

*6 Challenges  
to Living  
the Christian Life*



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota Bible Lectureship  
Saturday, April 9, 2005



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# Challenge to Living the Christian Life: Committing and Staying Committed

**Minnesota Bible Lectureship**

**Dan Mayfield**

**April 9, 2005**



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## **Failure to Commit**

Everyone promises commitment but it is elusive to find. We hear companies brag about their commitment to service, commitment to details, and commitment to quality. Our culture knows commitment to those things that satisfy the flesh.

Ironically, when it comes to the relationships, our modern culture has fostered a “no strings attached” attitude that has hurt marriage and family. The failure to stay committed has resulted in unfinished work, unrealized dreams, and most seriously, the failure to walk with God. Because they fear commitment, many never obey the Gospel. And some who formerly confessed Christ are no longer faithful.

## **A Binding Commitment**

To enter a contractual agreement, whether it is business and financial, or marriage, or whatever, it signifies a level of commitment. Becoming a Christian involves the entering of a covenant with God. Becoming a Christian is a lifelong commitment to a life of self-sacrifice. It is like getting married where Jesus is the groom and the Church is the bride (Ephesians 5:32). We need to say, “I do” to Christ, until eternity is done.

## Breaking The Commitment

There are all kinds of examples of commitment in the Bible.

1. Fading Commitment: “The love of many will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). It doesn’t matter that they promised their undying love. The raging fire of love became cold as ashes.
2. Leaving Commitment: they left their first love, Christ (Revelation 2:4). Unfaithful to vows. Treachery.
3. Loveless Commitment: like Demas, they love the world more than God (2 Timothy 4:10; Colossians 4:14; Phil 1:24). And there is no love left for God.
4. Deedless Commitment: “And they no longer do the deeds they did in the beginning” (Revelation 2:5). All of that first zeal has fizzled into all talk and no action.
5. Wandering Commitment: Some have wandered away from the faith in search of riches (1 Timothy 6:10). Some other love has caught the eye and there he goes, tragically hurting himself.  
There will be temptations to lure the Christian back into the world.
6. Quitters Commitment: They start and don’t finish since they fail to count the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:33). They have no “stick-to-itiveness.”
7. Distracted Commitment: Worries, cares, riches and pleasures crowd out any chance for bearing fruit (Matthew 13:18-23). Rocks and weeds have gotten in the way.
8. Conditional Commitment: That is, until the truth becomes too hard to accept. “They will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” (2 Timothy 4:3,4). They will stay committed if they find it pleasing.
9. Divided Commitment: They give a little of themselves to God, and the world gets some. But, “friendship with the world is enmity with God.” (James 4:4)

10. Fear of Commitment: They know the evidence for Christ warrants it, but they can't do it because they seek the approval of men (John 12:42).

Do any of these describe our level of commitment to Christ? When we no longer yield to Christ, the commitment that is offered to God is empty and useless.

### **Commitment Like Jesus** - Philippians 2:5-9

Despite the jeers and wagging of the tongues, Jesus Surrendered Himself to the will of God (Psalm 22:8). "For consider Him who endured such hostility by sinners against Himself,..." Consider what? He endured, "So that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12:3). Jesus blazed the path so that we would not quit. On the cross, He did not revile, "but kept *entrusting* himself to him who judges righteously." (1 Pet 2:23). Until He could commit His spirit to the Father, Jesus committed his life (Luke 23:46). He came to do the will of the Father. "Not My will", He said, "but Thy will be done." (Luke 22:42). Jesus was committed to the Father's will to save us.

Jesus taught commitment. He called for His disciples to give their all. When a would-be disciple said he was willing to follow, Jesus said, "the Son of Man had no place to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20). In other words, it's not an easy thing you commit to. When two disciples requested to sit on his right and left side in His kingdom, Jesus asked, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" (Mt. 20:21,22). When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, He instructed them, "...for I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you." (Jn. 13:14,15). Jesus said that a disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave than the Master, and "...if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you..." (Jn. 15:20). As Jesus had a cross to bear for the sins of the world, so each Christian has a cross to bear. He said, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciples." (Luke 14:27).

The picture should be clear. Jesus has shown and taught us where our commitment

ought to be. The challenge to living the Christian life is the challenge to follow Christ.

### **Commitment Like the Early Church - Acts 2:42**

This level of commitment was the norm for the day. People like Paul and Barnabas, Peter and John, were surrendered and delivered over to the grace of God. They were committed to telling people about God's grace in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This kind of commitment was apparent in many ways.

It was apparent in their complete devotion to the things of God. Acts 2:42 says the Christians were devoted to the "apostle's teaching", which is the Word of God. Paul writes how the Romans became obedient to that form of teaching to which they were "committed" (Romans 6:17). The Bereans were called "more noble-minded" because they received the Word with eagerness and searched the Scriptures daily to see if the things they heard were true (Acts 17:11). As a result, their sins were forgiven. In the full surrender to the will of God, there is eternal life. Luke says that the early Church was "devoted" to the Apostle's teaching. Commitment to God's Word is the hallmark of a Believer.

The Church was committed to fellowship (Acts 2:42). The word denotes "sharing, communion, or participation", and applies to Christian activity such as eating meals together, the regular contribution, and even by participating in the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 10:16). To remain faithful to God, it is important that Christians engage in lots of fellowship.

Commitment was apparent in their devotion to prayer (Acts 2:42). Luke wrote that the first small band of Christians were "continually devoting themselves to prayer." Paul wrote to the Romans to have this kind of devotion (Romans 12:12). And Paul told the Colossians to "devote yourselves to prayer."

In all of these things, the first century Church demonstrated their commitment to God and His plan to save mankind through Jesus Christ. The Christians we read of in the Bible

were dedicated to telling about the amazing message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 4:2). And they called on people to Believe in the Christ with repentance and baptism and their sins would be forgiven (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 22:16; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21).

If we want to live the Christian life, then we must have a strong devotion to the “apostle’s teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.”

### **Commitment to Christian Virtues** - 1 Corinthians 13:13

Believers must be committed to virtues. They help to distinguish what is right or wrong, good or evil, holy and profane. After Peter listed a number of qualities to focus on, he says, "if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." To be committed to spiritual growth is the sign of a Christian.

The primary moral and spiritual virtues are justice, courage, temperance, faith, hope, and love. Concerning the last three, when the Apostle Paul implied the cessation of the spiritual gifts, he said, “faith, hope and love, these three abide.” (1 Corinthians 13:13). If something *abides*; it sticks around. But if I’m not committed, my faith is dead, my hope is dead, and my love is dead.

Faith and Commitment. God rewards eternal life to people who are faithful. Hebrews 11 talks about people of faith who endured through great difficulties. Because God said to, Abraham journeyed to a new land which God would give to his descendents 400 years later (Hebrews 11:8; Genesis 15:13-16). The Hebrew writers says that Abraham's faith obeyed, "for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Hebrews 11:10). Because God said to, Noah built an ark after "being warned about things not yet seen..." A project that big takes an abiding faith. And Moses, who "refused to be called Pharaoh's son" turned away from the "passing pleasures of sin" because he considered

"the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward." These and many others endured the persecutions and hardships because they desired a better country, a city prepared for them by God (Hebrews 11:15,16). These people had an abiding faith because they made a commitment to God.

Hope and Commitment. The Christian's hope is wrapped up in the promise of being saved and receiving eternal life in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?" (Rom. 8:24) This is why Paul speaks of "the hope laid up for you in heaven." (Colossians 1:5). An abiding and unwavering hope will receive the reward in heaven. Are we committed to seeing that hope?

Love and Commitment. Paul said that, "the greatest of these is love." Women's magazines often write to women about men who are afraid to commit. In a survey of 800 men being asked if they broke a promise to their spouse in the last year, one man said, "Yes, and now I'm divorced because of it." Commitment is costly and risky, but as we have seen, it is where the greatest rewards are found. It might be that men don't commit because they don't love. Love for God, and commitment to Him, go hand in hand.

Faith, hope, and love are demonstrated through a lifelong commitment to Christ. Paul said to the Thessalonians that he was, "constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ..." (1 Thessalonians 1:3). According to Paul, faith, love, and hope are virtues that work, labor, and are steadfast. To live the Christian life a person must be infused with these spiritual virtues.

### **Commitment to Priorities** - Matthew 22:37-39

Pam Reed is committed to running. She recently ran all weekend to run farther than anyone else without taking a single nap. Burning 30,000 calories and 80 hours, she covered 300 miles. But she did not worship God; she did not assemble with the saints; she did not remember the Lord Jesus in the Supper. Are her priorities right?

Our first commitment is to *God*. But second to that should be the commitment to *marriage*. Because marriage is for a lifetime and because children are a challenge to raise, commitment is essential in the *home*. To Timothy, Paul said, “A man who doesn't take care of his family is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8). And because God loves the *Church* that was purchased through the blood of His Son, He wants Believers to be committed to the Church of Christ. No Christian can properly exclude him or herself from it (1 Corinthians 12:25). Beyond these things, it is also important for Believers to be committed to working hard in the vocations, but not in the way that the world is. Paul told the Thessalonians to work hard with their hands (1 Thessalonians 4:11); and to the Colossians he said, "do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance" (Colossians 3:23,34). This is important enough that Paul said, “if a man won't work, neither let him eat.” (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

To these things a Believer ought to be committed: to God, family, Church, and work.

### **Commitment No Matter The Costs**

A commitment to speak. Stephen stood before a crowd that was full of hatred and that at any moment could be provoked to put him to death (Acts 6-7). But he dared to speak. All Believers have the commitment to do the same, whatever the costs. Peter wrote, “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” (1 Peter 3:15). To “give an account” means you can give a pretty good answer for why you believe what you believe. God has revealed the truth through the Gospel and commanded that disciples be the ones to spread it to the entire world (Matthew 28:18-20). God wants every soul to yield to the Gospel. Christians should be committed to speaking it.

A commitment to death. Committed people cannot be intimidated to be silent about

their beliefs. "Do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled." (1 Peter 3:14). People who are devoted to Christ are not afraid of the enemy as much as they are compelled to do good by the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14, see how the virtues are important). Believers give up everything for God. "The great and foremost commandment" is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." A committed, dedicated, and devoted Believer never looks back because she "seeks the things above where Christ is seated." A Believer in Christ expects to be treated no better than Jesus was treated. Peter wrote to the Christians about the likelihood of being persecuted. He said for them to "rejoice" and "do not be ashamed." (1 Peter 4:12-16). Jesus said to the persecuted at Smyrna to "be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10).

An Enduring Commitment. Marriage is designed by God to be for life. Entering a covenant with God is meant to be for much longer. With Satan's help, the world is working to cause the Believer to stumble and falter in his faith. The Bible warns against succumbing to the pressure. The Hebrew writer says, "but we are not those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." Out of fear, lust, and weak moral fiber do Christians turn from their commitment to Christ. The runner understands commitment; by training and proper diet, she focuses her energies toward a material prize. The Christian's walk is similar. Paul said, "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). You have perhaps known such people whose dedication to a worldly endeavor is roundly praised by all. Christians are called to demonstrate just the same kind of dedication and commitment to Jesus Christ.

To live the Christian life means being unique in the world, different, and transformed in our thinking that we may prove what the will of God is (Romans 12:1,2). The challenge to

living the Christian life is having the will to follow Christ whatever the consequences.

## **Final Thoughts**

In a godless culture, men become fixated on fulfilling the desires of the flesh and gratifying that which is fleeting and vain. Our challenge is to remember what the song says: “this world is not my home.” We are pilgrims on a journey to a better place. This is the greatest reward for living a life of commitment to Jesus Christ.

Will you make a commitment to Christ today? Will you take up your cross and follow Him? It’s going to be a life of self-sacrifice and service to others; but there are great rewards at the end. Commitment means being devoted to the “apostle’s teaching, to fellowship, to breaking of bread, and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42). A disciple has a special place in his heart for these things. Today, you may enter a covenant with God if you will confess Christ as Savior, turn from sin, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

## I Want to Be a Worker

I. E.

I. Ballzell

1. I want to be a work-er for the Lord; I want to love and trust His  
 2. I want to be a work-er ev-'ry day; I want to lead the err-ing  
 3. I want to be a work-er strong and brave; I want to trust in Je-sus'

ho - ly word; I want to sing and pray, and be bus-y ev-'ry day,  
 in the way That leads to heav'n a-bove, where all is peace and love,  
 pow'r to save; All who will tru-ly come shall find a hap-py home,

**CHORUS**  
 In the vine-yard of the Lord. I will work, I will pray,  
 In the king-dom of the Lord,  
 In the king-dom of the Lord. I will work and pray, I will work and pray,

In the vine yard, in the vine-yard of the Lord; I will work  
 of the Lord;

I will pray, I will la-bor ev-'ry day, In the vine-yard of the Lord.



# Challenge to Living the Christian Life: The Entertainment Society

**Minnesota Bible Lectureship**

**Ray Stone**

**April 9, 2005**



*Ray Stone was born in 1943, raised in the Nazarene Church and converted to New Testament Christianity in 1967 at the age of 24. He married Gwen Clayton in 1967, and recently celebrated their 38th wedding anniversary. He attended Elk City School of Preaching in Elk City, OK (now Okla. School of Biblical Studies in Okla. City), studying under such men as W.S. Boyett, Gary Colley, and W.R. Craig, graduating in 1973. He has preached and taught in preaching schools in OK, TX, NM and MN. Ray moved to MN to preach in 1993. He is now preaching for the Maplewood church of Christ, where he has been since 1999. He also served as elder for the Maplewood church for 5 years. Ray has three grown children, two living in the Twin Cities and one who married and stayed in OK and has blessed him with two grandchildren.*

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## **I. Introduction:**

- A. Solomon: “There is no new thing under the sun,” Ecclesiastes 1:9-10. As evidence, consider...
1. ...Moses’ “crooked and perverse generation,” Deuteronomy 32:5.
  2. ...Christ’s contemporaries who were “an evil and adulterous generation,” Matthew 16:4.
  3. ...Peter urging people to “save yourselves from this crooked generation,” Acts 2:40.
  4. ...Paul pointing out the challenge (and the theme of these lectures) of living “as children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,” Philippians 2:15.
- B. We are at times “era-centric”--but our era is not unique: These are neither “the best of times” nor “the worst of times”!

## **II. “The Entertainment Society”. Several tangents present themselves:**

- A. The effect is has on society.
1. The moral slide of the entertainment industry, notably movie studios and their

“creeping movies ratings” in which today’s “PG” equals yesterday’s “R”; an “R” movie today would have been “X” not long ago! the result? “Soft porn” readily available to children and adults alike.

2. Violent and bloody video games and their attendant “de-sensitizing” effects on players.
3. Our “culture of passivity” produced by electronic entertainment, in which we prefer to be the audience rather than a participant in life (the “couch-potato” syndrome).

B. But the greatest challenge presented by the entertainment society is the transformation of our **worship** into entertainment for the masses.

1. Our individual private worship (Matthew 6:6, 3-4) is insulated from influence by the World.
2. But our collective public worship (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:18, 33) is vulnerable!

C. To the outside World, our worship activities can look rather dull.

1. It shouldn’t, to us--Our public worship, though collective ( I Corinthians 11:20), is individually offered (I Corinthians 11:28; 16:2)--so if it seems dull to you, the reason lies within you.
2. But outsiders may see our worship assemblies as “dull” when compared to various churches of men, believing we are in competition with them for the hearts and souls of humanity (We’re really not; there can be no competition when one side is predestined to lose--Matthew 15:13).
3. From the World’s point of view, we fall woefully short, i.e. not having the energy and excitement of the Southern Baptists, nor the dignity, pomp and circumstance of the Roman Catholics, etc.

D. Such comparisons shouldn’t bother us--but all too often they do!

1. I Corinthians 11:3 begins to look rather inadequate to some, who then advocate for

changes or additions that will “liven things up”, making our assemblies more attractive (read: “entertaining”): Instrumental music, special presentations at Christmas or Easter, baby christenings, “contemporary” worship alongside “traditional” worship, are just a few such.

2. There is, of course, nothing wrong with change--so long as it is authorized in Scripture. However, church members clamoring for such changes “to attract more people” may defend them on the grounds that “They are not forbidden.”
3. This must be understood: “Where does the Bible forbid it?” is the wrong question. God would have us ask, “Where does the Bible authorize it?”
4. Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 still reigns: 150 years ago the same conflict split the Restoration Movement.  
“The Bible doesn’t forbid it” (Disciples of Christ/Christian Church) is not the same as “The Bible doesn’t authorize it” (churches of Christ)--those stand in complete opposition to one another! The former allows anything God hasn’t specifically forbidden; the latter forbids anything God hasn’t specifically allowed.
5. The Bible shows us which approach is right: The burden of proof lies with the advocates of change--that is, we don’t have to “prove it wrong”; they must “prove it right”!
6. Scripture? Hebrews 7:11-14--as though the question had been asked, “Where did Moses say we can’t have priests from Judah?”; the answer: “When Moses spoke **nothing** concerning priests from the tribe of Judah”--that is, he didn’t say Judaites **could** serve as priests. A thing **not authorized** is a thing **forbidden**. It is vital that we continue to apply this “rule of silence” today. Entertaining or not, our worship must be Scripturally authorized.

E. Bible examples of entertainment offered in the guise of worship are easily found:

1. “Foreign” religions in supposed competition with God’s religion are represented by

Baal-worshippers vs. Elijah, God's prophet.

- a. Elijah's challenge: I Kings 18:24 "call on your god, and I'll call on mine, and let us see which answers."
- b. Their method of "calling on Baal": I Kings 18:26-29--quite a spectacle! Very entertaining, exciting; designed by man for man.
- c. Elijah's call to God: I Kings 18:36-37--low-key, short; not much of a show...but, it was "at "God's word", v. 36b--what He authorized. Compare the results!

2. Attempts by God's own people to twist His religion into that which would entertain, satiating physical

appetites, can be seen in events of the 40-years' wilderness wandering of the Jews:

- a. At first, Exodus 16:3, they longed for Egypt's "fleshpots" and bread.
- b. God's answer? Manna, delivered daily, Exodus 16:4-5, 35.
- c. But the Israelites weren't satisfied; suddenly, Numbers 11:5-6, they were pining, not just for meat and bread, but for Egypt's "fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic..."--in their opinion, God's provisions needed some spicing up!
- d. God's opinion: They needed some punishment: Numbers 11:18-20 "I'll give you meat; here's some quail"; 11:31 He made them knee-deep in quail! But read vv. 32-34 to see the final end.

F. God expects us to be content with what He gives--including His instructions for worshipping Him.

1. But our "entertainment society" conditions us to expect a show; a spectacle--else we go away feeling unfulfilled.
2. For instance, the common designation of those in the pews as "the audience"; the need to "get something out of the service" (entertainment) rather than contributing to it; etc.
3. We need to remind ourselves that we are not an audience; we are participants: I Peter

2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6; we all are priests. As such, Hebrews 13:15 and Hosea 14:2, we “offer up” gifts to God--our acts of worship--as active participants.

4. Each priest must present his own offering; in fulfillment of that, our collective worship is offered individually: I Corinthians 11:28; 14:26; 14:16; 16:2; II Corinthians 9:7; Ephesians 5:19; etc. We are not an “audience” to be entertained, but “priests” with a job to do!

5. Is the songleader below par? Your own singing doesn’t have to be! Is the preacher dull? (Think of I Corinthians 2:2-5 before you criticize preaching that is less than entertaining): You can still offer your own meditation on God’s word.

G. Here is the only proper understanding of worship as entertainment; as a performance in front of an audience:

1. We are the “performers”; God is the “Audience!” As any performer strives to please his audience, so do we with God--by giving HIM what HE wants, as outlined in His word.

2. Can we, then, enjoy worship? We should! God designed us; and then designed His Gospel, including church worship, to fit us. Good singing can lift our hearts; good preaching can inspire us; for God “met our needs” already in His original design. David’s exclamation, Psalm 122:1, should be ours.

3. Denominational churches use extremes to draw people with entertainment; but that should not tempt us to do the same: We’re not competing with them to offer better entertainment; God’s church is not in that business.

### **III. Conclusion: The challenge of the Entertainment Society to Christians is two-fold:**

A. The challenge to hold to our simple, pure New Testament mode of worship, II Corinthians 11:3; Hebrews 8:5. In spite of the flashy extremes all around us, let us leave the concept of “entertainment” where it belongs--in the World, not the church.

B. The challenge to nurture and develop our own spirituality that makes that worship

meaningful--and enjoyable--and satisfying--to us.

1. When we gather together to offer our corporate worship to God, we're not there to see a show, but to...

a. ...“provoke one another unto love and good works,” Hebrews 10:24...

b. ...”exhort one another,” Hebrews 10:25...

c. ...”teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” Colossians 3:16...

d. ...”sing and make melody with the heart **to the Lord**,” Ephesians 5:19...

e. ...”edify, exhort, and console” our fellow worshipers, I Corinthians 14:3.

2. These are the things with which God--our Audience--is pleased!

B. As a final thought, consider Micah 6:6-8.

# Give Me the Bible

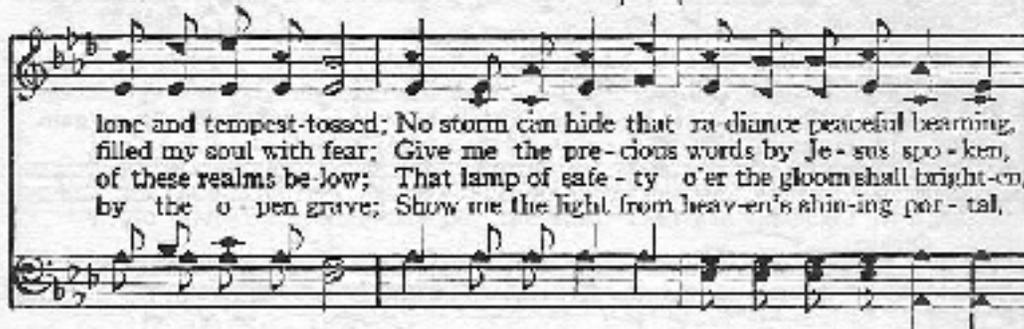
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Priscilla J. Owens

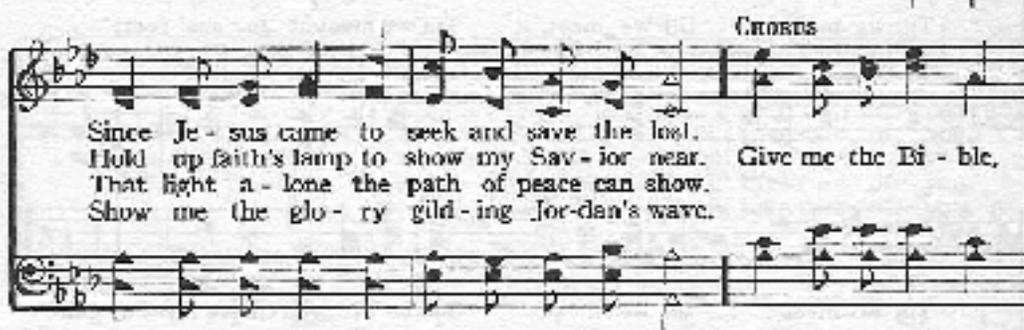
P. S. Lorenz



1. Give me the Bi - ble, star of glad-ness gleam-ing, To cheer the wan-d'r'er  
2. Give me the Bi - ble when my heart is bro - ken, When sin and grief have  
3. Give me the Bi - ble, all my steps en-light-en, Teach me the dan-ger  
4. Give me the Bi - ble, lamp of life im-mor-tal, Hold up that splen-dor



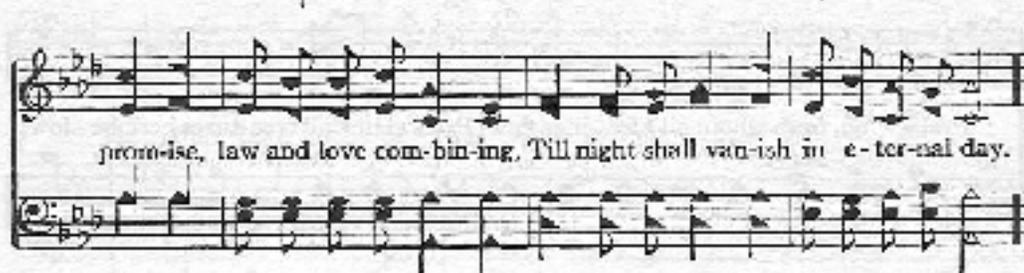
lone and tempest-tossed; No storm can hide that ra-diance peaceful bearing,  
filled my soul with fear; Give me the pre-cious words by Je-sus spo-ken,  
of these realms be-low; That lamp of safe-ty o'er the gloom shall bright-en,  
by the o-pen grave; Show me the light from heav-en's shin-ing por-tal,



**Cross**  
Since Je - sus came to seek and save the lost,  
Hold up faith's lamp to show my Sav-ior near. Give me the Bi - ble,  
That light a-lone the path of peace can show.  
Show me the glo-ry gild-ing Jor-dan's wave.



Ho - ly message shin-ing; Thy light shall guide me in the narrow way; Precept and



prom-ise, law and love com-bin-ing, Till night shall van-ish in e-ter-nal day.

# Challenge to Living the Christian Life: The Break-down of Home and Family

**Minnesota Bible Lectureship**

**Peter Heiniger**

**April 9, 2005**



*Pete Heiniger was raised in the Baptist church prior to being converted to Christ. After meeting the Mayfield family, His life was changed through the power and simplicity of the Gospel. Pete attended Pillsbury Bible Baptist Collge, Owatonna, MN., Mankato State University, and went on to receive a B.A. degree from Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver. Since graduating, Pete has worked in churches in Minnesota, Canada, and California. Pete is currently the Involvement Minister at Ripon Church of Christ in Ripon, California. He is married to Shara and together they have five girls: Briannah, Monique, Becca, Mia, and Sebra - all 6 years of age and under. In addition to the ministry of preaching, Pete has been a short-term missionary in Canada, directed a daycare and learning center, and has been an*

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Several years ago, on a rainy August day, two young adventurers decided to scale the highest summit wholly within Switzerland – Mount Dom, near Zermatt, Switzerland. At 14,942 feet, it’s higher even than the Matterhorn.

Even though they were young and relatively inexperienced, they felt confident in their mountain climbing abilities. Too confident, it turned out. For at noon, despite deteriorating weather, they boldly strode forth from the tiny village of Randa at the base of the Dom. Their goal was a house halfway up the mountain where they would spend the night before tackling the icy summit the next morning.

The two moved quickly up the forested trail as the rain continued to fall and even intensify. The sky darkened as they climbed upward, and the temperature dropped significantly. Because their goal was the “high hut” staffed by the Swiss Alpine Club, not the summit, they hadn’t bothered to bring cold-weathered gear. They soon regretted that fact as the constant rain soaked through their inadequate clothing.

At six o'clock P.M. they were still climbing when the rain suddenly turned to snow. They had long since crossed the timberline, and the trail before them was increasingly difficult to follow. By eight o'clock P.M. darkness had fallen, and they both knew they weren't just lost they were in life threatening trouble. They were soaked, shivering, and at risk of hypothermia. In the pitch-black darkness they had no way of knowing whether they were still headed toward the "high hut." Their path had disappeared, and they carried no tent or sleeping bags to shelter them from the storm or help them escape the cold.

Suddenly, just when their situation was most desperate, the moment of despair gave way to joy. From a great distance away, a tiny light began to flicker. Even at a distance the faint glow looked as bright as a lighthouse beacon to those two shivering, frightened young men.

Where did it come from? Before retiring for the night, the keeper of the Dom's "high hut" decided to step outside and place a kerosene lamp next to the door – just in case a beacon might be needed by anyone caught in the worsening storm. Encouraged once again, the boys pressed forward and in a few minutes found shelter that saved their lives.

In many ways, this story captures the essence of my lesson.

I am sure that there are hundreds of books on broken families. I am sure that equally there have been hundreds of sermons and articles written on our subject as well. What I do not want to turn this lesson into is a "tip" or "pointer" to help all of us avoid a broken family. I don't have some new, never heard before, idea that can save all of us from that path. And if you think about it for a moment, that should make you feel comfortable. Insert my old football coach here, saying, "The basics men, the basics men, let's get those fundamentals down." I believe that is applicable to our situation today. We're not facing some super inconceivable force, unfortunately, we are failing at the basics.

“Our children begin the path of their lives with high ideals, aspirations, dreams, naïve to the fact that they are walking right into the gathering darkness of a fallen world. On their own, even with loads of self-confidence and the vitality of youth, they will face a world growing darker and colder with sin, and like each of us, one day they will face death itself.” (John Trent, Ph.D.)

Those two climbers couldn't find their own way that night; they needed a light to guide them to life and safety...and someone willing to put that light where it could be seen.

That is our role as Christian parents. It's our calling and privilege to set before each of our children the “Light of the World” – Jesus – the One who alone can save them, guide them, and keep them safe and warm, both now and forever. But the same question confronts each of us – how do we do it?

In California, where I reside guaranteed real estate is unheard of – there is no guarantee when you live as close to the fault lines as I do. There are no unshakeable foundations, period. But our God and Creator the maker of all things did make such a foundational promise.

If you will turn with me to Psalm 15, we can see together that it is like a beaming light through a prism. Those five verses that make it up uncover or shine light on 10 character traits of a godly person... and they do end with an unshakeable promise.

“LORD,” the psalmist begins, “who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?” (v.1) The answer reads like a character development course. The one who dwells with the Lord is one “whose walk is blameless,” “who does what is righteous,” and “who speaks the truth from his heart” (v.2). This person “has no slander on his tongue” and “does

his neighbor no wrong” (v.3). Such a person helps and doesn’t hurt the poor, and gives honor to those whom God honors.

And what’s the reward for someone who seeks to live out such a godly life or pass such a life down to their children? It’s the promise of an unshakeable foundation for his or her life. In King David’s words, “He who does these things will never be shaken” (v. 5b).

I want you all to chew on this a while: Our children need Jesus to be the foundation of their lives. How we build on that foundation through teaching them, in all its various forms, how to know and love Jesus will help them today and onward. In 1 Corinthians 3 the apostle Paul writes, “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus” (vv. 10-11).

The sure foundation for our children is Jesus Christ – just like the old hymn says, “All other ground is sinking sand.” And those who actively build their faith, 1 Timothy 6:19 says, “lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

To clarify things in case things are a bit cloudy here, let me say this: broken homes are made by parents and not by children. The key to solving broken homes lies within us and His name is Christ.

For better or worse, we are responsible for much more than you bargained for back when you decided to start a family. With the esteemed title “Mommy” or “Daddy” comes a mega responsibility. Now that some of us have been thrust into the most important role -and some of us are well on our way with children grown or almost grown – thrust into the most

important role of our life, our routine, everyday choices suddenly have long lasting implications for our children. Like it or not, we are faced with the realization that, for good or bad, parents influence the lives of future generations in ways they can't even imagine. No pressure, right, it's all part of the job.

Throughout the progression from diapers to diplomas, there is one weighty issue that confronts every Christian parent: the spiritual formation and growth of our children. We read in Proverbs 22:6, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it," and we realize that we're not all that clear on what it means. We have promised ourselves that we won't make the same mistakes our parents made with us, but beyond that we're most likely hard-pressed to come up with a clear, coherent, biblical statement of what is involved in training a child in the way he should go.

The first mistake that comes is usually the answer to these questions: What about the church? Isn't the spiritual training of our kids the church's responsibility? After all, that's what our youth/involvement man or teachers are trained for, right?

It's true that preachers, teachers, and other staff are effectively teaching and preaching God's word and as a result God is lighting up people's lives. But those men and women would be the first to tell you that the spiritual training of children was never meant to be relegated to a single hour on Sunday morning. Spiritual training is meant to be lived out every day before children by loving parents and grandparents.

A statistic that is not on your sheet is that 70 percent of young people raised in church have not embraced the faith as their own by the time they graduate from high school and enter college. Think for a moment of the number of lives being blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ and his life giving salvation if every person who grew up in the church came back next Sunday

morning. The current buildings wouldn't come close to holding the crowds. That's what attendance at church would be like if we were successfully reaching our own children, never mind any other outreach.

This is so crucial to the issue of broken homes. Only God has the power to change and transform lives. What he can do is absolutely amazing. He can overcome poor parenting, sinful habits, rotten backgrounds – He can overcome it all. Teaching children to begin a lifelong relationship with God can even overcome our own failures. How can we teach relationship when folks the statistics bear out that we don't even have our priorities in line? We are out chasing 3 stall garages and the cars to fill them, the latest home on HGTV, the golden parachute, and failing at the most fundamental aspects of our faith.

I have 20 teenagers in my class back in Ripon, CA. I asked them if they could defend the reason of why we must meet together to take the Lord's Supper on Sundays to a Seventh Day Adventist who might disagree. I was hardly concerned about their talking with an Adventist, my concern was whether they knew why they were doing what they were doing. I allowed them to search for an entire 10 minutes of class. Finally, one of them, Jimmy is his name, says, "Okay, can you just give us the verse, please." I responded, "What verse?" He replied, "Where it commands us to assemble on the first day of the week." I told him, "I cannot give you that verse." Jimmy frustrated says, "Well, then we are going to be here and waste the entire class time looking for it." I said, "No, Jimmy, I am not refusing to give it to you. I am unable to give it to you because it does not exist." You should have heard the chatter – I mean they thought "This guy is off of his rocker!" One of the most beautiful things in all of Christianity – the communing with brother and sister in Christ to embrace the memory and power of Christ's death – and our 17 and 18 year olds have no idea why we do it. In fact, besides the mere symbolism found in the fruit of the vine and unleavened bread (and oh, they did not know where the verse that commanded those items to be used was

found either) they knew nothing of the usage of “table language” that is found throughout Luke’s writings.

Here is the key and we’re done.

If we are to live the life God intends for us, if we are to participate in the unfathomable love of the triune God (John 17), God must be restored as the center of our lives. We must die to ourselves as center, die to our addiction to idols, and die to the perpetual judgments we entertain in our minds on other people. God can only be our source of life when he is the center of our lives. So long as we thrust ourselves into the center we will be forced to seek life from idols, judging good and evil, and thus be cut off from our source center. We will live a life that is actually death. The only way to discover true life is to die to the “life” of living as the center and be restored to our true source center (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; cf. Gal. 2:19-20).

In a most profound sense, this restoration is already accomplished in Jesus Christ. Christ overcomes our separation from God and restores God’s Tree of Life in the center of our existence (we are getting our life from God and nothing else). On the cross, Christ in principle condemned every person as a rebellious and empty center and reconciled every person to God by restoring God as his or her true source center.

When we by faith say yes in the core of our being to what God has already done for us in Christ and join him in his death, burial and resurrection, we begin our participation in this new reality. What was true and what is true about Christ becomes true of the believer. The self that lives as the center, trying to derive life from the world (Material wealth/money, Hobbies Recreation, Community clubs, etc.), judging everything as good and evil, is crucified in Christ’s crucifixion. The self “in Adam” is now “old,” for it no longer has any validity.

The believer is a “new self” that lives in Christ and thus participates in God’s divine nature (Romans 6:3-10; 2 Peter 1:4).

Don’t you as parents want that truth to be realized and true about your wonderful children? I do. Then, I must model relationship to my children. I can’t expect my children to have a relationship with a god who they never see me speaking to, whose name or subject rarely cross over my lips. Where is God in your lives? And are you modeling the God of the Bible – or your own God?

When I asked my teens to tell me who they visualize when they think of God – it was truly scary. They had an idea of a God that is up in heaven wagging his finger waiting to pounce on them for their sin. He was stodgy finger wagging God – who was mostly angry with them. Folks, I don’t know who that is – but that is not the God of the Bible. My God is a loving God who has moved towards us. He is found revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. He loves me and always has. He loves you and always has. He has given you unsurpassable worth and value by dying for you on the cross. I was worthless, until Jesus died, and he freely gave me unsurpassable worth and value, for he gave his infinite self on the cross for me. Yet, not just for me did he give it, but for the entire world. Every person that I see has that same worth and value.

I want my children to see that God, for that is the true God of the Bible. Jesus is the supreme revelation of God – all other accounts must be seen in light of who Jesus is. The commands to love are supreme – all other commands must be seen in light of those two commands. This is relationship and this I must model for my children.

Relationships have many cuts, and sides, and grooves – and it is hard for us to think of a simple answer to all of the problems and issues that come into them. However, when we give

Jesus as the answer, it is not a simple answer for our Lord is no simple Lord. You ask: “Why do we have the same divorce rate as the world?” “Why do we have only slightly better abortion rate?” “Why do we have the same teenage pregnancy as the world?” Why? Why? Why?

Well, the statistics do not lie. To the extent that we have relationship with Jesus, is the extent that our families will. We have put ourselves in the center of our lives, we have lined up all kinds of surrogate gods on the shelves of our priorities and we have almost eradicated God from our daily lives altogether. You see, it is always easy to name the problem.

The solution is a harder pill to swallow because we must tear down habits and ways of thinking: We need to know our God. We need to search him out in the person of Jesus Christ. We need meaningful, daily conversation with our Lord. He must become center of our lives. We must drive all other salesmen from our temple with a whip. We must invest only in stock of Christ, which means that priorities must change.

If you reduce the Bible to its essentials, all of the doctrine, examples, stories, principles, laws, warnings, cautions, dos, don'ts, and truths amount to one thing: life. That's the subject of all Christian teaching and training. Life is the context in which that training is carried out and the goal toward which it aims. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

I could have spoken to relationships and how to get along with each other, but you know what – that makes it all about you. And it is NOT all about you. It really must become all about HIM.

# Blessed Assurance 24

Fanny I. Crosby

Mrs. Joseph P. Knapp

1. Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! O what a fore-taste of  
 2. Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, Vi-sions of rap-ture now  
 3. Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am

glo-ry di-vine! Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God,  
 burst on my sight; An-gels de-scend-ing bring from a-love  
 hap-py and blest; Watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-love,

Chorus

Born of His Spir-it, washed in His blood.  
 Ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love. This is my sto-ry,  
 Filled with His good-ness, lost in His love.

this is my song, Prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long; This is my

sto-ry, this is my song, Prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.



# Challenge to Living the Christian Life: The Lure of Wealth and Material Goods

**Minnesota Bible Lectureship**

**Art Wallis, Des Moines, IA**

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Introduction: I want to thank Bro. Mayfield for asking me to speak here today on the topic of "The Lure of Wealth and Material Goods", as part of the "Six Challenges to Living the Christian Life" series of lectures..

The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 1:10 NASV, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ."

You have seen the commercials. You have read the ads. You HAVE TO HAVE this product or that product. If you really want to be part of the "IN" crowd, you must use this or have that. Come on, you are worth it. So what if it costs 300% more than the competitor, think how good this brand will make you look.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are the only three things that the devil has in his bag of tricks to take Christians away from God. But, he knows just how to tailor make each temptation to fit each of us as individuals.

**I. The Temptation is there...**The Lure of Wealth and Material Goods is ever present each day. It is a dog eat dog world out there.. We have got to get ahead. We have got to have more

and more. We “need” to “keep up with the Joneses”. (Truth is, the Joneses have been trying to keep up with us)

These are all part of the lies the devil tells us.

The worldly view of death is that, “The person with the most ‘toys’ wins”. That idea runs totally counter to God’s teaching. “But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” – I Tim. 6:6-11 NASV

I was privileged to be in the delivery room when all four of our children were born. Paul was right, not a one of them brought anything with them when they were born into this world.

A few years ago I was also present when a godly man left this life for the life beyond. When he left, he left absolutely everything behind, including his physical body. Since we can bring nothing into this world with us; and surely we can take nothing out of this world with us when we leave; then having our basic necessities of life met while we are here should help us to enjoy the journey.

There are a lot of “get rich quick” schemes out there. There is nothing wrong with earning a living and getting ahead. We are to provide for our families. “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”- I Timothy 5:8 NASV “For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.” – 2 Thessalonians 3:10 NASV But, a lot of people are scammed each year by offers to make you rich in an instant. As Paul says, it leads to ruin and destruction.

The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil; and some people have sold out to the devil quite cheaply .

If it were not for temptation and sin, there would be no lure of wealth and material goods to us. Greed, envy, avarice....other sins of the heart are behind the lure of wealth and material goods. This is just an end result of other spiritual problems of the heart.

As far as contentment goes, we live in a time of super abundance, yet we find more discontented people today than perhaps at any time in the history of the world. How can you be contented when you are constantly bombarded with advertising that is designed to make you look like you need the latest, newest product? Let me make some suggestions to help you with this. Don't read the ads, toss them in the trash; don't go 'window' shopping, unless you are actually shopping for windows; burn the Christmas catalog the day it arrives; turn off the television during commercials, and you will find that you and your children will all be a lot more contented with what you already have.

Jesus warns us about the lure of wealth and material goods in Mark 10:23-27 NASV. "And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God' The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They were even more astonished and said to Him, 'Then who can be saved?' Looking at them, Jesus said, 'With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.'"

One of the problems with having wealth is that it is so time consuming to take care of it. Perhaps one of the reasons that it is hard for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God is that they don't have time to study the Bible, to learn about Jesus, and to be taught how to obey the Gospel. The more THINGS you have the more TIME they demand. In this day of great labor saving devices, we have less free time than before they were ever invented. Material

wealth can become a stumbling block to attaining spiritual riches, those “spiritual blessings” the Bible talks about.

Again, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had this to say about the uncertainty of wealth.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

– Matthew 6:19-34 NASV

As someone once said, “We know the cost of everything and the value of nothing.” You can probably tell me what that last gallon of gasoline you bought cost you. And what about the cost of the last CD or DVD you bought; you probably remember what their cost was. But can you tell me the value of a true friend or the salvation of your eternal soul?

A friend of mine, (Sigmund) Lloyd Murphy once said, “You can’t take it with you, but you can send it on ahead”. That is what Jesus is trying to tell us in the Sermon on the Mount. Our treasures are safe there, in heaven. How do you send your treasure on ahead? By supporting “good works” in which the church is to be involved. That means supporting not only the local church work, but also other good works of benevolence and evangelism, both locally and around the world. The church has great opportunity to help the less fortunate after natural disasters around the world. This often helps open the door for evangelism in these areas. Benevolence and evangelism often go hand in hand. Worldly materialism has no place for benevolence. Are YOU benevolent?

Again in Matthew six Jesus tells us that we cannot have our loyalty divided between two masters, we cannot serve God and wealth. We have to make a choice. There is only room for one on the throne of our heart. Who, or what, is it going to be?

I am afraid that as Christians, we sometimes forget that no matter what our needs are, God will supply them.....so why should we worry about it?

“And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, ‘If anyone wished to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’”

--Mark 8:34-37 NASV

We live in a day of great selfishness. Too few understand what self-denial is all about. Most people are only worried about themselves and have no care, no compassion on others in the

world around them. When we learn to deny self, and take up our cross, to follow Jesus, we will have a better opportunity of obtaining that home in heaven. God has a cross for each of us to bear. Each cross is individually made to fit just us. We each have our own sadness, sorrows and pains that we must bear as we go through this life.

What price tag can we put on our soul? (it is sad that some have sold out so cheaply) Our soul is priceless; but some treat it as though it were worthless.

I once knew a man who was a multi-millionaire. He had no desire to talk of spiritual matters. One day he became very ill. He was in Rochester in the hospital for a couple of weeks. He was so stressed out that he was literally digesting himself from the inside out and unless he could be cured, he would die. One day shortly after he was released from the hospital, a couple of us from church stopped by his house to check on him. There on top of that afternoon's newspaper (he did not know we were coming to visit) was his open Bible. He had been studying the Bible thinking that perhaps he would not fully recover from his sickness. Then a terrible thing happened. He got WELL. He no longer felt the urgency and the need for Jesus. I moved from there and I do not know whatever happened to that man. But, he had a multi-million dollar business to run and so he may have forfeited his soul to gain a little bit of what the world has to offer.

Often our choice is not between what is good and what is bad. Often the choice is between what is better and what is best. There are many perfectly good and wholesome activities that are going to end up costing us our souls, because they crowd out God, Christ, and the church in our busy schedules.

## **II. The Perils of Wealth and Materialism's Lure**

We find that this isn't a new problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Bible is replete with examples of how the lure of wealth and material goods caused men and women to be led into sin.

Achan – Joshua 7 – After the Lord had given the Jews such a victory over Jericho, Joshua sent just a small band of soldiers to take the little town of Ai. What Joshua didn't know is that there was sin in the camp and God would not bless them until the sin was taken care of. Achan was found out. God had put a ban on anyone taking any of the spoils of battle from Jericho, but Achan had taken something. He had taken a mantle from Shinar, a bar of gold, and 200 shekels of silver and hidden them beneath his tent. Sure he was breaking a command of God. Sure 36 Jewish soldiers had been killed in the battle with Ai for God was no longer with them. But would anybody really miss it? Would anybody really care? Because of the punishment brought upon Israel because of Achan's sin, Achan, his family, his livestock, and all of his possessions were stoned and burned. A heap of stones was piled up on top of them and left there as a warning. He just had to have those things. He coveted; he took them; he hid them. And, in the end, it cost him all that he had. Sin always: takes you farther than you want to go (the grave in this case); keeps you longer than you want to stay (until Christ's return in this case); and will cost you more than you are willing to pay (his life, the lives of his family, and his soul).

Gehazi/Naaman the Leper – 2 Kings 5:19-27 – Gehazi thought evil in his heart in that Elisha had not charged Naaman for healing his leprosy. Gehazi devised a plan, told a lie, received silver and clothing, and then hid it in the house. He thought he had put one over on Naaman and Elisha; Gehazi forgot that you can't put one over on God. Gehazi forgot that sin always: takes you farther than you want to go (away from his master Elisha and God's work); keeps you longer than you want to stay (they would have it forever); and costs you more than you are willing to pay (Gehazi and his family's good health was gone forever, and in its place they would have the plague of leprosy upon them).

Ahab/Jezebel & Naboth's Vineyard – I Kings 21 – Ahab wanted the vineyard that was next to his so badly that he could taste it, but Naboth wouldn't sell. Ahab gave up and sulked. Jezebel set up false testimony and was able to have Naboth killed and get Naboth's vineyard for her husband Ahab. Both Ahab & Jezebel were BAD people. As punishment for this sin and others, God would cut off every male from Ahab, both bond & free in Israel. Jezebel would be eaten by dogs in the district of Jezreel. Elijah also prophesied, "The one belonging

to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds will eat.” – I Kings 21:24 NASV In order to get the vineyard of Naboth, Jezebel plotted, wrote letters, involved others, had false testimony given to a kangaroo court, and had an innocent man murdered -- all because of greed and lust for a piece of property.

What would YOU be willing to do in order to have YOUR way or to get what YOU wanted?

Ananias and Sapphira – Acts 5:1-11 – “Ananias & Sapphira got together to conspire a plot to cheat the church and get ahead. They knew God’s power but did not fear it, lied unto the Holy Spirit. Peter prophesied it and they both dropped dead”. So go the words to a kid’s song we used to sing in VBS many years ago. That pretty much sums up what happened with Ananias and Sapphira and their greed. They wanted the glory without having to pay the price. The perils of wealth and materialism’s lure: took them farther than they wanted to go (the cemetery); kept them longer than they wanted to stay (until the resurrection); and cost them more than they wanted to pay (their lives and souls).

Is God’s money still in YOUR pocket?

Judas – Judas was a thief and a hypocrite. (The word hypocrite comes from two Greek words that mean “a play actor”, “someone who plays a different role in life than what they really are”.) Judas used to dip into the bag of which he was treasurer. Widows had helped to finance Jesus’ preaching tours, so in effect, not only was Judas stealing from God, but he was also stealing from these widows who had given the money. – John 12:4-6

The ultimate sin caused by the Lure of Wealth and Material Goods was when Judas sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver -- the price of a common slave.

It cost Judas dearly. Jesus had said it would have been better if Judas had never been born. When you bargain with the devil it will always take you farther than you want to go (hell itself); make you stay longer than you wanted to stay (all eternity); and cost you more than you were willing to pay (it cost Judas his soul). And for what? For a lousy 30 pieces of

silver!

Are YOU honest in YOUR dealings with others, or are YOU just play-acting with YOUR Christian life?

### **III. God Promises - He will take care of us and our needs:**

Consider now the lilies of the field, how they toil not, neither do they spin.....

Oh that we would learn to depend on God for our needs. Listen to what God has told us about this in both the Old and New Testaments:

“Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?’” – Hebrews 13:5 & 6 NASV

David once said, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” – Psalms 37:25 KJV

David also said, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”. – Psalms 23:1 KJV

God provided for the needs of all of the Israelites as they walked through the wilderness for forty years. He fed them with manna & quail (Ex. 16:13-21). He provided water from the Rock (Numb. 20)....and that Rock was Christ (I Cor. 10:4). During that time of wandering, their feet did not get sore, nor did their clothes wear out.(Deut. 29:5)

Even God’s Hebrew name, “El-shaddai” (God Almighty) means “...one who is able to supply, nourish, and satisfy.....God is mighty to supply, nourish, and satisfy; He is all-bountiful and all-sufficient....God is the all-sufficient and all-bountiful One.”

The lure of wealth and material goods lies in our lack of faith that God will provide for our needs. We are told to seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things (physical needs of life) will be added unto us. That is HIS promise to us. Do we believe it?

Too often today we don't differentiate between our "wants" and our "needs". God only promises to provide for our "needs".

#### **IV. How does this all apply to us today?**

We were warned about times such as we live in today. "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these." – 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NASV

If you find yourself at the racetrack, or in front of a slot machine, or buying a lottery ticket or a raffle ticket; if you are betting or gambling or gaming on anything where there is money or an exchange of goods involved...you have been caught by the devil in his lure of wealth and material goods. The word "lure" used in the title of this lesson for today is the exact word we need to describe what the devil has done to us. We are like a hungry fish that is lured by the fishhook... to take a big bite as it passes by. Once we have bitten, we are hooked, and it is nearly impossible to shake loose from it. If you are a gambler of any kind and you think you haven't been hooked, then let me ask you this. Have you ever said, "I can walk away from it any time I want to?" If you have said that, you are hooked. If you want to prove that you aren't hooked by the devil's gambling lure, then walk away from it.....and never go back.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the gambling industry let me shed some light on it for you. For every one dollar a government agency takes in on gambling taxes and fees, it

costs taxpayers, on average, \$3. (the taxpayer is ALWAYS the big loser when there is any kind of government-run gambling) That is for welfare costs, domestic violence costs, increased medical costs, and higher costs for police, ambulance, and other protective services. Usually when gambling and alcohol come into an area, prostitution isn't far behind.

I was talking with a man who helps gamblers to break their gambling addiction. The good news is that if both a husband and wife seek help, there is a 78% cure rate for the one who is addicted. But there are those gamblers, for instance, who like to play the slot machines. I was told that they may sit on their chair in front of that one machine for as much as 20 hours at a time without moving. They just keep feeding coins into the machine and pulling the handle. They do not get out of that chair for anything. They sit there until they wet themselves..... and they continue to sit there and feed the machine and pull the handle. One thing that I was shocked to find out is that it is NEVER ABOUT THE MONEY! It is all about WINNING; Beating the Odds; Beating the Machine!!!

Gambling destroys families, it destroys friendship, and it destroys self-esteem. People spend their rent money and food money feeding the machines, playing games of chance, wasting their time and money. In order for you to win, someone else has to lose! You are trying to make others become losers, and somehow that doesn't sound very Christ-like to me.

I am afraid that too many Christians today are a lot like Demas. In 2 Timothy 4:10 we read, "For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica;....." Many Christians have deserted the Lord because they have loved this present world rather than heaven itself. They have let money and material goods lure them away from the true life that only God can give.

Don't you realize that the Apostle John wrote, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." – I John 2:15-17 NASV

If you can see something with your eyes, it isn't important. If you can't see it, it probably is important. "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." – 2 Corinthians 4:18 NASV

Even the letter of Jude (vs. 12 & 13 NASV) has something to say about Christians who continue to participate in such sins: "These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever."

Did you notice there in the last part of verse 13 what their fate will be?! This is serious stuff!

There is hope! Gambling and other forms of greed and such sin are just like any other sin in that when we truly repent of it, walk away from it, and, as Christians, ask God to forgive us for it, GOD WILL FORGIVE! This is NOT the unpardonable sin, but we have to get our heart and mind and soul right with God so that He can forgive us for it. God will always hate the sin, but He also always still loves the sinner and hopes for repentance.

You can hide any sin for a while, but just remember, "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." -Numbers 32:23 NASV

Conclusion: I would like to close my talk today with an article that someone sent to me on the Internet, that sort of explains what this lesson I have just given is all about.

**"SATAN'S MEETING"**

Satan called a worldwide convention of demons. In his opening address he said,

"We can't keep Christians from going to church."

"We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth."

"We can't even keep them from forming an intimate relationship with their Saviour."

"Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken."

"So let them go to their churches; let them have their covered dish dinners,

BUT steal their time, so they don't have time to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ."

"This is what I want you to do," said the devil:

"Distract them from gaining hold of their Saviour and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" his demons shouted.

"Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered.

"Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow."

"Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6-7 days each week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles."

"Keep them from spending time with their children."

"As their families fragment, soon, their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work!"

"Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice."

"Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive."

"To keep the TV, VCR, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their home....."

"This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ."

"Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers."

"Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day."

"Invade their driving moments with billboards."

"Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services and false hopes.."

"Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines and TV so their husbands will believe that outward beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. "

"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive."

"Have them return from their recreation exhausted"

"Keep them too busy to go out in nature and reflect on God's creation. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, plays, concerts, and movies instead. "Keep them busy, busy, busy!"

"And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences."

"Crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Jesus."

"Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause."

"It will work!" "It will work!"

It was quite a plan!

The demons went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busier and more rushed, going here and there.

Having little time for their God or their families. Having no time to tell others about the power of Jesus to change lives.

I guess the question is, has the devil been successful in his schemes? You be the judge!!!!

Does "BUSY" mean: B-eing U-nder S-atan's Y-oke?

-Article is copied and adapted from the Internet-

Always remember that ANY sin will ALWAYS: 1. take you farther than you wanted to go; 2. keep you longer than you wanted to stay; and 3. cost you more than you were willing to pay.

And that, my Christian Brothers & Sisters, is just one of the end results of the Lure of Wealth and Material Goods. This is part of the spiritual warfare we fight. -(Ephesians 6:12)

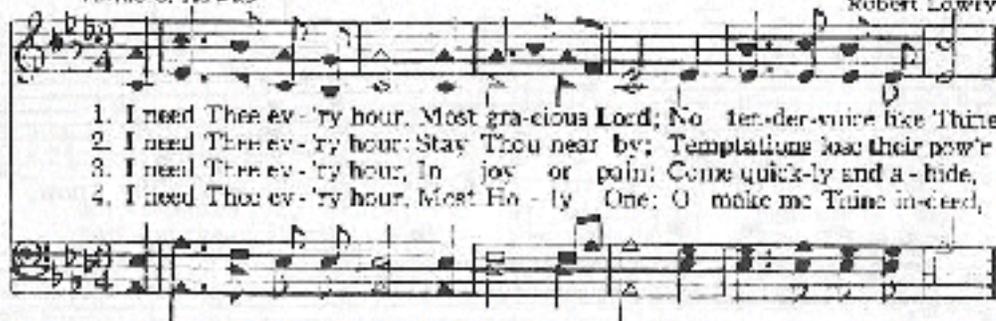
May you be successful in this fight! Your very soul is at stake! May God give you the strength to win!

For further study: Romans 12:11 & 2 Corinthians 4:11-18

## I Need Thee Every Hour

Annie S. Hawks

Robert Lowry



1. I need Thee ev-ry hour, Most gra-cious Lord; No ten-der-voice like Thine  
 2. I need Thee ev-ry hour; Stay Thou near by; Temptations lose their pow'r  
 3. I need Thee ev-ry hour, In joy or pain; Come quick-ly and a-hide,  
 4. I need Thee ev-ry hour, Most Ho-ly One; O make me Thine in-deed,

## Chorus



Can peace af-ford,  
 When Thou art nigh. I need Thee, O I need Thee; Ev-ry hour I  
 Or life is vain  
 Thou bless-ed Sort

need Thee! O bless me now, my Sav-ior; I come to Thee! A-men.

# Challenge to Living the Christian Life: Pseudo-Science: Attack from Without

## Minnesota Bible Lectureship

Jason Haygood

April 9, 2005



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### Introduction:

There is no God. At least that's what many scientists would have us believe.

It used to be that science and Christianity were good friends. At some point in the not-so-distant past the most brilliant minds in the scientific community held God and His word in high esteem. Those days are over.

Today, for the most part, Christianity and science are at odds with each other. This conflict exists *not* because Christianity and science are for some reason incompatible (as many would have us believe), but rather because many in the scientific community today have abandoned true science in favor of "pseudo-science".

### Science vs. Pseudo-Science:

What exactly is "pseudo-science"? According to Webster, the word *pseudo* means, "fictitious, pretended, or counterfeit". The word "science" is defined as, "the state or fact of knowledge; knowledge 2) systemized knowledge derived from observation, study, and experimentation carried on in order to determine the nature or principles of what is being

studied”. So, in a nutshell, “pseudo-science” is false, or fake, science. In other words, what many today are calling science is, in fact, not really science at all. It’s counterfeit. It’s false. It’s fake. Facts have been replaced with opinions, and evidence has been replaced by faith. The result is that science is turning into a religion.

The demise of true science has three causes: ignorance, arrogance, and bias. There is a huge difference between knowledge and wisdom. It is possible for someone to have a great deal of knowledge and yet have a total lack of wisdom. The scientific community is proving this to be true. The leaders in the various scientific fields are some of the most educated people on our planet. They have attained levels of knowledge in their respective fields that many of us could only dream of. And yet, despite all their learning, they’re not very wise.

A senator was being interviewed on the news recently concerning some contemporary issue that he was involved in debating. He said concerning his opponents, “It’s possible to become educated to the point of stupidity”. How true that is. And this is exactly the case with those who constantly ignore what God has told us to be true concerning the world that we live in.

Scientists are trying to become smarter than God. Many of them think that they already have. They look at the Bible and laugh. The idea that this universe that we live in was created by an all powerful God is absolute foolishness to them. The account of creation as it is told in the scriptures is nothing more than a fairy tale meant to provide hope to the ignorant masses. But the apostle Paul asked the Corinthians, “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (I Cor. 1:20). And later he told them, “The foolishness of God is wiser than men” (I Cor. 1:25). What science is mocking and calling foolishness is in reality the wisdom that they are trying so hard to find. The scientific community suffers from a bad case of ignorance. And the only way for them to overcome that ignorance is to accept the truths that God has revealed to us.

Arrogance is another plague on the scientific community. To put it mildly, some have failed to realize the limitations of their own minds. The *National Geographic Channel*

recently aired a program about the possibility of life on other planets. When one well respected astronomer was asked if there could indeed be other life forms in our universe, his reply was simply, “Oh, no doubt about it. We’re not alone.” When the reporter asked for evidence, the astronomer replied, “I just know”.

His own confidence was all the evidence that this particular scientist needed. There was no *real* evidence, no proof, nothing to even suggest that what he was saying was true. And yet he presented his opinion as if it were scientific fact. This same arrogance can be seen in much of what is being taught as scientific fact today. Where is the evidence? Where is the support? Where is the proof? It’s no longer needed. In fact, the entire scientific process is no longer needed. What has replaced it is the arrogance of a few well known ‘academics’. As long as they say that it’s true, it must be true. After all, how could they possibly be wrong? As long as this arrogance is allowed to continue, true science will be overshadowed by pseudo-science.

Bias has led men to many false conclusions. In fact, when bias is present the truth is very difficult to come by. And today’s science is full of bias.

Each year a question is posed to over 120 “intellectual” contributors by an organization called the Edge Foundation. This years question was: “What do you believe is true, even though you cannot prove it?” (Harrub). The responses to that question illustrate just how much bias exists in the scientific community. For example, evolutionist Richard Dawkins replied: “I believe that all life, all intelligence, all creativity and all ‘design’ anywhere in the universe, is the direct or indirect product of Darwinian natural selection. It follows that design comes late in the universe, after a period of Darwinian evolution. Design cannot precede evolution and therefore cannot underlie the universe” (qtd. in Harrub).

There you have it, bias in its most basic form. And this bias is shaping what is being taught and accepted as scientific fact. If a scientist such as Richard Dawkins is already convinced that Darwinian evolution is scientific fact (in spite of the fact that he cannot prove it), then every conclusion he’ll come to will favor his convictions. When someone like this

sets out to study the origins of the earth, they'll be looking at the evidences that they have available to them through tinted glasses. If the evidence does not support their biases, then it is simply discarded.

In November 1999, *National Geographic* published an article that claimed the missing link between dinosaurs and birds had at last been found. The fossil, named *Archaeoraptor liaoningensis*, was discovered at Xiasanjiazi, China. This discovery was monumental, as no "missing link" showing a connection between two animal species had ever been discovered.

Not everyone in the scientific community agreed with *National Geographic's* conclusion, however. Dr. Storrs L. Olson, the eminent curator of birds at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, was one of those who disagreed. He expressed his disagreement with the magazine prior to the article being published. However, as Dr. Olson put it, "it eventually became clear to me that National Geographic was not interested in anything other than the prevailing dogma that birds evolved from dinosaurs" (qtd. in Thompson, "National Geographic. . ."). And so the article was published.

As it turns out, the fossil was nothing more than an elaborate hoax. National Geographic was more concerned with supporting the popular theories of the scientific community than it was with the facts. Their bias led them to a false conclusion. The scientific community will continue to be embarrassed by false conclusions because of the biases that exist within it.

### **Pseudo-Science at Work:**

Perhaps the greatest illustration of pseudo-science (as it pertains to Christians) can be found in the arguments regarding the great flood. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence supporting the Biblical account of the great flood (Gen. 6-9). Unfortunately, it is not within the scope of this discussion to detail those evidences. Anyone interested should look to [www.apologeticspress.org](http://www.apologeticspress.org), and [www.christiancourier.com](http://www.christiancourier.com) for further resources.

What we do need to be concerned about is how the scientific community has dealt with these evidences. Because they are so biased against the Bible and any ‘supernatural’ accounts contained therein, any evidence that is brought to light that might support those accounts is automatically either disregarded or manipulated.

In 1999 the National Geographic Institute commissioned Robert Ballard, who was responsible for the discovery of the Titanic, to look for evidence of a great flood in the Black Sea. What his team of researchers found was an ancient beach, 550 feet below the surface of the Red Sea! Evidently, at one time the Black Sea was actually a fresh water lake. That is, until a great flood turned it into a sea. This lends support to the Biblical account of a world-wide flood, right? Not according to many scientists. The theory that they instead came up with was that of a severe localized flood.

Just a few weeks ago the National Geographic Channel (I’m not purposely picking on National Geographic) began airing a special they called “The Ultimate Survivor”. The intent of the program was to take another look at the evolution of man in light of recent scientific thought. One thought in particular caught my attention. Apparently, through the study of human D.N.A., scientists have discovered that at some point in our past, the human population was reduced to just a few people because of a cataclysmic event that changed the face of the entire earth. What was this great catastrophe? A flood, right? Wrong. According to them it could have been either a volcano, or an earthquake, or a meteor. Anything but a flood!

These are just two examples of what pseudo-science is all about. These two finds should have led scientists to the conclusion that the Bible was right all along: there was indeed a world-wide flood. But because of ignorance, arrogance, and bias, the scientific community has once again become pseudo-scientific.

### **Relentless Attacks:**

So why do Christians need to be worried about the false claims that are being made by the scientific community? Simple. We're under attack. Much of these claims are in direct conflict with our most basic convictions. Pseudo-science has its crosshairs set firmly on the Christian faith.

At the heart of this entire conflict is the theory of Darwinian evolution. This is the theory most widely held to today by the scientific community. The problem is, it's not compatible with the Biblical account of creation. And so a war is raging between those who find no place for God in discussions of the origin of our universe, and those who see God as the ultimate creator of our universe.

In spite of the fact that Darwinian evolution is just a theory, it is widely being taught as fact. Our young people today are in classrooms where the religion of evolution is being taught as fact, but where creationism cannot even be mentioned. This is having an enormous impact on their faith. Bert Thompson has stated:

In our day and age, young people often are subjected to what may well represent one of the greatest possible threats to their faith—the challenge of the conflict between evolutionary geology and the Word of God. The simple fact of the matter is that it is impossible to correlate the Bible with evolutionary geology, even though there have been those who have attempted such a compromise. As our youngsters study under those who delight in ridiculing the Flood account, or who attempt to effect a compromise of evolutionary thinking with the biblical record, this challenge to their faith will become all the more real (In Defense of the Genesis Flood Part II).

Our young people aren't the only ones who are feeling the pressure of the pseudo-scientific community. All of us do to some degree. And this pressure has led some to doubt the accuracy of the Scriptures. John Morris wrote concerning this dilemma:

Unfortunately, many others now have begun to judge Scripture's accuracy by its agreement with scientific dogma, and then to distort Scripture until the two seem

to agree. In doing so, scientific opinions of some scientists are elevated to a level they don't deserve, and Scripture suffers.

If such a method of interpreting Scripture is followed throughout, other doctrines will fall also. After all, miracles are "scientifically" impossible. Scientists know that virgins don't give birth, men don't walk on water, and bodies don't rise from the dead. One may gain scientific credibility among the secularists by twisting Scripture to fit science, but it would be better to honor God by believing His word (1998, p. d).

### **Defense for Dummies:**

There is no doubt that the rise of pseudo-science is having a detrimental effect on the Christian faith. The question is, what are we going to do about it? Simple. We "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3). We prepare ourselves, so that we will always be ready to defend the hope that is within us (I Peter 3:15). We are at war. And if we are at war, then we need to be ready to fight. One thing we need in order to fight is ammunition. In our case there is an abundance to choose from. But before we can properly use that ammunition, there are a few things that we need to understand. First of all, we need to understand that Christianity is not science. Let me repeat that: Christianity is not science. Does that mean that there are no scientific arguments that can be made to support our faith? Not at all. What it does mean is that you cannot subject Christianity to the scientific method. Why? Because it's not a science. It's a faith. And you cannot put faith under a microscope.

Secondly, we need to understand that defending the Christian faith is simple enough that anyone can do it. We are blessed to have some brilliant men within our brotherhood that are able to hold their own with even the most highly esteemed evolutionists. But they're not the only ones that can defend our faith against the attacks of pseudo-science. You don't need a PhD in molecular biology in order to defend your faith. Even the most simple minded among us can do it. Take myself as an example. Is there anything that makes me more qualified to be

speaking on this subject than any of you? No. So why am I doing it? Because I have confidence in my God and in what He has told me to be true.

Let me give you a couple of examples of arguments that any one of you can use to defend your faith. The first (and I think the most profound) is what is commonly called the design argument. Maybe you're already familiar with this argument. It's simple. The idea is: anything that shows evidence of design must have a designer. If you were to find an elegant Swiss watch while walking through the woods, what would you determine about the origin of that watch? Would you decide that it was the product of millions of years of pure chance? Or, would you determine that it was the product of the skilled creator? Obviously you would choose the latter. Why? Because the watch shows evidence of design, and anything that shows evidence of design must have a designer.

The same logic holds true in regards to the origins of our universe. If our universe shows evidence of design, then it must have a designer. Evidence of design is found everywhere we look. This is an old argument. The psalmist used it when he wrote, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (Psalm 19:1). Paul also used it when he told the church at Rome:

. . .that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:19-20).

Just because this argument is simple does not mean that it is not effective. In fact, it is the argument that seems to get the most respect from evolutionists. Evolutionist Kenneth Miller made the following statement concerning the design argument:

Of all the arguments that have been advanced against evolution, intelligent design is the most appealing, most common, and in my view, the most effective. The reasons should be obvious. First, the argument is easy to make and easy to understand. Second, the argument appeals to the emotional sense that we, and other living things, are what we are and where we are as the conscious result of intelligent design. Third, and most telling, the argument seems strengthened by each advance in our understanding of the complexity of life (Miller 26).

It seems that even some of the most outspoken atheists and evolutionists have struggled with the idea of intelligent design. The great skeptic, David Hume, wrote: “Anatomize the eye; survey its structure and contrivance; tell me, from your own feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation. The most obvious conclusion surely is in favor of design.” (qtd. in McCord 24)

Even the great Charles Darwin himself had doubts. In his famous work, *On the Origin of Species*, he wrote:

To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree (qtd. in Wallace).

The second argument is one that can be used to discredit the theory of evolution. It has to do with genetic mutations. The subject of genetic mutations is a complicated one, but the argument is simple. Darwinian evolution relies on the theory that genetic mutations occurred at some time in the past millions of years that were so dramatic that they led to the rise of entirely new species. There are two problems with this theory.

First of all, most mutations that occur are actually harmful to the existence of a species. Take for example albinism. Many species of animals very rarely display this genetic mutation.

This can actually make it much more difficult for that animal to survive. Many animals rely on very effective camouflage for protection from predators. An albino animal loses this protection. In fact, what they now possess is a great big target saying “EAT ME”, because their coloration will draw so much attention to them. So if mutations are typically negative, how could these mutations have been passed on to further generations to begin with?

Secondly, there is no such thing as tran-species mutation. In other words, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that a mutation could ever be dramatic enough to lead to the rise of a new species. A cat might be born with a severe mutation, but even if that cat were to reproduce, the offspring would still be cats. No matter what kind of mutation a cat might display, it will never produce a gerbil, or a fish, or a platypus; just more cats. Man has been selectively breeding dogs for thousands of years, but we have never managed to produce anything but dogs.

Evolutionists have been searching in vain for what is commonly referred to as “the missing link”. Do you know how it got this name? Because it’s missing. There is no such thing. One species cannot mutate into another. And because this cannot happen, Darwinian evolution is proven to be false.

### **Conclusion:**

We have plenty of ammunition to use against pseudo-science, but there’s one thing we still lack: soldiers. We need men and women who are bold enough, courageous enough, and zealous enough to use that ammunition against the enemy.

The effects of pseudo-science on the Christian faith cannot be denied. Those effects can be reversed, however. If people like you and me will start standing up to the ignorance, arrogance, and bias that is so rampant today among many in the scientific community, a

change will be seen.

In Acts chapter seventeen the apostle Paul stood on Mars Hill and preached to the intellectual elite of his day. What he told them was contrary to everything that they held to be true. His message was simple: there is one God, He is the creator of everything, and He will judge us one day through the resurrected Christ. What Paul did that day took more courage than we might realize. Paul preached that sermon because he had confidence in the God that he served. We need to have that same confidence.

There is a God. He is the creator of this universe and everything in it. Amen.

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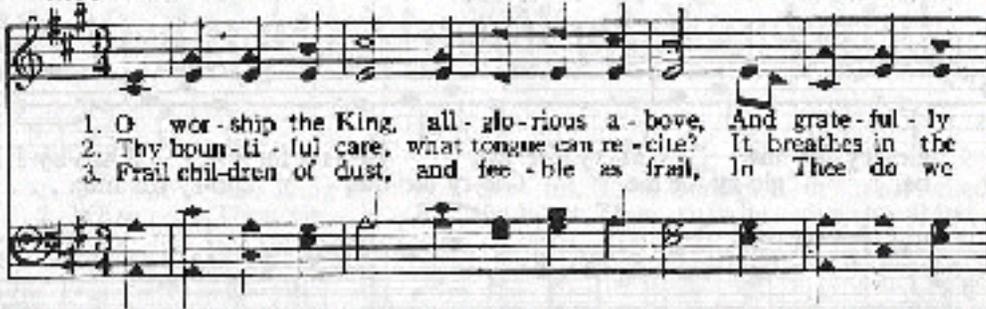
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## O Worship the King

Robert Grant

(Lyrics)

J. Michael Haydn



1. O wor-ship the King, all-glo-ri-ous a-bove, And grate-ful-ly  
 2. Thy boun-ti-ful care, what tongue can re-cite? It breathes in the  
 3. Frail chil-dren of dust, and fee-ble as frail, In Thee do we



sing His won-der-ful love; Our Shield and De-fend-er, the  
 air, it shines in the light; It streams from the hills, it de-  
 trust, not find Thee to fail; Thy mer-cies, how ten-der! how



An-cient of Days, Pa-vil-ioned in splen-dor and gird-ed with praise.  
 scends to the plain, And sweet-ly dis-tills in the dew and the rain.  
 firm to the end! Our Mak-er, De-fend-er, Re-deem-er, and Friend!



# Challenge to Living the Christian Life: False Teachers: Attack from Within

Minnesota Bible Lectureship

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## I. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THOSE WHO ARE FALSE THROUGH EITHER HOLDING OR TEACHING FALSE DOCTRINE.

A. The writings of the New Covenant say so.

1. Jesus said there would be those who teach it.

Matthew 24:24 - For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance.

2. Peter said there would be those who teach it.

2 Peter 2:1 - But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

3. Jude said there would be those who teach it.

Jude 17-19 - But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

4. Paul said there would be those who follow it.

1 Timothy 4:1 - But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

B. Why are these people intentionally/unintentionally teaching or believing falsely?

1. They have desires they want to fulfill.

2 Timothy 4:3 - For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

2. They are greedy.

2 Peter 2:1-3 - But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

3. They just want to believe certain things.

2 Timothy 2:16-18 - But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.

4. They want their ears tickled.

2 Timothy 4:3 - For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

5. They want power.

2 Corinthians 11:12 - But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

6. They do not love the truth and take pleasure in wickedness.

2 Thess. 2:8-12 - And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

7. They do not study enough and a plethora of other reasons (2 Timothy 3:1-7)

8. They may believe in another deity (Jeremiah 23:25-28)

C. What will they be called? Judge for yourself whether it is a title or more of a description.

1. False Christs & False Prophets.

Matthew 24:24 - For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance.

2. False Teachers.

2 Peter 2:1 - But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

3. False Witnesses

1 Corinthians 15:12-16 - Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;

4. False Apostles & Deceitful Workers.

2 Corinthians 11:12-14 - But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

5. Evil Men & Imposters

2 Timothy 3:13-14 - But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them;

Revelation 2:2 - I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil

men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

6. **Rebellious Men, Empty Talkers, & Deceivers** (Titus 1:10-14)
  7. **False Brethren** (Galatians 2:3-5)
  8. **Evil workers, false circumcision, dogs** (Philippians 3:1-3)
  9. **Sometimes they will be give a special personal name.** (Jeremiah 20:1-6 )
- D. **Most of the time they are just described as doing something falsely.**
1. **Professing that which is wrong and going astray.**  
1 Timothy 6:20-21 - O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"-- which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.
  2. **Having lied.**  
Jeremiah 5:11-12 - For the house of Israel and the house of Judah Have dealt very treacherously with Me," declares the Lord. They have lied about the Lord And said, "Not He; Misfortune will not come on us; And we will not see sword or famine. And the prophets are as wind, And the word is not in them.
  3. **Prophesying falsely**  
Jeremiah 5:30-31 - An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?
  4. **Prophesying falsehood**  
Jeremiah 14:13-14 - But, "Ah, Lord God!" I said, "Look, the prophets are telling them, 'You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.'" Then the Lord said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.
  5. **Paying attention to myths & teaching strange doctrine.**  
1 Timothy 1:3-7 - As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.
  6. **Having others join them in hypocrisy.**  
Galatians 2:11-13 - But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy
  7. **Binding too much on the brethren.**  
Acts 15:1 - And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."
  8. **Causing hindrances and dissensions because of their teaching.**  
Romans 16:17-18 - Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are

slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

9. Allowing immorality and other evils to occur. (Jeremiah 23:14)

E. False teachers/brethren can only be discovered through a scriptural examination.

1. How can one tell another is dishonest if that other is convinced they are honest?

a. They probably see that their way is right, but they may be lying to themselves.

Proverbs 21:2 - Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts.

(1. Do you think the inhabitants of Jerusalem wanted to be wrong so to lose the land?

(2. People have a great ability to fool themselves.

b. The Lord said they may be deceived, that is, they may not even know they are false.

Titus 3:13 - But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

c. They may also be deluded.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 - And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

(1. If one is deluded how could they even give off body signals about being wrong?

(2. If one is deceived themselves, they could probably pass a lie detector test.

d. Their conscience may be seared, as to not be able to tell.

1 Tim. 4:1-3 - But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

e. They may have a "double heart."

Psalms 12:2 - They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.

f. They have seen a false vision, or are being used by the Lord for another purpose.

(1. God may be testing us.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 - "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Lamentation 2:14 - Your prophets have seen for you False and foolish visions; And they have not exposed your iniquity So as to restore you from captivity, But they have seen for you false and misleading oracles.

(2. This person actually sees visions from God.

(3. They may be working from the futility in their minds, hoping it's true.

g. Who can contend with the concept that people can be sincere, but sincerely wrong?

(1. Paul, though preaching falsely, lived in good conscience.

Acts 23:1 - And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life

with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day."

- (2. Paul told the Romans that the Jews did have a zeal for God, but it was not in accordance to knowledge.

Romans 10:2 - For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

2. Therefore it will be impossible for their appearance to always reveal who they truly are.

- a. The Lord even said that they would appear as angels of light.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 - For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

(1. Would you think an angel of light was trying to get you to hell?

(2. Is the goal of these men to go to hell themselves?

(3. If someone is disguised is not their true appearance hard to ascertain?

- b. He said they could be disguised.

Matthew 7:15 - Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

(1. Why say, "Beware" if they are easily observed?

(2. What is "sheep's clothing" going to look like?

(3. Do you think they will have an "FP" stamped onto their forehead?

(4. Will they not appear sincere?

- c. The only reason God told us to test the spirits is because it's not obvious.

1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Revelation 2:2 - I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

(1. Why would we have to test if a false teacher's bad character would be obvious?

(2. Would one then test by looking at character?

- d. The people actually loved what these false people had to say.

Jeremiah 5:30-31 - An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?

(1. Again, where is the detection by bad character?

(2. Why would people love what they say if they detected their motivation was impure?

- e. They fool families to the point that they allow them to be entirely upset.

Titus 1:10-14 - For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. For this cause reprove them severely that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

(1. **Wouldn't the people detect foul play if it was obvious?**

(2. **The problem is that they give a lot of truth too.**

- (3. Do you think teachers and shepherds are above this type of action today?
- (4. For example, do you think it is sordid gain when a shepherd won't discipline a person living in adultery because the contribution will drop?
- f. Their behavior is such that ALL people will speak well of them.  
 Luke 6:26 - Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets.  
 Romans 16:17-18 - Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
- (1. Why would you speak well of greedy, deceptive, and ignorant men who are obviously trying to take you to hell? It must not be obvious.
- (2. Again, if it is possible for ALL men to speak well of them their detection must be quite difficult at times.
- (3. Why would you feel bad about someone who speaks nice about you?
- g. Their work ethic in preaching and teaching may be wonderful.  
 Matthew 7:20-23 - So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'
- (1. They probably will be calling Jesus Lord.
- (2. They will probably be very active for what they perceive to be right.
- h. They may be people that you know and trust in the church.
- (1. Did Cephas and Barnabas look "lost" when they quit eating with Gentiles?
- (2. Was Hymenaeus teaching the resurrection already took place because he no longer believed in the Lord and his goal was to go to hell and take others with him?
- (3. **Did those binding circumcision appear to hate the Law God gave?**
- i. Therefore the following chart is applicable.  
 John 7:24 - Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.
- | APPEARANCE                      | ACTUAL SITUATION                             |
|---------------------------------|--|
| (1. Angels of Light.            | (1. Messengers of Satan                      |
| (2. Sincere Prophets & Teachers | (2. False Prophets & Teachers.               |
| (3. Knowledgeable               | (3. Deceived                                 |
| (4. Confident                   | (4. Asserting error                          |
| (5. Lovers of God               | (5. Lovers of men, self, money, or the flesh |
| (6. Fearful of God              | (6. Fearful of Men                           |
| (7. Doing God's will            | (7. Doing PART of God's will.                |
| (8. Friendly & Comforting       | (8. Enemies & Destructive                    |
| (9. Zealous for God             | (9. Zealous for God & Satan (unknowingly)    |

- (10. Compromising for the good                      (10. Compromising the truth.
- j. Plus, we're told that we cannot always know the thoughts of another.  
 1 Corinthians 2:11- For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.
4. The Scriptural examination will be of examining their fruits, which will also include the actual teachings.
- 1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.  
 Matthew 7:15-16 - Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they?
- a. One must keep an open eye and judge by the teachings and its fruit since their work ethic may be very good.  
 Matthew 7:21-23 - Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'  
 Romans 16:17 - Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.
- (1. **Notice they weren't told to watch out for their poor characters.**  
 (2. **Instead they were to look at the objectively discovered contrary teachings.**
- b. **What are their fruits like?**  
 (1. **Are they replicating people who are heretics in doctrine just like themselves?**  
 (2. **Are they reproducing people who are then lost in unscriptural behavior (e.g. adultery)?**
- c. We rarely get to judge false teachers by their bad character.  
 (1. Their false teaching also judges their character.  
 (2. The Scripture reveals to us what is going on their minds since we often cannot see it.  
 Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.  
 (3. The Scripture will also have to be the ultimate judge.(Jeremiah 23:25-28)

## II. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FELLOWSHIP FALSE DOCTRINE.

A. How can one keep an infection that must be removed in order to survive?

1. Their talk will spread like gangrene  
 2 Tim. 2:16-17 - But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,
  - a. What is worse than gangrene?
  - b. ILL - Some still to pour maggots on gangrene and let them eat. Once there is a good supply of blood running out of the wound then they knew the maggots had made it through to living flesh and then they remove them.

c. It's like dealing with false teachers. It is a nasty business where many people are hurting.  
But the alternate of tolerating and doing nothing is even worse.

2. It leads to the infection of quarrels

2 Timothy 2:23 - But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

3. Precious time has to be spent in prevention of this disease.

2 John 9-11 - Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

B. It condemns people to hell.

1. To those who believe it.

2 Timothy 2:14 - Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

2 Timothy 2:23-26 - But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

a. What is the result of being ruined spiritually and being being in the Devil's snare?

b. Will heaven be the result when we are the Devil's captive and doing his will?

2. To those who teach it.

1 Tim. 1:18-20 - This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme

2 Peter 2:1-3 - But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

a. What is the result of a shipwreck and blaspheming?

b. If one has been delivered to Satan, can they be saved unless they repent?

### III. WHAT LEVEL OF UNITY MUST WE HAVE IN DOCTRINE?

A. There is no list that gives THE teachings we must agree on.

1. As previously stated, if anyone taught anything wrong it was dealt with.

2. Why would we assume we can believe different doctrines and be in fellowship?

a. Christians are commanded to not allow different doctrines.

b. Practically it does not work either.

(1. Imagine if only one of two persons thinks instrumental praise music to God is wrong?

(2. How could they ever fellowship without compromising their faith?

(3. One would think the other is tolerating sin, and the other that someone's playing God.

- c. Agreeing to disagree is also inconsistent since there is at least one thing everybody would require somebody else to believe in to be in fellowship with them.
- B. The church was to strive to be of one mind.
- 1. This is how it started out.  
Acts 2:46 - And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,
  - 2. When there was a difference they met together to make it that way (Acts 15:24-25)
  - 3. This is what was preached to all the churches.  
Philippians 1:27 - Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
  - 4. Entire letters were sent because of this problem.  
1 Corinthians 1:10 - Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- C. However, practically, pure unity in doctrine is more of a process than an eventual realization.
- 1. This is especially true concerning people of biblical times.
    - a. Inspiration was constantly updating and adding truth.
    - b. It is a fact more was expected of the Gentiles beyond only the four essentials given at the Jerusalem council. We know that because we have read all of the hundreds of extra commands in the all the eventual epistles sent to the Gentile churches.
  - 2. There is absolutely no two on earth that believe exactly the same due to various circumstances.
    - a. There is a different degree concerning quantity of knowledge between individuals.
    - b. There is a differing degree of shared knowledge between individuals, that is, they may never discover they believe differently since all things cannot be brought up.
  - 3. However, these cannot be used as excuses to not deal with things we knowingly disagree with.
    - a. Once differences are discovered brothers must work hard to be of one mind.
    - b. They will have to be diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.
    - c. When they do this both will come to a more accurate knowledge of the truth.
    - d. Actually, ignorance increases when people agree to disagree because they're never forced to study anything.
- D. Therefore, there will still be fellowship between brethren with differing beliefs in certain circumstances.
- 1. WEAKER FAITH - One area that is allowed in Scripture is when one brother does not have enough faith yet to allow it and therefore makes life tougher on himself.  
Romans 14:1-3 - Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him.
    - a. This man's conscious will not allow him to eat meat though in fact he could.  
1 Corinthians 8:4-7 - Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know

that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

b. This is not to say, that he could bind his weak opinion on others.

## 2. LESSER FAITH

Hebrews 10:26 - For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

a. There are individuals who have never received any sound teaching in a particular area.

b. There is a period of grace for them since one has to learn to crawl before walking.

c. We do not know how long this period of grace extends.

## 3. LIMITED FAITH

a. There are matters where we have limited revelation concerning an issue.

(1. In Corinth the woman is to have a covering on her head because of the angels.

(2. All we can do is make guesses as to the covering and the reason.

(3. We should not split over what we cannot decipher at this time.

b. Therefore we form opinions and perhaps guess at what is the truth on an issue.

c. We often call these “matters of opinion.”

(1. But, in truth, God does know the answer, so it is actually not a matter of opinion.

(2. We either have a situation of limited revelation or we have failed due to ignorance.

## 4. DIFFERING DEGREES OF FELLOWSHIP

a. The strongest degree of fellowship, signified by all of the commands for doctrinal unity, are for the local congregation.

(1. Is there a command or way for the entire brotherhood to be purely of one mind?

(2. It would practically be impossible to do so.

(3. We have to agree more because we work together on a daily basis.

b. A lesser degree would be with congregations we work with on an occasional basis.

(1. The level of doctrinal unity will probably depend upon contingencies of what work is being shared.

(2. The more people get to know one another the more they will share information.

c. Lesser yet is with those that just stop by for a visit.

(1. Will we give them a doctrinal questionnaire before we give them a handshake?

(2. Our times are different than New Testament times.

(a. People can travel across the country in a few hours and interact far more as visitors.

(b. People back then usually came to a place to stay at least for an extended period of time, and therefore made time for necessary sharing & testing since there was potential for greater fellowship.

(3. However, that is not to say someone won't be known for teaching a false doctrine. We should not receive such a one.

- E. What will the end result be with these truths concerning fellowship?
1. Birds of a feather will flock together.
    - a. Only people of like minds will end up together.
    - b. This is the exact situation today.
  2. God will sort it all out in the end.
    - a. Those who stand on what they believe will be judged by God for that.
      - (1. They will be judged by various standards.
        - (a. The Word
        - (b. Their own standard of measure.
        - (c. The circumstances in which they lived.
      - (2. If they are wrong then they will reap what they have sown.
      - (3. If they loved the truth and stood on it they will inherit eternal life.
    - b. Those who do not stand on what they believe, but compromise teachings for the sake of unity are in a no-win situation.
      - (1. They will be condemned for not standing up for doctrine.
      - (2. They will be condemned for holding that false doctrine.

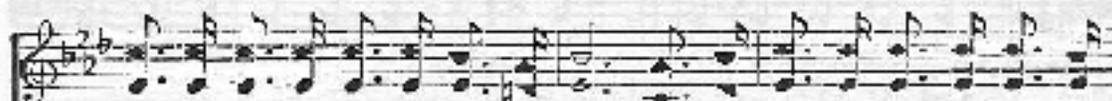
# When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder 254

I. M. B.

J. M. Black



1. When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, And the  
 2. On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise, And the  
 3. Let us la - bor for the Mas - ter from the dawn till set - ting sun, Let us



morning breaks e - ter - nal, bright and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather  
 glo - ry of His res - ur - rection share; When His cho - sen ones shall gather  
 talk of all His wondrous love and care; Then when all of life is o - ver



o - ver on the oth - er shore, And the roll is called up yon - der, I'll be there,  
 to their home beyond the skies, And the roll is called up yon - der, I'll be there,  
 and our work on earth is done, And the roll is called up yon - der, I'll be there.

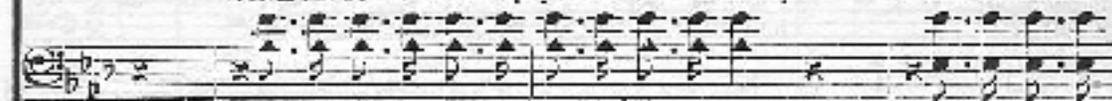


*D. S.—roll is called up yon - der, I'll be there.*

## Chorus



When the roll . . . . . is called up yon - - - der, When the roll . . . . . is  
 When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there, When the roll is



called up yon - - - der, When the roll . . . . . is called up yon - der, When the  
 called up yonder I'll be there, When the roll is called up yon - der,



## There's a Fountain Free

Mrs. M. B. C. Elada

Dr. A. B. Everell



1. There's a foun-tain free, 'tis for you and me: Let us haste, O haste to its brink;
2. There's a liv-ing stream, with a crystal gleam: From the throne of life now it flows;
3. There's a rock that's cleft and no soul is left, That may not its pure wa-ters share;



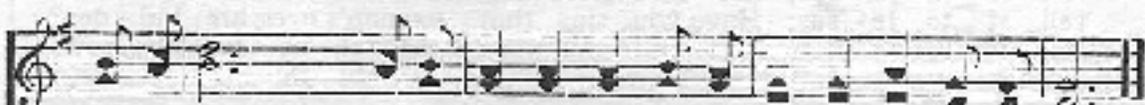
'Tis the fount of love from the Source-a-bove, And He bids us all free-ly drink.  
While the wa-ters roll let the wea-ry soul Hear the call that forth free-ly goes.  
'Tis for you and me, and its stream I see: Let us has-ten joy-ful-ly there.



## Chorus



Will you come to the foun-tain free? Will you come? 'tis for you and me:  
Will you come, Will you come,



Thirst-y soul, hear the wel-come call: 'Tis a foun-tain o-pened for all.  
Thirst-y soul,



# 255 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.—Prov. 18: 24

Joseph Seivon, 1855

Charles C. Converse, 1863



1. What a friend we have in Je - sus, All our sins and griefs to bear;  
 2. Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?  
 3. Are we weak and heav - y la - den, Cum - bered with a load of care?




What a priv - i - lege to car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!  
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged; Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
 Pre - cious Sav - iour, still our ref - uge; Take it to the Lord in prayer!




O what peace we oft - en for - feir, O what need - less pain we bear,  
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful, Who will all our sor - rows share?  
 Do thy friends de - spise, for - sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!




All be - cause we do not car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer.  
 Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness; Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a sol - ace there.

