

# GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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

## THE JUDGMENT OF VANITY (A Call to Repentance)

### Part 1

By Rayola Kelley



I don't know about you but the speed in which America is being dismantled by our socialistic Congress and the Marxist that sits in the White House is incredible. Case in point is the health care debate. The health care debate is not about reform because if it was, Congress could easily accomplish such a task. Rather it is about gaining control of the American people. For me spreading our wealth and trying to control our food and health has caused shock, despair and hopelessness. I continually remind myself that my future has never been, nor will it ever be, in this present world. My hope, citizenship and prospects are in the next world to come, not in the present one.

The question is, as citizens of the kingdom of God what must we do to prepare ourselves for what may be coming on the face of this world, as well as being ready for our Blessed Hope? There are those who believe that we will escape devastating times. I hope they are right, but what if we do taste the judgment hanging over this nation? How do we prepare for such a possible event? Do we get our guns? There is one thing I know, guns will not save us; but we must never give them up or our right to bear them. To give up our guns will make us nothing more than sheep that will be easily led to the slaughter as so many were in Europe during World War II. Do we write our congressmen and senators and march in protest to the insanity that is marking this nation's present state? I think we must let our voices be heard, but in so doing, we must remember worldly governments will never save us; rather, they often are what wicked

men will use to betray and oppress us.

Clearly, the world will always offer solutions according to its wicked ways. However, what must we do as strangers and pilgrims in this world? We must do what those who are part of the kingdom of God should naturally do, and that is pray. But, how should we pray? The Bible clearly tells us that in an environment where sin is raging and evil men are ruling, there is only one way to pray and that is from the premise of true repentance.

No doubt some of the readers of this article will be thinking, "What do I have to repent for? I live a decent life, go to church, do good deeds, pay my tithes," and so forth. Perhaps this is all true, but without true identification with the nation's sin, repentance will be missing, along with any real power in prayer. Keep in mind Jesus became identified with our sin, and even though Daniel had an excellent spirit, he became identified with the sins of Israel in *Daniel 9* so he could intercede on its behalf. Clearly, we must become identified with this nation's sins to come to a place of true repentance before God. After all, we have the famous Scripture of *2 Chronicles 7:14*: "*If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*"

It is only from true repentance that God is able to forgive and heal. It is also from repentance that we can receive a proper contrast as to our part as the blood-bought Church in this nation's condition. Let me take a moment to explain a theory I have about the world in which we live. God has always called a people to bring a stark contrast to those of the world. His people have always been called to serve as the light to truth, a clear distinction as to true righteousness, and clearly set apart from, as well as not belonging to, their present age of

thinking, doing and being. They are a people with a clear commission and calling to represent the holiness of God in a profane world in order to be living testimonies of His desire to save, reconcile and restore lost men.

It is interesting to study how God ordains and calls a people to Himself. The first people He called to Himself were the Jews. He first called a man, Abraham, then He called his son Isaac, then Isaac's family, that of Jacob and his descendents, ending with Him calling the nation of Israel out of Egypt (a type of the world) into the Promised Land where the people were to stand as His distinct representatives among the pagan nations.

Let us now consider how God is calling a people unto Himself. He first sent His Son to redeem His people. He has called these people out of the world to be part of His unseen kingdom and His Son's Body or Church. As a gift to this Body, the Lord has presented His Spirit and Word so that one day His Church will be presented back to Him chaste and unblemished. He also gave this Church a commission to invite others into His kingdom, as well as a calling that identifies them as a heavenly, spiritual Body that does not belong to this world. The question we have to honestly answer as those who claim to be part of this Body in America, do we possess such a distinction?

This brings me back to my theory about God's people. I believe the spiritual condition of the Church represents the spiritual temperature of a nation. For some nations, the spiritual temperature is a raging fever, pointing to the persecution of the Church. Such a Church is being refined in the fire, as those around them war against the mirror that reveals their evil intents and hatred towards truth.

The spiritual condition of America clearly reveals how the Church has failed to bring a real distinction. It appears as if what we witness as being the professing Church has become nothing more than a system that is worldly in function and fleshly in its wor-

ship, methods of operation and activities, making it lukewarm towards the matters of God. Since the professing Church is not clearly defining the boundaries of righteousness and truth, lawlessness abounds in our society, evil rages against those who dare to stand for righteousness, and the fires of persecution are being stirred up as a means to silence any living witness of a holy God.

Clearly, if the spiritual condition of America is reflecting the condition of the visible Church, it is vital to understand the professing Church's failure to maintain its distinction from the world. By understanding this failure, perhaps it will create a true environment of repentance among God's people, and bring them to a true state of humility. Let us now consider how the fruits of the lukewarm Church are apparent in an out-of-control society.

*Tolerance:* The theme of America is tolerance. Such tolerance claims that those who refuse to compromise their resolve concerning righteousness, and come into agreement with the blatant ways of evil are hateful. However, who is hateful? Sin "hides" when righteousness reigns, but it manifests with hatred and vengeance towards righteousness when evil reigns. How could a nation founded on godly principles be arm-wrestled to succumb to a cesspool created by a minority? Perhaps it is because it has become soft on sin in the name of "worldly popularity."

The Church is the only Body that can bring a clear contrast between the ways of wickedness and the ways of righteousness. However, it appears as if many pulpits have become silent concerning sin in the church, and have miserably failed to oppose the wicked ways of our leaders. In fact, the popular leader and spokesperson of much of Christendom retracted his stand concerning homosexuality. Undoubtedly, he has his reasons as to why he thinks he needs to "get along" with everyone in order to be viewed as tolerant or loving, but he should not be surprised in the end when he is appointed to the same righteous ("intolerant") judgment as those he wants to "get along" with.

*Unholy Alliances:* Our nation

has made unholy alliances with enemies in the name of peace. We think that by being at peace with angry men who have learned nothing but war, we will be able to live at peace with them. There is even the idea that if we appear to be like them, and refer to ourselves as having the same status or belief as they, they will not see any need to attack us. This is not only showing naivety, but also complete foolishness. These enemies are angry because they are not God, and they war to control and force their personal agenda on the masses. They do not intend to have peace; rather, they will use such foolishness to conquer what they consider as weak-minded and stupid.

What about the visible Church? It has come into an unholy alliance with the world. Its goal is to attract the world; therefore, it has made a quasi-peace with it by instituting worldly methods, practices and ways into the Church. However, in coming into agreement with it, the Church has not only become worldly in attitude, as well as come under the rebellious spirit of the world, but it has made a false agreement "of peace" with the enemy of God, Satan. Satan has and will use the false agreement to come into the Church to rob it of all purity, extinguish all truth, and destroy its righteous testimony.

*Worldly Standards:* The world views people according to how educated, charismatic, and superior they are in their fields. However, these standards are surface. The most educated often prove to be the most ignorant, the charismatic people prove to be the biggest seducers and liars, and those who are considered superior prove to be arrogant and weak. In summary, these individuals who are often looked up to lack enduring and trustworthy character. They may even see themselves as knowing what is better for the masses, but in reality they couldn't care less about anyone. Their lack of love and regard for life prevents them from connecting to reality in order to put any identity or individuality on people, allowing them to freely sacrifice the faceless masses in the name of their wicked agendas.

How do many in the visible Church judge those among them? Those with the highest degrees are

sought after to fill pulpits, the most charismatic, who often prove to be charlatans and heretical, are often rewarded with the money from large followings, and the spiritual elite consider those who are not part of their particular enlightenment as stupid and worthy of any tragedy that would befall them. Therefore, the Church has been led further and further away from the guiding voice of God (His Spirit), the simplicity of the Gospel, the wisdom and sanity of His Word, and the high calling of His people.

*Philosophies:* The fundamental philosophy of the world is humanistic. In other words, man has the means to be a solution to every problem that confronts him. This philosophy allows man to operate according to an amoral view that is obtainable, self-serving and convenient. When the world's philosophy is intellectualized, the result is relativism. Add religious virtue to this philosophy and you end up with a cult that is influenced by an antichrist figurehead and a religious spirit. Spiritualize this philosophy and you end up with the New Age view that is enlightened by an antichrist spirit.

How has the professing Church addressed the philosophies of the world? It has integrated them into its doctrines and practices. Since many who have bought the various lies and presentations of the world do not consider the Bible sufficient for today, the Church has embraced the devil's counterfeits. Psychology, along with New Age practices such as Positive Confession (mind science) and the latest addition of the many other counterfeits, "Contemplative Prayer" are a few examples of the humanistic philosophies that have been implemented into Christianity. Do any of us have to wonder why the American Church has become powerless, ineffective and weak? Due to these unholy influences, the visible Church is being integrated into this age as a subculture that is conditioned to flow with the rest of the current that is leading us towards the one-world government and religion.

*Images:* The world is big in presenting images. These images are used to counterfeit, influence or determine our take on reality. For example, Hollywood is nothing but one big image that hides the sin, vanity, and destruc-

## WAS JESUS A PACIFIST? By Jeannette Haley

Most of us have probably heard the question, "What would Jesus do?" The idea behind this "little movement" was to get people to stop and ask themselves what Jesus would do when confronted with different situations. Of course, a person's response will depend on his or her perspective of Jesus. This perspective may be based on any number of things, including biblical knowledge and experience, or what type of teaching and influences he or she has been exposed to.

Given the overwhelming influx of humanistic teachings that have engulfed and greatly weakened the modern church, it should come as no surprise that the main thrust of "WWJD" is pacifist in nature. Webster's defines pacifist as "strongly and actively opposed to conflict, and especially war." That sounds all well and good until "sons of Belial" fly loaded passenger jets into skyscrapers with the intent of killing as many Americans as possible, or kidnap your children to be used in the sex trade, or break into your home with the intent of raping the women and killing both them and other family members.

Recently "Communist Colmes" stated on FOX TV, "I don't believe in war." At this point, I just have to stop and ask—have you ever yearned to reach right through your TV screen and slap someone? Well, I have, and this was one of those occasions. Given the nature that I am, the one thing I have very little, if any, tolerance for is self-righteous *stupidity!* By making that one little statement, this brain-washed pacifist was trying to get across a number of points to the listening audience. First, he was exalting his "superiority". After all, if *he* doesn't "believe in war," then those of us who do believe in self-defense, national defense, and protection of others are low-life, warmongering ignoramuses. Secondly, he is implying that socialism (as he perceives it) is the solution to war. (Never mind that godless, soul-less and bloody socialism, communism, Marxism, etc. never has been, nor ever will be, an idyllic utopia for humanity.) Thirdly, and most importantly, he is 100 percent

clueless concerning *reality*. The average person in this world just wants to be able to live life in as normal a situation as possible, free from the threat of violence. Only a demented mind would actually desire to experience the horrors of war. Yet, politically correct "pacifistic communists" use war as a means to gain control of whole nations, justifying it under the banner of "the means justifies the end."

This denial of reality on the part of liberal, politically correct pacifists is not only shocking, but it is also downright terrifying when you consider where such an ideology is leading us as not only a nation, but also the entire world. Consider this: You cannot have reality without truth, and you cannot have truth without God. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:10 and 11, if you do not receive "the love of the truth" then you will not be saved and furthermore, God will send a "strong delusion" so that you will believe a lie. Verse 12 says, "*That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" Therefore, if a person's perception does not consist of truth and reality, but is a "strong delusion" sent by God Himself, is that person truly sane? After all, can there be truth and reality in insanity?

Pacifism is not reality, nor is it truth, because it denies what is. For instance, war exists. So does hate, murder, torture, crime, evil, wickedness, lawlessness and so forth. If pacifism is the answer to the world's problems, where is one example in the world's history that it actually works to permanently solve such problems, and resolve conflicts? Perhaps pacifists can boast that they "don't believe in war," but who really wants to *experience* the horrors of war? Only an insane sadist, or demon-possessed lunatic, such as Hitler, would relish the horrors and atrocities that result from war. Also, consider that pacifists do not stand *for* anything because if you stand for something, then you must necessarily stand *against* things. Pacifists have no sense of right and wrong; therefore, they do not believe in justice. It is impossible to win an argument with a pacifist, because he or she will run you around with their circular thinking, which is based on the relativism that defies common sense.

Back to the question, was Jesus a

pacifist? After all, He went about healing people, raising the dead, and doing good deeds. He even went as a lamb to the slaughter. In addition, He forgave his executioners from the cross. Shouldn't Christians, therefore, take a pacifist stand concerning any type of defense?

To answer this question, we need to understand the nature and origin of pacifism. Keep in mind, pacifism denies truth and reality, thus it is a delusional falsehood. Therefore, in order to understand where pacifism entered the scene, we must go back to the Garden of Eden. Who was the original pacifist? Was it God, or some other creature? If you turn to *Genesis 3:1-5*, you will see that Satan subtly and passively tempted Eve to transgress God's commandment. By telling her "Ye shall not surely die," he painted a picture of God that was not true. He was implying that God is non-confrontational, and passive, or "conflict hating" concerning His commandments; therefore, He does not really mean what He says, so there is nothing to fear in disobeying Him.

The other person, Adam, was part of this scene, and he was likewise passive in his rebellion against God. In verse 6 we read that he was "with her" and he did eat. Adam avoided conflict with both the serpent and Eve by making no move to protest the serpent's presence or Eve's seduction. God had given Adam the sole responsibility of "keeping" the garden (*Genesis 2:15*) which meant that he had the responsibility of guarding and protecting it from harmful intrusion. While Adam may have avoided conflict with the serpent, when he ate of the forbidden fruit, he declared war with God. History records the woeful results.

Was the Lord God's response passive towards Adam, Eve and the serpent? Not hardly! You can read what happened in *Genesis 3*. *Genesis* also records the events surrounding God's judgment upon the entire world, save for Noah and his family, which event was so catastrophic that none of us can fully grasp the magnitude of it. We read in *Genesis 11* that after the great Flood, the people decided to establish a one-world government and one-world religion which involved worship of the stars (some believe from

the top of the tower), instead of replenishing the earth as God had commanded. Again God stepped in and caused division among the people by confounding their language. Therefore, throughout the entire Old Testament we read of conflict and war between God's people and the heathen nations who knew not God.

Does this mean that God, since He is not a pacifist, "believes in war?" It is not a matter of "believing in war," but a matter of acknowledging the reality of war because we live in a fallen world which is the battleground between those who choose to follow God, and those who belong to Satan either by their own choice, or by passively ignoring reality altogether. There is no neutral ground. The good news is that this terrible state is not going to last forever. The prophet Isaiah prophesied, "And he [Christ] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" *Isaiah 2:4*.

In *Joshua* there is recorded what is known as a Christology. A Christology is whenever Christ appears to man in the Old Testament which is, of course, before His incarnation. Concerning this appearance to *Joshua*, we read, "And it came to pass, when *Joshua* was by *Jericho*, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and *Joshua* went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And *Joshua* fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto *Joshua*, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And *Joshua* did so." If God and His chosen leaders had all been pacifists, and claimed that they "didn't believe in war," then where would the nation of Israel be today? If we did not have their example of righteousness, hatred for tyranny, and love for God, truth and freedom, would America ever have existed? If we all cave in to

the bullying of Satan's pacifists, can we hope to survive?

As one reads the Gospels, searching for examples of pacifists, some interesting facts emerge. Mary, the mother of Jesus, did not exhibit pacifistic or politically correct attitudes when she extolled God's greatness, "He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree" *Luke 2:51, 52*. Neither was the greatest prophet who ever lived, John the Baptist, a pacifist when he thundered to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance . . . And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" *Matthew 3:7b, 10*.

Concerning Jesus, first we need to understand that He was fully God and fully man, and that He came in the flesh to dwell among man for about 33½ years for one purpose, and that was to offer Himself as the Lamb of God, to take away the sins of the world. He did not come to establish at that time His kingdom on earth, nor did He come to bring peace. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" *Matthew 10:34-36*. What we read in *John 2:13b-16*, dispels the myth that Jesus was always "sweet" and "mild". Jesus went up to *Jerusalem*, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." Jesus' scathing rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees in *Chapter 23*

of *Matthew* is hardly a portrayal of Jesus as a "politically correct pacifist!"

Although Jesus may be depicted in our day and age by "pen" and "picture" (writings and illustrations) as a wispy, harmless, weak wimp, nothing could be farther from the truth. The Apostle John's description of Jesus in *Revelation 1:13-16* should cause great sobriety for all. He wrote, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." John's response? "I fell at his feet as dead" *Revelation 17:a*.

To dispel any doubt concerning Jesus' disposition as a pacifist, meditate on these verses: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called "The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" *Revelation 19:11-16*.

God's people, if they are to be "faithful to the end" must know their God. We cannot know Him as He is, the great I AM, if we insist on bringing Him down to our level (to be "like us"), or by trying to fashion Him into what we either want Him to be, or imagine Him to be. We must resist the tempta-

tion that is behind it. Sadly, many believe that the pseudo glamour of Hollywood represents reality. After all, Hollywood stars can determine the ending of their movies, and if they die in one, they are able to come back as another character in another film. As a result, it seems as if those who are part of the false glamour of Hollywood have no real connection to what is happening in the world. They do not realize how fragile their world has become because it is based on images that have no substance to stand or withstand when reality does end up slamming them. They face an even greater shock when they cannot rewrite the script, and all of their wealth, influence and prestige is powerless to effect change. Sadly, the Church has become very much like Hollywood. It is all about image. The greatest image is that of success. The false glamour and presentation of TV allows preachers to be phony as they stand behind plastic smiles, professional hairdos, expensive clothes, and the appearance of success. It all sounds so good because people cannot see what is really happening behind the scenes, but all it is, is an image that often hides the house of cards that will quickly succumb to the winds of judgment.

In next month's article, I will deal with the values to which much of the Church clings. As we will see, it is no different from the world's value system. However, in God's eyes such values are idolatrous. Meanwhile, we must consider if the Church needs to repent.

We can admit that there is not much difference between the visible Church in America and the world, and that it is obvious that the world has come into the Church. But, and here comes the "but"—some of you could logic that it is not your fault or mine that the world has come into the Church. However, the world could not come into the Church unless we, as believers, brought it in, failed to stand against it, or reasoned that minor agreements with the world would not hurt anyone.

We, as the American Church,

stand guilty for our lukewarm attitude about the world. We have lost our edge of righteousness and our distinct testimony. We stand guilty for silently sitting back while the world invades the hearts and minds of those around us. We stand guilty because we failed to insist on separation from this enemy of God out of love for Him, obedience to His truth, and conviction of what is right. In addition, we failed to bring the convicting light of righteousness in the midst of great sin and arrogance. We simply offered the ways of the world as a solution. As a result, we are about to reap the judgment due us for our indifferent compromise and profane alliance. The end of this judgment will be our drinking from the bitter cup of vanity that will leave us empty and in utter shame and despair.

Are you ready to identify with the sin of this nation? Remember, judgment begins in the house of God. It will separate those who are Christians in name only from those who are truly following their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I, for one, am humbly repenting before the Lord for the sin of the Church and this nation. I am "owning" the sin because it belongs to all of us who have sat back believing that somehow everything will turn out alright because we are Americans. †

### QUOTES TO CONSIDER

"For many ages, the church has used education in the arts and sciences in order to qualify ministers for the preaching of the Gospel, as if the position were merely a work of man's wisdom. Clergymen, for the most part, come forth in the power of human qualifications, and they are more or less full of themselves, trusting their own abilities in science, literature, languages, and rhetoric.

To this, more than to any other single cause, the great apostasy of all Christendom is to be attributed. This was the door through which the whole spirit of the world entered into possession of the Christian church. Worldly lusts and interests, vanity, pride, envy, contention, bitterness, ambition, and the death of all that is good in the soul, have always had their nourishment, power, and support from a sense of the merit and sufficiency of human accomplishment. Humility, meekness, patience, faith, hope, contempt of the

tion to feast on heretical substitutions for the Word of God. Rick Warren's books are unscriptural and New Age, portraying God in a humanist, pacifistic false light. *The Shack* is bottom line blasphemous. "Christian psychology" is not Christian, but is a deceptive dead end. Fantasy "Christian" fiction is foolish folly, which corrupts and distorts reality that can easily translate into idolatry. Humanistic books may inspire tears of empathy, but humanism does not lead to the cross of Calvary.

There is only one God and one way. *"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" Romans 15:13.* Amen. †

world, and heavenly emotions (the very life of Jesus in the soul) are hardly practiced or desired by great thinkers, critics, linguists, historians, and public speakers within the church.

Now, the goal of the preacher ought to be to bring people to a full dependence upon and faith in the continual operation of the Holy Spirit, who is the only One who can resurrect and preserve the life of God in their hearts. It is not enough for the clergyman to preach upon the subject every now and then. Rather, everything that he teaches should be constantly directed to it, and he should constantly exhort men to be filled with the Holy Spirit, who is the life and truth of goodness. He should turn his hearers from everything that resists and grieves the blessed Spirit of God, who always desires to remove all evil out of our souls and to make us again sanctified partakers of the divine nature.

Only those who are born again of the Spirit are Christians; therefore, nothing should be taught to Christians unless it is a work of the Spirit, and nothing should be sought in preaching or in hearing except by the power of the Spirit. It is due to the lack of this that there is so much preaching and hearing but so little benefit to either the preacher or the hearer.

Today, it seems as if the work of the preacher is, for the most part, to display logic and eloquence upon religious subjects. However, his religious discourses can no more unite him to God than if he were arguing right and wrong in a court of law." - William Law

## RAYOLA'S RESPONSE

**Q:** *I want you to pray for me that God would give me the desire to study his word. I love the Lord with all of my heart, but when I start to study, I just seem to drift away, and then I quit reading. My heart feels sad and empty and I feel bad about it. Please pray that God will hear me and give me that desire. Please! Thank you and may the Lord bless you and yours.*

**A:** We will keep you in our prayers. We understand the struggle you are having. For those of us who are Christians, it must be our desire that the Word penetrates our hearts with its priceless truths. After all, its doctrines serve as our milk, its righteous ways our meat, and its truths can cleanse and transform us. Clearly, Satan hates it and has done everything to destroy the power and influence that it can have in the lives of God's people.

Due to the importance of God's Word, I want to give you a few things to consider. Keep in mind it is a spiritual book. As believers, we have the Spirit in us that moved upon men to record the truths, prophecies, Law, instructions, and examples found in the Word. Clearly, the Holy Spirit in us would cause us to hunger after His very words. Therefore, you must discern what is happening with the Spirit. There are reasons why the Holy Spirit is not able to bring such a hunger in us for the Word.

1) Translation: Some translations are contrary to the character of the Spirit and the intent of God's Word. If your translation is contrary to God's Spirit and truth, there will be no anointing on it or agreement with it causing the Holy Spirit to withdraw from it instead of creating a hunger for it.

2) Wrong Laying on of Hands: The Bible speaks of the wrong laying on of hands. It seems that Christians do not understand this doctrine (Hebrews 6:1-2). Laying on of hands points to some type of impartation, whether it be for anointing (setting apart), and/or in receiving personal callings, gifts and/or the Holy Spirit. Sadly, many Christians have innocently subjected themselves to the

wrong laying on of hands. In other words, they have had people with another spirit lay hands on them. This causes another spirit to serve as a covering over the person (Isaiah 25:7; 30:1). Wrong spirits hinder a person from connecting with the Holy Spirit in matters of revelation, inspiration, motivation, and agreement.

3) Motivation: The final reason people seem to "hit a ceiling" of confusion or apathy towards the Word of God is because their motivation is not correct. Believers either incorrectly see reading the Bible as a duty, or they correctly understand it as a banquet table at which the Holy Spirit imparts the very life of Jesus to them. They can see it as something they do to impress God, instead of realizing it is their spiritual food. Reading the Bible is a privilege and studying it is a responsibility, but the reason we do it should be purely for selfish reasons. We do it to benefit our lives in order to ensure spiritual fitness to stand steadfast in faith, obediently run the course set before us, and faithfully endure to the end.

Through the years, I have asked the Lord to give me a love for the truth of His Word, the eyes to behold Him in Scripture, the heart to trust Him in what He says, and the resolve to obey His Word. I have realized that if I do not love His truth, I will not be attracted to His Word. If I am not seeking to see and know Jesus, His Scripture will lack life. If I am not set in my heart to trust His Word, I will not believe it is vital to my well-being. If I do not resolve to approach His Word to obey it, it will never become real, living and vital to my life.

I encourage you to pray about these possible hindrances to see if any of them might shed some light on your struggle. If there is any further help we can be to you, please feel free to contact us.

God bless you in your endeavors to know His Word.— *Rayola*

*"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts." - Jeremiah 15:16*

*"Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it." - Psalm 119:140*

## COMMENTS CORNER

"Yet another power-packed newsletter!! My heartfelt thanks to you all for continuing steadfast in His Word, and sharing your wisdom with all of us! Jeannette, you did such a powerful job of expounding upon the exact detriment of not avoiding the counsel of the ungodly! Rayola, I was absolutely doing the happy dance here when I read your Q&A this month! Thank you for giving such Godly wisdom, and stating it all so succinctly, that we do NOT need any "new revelation"! We need to continue on in His Word, and it would be a wonder of wonders if we even "got all of that" while still wandering through this pilgrim land! I appreciate the time and effort that you all put into this monthly newsletter to benefit all of us, but, even more so, I appreciate your relationship with our Heavenly Father, so that you are able to bring forth good fruit for us to be nourished. Thanks to ALL of you!" - FL

"You asked what I've learned or been taught through all of this. [Suffering with cancer.] It was a deepening of what most of us say we know and believe but until we are faced with our own mortality, we often have it only in our heads and not our hearts. I've learned what it is to face death and that one day I will, barring the rapture sooner. We all know this but until I actually had to face it I was not really able to put it in His hands and in His timing and know that He truly is in control of the number of my days. Mostly, I think I am just filled with gratitude toward the Lord for taking such good care of me and for His constant and abiding presence and protection. I KNOW I am in good hands and when my time comes, it will be His time for me not one day too soon or too late. I want my life to please Him and be about His will. I want every day to glorify Him and I pray He will continue to lead me in the direction He has for me. His Will is the most important thing to me. I trust that His will is total physical healing and health but over and above that, I want His will. These seem like all platitudes but they have gotten so much more personal." - MN