

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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

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The Odyssey Part 8 The Conversation By Rayola Kelley

Have you ever taken the time to consider what makes Christianity so unique and different? The odyssey we take as Christians should lead us to discover and live the Christian life that will reveal that it not only holds the solution to the challenges facing each of us, but that it allows us to experience the excellence of its abiding ways.

As Christians, we often bounce along without taking time to consider what it really means to be a Christian. Just how powerful is the Christian life? We can declare all of heaven is behind it, but how will it translate in our everyday life? Let's face it, as believers we advocate much, but do we believe it enough that we walk it out; do we believe it enough that we live it? Or, is it just something we tack on when we go to church on Sunday or to Bible Study? Is it a religious robe we wear to appear pious or do we really walk according to the righteous ways as presented in the Bible?



I know one of the concerns that many Christians have concerns the youth. I don't know about you, but I fear for our youth. Many of us fear we are losing our youth to the deceptive and destructive ways of the age we live in. The late David Wilkerson even admitted that some of his grandchildren appeared indifferent to Christianity. In essence, he was saying that they appear to have no heart towards Christianity.

Recently, someone told me we need to have a different discussion with our youth about what really ails

them in this world. As I questioned this individual as to the different discussions we were to have, he implied that we have to throw out the discussion that has been taking place for at least 20 centuries, a discussion that actually leads back to the Garden of Eden. He implied that the Bible has become obsolete in its ability to address the real problems that beset our youth.

Needless to say, we found ourselves at odds. The Bible is not obsolete. However, as I considered the individual that I was having the discussion with, I could not help but think that the reason the youth are somewhat lost is because it appears that the adults, such as this individual, do not know where they have come from and where they are going. Regardless of how much such individuals look to the methods and intelligence of the world, such intelligence is either proven to be ineffective, ever changing, or a complete flop.

Clearly, we cannot address a problem unless we understand what it is. We cannot change something unless we are willing to face the real crux of the problem with the intent of becoming part of the solution. To be the solution, we must step outside of the problem and implement the answer. As I listened to this individual run the gamut of his intellectual logic, it was obvious he was abounding in his own philosophies and with his own take on matters, but he lacked a very important element—he could not abide by any real solution. Even though he declared that he was a “Christian of sorts”, it was obvious he did not consider Christ as the solution to the problems that ails our youth. After all, how can you believe Christ is a solution when you regard His Word as being obsolete?

There are different ways in which people approach a problem. There are people who want a conversation about the dilemma, but in the end all that is accomplished is talk. The rea-

son these people fail to get anything accomplished is because there is no real consensus as to what the solution is. Without knowing the answer people end up with many varying angles and opinions as to what is wrong in order to come to terms with the antidote, but no one can really agree on what to do because there is no real point of focus as to the resolution. It is important to point out that if one knows the answer, then the solution will often dictate how a problem must be confronted.

The second way people approach the problem is they come to the table with what they think the solution might be and are seeking confirmation and insight in how to handle it. This conversation entails how to implement the solution in order to solve the problem. A couple of problems can arise. First, not everyone who joins the conversation may agree with the solution. This can easily end in disagreement. If there is agreement as to the solution, conflict may arise as to how to effectively implement it.

The third way people approach the problem is that those who come together recognize the problem, understand the solution, and have the wisdom to implement it in light of reaching the ultimate end. The main reason these people come together is to ensure the integrity of the implementation of the solution. Such individuals walk in confidence because they operate according to absolutes.

For Christians the absolutes are found in the Bible. The problem has been defined, the solution has been made clear, and the implementation of it has been outlined. The real issue is ensuring that the problem is addressed in a right attitude, the solution is lifted up in the right spirit, and the implementation of all matters is done in light of truth according to the measure of faith allotted by God.

This brings us to the conversation we should be having as Christians. Regardless of what this man stated about having to change the conversation in

order to reach our young people, he failed to realize his take on it is part of the problem. The issue is not that the Bible is obsolete; therefore, the conversation has to change; rather, the problems for our youth are escalating because man continues to become more lost in his false presentations of the world and blinded by the godless intelligence produced by the secular, anti-God, humanistic, New Age, communistic philosophies of this age. *Colossians 2:8* makes mention of this very fact, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" The philosophies of this world will spoil a person because they are shrouded in vain, useless lies that deceive because they find their source in man's stifling and blind traditions, as well as from the false foundations of the world.

The one aspect that the man and I agreed on was that the problems that confront our youth find their origin in the Garden of Eden. However, variance arose between us because his take on the source of the problem was different than my understanding of it. His conclusion as to the problem our youth are confronted with is that shame was put on man in the garden; therefore, they had to cover themselves with fig leaves. In his mind these fig leaves represent all the ridiculous standards we put on our young people, preventing them from ever finding out who they are. He mentioned such standards as the Ten Commandments, etc. To me the problems our youth are confronted with is nothing more than buying the same lies as Eve succumbed to in the garden (*Genesis 3:1-6*).

The lies in the garden usually present themselves in the same pattern. The first lie begins with, "Does God really mean what He says?" The debates as to whether God said something, or whether He meant what He said is always the big "IF" people throw in the equation when discussing the credibility of God's Word. When we get into the debate of the imagined "IF's" in regard to the validity of God's Word, we will always digress into a state of unbelief.

Even though this particular man believes there is a God, he does not believe the Word of God is absolute or capable of meeting the present problems in spite of what it says about itself (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*). Regardless of his logic about this matter, it is obvious that he has bought the same lies as Eve. He questions the absolutes and validity of the Bible; therefore, he logics out that he does not have to take the Word seriously enough to believe it.

As Christians, how many of us really believe the Bible? We can declare God said it, but if we do not believe it is true, we will never live it. Perhaps some of the problem with our youth is that there is much conversation about religion, but they do not see it being lived out in everyday life. They hear much preaching, but they see hypocrisy behind closed doors when there is no religious limelight present.

The first lie produces unbelief towards God, while the second lie will always produce a false hope. The serpent told Eve that there would be no repercussions for her disobedient actions: that she would not die. Sadly, most people prefer to believe a lie rather than the truth. The reason for this is because the lie can serve their purpose. For this reason the Bible is clear that we must love the truth if we are going to prefer it over the false presentation of the world, the arrogant logic of our pride, and base ways of the flesh (*1 Thessalonians 2:10-12*). The lie exalted the deadly fruit in such a way that Eve began to lust after the fruit; therefore, the lie justified her eating of it.

The man that I debated with apparently has fallen for the second lie as Eve did. This man gave me the impression that one did not have to get the matters of truth and eternity right. However, before a matter can be solved in any arena, the right way of handling it must be clearly understood, then implemented. Ultimately, the man was implying that there is no real clear way to salvation and no real consequences to fear if one is wrong about such matters.

As this man talked about how he perceived the whole matter of the Garden of Eden, he reminded me of *2 Kings 17*. The Assyrians came into the land of Israel and took the Hebrews

captive and disbursed them through the empire. In turn, the Assyrians brought other people from other cultures to settle the land of Israel, which included the capital, Samaria. These individuals brought their idols with them and set up their pagan altars. Even though the children of Israel polluted the land with idolatry, they paid dearly for it by being subdued and taken captive by their enemy; but, Jehovah was not about to take idolatry lightly from those who were now settling the land. The Lord sent lions among these people and some were slain. Needless to say, this brought fear upon the people so they asked the king of Assyria to send a Jewish priest to them to teach them the ways of Jehovah. A Jewish priest was sent. The problem is that the people figured they could have it both ways. They could keep Jehovah God off their back by instituting the correct ways of worshipping Him while maintaining their idolatrous, pagan beliefs. In other words, they ended up with a hodgepodge of beliefs and practices. We read this in *2 Kings 17:41*, "*So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.*"

At least these pagans in this incident began to fear the Lord, but for many in this present world, they have no fear, no respect, and no semblance of decency to appeal to or reason with. When there are no absolutes, justice will be absent. Without justice, there will be no fear of consequences. Without consequences, rights or wrongs become a matter of personal opinions or preference. Since there is no real standard of right and wrong, chaos will ensue, lawlessness will be the order of the day, and fear will be the byproduct.

The man whom I was contending with appeared to be entangled with the same lies as Eve and had a hodgepodge of beliefs. They came from various sources, including the world and heretical teachings. They were clearly distinguished by the fact that this man had no real fear of being wrong in his conclusions. He had no desire to be challenged and had no real concern about the consequences that would ensue if he was found to be on the wrong side of the fence. He would not allow such a thought or challenge to

disrupt him in his fragile reality.

Fear will always be a part of the equation; however, we must discern what fear is motivating each of us. We will either fear the absurdity of lawlessness that ends in destruction, or we will fear the consequences of justice. Those who do not fear the consequences of justice also lack healthy fear. In Christendom, we refer to healthy fear as "fear of the Lord." Without the fear of the Lord, people's conclusions will prove to be vain and foolish, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of godly wisdom that will produce healthy attitudes and honorable conduct (*Psalms 111:10*).

The third lie involves the trustworthy character of God. Of course, to buy the final lie, you must first believe the first two lies. The real goal of Satan is to cause us to question the character of God. Once we begin to question God's character, we can erect our own ideas of God. We can dress him up in any kind of garb that will prove to be acceptable to our taste and understanding.

In the first lie, the enemy got Eve to question the integrity of God's word. In the second lie the devil got Eve to question God's intent. In other words, God just wants to scare you because He has no intention of letting those He created and love, die. Now that God's word is undermined and His intent appears fickle, then one can bring doubt on His character.

Genesis 3:4-5 focus on the third and final lie, "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Satan implied the reason that God did not want her and Adam to eat of the tree is because they would gain the same understanding and status as God. God's motivation was on the line. In other words, His motive was to keep them down rather than protect them from devastating consequences.

Today, man thinks he knows best. In many arenas he has substituted worship of knowledge over worship of God. He often thinks he has the answers. He looks within rather than upward. He draws from his worldly sources only to fall into a vacuum that has no real answer or hope.

The conversation we must have as Christians is that there is a righteous God and that because of Adam's rebellion man is in a fallen state. In this state he serves that which is destructive and has been and will be judged by the righteous Law of God. Those who are under the Law of God stand condemned to die, as well as operate within a lost, dark state of hopelessness. We also must stress that all will stand before some type of judgment seat. *Hebrews 9:27* tells us that, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment", and *Daniel 12:1c-2* gives us this insight, "...and at the time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Once the door of physical death is opened, those who are lost to God, will be ushered into eternity where they will begin to pay the consequences. Their main offense is not the wrong they have committed, but it is because in unbelief they rejected God's solution. They refused to face the problem that originated in the Garden of Eden, thereby, calling God a liar (*1 John 1:8, 10*). Since they spurned the problem, it is natural for them to reject the solution of His Son, therefore showing utter contempt towards the work of redemption.

Christ is the sole solution to the problem that ails all of us, and the problem that He alone must address seems confusing to those who have followed after the so-called "wisdom" of the world, but it has been made clear in the Bible. But, due to the deceptive philosophies of the age, the Bible is undermined and the problem buried under psychobabble nonsense.

What is the problem? Although it is not politically correct to identify the problem, it is what it is. It causes even believers to become lukewarm towards God and take useless detours. It has at times entangled me into a deadly web, enticed me into destructive traps, and blinded me to the simplicity of the solution. The problem is **SIN**.

The inherent state of sin, with its guilt, shame, and condemnation, along with its consequences of death came from Adam (*Romans 5:6-21*). We are all born with it and it is our natural incli-

nation to go with the lies in the Garden of Eden that serve our reality, our fleshly preference, and ways. We talk about what is wrong, but we will not adopt the truth of God so we can stand for what is right. We can worship what we know about a matter, but we will not connect to reality to see the folly of our inaction to do anything because our conclusions are void of truth and inept of any power to resolve the situation.

Meanwhile, there are those who tout that we need to have a conversation, but how many of these individuals have no intention of changing their view on a matter? Many of us are content with looking intelligent about a matter, but how many of us are willing to find the solution outside of our own reality? How many of us are humble and meek enough to allow ourselves to be found wrong in order to discover what is right? Sadly, the world is falling into absolute lawlessness, not because the conversation that we need to have is obsolete or void of a solution, it is because the world at large will have no part in the solution God has provided, and the church is failing to rightfully address the problem of sin.

The Bible is clear that Jesus came to address sin by dying on the cross. He went to a grave to silence sin's accusations, and He victoriously rose again three days later to prove that sin had no power over Him. It tells us that the Lord wants to reason with us about our sin (*Isaiah 1:18*). His Word is the sharp sword that is capable of cutting through the vain philosophies and lies of the present age with truths that will result in right conclusions and the implementation of sound solutions (*Hebrews 4:12*).

As believers, we know that our humble beginnings started with the work of redemption on the cross. At times in our journey we need to remember that we have been purged from our sins (*2 Peter 1:8-9*). We must not forget that the Gospel is the beginning of the conversation we need to have with each soul, beginning with the part of the conversation that clearly states, "Jesus died for our sins" (*1 Corinthians 15:1-4*). The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation and can produce the right state in a person, that of being born again of the

water (Word of God) and of the Holy Spirit (*Romans 1:16; John 3:5 refer to Ephesians 5:26, 1 Peter 1:23, Ephesians 2:8, Romans 10:17*).

Perhaps this would be a good time for each of us as Christians to examine ourselves in light of our high calling. I do not believe that the real problem with our youth lies with simply having a right conversation with them, because I believe there must be also a visible confirmation. In other words, I believe that our youth need to see what is real: they need to see Jesus, the essence of His attitude, life, and ways being lifted up in us, and walked out in practical living. After all, Jesus stated that if He was lifted up, He would draw all men to Himself (*John 12:32*). †

QUOTES

**From James O. Fraser,
pioneer missionary to China**

“Each time your spirit goes under and faints in the testing and trials which come to you, you lose mastery over the powers of darkness, i.e., you get below them instead of abiding above them in God. Every time you take the earth standpoint — think as men think, talk as men talk, look as men look — you take a place below the powers of darkness. The mastery of them depends upon your spirit abiding in the place above them, and the place above them means knowing God’s outlook, God’s view, God’s thought, God’s plan, God’s ways, by abiding with Christ in God.”

“As a matter of fact, much knowledge has no life-giving power in it at all. I really believe it is possible to preach dead sermons — full of good, orthodox truth but dead because the power of the Holy Spirit is absent. I believe it is possible to read a dead Bible for the same reason.”

“Over-strained faith is not pure faith, there is a mixture of the carnal element in it. There is no strain in the ‘rest of faith.’ It asks for definite blessing as God may lead; it does not hold back through carnal timidity, nor press ahead too far through carnal eagerness.”

“The plain truth is that the Scriptures never teach us to wait for opportunities of service, but to serve in just the things that lie next to our hands.”

WHEN GOOD IS BAD AND BEAUTIFUL IS EVIL

By Jeannette Haley

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. — Proverbs 14:12

As millions of Americans, and the rest of the world watch America’s fall into the cesspool of moral and financial ruin, one cannot help but wonder how many Christians are actively seeking to gain God’s perspective on this heart-breaking matter. After all, it’s easier to turn on FOX News and get caught up with all the philosophical arguments, heated debates, incessant rhetoric, educated guesses, and miserable prognosis over the future, or lack thereof, of this once great nation.

What made America great? Alexis de Tocqueville an aristocratic Frenchman who came to the U.S. in 1831, when he was only 25 years old, and later wrote *Democracy in America*, a two-volume study of the American people and their political institutions, answered that question: “I sought for the key to the greatness of America in her harbors; in her fertile fields and boundless forests; in her rich mines and vast world commerce; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic Congress and in her matchless Constitution. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America ceases to be great.”

The question is, has America really ceased to be good? To answer that question with a question, are the majority of America’s pulpits still aflame with righteousness, or have people exchanged their fear of God (which produces wisdom and righteousness) for a politically-correct, non-offensive, feel-good, “warm fuzzy,” watered-down, happy-clappy “fun” gospel that results in a tolerant, pathetic, “seeker-friendly,” lukewarm type of wimpy “Christianity” that saves no one?

Isaiah 5:20 can be applied to the America of today: “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil: that*

put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Let’s consider some of the exchanges of light for darkness, truth for lies, life for death that have taken place in this once great “good nation. Couch Dave Daubemire laments: “Our [elected] government officially denies the existence of God. Atheistic Humanism has overthrown the Almighty even though 80% of Americans still identify themselves as Christian. Government is no longer of, by, and for The People. We are actually being taught today that our children belong to the government. While babies are being murdered, sodomites are marrying, our government is being controlled by those who are loyal neither to America or to the Lord. Christians find themselves fighting over such trivial matters as school prayer, manager scenes, and the right to say ‘Merry Christmas’ at work. We strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. We have an un-American President. He opposes everything that made this nation great. Even a casual reading of his un-hidden personal history and the judging of his fruit exposes the fact his loyalty is to Islam and not to Christ.” (Excerpt from AMERICA: THE GREAT SUPER POWER, By Coach Dave Daubemire, News With Views, August 22, 2013.)

The double standard that has been skillfully interwoven into the fabric of American culture by the Global Mafia (agents of Satan) is a powerful weapon that seeks to divide and conquer. People are dumbed down by being continually lied to, and programmed to emotionally respond to certain key “triggers” rather than facts. In an article, “CHRISTIANITY IS OUR FOE... WORD MANIPULATION USED FOR CONTROL” written by Karen Schoen for News With Views, she states, “The altering of history allows the dumbing of the people by infusing meaningless values prompted by emotional trigger words rather than facts. Values not facts are now promoted in school. Facts are truths which give people the security of knowing where you are like being home with a warm fuzzy feeling you can always count on. Facts ground you because wherever you are, facts

never change and will bring you home. You can always count on facts to be the same for everyone. People can communicate on facts alone. Facts when known, bind individuals together. Facts are the fastest way to unite people because they are the same for everyone. People knowing the same fact can organize quickly and come together efficiently. So to conquer people, facts must be destroyed. Once values, which are ever changing opinions, replace facts, individuals become confused and are easily led and often become part of a gang, crowd, or mob for security. School programs like: School to Work, NCLB, CCS eliminate facts and indoctrinate value driven emotion. Once you conquer someone's emotion you can control them. School uses emotions to control the mind."

What a fitting description this is for both America, and the post-modern church! With the exception of the remnant, pilgrim Church, the foundational facts of Christianity are more and more considered archaic and obsolete. Sound biblical facts are systematically substituted with emotionally-charged rhetoric drawn from modern "perversions" of the Bible which flow from pulpit to pew. Facts concerning God, sin, judgment, hell, the deity of Jesus, and His death, burial, resurrection, and His millennial reign are no longer relevant to those whose religion and reality is solely feeling-based. Christians are told by God to test the spirits (*1 John 4:1*), not ask ourselves how what we see, hear or experience makes us "feel," or if we think it's "fair." We are also warned that those who do not receive love for the truth will be damned. (*2 Thessalonians 2:8-12*.)

As in the days of Noah before the Flood came and took them all away except eight souls saved in the ark, modern man has exchanged life for death, truth for lies, spirituality for psychology, true faith for "faith in faith", morality for gross immorality, and dependency on God for dependency on Government. Common sense is being exchanged for nonsense, love for indifference, hatred, and the god of self. Unbelief, idolatry and the return of paganism is considered good while biblical faith is held up as bad and dangerous to national security. Foolishness is the norm, while godly wisdom is mocked and shunned. Integrity has

been exchanged for degradation, generosity for greed, upright living for debauchery, sobriety for addictions, and godliness for idolatry, witchcraft, and sorcery (which includes drug addictions). The list of light exchanged for darkness is seemingly endless.

Other examples of when "good is bad" are when the mind benders tell us that the choice of abortion is "good" for women, while scoffers proudly declare that atheistic humanism and evolution is more "realistic, scientific and intelligent" than archaic faith in God and the Bible. Marriage between one man and one woman is derided and scorned while the abomination of homosexuality (and other deviant lifestyles) are exalted as "good," "normal" and acceptable. After all, "if it feels good, it must be good" right? *Wrong!*

The communists (who now have a controlling death grip of the government, media, and educational institutions) are boldly pushing the propaganda that decisions must be made, regardless of how damaging, destructive, demoralizing deadly, or damning, for the "greater good" which is the "right thing to do." When it comes to fornication, adultery, homosexuality, pornography, and other abominations, we are told that it is "good" to be "tolerant." After all, it is "bad" to "judge" and "good" not to insult or offend anyone, anywhere at anytime, especially if he or she is a Muslim, or a member of a cult, or even if he or she is a terrorist, or any other demon-possessed, hell-bent sinner. It is considered "good" to strip honest, upright, law-abiding citizens of their Constitutional rights such as freedom of speech, and the right to bear arms, (to name two) and considered "bad" to be a God-fearing, patriotic Christian.

The environmental movement in America alone has turned this once great nation over to its ear. Man was given dominion over the earth to subdue it (see *Genesis 1:26-28*) and everything was declared "good" by the Lord God. But, now we are told that man's "dominion" is "bad" and that everything in nature is preferred above man. "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever*" *Romans 1:25*. A major idol that is taking a huge chunk out of our American way of life is "Mother Earth"

worship. It's okay to murder unborn babies (and if some have their way, even children up to the age of three), but it's a crime to destroy an eagle's egg, or destroy habitat for a desert rat, or build a home where native weeds will be uprooted, or selectively harvest old growth trees, etc. It is "good" to introduce huge wolves, and other predators into wilderness and semi-wilderness areas where they destroy both wild and domestic animals, and are a threat to hikers, campers, sportsmen, and others who wish to enjoy remote areas. Predators such as wolves, bears, and mountain lions are either placed in wilderness areas, or protected in order to keep people out, and that is supposed to be "good," while human habitations are considered "bad." Thanks to Nancy Pelosi, tens of thousands of farmers and their land were brought to ruin in California when she halted irrigation water to their crops because of some silly little fish that was spotted in the irrigation canals. Growing food for the people and providing jobs is "bad," but saving a worthless minnow is "good." The bottom line—sin equals insanity.

God's perspective of good, bad, beautiful, and evil is far different than that of fallen mankind. Jesus told the religious, self-righteous Pharisees, "*Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God*" *Luke 16:15*. [Underscore added.] A small example of that hit home the other day when a friend sent an email with a link to a magnificent violin performance by Andre Rieu of Holland. The music hall was packed, the orchestra superb, and the music gloriously beautiful. You ask the name of the song he played? It was, *I Did It My Way*. The music is so moving, so incredibly soul-stirring that you find yourself caught up in its flow; that is, (if you belong to the Lord) until the unsung, but well-known lyrics begin to twist through your soul like a conflicting undertow. As the meaning of those self-exalting words sink into your consciousness, you find them conflicting and colliding with God's perspective. It feels like a jagged tear

threatens to cut through your innermost being like a chainsaw rips through green wood. The music is beautiful indeed, but those famous lyrics, although “highly esteemed” by man are an “abomination” to God, for they exalt man’s total independence from God in the height of his self-sufficiency, rebellion, and pride, all of which God resists. They are evil because they portray the exact opposite of God, His Word, and the example given to us by Jesus Christ, who cried, “Not my will, but thine be done.” The philosophy of *I Did It My Way* belongs to the realm of Satan and his manifold temptations to man.

Music so incredibly haunting and beautiful is hard to resist and can be as addictive as drugs. (This also applies to New Age music, ancient chants, Indian drumbeats, rock n’ roll, and other types of music.) Never forget, Satan doesn’t manifest himself as a gruesome, gross, grotesque gargoyle, but instead “is transformed into an angel of light” *2 Corinthians 11:14b*. He knew how to present what appeared to be good and beautiful to Eve, and she, being beguiled, fell for it. Satan knows the power of music, having originally been part of the angelic host who worship God continually (*Revelation 4:8*). In *Ezekiel 28:12-19*, and *Isaiah 14:12-15* we are given insight concerning Satan who was the “anointed cherub” (*Ezekiel 28:14*). Note: When studying the Old Testament, keep in mind that Hebrew writing often carries a literal intent or application for a certain time and place that can involve either literal physical individuals, places, and events of that time, as well as reveal, at the same time, facts concerning unseen entities in the spiritual realm, as well as describe the past, present, or future events concerning both the visible and invisible realms. In other words, the living Scriptures can, and often do, contain a dual or twofold meaning within one portion of Scripture. Hebrew writing also may contain a double fulfillment, such as with certain prophesies. To quote from Anna Schewry (<http://yadbyad.messengers-of-messiah.org/index.html>), “The basic factor in describing the Hebrew mindset of Scripture, is that first of all, Scripture must be tried in the realm of current, physical truth at the time of its

writing. Naturally, we cannot/must not try to spiritualize everything written in God’s Holy Word. Thoughts to keep in mind: Hebrew = VISUAL/PICTORIAL language; Greek = BRAINIAC/MIND language.” Another tip concerning reading the Old Testament is to determine who is speaking to whom. Unlike our English novels that make it easy for us to know who is talking, such as, “he said, “she replied,” and so forth, conversations can be difficult to follow. For example, in the Song of Solomon, one must discern when the Shepherd-King is speaking, and when the Shulamite girl is speaking. Likewise in the prophetic books such as Jeremiah, the reader has to be alert as to when the Lord is speaking, and when the prophet is speaking.

Christians also need to remember that not all of the Bible is written to us, but every word is written for us; therefore, “*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*” *Matthew 4*. (See also *1 Corinthians 10:6, 7*.) Thus, we are to discern and obey both the intent and principles of the Word. As one of my Bible teachers years ago used to say, “If the Bible makes literal sense, seek no other sense. But, if it does not make literal sense, seek another sense.” This is called “*rightly dividing the word of truth*” (*2 Timothy 2:15b*), by comparing Scripture with Scripture, thought with thought, precept with precept, principle with principle, and topic with topic.

Returning to the main topic of this article of when beauty can be evil, Satan can, and does, present evil camouflaged with great beauty. A book that, in my opinion, every Christian should read is *The Beautiful Side of Evil*, by Johanna Michaelson written in 1982 about her involvement with psychic healing, and other occult phenomenon before she gave her life to Christ, and he set her free. This book helped unravel a lot of confusion I was experiencing at the time because of the “good” things (such as physical healings) that I had witnessed and read about. Also, my dad and his wife were heavily steeped in New Age beliefs, Unity and metaphysics—so much so that they traveled to the Philippines to visit the then-famous psychic healers. They excit-

edly returned to the States with three hours of home movie film showing the “healers” performing their “miracles” on Americans. My spirit was greatly agitated, but I wasn’t fully equipped at that point to successfully argue with their so-called “proof” of “genuine healing.” After all, if “good” things take place, and people are “healed” of all kinds of problems in the realm of metaphysics, then why was it evil? The answer, of course, is the spirit behind the miracle. We must never forget that Satan, and demons have great power, and are able to deceive through “signs and wonders” which have always captured the minds and imaginations of mankind through the ages. The question is, is the Church prepared for the great deception that will usher in the reign of the antichrist? “*And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live*” *Revelation 13:13, 14*. (As a side note, in the recently-published, heavily footnoted, ultra technical book *Exo-Vaticanus* by Tom Horn and Chris Putnam ample proofs are given to substantiate that UFO’s, alien intelligences and abductions, which accompany the appearance of the one-world ruler are an exceedingly convincing, dangerous, terrifying plot targeting any belief and faith in God, and His Word, that remains on earth. The incredible, and overwhelming wonders and signs originate, not in the physical “outer space” as people are being led to believe, but from the unseen, spiritual dimension of Satan and demons who are able to take on substance and form that we can see.)

Issues of good and bad, right and wrong, morality and immorality are being relegated in our day and age by the scientifically-minded, progressive liberals to the junk heap of history. These self-proclaimed “intelligent elite” see themselves as posed on the precipice of global change which Satan has planned and plotted for centuries. This “New World Order,” of course, will seek to exclude and eliminate those of us who continue to uphold the tenets of

the faith, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and obedience to the Word of God. But, praise the LORD! Satan will be given only a very short period of time on this earth. Then shall the King come, as it is written, "*Behold I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*" Revelation 22:12, 13.

Are you ready? †

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

POSSESSING OUR SOULS AND VESSELS

Q: *I have read in a couple of different places where we are to possess such things as our souls in patience and our vessels in sanctification. What does it mean to possess ourselves in such ways?*

A: According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, "possess" means to acquire, own, obtain, provide what it takes to possess, and purchase if necessary. The Scripture that commands us to possess our souls in patience is found in *Luke 21:19*. It is in reference to the last of the end days when much will affront the souls of God's people.

Our soul is made up of the will, emotions, and intellect. We are told that in the end days, our resolve will be worn down (*Daniel 7:25*). If our resolve is constantly affronted by wickedness, our emotions will become frayed, and our understanding will be plagued with confusion, uncertainty, and fear. In order to possess or take ownership of our souls, we must take responsibility for how such challenges affect us. Are we going to define how challenges affect us or will challenges define us and we find ourselves giving way to the lies and despair of our situation? Regardless of how weary we are because of what is affronting us, we must line up to God's will, step over our emotions by choosing the Scriptural, godly, excellent way, and have faith towards God when our understanding is being swallowed by confusion and fear.

People who learn how to take ownership of their souls will be able to stand in faith, withstand with truth, and continue to stand in light of heavenly hope. They will have the integrity and character to endure the adversity that

will try to consume them in these last days. They will not be swayed by circumstances for their will, will be set upon an immovable Rock, their emotions disciplined by the Word of God, and their mind being transformed by the Holy Spirit.

The second Scriptural reference is found in *1 Thessalonians 4:4*. In this verse, we are to possess our vessel, (body) in sanctification. When you read *1 Thessalonians 4:3*, it explains why one must possess his or her body, "*For this is the will of God even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*"

Fornication is every illicit sex outside the Scriptural boundary of marriage, which includes adultery and pornography. (Note: The root word for fornication in the *Strong's Concordance* is "porn." Therefore, all acts of fornication are considered a type of pornography.) The Apostle Paul tells us that when a person commits fornication, he or she commits a sin against his or her own body (*1 Corinthians 6:17-20*). The reason is because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are to glorify the Lord in and from our temples. If we fail to sanctify or set our bodies apart for the sole purpose to glorify the Lord, they can easily be taken captive by the lust of the flesh and driven like an undisciplined wave on the ocean of life. When lust reigns it brings a person into an unholy agreement or union resulting in fornication, defiling his or her life and testimony.

Since there is a spiritual aspect to our being, unholy agreements also point to a spiritual agreement. Often such agreements serve as avenues for Satan to operate in a person's life or in the relationship, bringing guilt, condemnation, and oppression. In summation, to bring our body into agreement with the profane is also an act of spiritual whoredom or idolatry, which is another form of fornication. As the Apostle Paul stated, "*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*" (*2*

Corinthians 6:16-17).

Therefore, to ensure that we sanctify or properly set our bodies apart in order to glorify God, our attitudes towards the matters of sex must be respectable, our motive must be pure, our intention honorable, and our conduct godly. We must not only possess this type of disposition, but we must insist on it, not only from ourselves but from those whom we come into contact with. If we see that such an attitude is lacking, we must flee such an environment to prevent our lusts from being stirred up in a destructive way (See *2 Timothy 2:19-22*).

As believers, we must take possession of every moral aspect of our lives. We must not use our bodies to please every sexual desire, pursue every physical attraction that catches our eye, give in to our emotional whims, or fickle passions; rather, we must use our faculties to bring glory to God, honor to our Christian testimonies, and credibility to our Christian life.

In closing I want to end this subject with this stern warning, "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye*

From Revival Addresses by R.A. Torrey (1856-1928)

"...that is where sin begins—in a desire to be independent of God, in a desire to have our own way, in a desire to do as we please. The essence of sin is in a desire to do what we please, rather than be constantly looking to God and asking Him what pleases Him...what you please to do may be upright, may be moral, may be very refined, but the desire to do your own will is the heart and essence and substance of sin. There are different classes of sinners and different forms of sin. There is sin that is coarse, and there is sin that is refined. There is sin that is low and vulgar, and there is sin that is genteel and elegant. But all sin is alike in essence. It is man seeking to be independent of God, man seeking to have his own way; that is where sin begins, that is the very essence of sin."

**From *Revival Lectures*
by Charles G. Finney (1792-1875)**

"Bring up the individual's *particular sins*. Talking in general terms against sin will produce no results. You must make a man feel that you mean *him*. A minister who cannot make his hearers feel that he means them, cannot expect to accomplish much. Some people are very careful to avoid mentioning the particular sins of which they know the individual to be guilty, for fear of hurting his feelings. This is wrong. If you know his history, bring up his particular sins, kindly but plainly, not to give offence, but to awaken conscience, and give full force to the truth."

"The church is now filled up with hypocrites, because they were never made to give up the world. They never were made to see that unless they made an entire consecration of all to Christ, all their time, all their talents, all their influences, all their possessions, they would never get to heaven. Many think they can be Christians, and yet dream along through life, and use all their time and property for themselves, only giving a little now and then, to save appearances, when they can do it with perfect convenience. But is is a sad mistake, and they will find it so, if they do not employ their energies for God. And when they die, instead of finding heaven at the end of the path they are pursuing, they will find hell there."

"In dealing with a convicted sinner, be sure to drive him away from every refuge, and not leave him an inch of ground to stand on, so long as he resists God."

"There is only here and there a minister in the country who knows how to probe the church when they are in a cold, backslidden state, so as effectually to wake them up and *keep them* awake. The members of the church sin against such light, that when they become cold it is very difficult to rouse them up. They have a form of piety which wards off the truth, while at the same time it is just that kind of piety which has no power nor efficiency."

**SATAN CANNOT BE MADE
HOLY
by Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947)**

There is no such thing as purifying the impure. Evil things never get purer, but more vile. All impurity, all evil must be cast out. You can never make Satan holy. He will be hellish and fiendish forever, and when the brightness of God comes, the Devil will be glad to get in the pit and stay there forever and ever.

Some foolish people say that the Devil will be saved, and that they will go arm in arm with him. It is because they do not rightly understand the Word of God. You will never purify sin. "*the carnal mind...is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*" (Rom. 8:7). Carnality has to be destroyed. Evil propensities must be rooted out. God's plan is, "I will give you a pure heart, and a right spirit." And this is the order of the new creation in God.

It does not matter what you say; if your human spirit does not get wholly sanctified, you will always be in danger. It is that position where the Devil has a chance to work upon you. Therefore, we are taught to come into sanctification where uncleanness and corruption pass away, and where all kinds of lusts lose their power.

Only in the pursuit of sanctification does God bless us in our purifying state so that we ascend with Him in the glory. The saints of God, as they go on into perfection and holiness and understand the mind of the Spirit and the law of the spirit of life, are brought into a very blessed place.

It is the place of holiness, the place of entire sanctification, the place where God reigns on the throne of the heart. It is the place where the mind is so concentrated in the power of God that a person thinks about the things that are pure and lives in holy ascendency. The Spirit can sanctify your spirit until you will never vaunt yourself and will never say "I, I, I," but it will be "Christ, Christ, Christ." Then Christ will be glorified.—*Smith Wigglesworth Devotional*, pg. 223

"Jesus taught us to pray, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' But today, many pray 'My kingdom come, my will be done on earth, *and* in heaven.'" - J. Haley

COMMENTS FROM FRIENDS

"I am very thankful for the articles on Rock music, because my son started with listening to Rock music which led him to Rock concerts, then into drugs, and then into witchcraft. Once he entered into the world of witchcraft, then the demonic voices began and somewhere along the way to him the voice became his friend and mentally, emotionally and probably physically and definitely spiritually he is gone. It is very sad, so hopefully all of your readers will take heed to the warning about the severity of Rock music and the damage it can do no matter how harmless it may seem, please don't be fooled." - ID

"People are so weird....you step on their sacred cows [heresy] and they turn into grade school kids in the way they act." - ID

"Awesome word on Heaven! [GSM August Newsletter] When my brothers and I were pretty young, I about 6 or so, my brothers both younger, my parents took us a few times to a Unitarian church. Even as young as I was, and not having had any other spiritual training, I knew in my gut something was very wrong. You guys are hitting the mark!" - AR

"The most important ministry we can do right now is prayer and minister unto the Lord." - WA

"Your [Jeannette's] article [July NL] was exceptional as it clearly revealed the deep places you have been with the Lord as well as your struggles. Of course your newsletter is always good and filled with God's Word to think on, but yours and Rayola's articles harmoniously were interwoven by the Spirit. You both talked about your life's journeys of wrestling matches and your pursuit to follow Jesus and His truth to come to that place of peace, rest, hope and faith in God. I really liked Rayola's Q & A as it put in perspective the desires of our heart." - ID

"The Word challenges your reality, so if you are not in the Word, you end up with an insane reality." "You see people today that aren't interested in real ministry because all they want to do is stand up front. If they were interested in real ministry, they would be interested in people!" - Rayola Kelley