

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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

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SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

Part Three

IT IS A MATTER OF...

By Rayola Kelley

As we see the signs of the times, we must become sober about being prepared to face the challenges before us. The Bible is quite clear that the real challenge for Christians is to keep the faith that was first delivered to the saints of old (*Luke 18:8; Jude 3*).

Volumes have been written about faith, but the Bible is simple and clear as to its presentation concerning this virtue: it must be unfeigned. In spite of the push to try to be good or do good things, faith towards God is the only way we can please Him (*Hebrews 11:6*). We must never put misdirected confidence in who we are trying to be and what we are doing as a means to replace genuine faith towards Him. True faith that ends in salvation only finds its complete assurance in God.

This brings me to another important issue that must be properly confronted if we are going to survive the days in which we live. The first article in this series dealt with knowing God, and the second with the subject of sin. However, if you want to get down to the core of spiritual survival, it is quite simple. As *Romans 6* teaches us, we either serve God or sin. Clearly, if we are going to survive, we must be serving the right God. We know there is the God of the Universe, as well as the god of this world, Satan (*2 Corinthians 4:3-4*). Presently, one of these gods serves as our owner and master. If you serve sin, Satan is your god and owner, and if you serve Jesus, God is your owner and master. Clearly, there are no shades of confusion as to who we serve, the fruits of our lives will tell on us.

We must first come to terms with whom we serve before we can honestly answer the next vital ques-

tion. Who do we worship? Even though service is considered a form of worship in the kingdom of God, we can properly honor others without worshipping them. A lord deserves loyalty and service, but only that which we pay homage to will receive any worship. Worship entails more than service and loyalty, it requires an altar, commitment, affection, adoration, and exaltation. To worship something, we must give it importance. Such importance will be missing unless we give that which we pay such homage to identity, distinction, and honor in our hearts and minds.

In summation, we will put our faith in the one who serves as lord in our lives, and express our source of reliance in who or what we worship. It is for this reason that Jesus made this statement in *John 4:23*, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." It is incredible that the Father must search for those who know how to properly worship Him. What should this tell us about the worship going on in the different religious institutions? Is it acceptable worship to the Father?

Before we can address spiritual survival in relationship to who or what we worship, we must understand that we have been formed in such a way that we must worship something. In fact, that relentless vacuum in peoples' souls can only be satisfied through genuine worship. We can actually see this need to worship in the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

Moses, their intercessor who stood between them and the frightening God on Mount Sinai, had been absent for days. The people became insecure because there appeared to be no god present. Most likely they felt disconnected, like roving waves out on the endless ocean of uncertainty. These people had clearly been conditioned by Egypt to worship the

creation; thereby, they went back to their former ways and instructed Aaron to create a god. Aaron created a golden calf, an idol they were most likely acquainted with. In other words, the idol already had identity.

When you study the history surrounding the gods of that time, the bull was a predominate idol of that period. This reminds us that each age varies as to the idols that are worshipped. The culture and environment of the time will determine the types of idols that are being exalted. In all idolatry, some part of creation is always exalted. Whether it is an image of something in creation or man himself, God is stripped of His glory and replaced by that which has no life or real power (*Romans 1:21-28*). And, when man is exalted by cultic, humanistic, and New Age philosophies, God is humanized and man deified. It is for this reason that much of the terrain of the world has been marred by the ruins of past societies, cultures, kingdoms, and empires, which have collapsed from within because their idol had no power to keep them.

The children of Israel exalted this golden calf in their minds as god. It is important to point out that all idolatry begins in the mind. The imaginations of the mind create the expectations or possibilities of what such idols will add or bring to people's lives. These expectations are either self-serving or superstitious, and prove quite seductive to the flesh. They offer promises, but they are false, illusive, or temporary and will end in utter vanity, fear, and despair. However, these expectations take the affections of the heart captive. As I have pointed out in the past, the mind represents idolatry in high places, and the heart, idolatry in secret places (*Ezekiel 8:12; 14:3-5; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5*).

It is true that every culture will create the particular environment in which its idols will be given identity. Regardless of how civilized cultures can be, they have their own preferred gods, often created out of images and propaganda. These false gods "supposedly"

offer prosperity, happiness, security, and hope. In our culture, the preferred gods have been self-sufficiency, education, sex, money, power, control (witchcraft), and prestige to name a few. It is important to understand that when we abandon all to maintain, exalt, or possess these gods, we, in essence, will end up selling our souls. This is the required wage to possess any idol. Since our souls are the required payment for possessing idols, as well as represent the source of all fleshly and idolatrous worship, we are told by Jesus to worship in the right spirit (*John 4:23-24*).

Idolatry always creates a surreal world that ends up proving to be absolutely insane. Hence, enters the second part of Jesus' instruction—we are to worship in Spirit and truth. The right Spirit leads us into truth concerning who we are worshipping. Our understanding of God must be correct, clear, concise, and void of any fantasy or variance if we are to properly worship Him. Clearly, genuine worship is a form of godly discipline that will prove to be sincere, realistic, and honorable.

Since discipline is how we begin to possess our souls in patience, we must always deny self of what we think will make us happy and offer all such illusions and possibilities on the cross in the form of our flesh to be put to death on a daily basis. It is then that we can truly follow the truth of Jesus into a new life. After all, if we gain the world's preferred idols and lose our souls in the process what have we truly gained (*Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 21:19*)?

Upon the children of Israel's responses towards their new god, Aaron suggested that they construct an altar so they could worship the golden calf. With the environment in place, the children of Israel could abandon all to this god in sensual worship. With the so-called "possibilities" of satisfaction before them, the affections of the heart could be directed at this idol with complete abandonment. Such abandonment points to consecration. It is for this reason that the heart serves as the altar of consecration when it comes to worship. Peter tells us that we are to sanctify or set the Lord

apart in our hearts (*1 Peter 3:15*). Without such distinction, we would not be able to properly worship Him.

Clearly, if the heart is missing in honoring God, it cannot be considered genuine worship. Jesus made this clear in *Matthew 15:8-9*, "*This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" Obviously, the heart must serve as the altar of consecration for everything we do in regard to our lives before the Lord. In other words, service towards God that lacks heart is not worship. Praise offered towards God that is minus the right attitude and affections will come across as a tinkling cymbal of hypocrisy, and thanksgiving as a sour note of ingratitude.

Idolatry is the main reason many people are wandering in confusion, tormented by the inability to satisfy the restlessness in their souls, and frustrated that loneliness, emptiness, and insecurity gnaw at their very resolve like parasites.

This brings us to what it means to possess our souls in patience. Possessing our souls means taking responsibility for our decisions (thought process), determination (will), and emotions (affections). We must decide who we are to be by choosing whom we serve, and we must determine who we are going to become by who we worship. Who we are at present has been decided by the life we have embraced and now live, but who we become will decide the life we ultimately will reflect.

Service and worship walk hand in hand. The quality of our service will determine the type of environment that will affect what and how we worship. Service is determined by agendas and priorities, while worship will affect our attitude, emphasis, and approaches. It all seems simple enough, but both service and worship will be influenced by our perspective concerning God.

It is for this reason that Jesus made this statement to the Samaritan woman in *John 4:22a*, "*Ye worship ye know not what.*" The Samaritan worshipped a God that she had no personal knowledge about. She knew of Him and knew about Him, but she did not know Him. How can you properly

worship someone you do not know? How would you know how to approach or properly exalt or honor someone you did not understand?

Today in our politically correct society, God can be anything you want Him to be. In order to allow people to define their own god, the politically correct term that is being used is, "*higher power.*" Such a term may sound acceptable to ears that want to be tickled, but it is a cop-out. God is not some higher power, He is the Almighty. In other words, He is all-powerful. He cannot be just any God, for He is the only true God. He cannot be just any object, image, or idea because He is who He is, and since He is eternal He always will be. As idolatry has already taught us in the past, not just any god can save you.

Salvation of our souls lies at the core of all spiritual matters and truths. Serve whom you will, but if it is not the true God of heaven, you remain lost to Him. Worship whom you will, but if it is not the God of the Bible, it will all be in vain. Dance around your religious altars with penance, declarations, flags, and outward show of piety, but if such worship has not been consecrated in your heart to the only God of heaven, all such activities will be considered perverted, foreign, and strange to Him. Do all the religious works you can, but if it is not inspired or born out of faith towards the true God of heaven, such works will be considered reprobate.

The true God of the Bible deserves to be worshipped because He is who He is. Since He is deity, He alone deserves to be honored in a worthy, excellent manner. He is holy; therefore, He deserves to be approached in awe and humility. He is love; therefore, He deserves our total love and devotion, and He is our gracious owner, thereby worthy of obedience. He is our Lord, therefore, worthy of our complete dedication, as well as our redeemer, deserving of our complete trust.

Clearly, to survive the challenging times we live in, it will be a matter of worship that finds its inspiration and breeding ground in serving the right master. We must be sure that we are worshipping God in the proper fashion. In doing so, we can be assured that

WAKE UP TO THE POWER

By Jeannette Haley

Generally, the hardest part of writing an article, at least for me, is the beginning. Getting started has always been a challenge for me with just about every new situation, or project I have been faced with. I remember to this day the words my mother spoke to one of my grade school teachers during an Open House. Looking the teacher square in the eye she stated, "Jeannette is a slow starter, but a strong finisher." The years have proven her words to be true over and over again.

How does a person, in one short article, tackle the job of writing about a subject such as power? The more I thought about it, the more I began to realize that power means different things to different people, depending on what impresses or motivates them, and what their agendas are.

Nations struggle for power over one another; the handful of ultra wealthy behind-the-scenes world planners use their power to manipulate and control the masses; politicians will do just about anything to get votes in order to keep their high-paying positions of power including lying, cheating, and stealing, while the rest of the populace from the greatest to the least, oldest to the youngest struggles to maintain various forms of power in order to come out on top, control others, or just to survive day to day life.

Therefore, we can see that wealth, education, and positions of power in the different segments of society are attractive to those who desire security, a feeling of importance, and the ability to control others. Let's face it, haven't we all had our moments when we've either desired or daydreamed about "having it all" in order to control our destiny, or at least be a benefactor to the less fortunate? Nevertheless, there is a grave danger to power that is best summed up by John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, first Baron Acton (1834–1902). The historian and moralist, who was otherwise known simply as Lord Acton, expressed this opinion in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men

are almost always bad men." Both history and what we are witnessing in the world today prove how right he was.

The struggle for ultimate power, as any Bible-believing person knows, began long before the creation of man. This incredible struggle between God and Satan continues to this day, and will be brought to it's final conclusion at the end of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fire that fuels absolute power is pride and personal exaltation, or the desire to be as God, or even "a little god" as some popular heretics teach. Pride originated with the father of lies (Satan). These basic, simple facts are important to know and keep in mind if we are to be wise and discerning of spirits, as well as alert to our own heart condition and motivation.

All too often Christians become flippant towards the truths contained in God's Word, taking for granted what God has written for our spiritual survival in this world and the next. It is dangerous to treat the Word of God lightly, or to ignore it, disbelieve it, mock it, or use it out of context in order to change its meaning. God warns, "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you*" *Deuteronomy 4:2*. Jesus told the tempter in *Matthew 4:4*, "*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" (See *Deuteronomy 8:3; 12:32*.) If Jesus defeated Satan's temptations in the wilderness by quoting the Word of God, then shouldn't we hide the Word in our hearts so that we can do likewise?

There is a certain attitude permeating much of Christendom these days that undermines the importance and the power of the Word of God. Bibles collect dust while sermons and Sunday school classes are based on the latest best-selling so-called "Christian" book. Modern man seeks for answers to life from man, not from the Creator of man, and Creator of all that is, both visible and invisible. Man looks to psychology, philosophy, science, esoteric teachings, metaphysics and the occult, and even fiction, but not to the Bible which is the one book that is divinely inspired, ageless, living, eternal, true, powerful,

and holy.

Proof of how little God's Word is regarded can be seen in how lax Christian parents are (who should definitely know better) towards the Harry Potter series, and other witchcraft, New Age, Hindi, pagan and demonic movies, books, and products designed to captivate the minds and imaginations of children while initiating them into witchcraft. Let's face it, children (and not a few adults) are incredibly susceptible to the siren song of superhuman power whether it's the ability to magically fly, cast spells, practice out-of-body experiences (astral projection), tell fortunes, read cards or palms, communicate with spirit guides, demons, ghosts (familiar spirits), or the dead. Even Christians, who should know better, are frequently heard to say that they are praying for the dead, or that their departed loved one is "watching over them," and other such unscriptural and forbidden practices. Christians need to understand that God is not "The Force" or a merely a "higher power". The powerful evils that exist within the bizarre world of darkness and the occult have been repackaged for decades as cute, harmless, innocent, friendly, intriguing, helpful, wise, and beneficial. One of the covens in our area for grown women is so utterly ridiculous that it would be funny if it wasn't so popular and incredibly sobering concerning the eternal destination of the members.

Of course, there are some "genuinely serious" covens in this area, which a person can find nearly anywhere these days. Christians need to remember that the kingdom of darkness is every bit as real as the kingdom of light, and that the power to deceive, delude, and destroy is always seeking ways to bring down churches, ministries, and individual Christians whether they want to believe it or not. First, there is a real battle going on, day and night, for the souls of people, and secondly, there is real power in the realm of darkness. The problem is most churches are failing miserably to teach and train people in order to prepare them for the "day of battle." Instead, they offer "church lite" so no one is offended, or upset, or, God forbid, awakened to the reality of the spiritual battle at

hand.

I remember back in the 80's asking a certain Baptist minister what he would do if he encountered a witch. He said, in all sincerity, "I'd run as fast as I could in the other direction." His answer shocked me. Where was the knowledge of the Word and the power of the Lord in this man's life and ministry? Needless to say, I quit attending his nice, but utterly powerless church.

Nowadays Christians, as a whole, don't give much serious consideration to Satan and his devices. They are far more caught up with church activities, the latest "Christian" fiction, or music star, or their favorite preacher. The reality of Satan and his non-stop work in the earth to deceive and destroy is, for the most part, out of sight, out of mind. For example, over two decades ago Rayola and I lived in Fenn, Idaho. One day I went to Grangeville for a haircut. As I sat in the chair, my beautician and another woman commenced to have a lively discussion as to whether the devil really existed or not. As I listened in silence, the gal working on my hair abruptly came to the conclusion that there was no such thing as Satan at which point I interjected, "I have a question for you. If the devil doesn't exist, who was Jesus talking to when he was tempted in the wilderness?" Silence reigned for the remainder of my time in the beauty parlor.

Whether we want to admit it or not, Jesus talked a lot more about hell than heaven. *Acts 10:38* tells us "*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*" Even though we may read all the Scriptures pertaining to the casting out of devils, setting people free from the works of darkness, putting on the full armor of God, watching and praying, not being ignorant of the devices of the devil, and submitting to God and resisting the devil, yet how many of us slide into a state of apathy concerning such things? Like tired puppies after a hard day of play, we long to cuddle up under our warm, fuzzy blankies and blissfully slumber through any unpleasantness that may surround us.

The hard fact is, such apathy is

deadly. We are not cute little puppies, but people of the Cross—soldiers in the King's army. Jesus didn't save us to sit, slumber, or continue in sin. He saved us to serve, and that means we will be called to confront and overcome the works of darkness whenever and wherever it is encountered. We may want to go AWOL, but we are to be the salt and the light of the world until His return. God's Church needs to shake herself awake and take hold of the true power that causes demons to tremble. What is that power? *Romans 1:16* gives us the answer: "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*" [Emphasis added.]

The gospel is all about Jesus. It declares that He is God incarnate who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of a virgin, was crucified, died, and was buried, and rose again from the dead. There is so much power in the gospel, and in the Name of Jesus that Satanists and witches cannot utter His Name. They also fear and despise any reference to the blood that Jesus shed for us on the cross. It is to the Church's shame that she has taken for granted the glorious gospel, the cleansing Word, and the power of the blood.

We were recently reminded of these truths when we were led into an encounter with a witch who indicated that she wanted to be set free from the torment and imprisonment of powerful spirit guides and demons. This miserable woman had been indoctrinated into Satanism from the tender age of six by her foster grandparents, and was subjected to horrors beyond description.

Our hearts went out to her as we explained to her up front that if all she wanted was relief, then we could not help her. There must be an exchange of masters—Jesus must become LORD of her life. She wanted time to think about it which was a good indication that she wasn't desperate enough to truly want deliverance. However, in a couple of weeks we found ourselves in her apartment confronting Satan head on. She was so possessed that she could barely respond to us, but her demons began manifesting as we quoted God's Word. This is no time to discover that

you really don't know the LORD and His Word. (By the way, we use the KJV because other versions lack the clarity, anointing and power.) Remember, the Word of God is a two edged sword. It is pure TRUTH. It is absolute authority. No lie can stand against it. Lies only have power if people believe them, but the truth is the truth whether people believe it or not. That is why God's Word will remain even though heaven and earth shall pass away. Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*" *Matthew 24:35*.

This pathetic woman was physically ill and very weak because of an inability to eat, which is not unusual for people in her state. However, as her demons manifested at the Name of Jesus and the power of the Word of God, she received incredible strength. It was truly by the mercy of God that she couldn't strike us or throw us across the room. Eventually she was delivered enough that we could get down to the person. As we poured forth both the tender loving kindness and love of God for her, and His Word, she was lucid enough to be able to receive Christ...at least to repeat a prayer to receive Him. (Note: the Bible does not say we must "accept" Christ, but "receive" Him. There is a big difference and is important to study. See *John 1:14*.) Of course we asked the Lord to fill the places the demons had vacated with His Spirit.

It would be wonderful if we could report that this woman truly wanted Christ in her heart, but after each session we had with her, she would renounce the truth, reject Jesus, and run back into her darkness. Why did she prefer the bizarre and evil world of Satan and his tormentors to life, hope, love, peace, and salvation freely offered to her by Jesus? The answer is given by Jesus in *John 3:19*, "*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" The power of God was present through the Spirit and the Word to set her free, but she still had the power of choice, and tragically, after each session she would choose darkness over the light of Christ.

God is all powerful, yet He never

the Father will find us in the secret chambers of worship (heart) and the high places of praise and thanksgiving (mind); and, there we will be able to commune with Him.

The questions are who are you worshipping, and in what manner is that worship being offered? Are you possessing your soul through the discipline of genuine worship? †

“Power” Con’t. from pg. 4

has and never will step over mankind’s freedom of choice. People do not go to hell because they want to—they go to hell because they reject Christ. In working with people, once they indicate through word or deed that they do not want Christ Jesus as their LORD, then there is nothing more that we can do for them. We may be able to cast out demons, but only Jesus has the power to save. No man can save anybody! Only Jesus saves.

What was reiterated to us, brought into sharper focus, and driven even deeper into our spirits, was the incredible power of the Word of God. Demons love to intimidate you, then agitate you, draw you into arguments, mock and slander you to try and get you to defend yourself, or cunningly flatter you, or tell you things that only they could know about you. They lie in order to confuse you, run you around in circles, and sometimes cry out in self pity. They crave attention. All of this is to draw you away from using the pure Word of God on them, while trying to engage you in endless dialogue, because “it is written” is the only word that they fear and tremble at. The Word of God and the Gospel of Christ is the power of God when exercised in faith by a saint whose life is “hid with Christ in God.”

Wake up people of the Lord! “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the

obedience of Christ” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. We must remember who our real enemy is. We must wake up to the days in which we live, for Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, working signs and lying wonders in order to deceive. Satan will use and quote God’s Word in an attempt to deceive and tempt us as he did Jesus; and, Satan’s “ministers of righteousness” fill many a pulpit across the land. We must be “wise as serpents, harmless as doves,” discerning, and led by the Spirit of God.

Satan loves the modern “seeker-friendly,” politically correct, happy clappy, positive confessing, worldly, man-centered, lukewarm churches. He loves the religious atmosphere, traditions, and dead-letter preaching that dull people to the reality of Almighty God, sin, judgment, hell, personal accountability, and true holiness. There is no power where the Word of God is not upheld in deepest reverence and sobriety, diligently taught, preached, believed, and obeyed. Where are the people who “tremble” at God’s Word and pray until heaven moves and demons tremble?

To summarize, there are three powers that we should recognize. First, there is God omnipotent—there is no greater power than He. He is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, the ultimate authority and power, the Word become flesh (*John 1:1*). His Word is power (*Hebrews 4:12*.) Second in power is Satan and his demons. Yet, Jesus triumphed over them on the cross (*Colossians 2:15*). All power has been given to Him in heaven and earth (*Matthew 28:18*). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation! (*Romans 1:16*.) Third, God has given you and I the power of choice. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” *Hebrews 2:3?*

The question we must ask ourselves is, are we prepared to stand, resist (the devil and temptation), and overcome? Are we the people Daniel foretold in *Daniel 11:32b*, “but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits”? May it be so!



RAYOLA’S Q & A CORNER

CAN A CHRISTIAN REMIT SINS?

Q: I know this question may seem silly, but what does remission imply for believers in light of *John 20:23*?

A: Questions such as yours are not silly. It appears that to avoid being embarrassed, many Christians will hold onto assumptions about spiritual subjects, rather than ask questions as a means to confirm or develop a right premise of truth concerning such matters.

We know that in all other Scriptures, except the one in *John* where remission is mentioned, it had to do with the forgiveness or pardon of sin. Scripture is clear that only God, as the great, ultimate Judge of the universe, can forgive, pardon, or show complete absolution of sin (*Luke 5:20-24*). We are told in *Psalms 103:12*, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

Remission also reminds us of the changing of the guard. In the OT atonement was made for sins. In other words, they were covered by the blood of some innocent animal. However, in the NT, remission points to that fact that our sin has been taken away, completely removed by the blood of Jesus. It cannot be uncovered again for it is no longer.

When it comes to *John 20:23*, it was in reference to Church discipline. The disciples were reminded that they had the responsibility to confront sin in their midst in a proper way. Much of how we view sin depends on our attitude about it. We decide what sins we become offended with, what sins we show tolerance towards (released-remitted), and what sins must be confronted (retained until there is a proper show of repentance). Some sins simply offend our pride, while other sins are a matter of trespassing God’s Law or covenant. When it comes to offenses that offend our pride, godly love should cover them with honesty about the problem resting with our pride (not the offender), tolerance towards human frailty, and awareness that most people are ignorant of committing such offenses (*1 Peter 4:8*). Notice that godly love will cover such sins, but it cannot remit them. It can show tolerance that speaks of releasing oneself from seeing

someone pay the price for such offenses to ensure purity of spirit, purity of conscience, and purity of conduct, for a root of bitterness will defile everything. Clearly, tolerance must also be displayed towards those who have repented of past sins with the intent to restore. After all, remission ends in restoration.

However, when God's Law or covenant is broken such as stealing, adultery, lying, etc., it must be confronted for the sake of the offender and rooted out for the sake of the Body. *Matthew 18:15-18* clearly explains the proper conduct when it comes to Church discipline. However, these instructions clearly point out that such remission or retaining must be done in light of Scriptural instructions. It does this by reminding us that all matters were bound to the disciplines and judgments of the Law and could only be loosed once a matter was determined to be in line with heaven itself. We see in the case of the fornicator in *1 Corinthians 5*, that his sin was brought to the forefront and retained as so until he repented. Upon his repentance, his sin was remitted as the Body was instructed to release him from further judgment and to restore him (*2 Corinthians 2:6-11*).

The problem with much of our attitude towards sin is that we take great offense against sin that personally offends our pride or religious standards, but we do not regard how it affects the offender's relationship with God. We end up caring more about our righteous indignation instead of the broken fellowship that has occurred between God and that person. We do not regard sin in light of whether it will end in the death of that person's soul. We do not possess the love that will in meekness and love contend for the soul with the desire to see complete restoration between the person and God. *James 5:19-20* puts this subject in this light, "*Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude*

"If we are not governed by God, then we will be ruled by tyrants." - William Penn (1644-1718)

Whom should we obey —God or man?

The following is excerpted from "Christians convict pastor for 'giving out Bibles,'" WorldNetDaily, Sept. 1, 2011: "The pastor of a Wichita, Kan., church who has been vocal in speaking out on homosexuality on public streets, the influence of abortion interests in his state and other biblical issues says he has been convicted on charges relating to his decision to hand out Bibles at a Muslim mosque—in a courtroom staffed and filled with Christians. The counts against Pastor Mark Holick of Spirit 'One Christian Center', known as the church 'without walls,' technically were two counts of loitering and one count of disrupting a business. He was convicted by a 6-member jury in Wichita District Court and today was sentenced to a \$300 fine, a year of probation and ordered not to be within 1,000 feet of the Islamic centre where last fall he was caught handing out pamphlets containing portions of the Bible. What is startling, he told the judge and courtroom during a 15-minute statement in court, is that the conviction came about through Christians. [The arresting officer, judge, prosecutor, city attorney, and four of the six jurors are professing Christians.] At the time of his arrest, he warned that Muslim religion law, Shariah, is creeping into America through preferential treatment provided by law enforcement and the courts. Today, he told WND that he was handing out a book containing English and Arabic versions of the biblical books of John and Romans, as well as a DVD containing testimony from former Muslims. Holick had been handing out the biblical portions on a sidewalk adjacent to the Wichita mosque, and also went into the driveway where it crossed the sidewalk to do the same. It apparently was that action that the police cited for their counts of loitering and obstructing a business. Holick noted, however, there was no testimony that he had obstructed anyone. ... He told the court, 'This is about an idolatrous government that has rejected the Lord God Jesus. This is about a government that has turned from the Lord God to the many gods of pluralism.'"

COMMENTS & QUOTES

"The only way the antichrist can have complete control, is when every country is in the most dire debt. People in debt are slaves to the one who owns the debt! Its happening all the way round the world, with governments of the WEST mostly US and UK and Europe getting in deeper and deeper because the leaders are under the oppression of the banking syndicate pulling the strings behind the governments. It will not change, but I do not think the devil will be completely successful, but I may be wrong. Being in debt is being controlled and that is what it is all about, those in government are spending, spending and spending because that is what they have been told to do, either they have been promised some reward or some power, whatever it is that is their goal, their foolishness and lust will end in their destruction. We just keep looking up !!!" - UK

"Do tell Rayola I've been so blessed by the devotions! I thank you too for all the things you send me by email! It keeps me up to date on a lot of the things going on." - AR

"Your devotions are so right on. It's like eating good food - when digested properly they help make for a healthy spiritual thought life. Thank you." - ID

"Show me a person who despises Bible reading, or thinks little of Bible preaching, and I hold it to be a certain fact that they are not yet born again. They may be zealous about forms and ceremonies. They may be diligent in attending church and the taking of the Lord's Supper. But if these things are more precious to them than the Bible, I cannot believe that they are converted. Tell me what the Bible is to a person and I will generally tell you what they are. This is the pulse to try—this is the barometer to look at—if we would know the state of the heart. I have no notion of the Spirit dwelling in a person and not giving clear evidence of His presence. And I believe it to be clear evidence of the Spirit's presence when the Word is really precious to a person's soul." - J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)