

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

P. O. Box 93 ~ Nampa, Idaho 83653 www.gentleshepherd.com February 2008

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

TOLERANCE OR CHARITY?

Discipleship Series - Part 9 By Rayola Kelley

Last month I talked about the intent of something. Intent points to motivation, approach, and fruits. *Motivation* has to do with personal agendas or the emphasis put on a matter. *Approach* is the manifestation of the attitude in which a person does something. *Fruits* are not just a matter of what an individual does, but the type of spirit in which he or she operates. Ultimately, intent has to do with the type of inward environment that will exist in the soul of man.



Without the right spirit or motivation, the intent will have a wrong attitude behind it. For example, take John and James in *Luke 9:51-56*. They felt righteous and justified in wanting to call fire down on the people of Samaria for not receiving Jesus. However, Jesus' intent for traveling by way of Samaria was not to preach the Gospel, but to go on to Jerusalem where He would ransom humankind back from the claims of sin and death. John and James were not mindful of Jesus' intent. They were trying to appear noble about taking personal offence for Him. Jesus told them that they did not know what spirit they were of. Their intent was not righteous but fleshly. They lacked the vantage point of God's will and purpose.

What does it mean to line up to the intent of heaven to ensure that I am walking in step with Jesus? First, there must be a right motivation or spirit. Since the spirit establishes attitude, the attitude must be right if we are to walk out the intent of a matter correctly. For the next couple of months we will deal with the motivation, and on the third month, we will follow up the two articles with the

way in which we must walk out a matter.

Since motivation determines environment, we must consider the present environment we live in as far as the world. The environment will reveal not only the spiritual temperature of this nation, but establish the type of battle Christians must wage to maintain the integrity, life or spirit behind their Christian walk and testimony. A good example of this is the kind of battle Christians who live in Muslim countries have to personally wage to maintain the integrity of their Christian life.

The environment that exists in America is that of being politically correct. In such an environment, there are no absolutes. This means that to advocate any type of absolute classifies a person as being narrow-minded, dogmatic, contrary, and out of touch with reality. In such a society the people are demanded to exercise tolerance towards diversity, while strong moral convictions are considered hateful, prejudicial, and as standing in the way of everyone coming together into a one-world community. In fact, in a politically correct society tolerance is to be maintained towards every type of lifestyle and philosophy except in the case of fundamental Christianity.

In a letter to the editor in our local paper, a man actually voiced the philosophy of such a society when he referred to getting rid of fundamental Christians. After all, those who advocate and stand for righteousness will not leave people in their preferred delusion that all will be well in a world where the concept and teachings of a holy God and His Law are eventually wiped out, allowing for everyone to live in peace and harmony.

Clearly, there has been a powerful move in this nation to obliterate the witness and testimony of the God of the Bible, along with His holy Law. His Law reveals the state of darkness in regard to people's preferences for wickedness, and as a result, these

individuals loathe such an intrusion into their delusion. They resent being identified as transgressors who are dead in their sin, and that they have no real means outside of Jesus' redemption by which their transgressions are paid for without it costing them everything, including their very souls.

There was a woman who came to us because her demons tormented her. Clearly, Satan possessed her. After contending with her demons for many hours, she admitted she was a witch who willfully married Satan. When asked why she chose the way of Satan, she confessed that she became angry with God when she found out she could not just live any old way. We eventually discovered that she simply wanted relief from the torment of the demons, but she did not want deliverance from the power they had over her life.

Good is considered evil in a tolerant society because it will not adjust to any compromise, and evil is considered good because its darkness placates, justifies, and condones all wicked philosophies, preferences, attitudes, and actions. Consider what the prophet Isaiah says about this type of state in *Isaiah 5:20*: "*Woe unto them who call evil, good, and good, evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*" Woe in this text means to express pain or grief. Its attitude is expressed best as "Oh, alas, I must face my day of reckoning, and experience the pain and grief of the bitter cup of my ways. Woe is me!" These words are because the Lord's vineyard, Israel, was in a state of utter spiritual ruin due to the people's unholy compromise and agreement with the pagans and their gods. In *Isaiah 5*, God actually pronounced six woes upon Israel. These woes were in relationship to those who refused to maintain the integrity of their spiritual inheritance as God's people. These people were described as wasting their lives with drinking and partying, encouraging iniquity as a means to justify partaking of the vanity of this world, defining righteousness as being evil in order

to embrace wickedness, considering themselves to be wise and prudent in being tolerant towards evil, and finding their strength and reality by par-taking of that which is worldly.

Tolerance is the attitude advocated to bring about and ensure the state of political correctness. It is interesting to look this word up in the dictionary. It points out the obvious. A tolerant person will reveal a moderately good attitude towards diversity no matter how much he or she might disagree with it, and such a person can be most agreeable or show sympathy or indulgence towards apparent and disagreeable differences. However, the other meaning of the word tolerance has to do with enduring something that will prove to have unfavorable effects down the line. In other words, tolerance allows something that is unfavorable to a healthy environment to grow in that environment without any opposition.

The attitude of tolerance never has to be directed towards righteousness, because to do right and being right in a matter will not harm, defy or rip at the fiber or character of something. It is important to point out that tolerance never gives way or submits to what it disagrees with; rather, it simply allows something that is contrary and destructive to be without confrontation or challenge. In the majority of cases, such tolerance is nothing more than a mask that hides destruction, a cloak that hides pride, a robe that disguises the indifference of hatred and prejudice, and a covering that justifies dishonorable actions and practices.

This is why it is important to point out that the attitude of tolerance, which is being pushed upon our society, is for the main purpose of allowing the disease and ways of sin to have free reign in our society. This free reign will be able to express itself in any form, as well as grow without experiencing any opposition. Since sin is leaven, the sins that are advocated as normal, acceptable and righteous will have the capacity to consume and take over this nation. However, evil does have limitations. Eventually, wicked societies cave in on themselves because there is no substance or character left to

maintain them, and/or they will be thoroughly judged by God.

Being in a tolerant society can cause Christians to become spiritually dull towards sin, worldly compromise and unholy agreements. This brings us to the battle that, as Christians, we must wage in this environment. We must choose to love the truth and hate what opposes, oppresses, and will ultimately destroy the souls of men. In summation, we must hate sin and wickedness. We know that righteous men such as Job possessed such hatred.

People think that by being tolerant towards that which opposes the righteous ways of God is a sign of love and wisdom. In a sense, tolerance is the world's substitution for godly love. However, as already pointed out, the lopsided tolerance that is being shoved on us is not love, but is the indifference of prejudice and hatred. Challenge the person who uses tolerance to hide and justify personal sin, and his or her indifference will express itself in unbridled hatred, something we witnessed during the recent presidential election.

Since February is the month in which we think about love, I want to take the next two months to talk about what the King James Version of the Bible refers to as charity. Charity, rather than love, is a good word to bring about a clearer picture of godly love. The reason for this is that the word love carries different emotional and sentimental connotations that will often cause a person to miss the intent of godly love. The word "charity" may also actually cause some to consider what the intent of this virtue is in regard to the Christian life.

The opposite of charity is pride. The attitude of the tolerance advocated in America is a disguise of pride. Pride is what motivates unregenerated people in their pursuits, passions and goals. Pride can serve as a premise, spirit, motive, attitude, look, feeling, and/or action. Likewise, charity should, and must, serve as Christians' premise, point of inspiration or motive, attitude, look, feeling, and action. Let us now consider how charity responds in each area.

The premise of pride is selfishness, but the premise of charity is *sacrifice* (*John 3:16*). Charity is willing to be sacrificial to ensure the spiritual

well-being of others. This was the premise God came from when He gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice. Because of His sacrifice, we now can embrace eternal life that is abundant, as well as a spiritual inheritance that awaits us in the next world. For Christians, the premise of charity will manifest itself as *selfless, consecrated service* in light of God's love.

The spirit motivating pride is the spirit of the world, which freely works within those who are disobedient. However, the spirit that should be compelling or constraining Christians is the *Holy Spirit*. The Spirit of God sheds abroad this incredible charity in our hearts. As this charity is worked into our lives by tribulations, patience, experience, and hope, we will express it through *joyful service* to God and others (*Deuteronomy 28:47; Romans 5:3-5; Ephesians 2:2*).

The attitude of pride is arrogance, but the attitude of charity is *meekness*. Meekness comes out of a state of humility, and is in subjection to the Holy Spirit. The truest form of charity displays humility and meekness in being sensitive to act in a way that is upright and beneficial on the behalf of others. For the Christian, such meekness expresses itself in doing *service that is honorable and upright*.

The look of pride is haughtiness, but the look of love is *compassion*. It is important to note the idea of "looking" is associated with how people intend to respond. Their response depends on how they actually see a matter in relationship to personal character, level of commitment, and the sense of responsibility they have towards others. Tolerance is actually a haughty indifference that often disguises itself with an outward show of sympathy. Granted, sympathy may show an emotional response, but it will remain indifferent when it comes to getting emotionally involved. On the other hand, compassion cannot ignore or remain indifferent to one who is truly in need or in trouble. This is why charity will rejoice only in the truth, and never in iniquity. It cannot remain indifferent to the destructive influences, workings and activities of sin upon the lives and relationships of people. Like the Good Samaritan, the look of compassion will cause one to do what he or she must

GOD'S CHILDREN, ONE AND ALL? By Jeannette Haley

Surely, the Apostle Paul foresaw our day and age when he warned: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax [grow, increase] worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" 2 Timothy 3:12, 13. You do not have to look far to find "seducers" who are not only deceived through and through, but are deceiving others as well. All you have to do is turn on the news and listen to a "progressive" commentator, or any one of the "New World Order" liberal politicians. Flip over to the religious broadcasts and you will find more seducers and deceivers than you can count. You can take your pick of just about any type of politically correct viewpoint you desire to hear. No wonder Jesus warned us to take heed concerning what we hear.



Since we all lean towards hearing what we want to hear, or are in agreement with, wisdom demands that we step back and discern what spirit is behind it. Just because something sounds "right" to our way of thinking, or believing or because it "feels good" does not mean that it is truth. Neither is it truthful to be always "positive" in the face of harsh reality. Positive thinking and biblical faith are poles apart. Furthermore, just because it appears that the majority of the population agrees concerning social and cultural issues does not mean that they are *right*.

Christians need never to forget that the spirit of truth and the spirit of error often run in parallel lines. Sometimes the lines overlap, which gives Satan great advantage. Thus, those who do not "have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14b) can be easily deceived. Therefore, we must train our spiritual ears to "tune in" and discern the spirit behind what our physical ears are hearing.

There is a saying that goes something like this: "If you repeat a lie

often enough, people will believe it is the truth." For example, when you hear the oft-repeated phrase "separation of church and state," do you think that this is a quote out of our Constitution? The truth is this phrase is not in the Constitution of the United States. What our Constitution does guarantee is that Congress cannot legislate religion such as, for example, the Roman Catholic Church and Islam are well known for throughout the history of the world.

The world planners of the New World Order have used a series of deceptions, or powerful hoaxes, to alter the thinking of the masses. Let me give you some examples. Again, keep in mind that their most powerful weapon is the same one that the Nazi's and the Communists have used for decades. It is nothing less than *propaganda*. One of the main propaganda pillars upholding the New Age "platform" is the theory of evolution. This theory is one of the greatest hoaxes ever perpetrated on humankind, yet entire social systems and governments base their worldview and belief systems on it.

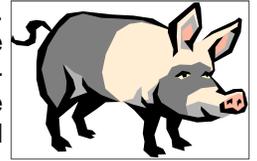
The truth is there is not one shred of scientific evidence that substantiates this ridiculous theory. Nevertheless, the influence of this insidious lie reaches into nearly every segment of society. Evolution stands in direct opposition to the claims of the Bible concerning the origin of creation. Thus, if a person swallows the poison pill of evolutionary nonsense, he or she will no longer regard human life apart from the animal kingdom. Therefore, an unborn child is not to be valued and cherished as a human being, but is identified as "just a fetus" which can be disposed of with little, if any, regard. After all, we are just another "evolved animal."

Of course, since we are merely evolved life forms, why have a moral code of right and wrong? The Bible, and our conscience, tells us what is right and what is wrong, but since we have decided to believe the unfounded gobbledygook of evolution, we no longer have to fear disobedience to God, and we can overrule our conscience by repeatedly doing what we would otherwise rule out as wrong. Eventually our conscience is silenced ("seared as with a hot iron") and so anything goes. We can live like a pig, look like a pig, and smell like a pig.

However, the life of a pig leads to

a dead-end road. At this point, the "evolved" pig discovers that life has no special meaning or personal purpose. It is all very depressing, actually. So, our descendant of an ape, in search of help, heads over to the next massive pillar of deception called psychology. Now, everybody in our "advanced" society knows that psychology offers the answer to every mental and emotional dilemma. Psychology, whether "secular" or "Christian" is not ever going to tell a person that sin, rebellion, and falling short of the glory of God, is the root cause of their stinky, pigpen of a life. Nope. What you will hear is how low your self-esteem is, and how you must think more highly of yourself. After all, the "god" of your "understanding" loves you. You are told that whatever you can believe, you can achieve, and "if it feels good, do it." It is okay because nothing is relevant. There are no absolutes. Therefore, if you feel attracted to the same sex, it is no big deal. God, if He does maybe exist somewhere, made you that way. Go, and sin all you want because, after all, in our evolved, progressive society, there is no such thing as sin, God's judgment and eternal hell. After all, we are all "children of God."

Now that our evolved and psychoanalyzed, immoral, liberal thinker has learned to love him or herself, it is time to work for a worthy cause. Therefore, off to the third most popular pillar of subtle subversion, one that is always waiting with arms outstretched to receive and deceive. The name of this seductive pillar is humanism. Now our polished pig is ready to launch out into the vast jungle of good works. The choices on the "do-gooder" playing field are utterly endless. Everything and everybody from A to Z needs help. Save the Amazon, the animals, Africa and un-Christian anthropology. Save the trees, save the wilderness and by all means, save poor "mother earth" from the scourge of humanity. Save the polar bears, save the whales, save the wolves, kill a baby. Oops! Sorry about that, I faltered and fell off the track for a moment.



To the abject delight of our “enlightened,” progressively evolved, self-loving, liberal-thinking, anti-fundamentalist, do-gooder, within the realm of humanism lays an endless smorgasbord of “religion.” Working hand in glove with the world’s pagan religions, the post-modern, harlot church is leading the way toward the much longed-for one-world, Babylonian, politically correct religion. Within this grotesque, false “church”, every foul and unclean thing imaginable is among her members. Tares among the wheat. Goats, wolves and pigs among the sheep. Tares, goats, wolves and pigs practicing idolatry, yoga, hypnosis, contemplative prayer, witchcraft, sexual perversion, pornography, homosexuality, fornication, abortion and every other wicked device known to man. Yet, each will readily affirm that they are “God’s child.” Some have even said a “sinner’s prayer” once, while others claim to have “always known” God. However, the path they are walking is the broad road to destruction.

Such is the all-embracing “love” of the spirit of the New Age. Imprinted over the seductive “golden arches” of this New Age religion are the words: “WELCOME, ONE AND ALL. GOD LOVES YOU. YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD. YOU ARE DIVINE.”

Now our “good” humanist can have his (or her) cake and eat it too! What could be more titillating to the senses, more euphoric to the religious sensibilities than the promise of utopia, both in this world and the nebulous future? All one has to do is to believe in yourself (and your own “goodness” of course) and to realize the divine being that you are (in spite of your ape-like ancestors.) While all of this convoluted, unfounded, ridiculous, unrealistic nonsense makes a born again Christian (or a common-sense person who thinks critically) feel like puking, it all makes perfect sense to the indoctrinated, deluded, damned soul, because, after all, they have “experienced” the “other dimension”—a dimension that the hated fundamentalist has never tasted (nor does he or she desire to!) At this point, the door is flung wide open for Satan to come in and reign through *pride*.

In his book, “A Time of Departing,” Christian author, Ray Yungen, writes:

“The New Age Christian—An accepted Oxymoron. All this popularity with meditative mysticism presents a very new and perplexing challenge for evangelical Christianity. We are beginning to encounter the *New Age Christian*. This new term describes someone who remains in his or her home church and professes the Christian faith but has also incorporated various aspects of the New Age worldview into his or her life. Philosopher David Spangler was very optimistic about the possibility of this integration when he wrote, ‘The point is that the New Age is here ... it builds itself and forms itself in the midst of the old.’”

Yungen goes on to explain: “What has fueled the momentum of this trend is the buffet dining approach that has marked American religious sensibilities in the last twenty years—you take what you want and leave the rest. Americans are picking and blending religions as if they were ordering espressos: pick your espresso blend, but you still get coffee—pick your spiritual path, but you still get God. Whatever suits your spiritual tastes, you bring together. The result is hybrid New Age spirituality.” (Pgs. 99, 100)

You may be saying, “There you go again, riding the same old horse called ‘Depressing’ while keeping time to the same old negative drumbeat.” Let me assure you, once the Prince of Peace establishes His throne in Jerusalem, and His kingdom on earth, I will be riding a horse called “Rejoice” while singing a joyful tune. Nevertheless, until that day, the commission to sound the warning remains the same. *“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; and his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he*

hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul” Ezekiel 3:18-21.

Paul wrote in *Colossians 1:28*, *“Whom we preach warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”* Warnings abound in our world. Storm warnings, fire warnings, flood warnings, mud slide warnings, toxic toys, food and drug warnings, pet food warnings, virus warnings, economic warnings, terrorist attack warnings, riot warnings, and so forth. Last but certainly not least, the collapse of capitalism warnings, which involve job losses, home losses, and now warnings of food shortages. All of this can be overwhelming.

Yet, when all is said and done, the warnings that exceed them all are God’s warnings. To those who refuse Him, He warns, *“I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not answer; when they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not”* Isaiah 66:4. And, *Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”* Isaiah 55:6, 7.

The future of both the saved and the unsaved is summed up in this “cut and dried” statement of the Prophet Daniel: *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”* Daniel 12:2. Undoubtedly, many of those who will spend eternity in shame and everlasting contempt truly believed that they were a “child of God.” Such were the Pharisees, the most religious people of Jesus’ day. They boasted to him, *“We be Abraham’s seed...”* John 8:33. In Jesus’ discourse to them, He pointed out,

Continued Page 5, Column 2

do to help a person by making the necessary commitment to go the distance required. Such compassion will show itself in *service that completely identifies with, and enters into the plight of another*. This means making all personal resources available to help lift the burden of the individual who is in need or in trouble.

The feeling of pride is self-exaltation or an unrealistic feeling of euphoria because everything seems to be going the person's way; but such a feeling is temporary and fickle. However, the feeling of charity is *benevolence*. Benevolence is naturally kind; therefore, it is always ready to show kindness and gentleness in a situation. In fact, benevolence will never stop to consider personal cost or inconvenience. As a result, benevolence expresses itself in committed, *sacrificial service* towards others.

The act of pride can express itself in good deeds tainted by selfishness, or it can come out in some form of cruelty such as indifference and mocking. The act of charity is *submission*. Godly submission gives way to that which is worthy of service for the benefit of the whole. Benefit in this text points to that which is good or moral. Such goodness will ensure the integrity of the service rendered, as well as the spiritual well-being of those who are being served. Regardless of the cost, submission considers all service to God as being *reasonable, or the least it can do* in light of the incredible charity God has shown each of us.

This brings us to the reality of this charity: it cannot be earned. Everything we receive from God is because each of us is a charitable case before the throne. Clearly, we are at the mercy of someone greater than we are, and worthy of devoted service. We all know that one day we will answer to Him for what type of service we have done in this body.

People can deny God exists, outlaw His Bible and moral Law, persecute and mock His servants, call His ways evil, and rage against His immovable truths about sin and salvation, but in the end each of these individuals will stand before this

righteous God on a day of reckoning. Every lie will give way to truth, every form of opposition against Him will melt in fear, and every excuse will be silenced as His righteous Law is exalted as the true standard of justice. At this time these people will be declared guilty and doomed.

My challenge to every Christian is that each of you must refuse to give in to the present, convenient attitude of tolerance in order to get along in this world. Rather, I want to encourage every one of you to fan the flame of your love for God, His truth and each other into a greater fire. My prayer is that this fire will burn up any residue of your self-life in order to refine and enlarge the charity that is already present in your life. May you walk according to, in, and because of this eternal virtue. May it truly become your premise, motivation, attitude, look, feeling, and act in your life before God and your service to others on His behalf. †

God's Children? Con't.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" verse 44.

To be a child of God a person must be redeemed through Christ. A person cannot be born into this world in the flesh, go to church, or do good works and claim to be a child of God. *Galatians 4:4-7* says, *"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."* Only those who are born again by the Spirit of God are God's children. (See *John 3:1-21*.) The Word of God makes it abundantly clear that God's children hear His voice, obey Him, and are indwelt by His Spirit. If a person is not indwelt by His Spirit, does not obey Him and abide in Him, he (or she) is none of His.

In conclusion, be not deceived

when a suave, seductive image stands before you and claims to be a "child of God." It may not be politically correct to test the fruit and discern the spirit, but obedience to God and standing for truth is never going to be politically correct. "Politically correct" is not a biblical term, doctrine, or principle, but it was and is the theme of socialism and the Nazi regime.

Be careful, very careful, what you hear, what you believe, and whom you follow. Your eternal destiny depends on it. †

**GOODNESS IS IN GOD
ALONE**

By William Law

"All possible goodness, whether named or nameless, was in God from all eternity. Therefore, for all eternity it must be inseparable from Him; it can be nowhere but where God is. Before God created anything, there was only One who was good. Likewise, even after God created the innumerable hosts of blessed and holy and heavenly beings, there was and still is only One who is good, and He is God (*Matt. 19:17*).

"All that can be called goodness, holiness, or heavenly inclinations in us is not our own, nor can it be considered the result of any of our own powers. Rather, all that is called divine goodness and virtue in us is nothing but the goodness of God manifesting itself according to how our created nature is able to receive it. This is the unalterable relationship between the Creator and the creature. Forever and ever, goodness can only belong to God. It is as essential to Him and inseparable from Him as His own unity.

"God could not make the creature to be great and glorious in itself; this is as impossible as it would be for God to create beings who are not dependent upon Him. *'The heavens,'* said David, *'declare the glory of God'* (*Ps. 19:1*), and no creature can declare any other glory but that of God. If we wish to say that a divine or heavenly creature shows forth its own natural power, it might as well be said that the earth shows forth its own handiwork. (See *Psalm 19:1*)"

"You Will Receive Power" - Pgs. 8, 9

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

THE UNWISE STEWARD, AND STEWARDSHIP

Q: *Could you clear up my confusion by explaining to me the parable of the unwise steward in Luke 16:1-13? It appears as if Christ is complimenting the wicked steward for being dishonest.*

A: This is one parable I have struggled with, but writer and teacher William MacDonald gave the best explanation I have ever heard about it in his book on discipleship. Jesus is trying to bring contrast to His own disciples as to responsible stewardship. He is using the unjust steward, who represents the wisdom of the world, to show how a good steward will use the necessary means to secure his or her future. Granted, the unwise steward used his master's goods to secure his future well-being by making friends who would watch out for him when he no longer had employment, but he understood the necessity of taking the required action to do so.

Jesus was trying to challenge His disciples as to the type of investment they were making in regards to His kingdom. Many of God's stewards end up living for this present world instead of preparing for their eternal habitation. They have been given everything from their master's hand to invest into His kingdom as a means to secure a habitation in the next world, but many fail to be faithful to use such investments in a proper way.

Since unfaithful stewards misuse what others have entrusted to them, they will not personally be entrusted with greater riches. Of course, such riches will be given in the next life to those who prove to be faithful stewards.

The challenge is quite clear. People of the world understand that they must take the necessary steps to secure their future, but some of God's servants fail to see the need to prepare for their future habitation by making the necessary eternal investments as faithful, responsible stewards of God.

*"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
—Luke 16:13b—*

COMMENTS & EMAIL

[Comments on January NL] "Principle vs. ordinance, law, duty—absolutely BRILLIANT, Rayola!!!! As you know, I'm in contact with quite a few 'Messianics,' and unfortunately, they will NOT admit to the simplicity of this truth that you've written so beautifully! They want to REMAIN under the law, and I think it's because it gives them a feeling of 'religiosity'! What a sad commentary for them. I thank God that He has shown me the principle, and removed the burden of the law from me! Whom the Son sets free is free IN-DEED! You've done such a splendid job of this, Sis, and I'm so thankful that you continue to fulfill God's calling in your life—what great manna is offered at the buffet table of GSM!

"*DEPRESSED?*" Jeannette, thank you SO MUCH for addressing such a pertinent issue within Believers!!! As you know, I was caught in the trap and burden of all that you spoke of, before God delivered me from the Word of Faith CULT! One was actually anathema if they dared to present themselves as mere HUMANS! Also, methinks that a LOT of depression is arising these days due to NOSTALGIA! I honestly believe that it is a devious spirit that has controlled many people for such a very long time. They long for what once was, rather than trusting God for what is! Hand in hand with this spirit is the spirit of worry—worrying about the immediate day and/or the future. These two are Siamese twins in the spirit realm What a SUPERB job you've done with this topic and article! I'm sure Adam and Eve were beyond depressed when God drove them out of the Garden of Eden. As I read this sentence, it crossed my mind that God is the 'originator' of foreclosures!

"*IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S PRESENCE AND GOD'S GLORY?*" Rayola's Q & A Corner—Now there's something I did NOT know! Thank you! This is why I'm always so excited to read the NL— it's not just exercise for the gray matter—it truly speaks spirit to spirit and feeds my soul!

"Once again, you have all outdone yourselves with the feast you've given

us this month. May God overwhelm you all with His mercies and blessings in this upcoming year!" - FL

"I do receive the daily devotions and have enjoyed them for the last year, that was a lot of work for you. And yes your 'newsletters' come on time each month, thank you for that also And, happy New Year to you folks also, and I wonder after watching the News this morning how much time we really do have left, with that serious war over in Israel, I wish I didn't get scared about those things, when it is going to happen according to the Bible. I appreciate your time in emailing over this last year and be blessed for all you do to educate people about what is right." - WA

"Well, Israel and Hamas are at it and Hamas had better realize that it is impossible to come up against the God of Jacob and win, the sooner they realize that, the better it will be for them. Oh, and Obama (America's new god) is ready to be received and worshipped come Jan. 20. What a travesty! And, of course, the religious charlatans continue their greedy scams and gross idolatry as they continue to lead the masses of dumbed-down, biblically illiterate souls down the path to destruction. It seems as though things continue as they were, but not for long. Jesus is coming to set all things in order, when I do not know. But the signs are pointing to real soon! Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen." - MD

"Wanted to let you know that I have resumed my study of Rayola's book, 'The Anatomy of Sin'. Very enlightening, informative, and thought-provoking. Also have read some of the January Newsletter article on the Sabbath. Excellent! Thank you for your continued encouragement to walk according to the ways of God as revealed in His Holy Word. May the grace of God continue to be abundant toward you as you labor in Jesus' Name." - MD

"The last newsletter was so good also, as are all of them. Felt the articles had such good information and truth to share with others." - MT

"The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not." - Thomas Jefferson