

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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

WISHFUL THINKING OR PREPARATION?

Discipleship Series 12

By Rayola Kelley

Last month I dealt with the subject of faith that allows us to experience the favor or grace of God. Faith enables us to walk out our Christian life in victory. After all, faith allows us to stand firmly on the Rock of Ages, instead of being shipwrecked on it by the various winds of ignorance, delusion and unbelief. Such stability ensures us that the robber (Satan) cannot steal what has been truly grounded in Jesus (*John 10:10; Ephesians 6:10-13*).

Faith also allows us to withstand the different and sometimes contrary waves of temptation brought on by the attractions and philosophies of this present world, or age, in which we live. As we line up to the Cornerstone (Jesus) of our spiritual lives, we will be strengthened against the bombardment of that which is temporary (worldly), seductive (demonic), and heretical (cultic, religious, and antichrist), allowing us to withstand that which could subdue or kill the work of the Spirit and His Word in our lives.

Genuine faith also ensures us that when the evil forces bring false accusation against the immutable source of our trust, strives to oppress the spiritual confidence and liberty that establishes us as believers in our heavenly assurance, and with hatred and persecution tries to destroy the eternal life that is brought forth in us because of our testimony of Christ, we will remain standing in light of our heavenly leadership and authority. Truly, genuine faith towards God is what allows us to walk in and according to the life of Christ in us, stand in the power of His Spirit, withstand with the authority of His Word, and when all is said and done, we will remain standing because of who He is.

It is of the utmost importance that we understand how genuine faith towards God enables us to walk, stand, run, and eventually finish the course of our earthly journey. It must be first noted that the real faith first delivered to the saints has been under attack from day one. Many of the epistles are actually contending for the one true faith in which the pilgrim Church was clearly established.

Today is no exception. Genuine faith continues to come under attack as heretics have tried to abuse it for their own purposes, adjust it to their heretical views, undermine it to replace it with their worldly, New Age methods, and redefine it according to their particular gospel. As a result, it can be hard to try to come to terms with the faith that pleases God in the midst of the many false presentations of it (*Hebrews 11:6*).

Hence, enter the Scriptural warnings. Jesus questioned if He would find real faith when He returned. The Apostle Paul talked about faith that is found to be worthless if it is not securely placed in Jesus. He also mentioned that it could become shipwrecked if people fail to hold on to a good conscience concerning the matters of God (*Luke 18:8; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Timothy 1:19*).

If religious people are not operating according to genuine faith directed towards the God of the Bible, what are they walking in and according to? As I have listened to different individuals' perception of faith, it often operates according to two arenas: 1) the fleshly arena where the flesh or experiences are being exalted in accordance to how something makes a person feel, and 2) people's particular preferences that have been greatly influenced by man-made religion, occult inspired methods, or worldly philosophies. In such arenas, people are putting faith in the type of environment they can set up according to their beliefs, practices and personal understanding.

Since we cannot please God

without genuine faith, it is vital that we understand what real faith is and how it works. We must get rid of our unrealistic notions and embrace the faith that God wants to bring forth in our lives. Let us now consider the contrast, or comparison, of real faith with false presentations in regard to the areas that faith affects in our spiritual walk.

Perception of God: Genuine faith is solely directed towards the God of the Bible. Faith is a choice that chooses to believe God by believing His Word as being inspired and true. It is active in that it is ready to walk according to what the Word declares. Because faith chooses to believe God, it allows a person to discover God in His righteous, perfect ways. Clearly, active faith will result in a person's perception of God being correctly established and fine-tuned. If a person has a right perception of God, he or she will be able to allow God to be God, and trust that He will work out the details according to His eternal plan.

The problem with a false presentation of faith is that it is based on an idol, an unrealistic concept or an erroneous belief about God. Since a person's concept of God is vague, unrealistic, or wrong, his or her faith will usually be based on what God can do, not based on who He is. Such individuals will walk according to their presumptions about God and seek Him on the basis of orchestrating their life according to their personal perceptions, needs and desires. However, God does not operate according to what He can do, but who He is. Sadly, these people often put God to a foolish test because of their pseudo faith. These individuals have failed to understand that God's ways are determined by His attributes and not by His power. Such people end up erring in their hearts about Him, and will end up walking in unbelief towards Him because He fails to perform according to their understanding (*Hebrews 3:10-14*).

Reality: Another area that genuine faith enables a person to properly confront is reality. People have a hard time

with the harshness that plagues life. They are forever trying to become an exception to the rule, rather than accept the harsh fact that they are subject to the same life and similar challenges as everyone else. People, in their attempts to control reality, often devise means in which to protect themselves against the realities of life; or, they develop some code or practice that will supposedly earn them the right to remain untouched by the various challenges of life.

Hence, enters the temptation and futile attempt to control life with a heretically inspired faith. Obviously, in order to control the challenging or sorrowful reality that can intrude into people's lives, they must know how to control God. Those who operate according to the heretical belief and practices such as Positive Confession or Contemplative prayer believe they can control God regardless of His will, with their very words, their minds or with their prayers. They perceive that they can speak, imagine, or develop a right type of environment to bring something into existence, or in some cases they can use God's promises on Him to force Him to give way to their desires.

How can one honestly control reality? The truth is no one can control reality. People are like corks on the ocean of life. The winds of adversity will blow and the waves of destruction will come crashing down into each of our lives, testing our character, exposing our point of reliance, and shaking every false way until it ceases to stand. The only thing we have control over is how these various challenging intrusions are going to affect our lives.

Genuine faith is not used to change our realities; rather childlike faith mixed with the wisdom and strength of God allows us to honestly face present reality. God cannot impact our lives with liberating truth unless we are dealing in reality about a matter. The reason most people resent reality is because it clearly exposes each of their inability to change a matter, their need for God's guidance and intervention at all times, and His abiding faithfulness to see them through situations.

By putting our confidence in the Lord during such dark times, we will

allow Him to take us by the hand and guide us through each difficulty. This brings us to the next important point of faith, it prepares us.

Preparation: Most people have God in a controllable box of theologies, doctrines and religious notions. This box allows them to maintain their comfort zones, as well as operate from what I call wishful thinking. Such wishful thinking entails the concept or the idea that bad things only happen to bad people; therefore, it will not happen to my family or me because we are church-going Christians. However, bad things do happen to good people. No one person or family is exempt from the curse of sorrow, despair, loss, and death that plagues the world in which we live. Such an unrealistic notion may be pleasant and desirable as it allows such individuals to live in fantasy or denial about the challenges that life can present to them at any time, but it will also prevent them from being prepared to stand and endure when confronted by the challenges of life.

Since we, as Christians, are to walk by faith, we are to continually advance in our Christian life in taking on the new man, in our understanding about God, and in our spiritual growth. Active faith will not allow us to put confidence in any type of status or convenient works, while we simply try to wish the fullness of our life in Christ into existence; rather, it will cause us to go forward according to the leading of the Spirit and godly instruction to discover life. It is not a matter of thinking about the incredible life we can have in Christ, but it is about experiencing it on a daily basis. Faith is not a matter of hoping for this life; rather it is about walking in expectation of inheriting the promises of it. The Bible clearly tells us that what has not found its origins in true faith, or has not been properly mixed with it, finds its origins in the sin of unbelief (*Romans 14:23; Hebrews 3:19-4:2*).

Hebrews 6:12 states this about faith: "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Note that we are not to be slothful towards our life in Christ, wishful in thinking about the type of life we could have in Him, or hoping that somehow this life will come to us, we are to be active in following the faithful example of those

who truly inherited the promises of this life through patience. Patience not only points to the character to endure, but it allows that endurance to be developed through the trying experiences of life.

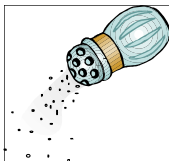
We are clearly living in precarious times. Genuine faith will cause us to live in expectation of our eternal future, while faithfully occupying in this present age until our Lord comes for His Church. But, it will not allow us to live in wishful thinking and denial about the times in which we live. Faith will always choose to believe and consider matters according to what God's Word says about the times we live in, regardless of how frightening or uncertain they may be. We can make plans concerning our present world, but we must realistically avoid holding tightly to them. James tells us in *James 4:13-15* that by making plans, in light of this present world, as if we can bring such matters about, is evil. After all, our life is a vapor that quickly vanishes, and the only real declaration we can make about the things of this world is "if the Lord wills it, then it shall be." This brings us to the final point of genuine faith, that of faithfulness.

Faithfulness: Faithfulness requires endurance. We know that God is faithful to see us through a matter to its completion, including salvation. People can put their faith in God's power, personal words, religious activities, and deeds, while living in denial or according to wishful thinking, but such points of reliance lack faithfulness to see a person through to the end. In fact, most people end up disillusioned, but such disillusionment is often directed at God and not at their failure to walk by sincere, child-like faith.

Genuine faith possesses the quality of faithfulness. Although there are people who are aware of the times in which we live, they may or may not be preparing for them. Many consider such preparation in terms of physically being ready for the grave uncertainties that are coming upon this world, such as famine. However, preparation for the Christian is in relationship to spiritual preparation more than physical preparation. Granted, there is nothing wrong with seeking God as to how to physically prepare for the times we live in, but as believers we must realize that we must be prepared to stand in

SALT-FREE AND SHADY? By Jeannette Haley

Have you ever been on a salt-free diet? I remember when the “latest health scare” was the issue of salt. Granted, regular table salt is not a healthy substitute for “real” or mineral salt, but looking back on those “salt-free” days, I was just as clueless as the rest of the gullible public when it came to the trends of the times. I distinctly remember making a huge pot of vegetable beef soup, without salt. Believe me, that concoction would not have won me my very own spot on the Food Network. Try eating a hard cooked egg, chips or popcorn without salt. It’s like, what’s the point? You might as well munch down a bowl of cheap dog food.



Thankfully we now know the “rest of the news,” and that is that sea salt is essential to life. According to Wikipedia, “The role of salt in the Bible is relevant to understanding Hebrew society during the Old Testament and New Testament periods. Salt is a necessity of life and was a mineral that was used since ancient times in many cultures as a seasoning, a preservative, a disinfectant, a component of ceremonial offerings, and as a unit of exchange. The Bible contains numerous references to salt. In various contexts, it is used metaphorically to signify permanence, loyalty, durability, fidelity, usefulness, value, and purification.”

Other interesting information about salt in the Old Testament from Wikipedia says, “In Leviticus 2:13, God commanded that ‘And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.’ Salt was cast on the burnt offering (Ezekiel 43:24) and was part of the incense (Exodus 30:35). Part of the temple offering included salt (Ezra 6:9).”

“Salt was also used to ratify covenants. In Numbers 18:19, God promises to provide, through the offerings of His people, for His priests forever: ‘All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to

you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you.’ Salt cannot be burned or destroyed. Perhaps because of salt’s durability, God used it as a metaphor to indicate that as salt keeps its flavor, so the Lord’s covenant with the priesthood was durable. More likely, however, is that the ‘covenant of salt’ (or, in some versions, ‘inviolable covenant’) refers to a practice that rendered contracts irrevocable during the time period in which the Bible was written. In biblical times, men carried pouches of salt on their belts. When a pact, promise, or contract was made, the men from each of the participating parties would intermingle the salt from their own pouches with the salt from the pouches of the other party. This reminded the men that they could not retrieve their own salt from the other pouch, symbolizing the fact that they could not go back on their word.

“Another reference to the use of salt to ratify a covenant occurs at Chronicles 13:5. At the beginning of this chapter, Abijah, King of Judah and rightful heir to David’s throne, is at war with King Jeroboam, who has taken control of Israel. Before Jeroboam’s destruction, Abijah speaks of the Davidic Covenant: ‘Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt?’ Here, salt refers to God’s irrevocable pledge and intended loyalty in fulfilling the Davidic covenant and God’s desire for the loyalty of David’s lineage to Him if the people are to enjoy the blessings of the covenant. The preservative quality of salt represents the fidelity or loyalty intended in keeping the covenant.

“Newborn babies (because of what the Lord commanded) were rubbed with salt to promote good health. A reference to this practice is in Ezekiel 16:4: ‘As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.’

“In the book of Genesis, chapter 19 the wife of Lot was turned into a pillar of salt when she disobeyed the

command of God and looked back at the city of Sodom whilst fleeing from its destruction. Some Christians see this to mean literal salt whilst some think it refers to ‘rock salt.’”

In the teachings and parables of Jesus, He often illustrated them with those things that were relevant to the lives of the people. Concerning salt, in *Matthew 5:13* He said, “*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*” “Savour” in this context means “to become insipid; to make (act) as a simpleton; become fool, make foolish.” In reference to the salt of the earth, Jesus is saying that His people in every generation are the essential “salt” that brings life to those who are spiritually dead.

However, before we become puffed up about how important we think we are, remember that Jesus always brings a sobering contrast, and this verse is no exception. He makes it very clear that it is possible for the salt to lose its “savour” which renders it not only useless, but also so contemptible that it will be thrown out and trampled underfoot. He is warning the church of the consequences if they fail to be the salt of the earth, thus beyond remedy, having become foolish as well as utterly worthless. This warning becomes more personal when you realize that salt loses its savor when it loses its properties because of environmental factors. According to James M. Freeman, salt produced by the evaporation of sea-water in hot countries sometimes loses its saline properties. The same result is also sometimes seen in impure rock-salt that has long been exposed to the air. When such is the case, nothing can be done with it but to throw it out onto the roadway, where men and beasts trample it down (“*Manners & Customs of the Bible*” page 335). Other sources report that salt becomes unsavory and worthless once it is diluted with other elements.

Following Jesus’ statement concerning the salt, He went on to declare in *Matthew 5:14-16*, “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men*

light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The light within us does not shine so that we can attract people to ourselves; instead, it is the light of Christ that draws people to Himself. Therefore, our "good works" are not to bring glory to us, but to God alone who is worthy of all glory and praise.

When Jesus appeared to Saul as he made his way to Damascus seeking for authority to persecute "followers of the way," Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" Acts 26:14-18. [Emphasis added.]

This darkness means obscurity, or shady. We know that Satan works his subtle seductions through the darkness of obscurity lest the light of truth exposes his lies and deceit. Throughout the Scriptures, light and truth are associated with God and His righteousness while Satan's false light is darkness and destruction. Underneath all is the inescapable issue of SIN. Regardless of how modern man has devised ways to downplay, ignore, deny, redefine, intellectualize, and just plain mock the fact of sin, Jesus made it very clear what man's problem is. He said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are

wrought in God" John 3:19-21.

Immediately after the Apostle Paul's first encounter with Jesus, the great light that he had seen blinded his physical eyes. Through this time of physical darkness he knew that the light that he had been walking in was a false light; now he knew the true light of the world. Moreover, the true light of the world had called him to turn people from Satan's darkness to the light. Jesus was establishing His church as the salt and the light. The Apostle Peter wrote, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" 1 Peter 2:8.

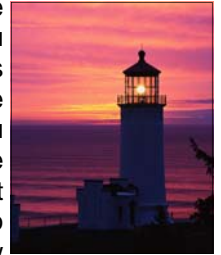
Nearly twenty years ago the Lord put Rayola and me together as a team. I will never forget, during a time of prayer, Rayola's heart cry, "Lord, make us the salt and the light." The simplicity, yet profoundness, of this heartfelt prayer went through my spirit like a two-edged sword. The "salt and the light." Didn't that mean more than just attending church once or twice a week? Didn't that mean being always "salty" wherever we were, in any circumstance however obscure, unpopular, overlooked, uncomfortable, or misunderstood, with our "light" burning? Didn't being the "salt and the light" mean a *state of being*? In other words, first presenting our "bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is [our] reasonable service"? (Romans 12:1)

Both salt and light have the ability to attract. For example, in Montana's Glacier National Park, there is a mountainside with a natural salt lick. Tourists can park and quietly watch the mountain sheep making their way down to the salt lick from great heights. It's fascinating to watch these surefooted animals, both young and old, as they follow one another to this abundant source of salt.

If you have ever gone on a tour of an underground cave, you will no doubt recall the moment when the tour guide switches his or her flashlight off. It is an eerie feeling not being able to see anything whatsoever because of the total absence of light. Everyone sighs in relief when the guiding light is switched back on.

More often than not (and this was true for myself as well) Christians who long to be the salt and the light define this mandate from the Lord in ways that can be burdensome, and out of line with God's will for them. Our God is a *personal* God. Where one person is called to be the salt and the light may not necessarily be where God is calling you or me. Nevertheless, wherever we find ourselves in this sin-sick, dark world, we are to be the salt and the light.

Some of you may remember the wonderful song, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are". The writer of this song, Ina D. Ogdon, (1913), early in her life had hoped to preach on the Chautauqua circuit. However, her father's illness forced her to abandon her plans for an evangelistic career, in order to care for him at home. She wrote these encouraging words showing how one can serve the Lord in many different ways and circumstances. In other words, make the best of where you find yourself. (Music: Charles H. Gabriel). The song goes: "Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do, Do not wait to shed your light afar, To the many duties ever near you now be true, Brighten the corner where you are. (Refrain) Brighten the corner where you are! Brighten the corner where you are! Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar; Brighten the corner where you are! Just above are clouded skies that you may help to clear, Let not narrow



self your way debar; Though into one heart alone may fall your song of cheer, Brighten the corner where you are. (Refrain) Here for all your talent you may surely find a need, Here reflect the bright and Morning Star; Even from your humble hand the Bread of Life may feed, Brighten the corner where you are. (Refrain)"

Here is where those *individuals* who are the salt and the light depart from the social gospel of the apostate church. Apostasy, the result of unbelief and rebellion, manages to maintain an outward form, or show, of acceptable religion, which can come

faith against the present darkness, withstand by faith with truth, and remain standing even if it might cost us our lives, as we know them.

Without faithfulness that is established in the faith walk, we will not be able to stand or endure to the end. After all, it is the active walk of faith that makes us open to the leading of the Spirit, as we are being prepared to truly stand.

Are you faithfully walking by faith, allowing the Lord to prepare you spiritually for the times we live in or you operating from the premise of wishful thinking, that all will ultimately turn out alright? Wishful thinking might keep people in an ignorant state, but it will never change the harsh wind or waves of circumstances or the impact they might have on our lives. Wishful thinking will not only cause you to become shipwrecked in your faith, but it will also produce disillusionment and unbelief towards God. †

RAYOLA’S Q & A CORNER

“RIGHTS”

Q: *My question may seem out of the extraordinary, but I have been hearing how more government control means that we as citizens lose more rights. I also know I have had certain rights allotted to me as a child of God. I want to understand how such rights work in our lives and what it would mean for us to lose them.*

A: I compliment you on your question, but I have to admit my answer may not be very encouraging as far as this present age that we live in. To understand rights (expectation or inheritance) you must do so in light of laws (environment), privileges (conditions), and opportunities (possibilities). Let me best summarize these subjects to bring them into proper focus.

Rights have to do with maintaining a certain quality of lifestyle, which includes personal choice or preference according to a person’s moral conscience. This lifestyle includes such matters as being able to wor-

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under different guises or titles. However, the spirit behind it remains the same. Thus, just as there is a cultural war in America between the “liberals” and the “conservatives,” there is likewise a war between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Those in the apostate church worship a mystical “Jesus” that the pilgrim church never knew—a Jesus that fits in quite comfortably with the plans of the Babylonian, one-world-religion people. Beware of the redefined, unbiblical, “modern Jesus.” He is antichrist, and cannot save anyone.

By contrast, Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* John 8:12. While most people associated with some form of religious instruction or practice, would agree that Jesus is the light of the world, how many of them also “follow” Him or even know what that means? We can get all mushy and sentimental about “sweet Jesus, the light of the world,” loving our concept of Him, but are we willing to deny self, pick up our cross and follow Him to Calvary? Are we able to drink of the cup of self-denial and suffering from which He drank? The question is, is the Jesus you “follow” leaving you to your own devices and agendas of seeking to live and look like the world? If the latter is true for you, then you are still in darkness, and without the light of life. *1 John 1:6 says, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”.*

We know that the darkness of Satan’s kingdom is rapidly spreading over the earth, swallowing whole nations in its insidious grip. We know that it will culminate in a one-world government that will seek to eliminate the “salt and the light.” Nevertheless, we also know that in the midst of this terrible time, God still has His true Church who will stand distinct as the salt and the light of the world, made up of individuals who have separated themselves from the apostate, harlot Laodicean church

system.

Where are you today? Are you assured that you are indeed the salt and the light, pointing people to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only means of salvation? Is *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”*? Do you have enough “oil in your lamp” to keep you burning to the end? On the other hand, maybe you are one who is passively content to ignore the approaching storm that will usher in the greatest time of spiritual darkness this world has ever seen. Perhaps you have been so caught up with church involvement, activities, entertainment, programs, movements and a host of other man-centered *stuff* to last a lifetime that you have left Jesus behind. If so, you need to wake up to the reality that you are “salt-free” and in “shady darkness”—and one whom the Lord Jesus Christ will reject at His coming.

Jesus said,



“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Will you open the door of your heart to Him before it is too late? †

LETTERS & EMAILS

“Have you seen the message from Jay Sekulou about his outrage over the Homeland Security release saying Christians, pro-life people, and veterans are subversive? Guess we shouldn’t be shocked. He’s taking this on in his radio talk shows. We’re being attacked by a godless government!” - ID

“Thank you for all you have done for me and my family, I can’t thank you enough. You have been so appreciated. You have taught me so much throughout the years, and I am so very thankful to have you in my life.” - Age 13 - ID

“Good newsletter. Jeannette, your article packed a powerful punch!” - ID

“I truly DO think of what the saints before us have endured—which leaves me always wondering ‘when is the axe gonna fall on me!’ I’m certainly not even in the same class of those who’ve gone before, and if it happened to them, who am I to think I will escape the same fate? I love you gals for being such STRAIGHTSHOOTERS! God bless you beyond all you can ever ask, think, or imagine!!!!” - FL

ship without fear of persecution and, if the initiative is there, seek after a better quality of life or status without being stopped by prejudicial barriers of class, money, culture, and religion. Such rights also give people the liberty to pursue, uphold and maintain such a lifestyle. In God’s economy, He has made basic rights available to every human being to pursue the best quality of life that can be obtained in His kingdom. These rights have to do with believers being His children, living in expectation as heirs to an eternal inheritance. However, His holy Law is what determines what is honorable and acceptable.

Righteous laws will protect the rights of people to pursue and maintain honorable (moral) lifestyles. Being morally responsible protects the integrity of personal rights. Such laws protect against dishonorable people from abusing other people’s basic rights to life, property, and freedom to believe or worship God, as well as living in peace. After all, when others abuse the rights of another person, they are denying him or her of the basic rights that should be allotted to every human being. To deny, abuse or neglect the moral obligation behind such rights will cause people to end up losing them.

Privileges include rights, but rights and privileges are different. Rights are available to everyone to pursue an honorable life in a moral, responsible society, while privileges are given as a means to benefit a person’s life. However, privileges are restricted by Law. Rights can be denied or lost through abuse of strength or power, but privileges can be revoked when the conditions are not met because government, or one who is in authority, has given them. Two examples of privileges are righteous prayers before the throne of God and being able to drive a vehicle.

Opportunity is the final aspect of this picture. In God’s kingdom, or a free society, where people have the means to pursue the highest caliber of life and reach their potential, there are opportunities that are available for individuals to discover personal heights in relationship to character, abilities, initiative, goals, and dreams.

Such opportunities do not represent free handouts; rather, they represent temporary open doors in which a person with the necessary initiative will recognize the moment and seize it. Opportunities in God’s kingdom point to His promises that we can diligently pursue and patiently wait for as we endure the testing of our faith until they are fulfilled in our lives. To seize an opportunity means one avoids losing the chance to reach a goal, have a dream realized or gain a different life. In America, we have witnessed certain groups of people who were oppressed by their former governments making a better life for themselves in this country because of the opportunities that are available. These people seized them by working hard to acquire their goal, thereby, bettering their lives.

When Americans talk about losing their rights to more government interference, they are simply making reference to the government gaining more control over the different aspects of their lives. The more control government gains through passing oppressive laws and establishing covert policies and acts, such as a recent move to outlaw personal gardening and farming as a means to control people by controlling the food supply, the less say people have over their lives. In such an environment, rights becomes privileges, laws become select and abusive, ultimately exalting the elite and maintaining elaborate lifestyles for them while the masses are kept poor, ignorant and subservient, and privileges become so regulated that all opportunities are eventually closed down. Therefore, in oppressive governments everything becomes a matter of privilege so that such privileges can be revoked at any time in order to dictate to or control (oppress) a situation or people in any matter, including religious preference.

Such oppressive, wicked governments break the back of freethinking people as they subdue personal initiatives and hopes, making people and their following generation slaves to the government’s dictates. In such a society, aborting unborn babies conditions people to graduate to the next stages of dehumanizing the masses and deifying the leaders with such actions as withholding necessary

medical funds from those suffering from such diseases as cystic fibrosis. Eventually, this terrible digression of moral reasoning will end with euthanizing anyone who cannot serve the government’s purpose, such as the physically challenged and the elderly, as well as justifying the sacrifice of those who dare disagree with such abominable insanity.

There are names for the humanistic, demonically inspired ideology that drives such wicked governments such as communism and fascism, but the ultimate goal is to bring in a one-world government where all people are subservient to a few. In my tender years of grade school we not only were being prepared to be bombed by communistic governments (Russia and Cuba), but we feared communistic takeover because we knew it would be death to the personal freedom that was precious to many of us. We were also aware of how fascism devalued people based on their lineage and beliefs, causing the useless death of over six million precious souls, including innocent children, during the holocaust.

Some of us have wondered how such ideologies can gain a foothold in a society such as America. Sadly, we are seeing how it is accomplished. The main platforms such philosophies gain ground on are people’s ignorance and laziness. It seduces ignorance and offers free bread to the lazy, while it conditions our young people in its sinister ways. Since the social philosophy with its liberal attitude has taken center stage and become rooted in the educational system of America, our young people have not been educated about the destructive ways masked by these wicked philosophies. Instead of becoming discerning to the destructive traps of these ideologies, they have been dulled down and conditioned to embrace these wicked philosophies so that when politically presented to them, they will actually embrace them in utter ignorance and delusion. Such an embrace would cause America to fall into the destructive, controlling jaws of these wicked ideologies, without any one country firing a shot.

I don’t know about you, but as a Christian, I am glad that my life, hope and future is not in this present world.