

Son of My Wisdom



2 Chronicles 7:14 (Part 1)

I don't really know how to begin to say what God is saying to me. Perhaps wisdom dictates that we begin with a scripture.

If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

This verse speaks volumes. We could mine for gold in this scripture for six months and still not tap the "mother-load."

During a recent conversation, someone asked me how someone engages in spiritual warfare. Right then, I heard the Lord say to me, "If my people which are called by My name shall...." I don't mind telling you that I was caught off guard, momentarily. I'd never heard such a response to a "spiritual warfare" question.

Let's consider this: the pestilence in a land and the sickness of a land are not, primarily, a result of the sin of sinners. Unbelievers *have* always, and I suppose *will* always sin. They cannot be expected to do otherwise. But righteousness exalts a nation. I submit to you that it is the sin of the people who are *called by His name* that causes pestilence to be sent.

You may recall that we have been talking about Laodicea in the *Love and The Truth* column. It is a Laodicean church, more than dirty politicians, or raging criminals, or witches, or powers, or principalities, or spiritual wickedness in high places that is the cause of the darkness all around.

God's people (more than any other) determine the general wellbeing of a people; of a nation. The scriptures teach that "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice...." (Prov. 29:2) You're thinking that the only way for the righteous to be in authority is for them to have been assigned an "office" or "seat" of authority. I tend to disagree. There is "legislated or assigned" authority; then there's "inherent" authority. In the world, authority is *assigned*; whereas in the Kingdom authority is *inherent*. In the



A Journey to Intimacy

The Spirit of the Lord God is Upon Me (Part 5)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, *recovering of sight to the blind* and the opening of the prison to them that are bound....⁽¹⁾

It is the clear and genuine *proclamation of the gospel* that will open the prisons of them that are bound. By now, you will have marked the repetition of the statement or intimation: that the gospel is specifically to the meek among the brokenhearted; among the captives; among the blind and certainly among the bound.

What is meant when the scriptures identify one as "bound?" What are the prisons?

BOUND

Although He can and does do it; *rarely* does the scripture speak of God as binding a person.⁽²⁾ *Generally* the scriptural usages of the term "bound" or "to bind" (as it relates to man) are relegated to the activities of the enemy, and on occasion the activities of man. Some of the characteristics of "being bound" are that of being restricted; circumscribed; or limited (partially or completely). It speaks to an absence of liberties (whether voluntarily, on involuntarily).

For the most part the term "bound" has both negative and positive connotations associated with it. In a very real sense the concept of being "bound," with both its negative and positive employments, is needful [more on this later]. I know, that sounds peculiar, doesn't it. Well, by virtue of its finite nature, humanity has a great many boundaries; and rightfully so. We are limited, bound or circumscribed as created beings. **Sidebar:** It may serve us well to be a bit more cognizant of this reality, and respect its import.

Love and *The Truth*



Melchisedec in Laodicea - IV

We've seen in the last edition, that we as a Laodicean people, are neither cold nor hot. We have seen the current church culture as one in which we are neither willing to correct one another, and admonish to holiness; nor are we able to refresh one another. We are *not interested* in being holy; yet we *are commanded* to be holy, because our Lord is holy. ^(Lev 11:44) And it is reasonable that a servant should be as his Master.

My question to you is this: Do we really have a clue what it means to be holy? Do we care? We should. The world may be able to be dismissive about God's command to be Holy; but His Body had better not be.

Often on this point, we're like an impudent child. When we don't like what God is saying to us; we disregard it or lightly esteem it or (better) we completely ignore it.

We know what it means to be "good Christians." However, do we know what it means to be perfect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect? ^(Matt 5:48)

Does it cause our hearts to burn within us; when we see how holy these men of scripture were? Shouldn't we be asking ourselves why the gospel had such a profound effect on them, and how little it has on us?

Have we not been "floored" by the beginning of the church in the book of Acts? These were men and women of a heavenly caliber. And this is true of them, in whose veins, was the blood of Adam. Or look even further back: Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Daniel, and the Prophets. These were men of whom the Scripture says "*the world was not worthy.*" ^(Heb. 11:48) And yet we have become a generation of professing Christians, of whom *the world is not worried.* He said, "If you were **of** the world, the world would receive his own." The world has wholly received the church, with very few exceptions. This should send off alarms inside. The world hated Jesus, but it likes the church. Hhhmmm

What does Jesus say about all of this? The Laodicean problem is not simple blindness. The blind men cried out "Thou son of David, have mercy on us." ^(Matt 9:27) At least they knew that they were blind, and in desperation they sought mercy. O would to God that we Laodiceans



Boot Camp

Submission - *The Sanctification of the Soul*



Destination – Wrap Up (Season Finale)

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ⁽¹⁾

Silence is Golden

We "discussed" previously that the reality of our "following Christ," is more one of *perpetuation*, rather than *imitation*. This reality is one that allows "the Risen One" to perpetuate His obedience through us, to the glory of God the Father.

Do you remember a time when you had a cross on your back and you were directed by the Lord to endure it silently? And you did not? I can remember; I failed this test many, many times.

I was reading the trials of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew and something caught my eye (it's more the case that it caught me in the chest). When "*He [Jesus] was accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.*" Unfortunately that is not presently my testimony. I'm committed to it, though. By the grace of God, I am committed. I intend at length that this testimony of Jesus Christ will soon be my own: "But Jesus held his peace." ⁽²⁾ Prophetically, it will sound like this: "But JoAnn held her peace." I would to God that this servant should be as her Master.

Could you imagine what it would have cost *us* if Jesus had so much as mumbled even one word (*in His defense*), during his trials at Gabbatha? ⁽³⁾ It was not the case that He didn't say ANYTHING at all. For the high priest Caiaphas said to Jesus "*I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*" ⁽⁴⁾ At this point Jesus responded. But He would not say anything *in His own defense*; *He would not say anything to justify or defend Himself.* He knew that in the courts of the Most High God, there is only one "Justifier." ⁽⁵⁾ And it is *not* "the accused" (whether right or wronged). It is never the accused.

Ouch!! Who's that standing on my toes!!

Living Waters



Your Kingdom ... Your Will

While praying one afternoon, I heard the Spirit say (repeatedly), "Thy kingdom come." I replied, "Yes, Lord, Thy kingdom come, *in me*." After a number of repetitions and a number of responses, I went on to say "Thy will be done." Then I stopped, caught by my understanding (or shall I say my misunderstanding) of these words.

I said, "Father, as I understand it the phrases "Thy Kingdom come" and "Thy will be done" are essentially the same, aren't they? They are two expressions of the same reality, right? At least this was the assumption in my thinking. I asked, "Lord, what's the difference? I see the will of the King as integral to the Kingdom."

The Lord is soooo sweet. I long to walk and talk like Him. He said, "The coming of *My Kingdom* is governmental and vital. The coming of *My Will* is personal and intimate." Just here, I paused to receive the weight and gravity of what He had just said to me.

He went on, "There is a sense in which you can come under My Kingdom government, without being submitted to the governance of My will." Oh my Lord!! I felt my understanding being stretched. He said, "One can be a part of the Kingdom, and never be a part of the King." Admittedly this challenged everything that I thought I understood about the Kingdom. The Lord began to show me the many places where this truth is expounded.

Quick Note: You see this in the parable of the tares. ⁽¹⁾ It begins with "the kingdom of Heaven is like...." This lets us know that the following is describing a particular condition *within* the Kingdom. It then says that the tares were interspersed with the wheat. The wheat is in the Kingdom, so if the tares are intermingled, then the tares must also, technically, be *in* the Kingdom. However, the wheat is submitted to the governance of the will of the King; whereas the tares are not. Essentially that is what makes the difference between them, right. If any man be in Christ, he is *wheat*; for all of the old characteristics of the *tares* have passed away; and behold all things have become new. ⁽²⁾

Nutrition, Health & Wellness



My Life! ... A Vineyard?

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (Genesis 1:29)

Do you mind if I begin with a testimony? And we'll see where it leads. One morning as I was preparing for my day, I began to talk with the Lord regarding this column. I said "Father you gave me permission to include a column on nutrition, health and wellness. It seems that I have not received, from You, much on what to include in this column. I'm a bit concerned." Our Lord is so beautiful and temperate!!! As a Father does a young child, He humored me, as I stated my case (respectfully, mind you). I had finished my petition. He didn't respond immediately, so I had begun to go on with my day.

After a bit of silence, the Lord just started talking (*right in the middle of whatever was going on at the time*). He said, "The reason you hadn't really heard anything on this column is because you had a preconception of what ought to be included in a column of this type. But it's not what *I* had in mind, at all." "Oh my!" I thought.

He didn't even wait for me to respond. He led right in with this month's article. Quite simply, He blew all of my circuit boards. I wonder if you'll get the same (or a similar) effect. As I was trying to mentally "get my arms around" what He had said it appeared that it may take a couple of editions to work it out.

This amazing revelation will unfold in no particular order, across the editions. I pray that nothing is lost, of it, along the way. What the Lord shared is extremely large; my task is how to distill it into a reasonable and coherent utterance. Please, pray for me.

Choose: God or Mammon

The Doctrine of Balaam

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. ⁽¹⁾

As if we hadn't already done sufficient damage to your theology, here we go again.

I'd probably be a bit tentative if someone began our discussion with a solemn WARNING. So it's okay to be suspicious and tentative, because we are beginning this discourse with such a warning.

WARNING – the following *WILL* be hazardous to your present theological construct and predispositions. If we discharge our duty correctly, not one theological stone should be left upon another, at the end of this road (wherever that may be). Although we will be praying for a safe landing, we cannot ultimately be responsible for the outcomes.

You may recall from the *Living Waters* column in the December 2011 edition of the newsletter, the article about the church in Pergamos. The article was entitled "*Repent ... Or Else.*"

Oh, I see; you saw the title and "passed" on the opportunity to read the article. That's cool. But then you may also want to take a rain check on reading this article too.

But if you insist on reading this article, may I ask that you retrieve or collect a copy of the December 2011 edition and also read that article too? If you do not have ready access to that edition, you may get it from the archive section of www.kingdomnewsonline.com. We'd love to have you go with us on this journey. I promise that it will challenge everything you ever thought you knew about your salvation or salvation in general.

Special: What's Your Kingdom ROI?

It is my understanding that every savvy investor wants a healthy Return on Investment (ROI). And no reasonable person would refute this expectation. It seems to me that God is a Savvy Investor, don't you think? Has He not made many grand and wonderful investments in us?

Now for the hard questions: (Please allow me to personalize this portion. I don't want you to think that I'm talking about anyone else.)

What is your ROI? What does your life return to Him as a yield?

What's that question again? You're right ... you're right, I'm sorry I didn't establish a working definition for ROI to level-set the discussion. I'll do that right now. Boy, you guys are on your toes today. Oh, my bad ... those are my toes you're standing on.

For the sake of this discussion the definition for ROI is "a means by which an entity measures its profitability. Generally a calendar or a fiscal year is the period of the measurement." The process for measuring the ROI is to take the year's income and divide it by the collective debt. The ROI is a way to determine if an entity has made wise use of turning capital into profit. For the record, "capital" is what God has invested into us. "Profit" is what we return to Him, after we've paid all of our bills.

There are so many ways in which we can return to the Lord an appreciable ROI from His investments into our lives. But let's take a very quick look at one.

The scriptures say that God has given to every man a measure of "faith." ⁽¹⁾ So we see one of God's investments in us. What, pray tell, are we to do with that "one talent?" Well, I'll give you a hint of

on this subject. It was difficult for me to assess where He would go next. I'm still reeling from the music; I mean what does *One* do for an encore, in a situation like this?

(My head still swimming) I heard the Lord say *quite out of the blue* "... the trying of the fire."

I said "O-k-a-y. Father I remember that you told us that *You* are "the fire." So what then ...?" While the question is still being formulated in my mouth, the Lord (quite abruptly) says something that seems (to my fragile mind) to be altogether unrelated. He said, "I wanted to dwell among them."⁽²⁾

Can I just tell you that, right here, I was lost? I didn't know what to do with what I had just heard. But in the distance, I heard the faint voices of Israel telling Moses, "Look Moses! You and God can take your conversations to the mountain top." Trembling, they said "He doesn't have to converse with us. It's okay if He just talks to you, Moses, you can translate for us."⁽³⁾ And so we see Israel's response to the terrible and trying presence of the Living God. Very really our Lord is a consuming fire that tries the hearts of His sons and servants. And given that our hearts are desperately wicked (so says Jeremiah 17:9); the idea of dwelling in the presence of the Holy One is disconcerting.

I said, "Okay?!? But Father, aren't You also the One who asked "*can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned?*"⁽⁴⁾ Admittedly, My Lord, Your dwelling among us is quite a frightful occasion."

The Lord goes on to expose, how that He wanted to dwell among Israel. It dawned on me, that if Israel had been more accepting of God's presence among them, I'd venture to say that they would not have had the problems with idols that they incurred. The same is true for us. Israel, wanted God on the mountain top, where "Moses could go up" to meet with Him. They didn't want Him in their midst. We don't want Him in our midst either. But, if we allow God to dwell in our midst, it is extremely easy to distinguish between the true and Living God and an idol. We don't know this yet (but by God's grace, we shall); there is *something* that happens to us in the presence of the Living God. Words fail!!!!

Come; take an evening ride with me, along the coast.

As you look out over the ocean, consider this: If you

take an object and cast it into the fire; when the fire has run its course, what is left of the object? Whatever may be its remains, it is not the thing that *was*.

Fire has a way of reducing most things to their basest element; or consuming them altogether. But if we receive the refining fire of God's presence, at the least we'll be "no worse for the wear;" at the most we'll be "pure gold."⁽⁵⁾ But if we do not admit the fire of God's presence, at length we will be consumed by it nevertheless. We cannot approach the fire of God's presence and remain the same. And if you believe that you have approached Him and see within yourself that not much has changed, then I have a bridge over here that I'd like to sell to you for half a million dollars (cash only, please).

The presence of God in our midst is both a *great gift* and a *terror*. (Nehemiah 1:5)

GREAT GIFT

Here are just two of the pleasantries of God's presence among us.

1) Daddy's home ... If a son shall ask bread, or a fish, or an egg of any of you that is a father, would he give him a stone, or a serpent or a scorpion? Probably not. If you then (being evil) know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?

⁽⁶⁾ Now that is certainly one wonderful reality of God's presence. Another is that

2) The Great Warrior is resident with us, in the time of trouble. That's good because our enemies become His enemies. And we know what He's going to do to His enemies (don't we); make them His footstool.⁽⁷⁾ As our resident Warrior, He says to us "You shall not need to fight in this battle; just *suit up and show up*. I got this!!"⁽⁸⁾

We see the love and protection of God's presence with us. But as there are always two sides to every coin; this coin is no different. The head of the coin is the *love* of God; the tail of that same coin is the *terror* of God. We so delight in the love of God, and would rather circumvent the terror of God; just like our big brother Israel. Unfortunately, you cannot have the one without the other. There is no schism in God, He is a balanced Unity: both Alpha and Omega. He both "loves" and "hates." He is both "good" and "terrible." But here's the interesting thing: "rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Is it your desire to not live in fear of the terror of God? Then do that which is good, and you

shall have praise of the same."⁽⁹⁾

TERROR

Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.⁽¹⁰⁾ And knowing the terror of God we ought ourselves also to be persuaded. Now, when we speak of terror we are not expressing or implying that God is mean and unapproachable. We're simply saying that His back is turned to all that is dishonorable; all that is offensive; to all that is antagonistic to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. For such are many of the attributes and areas of our lives. And this departure of ours, from the upright ways of God; provokes in us a terror of the purity of His presence. A criminal is not interested in tarrying in the presence of an omniscient Judge. And that's just *my* personal testimony.

Again, these two (gift & terror) are heads and tails of the same coin. Then you get those things that look like *gifts* but they have the attribute of *terror* present. Like when He says "No good thing will I withhold from them that walk upright before Me." It's that type of present you open (and start jumping up and down) while you're still pulling the wrapper off of the box; but when you see the gift in the light, you find that it's not quite what you thought. The "no good thing will I withhold from them..." is the first part that comes out of the box. Yaahhh!!!! Then out comes the bill "...that walk upright before Me." Aaahhhh, You had to go there.

The challenge is that we like to *dance*; we just have a problem when it comes to *paying the piper*.

God tabernacling among us; God's sovereign rule over us is what we're asking for when we say "Thy Kingdom come..."⁽¹¹⁾

God intended with Israel (and intends with us) to humble our hearts by His consuming presence; and to prove our character by His Word. Time and chance (or tests and trials) can try us; but their effects are esoteric (and can be transient); whereas the effects of the Word and presence of the Living God, are intimate and profound. Tests and trials can certainly change what we *do*; but dwelling in the secret place of the Most High will change who we *become*. It is by this that we lay up for ourselves heavenly treasures. These treasures are *IN* us. They are not simply in our possession (as is the case with treasures of another Kingdom).

Sidebar: Oh great, the light is red. As we pause momentarily at this intersection, allow me to answer a question (perhaps even before it is

formed in your mind). If it's not presently there, it may soon come. So let me get a running start on the answer(s).

Question: "JoAnn, are you saying to me that as a child of God, I cannot possess earthly treasures?" W-e-l-l ... If you allow me to reframe the question I can answer it better. If your question is: "As a child of God, is it possible for me to have access to earthly resources?" You see, for the child of God, there is only One "treasure" – His name is Jesus⁽¹²⁾ everything else is a "resource" ... EVERYTHING else. A "resource" is a means to an end; whereas a "treasure" is the end. It is itself the object of the pursuit. The question now being properly framed, the answer is, "Emphatically yes! Did not our Lord make wonderful use of earthly resources?⁽¹³⁾ Two fish, and five loaves of bread⁽¹⁴⁾ ... boats on tempestuous seas⁽¹⁵⁾ ... Judas⁽¹⁶⁾ ... the whips of Roman soldiers⁽¹⁷⁾ ... a cross and a crown..."⁽¹⁸⁾ Did He care to have many of these in His possession? Not really, because He knew that they were simply a "payday loan." At the end of the day, we must give them back with interest or opportunity costs. [*One day we'll talk more about this, God willing.*] And so it is with the one who lays up treasures for himself, but is not rich towards God.⁽¹⁹⁾

So when our Lord counsels us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire (among other things), perhaps He's offering us an opportunity to exchange our hearts and our works (wood, hay and stubble) for pure gold that has been proven by both the Word and the Presence of the Living God.

Whew!!! That was an interesting journey (I'm still shaken from the ride). I would really like to tell you what the Lord will share with us next month. But it seems that it is not for me to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power.⁽²⁰⁾

Until then, I bid you God's best. <ccc>

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Revelation 3:14-19

⁽²⁾ Exodus 29:45-46; Deuteronomy 12:10-11

- (3) Exodus 20:18-20
 (4) Proverbs 6:27
 (5) Job 23:10; Zechariah 13:9
 (6) Matthew 7:11; Luke 11:11-13
 (7) Matthew 22:44; Luke 1:71; Numbers 10:9
 (8) 2 Chronicles 20:17
 (9) Romans 13:3; Genesis 4:7
 (10) 2 Corinthians 5:11
 (11) Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2
 (12) Song of Solomon 3:1-4; Acts 17:27
 (13) 1 Corinthians 7:31
 (14) Luke 9:16
 (15) Mark 4:37-39
 (16) Luke 22:22; John 18:4; Mark 8:31
 (17) Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 27:26
 (18) Colossians 1:20
 (19) Luke 12:21
 (20) Acts 1:7

Psalm 33:8-18

8 - Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 - For he spoke and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 - The LORD brings the counsel of the heathen to nought; he makes the devices of the people of none effect.

11 - The counsel of the LORD stands for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

12 - Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13 - The LORD looks from heaven; he beholds all the sons of men.

14 - From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 - He fashions their hearts alike; he considers all their works.

16 - There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 - A horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

18 - Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

friends, co-workers, strangers, and so on). Sometimes we, as believers, behave as if there are people we don't have to love.

I've heard Christians say things like, "he made me curse him out" or "I had a right to get angry at her and do what I did." Of course, there are situations that may irritate us. At the same time, Christians are called to model love in its highest form. This means unconditionally.

Before we dive in too deeply, let's lay a quick foundation. We are not saying that when we exhibit love toward people, we excuse inappropriate behavior. We do not. We hold people (starting with ourselves) accountable to engage in a positive manner.

With that said, there is a way to interact with all people exhibiting the unconditional love of God. How do we do this? I was holding my breath waiting for you to ask!

Let's take a look at a pattern that has been laid for us to follow. Romans 5:8 says, "*God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (KJV paraphrased). It's interesting to note that God made us. He allowed us to pull away from Him. He sent His Son to redeem us (when we were not even thinking about Him), and He continues to show His love for all people (whether we want Him or not.)

This is really a powerful concept to consider. We know that the plan of redemption was actually made before creation. God redeemed us before He made us. He knew we would leave Him, and He made it possible for anyone to come back into fellowship with Him if they choose to.

Now, while you are chewing on that, add this piece. God loves sinners equally as much as He loves Christians. People who will never choose God are covered by His love. Murderers, thieves, child abusers, rapists, domestic violence perpetrators, and anyone else we can think of are covered by God's love.

Is it challenging to swallow what I just gave you? Well, let's go back to our verse in Romans 5. The scripture did not say Christ died only for people who plan to get saved. Christ died for humanity (whether we choose Him or not). The scripture goes on to say that it was because of God's love for humanity that He sent His son.

God’s love for humanity has NOTHING to do with our behavior. God loves us because of who He is, not because of who we are or how we behave. The two are completely separate.

Notice, however, we did not say sinners will be excused for their behavior. This, too, is a separate issue related to judgment. God created laws (or principles) that govern human behavior. He laid out how these laws apply to us. In Deuteronomy the 28th chapter, God meticulously spells out how His law interacts with humanity.

God teaches us that if we choose to follow the principles He lays out for us, our outcomes (and those of our family and community) will be positive. He goes on to share that if we choose to ignore or violate His laws, we will bring to ourselves, our families, and our communities negative outcomes.

Because of God’s love for us, He has shown us how to bring about the kinds of outcomes that will be beneficial. And whether or not we choose His way, He never withdraws His love from us. Yet, He holds us accountable for our choices and actions.

Now, let’s get back to the new traditions we are about to start.

We discussed taking the month of February to review scriptures related to love. You can do this simply by searching for “scriptures related to love” on the Internet. I did this and it works. Then, we would determine (with our loved ones) how we can intentionally apply these truths in our relationships.

If we will start with our family and friends, then we can expand to others in our community. So many people are hurting and disenfranchised because there is a lack of true love. Families engage in abusive behaviors. People can’t seem to get along at work. Sitting in traffic a person could lose his or her life due to road rage. Why? There is an epidemic of false or empty love.

I encourage each person to do some soul searching this month. How can each of us model the God-kind-of-love in our personal worlds? This is the kind of love that brings positive outcomes. It’s love that never fails, even as we hold people accountable for their inappropriate actions.

- The God-love says to a child, “You have

violated a house rule and you are responsible to bear the consequences we discussed. Know that I still love you.”

- The God-love says to a spouse, “When you spent more money than what we agreed on, I felt like you didn’t care about the agreement we made to stick to a budget. Still, I want to understand your reasons for making the decision you did. I want us to work through this.”
- The God-love says to an employee, “I realize it’s been a challenge for you to be on time for work while your child has been ill. However, I’m responsible to ensure we are able to meet our commitments as a company. I’m willing to discuss a temporary plan to see what will work for everyone involved, if possible.”
- The God-love says to a friend, “I’m sorry for letting you down because we did have an agreement, here is what happened. Is there any way I can be of help now?”

Are you starting to see a pattern? We take responsibility for our behavior and we deal with the behavior of others “in love” and with respect. And, we hold people (starting with ourselves) accountable for their choices and actions.

Celebrating love with a new tradition of committing to true love and accountability will take us farther than roses or chocolates ever could.

Be blessed! [LL]

Joyce White, LMSW

Q&A

Question:

What relationship does St. John 3:16 have with 1 John 2:16?

Answer:

It is a prime case of the parent telling the child: "Do what I say, and not what I do."

For God so loved the world, but you had better not.

- JoAnn C. White (1/10/12 <> 8:25PM MT)

Kingdom, authority is a natural endowment of godly character, which is a natural outcome of obedience. But when the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All his righteousness that he has done shall not be mentioned. (Ezek. 18:24)

The other thing I see here in this scripture is that the three things that God said he would do are a package deal. They work together.

It is evident that if He isn't healing our land, He is neither forgiving our sin, nor hearing from heaven in any substantial measure. The heavens are largely brass, over a Laodicean nation.

Our Lord has been gracious, He has given the remedy: humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways. As we go, we will begin to see what the Lord means by that.

In the meantime, feel free to send questions and comments to kingdomnewsletter@yahoo.com. You can even send them in ALL CAPS, if you like (smiling). We'd love to hear from you.

Let's begin to see what God is calling us to. Yes, it is frightening; yes it is daunting. But what are our alternatives; where else would we go? He has the words of eternal life. -SOMW-

May the God of peace, Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen. (Heb. 13:20-21)

David L. White

CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.
Proverb 28:13

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9

Here we return to the negative and positive employments of being "bound." A negative employment of *bondage* is "imprisonment." A positive employment of *bondage* is a "law" (i.e., statutes, ordinances, principles, etc.). And both of these employments are needful, in more ways than we could imagine.

- The positive employments of bondage can keep us from *being* harmed. A baby, when it first learns to walk, should be *bound* or *circumscribed* for safety sake.
- The negative employments of bondage can keep us from *doing* harm. One who is a "menace to society" ought to be *bound* or imprisoned (at least that's my opinion).

We mentioned that a law was a positive employment of bondage. Let's look at a dynamic regarding *law*. There are potentially two vital attributes to laws that we should be somewhat familiar with.

- There is an attribute of law where compliance is *strongly encouraged*.
- There is another attribute of law where compliance is *imposed*.

While obeying the traffic laws is *strongly encouraged* and advisable, it can be a costly struggle to enforce compliance. That's what state troopers, tickets, traffic court, etc. remind us. On the other hand, the Law of Gravity is *imposed*. Compliance here has already been decided for us. And while compliance to the Law of Gravity may be negotiable, it is not optional. We can negotiate with the Law of Gravity by an equal and opposing law (say, the law of Aerodynamics); and even that relationship is not without its impositions. Overall, submitting to the Law of Gravity is not an option. Dying (both naturally and spiritually) is a law of our nature, and is also not optional under their corresponding circumstances. There are other laws of our nature that

operate according to edicts of the Divine Law Giver, irrespective of our predispositions toward them. **Example:** The law of sin and death has been *imposed* upon us by bequeath of our father Adam. Contrariwise, compliance with the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is *strongly encouraged*. And there are many more such comparisons.

So we looked at the positive and negative employments of bondage. Now let's look at when it is needful to be "bound?" (This portion of the trip may be a bit rocky and somewhat foreign, but hang in there.)

We talked about a baby when it begins to walk; and how that it is wise that the parents should impose circumscription of the child's boundaries basically for the safety of the child. As the child continues to grow, it reaches its "terrible twos" and begins to *vaunt its dominion* in a rather brutish, undisciplined, and quite foolish way.⁽³⁾ Well as adults and sometimes as Christians we get stuck in cycles of our "terrible twos." We exercise our dominion in equally undisciplined and unchaste modalities. And we find ourselves in bondage to the beggarly things of this world.

Paul asked the church at Galatia, "*But now, after you have known God, or rather are known of God, how do you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, where you desire again to be in bondage?*"⁽⁴⁾

And this is where the opening scripture finds us: imprisoned by our own destructive devices. When we approach the matter from this direction, it is quite easy to see how a genuine proclamation of the gospel (the good news, good tidings) opens the doors of the bound and imprisoned. And nothing else will open these doors (trust me on this one). Again, the gospel begins with a commandment to "Repent!" When and where we find ourselves imprisoned, the key to the gate is "repent." If we come to one who is imprisoned (ourselves included) with any other version of the gospel, the prisoner may "feel" better; but he/she will nevertheless remain bound. Telling a prisoner "how to live his best life now," has a less than desirable outcome (no

pun intended).

Since we're here, let's ask another pressing question. Why is "repentance" the key to the prison? Well, in case you weren't aware, the gatekeeper of the prison is the Enemy.⁽⁵⁾ Godly repentance brings us squarely to the foot of the Cross. The Lord says to us that at the Cross, "we (being dead in our sins and the uncircumcision of our flesh) have been quickened together with Christ. Now having been forgiven of all of our trespasses; He has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that witnessed against us. These ordinances that were contrary to us, He took them out of the way. He nailed them to His cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them; He embarrassed them openly, triumphing over them in the work of the Cross."⁽⁶⁾ The Enemy knows what happen at the Cross (far better than we do). It is his hope that we never really discover the devastation that the Cross of Christ wrecked upon his kingdom. He also knows that our repentance brings the Cross of Christ to bear upon him and he must relent. And open swings the doors of our prisons.

Another important point, have you ever had two keys that look just alike? But only one of them actually opens your door. I have. And having both of them in close proximity causes confusion and sometimes chaos. This is what can happen with the keys of "repentance." There seems to be two versions of this key. And they can and often do look very much alike. Certainly, they are indistinguishable to the uncircumcised eye. Let's see if we can mark them so that they no longer cause us confusion.

- One version of the "repentance" key looks much like a "brokenhearted apology." There is only one stanza to this song; it begins and ends like this. "Lord I am sooooo sorry for what I've done. (Translated: Dang, I hate that I got caught.) Will You please forgive me?" The problem with this key is that while the prison may actually seem to be enlarged and give a sense of openness (at least emotionally); the walls never really go away.

- The other (or shall I say genuine) version of the "repentance" key looks much like an "about face." The chorus could potentially go on forever. It sings like this: 1) deny the self-life; 2) take up our crosses; and 3) follow Christ. Next is the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit, against which there is no law. ⁽⁷⁾ And where there is no law, there is no transgression. ⁽⁸⁾ The Enemy thus has no recourse here; he is altogether unemployed in our lives.

And so we see that the living proclamation of the gospel heals, proclaims, recovers and opens the doors of our prisons. ^{-JTI-}

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- ⁽¹⁾ Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18
- ⁽²⁾ Acts 20:22-23
- ⁽³⁾ Proverbs 22:15
- ⁽⁴⁾ Galatians 4:9
- ⁽⁵⁾ Luke 13:16; Mark 5:4
- ⁽⁶⁾ Colossians 2:13-15
- ⁽⁷⁾ Galatians 5:22-23
- ⁽⁸⁾ Romans 4:15

Jealous of What ?!?

Question

What do the following scriptures: Exodus 34:14 and 1 Corinthians 11:2 and Song of Solomon 8:6 all have in common?

Answer

God is a jealous God. And jealousy is as cruel as the grave. If you provoke the Lord to jealousy, the grave might be exactly where you'll find yourself.

[See also Psalm 78:58-62; Exodus 20:5; 1 Kings 14:22]

- JoAnn C. White (1/10/12 <> 8:38PM MT)

saw as clearly as these blind men. So clear was their vision that not only did they know their need of his mercy; but they being blind followed Jesus! Get that, blind men followed Jesus! O that we saw ourselves as clearly as they. O that we saw Jesus Christ as clearly as they.

Again, I say the Laodicean problem is not mere blindness. It's deeply entrenched. Laodicea is blind to the reality that "Laodicea is blind." He counsels us as he does for this reason: because we say that we are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and we do not know that we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The church today believes that she is getting along quite well in her Christianity. But so did the men in Noah's day; the scriptures say they ate and drank until "it started raining." They didn't even see the clouds coming. (Matt. 24:38-39)

We must drive this home, because we think that we are fine. Please read the book of the Acts; read Hebrews 11; read Genesis 12; or even the Psalms. King David in his darkest moment, after his most treacherous sin, had a personal knowledge of God that is deeper than we have in our holiest moments. Read Psalm 51. Where did this man come to know about the Holy Spirit of God as a free gift from God (Psalm 51:11)? This is many hundreds of years before Jesus Christ, or even John the Baptist.

Does our knowledge of our sin grip us like his did (Psalm 51:1-5)? Are we so thoroughly acquainted with the purging of God as King David (Psalm 51:7)? Do we know that our religious exercises are worthless to God (Psalm 51:16)? Do we know anything of the brokenness in Psalm 51:17; probably not. I mean, no one runs for a fire extinguisher, until they smell smoke; and others don't move until they see the flames.

These are not just words that we are reading. Until we repent and begin to seek God with all of our being, we are walking in blindness as if we saw perfectly fine. Next month, let's drill deeper and get our arms around the "you are here." From there it becomes easier to map the route to where God is calling us to be.

For now, give heed to this exhortation: Repent, and seek God again, not casually but fervently, not in emotionalism but with purposeful submission.

God speed. ^{-LATT-}

David L. White

The scriptures teach that, although Jesus was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things that He *suffered*.⁽⁶⁾ One definition of the term "to suffer" is "to allow or to endure." We *suffer* things that we "allow to occur" or if they are imposed upon us we "endure" them; as opposed to stopping or side-stepping them. This use of the term *suffer* does not carry with it the sense of "victimization." One who *suffers* for Christ's sake, is one who actually "sees" his cross. And by an act of his volition, picks it up, carries it and dies on it. We say, with our Lord "No man takes My life. I lay it down."⁽⁷⁾ We say with "our big brother" Paul, all things are left to our volition; whether life or death ... the choice is ours."⁽⁸⁾

Examples:

- Jesus said, if someone takes your coat, be willing to also sustain the loss of your cloke as well.⁽⁹⁾
- Paul, in his discourse with the church at Corinth said, why does a brother prosecute his brother in the court of law. Why do you not rather "suffer" the offense?⁽¹⁰⁾

Meditate on this: If Jesus had so much as opened his mouth during His suffering, He would have (in a very real sense) negated vital prophecies concerning Himself and His Deity. The Father told mankind, many years prior to the coming of our Lord, that He would not open His mouth, in His own defense.⁽¹¹⁾ Here is wisdom: the Lord said, "*So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*"⁽¹²⁾ The Father said that Jesus wouldn't open His mouth; and Jesus didn't open His mouth to defend Himself. And so you have the Word of God returning to Him "signed, sealed and delivered."

Prophecy: *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.*⁽¹³⁾

And when Jesus came, He said (repeatedly) that He must suffer these things, so that the scriptures may be fulfilled. Essentially what He was saying (and what we must also say) is that there are some things that God has prophesied about Him [Jesus] that He was obliged to carry out; that He was committed to fulfill.

Jesus said to those who came to collect Him at Gethsemane: *Are you under the mistaken impression that I cannot right now, pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*

But I refuse to do that, or else how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled? For this cause came I to this hour; all this was done, that the writings of the prophets might be established.⁽¹⁴⁾

What could be the eternal cost of us opening our mouth to defend ourselves, during our Via Dolorosa journey? What might have been the expense to mankind if so much as *one* of the Father's prophecies (concerning Jesus) had failed to come to fruition? Suppose the failure had resulted from Jesus speaking up to defend Himself, during His trials. That is a frightful consideration. It not only would have had implications for the man Jesus Christ; not only for us (as His beneficiaries); but it would have had devastation implications for the Person of God the Father.

In Joshua's "Gettysburg Address" he said to Israel, "*Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing has failed.*"⁽¹⁵⁾

So for us, what is the cost when *we* refuse to be humbled during our Gabbatha (judgment hall) experiences? How many souls could that cost us; how many could be at stake here? How many of those might be the souls of our very own loved ones? How much ground might we yield to the enemy by our seeking to save our life; as opposed to enduring hardship and suffering wrong? Could it be the case that such a weight of responsibility has been placed upon our shoulders? Could it be the case that the veracity of the name and reputation of the Living God has been put at risk pending our obedience? Well, it has. God is not only staking *His* reputation on His ability to conform us into sons. But He is also putting the weight of the harvest of other souls squarely upon our volitionally allowing ourselves to be so conformed.

Another peculiar consideration is this. Perhaps, we can come to appreciate that one of the reasons that Jesus didn't open His mouth in His own defense was to ensure that the Father's prophecies would be fulfilled. But I'd challenge you that there is "at least" one other reason that He didn't open His mouth. It was because He knew it was the Father who was afflicting Him. (Gasp!! How dare you, JoAnn, make

such an insidious statement as to accuse God of affecting the Son so harshly?) Aaahhh I can see that we do not yet know our God.

Quick Sidebar: The death of Christ on Calvary was not the case the He had accidentally fallen into the hands of an angry mob. Nor was it the case that Jesus had so provoked the Pharisees (et al) for driving the money changers from the temple. The death by crucifixion was a token (but appropriate) representation of the heinousness of the crime of Adam (and his posterity). Now this penalty was a duty owed **not** to the Roman government, **nor** to the "Jewish popery," but to the Sovereign Lord God who is Law Giver, Judge and Executioner. ⁽¹⁶⁾

It pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He [the Father] has put Him [Jesus] to grief. ⁽¹⁷⁾ I was dumb; I opened not My mouth; because [Father] You did it. ⁽¹⁸⁾ You saw the Roman military nailing Jesus to the Cross. Jesus saw His Father remanding Him to the Cross. Quite a different perspective, huh?

In our following Christ, we are directed to be meek; to be merciful, to be peacemakers; to rejoice and be exceeding glad, when reviled and persecuted (i.e. hung on the cross). This we do, because it pleases the Lord to bruise us. Remember, in order to bring forth wine, the grape must be bruised.

The Spirit of God will, through our spirit, mentor and lead us into sweet submission and obedience to the Word of God. Progressively we see that we are being sanctified into amazing expressions of "Son-ship." -BC-

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- ⁽¹⁾ Luke 9:23
- ⁽²⁾ Matthew 26:63
- ⁽³⁾ John 19:13
- ⁽⁴⁾ Matthew 26:53
- ⁽⁵⁾ Romans 3:25-26
- ⁽⁶⁾ Hebrews 5:8
- ⁽⁷⁾ John 10:17-18
- ⁽⁸⁾ 1 Corinthians 3:21-22
- ⁽⁹⁾ Matthew 5:40
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ 1 Corinthians 6:6-7
- ⁽¹¹⁾ Acts 8:32
- ⁽¹²⁾ Isaiah 55:11
- ⁽¹³⁾ Isaiah 53:7
- ⁽¹⁴⁾ Matthew 26:53-54, 56; John 12:27
- ⁽¹⁵⁾ Joshua 23:14

⁽¹⁶⁾ Exodus 32:10

⁽¹⁷⁾ Isaiah 53:10

⁽¹⁸⁾ Psalm 39:9

What's that Mark !?!

What is the 21st century Mark of the Beast?

Is it not that our hearts love the commerce of this world; to the point of choking out the Word of God; the way of the Kingdom ... the King?

Is it not that we buy, sell and trade on the standards of this world?

Those who receive the Mark of the Beast will simply be making a visible declaration of an already invisible allegiance.

First the mark is within; then the mark is without.

Those upon whom is the superscription of the King Eternal, will not receive it (not now, and not then) for they have already been "marked" by the Blood of the Lamb.

- JoAnn C. White (1/17/12 <> ~6:15AM / MT)

So we see that the coming of the Kingdom and the coming of the will of the King are two different events. You'll want them both. Both are imperative. Kingdom government overlays the resources, the land and the affairs of life, etc. Whereas the King's will is impressed upon the persons or citizens themselves. It's akin to being married for 40 years but only being in love with your spouse the last 7 years of the relationship." I know, I know ... you wouldn't know anything about that, would you.

I glimpsed very quickly, how that there are people who live in the United States, under the governmental authority of the U.S; although not a party of the collective "mind" of its governance. While I have in my head, some of the categories of the "aforementioned" persons; Wisdom directs otherwise. I believe that you get the message.

The Lord continued to lead down this path. And I followed very attentively. But I did not *then* recognize that the Father was answering a question that I asked Him (less than a month ago).

Question: I asked, "Lord during Your millennial reign, the earth will be at peace. And the kingdoms of this world, will submit to Your jurisdictional leadership, as you sit on the throne of David. How is it that when the enemy is loosed "for a time" some the kings and people of the earth will side with him in warfare against You?"

Reference: *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ... And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.* ⁽³⁾

I recalled that the Lord (at that time) very gingerly said, "Just because someone is under your reign, does not mean that they are *with* you." Now that part I got; I see that all the time. But it rang home very clearly to me, during this dialog with the Father.

Now we see that we can be *in* the Kingdom, and yet not be submitted to the will of the King. I know, I know, this is another "theology wrecker." If it's any consolation, better to have your theology shaken by a tremor, than to

have it completely toppled by a quake registering 8.9 on the Richter scale. That being the case let me close here. I have some things that need to be addressed before the Father.

Until next we meet, I bid you farewell. *LW*

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Matthew 13:24-30

⁽²⁾ 2 Corinthians 5:17 JCW version

⁽³⁾ Revelation 20:4, 7-8

AAAAaaahhhh Wisdom

Simple wisdom, God breathes out to all who ask. The *deep things of God* are tucked away; *sound wisdom* is hidden. The Lord does know that a king will be honored to search it out.

If any man lacks wisdom let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and does not scorn men for asking. James 1:5

My son, receive my words, hide my commandments with you; so that you incline your ear to wisdom.

If you seek Wisdom as one who looks for silver and if you search for Wisdom as one who searches for hid treasure; *THEN* you will understand what it means to fear the Lord and you will find the knowledge of God.

The Lord gives wisdom; and out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous ... Proverb 2:1-10

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings to search out a matter. Proverbs 25:2

- JoAnn C. White (1/17/12 <> ~6:15AM / MT)

Disclaimer: I MUST, here, place a solemn notice. Throughout this exposition, what will be shared will prick you; it may also unsettle you; it may even provoke you to wrath. But PLEASE don't let that stop you from reading it; as I cannot allow that possibility to stop me from sharing it.

The Lord has also promised that the wrath of man will do either of these two things:

- 1) Surely the wrath of man shall praise the Lord; and
- 2) The remainder of man's wrath the Lord will restrain or sequester. ⁽¹⁾

And at least if you are upset with me; we will both know why. Please also know that I promise to always handle the Word of God (and the exposition of it) with the utmost reverence for our Lord and with an unmitigated love and compassion for you, the reader.

The foregoing being the case; here is my meager interpretation of what the Lord said to me. First we have an Executive Summary of what is to follow; then upon its heels, the full exposition:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lord said essentially, "JoAnn, I planted a vineyard. I hedged it about; I dug a winepress and built a tower. Then I loaned it out to *husbandmen*." While the Lord is telling me of this parable, my brow begins to wrinkle. You see, I know that the Lord is beyond brilliant; but I was not quite sure what a *vineyard* had to do with *nutrition, health and wellness*. But that didn't stop Him. The Lord kept talking, and I kept listening.

The Lord must have seen that funny look on my face, so He gave me a reality check [He has been having to do that quite frequently, of late]. He said, "JoAnn, YOUR LIFE IS THE VINEYARD AND YOU ARE THE HUSBANDMAN."

Behind this, my head was tilted at almost a 45-degree angle. And my eyebrows had shifted UP. That didn't bother Him one bit either; He

kept right on talking. He said, what amounted to this: "I left the vineyard in your hands. I went away to prepare a place for us. I expected that you would keep that which I have committed to you, against that day. And as the seasons of harvest came around throughout the years of your life; I pretty consistently have sent servants to receive the fruits of My vineyard. But I am not very pleased with your responses or your yields. You fought against them; you blamed them; you resisted them as if you didn't know that I had sent them."

FULL EXPOSITION

Now will I sing and expound to you a song of my Beloved, touching His vineyards.

FIRST STANZA

My Beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. He fenced or hedged it about and removed the stones. He planted the choicest vine; built a tower in the midst of it; and dug a winepress in it. He was delighted with his vineyard and looked forward to it bringing forth beautiful, sweet grapes; which of course would produce a most delectable wine. And behold it brought forth *wild* grapes. What is my Beloved to do? He said, "I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up. I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be overrun or trodden down. I will lay it waste. It shall not be pruned. Neither shall the weeds thereof be dug up. Instead there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they send no rain upon it." ⁽²⁾

SECOND STANZA

My Beloved planted another vineyard. Likewise, He hedged it round about, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and this time He let it out to husbandmen (or caregivers, or keepers) and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit (harvest) drew near, He sent His servants to the caregivers, that He might receive the fruits of His vineyard. And the keepers took His servants, and beat one, and killed another,

and stoned another.

Again, my Beloved sent other servants more than the first: and the husbandmen did to these servants likewise. The keepers threw stones at them, wounded them and sent them away shamefully handled.

But last of all He sent unto them His Son (or His Word), saying, "Surely, the keepers will reverence My Son (or regard My Word). But when the caregivers saw the Son, they said among themselves, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on His inheritance. Or if we get rid of the Son (or the Word) we can do with this vineyard, as we please.

And they caught Him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew Him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will He do to these husbandmen? He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out His vineyard unto others, which shall render Him, His fruits in their respective seasons.⁽³⁾

So I'm looking at this thinking, "Father, again how does this have anything to do with nutrition, health and wellness?"

Admittedly there are a number of different modalities or ways to represent what the Lord has revealed to me. Essentially the life of the person (whether Christian or not) is the vineyard of the Lord. Although we will focus on and speak very specifically to the life of the Christian; we will at times admit a more expanded view for additional clarity.

When we look at the life of the Christian as a vineyard, we see that we are **hedged** about. We get a sense of this from Satan's chat with the Father, when he says, "Haven't you made a hedge about them, and about their house, and about all that they hath on every side? You [God] have blessed the work of their hands, and their substance is increased in the land."⁽⁴⁾ The **winepress** can be identified by a number of different things or artifacts. For the most part, the winepress is our internal system whereby we "make sense" of our life, our world, and our selves. The *mind* or the *intellect* is a prominent and central part of this winepress; it also receives inputs from sources of

influence external to itself. The **tower** is the person, place or thing to whom we pay homage, or deference; or that we esteem. The tower is the oracle of our life; that to which we go to for guidance or wisdom. In life in general (depending on the person); the tower can be the Bible; it can be another deity; it can be a parent; or any other such thing.

[The Lord has said a great deal more on this portion; He has given beautiful insights. However, time and space do not permit this month. I have asked the Father for permission to expand on this portion in next month's edition.]

In this case, we ourselves are the "husbandmen or the keepers." We have the oversight of the Lord's vineyard. We are supposed to be taking care of His vineyard (our lives) in a way that is honorable to Him. Now in order for us to do that, we must be/become knowledgeable about this responsibility. We must sustain an intimate and consistent connection with our Lord. This is especially the case in that we must frequently make decisions regarding His vineyard; which have both a direct and indirect impact on Him. The responsibility of the husbandman is a great one. This is one reason that if we uphold this duty well; the rewards are unfathomable. Likewise, if we shunt this duty, the penalties are equally far-reaching. The keeper's responsibility includes (but is not limited to) the care and upkeep of the vine; the soil; the hedge (fence); the tower; irrigation; pruning; caring for the land overall; and much, much, much more. Perhaps at length we'll be able to explore some of the effects and applications of each of these (and other) responsibilities.

Just a few quick mentions here: Did you know that a vineyard needs earthworms to help keep the soil rich and biologically stable? This was news to me too. The soil needs to be analyzed periodically. The calcium levels need to be monitored to sustain a rich pH balance in the soil. Grapes need water to grow. At some point, we'll want to see some of the practical implications of these facts, as well.

Now the **tower** is useful in the oversight of the

vineyard. It provides a sufficiently high perch for the "watcher" over the vineyard. In our lives we have a "watcher;" and we are to regard its presence and its warnings. For the Christian the *conscience* performs the function of a "watcher." If we allow, the Spirit of God will guide and protect the "watcher."

We are the husbandmen or keepers of the vineyard, which belongs to God. When the time of harvest comes, the Lord sends His servants to receive of the fruit of His vineyard.

WARNING - Up until this point the ride was rather pleasant and tolerable. That is going to change a bit. Strap on your seatbelts, please; and put away any sharp objects that may be nearby.

During the course of our lives as husbandmen, the Lord continually and unrelentingly makes investments into His vineyard. He is a good householder. Therefore it is not unreasonable for Him to expect an abundant harvest. Before we talk about the harvest, let's peak at the fruit.

In our vineyards, the Lord has planted the True Vine. It then, doesn't seem far-fetched that He would expect the type and volume of yield that He does. You probably wondered from time to time, why it seems that God expects so much of us. Well, if you invested what He's invested, your expectations would be commensurate, as well. "To whom much is given; much is required."⁽⁵⁾ Likewise, the investor who puts up the most capital; expects to receive the greatest yield (or to suffer the harshest loss). On the one side of the equation, our Lord does not mourn over His losses; instead He rejoices over His wins. Are you a "win?" Your loved ones, too? So we see that our Lord has planted in us the choicest Vine. As the harvest seasons of our life approach, He sends His "servants" to collect the fruits of the vineyard. "What fruits?" I'm glad that you asked. The fruits of the True Vine are love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith and temperance.⁽⁶⁾

In this particular scenario, we see that the husbandmen (us) were *not* particularly pleased

when the "servants" came to collect on behalf of the Lord. I must admit that I partly understand why the husbandmen responded harshly to the "servants" that come for the fruits. Perhaps it is because of how the "servants" were *dressed*. You've seen them; *opportunities* that come *dressed* as problems, troubles, and chaos. We do not identify them with the Lord of the vineyard. We often mistake them for thieves and robbers; as opposed to "servants."

You keep asking me "Who are these servants?" This time instead of just providing a response, I will thereafter ask you a series of questions. Fair enough?

"Servants" are *ALL* people, places and things that are useful to the Master (whether intentional or not) in accomplishing His objectives. Now get this, all servants of God do not bear the Master's name; but are useful in the Master accomplishing His strategies.

If the Lord has sown into us spiritual things, is it a great thing if He shall expect to reap in carnal or natural ways?⁽⁷⁾ I mean, if the Lord has taught us "blessed are the poor in spirit;" why is it that we rebel, when He sends His "servants" to test us to see if we are indeed "poor in spirit?" The Lord has filled us with His Spirit and ministered to us His Word. Why, pray tell, do we think it strange when these fiery trials (His servants) come to draw out of us the wine of God?⁽⁸⁾

I know, we thought that all servants were nice, pleasant, docile and complacent individuals. Well if we "hang around in the scriptures" long enough to read the fine print, we'll see that (I like to say it this way) the Good Master has both "offensive and defensive" servants.

"Defensive servants" are those who nurture, maintain and increase the overall wealth of the Master, His butler, His cupbearer, His husbandmen, etc. "Offensive servants" are those who collect the Master's *pound of flesh*, when necessary. They are those who go to "collect or harvest" on behalf of the Master. It is not unusual

that "offensive servants" might be *hired*, specifically for that task. I'm serious. Oh, I see ... does it feel like I'm pulling your leg? Fair enough; let's ask Isaiah[7:12, 17-25], here Ahaz prophesies to the house of David, that the Lord was going to *hire* Assyria to humble them, to chasten them (specifically to shave the head and beard of Israel); which we know from Jewish custom is an offense and a humiliation. ⁽⁹⁾ Is that too Old Testament for you? Not a problem. In Matthew a householder went into the marketplace early one morning to *hire* laborers (or servants) to work in this vineyard for the day. They were hired very specifically to "pluck the fruits of the vine." ⁽¹⁰⁾ What's that you say, "... in the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established?" That's a reasonable request. You'll also see that the prodigal son, when he came to his senses said, "How many *hired* servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" ⁽¹¹⁾ I won't even burden you with the weighty consideration that Judas was also in one sense "*hired*." Again what is a servant? They are people, places and things that are useful to the Master for accomplishing His strategies and objectives. The scriptures say to us: "And truly the Son of man will go, as it was determined: but woe unto that man (by whom He is betrayed!" ⁽¹²⁾ "It is impossible but that offences will come (servants): but woe unto him, through whom they come!" ⁽¹³⁾ Okay, our final burden of proof:

"Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. And the LORD said, "Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? ... And there came forth a spirit (*servant*), and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, *How so?* And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shall persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so." And I'll only hint at the fact that the tormenting spirit that was assigned to King Saul, received his marching orders from the Father. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Didn't know these events were in your Bible, did

you? (smiling) Here were just a few examples of "*offensive*" servants.

And so we see that our Lord is pleased to choose what (and whom) He will to accomplish His objectives. While our heads are still spinning I'll ask one question more: Has not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor? ⁽¹⁵⁾ Is it not lawful for the Lord to do what He will with His own? Let's be careful that our eye be not evil, because the Lord is Good? ⁽¹⁶⁾

Okay we worked through identifying the people, places and things that the Lord uses as servants to accomplish His ends. Now let's personalize it. There are a million potential questions on this topic, but we won't burden you with too many. You thought I forgot, didn't you (smiling)?

Question: What is calculated to draw out of us *longsuffering* and *patience*? Which servant of the Lord, is sent to harvest our *longsuffering*? By what means is the fruit of *patience* extracted from the vineyards of our life? Do I hear you crying "Uncle?"

Answer: Well, James says that we are to count it all joy, when we fall into various temptations. We know that the "trying of our faith works or presses out of us *patience*." ⁽¹⁷⁾ Aaahhhaaa, it is that servant "*diverse temptations*," calculated to try our faith; thus producing in us *longsuffering*.

Question: What servant of the Lord, is set to stimulate *joy*? I'll give you one hint: the answer is NOT that the "joy of the Lord is your strength." Before the joy of the Lord can strengthen you, the joy must be stirred up.

Answer: Let's see, Matthew says that the servants known as "*reviling, persecution and slander*" ought to cause us to rejoice or spring forth in joy. ⁽¹⁸⁾ What's that you say?!? You believe that I'm making this up? That's a reasonable response and you could be right. Or you could just read Matthew 5:11-12 and Acts 5:40-41. Here let me get them for you:

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, ... for My sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. ⁽¹⁹⁾

And when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. ⁽²⁰⁾

Question: Here comes that other servant of the Lord, expecting a response of peace from us. By what means do we make peace?

Answer: We make peace the same way Jesus made peace: through the blood of His Cross. ⁽²¹⁾ This servant is our cross. But that shouldn't be too much of a problem for us, right?! We just learned how to take up our crosses, with the expectation that we must at some point shed our blood there, right?!? I mean, what's the purpose of carrying a cross if you're not prepared to die on it? *Suggestion:* A cross is heavy; don't pick it up if you aren't going to use it, to crucify the flesh.

The goal here is to come away seeing that our lives are the vineyards of the Lord, and He has left us (husbandmen) in charge. He has made plain to us, in His Word, that periodically He'll be sending "servants" to collect of the fruits of His vineyard.

It is the responsibility of the husbandman (us) to keep the vineyard (our lives) in such a way that whenever the Lord shall send His servants to collect from us the fruits, we shall willingly and cheerfully yield them to Him, for His glory.

Great and many are the duties of the husbandman; we must be diligent to add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love (charity). ⁽²²⁾ Love is the fulfillment of the Law; first vertically then horizontally. And if we give diligence to the fulfillment of these duties and abound in them, they will make us of the caliber of husbandman that we shall neither be barren nor lacking in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And when time and chance happens to us, ⁽²³⁾ (trust they WILL happen) we will know them for what they are "servants" that the Lord has sent to harvest the wine of His choicest Vine. We can say of them, "Oh, my Lord; have You desired of me patience? Then patience You shall have, for I have cultivated it in this Your vineyard." We will say of our temptations: "What's that my Lord, You have sent to draw out temperance. Then the temperance of the choicest Vine, You shall have." "Has my Lord, been bragging of my godliness? Then godliness You shall have, for I have enough of it to spare."

Summarily, when the Father God sends His servants (life's tests and trials) to the vineyards of our lives, to collect of the fruit of the True Vine: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness faith and temperance ⁽²⁴⁾ perhaps, it is that He is preparing the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and wants to draw out the new wine of the life of the Bride of Christ, which is the Church, that which has been processed through the winepress of this age, and pour them into incorruptible wineskins and to pour them out into the ages to come, as His glory.

Let us be diligent to keep the vineyards of our life, and be ready at a moment's notice to yield to the Lord the fruits of our obedience.

We believe that we have permission to share, in the coming months, more detail of the wickedness of the husbandman; particular illuminations of the objects of the vineyard (hedge, winepress, tower, etc.) and how the servants draw out of us the harvest of the vineyard, and much more.

Until next month, God speed. =NHW=

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, SMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Psalm 76:10

⁽²⁾ Isaiah 5:1-6; Mark 12:1-9; Mark 4:7

⁽³⁾ Matthew 21:33-41; Mark 12:1-11; and Luke 20:9-17

- (4) Job 1:10
 (5) Luke 12:48
 (6) Galatians 5:22-23
 (7) 1 Corinthians 9:11
 (8) 1 Peter 4:12
 (9) Isaiah 7:12, 17-25
 (10) Matthew 20:1-15
 (11) Luke 15:11-17
 (12) Luke 22:22
 (13) Luke 17:1
 (14) 1 Kings 22:19-23; 1 Samuel 18:10
 (15) Romans 9:21-23
 (16) Matthew 20:15
 (17) James 1:2-3
 (18) Matthew 5:11-12
 (19) Matthew 5:11-12
 (20) Acts 5:40-41
 (21) Colossians 1:20
 (22) 2 Peter 1:5-8
 (23) Ecclesiastes 9:11
 (24) Galatians 5:22-23

Now Later(s)

Weeping and Laughing

We all know that it is appointed unto man once to die.... (Hebrews 9:27) It also seems that other things were also appointed to man. To both *weep* and *rejoice*.

We shall all do them both. The question is "when?"

Blessed are you that weep **now**: for you shall laugh, **later**.

Woe unto you that laugh **now**! For you shall mourn and weep, **later**.

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven ... a time to weep, and a time to laugh.

Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. If you mourn **now**, there is comfort for you. If you mourn **later**, there will be no Comforter for you.

Now or later? The choice is yours.

(Luke 6:12, 25; Eccl. 3:1, 4; Matthew 5:4)

- JoAnn C. White (1/19/12 <> 3:01PM / MT)

Essentially, we're going to continue our march in the direction of the prior column. It seems that the Lord wants to enlarge on very specifically the doctrine of Balaam. Is that not a curious thing? The Lord wants us to receive more light on the doctrine of Balaam. What it is? What are the implications of its presence in the 21st century church? How does that affect us? What does that mean to you? Why are we talking about this? And many more such questions will be addressed along the way.

Let's begin by setting in place a few *qualifiers*. They won't look like qualifiers "out-of-the-gate;" they'll look more like protracted detours. But along the journey, your heart will refer back to them, I promise.

Detour

The following looks more like a layover, than a detour. But I believe it will establish a quite necessary sub-structure to the point at hand.

While talking with one of my "sons" recently, he mentioned that one of his friends admitted the following. First let me briefly and covertly introduce you to this gentleman: he works as an artist. Suffice it to say that he gets paid for his artistic skills. While many would look up to him, this young man said that "interestingly enough, he has not done as well as I could have, in his craft because of how he was taught *mathematics*." That's right, *mathematics*.

Oh my! I see a flurry of questions. What does *mathematics* have to do with an artistic skill or craft? You probably remember this type of question from your primary school experience. When we'd ask questions like: "What does *mathematics* really have to do with life? Will we ever really use it, beyond basic addition and subtraction?"

It might have been nice if someone had genuinely answered that question for many of us. Instead of letting us go on thinking that *mathematics* really had no bearing on the greater importance of life, in general.

NOTE <> For those of our readers who are teachers by trade; or for those of you who know or have known wonderful teachers, please don't take offense. We are not making reference to the many wonderful unsung heroes we've had as teachers. What we're doing is highlighting the effects of a reality that existed (and continues to exist) in our academic environments. We're not really even talking about the teacher, as a person. We're talking about the residual impact of their influences, on the learning process and resultant academic development (or under-development) of the student. The student (incidentally) later becomes the alderman, the entrepreneur, the chef, the law enforcement officer, the musician, the judge, the Chief Financial Officer or any number of other *thinkers* and *influencer* of our day.

The question at hand is this: "What does *mathematics* have to do with life?" I'd like to take a stab at answering the question, if I may. Here, the use of the term *mathematics* is intended to encompass the whole body of the laws of numbers (and all that they represent); from basic arithmetic to the most mind-numbing quantum calculations. Whew!!!!

With that in place, I submit to you that the collective body of *mathematics* (from its most basic to its most complex iterations) is one of the purest expressions of fundamental logic. "Logic" in this case is defined as "the relationship of element to element to whole in a set of objects, individuals, principles or events."⁽²⁾ In laymen's terms, "*mathematics* is probably the most objective framework in which to understand relationships." And we know that "relationships" are the substance and fabric of philosophies, cultures, economies, theology, life, etc.

There is a branch of Philosophy called the *philosophy of mathematics* that studies the philosophical assumptions, foundations, and implications of mathematics. The aim of the *philosophy of mathematics* is to provide an account of

the nature and methodology of mathematics and to understand the place of mathematics in people's lives. The logical and structural nature of mathematics itself makes this study both broad and unique among its philosophical counterparts.⁽³⁾

Here are just a couple of quick examples and points of reflection:

As you can appreciate, Statistics is a branch of Mathematics. A subset of this branch is statistical inference, which is a process of drawing conclusions from data that is subject to random variations. We do this every day, while trying to make a left turn, across 3 lanes of traffic, during rush hour. Our brains default to this type of decision-making model in normal daily activities. Could you imagine how useful this type of "*intentional*" thinking could be to us?

There is a branch of Statistics called *survival analysis* which deals with death in biological organisms and failure in mechanical systems. This topic is called *reliability theory* or *reliability analysis* in engineering, and *duration analysis* or *duration modeling* in economics or sociology.⁽⁴⁾

There is also a branch of mathematics called "game theory" that analyzes situations where a person's success is based on the choices of others. Sounds more like the "game of life" doesn't it? Another way of defining the term is that "game theory" is the study of mathematical models of conflict and cooperation between intelligent rational decision-makers; also known as *interactive decision theory*." Believe it or not, "game theory" is used in economics, political science, and psychology, and other, more prescribed sciences, like logic or biology. You're going to love this: "game theory" initially addressed zero-sum games, such that one person's gains exactly equal net losses of the other participant(s). Doesn't that sound like our nation's financial sector, specifically the banking institutions? James Madison made what we now recognize as a game theoretic analysis of the ways states can be expected to behave under different systems of

taxation. As far back as 1838, there was even research into the Mathematical Principles of the Theory of Wealth, by Antoine Augustin Cournot.⁽⁵⁾

Plato regarded logistic (arithmetic) as appropriate for businessmen and men of war who "must learn the art of numbers or [they] will not know how to array [their] troops" and arithmetic (number theory) as appropriate for philosophers "because [they have] to arise out of the sea of change and lay hold of true being."⁽⁶⁾

Wow, look at how much we miss when we "sleep our way through life." Let's ensure that our children don't follow in our footsteps, on this point.

The human mind operates in large part in obedience to the laws of logic, which has an umbilical relationship with mathematics. The mind rationalizes, it reasons, it analyzes, etc. When performed correctly, these tasks are undertaken out of the objective foundations of what we call the various branches of mathematics. When our thinking and reasoning take a departure from its original moorings, we get some of what our pharmaceutical world is trying to write prescriptions for. We get irrational modes of thinking which lead to the various manifestations of mental chaos that we see run amuck in society today. These of course give rise to the various expressions of emotional instability. You may recall that the "emotions follow thought," as a law of our human nature.

There is **no** branch of mathematics,
however abstract, which may not someday
be applied to the phenomena of the real world.
—Nikolai Lobachevsky

That's enough for now. My head is starting to ache (smiling). Yours too?!

In closing, our destination is that we might be enlightened on the effects of the Doctrine of Balaam on the 21st century church. Because you will find that this destination is somewhat overwhelming, it seems only fair and reasonable to try and eat this elephant one bite at a time. Remember this "way" is a marathon, not a sprint. I believe we'll find, at length, that it will have been our "sprinting" that has brought us to this

lamentable condition.

Some landmarks along the journey are (not necessarily in this order):

- What is the Doctrine of Balaam? (*You can get a hint of this from the December 2011 edition in the Living Waters.*)
- Is it true that the doctrine of Balaam really does exist in the 21st century church? If so, how so, and what are its implications.
- How have we missed seeing it, for what it is?
- Now that the foundation of our system of beliefs has been disheveled, what are we to do going forward? This one is akin to the question, asked by ones newly shipwrecked on a small island: "Now that you've identified this small island is officially a leper colony; what do we do now?"

(Smiling) God willing, we look forward to communing with you on the exposition of this topic, in the next series of editions. CGM

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Matthew 6:24

⁽²⁾ Second College Edition, the American Heritage Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin ISBN 0-395-32944-2

⁽³⁾ Collected 1/30/12 from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_mathematics

⁽⁴⁾ Collected 1/30/12 from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survival_analysis

⁽⁵⁾ Collected 1/30/12 from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_theory

⁽⁶⁾ Boyer, Carl B. (1991). "The age of Plato and Aristotle". *A History of Mathematics* (Second Edition ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.. pp. 86. ISBN 0-471-54397-7. And from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pure_mathematics collected 1/30/12.

BEGINNINGS...

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

(Genesis 1:1)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God, when He created the heaven and earth.

(John 1:1-2)

what NOT to do with it. Don't bury it. Sow it "yes;" bury it "no." Now I'll give you a hint of how to increase that "one talent" by "seven."

Diligently add to your *faith*, 1) *virtue*; and to your virtue, 2) *knowledge*; and to your knowledge, 3) *temperance*; and to your temperance, 4) *patience*; and to your patience, 5) *godliness*; and to your godliness, 6) *brotherly kindness*; finally add to your brotherly kindness, 7) *charity*.⁽²⁾

This is an acceptable ROI to the Father. So much so that He has attached a promise that if these things *abound in us*, they will ensure against our being either barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ... and if we *do* these things, we shall never fall. Oh, to live a life where having done all to stand ... we stand. CGM

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Romans 12:3c

⁽²⁾ 2 Peter 1:7-10

WHAT IS PRAYER???

**Contrary to popular opinion,
prayer is not a discourse
between man and God where
man talks God into
“performing.”**

**It is more the case that prayer is
a discourse between man and
God where God loves man into
“conforming.”**

- JoAnn C. White (1/17/12 <> 1:39PM / MT)

IF

By Rudyard Kipling

(When I was a child, my father shared this poem with me. I'd like to share it with you.)

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream -- and not make dreams your master;
If you can think -- and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings -- nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run --
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And -- which is more -- you'll be a Man, my son!

Collected on 12/5/11 from

<http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/if.html>

Let's Chat ...

One of my **FAVORITE** portions of scripture is 2 portions of Moses' talk with God in the mountain, **Exodus 32**. It is my prayer that the Father soon gives me permission to "work through" this with you.

Expositions of Prayer

The scriptures teach that the effectual and fervent prayers of the righteous are strong and do exploits.

(James 5:16; Daniel 11:32)

In Moses' talk with God, we see some of the characteristics of effectual prayer. I submit to you that we'll find that effectual prayer is most often either *repentant* or *intercessory* in nature.

Moses petitions God for the glory of the name of God. (*Intercessory*)

Here, Moses is not concerned for his own name or for his own reputation; nor (in this case) is Moses petitioning for Israel's name or their image, among the nations.

Never saw intercessory prayer that way before, huh. Moses is not petitioning for himself, he's petitioning for the Lord's honor. And he is mediating between God and Israel. Apart from Jesus, this is one of the MOST supreme exhibits of intercessory prayer. It is the composite of the *Ministry of Reconciliation*; which we have been given.

(Exodus 32:9-14; 2 Corinthians 5:18)

Moses returns to the mountain of God to repent on behalf of Israel's sin. But look at how he does this.

Moses says "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (*Repentant*)

Never saw repentant prayer that way before, either. Have you? Greater love has no man than this: that a man would lay down his life for his friends.

Paul said, "For I could wish that I, myself, were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

(Exodus 32:30-33; John 15:13; Romans 9:3)

- JoAnn C. White 1/13/12

Are You Sure?

There is a healthy contemplation that drives us to check our commitment to our various relationships with others. While I have your attention may I ask another question? Do you ever wonder if you're really saved? I don't mean to intrude ... okay maybe I do intend to intrude. Do you contemplate your loyalty and commitment to your relationship "with Christ" very specifically? Respectfully, we are not talking here about your relationship with a religious institution. We're asking about a very up-close and personal relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ.

The scriptures encourage us to periodically check our "fruit." We are admonished to work out your own soul's salvation with fear and trembling. ⁽¹⁾

I can just imagine Jesus standing before the fig tree, asking "Hey guys, what type of tree is this?"

His disciples replied (almost snickering), "My Lord, it's a fig tree."

And Jesus asks again, "How can you tell, that this is a fig tree?"

His disciples reply again (almost bursting at the seams), "Teacher, we can tell by the leaves."

Jesus once again, "Okay, let Me ask you guys one more question ... what is the purpose of a fig tree, if it won't bear figs." They all fell silent.

Jesus cursed the fig tree saying, "Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit, My Father will remove. It will not be allowed to continue to make demands of (or trouble) the ground." ⁽²⁾ He looked at the disciples and walked away en route to Bethany. ⁽³⁾

So I ask again, how do we know that we have a personal covenant with God?

May I make a few suggestions on ways to discover the truth? ⁽⁴⁾

- 1. How does your covenant with Jesus Christ affect your concept of God and your attitude towards Him?**
- 2. How does your relationship with God affect your attitude towards Jesus Christ (Him as a Person and His Lordship over your life)?**
- 3. How does your covenant with God affect your attitude towards the Holy Scriptures?**
- 4. How does your relationship with Christ affect your attitude towards your "self-life" or your "flesh"?**
- 5. How does your covenant with Christ affect your relationship with and attitude towards your fellow Christians?**
- 6. How does your relationship with Jesus affect your relationship with and attitude towards the world?**
- 7. Last, but in no way least, how does your covenant with Jesus affect your attitude towards sin?**

Perhaps we should take the next couple of weeks or months and grapple with this? Try to answer each question thoroughly in light of the scripture's mandates on each of these respective relationships. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. ⁽⁵⁾

Be Sure!

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

(1) Philippians 2:12

(2) John 15:1-2; Luke 13:7

(3) Matthew 21:17-19

(4) Gleanings and adaptations from A.W. Tozer's Man: The Dwelling Place of God, p.62-68

(5) Hebrews 13:20-21

