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PO Box 571 - Priest River, ID 83856 * www.gentleshepherd.com * November 2013

THE ODYSSEY

Part 10

THE MAP

By Rayola Kelley

One of the challenges confronting us as spiritual sojourners on our odyssey is what we call the "walk." As believers, we must walk or live in the way that has been ordained by God. If we walk in the way, we will overcome all the challenges that could beset us on our journey and send us in another direction.

The problem is that it is easy to talk the talk, but another whole story when it comes to walking the walk. As believers, we must indeed "put our money where our mouth is" to avoid becoming a bona-fide hypocrite on the spiritual journey. Hypocrites in Christianity are those who wear the title of being a Christian but do not live the Christian life.

I remember my first seven years as Christian, I ignorantly majored in hypocrisy. I was developing my Christian talk by learning about God and applying the right terminology at the right time. As most know, head knowledge alone can make you judgmental, self-righteous, and stiff-necked. People who fall into such a trap, become dogmatic and delusional. They perceive that if they know a matter as being true, then they can rightly conclude it is true in their case. However, if you never make such a precept a practice that you live in and by, it will never become a reality or truth in your life. You may declare it, but if you fail to live it, you will eventually be considered a hypocrite. Head knowledge without a heart revelation that results in obedience to what is true produces a delusional, dogmatic hypocrite.

What does it mean for a Christian to walk the walk? Like all people who are trying to go a certain way, it requires following a map. As Christians, we have one map: The Word of God.

Like all maps, problems with fol-

lowing the Word of God can be quite challenging. There are those who do not perceive they need a map, for they think they know where they are going. However, in most cases such people become confused, and become quickly lost. There are those who do not know how to read the map and they become turned around or end up going in circles. There are those who study the map until they think they know where they are going, but fail to consult it along the way and end up taking detours.



When it comes to walking the walk of the Christian life, one must consider his or her attitude towards the Word. For example, those who think they know where they are going lack humility and have failed to humble themselves before God with the intent of truly obeying His Word. They become skeptical because they will never get anywhere in their spiritual life. For those who do not know how to properly handle the Word of God, they have either failed to pay the price to learn it, or they are inexperienced and must take the initiative and time to learn that it is milk and food for their soul. If they fail to see that the Word contains the nourishment to keep them going, they will become spiritually bankrupt. For those who initially consult it, but fail to regard it along the way, their many detours will cause them to become disillusioned with their walk.

This brings us to our attitude towards the Word. Do we esteem it? For example, how much do you value God's Word? What is your attitude towards it? Do you really believe it? Granted, as Christians we can automatically quote the famous creed, "I believe that the Word of God is inspired by God; therefore, it is infallible (in intent, truth, and doctrine) (2 Timo-

thy 3:16). How many of us understand or really believe it is infallible? Since it is infallible, it is void of inconsistency in intent and incapable of possessing any error in truth or doctrine. As the Bible states it will stand when all else is consumed in the fires of judgment (*Matthew 7:24-27*). This means the idea that it is metaphoric, obsolete, and not applicable for the times we live in will prove to be foolish, for all matters will ultimately stand in judgment before this everlasting testament of God.

Sadly, we can deceive ourselves to our real attitude towards the Word. Instead of esteeming it, we can show utter disregard towards it. We can quote a matter to the point that we believe it has become our creed and way, when in fact we do not back it up by our conduct. How do we know if we believe God's Word? The answer to the question is quite simple. Those who believe it, live it!

It is easy for a person to say he or she believes that the Bible is infallible, but show contempt towards it (*1 Samuel 1:30*). In other words, the individual treats it as being common and insignificant when he or she does not see any real need or urgency to adhere to it. Such a person may show contempt towards the Bible by using certain Scriptures out of context to "confirm" as "acceptable" to God what is actually heretical, profane, and foolish. Contempt is also shown when a person highlights pet doctrines over the complete counsel of God's Word. Individuals will show contempt by picking and choosing what they will believe, and they will show disdain when they simply give the impression of faith in it, but are quick to discard those things of the Bible that challenge their moral compass. Regardless of the approach, contempt towards the Word of God finds its origins in unbelief.

A person can say it is inspired by the Holy Spirit, but totally miss the

intent of it because he or she is not being led into all truth by the Spirit (*John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:20-21*). In such cases, the Word becomes dead-letter. Jesus said it best when He stated, *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"* (*John 6:63*). In such situations, we are once again reminded that one can talk the talk but the real proof will always be in the walk.

As we consider our attitude towards the Word of God, it is important to realize that our attitude towards the matters of God find their basis in our own character or way of handling situations. For example, today it appears that people's word means little; subsequently, that is one reason why God's Word holds no real significance in the minds of many, including many Christians. If someone does not really mean what he or she says, then he or she will prove to be untrustworthy. If we lightly esteem what we say, how can we possibly believe that God's Word has any real substance to it? Clearly, if we lightly regard anything that is truthful, holy, moral, and right, we can conclude that we will surely lightly esteem God's Word for it is based on eternal truths, encased in holiness, and confirmed by moral uprightness.

Last month, I stated that I would share how you can overcome the world. We know Jesus overcame the world, but how? The first epistle of John tells us that the world is made up of the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and the lust of the eyes. We are told we overcome the world through our faith in Jesus. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (*1 John 2:15-17; 5:4; Romans 10:17*). Ultimately, active, genuine faith manifests itself in obedience to what it has heard and knows to be true. We know that Jesus overcame all three of the elements of the world by quoting the Word in context during His temptation in the wilderness. In other words, He believed the Word and stood upon it. However, the real key to Him overcoming came through His obedience to the Word. *Hebrews 5:8-9* tells us, *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedi-*

ence by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Notice the end of *Hebrews 5:9*—only steps of obedience keep us in step with our Lord and Savior.

Obedience is a discipline. All discipline begins with learning what something must look like in its proper form. You cannot understand how to comply to something unless you understand how it must be done. The Word of God clearly shows how something must be executed. It explains how it will look and the end results. However, it requires steps of obedience in what one knows will be correct, in order to ensure a right outcome. *Psalms 119:105* confirms that it requires steps of obedience to inch one's way towards the end of a matter, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* Notice it is a small lamp that is only capable of lighting the path a few feet at a time. We do not make spiritual advancements by leaps and bounds, but by steps inspired by faith and wrought by obedience.

Adherence to the Word of God is the only way to ensure an acceptable walk before the Lord. To properly obey the Word, you must first discipline your disposition with humility. You must submit your attitude in meekness to the truth of a matter. You must bring all imagination into obedience to Christ, and you must "beat" all your bodily members into subjection.

It is important to realize that the Word of God addresses all matters that affect our life. It is not only meant to protect the believer from themselves, but it is designed to protect the Church from wolves, and those seeking the light from the misdirected, and often cruel, ways of self-righteousness. Everyone who walks into a place where the Word of God serves as the ultimate authority and truth to beliefs, attitudes, and conduct should never have to be concerned about what they will encounter.

Admittedly, one of the hardest tasks I have encountered in the past is to know where to send seeking souls. It seems that many of the churches I knew or heard about did not adhere to the Word of God. Instead of being grounded in the Word of God and disciplined in the ways of Christ, so many

sheep were either being led astray by heretical beliefs, beaten up by unloving religious attitudes and ways, or falling through the cracks of indifference. Such sheep have very little chance of coming out of this sort of grist mill in the best of shape.

If as Christians we obey God's Word, we will walk in light of the authority of heaven. If the church walks according to the Word of God, it can be assured of being a holy sanctuary in which the Holy Spirit has free access to reconcile, heal, restore, and bring souls into the place of redemption. If a person seeks the wisdom of the Word of God, he or she will find salvation, refuge, hope, and confidence that he or she is standing on sure ground that will not be moved. Clearly, the Word of God is our protection, source of authority, and sure foundation. But, we must approach it to believe that it is so with the intent to apply it as truth and obey it.

This brings me to the revelation of overcoming with the Word of God. In the past I believed that transformation of the heart attitude would be so drastic in my life that I would be able to mark the hour, day, and year. I perceived that it would require a major crisis to line me up to the truths of heaven. Granted, there were some major crises in my life, but they only caused me to reexamine my ways and sometimes change direction in my life, but they never transformed the inner man. I realized that crises often brought me to places of brokenness and repentance, but never to the work of transformation that is the product of being truly converted by, and to, the ways of God.

It seemed like I waited for years for something drastic to happen to me in order to see the real transformation take place I so desired in my life. One day I started to remember how I was, and as I traced my life to my present walk, I realized that the work of transformation had indeed taken place. Granted, my life will always be a work in progress until I meet Christ face to face on that glorious day, but I had a real awareness that a work had taken place. It was not simply a surface work, but a deep transforming work.

I pondered when and how such a work took place. It was at that time the Lord turned on the light to show

me what had transpired. He revealed to me that the transforming work that took place occurred as I had simply obeyed His Word. Admittedly, I was a bit shocked. Although I did not display the greatest attitude at every point of obedience, I always found that my attitude adjusted accordingly once I responded in obedience. It was clear that by obediently walking in the way of Biblical truth, my inner being was being transformed.

I also realized that as I obeyed the Word of God, my motive was being purified. Many times I would obey for the sake of personal pride (made me feel good about self), or for the sake of impression (made me look good to others), but the more I obeyed because it was simply the right thing to do, the more I realized that it was my reasonable service to do so (*Roman 12:1-2*). In other words, self could only pervert the things of God; therefore, it must be absent from any service or worship to God to ensure the integrity of my life. Obedience towards the things of God should be a natural extension and response of our love for Him, our faith towards Him, and our sincere respect for His Word. It was then that I realized my motive had not only been purged from the profane ways of selfishness through obedience, but transformed.

I also discovered that through obedience heavenly wisdom had replaced my fickle, immature zeal. As I got older, this discretion became a real asset to me. In zeal you are relying on personal strength, but as a person's strength is ebbed away by age, activities, and the many demands of life, you must become honest about where your real source of wisdom and strength comes from. Unless a matter is ordained by God, it will prove to be vanity, and if one's reliance is not on God to lead the way, strength will be robbed from him or her by frivolous pursuits and deeds.

The Word tells us that it is the water that cleanses us, preparing us to be the bride of Christ (*Ephesians 5:26*). For me, when I obeyed it in the right spirit, it became a washing machine that created the right action in my life to produce godly character. It was a hammer that knocked a lot of personal notions out of my thinking,

and it is an ongoing fire that illuminates and purges what remains of my selfishness. It is a sword that penetrates deep down to my motives, exposing them, while circumcising the intents of my heart (*Jeremiah 23:29; Hebrews 4:12*).

Clearly, if we are to ensure the success of our odyssey, we must make sure we are following the map God has given us. We cannot ignore, adjust, pick or choose, or discard it along the way and assume that we will arrive at our destination. We must believe it is the only map, and through obedience to it we will secure the heavenly treasure, possess the promises of God, and be assured of forever living in the light of our Lord's glory, love, and grace. †

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

WORLDLY OR CARNAL?

Q: *Is there any difference between a carnal Christian and a worldly Christian?*

A: In studying the Bible, I believe there is a big difference. First of all the initial description gives us insight into their difference. Carnal means "fleshly", while worldly implies it belongs to the world. Carnal will make a person fickle towards the matters of God, while worldliness will make him or her idolatrous.

This brings us to another difference between the carnal and worldly Christian. Since there is no spiritual basis in the flesh, carnal Christians must resort to a worldly attitude towards spiritual matters that fly against their conclusions. Such Christians' flesh must be first stirred up to consider matters according to how the world would approach and perceive it. These individuals become identified with man-inspired religion in some way, rather than Christ, to justify their fleshly way of thinking. For example, if you consider the carnal debate that took place between the members of the Corinthian Church in *1 Corinthians 3*, they were in competition brought on by the idea of who baptized who. Competition comes out of the many jealousies of pride which are the works of the flesh (*Galatians 5:19-20*). The fleshly fruits it produced were elitism, judgmentalism, and division within the church.

We know that one of Paul's followers and helpers, Demas went back into the world (*2 Timothy 4:10*). This brings us to those who are worldly Christians. These people prefer the ways and practices of the world over Christianity. They often put so-called "robes of righteousness" over their worldly practices and ways to hide their divided heart. As you can see, carnality affects the attitude of the mind, while worldliness affects the heart attitude.

Christians who are worldly often display a half-heartedness towards the things of God. After all, the world will dull a person down towards spiritual matters. Such individuals have in some way come into agreement with the world and put their reliance on the world to bring personal purpose, satisfaction, and identity. They will prove to be lukewarm in their responses towards God, but zealously critical towards those who do not adhere to what they perceive constitutes Christianity. When these people are unmasked, they are often considered hypocrites because they fail to live according to their own judgments about spiritual matters.

Another difference that has been pointed out concerning these two types of Christians comes down to where they ultimately end up. For carnal Christians, they end up wandering around in the wilderness of testing and preparation. Sadly, if they do not repent and allow their minds to be transformed, they will not prove to be overcomers and will not inherit all of the promises of God.

Worldly Christians wallow in the pigpens of the world. They walk around with the stench of the world on them. Their eyes are dull to the light of Christ, their ears deaf to the voice of the Shepherd, and their heart slow or unresponsive to the nudging of the Holy Spirit. They are like the Prodigal Son in *Luke 15*. They need to see the vanity and destruction of the world and return home, ready to be servants in heart so they can be once again honored as sons and daughters of God. If such Christians do not repent of such worldliness, they might find themselves in the end being regarded as an enemy of God (*James 4:4*). †

BECAUSE I SAY SO

Part 1

By Jeannette Haley

While the title of this article may cause a flashback to occasional childhood standoffs with parental authority—to which I can relate—that is not the purpose of this writing. Granted, it would be much easier and more amusing to revisit some of those parent-child confrontations than to tackle the subject at hand. Having said that, please bear with me as I take the plunge into the murky waters of doubt, debate, and disinformation concerning a hot topic among Christians; that is, the subject of health and healing.

My first encounter with this subject came by way of an old friend of the family, Mrs. Fisher, when I was just a kid. Of course, when you are a kid, most everybody seems *old*. To be honest, I still believe she was old, even then. One day, out of the blue, she gave me a book, and instructed me to read it. But, instead of a good horse book, or cowboy book, or Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, or some other exciting book, she handed me Mary Baker Eddy's book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. I remember thinking what an odd book that was to give a kid like me as I sat in the middle of my bed thumbing through its smooth white pages, trying to figure it out. Thank God, I already had a basic foundation of the Bible. Not an extensive foundation, of course, but enough to know that it was the true and unchanging Word of God. I knew that God had created everything, that Jesus had come to die for us, and that everyone needed to be saved. I also knew that Mrs. Fisher never talked about Jesus, or the Bible the way my Sunday school teachers did.

On the other hand, the inexperience of youth, and an insatiable curiosity towards the spiritual realm were there as well—both areas where Satan tries to take advantage. However, the Holy Spirit is faithful, and as I struggled to grasp what was written concerning health and healing there was a growing sense of agitation in my spirit. When I read the words "*All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error.*" (S&H 468: 10–12), and statements such as "*Evil is but an illu-*

sion. It has no real basis. Evil is a false belief. God is not its author" (S & H, 480), I knew for sure that the book was dangerously full of error.

In my teen years my dad married a woman who belonged to the Unity School of Christianity, of which I knew nothing, but thankfully, my mother flatly stated that it was "a cult." The more my dad's wife pressed me to read Unity material, the more agitated my spirit became. For one thing, the Holy Spirit wouldn't let me read it, even if I tried. My eyes couldn't focus on the words and my mind simply shut down. There was nothing about it that made sense to me, and again, I knew it was unscriptural, and erroneous.

Years later I came to the conclusion that such cults as Christian Science, Religious Science, Unity, Metaphysics, New Thought, Scientology, all the Eastern Mystic Religions, the New Age Movement (with its multitude of related "spiritualistic" beliefs) as well as other "mind over matter" beliefs, ideas, and practices come under the umbrella of "mind science" religions. Rayola and I like to think of all such false beliefs, movements, and cults as merely "branches" on the same evil "tree." In fact, when the Lord first brought Rayola and I together in ministry, we put together a short "seminar" on the dangers of the New Age Movement for different Christian groups. (Twenty-five years ago most churches, especially in rural areas, were still unaware of the dark clouds of Eastern occult mysticism blowing towards the West, cleverly disguised as "new revelations" using Christian terminology.) We needed to somehow illustrate in an understandable manner how every false belief, cult, and the occult are interrelated, and spring from a common source that reaches back to Babylon, (and even the antediluvian world). We were alarmed at how these insidious beliefs and practices were beginning to infiltrate the Christian churches. That prompted me to draw a tree labeling the error beginning at the root system, through the trunk, and into the various branches, limbs and twigs respectively. Over two decades later, Satan's lies and deception have grown so massive, and are progressing so rapidly that drawing such a tree would

be extremely daunting. Truly, broad is the way to destruction, and it appears to be growing broader by the day.

The mind science cults generally center on the area of health and healing for mind, spirit, and body, making them attractive to people who want to control their own destiny, and who want "more" than what God has plainly revealed in His Word. After all, health and healing is something mankind has sought after ever since the fall in the Garden of Eden, not to mention the lure of "godhood." The search for the legendary "fountain of youth" inspired early explorers to travel to "parts unknown" in search of it. One can hardly blame desperate people for trying just about anything that promises relief from their sicknesses and sufferings. Many embark on difficult pilgrimages over hundreds of miles to visit shrines, so-called "sacred sights," and "healers." When it comes to the area of health and healing for Christians, the challenge for believers is to be able to wade through, and discern, the different approaches, beliefs, teachings, claims, techniques, and practices that have swept into the Church. No doubt one of the questions most believers long to ask God (besides why He made mosquitoes and other pests) is why so many people of great faith have not been healed of their sicknesses after much prayer.

One of the fastest growing segments of the Protestant Christian churches over the past few decades is the "Positive Confession, Word Faith" movement. This "has involved two distinct but closely related factions: the Norman Vincent Peale/Robert Schuller Positive-Possibility thinkers/Positive Mental Attitude, with their roots in New Thought; and the Kenneth Hagin/Kenneth Copeland Positive Confession and Word-Faith groups, which have their roots in E.W. Kenyon, William Branham, and the Manifest Sons of God/Latter Rain movement. Well-known names among its leaders are E.W. Kenyon, Charles Capps, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Frederick K.C. Price, Robert Tilton, and David [Paul] Yonggi Cho. It does not yet constitute a new denomination, but it certainly represents innovative teachings outside of mainstream Christianity. The

situation is so serious now because of the dominance over the so-called Christian media achieved by the teachers of Positive/Possibility Thinking and Positive Confession.” (Quotes from Biblical Discernment Ministries)

According to the Apologetics Index, Joyce Meyer is another big proponent of this mind science, New Age practice. “Words are containers for power,” she writes in *The Name, The Word, The Blood*. The basic premise of ‘positive confession’ as taught in the Word-Faith movement is: God created things by speaking them into existence. We are created in God’s image. Therefore we, too, can create things (or situations) by speaking them into existence. Those who teach this doctrine claim that words are a creative force, with the power of influencing both the physical and the spiritual world. Hence believers spend much time binding Satan, demons and other spiritual entities, claiming health, claiming wealth.”

I remember back in the early 80’s getting caught up with the “positive confession” teachings of Kenneth Copeland on TV, until I finally woke up to the fact that his teachings were identical to what Unity teaches. Years later when Rayola and I were invited to a certain church to hear a so-called “wonderful” speaker, we both recognized the heresy he was spouting, but, interestingly, from two different perspectives. I identified it as the Manifest Sons of God belief, and she recognized it as pure Mormon doctrine! Satan is forever repackaging the old lie (“Ye shall be as gods”) and presenting it to mankind as something “ultra spiritual,” or “scientific,” or “advanced,” or as “hidden wisdom of the ancients.” Such is the mind science Positive Confession/Word Faith movement. Naturally, if we are “little gods,” then we can create, and control, our own reality, and even others, through the power of our words which is the essence of witchcraft. (That is why you will hear me call communism “Satan’s religion” because it is all about control.)

Control and power is the irresistible, beguiling, shiny bait on Satan’s hook. The desire for control and power begins at birth and ends at death, *unless* a person relinquishes to God every desire for independence

and the self-glorification that control and power promises. Only the god-head—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the ultimate power and glory, which brings me to idolatry. This is the most insidious of sins in the eyes of God. Idolatry dares to exalt mind or matter, the unseen or the seen, above the triune God. Therefore, those who worship their worship, or who have faith in their faith are committing idolatry. The same is true of those who place their faith in the words that they speak, the “positive confessions” they cling to regardless of the circumstances or situations at hand. “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” *Isaiah 46:9, 10*.

Christians who have come under the sway of mind science promoters are generally well-meaning people who desperately long to operate in the “gift of healing,” even if it means going outside of the acceptable perimeters of biblical orthodoxy to develop a formula that promises results. Sadly, they often find themselves at odds with Christians who maintain a solid biblical stand, and mainstream, historical Christianity—that “old time religion,” which has stood the test of time, and has remained unchanged for two-thousand years. As D. R. McConnell pointed out, “any new religious movement [within Protestantism] must bear the scrutiny of two criteria: biblical fidelity and historical orthodoxy.” He adds, “Regrettably, the Positive Confession movement fails on both counts. The historical roots of this movement (which Charles Farah has called ‘Faith Formula Theology’) lie in the occult, and most recently, in New Thought and its off-shoot, the Mind Science cults. Its Biblical basis is found only in the peculiar interpretations of its own leaders, not in generally accepted Christian theology.” (Quotes from Biblical Discernment Ministries)

A good summation of this error states, “As the name “Positive Confession”/“Word-Faith” implies, this movement teaches that faith is a matter of what we say more than whom we trust or what truths we embrace and affirm in our hearts. The term “positive con-

fession” refers to the teaching that words have creative power. What you say, Word-Faith teachers claim, determines everything that happens to you. Your ‘confessions,’ that is, the things you say -- especially the favors you *demand* of God -- must all be stated positively and without wavering. Then God is *required* to answer. Word-Faith believers view their positive confessions as an incantation by which they can conjure up *anything* they desire: ‘Believe it in your heart; say it with your mouth. That is the principle of faith. *You can have what you say*” (*Charismatic Chaos*, pp. 281, 285).

Christians who are in a battle for their lives with terrible diseases are often deeply wounded by the cruel and heartless words of the “positive confessors.” Nowhere in the Word of God, either in the Old or the New Testaments will you find this insidious, occult belief and practice. What you will find is the fact that sickness and death are a reality which began its work the moment Adam partook of the forbidden fruit. *Romans 5:12* says, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Sickness and suffering are part of the experience of our brief existence in these physical bodies.

Those who slap an unbiblical platitude on a suffering child of God by telling him or her that sickness, disease, or a hard-to-heal injury is because he or she has sin in his or her life, or a demon, or lack of faith are of the wrong spirit, and have no business in any type of Christian ministry whatsoever, period! They lack the fruit of the Spirit, and walk in disobedience to the Word of God which tells us to “weep with them that weep” *Romans 12:15b*. God will surely judge those who have wounded His sheep, scattered His flock, weakened their faith in Jesus, or turned them away from the Lord altogether. To such false workers the Lord declares, “My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place. All that found them have devoured them: and

their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers” Jeremiah 50: 6, 7. While this passage of Scripture pertains to the people of Israel, it also applies to the Church today. God has not changed, his righteous judgments, and Word, have not changed, nor have His truth and principles changed. The Apostle Paul warned, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” Acts 20:29-31. (Underscore added.)

The Positive Confession/Word Faith/Positive Mental Attitude mind science religions originate, as stated, from the occult, and mystical Eastern religions such as Hinduism. (Unity is a New Age combination of Hinduism, Christian Science, New Thought, and metaphysics.) The spirit behind these, and other unbiblical teachings, religions, and movements is an antichrist spirit. Furthermore, the bottom line of cults, and the occult is the denial that the Lord Jesus Christ is God Incarnate. It all goes back to the serpent's lie in the Garden of Eden that we can become “gods.” When a person takes a “bite” out of this poisonous fruit of unbelief, he or she opens the door for demonic influences such as oppression, or even possession.

Christians who allow themselves to get caught up in the hype of “positive confession” take certain key Scriptures out of context, and proceed to quote them to others who are in need of physical healing with no genuine concern or consideration for where such hurting, and often devastated, people really are. Not every situation is the same, not every sickness or disease has the same cause, and there is no such thing as a “one size fits all—just believe it because I say so” solution. The question is, what happens when isolated Scriptures relating to healing are taken out of context, and used as a mantra, or a formula, or a “magic wand” to “cure” people, and the person remains sick,

or his or her condition worsens, or they even die? According to the Word-of-Faith people, the pat answer to that goes like this: “You (or he or she) just don't have enough faith.” What destruction this sinister belief has wrought among God's sheep! The damage to precious souls is incalculable.

The Word of God itself holds the key as to why not everyone is healed. While it is true that there have been people miraculously healed down through the ages (some instantly, others over periods of time), and even some raised from the dead, and while it is true that God is still healing people around the world, it is also true that not every Christian who loves the Lord is physically healed in this life. To begin to gain a glimpse of the bigger picture, we must first shift our focus from humanity's ills, and our pet theories, traditions, and doctrines, and lift our spiritual eyes up to God until our perception is enlarged to embrace the full realization that GOD IS SOVEREIGN. This means that God is in control of everything. He has His reasons why He heals some, and doesn't heal others. Even Jesus did not heal everyone who gathered at the Pool of Bethesda. (See *John 5:1-16*.)

Secondly, many of the Scriptures the positive confessors quote concerning physical healing are about spiritual healing, first and foremost. Sin is what keeps people out of heaven, not sickness. Our preoccupation with our temporary, earthly existence can easily take precedence over what is the primary importance to God, and that is salvation. It is also important to consider that every promise of God concerning both spiritual healing, and physical healing, will be fulfilled when Jesus comes to set up His kingdom on earth.

Salvation is a three-stage process: the first being spiritual healing when we receive Christ, and become born again; secondly, the healing process of regeneration and sanctification as we walk out the life the Holy Spirit works in us; and, thirdly total physical healing when our redemption is complete. In the words of Pastor Art Sather, “My spirit is saved, my soul is being saved, and my body will be saved.” “*And not only they, [creation] but ourselves also, which have the*

firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” Romans 8:23 (Emphasis mine).

Therefore, healing is in the atonement for all, but not all will receive physical healing in this life, and even if they do, they will still die for we are living in a corruptible body. Here is God's promise: “*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” 1 Corinthians 15:51-54?*

Romans 8:18 records the Apostle Paul's attitude concerning suffering, “*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” Romans 8:18.* Sometimes God allows His saints to suffer for His glory. *Romans 8:17* says, “*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*” If it is not God's will that any believer should ever suffer physically in this world, then how can we explain away great portions of Scripture such as *Hebrews 11*, or the entire book of *Job* (which gives us a behind the scenes explanation as to why God's righteous servant Job was allowed to suffer at the hand of Satan)? Peter wrote, *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” 1 Peter 5:10.* If God is sovereign, and if it is not His will that His people suffer through sickness, persecution, and death, then how would you explain that to the millions of martyrs who have suffered and died for their faith for the past two thousand years, and who are still suffering and dying for their faith every day? Is God bound to do our

will because we quote His Word to Him with a "because I say so" attitude? Heaven forbid!

Do we believe in healing? Of course we do! We have prayed for people through the years that were healed. We have seen the Lord heal many people, but not all of the people. But, that doesn't discourage us from continuing to seek the Lord for physical healing for others, and ourselves as well. What is of utmost importance is for all of us as God's people to be able to declare with the Apostle Paul, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" *Philippians 3:8-11*.

Seek Jesus first, then be encouraged with these words, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry" *Hebrews 10:37*. †

QUOTING QUOTES

"The U.S. has lost much respect as a world leader under the present administration. Quoting a commentary for a March 2010 newspaper article appearing in *Prayer Zeitung*, a German-language Czechoslovakian newspaper: 'The danger to America is not Barack Obama, but a citizenry capable of entrusting a man like him with the Presidency. It will be far easier to limit and undo the follies of an Obama presidency than to restore the necessary common sense and good judgment to a depraved electorate willing to have such a man for their president. The problem is much deeper and far more serious than Mr. Obama, who is a mere symptom of what ails America. Blaming the prince of the fools should not blind anyone to the vast confederacy of fools that made him their prince. The Republic can survive a Barack Obama, who is,

after all, merely a fool. It is less likely to survive a multitude of fools, such as those who made him their president."

CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUALITY

A belief system that uses ancient mystical practices to induce altered states of consciousness (the silence) and is rooted in mysticism and the occult but is often wrapped in Christian terminology. The premise of contemplative spirituality is pantheistic (God is all) and panentheistic (God is in all)."

"The reason Christian leaders aren't taking the New Age more seriously is because figures, like Rick Warren, are not ringing out a warning and are themselves being influenced and deceived by the New Age." - Warren B. Smith

QUOTING WOLVES

Dr. Rick Warren stated on May 23, 2005, at the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life: "The word 'fundamentalist' actually comes from a document in the 1920s called the Five Fundamentals of the Faith. And it is a very legalistic, narrow view of Christianity." The five fundamentals of the faith to which Dr. Warren objected are: 1. The inerrancy and full authority of the Bible. 2. The virgin birth and full Deity of Jesus Christ. 3. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 4. Christ's atoning, vicarious death for the sins of the world. 5. The literal second coming of Jesus Christ. This is obviously not the same soul-saving Gospel preached by the Apostle Paul: '*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*' *Galatians 1:8*."

"With practice, you can develop the habit of praying silent 'breath prayers. Use 'breath prayers' throughout the day, as many Christians have done for centuries. You choose a brief sentence or a simple phrase that can be repeated to Jesus in one breath."—Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*

"We have promoted an unbiblical message that becoming born-again is the answer to everything. It's not. It changes your eternity, but it doesn't change your sexual behavior, for instance. The gospel does not always have the answer for modern-day dilemmas." - Bruce Wilkinson

ARE YOU FILLED?

He received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. — Acts 9:18

"Ananias went down to the house on Straight Street, and he laid his hands on the one who had before been a blasphemer and a persecutor. He said to him, '*Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit*' (Acts 9:17). He recognized him as a brother whose soul had already been saved and who had come into relationship with the Father and with all the family of God, but there was something necessary beyond this. Yes, the Lord had not forgotten his physical condition, and there was healing for him. But there was something beyond this. It was the filling with the Holy Spirit.

"Oh, it always seems to me that the Gospel is robbed of its divine glory when we overlook this marvelous truth of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To be saved is wonderful; to be a new creature, to have passed from death to life, to have the witness of the Spirit that you are born of God—all this is unspeakably precious. But whereas we have the well of salvation bubbling up inside us, we need to go on to a place where from within us will flow '*rivers of living water*' (John 7:38). The Lord Jesus showed us very plainly that, if we believe in Him, from within us will flow these '*rivers of living water*.' And this he spoke by the Spirit. The Lord wants us to be filled with the Spirit, to have the manifestation of the presence of His Spirit, the manifestation that is indeed given '*for the profit of all*' (1 Cor. 12:7)." - *Smith Wigglesworth Devotional pg. 381*

Happy Thanksgiving

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation - Psalm 68:19

Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people" -1 Chronicles 16:8

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High - Psalm 92:1

~~GIVE THANKS~~

A PAINFUL PRIVILEGE: SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

By Heidi Swander

One report of many cited in an October 2012 ChristianNews.net article entitled, "From Jailing Evangelists to Church Bomb Plot, Christian Christian Persecution on the Rise in America," states that Michael Salmen, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced to 60-days incarceration for holding worship meetings on his private property. Salmen was first prohibited from holding meetings of friends and family in his home. Authorities claimed that the house was, "not up to code" for such meetings. So, he built a structure to house the meetings in his back yard. Neither did this appease officials and, eventually, Salmen was incarcerated for defying city ordinance.

"Some note that Salman was charged for violating code from the International Code Council, which was adopted by the city of Phoenix, and is in place in many municipalities across the nation. It is believed that these codes will be used to shut down many house churches across the nation," the article states.

Also in October -- and a little closer to home for this ministry -- a senior citizen in a HUD-subsidized building in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was accosted by a social worker who happened by a common area where Ruth Sweats was reading to a friend the introductory paragraph from her Bible on the Book of Revelation. Sweats said, "The building social worker, 'dramatically approached her with a raised voice' and said, 'You can't talk like that here!'" Sweats also told WND [World Net Daily] that, "The social worker claimed that free speech doesn't exist when it's in a HUD-funded building, and that in order to talk about the Bible it had to be in an apartment, not the common area."

The most recent edition of the 140-page Survey of Religious Hostility in America, presents over 600 incidents of religious attacks and hostility in the United States including, but by no means limited to these events:

- A federal judge threatened "incarceration" to a high school valedictorian unless she removed refer-

ences to Jesus from her graduation speech.

- A public school official physically lifted an elementary school student from his seat and reprimanded him in front of his classmates for praying over his lunch.

- The U.S. Department of Justice argued before the Supreme Court that the federal government can tell churches and synagogues which pastors and rabbis it can hire and fire.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs banned the mention of God from veterans' funerals, overriding the wishes of the deceased's families.

"Many readers ask me [Randy Alcorn] whether Christians in China continue to suffer persecution. Often they've been told it's a thing of the past." Not so, Randy says. And he confirms his statement by relating a number of harrowing stories. Here's one: "Even as the government attempted to create a better public image for China in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, they continued to persecute believers. *Asia News* reported that in December 2007, officials arrested 270 Christian pastors in a quick and brutal raid, accusing them of holding an illegal Bible meeting and fining 120 of them with an 'interrogation tax.'

"According to the *China Aid Association*, earlier that year a Beijing house-church leader, Hua Huiqi, served six months in prison. Hua and his seventy-six-year-old mother were arrested after being attacked by seven police officers. While walking on a public street they were kicked to the ground and taken to the Olympic police station for questioning. Hua's mother, Shuang Shuying, had turned her residence into a boarding house for believers. When authorities began planning the Olympic games, they dismantled the home and her family was detained, supervised twenty-four hours a day, and frequently beaten. Imprisoned for two years, Shuang was tortured, lost her vision, and dwindled to a mere seventy-three pounds."

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." - 2 Timothy 3:12

~Pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.~

THE QUESTIONS SHOULD RATHER BE . . .

"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows." John 16:33 True victory is not found in escaping or evading trials--but in rightly meeting and enduring them. The questions should not be, "How can I get out of these worries? How can I get into a place where there shall be no irritations, nothing to try my temper, or put my patience to the test? How can I avoid the troubles which continually harass me?" There is nothing noble in such living. The soldier who flees when the battle approaches, is no hero; he is a coward.

The questions should rather be, "How can I pass through these trying experiences--and not fail as a Christian? How can I endure these struggles--and not suffer defeat? How can I live amid these provocations, these reproaches and testings of my temper--and yet live sweetly, not speaking unadvisedly, bearing injuries meekly, returning gentle answers to insulting words?"

"He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son!" Revelation 21:7 - J. R. Miller - (1840—1912)

OSWALD CHAMBERS QUOTE:

"The unexplained things in life are more than the explained. God seems careless whether mankind understands Him or not. He scarcely vindicates His saints to the world.

People told Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus. 'He whom thou lovest is sick,' they cried. But Jesus went on His way. He did not send any words of hope, nor did He even go. Lazarus died, was buried, and four days afterwards Jesus appeared. Perhaps you can understand Martha, as she exclaimed, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died' (John 11:21).

If you do not understand that, you are unaware of the real nature of suffering. You are unaware of the poignant agony of God's silences.

Have you read 1 Peter 4:12-19? An informal consideration of those verses will serve to knot into some kind of order what the Bible indicates, states, and implies regarding suffering." - Devotions for a Deeper Life, Pg. 146