To my sister, Heather.

If ever there was two people,  
who knew firsthand  
the ravages of spiritual warfare,  
It would be you and me.

Prior to salvation,  
both of us,  
at various times,  
have danced with the devils,  
played their games,  
and sang their songs.

We ingested their poison,  
believed their lies,  
and even tried to end these lives,  
multiple times.

But God did what only He can do.  
He rescued us from the dominion of darkness,  
He saved us from the clutches of the evil one.  
He set us free.

Thank you for not only putting up with me,  
and for being a wonderful sister here on earth,  
but for now being a fellow soldier of Christ,  
fighting the good fight,  
in this greatest battle of all,  
The Great Cosmic War.

Don’t ever give up Heather,  
We know who wins.

I love you.
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Preface

Why are so few Churches making an impact on the world today? Why are so many believers living defeated lives? Why do so many Christians talk about having a victorious Christian life, yet so few seldom ever do? The answer lies in the greatest spiritual war of all time, The Great Cosmic War.

But we have a problem, a big problem in the Church today. You see, you would think that the knowledge and mastery of spiritual warfare would be commonplace among the Christian community. After all, our Lord Jesus Christ took on and defeated the devil himself. But unfortunately, waging war against the enemy of our souls is one of the least talked about topics in the Church today, for a couple of reasons. One reason is because some in the Church have detrimentally taken spiritual warfare to an unhealthy extreme. The result is that the moment you try to talk about spiritual warfare in Christian circles, most people think you’re some sort of a weird lunatic. Then, as if that wasn’t bad enough, we have the second extreme to deal with. Nearly half of all professing Christians today don’t even believe that our greatest archenemy, the devil, even exists. No wonder we’re losing the fight! Yet in the midst of our sad skepticism, spiritual warfare really is something we all have to deal with every single day here on earth. And unless we get a proper balanced handle on it, we will simply continue to be beaten to shreds spiritually.

Thus, I have written this book, without all the hyper fanaticism, showy sensationalism, or dry theological jargon and simply focused on getting down to the nuts and bolts of the greatest war of all time, the war against the children of God and the forces of hell. It is penned with a powerful concoction of practical information and personal application for personal victory, while clearly exposing the lies, traps, and pitfalls of the very forces of evil. It is my prayer that this book will not only clearly unveil this deadly invisible war and expose the seductive weapons the devil uses to keep the Church from becoming a mighty army for God, but that it will also provide the practical tools needed for the personal spiritual victory that our Lord Jesus Christ has already won for us.

One last piece of advice. When you are through reading this book then will you please READ YOUR BIBLE? I mean that in the nicest possible way. Enjoy, and I’m looking forward to seeing you someday!

Billy Crone
2011
Part I

The External Battle
“It was the largest luxury ship of its day. And on its maiden voyage it hosted some of the most prominent people in the world including a host of millionaires. Due to its double-layered hull and sixteen watertight compartments, it was considered to be unsinkable.

However, shortly before midnight on April 14th, the ship collided with an iceberg, damaging five compartments and thus the unthinkable became reality. The unsinkable ship began to sink. And even when the alarm was sounded, many of the passengers casually disregarded the warning and thus perished in their arrogance.

But even for those who heeded the warning, their fate wasn’t much better because to their horror they discovered that there were only enough lifeboats for less than half the people on the ship.

And even for the fortunate few who made it into a lifeboat, they soon discovered that the drain plugs in the bottom of some of the boats had been pulled out. Everything that could have gone wrong seemed to go wrong that night.

And when the screams and cries finally subsided, the death toll rang out, 1,635 people were dead. The ultimate luxury boat had turned into the ship of doom.

The year was 1912. The ship of course, was the Titanic.”

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Now, we all know about the Titanic and how it was one of the worst disasters of all time, right? But what if I told you that I know of a disaster that makes the Titanic look like chump change. And what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one night, but it’s going on right now today and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. And this isn’t a watery maritime disaster. It’s a worldwide spiritual disaster. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Killer C’s.

People of God, as American troops have gone off to war to fight an external enemy, so the American Church needs to go to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your effectiveness for Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to begin a Scriptural study revealing this cosmic battle we’re in, and expose the seductive weapons the devil uses to keep us from becoming a mighty army for Almighty God. And there’s no time to waste, so let’s get started.

The first external attack, the first Killer C the enemy fires at us is the attack of the Casual Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

Matthew 15:1-9 “Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!

Jesus replied, And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, Honor your father and mother and anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God, he is not to honor his father with it.

Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.” (NIV)

Now according to our text, Jesus doesn’t even hesitate in rebuking the religious people of His day, does He? And why is that? Because they were being hypocrites, right? Oh, they might have made a great show before men, but their
hearts weren’t really devoted to God. And they may have been masters of saying all the right words and doing tons of religious things, but when all was said and done, they were simply giving God the ol’ lip service. In fact, the only reason why they performed the “religious things” they did was to simply keep up appearances before men.

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate when person has become a Casual Christian is this; When Their Attendance Goes Down. You see, the first definition of the word casual means, “to occur by chance or without regularity.” And folks, this is one of the very first things the devil will do to keep Christians from becoming a mighty army. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to be labeled as one of those religious freaks who goes to Church services on a regular basis, do you? No! Just go enough to keep up appearances.”

And folks, you might think a casual attendance is no big deal, because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this a lie from the pit of hell, because the devil knows that a casual attendance leads to casualties. And the first casualty is that it Weakens the Church.

Romans 12:5-8 “So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

If it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” (NIV)

Folks, the Bible simply says that each Christian has been given supernatural gifts by God, not just for their own benefit, but for the benefit of the whole Church. And the enemy knows the power of this, so he gets people to not use their gifts. For instance, some Christians are given the gift of teaching. But if they rarely come to services, how can people be taught? And some Christians have the gift of encouragement. But if they rarely come to services, then how can others be encouraged? And on and on it goes. Do you see what the enemy is doing? Pretty slick, isn’t it?

People of God, we desperately need each other. That’s the way God has designed it. Every single one of us plays a vital role in keeping the Church of Jesus Christ strong and healthy. But if a Christian only comes enough to “make
appearances” and not enough to show they’re really interested, then how is the Church ever going to stay strong? Do you see the cunningness of the enemy?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second casualty caused by a casual attendance is that it Weakens the Gospel.

**John 8:31-32** “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (NIV)

People of God, a Christian who is casual in their attendance is not only tricked into weakening the Church, but the gospel as well. And here’s how it works. When Christians go to Church services, they learn about God’s truth, right? And it’s God’s truth that enables us to expose the harmful lies out there, especially the ones concerning the gospel. Let me show you what I mean. Here’s a list of the so-called spiritual beliefs of the non-Christian. You tell me if they’re full of lies:

- 67% of unchurched adults call themselves Christian.
- 10% believe that God is a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach.
- 19% believe that “the whole idea of sin is outdated.”
- 68% stated that satan is merely a symbol of evil.
- 81% believe that angels exist and influence people’s lives.
- 64% believe that if a person is generally good they will earn a place in Heaven.
- 61% do NOT believe that people who do not accept Jesus Christ as their Savior will have to go to hell.\(^2\)

Now folks, as shocking as that might be, did you know that the American Church doesn’t fare much better? Today, many Christians are not only having trouble sharing the gospel, but they’re having trouble explaining what it is! Check this out. Here are the so-called spiritual beliefs of American Church. I wish I were making this up:

- 53% says that the Holy Spirit doesn’t exist.
- 30% says that Jesus Christ died but never had a physical resurrection.
• 29% contend that when he lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins like other people.

• 25% agreed that it doesn’t matter what faith you follow because all faith groups teach the same lessons.

• 31% says that a good person can earn his or her way into heaven.

• 12% don’t know what will happen to them after they die.

• 47% says that satan does not exist.\(^3\)

Now, I’d say the American Church needs to study their Bible just a little bit more often, how about you? But here’s the question. “How are they ever going to do that if they don’t attend the services designed for it?” **Stop and think about it!** Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? He knows that if he can get the American Church to be casual about their attendance, then they’ll never be equipped with the truth and nobody else will ever be set free.

Keith Green made the comment, “The Lord Jesus rose from the dead but the American Church can’t even get out of bed.” People of God, if the **American Church** is going to be all that we can be, then we’ve got to **keep our attendance up** not down. We’ve got to open our eyes to the tricks of the enemy, or we’ll never become that mighty army for Almighty God.

Oh, but that’s not all. The **second sign** to indicate when a person’s become a **Casual Christian** is **When Their Witness Goes Down**. You see the **second definition** of the word **casual** means, “to feel or show little concern.” And folks this is another thing the devil does to keep Christians from becoming a mighty army. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to be labeled as one of those religious freaks who witnesses to everyone around you, do you? No! Just tell them everybody’s going to heaven and that there is no such place as hell.”

And folks you might think a **casual witness** is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a **casual witness** leads to casualties. And the **first casualty** is that it **Shrugs Off Christ’s Commission**.

**Mark 16:15** “And then he told them, Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere.” (NLT)
Now, we all know that this is the infamous passage of Scripture called the Great Commission, right? Well, we used to. You see, the devil has now gotten the American Church thinking it’s not the Great Commission, but the **grand suggestion**. And to make matters worse, the American Church no longer calls shrugging off Christ’s commission a sin. No! They just excuse it away and say, “That’s for those other Christians who like doing that kind of stuff.” But people, sharing the gospel to the ends of the earth is **not an option**. It’s an order to be obeyed just like “you shall not murder” and “you shall not steal.” And when we disobey God it’s **called sin**.

Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to? He knows if he can get the American Church to be casual about their witness and excuse away their disobedience, then they’ll never get the gospel out and nobody will ever be saved.

Oh, but that’s not all. The **second casualty** is that it **Sends Others to Hell**.

**Matthew 7:13-14** “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way. But the gateway to life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.” (NLT)

People, the Bible simply declares that the majority of people are not on the highway to heaven, but they’re actually on the highway to hell. And it’s not just that people aren’t going to heaven when they die. Jesus said that without Him, they’re going to hell. And people, hell is one place you don’t ever want to go to. Mark Cahill gives this sobering description:

“I talked with a young man one day who mentioned that he had been injured and wound up on an emergency-room operating table. He said his heart had stopped beating and as his soul rose up out of his body, immediately the sense of an evil presence began to come over him and he could hear an evil hissing laughter. He told me he was so glad to get back into his body and be alive! He now knows how real evil is.

A respiratory nurse who works in an emergency room told me about a patient who had gone ‘code red’ – he flat-lined. She and some other medical personnel rushed over with the defibrillator to try to bring him back to life. They applied the paddles and revived him.
She said that he started screaming and shouting, “The heat, the heat!” Then his heart stopped again. They brought him back a second time. He shouted, “The flames, the flames!” They lost him again. Four times the man flat-lined and was brought back, each time shouting about the heat or the flames. After the last time, he died and they couldn’t bring him back.

She said all the doctors and nurses just stood there for a few minutes and stared at the body. They all knew that man went to hell. He was screaming it to them before he even got there.

Dr. Maurice Rawlings, a cardiologist, has witnessed numerous patients during and after their near-death experiences. After interviewing 300 patients immediately after resuscitation, Dr. Rawlings says that nearly half of them reported seeing a lake of fire, devil-like figures, and other sights reflecting the reality of hell.

His conclusion? He says, ‘There is a life after death, and if I don’t know where I’m going, it’s not safe to die.”

People of God, if the American Church truly believed in a hell, they would cry out to God from the depths of their being, “Give me souls or take my soul!” Why? Because any sane person would do whatever they had to do to keep others from going to a place like that. And that’s precisely why Jesus warned about it over, and over, and over again. He loves people and doesn’t want them to go there. And does not the American Church realize that when they refuse to share the gospel that they’re actually helping to send people to hell?

Oh people, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s doing? He knows if he can get the American Church to be casual about their witness, then they’ll never take anyone else to heaven with them, and instead will let others go straight to hell. People of God, if the American Church is going to be all that we can be, then we’ve got to keep our witness up not down. We’ve got to open our eyes to the tricks of the enemy, or we’ll never become that mighty army for Almighty God.

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Killer C’s and you’ve actually become a Casual Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Casual Christian into a Committed Christian. And folks a Committed Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only love people
enough to tell them the truth, but they’ll even forsake their very lives for the truth if necessary, like this Christian did. These are the actual words of a Zimbabwe Christian just before he was martyred for the faith. You tell me if He was committed to Christ:

“I’m part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have the Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made – I’m a disciple of His. I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I’m finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don’t have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean in His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and I labor with power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions are few, my guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the enemy, pander at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won’t give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus.

I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And, when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me . . . my banner will be clear!”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If the Lord Jesus came back today, would your banner be clear?” Would He say, “Where are you my son,” or would He say, “Well done, My good and faithful servant.”

People of God, There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Casual Christian! The
alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Killer C’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Chapter Two

The Cultural Christian

“It was a typical Sunday morning with people eating breakfast and getting ready for Church services. And it appeared that the inhabitants of this island were going to be blessed with yet another beautiful sunny day.

But all that was to change in a matter of seconds. At 7:55 AM, Logan Ramsey looked out his window and spied not a palm tree in this tropical paradise, but a plane. And normally this wouldn’t have been an unusual sight except that this plane dropped a bomb.

For the next one and a half hours over 350 enemy planes bombarded this American base. The surprise was complete. The destruction made easy. Why?

Because not only was every single warning sign completely ignored, but the American planes were parked in neat rows creating a dive bombers dream come true.

In fact, ten minutes into the attack, a bomb crashed though the deck of one of the battleships and ripped the sides open like a tin can and within minutes the massive ship sunk to the bottom taking 1,300 men with it.

And when the smoke cleared and the final explosion was silenced the damaged was assessed. More than 180 planes were obliterated, several ships were sunk and incinerated, and 2,343 people were annihilated.
It was a day that will live in infamy. The year was 1941. The attack of course, was on Pearl Harbor.”

Now, we all know about the attack on Pearl Harbor and how it was one of the worst U.S. disasters of all time, right? But what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes Pearl Harbor look like child’s play. And what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one morning, but it’s going on right now today and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Killer C’s.

People of God, as American troops have gone off to war to fight an external enemy, so the American Church needs to go to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your effectiveness for Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue in our study, The Attack of the Killer C’s. In the last chapter we saw that the first external attack, the first Killer C the enemy fires at us is, the attack of the Casual Christian. And there we saw that the devil will trick you and I into actually weakening the Church and the gospel. How? By being casual in our attendance and causal in our witness.

Oh, but that’s not the only thing. The second Killer C the enemy fires at us is, the attack of the Cultural Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

Luke 9:57-62 “As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.

He said to another man, Follow me. But the man replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Still another said, I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good bye to my family.

Jesus replied, No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” (NIV)

Now according to our text, Jesus doesn’t even hesitate to expose the lame excuses people come up with, for not following Him like they should. Oh,
they might sound very rational and extremely important, but it only shows their hearts aren’t really devoted to God. They were actually **still devoted** to the things of this world. Therefore, Jesus lays it on the line and declares that this kind of worship is completely unacceptable to Him. Anyone who tries to put one foot in God’s kingdom and one in this **culture** is not fit to be His disciple.

And people, that’s why the **first sign** to indicate when person has become a Cultural Christian is **When They Long for Created Things More Than the Creator**. You see, the **first definition** of the word cultural means, “to have an acquired taste for the material things of this world.” And folks, this is one of the very first things the devil does to keep Christians from becoming a mighty army. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to study the Bible or pray, do you? No! You know that stuff’s boring. I mean, wouldn’t it be much more fun to get some entertainment, or go buy something nice for yourself?” And folks, you might think a cultural taste for things is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a cultural taste leads to catastrophes.

And the **first catastrophe** is that it **Destroys Your Tastes for the Things of God**.

**Acts 2:42-43** “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.” (NAS)

Folks, the Bible simply declares that the secret to a powerful Christian life is by being **daily devoted** to the Word of God and in praying to God. And people, the devil knows it’s these daily spiritual exercises that gives us the **power** we need in our walk with God. And since he can’t take away our salvation, the Scriptures, or even our freedom to spend time with God, here’s what he does. Boy is he slick. Since he can’t take away the spiritual, **he seduces us with the material**. Slowly, little by little, he gets us to develop a taste for created things instead our Creator. And it’s such a seductive process that most of the time we don’t even realize it’s happened to us until it’s too late. So how do you know if you’ve started living for created things more than the Creator? Great question, I’m glad you asked. All you’ve to do is ask yourself this question, “What really disturbs you?”

- Are you disturbed at missing a day’s work or missing a Church service?
• Your garden not growing or your Church not growing?
• Your newspaper unread or your Bible unopened?
• Your missing your favorite TV program or missing a good Bible study?
• Your children late for public school or late for Sunday School?
• Your housework being neglected or your Church work being neglected?
• Your inability to keep up with your neighbors or the millions who do not know Christ?
• A scratch on your new car or a soul lost in hell?

• WHAT REALLY DISTURBS YOU THE MOST?

People of God, if you love any book more than the Bible, any pleasure more than prayer, any satisfaction more than the Savior, then WATCH OUT! The enemy’s after you! He’s sucking you dry of your spiritual power! And maybe the reason why the American Church has it’s back up against the wall is because they hardly even study the Bible at all. Maybe the reason why the American Church is so powerless is because they’re so prayerless. Oh, people, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second catastrophe caused by a cultural taste is that it Destroys Your Time for the Things of God.

Matthew 23:11 “The greatest among you will be your servant.” (NIV)

Folks, the Bible declares that if you want to live a life that stands out with true significance, then you need to get busy serving others. And as we saw in the last chapter, God gives each Christian supernatural gifts for that very purpose. And when that happens, our service becomes eternally valuable, which makes our lives eternally purposeful. And people, the devil knows this. But since he can’t take away our spiritual gifts, here’s what he does. He takes away our time to use our gifts. How? By getting us to live for created things instead of our Creator.

You see, in order to get more things you have to get more money. But in order to get more money, you have to give more time to earn it, right? And on and on it goes until you have no time to serve God because now you’re too busy serving things! And folks, you tell me if the American Church has lost its time to serve God. Here’s a list of the activity of the average American Church member:
• 10% of reported church members cannot even be found.
• 20% never pray.
• 25% never read the Bible.
• 30% never attend Church services.
• 40% never give to any cause.
• 50% never go to Sunday School.
• 70% never give to missions.
• 75% are never engaged in any Church activity.
• 80% never go to a prayer meeting.
• 90% never have family worship.
• 95% never ever win a soul to Christ.

Now, I don’t know about you guys, but I’d say the American Church has its priorities just a little bit out of whack, how about you? I’d say somebody’s doing a real good job of distracting them. People of God, we may make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give! Therefore, if you don’t have time to serve God then you better WATCH OUT! The enemy is after you! He’s tricking you into wasting your life!

The second sign to indicate when a person has become a Cultural Christian is When They Long for the Teachings of Man More Than the Word of God. Folks, the second definition of the word cultural means, “to have an acquired taste for the intellectual things of this world.” And here’s what happens. The devil throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to be labeled as being intolerant or narrow-minded do you? I mean, doesn’t it make sense to listen to what other cultures have to say?”

And folks, you might think a cultural teaching from man is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a cultural teaching leads to catastrophes. And the first catastrophe is that it Keeps You from the Truth.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God’s way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.” (NLT)

Folks, contrary to what society would say, the Bible not only came from God, but it’s the only book that gives us the power to live for God. And people, the devil knows this. But since he can’t keep the Bible away from the Church, here’s what he does. He keeps the Church away from the Bible. How?
By seducing us with fun-filled entertainment and feel good teachings of man. I mean, after all, everybody likes to have fun and be told how wonderful they are, right? Of course! And so slowly over time the American Church no longer wants to hear the truth. No! They only want to hear what makes them feel good. And people, how ironic it is that the very Scripture that warned of this behavior is the very same Scripture people no longer want to hear.

2 Timothy 4:3 “For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear.” (NLT)

People of God, pay attention! This Scripture has been fulfilled before our very eyes! People in the Church today don’t want to hear the truth anymore. No! That might make them feel convicted, and by cracky, that doesn’t feel good. And folks, this attitude has gotten so bad that it even has it’s own label. It’s called “salad-bar religion”:

“Salad-bar religion denotes the trend where people pick and choose religious beliefs, doctrines and practices – mixing and matching them much as they would select food in a cafeteria.

This is not just popular among non-Christians, but also among people who consider themselves to be Christians. People borrow from different traditions, then add them to whatever religion they’re used to.

Americans write their own Bible. They fashion their own God. More often than not, the God they choose is more like a best friend who has endless time for their needs, no matter how trivial.

Scholars call this, ‘domesticating God,’ turning Him into a social planner, therapist, or guardian angel. We have trivialized God. We assume that God is the butler who serves you for one reason, to give you a happy life. We’ve turned Him into a divine Prozac.”

People of God, the American Church is on drugs if they think that God is going to conform Himself to their culturally created desires. We are to be conformed into His image, not the other way around. Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?
Oh, but that’s not all. The second catastrophe caused by a cultural teaching is that it *Keeps You In the Dark*.

1 Corinthians 1:19-20 “As the Scriptures say, I will destroy human wisdom and discard their most brilliant ideas. So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world’s brilliant debaters? God has made them all look foolish and has shown their wisdom to be useless nonsense.” (NLT)

People of God, the Bible declares that even the most brilliant words of man are merely nonsense in comparison to the Word of God. In fact, they’re not only nonsense, they’re *poisonous*. And people, the devil knows this; and so he not only keeps us away from the truth, he *gets us to stay in the dark*. How? By eating the poisonous teachings of man. And boy, have people been falling for this one hook line and sinker. People, we live in a society today where the average person listens more to the baloney on talk shows than the truths contained in the Bible. People would rather go see a so-called psychic instead of their local Pastor. Our world is quick to honor the scientists who study the stars but we refuse to acknowledge the One Who made the stars in the first place!

People of God, when is the American Church going to wake up and see that the teachings of man are a one way ticket to *spiritual suicide*! Rather than giving people a better life on earth, they’re actually leading them straight to hell. But don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to the final words of some of the world’s *so-called* wisest men:

**DAVID HUME**: The atheist died in utter despair with an awful scene crying out, “I am in the flames!”

**VOLTAIRE**: “I am abandoned by God and man! I shall go to hell! O’ Jesus Christ!”

**KARL MARX**: Was on his deathbed surrounded by candles burning to lucifer and screamed at his nurse who asked him if he had any last words, “Go on, get out! Last words are for fools who haven’t said enough.”

**NIETZSCHE**: Died insane, completely out of his mind.

**JEAN-PAUL SARTRE**: “I have failed.”
SIR THOMAS SCOTT: “Until now I thought there was no God or hell. Now I know there is both, and I am doomed.”

J.H. HUXLEY: The famous agnostic, suddenly looked up and whispered, “So it is true.”

SIR FRANCIS NEWPORT: “Do not tell me there is no God for I know there is one, and that I am in his angry presence! You need not tell me there is no hell, for I already feel my soul slipping into its fires! I know that I am lost forever.”

Now, I don’t know about you guys, but I’d say those men found out too late that their so-called wisdom wasn’t so wise after all, how about you? People of God, if the American Church is going to stay out of the dark and become strong in the light, then we’ve got to keep our teachings on the Word of God, not the word of man. We’ve got to open our eyes to the tricks of the enemy, or we’ll never become that mighty army for Almighty God.

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Killer C’s and you’ve actually become a Cultural Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Cultural Christian into a Committed Christian. And folks a Committed Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only love hearing the truth more than their feelings, but they’ll even forsake their very lives for the truth, if necessary, like John Hooper did:

“The year was 1555 and his crime was that he refused to turn from the truth. He was not going to deny his Protestant beliefs and accept the Pope as the head of the Church of England. And so, Mr. Hooper was burned at the stake.

After Hooper forgave the man who made the fire, it was lit, but the fire builder had used green wood, and even when it finally caught, the wind blew the flames away from Hooper.

A second fire was lit, but it only burned low, not flaring up as it should have. The fire was lit the third time but even that didn’t do much good because of the wind.

Even when Hooper’s mouth was black and his tongue swollen, his lips continued to move until they shrank to the gums. He knocked on his breast with his hands until one of his arms fell off.
Hooper was in the fire for over forty-five minutes, suffering patiently even when the lower part of his body burned off and his intestines spilled out. Now he reigns as a blessed martyr in the joys of heaven that are prepared for the faithful in Christ.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “Would you, with all your heart, be willing to burn for the truth of God? Or does your heart still burn for the things of this world?”

People of God, there’s a war going on and its not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Cultural Christian! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Killer C’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
“It was your average morning with people heading off to work, kids walking to school, and toddlers riding their tricycles, under their mothers watchful care. But all that was going to change in the blinking of an eye.

At 2:00 AM that very morning, a plane carrying its deadly cargo called, ‘Little Boy’ began its historic mission.

And as expected, the ground radar detected incoming aircraft, but since there was no sign of bombers, the people on the ground thought the danger had already passed. Therefore, the plane continued on.

In fact, exactly one hour later the radar again spotted two B-29’s and issued yet another warning for the people to head for shelter. However, the people ignored it because they thought for sure that this was just another false alarm.

And so, precisely sixteen minutes later, Little Boy was dropped and unlike his name he left behind a massive mushroom-shaped cloud near the center of this thriving city.

The destruction was instantaneous and unbelievable, with 90% of the buildings being obliterated by 1,000 mph winds.
And the loss of life was absolutely inconceivable with 140,000 people being incinerated by temperatures above 9000 degrees Fahrenheit.

The year was 1945. The plane was the Enola Gay. The bomb was atomic. The city of course, was Hiroshima.”

Now, we all know that the bombing of Hiroshima was one of the worst disasters of all time, right? But what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes the bombing of Hiroshima look like a mere firecracker. And what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one city, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Killer C’s.

People of God, as American troops have gone off to war to fight an external enemy, so the American Church needs to go to war to fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your effectiveness for Jesus Christ. Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue on our study, The Attack of the Killer C’s.

We’ve already seen that the first external attack, the first Killer C the enemy fires at us is, the attack of the Casual Christian. And there we saw that the devil tricks us into weakening the Church and the gospel by being casual in our attendance and casual in our witness. And in the last chapter we saw that the second Killer C the enemy fires at us is, the attack of the Cultural Christian. And there we saw that the devil will actually trick us into wasting away our strength and wasting away our lives. How? By longing for created things more than the Creator and longing for the word of man more than the Word of God.

Oh, but that’s not the only thing. The third Killer C the enemy fires at us is the attack of the Compromising Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

Matthew 16:21-24 “From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. Never, Lord! he said. This shall never happen to you! Jesus turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, satan! You
are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. Then Jesus said to his disciples, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (NIV)

Now according to our text, Jesus doesn’t even hesitate to rebuke Peter for suggesting that He should refrain from a life of personal pain and possible death. And oh, I’m sure Peter thought he was helping the Lord. But in reality, this suggestion to pamper your life instead of sacrificing your life didn’t come from God. It actually came from satan. Therefore, Jesus declares that if anyone is going to be His disciple then they must emulate His behavior. They must deny themselves, pick up their cross and follow Him, suffering and all.

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate when person has become a Compromising Christian is, When They No Longer Believe In Denying Sin. Folks, the first definition of the word compromise means, “to make a shameful agreement or to follow the middle ground.” And people this is one of the very first things the devil does to keep Christians from becoming a mighty army. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to be labeled as one of those boring religious types do you? No! I mean, surely there’s nothing wrong with having a little fun once in awhile, right?” And folks, you might think a compromising behavior is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a compromising behavior leads to calamities.

And the first calamity is that You No Longer Become Shocked At What Sin Is.

Acts 19:18-20 “Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. A number of them who had been practicing magic brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars. So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.” (NLT)

Now according to our text here, these Christians were under such a strong conviction that they even sacrificed personal gain just to get rid of the sin in their lives. And as a result, the Gospel spread like wildfire. And people, the devil knows that it’s a life of self-denial that adds fuel to the Gospel. So here’s what he does. He gets us to no longer deny ourselves from sin, but to become desensitized to sin. How? By the media, of course. You see, the media not only seduces us into wasting our time, but it puts waste in our mind. And before you know it, just like a person who gets addicted to drugs, you end up getting
addicted to entertainment. And this addiction process is so seductive that most of the time we don’t even realize it’s happened to us until it’s too late. In fact, it’s so common that even secular researchers have traced the process of becoming an entertainment junkie:

**PHASE #1: A junkie is consumed with his “fix.”**

**Daily Television Usage**

- Children: 2-11: 2 hours 43 minutes per day.
- Teens: 12-17: 2 hours 52 minutes per day.
- Men: 18+: 3 hours 52 minutes per day.
- Women: 18+: 4 hours 28 minutes per day.
- Daily home usage: 6 hours 59 minutes per day.

“With TV sets turned on in the inner city for eleven hours a day and multiplying satellite, cable, and broadcast channels, television has become the closest and the most constant companion for American children. It has become the nation’s mom and pop, storyteller, baby sitter, preacher, and teacher. Our children watch an astonishing 5,000 hours by the first grade and 19,000 hours by the end of high school—more time than they spend in class. The question more and more concerning parents, psychologists and public officials is this: What is all this viewing doing to them?”

**PHASE #2: A junkie becomes addicted to his “fix.”**

“Once people are exposed to the spectacle of blood and sex, they want more and more as they become hardened to the titillation of the last violent or sexual act they see. Just as a drug addict who becomes less and less responsive to a drug keeps looking for the initial ‘ideal’ rush, so those who are addicted to the sex and violence in films seek increasing doses of sex and violence to appease their lust.”

**PHASE #3: A junkie will destroy his mind for his “fix.”**

“Movies are one of the bad habits that corrupted our century. Of their many sins, I offer as the worst their effect on the intellectual side of the nation. It is chiefly from that viewpoint that I write of them—as an eruption of trash that has lamed the American mind and retarded Americans from becoming a cultured people.”
PHASE #4: A junkie will eventually kill himself with his “fix.”

“We often forget that there is a war raging around us. It is a war being waged inside our minds, a spiritual war for our souls. The adversary is using every possible tactic to control our minds: materialism, secularism, humanism, and all the other isms that conflict with Christianity. He is using the most effective weapons to win: the power of the mass media of entertainment. With the corrupted movies and television programs of our age, the adversary is fueling our sinful propensity to lust and hooking us on our desires. Once hooked, he drags us down to hell.”

People of God, let’s be honest with the facts. The majority of the material in the media today can no longer be called entertainment, but sinnertainment. All it does is distract us from Christ and desensitizes us to sin! And when is the American Church going to realize that every package from hell comes disguised in ecstasy? Oh, you’re being entertained alright. You’re being entertained to death! Oh, people, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second calamity caused by a compromising behavior is that You No Longer Know What Sin Is.

Hebrews 11:24-25 “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.” (NAS)

Folks, the Bible declares that Moses, the man of God, made an incredible decision to be persecuted with the people of God instead of enjoying the pleasures of this world. And because of this, God used him mightily. And people, the devil knows this. He knows it’s a life of self-denial that enables us to be used mightily of God, so here’s what he does. If he can’t get us to become desensitized to sin, he gets us to no longer know what sin is. How? Thanks for asking. He does it in three ways.

The first way is by getting us to rationalize our sin. For instance, we make excuses like, “I just can’t help it. It must be a hereditary thing.” Or, “This must be the cross I have to bear.” Sound familiar? Of course! But do we really think God is going to fall for this? I don’t think so!

Or the second way the enemy gets us to become desensitized to sin is by getting us to redefine our sin. For instance, today we’re told by our society that we shouldn’t call alcoholism a sin. No! Let’s just call it a social disease. And we
shouldn’t call adultery a sin. No! Let’s just call it stepping out, or fooling around. And we shouldn’t call homosexuality a sin. No! Why everybody knows that’s just an alternative lifestyle. Once again, do we really think God is going to buy into this? I don’t think so! Call it what you will but sin is sin!

Oh, but it gets worse. If satan can’t get us to rationalize or redefine our sin he’ll get us to resort to relativism. And for those of you who may not know, relativism teaches that there are no absolutes. You yourself get to decide what’s right and wrong, not God. But people, relativism is not only unbiblical, it’s absolutely illogical. Why? Because the moment you say there are no absolutes, you just made an absolute statement!

And people you can call it what you want, but again, sin is still sin. And the Word of God is absolutely sure about it. And when is the American Church going to realize that rationalizing, redefining, and relativism is just another trick of the enemy to keep us from living a life of self-denial? People, a powerful Christian life comes not in flirting with sin but in fighting sin! And this is precisely what Billy Sunday was trying to say:

“He said, ‘I am against sin. Therefore, I’ll kick it as long as I’ve got a foot and I’ll fight it as long as I got a fist.

I’ll butt it as long as I’ve got a head and bite it as long as I’ve got a tooth.

And when I’m old and fistless, footless, and toothless, I’ll gum it until I go home to glory!’”

People of God, we can’t compromise and make excuses for sin. We’ve got to fight it all the way to the end! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to? He knows that if he can get the American Church to treat sin like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake, then they’ll not only get bit, but they’ll actually end up poisoning their own walk with Christ!

Oh, but that’s not all. The second sign to indicate when a person has become a Compromising Christian is When They No Longer Believe in the Forgiveness of Sin. Folks, the second definition of the word compromise means, “to expose to suspicion or to discredit.” And here’s how the devil uses this one. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t mean to tell me that every single one of your sins are forgiven? No! Surely there’s a catch somewhere. I mean, come on, everybody knows that nothing in life is for free.” And folks you might think a compromising belief is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t
hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that compromising belief leads to calamities.

And the first calamity is that it Keeps You From Grabbing Hold of Your Destiny.

**Ephesians 6:10-11** “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” (NIV)

People, the Bible declares that the moment you got saved, you not only had your sins forgiven by God, but you were made into a mighty warrior for God. Every single Christian is given the armor of God for one reason and one reason alone. To do battle against the enemy of our souls. And people, the devil knows this. But since he can’t take away our armor to fight with, he simply gets us to stop fighting. How? By getting us to doubt God’s forgiveness!

You see, the devil is so evil that he not only tempts us to sin, but once we sin, he whispers in our ears, “God won’t forgive you for that one. Look at you! You’re not a mighty warrior. You’re a good for nothing failure.” But people, if we start doubting God’s forgiveness, it will stop us dead in our tracks. And the next thing you know, we’ll be sitting down on the battlefield of life in a heap of despair. Why? Because we listened to a pack of lies instead of the Word of God!

One author puts it this way:

“The Christian life is like standing at one end of a long, narrow street lined on both sides with two-story houses. At the other end of the street stands Jesus Christ, and as we walk towards Him we grow in maturity. There is absolutely nothing in the street which can keep me from reaching Jesus.

But since this world is influenced by satan, the row of houses on either side are inhabited by beings committed to keeping us from growing strong. So they hang out the windows and call to us,

‘Hey, look over here! I’ve got something you really want!’ or ‘Hey, try this, there’s nothing wrong with it. Or maybe it’s this one, ‘You’re a worthless idiot and boy you failed big this time. God can’t use you now!’

And even though these voices have no real power to block our path, the strategy works all too well. You see, many Christians treat life’s journey like a stroll through a shopping mall, instead of a race through a battlefield! And instead of
staying focused on Christ, they give in to window-shopping at the enemy’s stores!

And the longer they linger, the easier it is for satan to keep them from running to Christ! The whole tactic is to simply get our eyes off of Jesus, slow down, sit down, stop, and if possible, give up on our journey to Jesus Christ.”

People of God, whatever you do, don’t compromise by going window-shopping at the enemy’s stores. Don’t give an ear to his lies about not being forgiven by God. Why? Because if you do, you’ll be tricked into thinking that God can’t use you anymore. And the next thing you know, you’ll stop fighting on the battlefield of life.

People of God, stop and think about it! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? If the American Church is going to be all that we can be, then we’ve got to stand back up on the battlefield of life, shake off the lies of the enemy, and start fighting again for Jesus Christ! We’ve got to open our eyes to the tricks of the enemy, or we’ll never become that mighty army for Almighty God.

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Killer C’s and you’ve actually become a Compromising Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Compromising Christian into a Committed Christian. And folks, a Committed Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only refuse to compromise with sin, but they’ll stake their lives on the Savior’s forgiveness of sin, all the way to the end, like Polycarp did:

“The year was 165 AD and Polycarp’s crime was that he refused to deny Christ and accept Caesar as Lord. So Polycarp was put to death.

As he entered the stadium, the proconsul told him, ‘Repent and swear by the Genius of Caesar and I will release you.’

And Polycarp replied, ‘For 86 years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me? If you vainly suppose that I will swear by the Genius of Caesar, as you request, and pretend not to know who I am, listen carefully: I am a Christian. Now if you want to learn the doctrine of Christianity, name a day and give me a hearing.’
So the proconsul replied, ‘I have wild beasts. I will throw you to them, unless you change your mind.’

But Polycarp said, ‘Call for them! For the repentance from better to worse is a change impossible for us.’

The proconsul now angered said, ‘I will have you consumed by fire, since you despise the wild beasts, unless you change your mind.’

But Polycarp replied, ‘You threaten with a fire that burns only briefly and after just a little while is extinguished, for you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay? Come, do what you wish.’

And so Polycarp was burned at the stake.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “Would you, like Polycarp, be willing to follow Christ and burn out your life in a passionate flame for Him? Or are you still being tricked by the enemy to burn up your life in a flaming passion for sin?”

People of God, There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Compromising Christian! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Killer C’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Chapter Four

The Corruptive Christian

“It was your average morning with people sleeping in their beds dreaming pleasant dreams before heading off to another hectic day of work. But little did these people know, that a full-blown nightmare was looming on the horizon.

At 3:42 AM that very morning, an unbelievable jolt struck just outside this industrial city with a population of nearly one million people.

And because of its timing, the destruction was made easy. Why? Because it struck in the middle of the night, which meant that almost everyone in the city was still asleep. Therefore, most people were crushed to death without ever even waking up.

And even for the fortunate few who survived being crushed to death their fate wasn’t much better. Why? Because the power got knocked out and made the rescue efforts impossible in the dark. And therefore, many were left entombed within the debris.

And as the dust finally settled, the damage was assessed. The once thriving city had become a wasteland with virtually all of the 180,000 buildings being completely demolished.

And the loss of life was absolutely horrifying with the lives of almost 500,000 people being snuffed out, never to wake again.
The year was 1976. The disaster was an earthquake. The place was, Tangshan, China.”

Now, we all know that earthquakes can be some of the worst disasters of all time, right? But what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes that Chinese earthquake look like a mere burp. And what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one city, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Killer C’s.

People of God, as American troops have gone off to war to fight an external enemy, so the American Church needs to go to war to fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your effectiveness for Jesus Christ. Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue on our study, The Attack of the Killer C’s.

We’ve already seen that the first external attack, the first Killer C the enemy fires at us is the attack of the Casual Christian. And the second Killer C the enemy fires at us is the attack of the Cultural Christian. And in the last chapter we saw that the third Killer C the enemy fires at us is the attack of the Compromising Christian. And there we saw that the devil will actually trick us into no longer fighting against sin and no longer fighting against him. How? By getting us to become desensitized to sin and by getting us to doubt the Savior’s forgiveness of sin.

Oh, but that’s not the only thing. The fourth weapon the enemy fires at us is the attack of the Corruptive Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

John 17:20-23 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one: I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.” (NIV)
Now according to our text, Jesus doesn’t even hesitate to pray for the Church to be unified. Why? Because He knew that one of the worst things we could ever do is to start fighting amongst ourselves and become divided. Why? Because if we did that, then nobody would believe the gospel. Therefore, Jesus lays it on the line and declares that if the world is ever going to believe in Him, whom they’ve never seen, then we His Church must dwell together in unity.

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate when person has become a Corruptive Christian is When They Sound More Like satan Than The Savior. Folks, the first definition of the word corruption means, “to change from good to bad, to become tainted or rotten.” And people this is one of the very first things the devil does to keep Christians from becoming a mighty army. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to be labeled as one of those mindless religious types who never gets to say what’s on your mind do you? I mean, after all, you know what’s best, right? I think you better say something about it.” And folks you might think a corruptive mouth is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a corruptive mouth leads to corruption.

And the first corruption is that You’ll Start Thinking Like the devil.

Psalm 119:9-11 “How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word and following its rules. I have tried my best to find you – don’t let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” (NLT)

People, the Bible declares that the Word of God not only shows us what sin is, but it also keeps us from sin. It protects us from a life of corruption. And people the devil knows this. So if he can’t keep you from going to a Church service that teaches the Word of God, here’s what he does. He’ll keep you from listening to the Word of God. How? By getting us to complain! People, the devil knows if we start thinking about our will, our way, our likes, and dislikes when it comes to a Church service, then pretty soon he’s got us distracted. Why? Well, think about it. When things don’t go our way and the way we like them in a Church service, then we’re tempted to complain about it, right? Of course! But people, as soon as our mouths open up to complain, guess what just happened? Our ears are no longer listening. And so the Word of God goes in one ear and out the other. Why? Because we’ve been tricked into focusing on personal satisfaction instead of godly instruction, like this guy was:
“Jim Smith went to Church service on Sunday morning. He heard the organist miss a note during the prelude, and he winced. He saw a teenager talking when everybody was supposed to be bowed in silent prayer. He felt like the usher was watching to see what he put in the offering plate and it made him boil.

He caught the preacher making a slip of the tongue five times in the sermon by actual count. As he slipped out through the side door during the closing hymn, he muttered to himself, ‘Never again, what a bunch of clods and hypocrites!’

Ron Jones went to Church service one Sunday morning. He heard the organist play an arrangement of ‘A Mighty Fortress’ and he was thrilled at the majesty of it. He heard a young girl take a moment in the service to speak a simple message of how her faith had made a difference in her life.

He was glad to see that the Church was sharing in a special offering for the hungry children of Nigeria. He especially appreciated the sermon that Sunday—it answered a question that had bothered him for a long time.

He thought as he walked out the doors, ‘How can a man come here and not feel the presence of God?’

Both men went to the same Church service, on the same Sunday morning. Each found what he was looking for. So the question we need to ask is, ‘What are we looking for on Sunday mornings?’”

People of God, the reason why we gather together for Church services is not for personal satisfaction, but personal transformation upon hearing the Word of God. But if all we think about is our will, our way, our likes, our dislikes, then just like that man, we’ll be in the right place alright, but we’ll never hear a thing! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second corruption caused by a corruptive mouth is that You’ll Start Talking Like the devil.

Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” (NIV)

People, the Bible declares that you and I are to be very careful about the words coming out of our mouths. Why? Because positive words create positive
results. But **negative words** create negative results. And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. He gets us to use our words not to build each other up, but to tear each other down. How? **By gossiping, of course!** People, the devil knows that if he can get us to start complaining and thinking like him, then pretty soon we’re going to share that complaint and start talking like him. And the next thing you know, our words are no longer positive, **but poisonous**, and they spread like gangrene in the Body of Christ.

But you might think, “Hey come on. Don’t you think it’s a little extreme to say that a person’s gossip can actually **destroy** the Body of Christ? I mean, it can’t be that big of a deal.” But folks, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to those who are **openly bent on destruction**. We’re going to take a look at the actual list, according to witchcraft, of the seven most powerful demons and the weapons they use to destroy people.

1. **REGE** – He’s the General of the occult. He deals with such drugs as marihuana, hashish, cocaine, speed, LSD, peyote and mescaline. These are drugs of sorcery and are used to attack the mind and open it up for a demon to enter.

2. **LARZ** – He’s the demon of sexual lust, homosexuality, adultery, and other such sexual perversions.

3. **BACCHUS** – He’s the demon of addictions, such as drugs, smoking, and alcohol.

4. **PAN** – He’s the demon of the mind. He causes mental illnesses, depression, suicide, nerves, and rejection.

5. **MEDIT** – He’s the demon of hate, murder, killing, war, jealousy, envy, and gossip.

6. **SET** – He’s the demon of death. He incites wars, terrorism, genocide, etc.

7. **CHRISTIAN DEMON** – This particular demon has no set name. He is so powerful that most witches won’t even bother him. His job is to weaken a Christian’s walk with the Lord by making him content, fail to live up to Church commitments, such as giving, soul-winning, church participation, etc. However, one of his most destructive tactics is to get Christians to talk about each other through gossiping and causing strife within the Church.\(^3\)
Now, let me get this straight. Two out of the seven of the most powerful demons, according to witchcraft, use gossip to cause destruction in the lives of Christians? Gee, maybe gossip is a little more destructive than we think! People, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to? He knows if he can get the American Church to talk more like him than a born-again Christian, then they’ll not only destroy themselves but they’ll take others down as well.

Oh, but that’s not all. The second sign to indicate when a person has become a Corruptive Christian is When They Behave More Like satan Than The Savior. Folks, the second definition of the word corruption means, “to cause disintegration or ruin.” And here’s how the devil uses this one. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to be labeled as one of those brainwashed religious types who always does what others tell you to do, right? I mean, after all, you know what’s best, right? I think you better do something about it.” And folks you might think a corruptive deed is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that corruptive deeds leads to corruption.

And the first corruption is that You’ll Start Acting Like the devil.

Proverbs 6:16-19 “There are six things the LORD hates – no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord among brothers.” (NLT)

People, the Bible declares that one surefire way to be put on God’s hate list is to be a troublemaker. God not only hates it, He absolutely detests it. And people, the devil knows this. But since he can’t hurt God physically, here’s what he does. He hurts God emotionally. How? By getting His children to act like the devil. You see, the devil knows that once he gets us to complain about each other, and then start gossiping about each other, then pretty soon we’re going to start fighting each other. And the next thing you know, Christians are no longer fighting the devil because they’re too busy acting like the devil! And people, this absolutely breaks the heart of God!

But you might think, “Hey come on. Don’t you think it’s a little extreme saying that Christians are acting like the devil when they fight against each other? I mean, it can’t be that big of a deal.” But folks, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to those who actually worshipped the devil. The following quotes are from former satanists who have since become Christians. Pay attention to the weapons they used to use to destroy Christians and take down Churches:
“Christians are the satanists worst enemy. They are out to torment you. They are out to blackmail you. They will even kill you. They tried to kill me when I came out from black witchcraft.”

“If you’re in a Church where the Spirit of God is really moving and the Word of God is really being preached and where prayer is really going up to heaven for the salvation of souls, then they are going to regard you as their mortal enemy.

They will be out there trying everything they can to destroy, kill and to maim because that is of course the nature of satan and also the nature of his followers. They will try to infiltrate your Church. They will try to set up whispering campaigns against the Pastor and the elders. They may even try to seduce the Pastor.”

“For two years I was involved in a Baptist Church. I was constantly complaining about the Pastor’s sermons being too long, too dry, sowing discord among the people and gossiping about others.”

“Some Satanists who were handpicked, the most powerful ones, were sent into Church services to disrupt the meeting and we stopped people from going forward when they’d ask people to go forward and accept Christ as their Savior.”

“I personally, in fact, was trained to learn all the Christian jargon. You know like, ‘Hallelujah and praise the Lord’ and say all the right things yet I had no idea of Jesus being my Savior than a man on the moon.”

“If you can tear down the prayer foundation of a Church, then you’ve destroyed that Church. And that’s what every witch or Satanist plans to do when they go into that Church. It’s to tear down that prayer foundation. And the rest of the Church goes quickly after that.”

Hmmm. Now, let me get this straight. You mean to tell me that the weapons satanists use to destroy Churches is to get Christians to start complaining, gossiping, and fighting? Gee, where have I heard that before? People, stop and think about it! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to? People of God, if the American Church is going to be all that we can be, then we’ve got refrain from corruptive words and corruptive deeds. We’ve got to remain strong in love and unity, or we’ll never become that mighty army for Almighty God!
Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Killer C’s and you’ve actually become a Corruptive Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Corruptive Christian into a Committed Christian. And folks, a Committed Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only refrain from a life of corruption and sin, but they’ll even give up their lives to bring corruption to an end, like Telemachus did:

“The year was 391 AD and Telemachus was a godly Christian man who lived in a remote village, tending his garden and spending much of his time in prayer.

However, one day he felt called to go to Rome by the Lord so he obeyed, setting out on foot. Weeks later he arrived in the city at the time of a great festival. So Telemachus followed the crowd who was surging down the streets into a Coliseum.

There he saw the gladiators stand before the Emperor and say, ‘We who are about to die salute you.’

And suddenly, Telemachus realized that these men were going to fight to the death for the entertainment of the crowd. So he cried out, ‘In the name of Christ, stop!’ But no one would listen.

So he pushed his way through the crowd, climbed over the wall, and dropped on to the floor of the arena. And when the crowd saw this tiny figure rushing to the gladiators and saying, ‘In the name of Christ, stop!’ they thought it was part of the show and began to laugh.

But as soon as they found out it wasn’t a part of the show, the laughter turned to anger. And as Telemachus was pleading with the gladiators to stop, one of them plunged a sword into his body and he fell to the sand.

As he lay dying, Telemachus’ last words were, ‘In the name of Christ, stop!’

And then a strange thing happened. The gladiators stood looking at the tiny figure lying there. A hush fell over the Coliseum. Suddenly, way up in the upper rows, a man stood and made his way to the exit. Then others began to follow. In dead silence, everyone left the Coliseum.
It was to be the last battle to the death in the Roman Coliseum. Never again in the great stadium did men kill each other for the entertainment of the crowd. Why? Because of one tiny voice that could barely be heard above the crowd, courageously spoke the truth in God’s name, ‘In the name of Christ, stop!’”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “Are you, like Telemachus, being used of God to stop the corruption of this world? Or are you being used of the devil to start corruption in the Church?” And if that’s you, then I beg of you, “In the name of Christ, stop!”

People of God, There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Corruptive Christian! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Killer C’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Chapter Five

The Counterfeit Christian

“It was your average morning with people heading off to another hectic day of work in this city that never sleeps. But little did these people know, for many of them, it was soon to become their last day alive.

At 8:45 that very morning, a passenger jet crashed into the north tower of this business high-rise, tearing a gaping hole in the building and setting it on fire. And if that wasn’t bad enough, precisely eighteen minutes later, a second airliner crashed into the twin south tower, causing a devastating explosion.

But even for the fortunate few who survived the explosions and flames, their fate wasn’t much better. Why? Because the unthinkable became reality. The buildings were not only on fire, they began to fall.

And as the dust finally settled, the damage was assessed. The once thriving trade center had become a wasteland that required 98,000 truckloads just to remove the debris.

And the loss of life was absolutely heartbreaking with the lives of almost 3,000 Americans being wiped out.

And before going to sleep, the President wrote in his diary, “The Pearl Harbor of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century just took place today.”
The year was 2001. The city was New York. The disaster was, 9/11.”

Now, we all know that the terrorist attack on 9/11 was one of the greatest disasters of all time, right? But what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes 9/11 look like a **backyard scuffle**. And what if I were to tell you that **this disaster** didn’t occur in just one city, but it’s going on **right now today** all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about **The Attack of the Killer C’s**.

People of God, as American troops have gone off to war to fight an external enemy, so the American Church needs to go to war to fight the **internal enemy** of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a **demonic host** whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish **your effectiveness** for Jesus Christ. Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue in our study, **The Attack of the Killer C’s**.

We’ve already seen that the **first external attack**, the **first Killer C** the enemy fires at us is the attack of the **Casual Christian**. The **second Killer C** is the attack of the **Cultural Christian**. And the **third Killer C** is the attack of the **Compromising Christian**. And in the last chapter we saw that the **fourth Killer C** the enemy fires at us is the attack of the **Corruptive Christian**. And there we saw that the devil will actually trick us into self-destructing ourselves and self-destructing the Church. How? By getting us to **sound** and **behave** more like satan instead of our Savior.

Oh, but that’s not the only thing. The **fifth and most deadly Killer C** of all the enemy fires at us is the attack of the **Counterfeit Christian**. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

**John 6:60-66** “On hearing it, many of his disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’ Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, ‘Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.’

For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, ‘This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.’ From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.” (NIV)
Now, according to our text, Jesus not only didn’t even hesitate to tell the people who were following Him, that not only were His teachings from God, but that He Himself was God. How? By knowing only what God could know. That is, whether or not a person truly believed in Him. And because of this, we observe the shocking truth that “Not everyone who claims to be a disciple of Christ really is one.” The Bible says that some people are actually going to be counterfeits just like Judas Iscariot was.

People, the word counterfeit means, “to pretend or imitate something else with the intent to deceive.” And folks, this is satan’s deadliest trick of all. Just like Judas of Iscariot, he gets people to think they’re on the highway to heaven, when in reality they’re still on the highway to hell. Therefore, in order to make sure we don’t fall into this deadly trap as well, I think we better take a look at the signs that indicate when a person may indeed be a counterfeit Christians, how about you?

The first sign that indicates when a person has become a Counterfeit Christian, just like Judas, is when they Worship God with Their Head but Not Their Heart.

James 2:14-17,19 “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder.” (NIV)

People, the Bible declares that not all faith is a saving faith. And according to our text, if your faith is not accompanied with action, it’s not only fake, it’s dead. And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. He tricks people into thinking that faith is having a head knowledge of God, instead of a heart knowledge. Or in other words, just giving a mental ascent that God exists. But hello, as we read, even the demons believe that God exists but are they saved? Absolutely not! So, if you believe that there’s a God, then whip-de-do! This only puts you on the same level as the demons! And this is what the Bible calls a dead faith.

And people, it’s my contention that this dead faith syndrome has become an epidemic in the American Church. Many people in Churches today think it’s no big deal to not “get involved” and “get serious” about going to
Church services. I mean, after all, you don’t want to be labeled as one of those Jesus freaks do you? And people, this apathetic behavior has become so commonplace in the American Church that we even make jokes about it all the time, like this one:

“There were three country churches in a small Texas town that were being overrun by some pesky squirrels.

So the first Church called a meeting to decide what to do about the squirrels. And after much prayer and consideration they determined that the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn’t interfere with God’s divine will.

And when the second Church got together, they decided they weren’t in a position to harm any of God’s creations. So, they humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free a few miles outside of town. However, three days later, the squirrels were back.

But it was only the third Church that was able to come up with the best and most effective solution. You see, they decided to baptize the squirrels and registered them as members of the church. Why?

Because now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.”

Now, granted that joke is pretty funny, right? Why? Because it’s so true, right? But folks, it’s really not at all that funny when you realize that those who are acting like squirrelly Christians may not even be Christians at all!

People of God, a true Christian is not one who lives for God just twice a year! No! They live for the Lord every single day of their lives and God uses them to transform this world. John Wesley said, “Give me ten people who hate nothing but sin, who fear nothing but God, and who love nothing but Jesus, and I can change the world.”

And people, I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but the American Church seems to be having a hard time changing this world nowadays. In fact, it seems this world is having an easy time at changing the American Church. Why? Well, maybe it’s because the American Church is full of people who Worship God with Their Heads but Not Their Hearts. Maybe the American Church is full of Counterfeit Christians.
Oh, but that’s not all. The second sign that indicates when a person has become a **Counterfeit Christian**, just like Judas, is when they **Worship God with Their Lips but Not Their Lives**.

**Titus 1:15-16** “Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are defiled. Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are despicable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.” (NLT)

People, the Bible declares that not everyone who claims to know God really knows God. In fact, if all they do is give God lip service instead of **life service**, then their so-called faith is actually worthless. And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. He tricks people into thinking that all you have to do is, **not live like a Christian**, but **just say you’re a Christian**, and somehow you’ve become one. But people we’re only fooling ourselves if we think we can **sin up a storm** six days a week and go to a Church service on the seventh and somehow everything’s just fine. Anybody can claim to know God all they want. But if they deny this claim by the way they live, then they’re being a **hypocrite**. And this is not only detrimental to your soul, but to the souls of others. One person said this:

“*The number one cause of atheism is Christians. Those who proclaim God with their mouths but deny Him in their lifestyles, are what the unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.*”

And people, it’s my contention that this **lip service syndrome** has become an epidemic in the American Church. Many people in Churches today think that all you have to do is claim to know God, **but never live for God**, and somehow you’re in like flint. But people, a true Christian **is not** one who lives for God just one hour a week. No! They live for Him every single day of their lives, and God uses them to light this world on fire!

When asked why so many people came to hear him preach, John Wesley said, **“It’s simple. If you light yourself on fire for Jesus Christ, people will come for miles just to watch you burn!”** And people, maybe this is why the American Church can’t seem to get the fires of revival burning across our nation anymore. Why? Maybe it’s because people are **Worshipping God with Their Lips but Not Their Lives**. Maybe they’re actually Counterfeit Christians.
Oh, but that’s not all. The **third sign** that indicates when a person has become a **Counterfeit Christian**, just like Judas, is when they **Worship God with Their Thoughts but Not the Truth.**

**1 John 2:18-19** “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.” (NIV)

People, the Bible declares that not everyone who goes to a Church service really belongs to the Church. If they walk away from the truth and start following a lie, then it only shows they were never saved in the first place. And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. He tricks people into thinking that there are many roads to heaven and that Jesus is not **the only way to God.** Rather, He’s just one of the many ways to God.

But hello, this is not only calling Jesus a liar, but it’s assuming that God is going to bend His truth to your man-made thoughts! And oh, it may sound nice and wonderful, but sooner or later, the truth will be made known, like this story reveals:

“A counterfeit Christian is like a counterfeit ten dollar bill. For instance, let’s suppose you have a counterfeit bill but don’t know it. You think it’s genuine.

So sure enough, you use it to pay for some gas. But as soon as it makes its way to the bank, the bank teller spots the phony and says, ‘I’m sorry, but this bill is a counterfeit.’

Now that ten dollar bill may have done a lot of good while it was in circulation, but when it arrived at the bank it was exposed for what it really was and it was immediately put out of circulation.

And so it is with the counterfeit Christian. They may do a lot of good things in their life, but when they face Christ at the final judgment, they’ll immediately be rejected.”

People of God, if a person professes to be a Christian, yet walks away from the truth that Jesus really is the only way to heaven, then the Bible says they’re a counterfeit. And maybe this is the reason why the American Church has
lost its zeal for the lost. Maybe it’s because the majority of the American Church is still lost themselves? How? Because they’re **Worshipping God with Their Thoughts and Not the Truth**. They’re Counterfeit Christians!

Oh, but that’s not all. The **fourth sign** that indicates when a person has become a **Counterfeit Christian**, just like Judas, is when they **Worship God with Their Religion but Not a Relationship**.

**Matthew 7:21-23** “Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!” (NIV)

People, the Bible declares that not everyone who says, “Lord, Lord” really belongs to the Lord. If their faith is based on **pious religious deeds** instead of a personal relationship with Christ, then they don’t belong to Christ. And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. He tricks people into thinking that if they want to get to heaven, then they just have to be a good religious person, who does good religious deeds once in awhile. But people, hello! Jesus didn’t die on the cross so people could **get religious** for Him. NO! He died on the cross so we could have a relationship with Him.

And people, it’s my contention that this **religious attitude** has become an epidemic in the American Church. And because of this, many people who claim to be **alive in Christ** are actually dead to Christ because of their religion, like this story reveals:

“A new minister in a small Oklahoma town spent the first four days desperately calling on the Church membership and begged them to come to his first services. But try as he might, nobody would come.

So he decided to place a notice in the local newspapers, stating that as the Church was dead, it was his duty to give it a decent Christian burial the following Sunday.

Well, this of course got the curiosity of the whole town and everyone turned out. And when they got there, they saw a coffin smothered in flowers in front of the pulpit.
And after the minister read the obituary and delivered a eulogy, he invited his congregation to step forward and pay their respects to the dearly departed.

And without a moments hesitation a long line was formed because each person couldn’t wait to see what in the world was in the coffin. But, as soon as each person peeped into the coffin, a strange thing happened. Each person quickly turned away with a guilty look. Why?

Because the minister had placed a large mirror inside the coffin which meant that every single person simply saw themselves.”

People of God, I place a mirror before the American Church today and say this, “If you have to have your arm twisted to come to a Church service, then maybe you don’t have a relationship with Christ, but a religion with Christ.” And if you can’t ever seem to get motivated to come hear the Word of God, then maybe one day you’ll hear from God, “Away from me you evildoer, I never knew you!” But how could this be? Well, it all starts by Worshipping God with Your Religion and Not a Relationship.

People of God, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to? It’s his greatest trick of all! He knows if he can trick people into having a dead faith, then they’ll have a false salvation. And instead of being on the highway to heaven, they’re still on the highway to hell!

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Killer C’s and you’ve actually become a Counterfeit Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, you just became God’s child. And by His grace He’ll turn you from a Counterfeit Christian into a real Christian, a Committed Christian.

And folks, a Committed Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only live for Jesus every single day of their lives, but they’ll refuse to turn from Him all the way to the end of their lives, like Thomas Hawkes:

“The year was 1555 and Thomas Hawkes was condemned with six others to be burned at the stake. Their crime? They refused to turn from the truth and place themselves under the authority of a dead Church.

And just before his death, several of Hawkes friends, asked him a favor. You see, they were afraid for their own lives and wondered how long true faith could stand in the midst of the fire.
So Thomas Hawkes agreed that if the pain was tolerable and his mind was still at peace, that he’d lift his hands over his head.

And when he had been in the fire so long that he could no longer speak, his skin had shrunk, his fingers had been burned off, and everyone thought he was dead, Thomas Hawkes suddenly raised his hands over his head and clapped them together three times!

And the people there – especially those who understood his gesture – broke into shouts of praise and applause as Thomas Hawkes sunk down into the fire and gave up his spirit to be with the Lord.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “Would you, like Thomas Hawkes, being willing to show a true faith in Christ by being burned alive at the stake before entering heaven? Or have you been tricked by the devil into having a dead faith and are actually being led straight into the fires of hell?”

People of God, There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Counterfeit Christian! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Killer C’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Part II

The Internal Battle
Chapter Six

The Discontented Christian

“It was one of the biggest outbreaks of disease of all time. In fact, so horrific was this plague that it struck terror in the hearts of all of Western Civilization and society was literally torn apart.

It all began with a seemingly mild headache that soon progressed to a few innocent looking spots on the skin, first red but then turning black. And in just a matter of days a high fever took over causing the glands to swell, leading to an uncontrolled vomiting of blood.

Soon, people’s glands actually began to burst giving them a grotesque appearance right before they died an agonizing death.

So fast and so devastating was this plague, that in no time fields were left untilled, animals were left to wander, bodies filled the rivers, and ships actually drifted out to sea full of dead crews.

In fact, people were so terrified of contracting this disease that one man who actually survived wrote this, “Brother forsook his brother, an uncle his nephew, a sister her brother, and oftentimes a wife her husband. And even more extraordinary and well near incredible, fathers and mothers refused to visit or tend their very children, as if they had not been theirs.”
And when all was said and done, the destruction was massive. The entire European world was completely decimated. One-fourth of the civilized world was annihilated.

The year was 1347. The cause was a tiny flea. The plague was bubonic. Of course, I’m talking about the Black Death.”

Now, we all know that the Black Death was one of the worst outbreaks of disease of all time, right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disease that makes the Bubonic Plague look like a mere boo boo. And people, what if I were to tell you that this disease didn’t occur in just one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. People, I’m not talking about an external bacterial disease. I’m talking about an internal spiritual disease. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your witness for Jesus Christ.

And we’ve already seen that the external attacks the enemy fires at you and I are the attacks of the Casual Christian, the Cultural Christian, the Compromising Christian, the Corruptive Christian, and the Counterfeit Christian.

But people, you have got to understand that the devil doesn’t stop there! Are you kidding? He is wicked, he is evil, he hates your guts, he wants you dead! If the devil can’t get at you externally through the Attack of the Killer C’s, he doesn’t stop there. He just switches gears and comes at you internally with the Attack of the Deadly D’s. Therefore, in light of this truth, there’s no time to waste, so we better get started. People it’s pretty simple. The first internal attack, the first Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Discontented Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

Philippians 4:10-13 “I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.
I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the Apostle Paul is very clear and very blunt when it comes to being a contented Christian, right? What did he say? He said from firsthand experience, it doesn’t matter if you’ve got a lot, or if you’ve got a little, or if you’re in a high time, or in a low time, there is no excuse for a Christian to ever be what? Discontent, right? Why? Because what did he say? He said Jesus Christ is sufficient to satisfy our every need, right? And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate when you’re becoming a Discontented Christian is When You Long for Material Things More Than Your Maker. People, the first definition of the word discontent means, “no longer having a complete acceptance of what one has.” And people, this is one of the very first internal things the devil does to keep us from having a powerful witness. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to go through life missing out on all the wonderful things this world has to offer, do you? I mean, having Jesus in your life is good and all, but do you really think He expects you to do without?” And folks, you might think a discontented heart is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a discontented heart leads to destruction.

And the first destruction is that You Start Seeking Satisfaction from Things.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.” (NIV)

People, the Bible simply says the way to experience a great Christian life is not only living a godly life, but a what? A contented life, right? And what are we supposed to be content with? If we have food to eat and clothes to wear, then what? We should be content, right? And I’m assuming that none of you reading this are starving or naked, which is good because it would be a serious distraction to those around you. But seriously, if we have food to eat and clothes to wear, then what? We’ve got every reason and no excuse to be the most contented people on the planet, right? Of course!
And boy, talk about the ultimate witness to the lost! I mean, can you imagine running into a Christian who is always satisfied and content no matter what they have or don’t have? I mean, gee whiz, the first question out of their mouth is going to be, “How in the world can you do that? I never seem to be satisfied no matter what I have. Man, whatever your secret is, I want it now!”

And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. If he can’t keep us from turning to Christ and getting saved, he simply tricks us into seeking things outside of Christ, after we’re saved. How? By getting us to think that a material thing can gratify a spiritual need! People, the devil knows if we start seeking satisfaction in anything outside of Jesus, then ultimately, even though we should be the most contented people on the planet, we’ll end up just as despairing and just as empty as the rest of the world. And people, when are we going to learn that living a life for things, instead of the Creator of all things, not only leads to an empty life, but a hellish one, like this guy learned:

“There was a fictional guy who lived out a fantasy life and all he had to do was think of it and poof! it happened.

So this man, in a moment of time, sticks his hands in his pockets and leans back and imagines a beautiful mansion and poof! He’s got a fifteen bedroom mansion, three stories high with servants available to wait upon his every need.

So he thought, ‘Why, a place like that needs several fine cars.’ So he again closes his eyes and imagines the driveway full of the finest wheels money can buy. And poof! There they are. Several of the finest vehicles right before his very eyes that he’s free to drive himself or have a chauffeur drive him wherever he wishes.

But soon there’s no other place to travel so he comes back home and wishes for a sumptuous meal and poof! There it is, a fabulous full course meal right in front of him with all of its mouth-watering aromas, in which he eats alone.

And yet…there was something more he needed to find, contentedness. Finally, he grows so terribly bored and unchallenged that he whispers to one of his attendants, ‘I want to get out of this. I want to create some things again. I’d rather be in hell than in here.’

To which one of the servants replied, ‘Where do you think you are?’”

2
People of God, how ironic it is that we who are on the highway to heaven through Jesus Christ, have been so easily duped by the devil to exchange it all for a hellish life here on earth. How? **By getting us to think that a material thing can gratify a spiritual need!** And people, I’m telling you, once we fall for that, we not only lose out on a contented walk with Christ, but we lose out on a powerful witness for Christ. **Stop and think about it!** Who would ever want to accept Jesus Christ if we are just as empty and just as despairing as the rest of the world? Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The **second destruction** caused by a discontented heart is that **You’re Seduced into Craving Things.**

Psalm 101:2-4 “I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.” (NKJV)

Now people, according to our text, the Psalmist declares that they not only want to live a perfect life with a perfect heart before God, but one of the keys **to doing that** is what? To set no wicked thing before our eyes, right? And people, the devil knows this. So if he can’t get us to **openly support** his wicked ideas and his evil ways, he simply tricks us into **voluntarily setting** them before our very face. How? **By television, of course!**

People, pay attention and wake up! We’ve not only been seduced into thinking material things can provide a spiritual need, but now we’ve been brainwashed into thinking the medium which spews forth this satanic lie twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, **called television**, has no effect on us. We actually believe that the TV exists purely for our own entertainment, when the whole time it’s geared towards ripping us off our cash! How? **By seducing us into becoming unrestrained consumers!** In fact, if you don’t believe me, even as far back as 1966, a New York Times Magazine article admitted it. They said:

“TV is not an art form or a cultural channel; it is an advertising medium…it seems a bit churlish and un-American of people who watch television to complain that their shows are lousy. They are not supposed to be any good. They are supposed to make money.”

And how do they make this money off of us? **Through the advertising in the commercials!** People, in case you haven’t noticed yet, the commercials today have gotten so seductive they don’t even tell you about the product
anymore. Are you kidding? They skip that part and go straight to the satanic lie that this thing will bring you satisfaction, this thing will bring you fulfillment, why it will give you a contented life, right? Isn’t that what they’re saying? And it’s exactly what this guy observed:

“There was a time when ads gave us information about the products, but that was when we needed what was being sold. Advertising has to be far more sophisticated if it is to appeal to those of us whose basic needs have already been satiated.

To listen to the ads is to be assured that everything needed for spiritual well-being can be secured if we just have enough money. Hamburgers are sold by appealing to our sense of losing out on life:

‘You deserve a break today…at McDonald’s.’ In reality all you get for your money is some ground meat.

Or ‘Buick is something you can believe in!’ Here you thought a Buick was an automobile, and the ad makers tell you it’s a religious conviction!

Or there’s a big time beer ad in which some guys are seated by a stream cooking fish over an open fire. It is evening and it’s obvious that these sportsmen have had a good day.

A deep voice sings out, ‘Here’s to good friends. Tonight is kind of special…’ Then one of the guys rips off a can from a six pack, tears off the tab, holds it up, and with deep sincerity says to his friends, ‘You know guys, it doesn’t get any better than this.’

We’re looking at a can of beer, but the ad conveys the idea that what comes with the beer is a sense of intimacy with good friends.

Then there’s the most famous ad of all time. In it we are shown people from all the nations of the world. There are blacks and whites from South Africa. There are people from Asia and Latin America, and ethnic types from all over Europe. They are holding hands.

They are singing together in unison, ‘I’d like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony…’ And what is it that brings perfect harmony to broken humanity? It’s
Coca-Cola. And if there’s any doubt about the validity of the claim, a strong authoritative voice assures us, ‘It’s the real thing.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say not one of those commercials told us anything about those products, did they? No! What they did, and what virtually every commercial today does, is to seduce us into thinking that their product, their thing, will give us what? Contentment, right? And people, it’s one thing to be duped into thinking that things can give you contentment, but it’s another thing to allow yourself to be seduced into craving them. How? By setting a wicked thing before your eyes every single day, day in and day out called TV!

And people, I got to thinking about this. I thought, well gee whiz, maybe this is why so many Christians today are having such a hard time being content? Maybe it’s because they’re ingesting discontentedness into themselves. But you might be thinking, “Hey, come on, I’m an adult and I’m aware of that stuff, but it has no effect on me. I’m much more discerning than that.” Oh really? Well one, you better tell that to the advertisers who spend billions of dollars every year for those commercials because they know it has an effect on you. And two, hello, even former President Calvin Coolidge knew about the power of advertising and its ability to influence us when he said this:

“Advertising is the most potent influence in adapting and changing the habits and modes of life, affecting what we eat, what we wear, and the work and play of a whole nation.”

People of God, when are we going to wake up and realize there really is a satanic seduction going on here? It’s not being fanatical. It’s just being honest with the facts! Oh, but that’s still not all! It’s bad enough if you want to fall for this satanic seduction. But people, you’ve got to understand that if you do, you’re actually giving a satanic impression of God, like this guy said:

“The function of God has been changed. He has a whole new role. No longer is He the object of all worship and adoration. Instead He has become an important means for getting what we now worship and adore—things, or at least the money to buy the things.

In our brave new world we worship the things we have been conditioned to want, and we will be religious if religion can guarantee us the products our democratic capitalistic society turns out by the tons.
This new Jesus propagates a ‘prosperity theology’ that promises the faithful if they seek first the kingdom of this reconstructed deity and do all the things the pop religious books say will guarantee success, then all these things (the ones described in the ads) will be added unto them.

This is a new religion that is functional, fit for these new believers who hunger for consumer goods. It has, as they say, ‘user-friendly churches’ that are just right for people whose God is a super-genie who can be at our beck and call through prayer and who will help us succeed in life…which of course means to get all the things we don’t need, so as to gratify our media-created hungers.”

People of God, when are we ever going to wake up and realize that we really are living in one of the most satanically seductive times of all time? The devil is using advertising to not only seduce us into craving things instead of Christ, but to also give a false impression of Christ! But you might be thinking, “Okay so maybe I am allowing myself to be seduced into having a craving for things and to indulge my every whim, but don’t you think you’re being a little bit over dramatic calling this a satanic seduction?” Well folks, don’t take my word for it, let’s listen to satan’s.

For those of you who may not know, the very first law of the nine satanic statements in the satanic bible is “satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence!” People of God, I don’t know about you, but it sure sounds like living a life of indulgence is not only a stupid thing for a Christian to do, I’d say it’s a satanic thing to do, how about you? Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

But that’s not all. The second sign to indicate when you’re becoming a Discontented Christian is When You Long for Gold More Than Your God. People, the second definition of the word discontent means, “to continually desire more than what one already has.” And people, here’s what the devil does with this one. He throws out the bait and says, “You don’t want to go through life missing out on all the wonderful frills that this world has to offer, do you? I mean, having Jesus in your life is good and all, but do you really think He expects you to have no fun?” And folks, you might think a discontented mind is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that discontented mind leads to destruction.

And the first destruction is that You Start Seeking Satisfaction from Money.
**Hebrews 13:5** “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” (NIV)

People of God, the Bible simply declares that we’re not only to be content with the amount of food and clothes we have, but what? We’re also to be content with the amount of money we have, right? Why? Because what did it say? God has not only promised to never leave us or forsake us, but to personally provide for us, right? Therefore, regardless of what our bank account might say, we have every reason to be the most contented people on the planet, right? Exactly!

And boy, talk about the ultimate witness to the lost! I mean, can you imagine running into a Christian who’s always satisfied and content no matter how much money they’ve got? I mean, gee whiz, the first question out of their mouth is going to be, “How in the world can you be that way? I never seem to be satisfied no matter how much money I have. Man, whatever your secret is, I want it!”

And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. If he can’t keep us from turning to God and getting saved, he simply tricks us into loving money more than God, after we’re saved. How? By getting us to think that a pile of gold can satisfy a godly need! People, the devil knows if we start seeking satisfaction in anything outside of Jesus, including money, then ultimately, even though we should be the most contented people on the planet, we’re going to end up just as restless and just as insecure as the rest of the world, like this man was:

“A rich industrialist was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat. So he asked him, ‘Why aren’t you out there fishing?’

And the fisherman replied, ‘Because I’ve caught enough fish for today.’

So the rich man asked, ‘So why don’t you catch more fish than you need?’

And the fisherman said, ‘Well, what would I do with them?’

And the rich man said, ‘You could earn more money and buy a bigger boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets and catch even more fish and make more money. Soon you’d have a fleet of boats and be rich like me.’
And the fisherman asked, ‘Then what would I do?’

And the rich man replied, ‘Then you could sit down and enjoy life.’

To which the fisherman replied, ‘What do you think I’m doing now?”’

People of God, how ironic it is that we who are given the Personal promises of God to enjoy His rest today, have actually exchanged it all in search of a pile of cash for tomorrow. How? By thinking that a pile of gold and can satisfy a godly need! And people, I’m telling you, once we fall for that, we not only lose out on a contented walk with Christ, but we lose out on a powerful witness for Christ. Who would ever want to accept Jesus if we’re just as restless and just as insecure as the rest of the world? Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second destruction caused by a discontented mind is that You’re Seduced into Craving Money.

2 Corinthians 2:11 “In order that satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” (NIV)

People, according to our text, the Apostle Paul simply declares that if we don’t want to be outwitted by the devil, then we better not what? We better not be unaware of his schemes, right? And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. He knows if he can’t get us to openly accept his wicked ideas and evil ways, he simply tricks us into subliminally accepting his wicked ideas and evil ways. How? By television, of course!

People, when are we going to realize the advertising industry not only uses television to seduce our hearts into buying things, they also get us mentally lust for things. And what’s interesting about the word “schemes” in the text here is that it’s the Greek word “noema” which is actually the word for “mind.” So this means the devil not only schemes against us, but he does so by playing “mind games” with us. Therefore, if the average person spends 4 ½ hours a day watching TV, which by the way, is enough time to read the Bible 22 times in one year, and if we’re exposed to no less than 1,000 commercials a day, then who do you think is winning the war on our minds? Not God! And what did The Apostle Paul say? If you don’t want to be outwitted by the devil, then what? Don’t be unaware his schemes, his “mental mind games.”

And oh, by the way, for those of you wondering why there’s such an emphasis on sex in advertising messages, pay attention. Remember what you’ve
read thus far and put it all together. The way the advertising industry gets us to not only crave things, but to specifically **lust after things**, is to get us to **mentally** equate the purchase of their product with an **act of lust**, using sex! And can anyone guess what it takes to buy all these things we crave and now lust after? That’s Right! **Money**! And so now you’re not only lusting after things, you’re lusting after the money to buy these things, even more so than God!

But you might be thinking, “Okay so maybe they’re using sophisticated sexual advertising on us to **mentally mesmerize us** into lusting after things. But come one, don’t you think you’re being a little overdramatic by calling it a **satanic seduction**?” Well folks, I don’t know about you, and maybe it’s just a coincidence, but I kind of find it interesting how some say that the name for new headquarters of the movie industry back in the 1920’s was carefully chosen to be “Hollywood”. Why? Because if you know anything about ancient witchcraft, you know that the most powerful wood for a witch to make a magic wand from, was **the wood of a Holly tree**.¹⁰ And can anyone guess what the witches used these wands made of “holly” wood for? Hey, that’s right! To **mesmerize people**! Gee, maybe Hollywood and movies and television and commercials really are meant to satanically seduce our minds! And to think that we **volunteer** for this brainwashing every single day! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this **Attack of the Deadly D’s** and you’ve actually become a **Discontented Christian**, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Discontented Christian into a **Discipled Christian**. And people, a Discipled Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only love God more than money and more than things, but they’ll have the supernatural contentedness regardless of anything, like this Christian did:

> “Horatio Spafford and his family were members of the Fullerton Avenue Presbyterian Church. And Spafford and his wife had learned what it meant to completely trust God in every situation.

First, The Spaffords’ only son was killed by scarlet fever at the age of four. And a year later, Horatio had invested heavily in real estate on the shores of Lake Michigan but every one of these holdings was wiped out by the great Chicago Fire.
So, aware of the toll that these disasters had taken on his family, Horatio decided to take his wife and four daughters on a holiday to England and then travel throughout Europe.

Yet just before they set sail, a last-minute business issue forced Horatio to delay. So not wanting to ruin the family holiday, he told his family to go on ahead as planned. He’d catch up to them on the other side of the Atlantic.

However, their ship, never made it. It collided with an English sailing ship, and sank within twenty minutes. And even though Horatio’s wife, Anna, was able to cling to a piece of floating wreckage, all four of their daughters were killed. And the next thing you know, Horatio received the horrible telegram from his wife, only two words long, ‘saved alone.’

So Spafford immediately boarded the next available ship to be near his grieving wife. And during the voyage, the captain of the ship had called him and said, ‘I believe we are now passing the place where the ship was wrecked.’ So Horatio then returned to his cabin and penned the lyrics of his great hymn of praise to God in the midst of his pain. Maybe you recognize it.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea-billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, “It is well, it is well with my soul.”

Though satan should buffet, tho’ trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If you lost all your children in a sinking boat, would you, like Horatio Spafford, still be able to be content with God’s provision? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil to act like everybody else who is discontent because they don’t have a boatload of money and a boatload of things?”

People of God, it’s high time that we the Church to wake up and stop being ignorant of the devil’s schemes! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Discontented
Christian! Come on! Wake up! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Deadly D’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
“It all began in the sixteenth century when a small cabin boy committed a seemingly innocent act of rebellion. All he did was sneak off his boat and make his way to shore of a newly discovered territory called Mexico. But the problem was, the boy was infected with a killer virus.

And because of this act of rebellion, in no time at all, millions of people both young and old became infected as well. And in a matter of days, a seemingly mild rash appeared, that soon progressed to a high fever, then vomiting, and finally an aching all the way into the bones. And the next thing you know, one out of every two people died a horrible death!

In fact, one survivor put it this way. He said, “When it all began, it spread all over the people with great destruction. Some were covered with pus pockets all over their bodies, including their faces and heads. They could not walk.

They only lay in their resting places and beds. They could not move, they could not stir, they could not change positions, nor lie in one side, nor face down, nor on their backs, because if they stirred at all they cried out in great pain and anguish.”

And so great was the stench of the dead that people fled in utter terror. And what the virus didn’t kill, the ensuing famine and pestilence did, as society shut down
while dogs and vultures devoured the bodies. And as a result, it was said that the Horsemen of the Apocalypse had come to Meso-America.

The year was 1518. The death toll was over 20 million. The killer virus was of course, smallpox!”

Now, we all know that that particular outbreak of smallpox was one of the worst outbreaks of disease of all time, right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disease that makes smallpox look like a case of the pimpl[es]? And people, what if I were to tell you that this disease didn’t occur in just one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your witness for Jesus Christ. Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue in our study, The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

And in the last chapter we saw the first internal attack, the first Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Discontented Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually trick you and I into being completely dissatisfied with life and full of despair, just like everybody else, when the whole time we should be what? The most contented people on the planet. So how does he get us to do this? By getting us to long for material things more than our Maker, and the money to buy these things more than God.

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember the devil’s character. He is wicked, he is evil, he hates your guts, he wants you dead! Therefore, he doesn’t stop! People, the second Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Doubting Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

Genesis 3:1-5 “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden?
The woman said to the serpent, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.

You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the very first thing the devil did to launch the fall of mankind, and thrust us into a cursed creation, was to use the weapon of what? It was the weapon of doubt, right? What did he say? Did God really say that? Doubt, right? And people, the reason why the devil did that was because he knows that once we give into doubt, we’ll not only start to question God, but we’ll actually end up calling God a what? We’ll call Him a liar! “You will not surely die,” right?

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate you’re becoming a Doubting Christian, actually calling God a liar, is When You Place Your Security into Something Else Besides God. People, the first definition of the word doubt means, “to be skeptical or raise suspicions regarding one’s well-being.” And people, this is another internal thing the devil does to keep us from having a powerful witness. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey, I know having Jesus in your life is good and all, but did God really say He’d personally take care of you while you’re on this earth? I mean, don’t you think you should take measures to secure your own life, just in case?” And folks, you might think a doubtful security in God is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a doubtful security leads to a devastation.

And the first devastation is that You Start Seeking a Perfect Bank Account.

Matthew 6:19-21 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (NIV)

People, the Bible simply declares that one of the dumbest things a Christian could do with their life is to what? Is to waste it, all their time and all their energy, in stockpiling treasures on earth, right? Why? Because what did
Jesus say? It not only steals your heart away from Him, **but because it’s not secure**, it cannot and will not last forever and therefore leads to a wasted life, right? Therefore, a smart Christian is one who invests all of their time, all of their treasure, all of their talents, and all of their tongue into what? Storing up treasures in heaven, living for the Kingdom of God, right? **Why?** Because that’s the only thing that lasts forever! That’s the only truly secure thing in life, right?

And boy, talk about the ultimate witness to the lost! I mean, can you imagine running into a Christian who **cares more about giving** their time, **treasure, talents, and tongue** to the Lord’s work than to what’s going on at Wall Street? I mean, can you imagine running into a Christian who could give a rip about the Stock Market or Dow Jones report or the state of the economy? I mean, gee whiz, the first question out of their mouth is going to be, “How in the world do you do that? I mean, here I am sweating like pig, running the rat race day in and day out to secure my own future, and you just keep giving yours away like there’s something more important to live for. And not only that, the whole time you’re full of a peace and assurance that I just can’t find anywhere. Man, whatever your secret is, I want it now!”

And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. If he can’t keep us from turning to Christ and going to heaven, he simply tricks us into wasting our lives before we get to heaven. **How?** **By investing in an earthly retirement more than a heavenly one.** People, the devil knows if we start seeking security in **anything** outside of Jesus, including a pile of **cash**, then ultimately we’ll end up just as greedy and just as insecure as the rest of the world.

And people, correct me if I’m wrong, but is this not the insane mantra of our society today. They say you’ve got to get a good education, so you can get a good job, so you can get a lot of money, to buy things you don’t need, to impress people you don’t know, who in the end, don’t even care, right? And then they say, you have to **secure this way of life** by spending even more time, making even more money, so you can stockpile it away until you have enough to do what? Here’s the big goal. That’s right! Spend the rest of your days sitting around doing whatever you want, **as well as**, buying even more things you don’t need, to impress even more people, who in the end, still don’t even care! And people, **that’s not only insane, it’s unbiblical!** Where in the Bible does it say we’re to stockpile cash on earth so we can do whatever we want with our life, and buy endless things we don’t even need? Answer? Nowhere!

So the question is, “How in the world does the devil get us to fall for this lie when the Bible clearly says we shouldn’t live like this?” Well, hey great question! I’m glad you asked! The **first way** he does it is by **Words of Fear**.
People, read the newspaper or watch the TV and what **fearful message** is drilled into our heads every single day, day in day out? “Is your life secure? Do you have enough money? What if something happened to you? Do you have insurance? What about your kids? What about your family? How will you survive?” And the next thing you know we line up by the truckloads to buy their so-called secure solutions from a what? A **media generated fear**.

And people, lest you think it’s not a media generated fear, listen to this. Did you know that investment houses spend billions of dollars every single year just to advertise their investments? Why? Because they know if they scare us enough, we’ll end up giving them billions and billions more dollars to do what? So they, **not Jesus**, can **secure our future for us**, right? And so the next thing you know, rather than trusting in Jesus and living a life for Him, we squirrel away every cent into a so-called retirement bin. **Why**? Because we listened to their words of fear instead of our faithful God!

Oh, but that’s not all. The **second way** the devil tricks us into seeking security outside of God is by **Words of False Teachers**. People, it’s bad enough society spits out this lie of false security in a pile of cash, but believe it or not, there are those who claim to speak for God that reinforce it! Get this! They actually say that we not only **should** store up treasure here on earth, but that we’re **guaranteed** this treasure from God Himself! Don’t believe me? Let’s take a look at just a few of their quotes:

- **Jesse Duplantis**: “The very first thing on Jesus’ agenda was to get rid of poverty!”

- **Fredrick Price**: “The apostles were businessmen. They were rich men and had plenty of money. I’m going to show you that Jesus was a wealthy man had plenty of money. Jesus and the disciples were rich, only rich people could take off for 3.5 years.”

- **John Avanzini**: “Jesus was handling big money because that treasurer He had was a thief. Now you can’t tell me that a ministry with a treasurer that’s a thief can operate on a few pennies. It took big money to operate that ministry because Judas was stealing out of that bag. If you have a treasurer, that means you have a lot of money.”

- **Creflo Dollar**: “I’m telling you, Jesus wasn’t poor, and He didn’t wear no rags, either. Like we march in on these Easter little plays that we do at our
church, with those raggedy sheets on. Jesus didn’t have no rags on. He wore
designer clothes, honey!”

- **John Avanzini**: “Jesus wore designer clothes. Well, what else you gonna call
  it? I mean, you didn’t get the stuff He wore off the rack. It wasn’t a one-size-
fits-all deal. No, this was custom stuff.”

- **Creflo Dollar**: “But without faith stuff, you have no stuff, because faith stuff
  is the stuff of all stuff. Take away the faith stuff, you ain’t got no stuff. Get
the faith stuff, and you can get some more stuff, because you got the main
stuff. Now, did you get all that stuff?”

- **Robert Tilton**: “The only time people were poor in the Bible is when they
  were under a curse” and “Being poor is a sin.”

- **Fredrick Price**: “The whole point is I’m trying to get you to see – to get you
  out of this malaise of thinking that Jesus and the disciples were poor and then
relating that to you – thinking that you, as a child of God, have to follow
Jesus. The Bible says that He has left us an example that we should follow
His steps. That’s the reason why I drive a Rolls Royce. I’m following Jesus’
steps.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I not only find those words a
complete atrocity, but in light of what Jesus said earlier, it’s an utter blasphemy!
What did Jesus say? **Do not store up treasures on this earth! Stop it!** Why?
Because it cannot last forever, it takes your heart away from Him, it cannot give
you security, and besides, there’s much more important things to do with it, like
this guy learned:

“This man is on the brink of leaving with suitcases packed full of fortune, when
all of a sudden, his conscience speaks to him. Acting like a guardian angel during
WWII, he instead decides to save as many people as he can with his money.

Soon he bargains with a Nazi named Goeth to buy back his Jewish workforce,
transplant them to his safer hometown, and build a weapons factory that
produced junk weaponry. The conversation goes like this.

Goeth: (puzzled) You want these people?
The man: These people, my people, I want my people.

Goeth: Who are you, Moses? Come on, what is this? Where’s the money in this, where’s the scam?

The man: It’s good business.

Goeth: Yeah, it’s ‘good business’ in your opinion. Look, you’ve got to move them, the equipment, everything to Czechoslovakia, pay for all that and build another camp. It doesn’t make any sense... You’re not telling me something.

The man: It’s good for me. I know them, I’m familiar with them, I don’t have to train them. It’s good for you. I’ll compensate you...

Goeth: You’re probably scamming me somehow. Yeah, all right, don’t tell me, I’ll go along with it. It’s just irritating I can’t work it out.

The man: Look, all you have to do is tell me what it’s worth to you. What’s a person worth to you?

Goeth: No, no, no, no. What’s one worth to you?

And so the next thing you know, this man actually begins to sacrifice all his wealth to do just that. Buy back one person at a time until his list grows to about 1,100.

And when the war had finally ended, the people of the list made a gold ring for this man with an inscription that said, ‘Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire.’

But suddenly, tears flowed down his cheeks as this man looked at the eyes of the workers, and actually sought their apology for not doing more. To one of his workers named Stern, he said this.

The man: I could’ve got more... I could’ve got more, if I’d just... I could’ve got more...

Stern: There are eleven hundred people who are alive because of you. Look at them.
The man: I threw away so much money, you have no idea. If I’d just...

Stern: There will be generations because of what you did.

The man: I didn’t do enough.

Stern: You did so much.

The man: This car. Goeth would’ve bought this car. Why did I keep the car? Ten people, right there. Ten people, ten more people. This pin, two people. This is gold. Two more people. He would’ve given me two for it. At least one. He would’ve given me one. One more. One more person. A person, Stern. For this. I could’ve gotten one more person and I didn’t.”

The man in anguish is of course, Oscar Schindler of ‘Schindler’s List.”

Oh, people of God. In light of that story, ask yourself. Is the stock market more important than the Savior? Is the economy more important than eternity? Is a CD more valuable than saving a soul? People, wake up! Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also! Stop and think about what we’re doing! We’re more concerned about a powerful economy than saving a person from hell! We’re not just being poor examples of a Christian’s Schindler’s List, but ask yourself, “Is there even anybody on your list?” Is there? Or are too busy storing up treasure on earth as people go straight to hell! Why? Because you got tricked and seduced into placing your security into something else besides God! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second sign to indicate when you’re becoming a Doubting Christian, actually calling God a liar, is When You Place Your Future into Something Else Besides God. People, the second definition of the word doubt means this, “to question or become fearful of one’s safekeeping.” And people, here’s what the devil does with this one. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey, I know having Jesus in your life is good and all, but did God really say He’d personally watch over you until you get to heaven? I mean, don’t you think you should secure your own future, just in case? And folks you might think a doubtful future in God is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that doubtful future leads to devastation.

And the first devastation is that You Start Seeking a Perfect Life.
1 Peter 4:12-13 “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (NIV)

People of God, the Bible simply declares that we not only should not be surprised by painful trials, but what? We need to rejoice in them, right? Why? Because if Jesus suffered, and we belong to Him, then it’s an honor to suffer right along with Him, right? Therefore, it’s obvious. God has not promised us a perfect life, but a what? A painful one, right?

And boy, talk about the ultimate witness to the lost! I mean, can you imagine running into a Christian who’s never bothered by trials and actually rejoices whenever problems come their way? I mean, gee whiz, you know the first question out of their mouth is going to be, “How in the world can you do that? I mean, I’ve seen what you’ve gone through and most people would have gone crazy by now, but you’re still full of joy! Man, whatever your secret is, I want it now!”

And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. If he can’t keep us from rejoicing in Christ when the trials do come, he simply tricks us into thinking that trials should never come in the first place. How? By investing in an earthly insurance instead of a heavenly one! People, the devil knows if we start seeking security in anything outside of Jesus, including a pain free life, then ultimately we’ll end up just as frightened and just as scared as the rest of the world.

So the question is, “How in the world does the devil get us to fall for this lie? Simple! The first way he does it is by Words of Fear. People, read a newspaper, or watch the TV, and what’s yet another fear drilled into our heads every single day, day in and day out? “Is your future secure? Do you have enough insurance? Are you eating properly? Do you exercise? What if something happened to you? What if your car broke down? What if your house burned down? What if a flood came? What if your health started to fail? What would you do? How will you survive?” And people, the next thing you know we line up by the boatloads to buy their so-called insurance from what? A supposed pain free life.

And lest you think we don’t do this, listen to this. Did you know in 2003 alone we spent $1.6 trillion dollars on health care making it 14% the Gross National Product? Did you know that billions of dollars are spent every single year for herbal and vitamin supplements? In fact, did you know last year alone Americans spent 2.3 billion dollars just on antioxidant supplements? Why?
Because they’ve got us scared to death of anything bad ever happening to us! And so now we give them billions of dollars to do what? So they, not Jesus, can secure our future, right? Why? Because we listened to their words of fear!

And gee whiz, you’d think with the billions of dollars we spend every year that we’d have a pain free life by now, right? Well, apparently, it’s doing just the opposite! Did you know that doctors and the so-called modern health care system is the LEADING cause of death in this country? Not heart disease, not cancer, but doctors. Don’t believe me? Take a look at these stats.

Did you know that not only is 56 percent of the population of the United States is treated unnecessarily by the medical industry, or in other words 50,000 people per day, but that doctors and the so-called modern health care system is the LEADING cause of death in this country? Not heart disease, not cancer, but doctors.

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Keep in mind that the annual death rate for heart disease is only 699,697 and the annual death rate for cancer is only 553,251. Also keep in mind that during the Revolutionary War, 25,000 Americans died. During the Civil War nearly 500,000 people died. During WWI over 100,000 people died. During WWII about 400,000 Americans died. And both the Korean and Vietnam wars killed about 113,000 people. Yet, in one year alone 999,936 people die from doctor related incidents? Do the math and you will see that all the deaths from all these wars, over all those years, is only 1,138,000 while doctors kill as many people as all those wars combined in just one year and three months! So much for getting a pain free life! I think I’ll stick with God, how about you? In fact, not only is God apparently safer, but as one guy points out, so are guns! Check this out:

- Number of physicians in the US: 700,000.
- Accidental deaths caused by physicians per year: 999,936.
• Number of gun owners in the US: 80,000,000.
• Number of accidental gun deaths per year (all age groups) 1,500.

• This means that statistically, doctors are about 72,000 times more dangerous than gun owners. Therefore, since not everyone has a gun, but everyone has at least one doctor, we need to alert our family and friends to this alarming threat, and we’ve got to petition congress to ban the use of doctors before this gets out of hand!

   Now folks, please don’t misunderstand me. I’m not saying don’t ever go to the doctor. Hello! I’ve been to the doctor and I’m sure you have too. Here’s my point. I’m saying don’t put your security into one for a pain free life! Why? Because God never said we’d have one! And He certainly never said if we spent all our gold buying enough insurance, and enough health care, and enough vitamins, and enough exercise equipment, that we’d never go through trials. No! He’s promised us something better! He said, when we go through trials, He’ll turn them into gold!

   And since we have such a hard time believing this, I’m going to share with you just a few of the ways I’ve learned, how we really can be blessed, that’s right, I said blessed, by a painful life. Pay attention! It can be used to help expose our sin nature, to keep us from becoming spiritually lazy, to cause us to be a blessing to others, to teach us that God is God and we are not, to make us more like Jesus, to keep us from wasting our lives, to make us more humble, to make us more joyful, to make us more loving, to produce a powerful testimony, to produce a powerful character, to steer you into a new direction, to build your faith, to get you to appreciate fellowship, to teach you the power of praise, to discipline you, to see what your made of, to make you more thankful, to purify your service, or maybe even to get you saved.

   But here’s my point. I don’t know about you, but gee whiz, it really looks like our painful trials, not a pain free life, really are some of the best things that could ever happen to us, right? No wonder Peter said to rejoice in them!

   Oh, but that’s not all. The second way the devil tricks us into falling for this lie of having a pain free life is by the Words of False Teachers. People, once again it’s bad enough that society spits out the lie that you can have a pain free life, but believe it or not, there are even more people out there who claim to speak for God who reinforce this lie as well! Get this! They actually say we not only should have a perfect life, but that we’re guaranteed one from God Himself. Don’t believe me? Let’s take a look at just a few of their quotes:
- **Benny Hinn**: “Sickness does not belong to you. It has no part in the Body of Christ. Sickness does not belong to any of us. The Bible declares if the Word of God is in our life, there will be health, there will be healing – divine health and divine healing. There will be no sickness for the saint of God. That means not even a headache, sinus problem, not even a toothache – nothing! No sickness should come your way.”

- **Kenneth Hagin**: “It is the plan of our Father God in His great love and His great mercy that no believer should ever be sick.”

- **Kenneth Copeland**: “You began to meditate on those scriptures until you built an inner image of yourself healed. As that image grew more crisp and clear, you began to expect – or hope for – that image to become a reality. You’ll be expecting the very presence of God to rise up in you so powerfully that instead of believing for healing every six weeks, you’ll walk in divine health every day!”

- **Marilyn Hickey**: “Say to your body, ‘You’re whole, body! Why, you just function so beautifully and so well. Why, body, you never have any problems. You’re a strong, healthy body.’ Or speak to your leg, or speak to your foot, or speak to your neck, or speak to your back; and once you have spoken and believe that you have received, and don’t go back on it. Speak to your wife, speak to your husband, speak to your circumstances; and speak faith to them to create in them and God will create what you are speaking.”

- **Rod Parsley**: “Salvation and healing are two gifts wrapped up in the same package. For God, healing is just as important and necessary as salvation.”

- **Frederick Price**: “The believer should never die before the age of 70. That is the minimum and then they should live to be 120 years. This is done by faith words. If you keep talking death, that is what you are going to have. If you keep talking sickness and disease, that is what you are going to have, because you are going to create the reality of them with your own mouth. That is a divine law.”

- **Fredrick Price**: “How can you glorify God in your body, when it doesn’t function right? How can you glorify God? How can He get glory when your body doesn’t even work? What makes you think the Holy Ghost wants to live inside a body where He can’t see out through the windows and He can’t hear
with the ears? What makes you think the Holy Spirit wants to live inside of a physical body where the limbs and the organs and the cells do not function right?”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I not only find those words utterly sickening, but in light of what we read earlier, they’re completely unbiblical! How many times does the Bible have to say it? **God’s never promised us a perfect life,** but a what? A painful one!

And people, when are we going to learn that the Suffering Servant is the example Christ has left for us to follow? Not the physically fit servant, not the forever healthy servant, but the Suffering Servant. In fact, sometimes it’s seeing God’s children rejoice through suffering as well as knowing that God is a God Who is well acquainted with suffering, that turns out to be one of the greatest witnesses of all to those who are currently suffering, like it was for these guys:

“John McAllister sits in his wheelchair suffering from a degenerative nerve disease. His once 6-foot 3-inch frame is withering away. His white abdomen is exposed along with a patch and a permanent feeding tube in which a nurse plunges in lunch.

Months pass and John’s wheelchair now sits unused in the corner. He’s too weak to sit in it much. Breathing is heavy labor. Calling out is impossible. He needs to call out tonight. In the darkness an ant finds him. The scout sends for others and they come. First hundreds, then thousands.

A noiseless legion inches its way down the chimney, across the floor, secretly crawling up his urine tube, up, over and onto his bed. They fan out over the hills and valleys of John’s blanket, tunneling under and onto his body. He is covered by a black, wriggling, invasion.

John’s wife, along with a nurse, found him in the early morning with ants still in his hair, mouth and eyes. His skin in badly bitten and burned. John is a Christian. His God can see in the dark. Why, in the name of heaven, why? This is suffering stalking a person down and ripping into his sanity.

This is affliction spinning out of control. Or is it God’s idea of accomplishing something deep and profound in our lives?
Another friend, Gloria, fell into deep anguish over the dismal prognosis of her daughter’s illness. Little Laura had already suffered enough from the degenerative nerve disorder she had been born with, and now the doctors’ forecast included more suffering and impending death.

One night after leaving her daughter’s bedside, she spat, ‘God, it’s not right. You never had to watch one of your children die!’ As soon as the words escaped, she clasped her hand over her mouth. He did watch child die. His one and only Son.

Or there’s the stressed out firefighter who rolled up his sleeves revealing the smooth ends of two stumps where hands should be. They were burned off in a blaze whereupon he lost his job.

The fireman didn’t need a briefcase full of words. He needed the Word. The Word made flesh – gouged, with nail-pierced wrists, hands nearly ripped off. Spat upon, beaten bloody, with flies buzzing and hatred hammering.

Here the fireman stopped thinking of God as a meditating mystic on a faraway mountain. No longer was He an abstract deity. Nothing neat and tidy about Him.

God got messy when He smeared His blood on a cross to save people from hellfire. This held a strange appeal for this man who had injured himself rescuing others from the flames.”

People, when are we going to learn that God is a God Who is well acquainted with suffering? And because He is well acquainted with it, He alone has the ability to make something great out of it. People, stop and think about it! Either God is God over all, including suffering, or He’s not God at all.

Anything less than this is calling God a liar! And until we see this, we’ll not only miss out on a peaceful walk with Christ, but we’ll end up giving a false impression of Christ! And that’s exactly what this person said:

“Do we find repulsive a God who gives the nod to our tragedies? Think about the alternative. Imagine a God who didn’t deliberately permit the smallest details of your particular sorrows. What if you’re trials weren’t screened by any divine plan? What if God insisted on a hands-off policy towards the tragedies swimming your way? Think what this would mean.
First, the world would be worse, much worse, absolutely intolerable – for everyone – every second. Try to conceive of Lucifer unrestrained. Left to his own, the devil would make Jobs of us all. The Third Reich would have lasted forever. Your head would be mounted on satan’s wall above his fireplace. Human sacrifice would entertain basketball crowds at half-time. ‘Child Molesting Techniques’ would be taught at community colleges.

The only reason things aren’t worse is that God curbs evil. ‘satan had asked to sift you like wheat,’ Jesus told Peter. He had to get permission, which means that he operates under constraints. If God didn’t control evil, the result would be evil uncontrolled. God permits what He hates to achieve what He loves.

In God’s wisdom and love, every trial in a Christian’s life is ordained from eternity past, custom made for that believer’s eternal good, even when it doesn’t seem like it. Nothing happens by accident…not even tragedy…not even sins committed against us.

Our pain, poverty, and broken hearts are not His ultimate focus. He cares about them, but they are merely symptoms of the real problem. God cares most – not about making us comfortable – but about teaching us to hate our sins, grow up spiritually, and love Him.

Every sorrow we taste will one day prove to be the best possible thing that could have happened. We will thank God endlessly in heaven for the trials He sent us here. This is not Disneyland – it is truth.”12

People of God, when are we going to learn that God has never promised us a perfect life on earth? And if you give into this lie of this world, or even the false teachers who say you can guarantee yourself a so-called perfect life if you have just enough money, or just enough insurance, or just have enough faith, then you’re not only calling God a failure, but you’re calling God a what? You’re calling Him a liar! Why? Because you got tricked and seduced into placing your future into something else besides God!

In fact, believe it or not, this is exactly what the above mentioned false teachers have said. Namely that God is one big failure. Don’t believe me? Check out what they’ve said for yourself:

- Kenneth Copeland: “I was shocked when I found out who the biggest failure in the Bible actually is. The biggest one in the whole Bible is God. I
mean, He lost His top-ranking, most anointed angel, the first man He ever created, the first woman He ever created, the whole earth and all the fullness therein, a third of the angels, at least – that’s a big loss, man. Now, the reason you don’t think of God as a failure is He never said He’s a failure. And you’re not a failure till you say you’re one.”

People, think of the sick and twisted irony here! God has never promised us a perfect bank account and He’s never promised a perfect life, but once we give into doubt and think He has, and we don’t get it, then guess who looks like a liar! God! So in the end, the devil, who is the father of all lies, actually tricks us into calling God the Father the father of lies! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Deadly D’s and you’ve actually become a Doubting Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Doubting Christian into a Discipled Christian. And people, a Discipled Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only not be surprised by a painful life, but they’ll keep on shining for Jesus no matter how much pain is in their life, just like this lady did:

“Karla Larson is a woman in her thirties who is desperate to understand a few reason why. Severe diabetes is the root of it all. Both legs amputated. A heart attack. A kidney transplant. Constant battles with collapsed veins. Severe edema and legally blind.

When we first met at one of our JAF Family Retreats, I remarked, ‘Karla, I’m amazed you were able to make it’ to which she replied with a grin, ‘I thought I’d better come before I lost any more body parts.’ She hasn’t lost her sense of humor.

In fact, she recently mailed me one of her body parts. I opened the shoe box and discovered a used prosthetic foot with a note attached, ‘Since all of me can’t be with all of you all the time, I thought part of me would just have to do!’

If Karla is distressed, it is for the comfort of others. If she is suffering, it has a bearing on the salvation of those around her. Maybe it’s Christie, her transplant nurse, cool-headed in the operating room but cold-hearted about spiritual things.
Maybe it’s the other nurses at the clinic who spend their coffee break whining about new regulations. Perhaps her friends of the Church whose major problems are menopause and mid-life crisis. Maybe it’s the coworkers from her old office, neighbors down the street, or the bag boys and grocery clerks who always greeted her at the supermarket.

When people who face lesser conflicts – like sow bugs in the shower – when they see someone handle greater conflicts, it speaks volumes. They learn something very powerful about God from observing you.

Jesus isn’t around in the flesh, but you and I are. When we suffer and handle it with grace, we’re like walking billboards advertising the positive way God works in the life of someone who suffers.

Karla shames the worldly wise who scoff at God. She shames the stiff-necked who trust in their strength. She casts shadows on them, and they know it. They can’t hold a candle to her gritty, gutsy, faith. But that’s good. How else would their boasting be nullified?

How else would they be stripped of confidence in their slim waistlines, tights abdominals, flashy photogenic smiles, big brains, bucks, and brass plaques on their office walls?

Karla may lose another finger – and if she does, the watching world will be forced to swallow its pride and drop its jaw in disbelief at her tenacious trust in God. Either she is mad or there is a living God behind all of her pain who is more than a theological axiom.

Her life is living proof that He works.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If you lost all your limbs, one by one, day after day, would you, like Karla Larson, still be able to have a sense of humor? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil to act like everybody else who is down in the dumps, getting mad at God, because you don’t have a perfect bank account with a perfect life?”

People of God, it’s high time that we in the Church to wake up and stop being ignorant of the devil’s schemes! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at
risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a **Doubting Christian**! Come on! Wake up! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s **The Attack of the Deadly D’s**. Don’t let the enemy get you!
“It started off like just any other day in this small English village with people journeying into town to share their wares and do business, including one traveler with a seemingly innocent box of laundry. The only problem was, it was laced with a deadly plague!

And the next thing you know, 80% of the population was totally annihilated! First, it started with a splitting headache, then the glands including the tongue began to swell abnormally, as their skin turned a wretched black.

In fact, so ghastly and so fearful were people of contracting this disease that when only one person of a home came down with it, the whole house was sealed condemning the rest of the family to death, healthy and all. But they were sure to paint a red cross on the door with an inscription saying, ‘The Lord have mercy on us.’

And because of this, in just a matter of months, society came to an utter halt as the few remaining healthy people roamed the streets with wooden carts shouting, ‘Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!’ whereupon the piles and piles of disfigured corpses were thrown into huge burn pits that produced a constant sickening stench to the air.

And believe it or not, a song was actually composed about this plague that’s still sung by children today. It goes like this. Ring around the Rosie. Pocket full of
posies. Ashes ashes, we all fall down. Only the last line in the original was, We all fall down dead!

The year was 1665. The death toll was over 100,000 people. The killer disease was of course, The Great Plague of London!"1

Now, we all know the Great Plague of London was one of the worst outbreaks of disease of all time, right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disease that makes that killer plague look like a common cold? And people, what if I were to tell you that this disease didn’t occur in just one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your witness for Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue in our study, The Attack of the Deadly D’s. And we’ve already seen how the first internal weapon, the first Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Discontented Christian. And there we saw how the devil gets us to long for material things more than our maker and loving the money to buy these things more than God.

And then, in the last chapter, we saw that the second Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Doubting Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually trick you and I into placing our security and placing our future into something else besides God, via doubt, which turns us into a totally greedy and totally insecure people, just like everybody else on the planet. Yet, the whole time we should be what? We should be the most peaceful people on the planet, right? Boy, talk about a rotten witness! No wonder nobody wants to become a Christian!

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember the devil’s character. He is wicked, he is evil, he hates your guts, he wants you dead! Therefore, he doesn’t stop! People, the third Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Depressing Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:
Habakkuk 3:17-18 “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the prophet clues us in on something that apparently we’ve long forgotten when it comes to the issue of depression. What did he say there? He said it doesn’t matter if you’re having the worst stinking day of your life. It doesn’t matter if you’re having the worst year of your life. It doesn’t matter how bad things ever get in your life. He said what? There’s still no excuse for a child of God to get depressed, right? There’s no reason to lose our joy! Why? Because what did he demonstrate by his actions there? Joy isn’t based on how we feel about our life. It’s a deliberate act of faith in God in spite of our life, right?

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate you’re becoming a Depressing Christian, is When You Focus on Your Feelings Instead of Your God. People, the first definition of the word depressed means, “to feel downhearted or blue, or to be low in spirits.” And people this is yet another internal thing the devil does to keep us from having a powerful witness. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey now, wait a minute. I know having Jesus in your life is good and all but don’t you think you’re putting that smile on just a little bit too thick there buddy? I mean, you keep that up and people will think you’re one of those weird religious wackos, you know what I mean? Besides, everybody knows sooner or later you’re going to get depressed about something. It’s only normal!”

And you might think a depressing feeling is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a depressing feeling leads to a demolition. And the first demolition is that You Start Seeking a Phony High.

Philippians 4:4, 6-7 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (NIV)

People, the Bible simply declares that we’re not just to rejoice in God, but we’re to do so for how long? What did it say there? It said to always rejoice in the Lord, right? And how many of you would say that kind of implies a long
time? Also, notice that the Apostle Paul did not say the way we do this is by gritting our teeth or putting on that phony smile like you see so often on Sunday mornings. And neither did he say we do it by going out and buying something or paying somebody to make us feel happy, did he? No people! What did he say? He said don’t purchase anything from man for a temporary phony high. He said to present your requests to God in prayer and receive His what? His peace, right? Why? Because it’s God’s peace that allows us to walk around in continual joy! We’re at peace with everything because we’re trusting God to take care of everything. That’s why we’re always rejoicing!

And boy, talk about the ultimate witness to the lost! I mean, can you imagine running into a Christian who’s always full of joy, they’re never down in the dumps, they just simply keep on rejoicing in God no matter what happens in their life? I mean, gee whiz, you know the first question out of that person’s mouth is going to be, “How in the world do you do that? I mean, it’s one thing to have a good day, but you have a good day every single day of your life and you don’t have to go anywhere or buy anything to get it! Man, whatever your secret is, I want it now!”

And people, the devil knows this. So here’s what he does. If he can’t keep us from rejoicing because we’re saved by God, he simply tricks us into seeking joy outside of God. How? By getting us to seek a temporary emotional high instead of a permanent joy from God Most High! People, the devil knows if we start seeking joy in anything outside of God, including an emotional rush, then ultimately we’re going to end up just as gloomy and just as depressed as the rest of the world. Why? Because the world’s joy is not only phony, it’s fleeting, it’s false, and can’t last like true joy in God!

So the question is, “How in the world does he do this? How does the devil trick us into exchanging a permanent joy in God for a temporary high from man? Well, hey great question! I’m glad you asked! The first way he does it is by Words of Fun.

Isaiah 61:10 “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices greatly in my God.” (NIV)

People, the Bible simply declares that if we want to rejoice greatly in life, then we what? We delight ourselves greatly in the Lord of Life, right? I mean, it’s simple. It’s right there in the text. Piece of cake, right? Well, you’d think so, but apparently God is not good enough anymore. You see folks, when it comes to having joy, we don’t listen to the Word of God our Savior. Are you kidding? We listen to words of fun from society. I mean, you’ve heard it before.
Society says, “Hey man, if you’re feeling bored or depressed lately, you don’t need to delight yourself in God. No, no, no! That’s boring sissy stuff! You don’t need something spiritual. Why you need something entertaining! You need to go watch a movie, or go to an amusement park, or get involved in sports, or maybe even take that cruise you’ve always dreamed of. Why everybody knows that’ll make you happy, right?”

And you might be like me thinking, “Come on. No Christian is going to fall for that lie. I mean, we just read in the text, the only surefire way to get rid of depression is to delight ourselves in God, not entertainment. We know better than that!” Really? Then folks, you tell me why in the world we spend over 120 billion dollars and over 200 billion hours every single year just on legal forms of entertainment? That doesn’t sound like were delighting in God to me!

And people, I’m telling you the reason why we fall for this lie and spend so much stinking time and money on entertainment instead of God is because the entertainment they’ve created is not just seductive, it’s addictive. People, whether you believe it or not, societies version of fun is specifically designed to not just rip us off our cash, get this, as we saw earlier, it’s to turn us into “entertainment junkies” where just like a drug addict we have to keep coming back and pay more and more money, to get more and more of a phony high! And for those of you having a hard time believing this, lets take a look at some more stats from secular researchers, about just one form of the world’s entertainment, called television, and you tell me if even they admit how addictive it is:

**Proof that TV is Addictive**

“Watching fighting or other violence can make the mind believe that it is about to engage in life-threatening activity. The body will often respond by releasing adrenal epinephrine into the bloodstream, giving the viewer an adrenal rush without the threat of actual violence. Watching sexual activity and nudity makes the mind think that the person is about to mate so the body releases raging hormones that can often cause an addictive adrenal rush without the psychological burdens attendant to most human relationships. The physiological phenomena will engage and attract the viewer, often causing him or her to want more and more exposure to the stimuli that cause the artificial physical elation.”

**Proof that TV is Hypnotic**
“At the same time as television inhibits cognitive growth, research shows that children ‘habituate’ to repetitive light-stimuli (flickering light, dot patterns, limited eye movement). When habitation occurs then the brain decides that there is nothing of interest going on—at least nothing that can be done about—and virtually quits processing information. In particular, the left brain ‘common internegative area’ goes into a kind of holding pattern, and television viewing reaches the level of somnambulism, similar to being hypnotized.”

**Proof that TV Damages Your Mind**

“And because of television’s insidious ‘flicker,’ (every four seconds, on the average, the picture changes) television does not promote long-term attention. (Gee maybe that’s where ADD comes from!) Lastly, because the action shifts constantly and capriciously backward, forward, and laterally in time…television does not promote logical sequential thinking.”

**Proof that TV is Dangerous**

“The point of this litany of problems with respect to different media and arts is simply to point out that there is no place to hide. The media and the arts are pervasive in our society. Americans are in the midst of entertaining themselves to death. Either denial or license will only allow the problems to continue to grow out of control.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say if even secular researchers admit that TV is addictive, then maybe TV really is addictive, how about you? In fact, it’s gotten so bad in the Christian community, that I’ve discovered a new version of the 23rd Psalm. It’s now called the 23rd Channel. Check it out:

**The 23rd Channel**

The TV is my Shepherd, I shall want.  
It makes me lie down on the sofa.

It leads me away from the Scriptures.  
It destroys my soul.

It leads me in the path of sex and violence, for the sponsor’s sake.
Yea, though I walk in the shadow of my Christian responsibilities, there will be no interruption, for the TV is with me.

It’s cable and remote, they control me. It prepares a commercial before me in the presence of worldliness.

It anoints my head with humanism, my coveting runneth over.

Surely laziness and ignorance shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house watching TV forever.\(^4\)

Now folks, **my point is this.** That joke would be funny if what? If it weren’t so stinking true! And people, I’m telling you, its bad enough we volunteer to put this waste into our minds but it another thing to think that waste is going to put joy in our heart. Hello! What did we just read? True lasting joy can only come from Who? God! Oh yeah, entertainment might give you a temporary emotional high, but it won’t last. **It can’t! Why?** Because the next day you wake up and discover your high from entertainment is gone and so just like a drug addict you’re now off seeking another source of entertainment, to get another high to get you through another day. Tell me that’s not just like a drug addict!

And people, this not only tricking us into losing out on the joy of God, it’s tricking us into giving a bad witness for God! **Stop and think about it!** Are we not saying that Jay Leno is more entertaining than Jesus? Are we not saying that a movie produces more joy than God? Do people really need to turn to Hollywood instead of the Heavenly Father to get rid of their depression? **People wake up!** No wonder nobody wants to become a Christian. I mean, what joy would there be in that, right? Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The **second way** the devil tricks us into seeking a phony high is by **Words of False Teachers.**

Psalm 19:7-8 “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart.” (NIV)

People, the Bible simply declares that **yet another way** to bring joy to your heart is to what? To immerse ourselves in the Word of God, right? His commandments. I mean, it’s simple. It’s right there in the text. Piece of cake,
right? Well, you’d think so, but apparently God’s Word is not good enough anymore. You see, we’ve not only fallen for societies lie that joy comes from entertainment instead of God, but believe it or not, we’ve actually carried this lie into our so-called worship of God! How? By listening to the **words of false teachers** instead of the Word of God.

People, there are actually those who are claiming to speak for God, who not only say we need to downplay the study of the Word of God, but now we need to replace it with the entertainment of man. Don’t believe me? It’s called the **church growth movement**. And for those of you not familiar with this false teaching, let’s take a look at just a few of their false beliefs.

1. **CGM**: The primary goal of the Church is numerical growth.
   **Bible**: The primary goal of the Church is spiritual growth. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

2. **CGM**: The Pastor’s primary role is as an encourager who makes people feel good.
   **Bible**: The Pastor’s primary role is as a teacher. (Ephesians 4:11)

3. **CGM**: The style of music is to be what the culture likes and is pleasing to them.
   **Bible**: The style of music is to be from the heart and what is glorifying to God. (Ephesians 5:19)

4. **CGM**: The means of evangelism is to use marketing techniques to draw people in instead of going out into the community.
   **Bible**: The means of evangelism is to go into all the world making disciples and not just wait for them to come to you. (Matthew 28:19-20)

5. **CGM**: Sermons should only contain positive messages and not negative ones about hell or God’s wrath and hatred towards sin.
   **Bible**: Sermons are to preach the whole counsel of God and not just a part of it. (2 Timothy 4:2)\(^5\)

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but it sure sounds to me that somebody’s more interested in entertaining the lost than in telling them the truth, right? And for some reason folks, I don’t know, maybe it’s just me, but I don’t think that’s quite what Jesus had in mind when He gave us the Great
Commission, you know what I’m saying? I mean, I don’t think He said to go into all the world and make them feel good as they go straight to hell! Are you kidding? He said to make disciples, which means you study the Bible! Get a dictionary people! A disciple means a disciplined learner, not an entertained pew-warmer!

And if you’re still having a hard time believing we’d ever get tricked into seeking entertainment over Bible study, let’s take a look at how this lie starts off, seemingly small and innocent, but progressively gets worse. For instance, one Church service I checked out seemed to be okay on the surface, that is until I noticed how they only had a few Bible studies. Instead, they encouraged people to participate in nothing but fun activities. It was as if they were saying, “Come to our Church and if a Bible study group isn’t your thing then check out these other fun groups such as our Bicycling Group, Canoeing Group, Financial Sense Group, Fishing Group, Golf Group, Hiking Group, Museum Enthusiasts Group, Painting Group, Progressive Dining Group, Scrapbooking Group, Skydiving Group, and the White Water Rafting Group.” All that was from just one Church, and there were many other groups as well.

And people, hello, don’t misunderstand me, I’m not saying that there’s anything wrong with riding a bike or painting a picture. Hello! What I’m saying is that on the surface, this switch to nothing but fun activities might seem innocent enough, but remember what happened with secular entertainment. Once you start seeking joy in an activity over God, you get turned into a what? An “entertainment junkie.” And then just like a drug addict, you have to keep coming back more and more, to get more and more of a phony high, right? But that’s not all! The next thing you know, just like a drug addict, you find that your tolerance level gets higher and higher and so now you have to seek an even bigger or wilder activity to maintain that high. Don’t believe me? Listen to what fun you could have if you go to these so-called Church services and you tell me if they’re not seeking something bigger and wilder to maintain a phony emotional high:

The Can Can Dance Church: One Church service included a lady who said the Spirit of God gave her the “Left Leg Anointing”. Suddenly she kicks up her left leg (like the “Can Can” dance), and says, “More Jesus”, whereupon people are supposedly slain in the Spirit in the direction of her kick. Then she proceeded to take the Lord’s name in vain saying, “Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my God”, which she later changes to “Oh my goodness.”
The Hiss Like a Snake Church: Another Church service included the so-called minister hissing like a serpent and sticking his tongue out grunting loudly as he walked through the crowd. And all the while in the background people are yelling, screaming and making animal sounds.

The Squeal Like a Pig Church: Go to this service and you would have heard the sounds of pigs squealing while people are dancing a jig.

The Moo Like a Cow Church: Or go to another service and you’d see a lady “mooing” like a cow with two so-called ministers rolling around on the floor beside her.

The Baa Like a Sheep Church: Or go to this service and you join these folks “baaing” like a sheep.

The Bark Like a Dog Church: Or for those of you “canine” lovers out there, maybe you can go to this service and join everyone in barking like dogs. That’s right…Who let the dogs out!

The Roar Like a Lion Church: Or if a dog bark isn’t loud enough for you, you can go to this Church service whereupon you will be encouraged to roar like a lion.

The Cluck Like a Chicken Church: Believe it or not you can go to a Church service where the so-called minister doesn’t preach another boring sermon from the Bible. No! He stands around clucking like a chicken!

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I don’t think Jesus came all the way from heaven to die a horrible death on the cross just so we can walk around clucking like chickens during a Church service! Hello! Talk about blasphemy!

But you might be thinking, “Well hey, that’s just those Christians on the charismatic fringe. Why, we’d never do that in our mainline denominational Church.” Oh really? People, I’ll tell you what. Let’s take a look at some activities from mainline Churches today, and you tell me if even they aren’t seeking entertainment over the Word of God:

The Drive-Thru Church: Believe it or not there’s new drive thru Church in Davenport Iowa, where services only take about five minutes and you don’t even have to get out of the car. ‘Just pull up in our parking lot,’ the Rev. Rich
Hendricks suggests where he promises some humor in the offerings with congregants, for example, will be dressed like anglers in tune with a fish theme. In fact, everyone will be given communion, but this will be specially delivered in a tackle box and a clean bait cup. A station will be set up for an informal church choir, and those interested may exit their vehicles and sing. Participants also will take home a special gift in the form of brightly colored fish key chains or other accessories.

**The Clown Communion Church:** A sassy little Episcopal Church in New York City now not only has a clown performing communion services, but the congregants are encouraged to dress up as clowns themselves. Looking like refugees from a Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus, the Rev. Dr. James Herbert Cooper, encouraged the parish family to come to church “in clown dress, big hats, floppy shoes or some sort of foolish garb.” In fact, he said encouraged those watching on the Internet to also be foolish enough to put on some white face or a big grease-paint smile as we worship God and learn about the structure of the communion by being the circus which came to town and to church on that day. And after the offering was taken for that day the people responded with their noisemakers.

**The Porn Movie Church:** The People’s Church, formerly known as The First Baptist Church, in Franklin, Tennessee recently achieved national attention by hosting a special event they called “Porn Sunday.” Believe it or not they actually showed an ‘R’ rated film entitled, “Missionary Positions,” to allegedly help those addicted to pornography. In fact, one of the makers of the film said, “We can’t keep up with the amount of requests to do these ‘Porn Sunday’ things, so we’re doing a national ‘Porn Sunday.’” And one Church that hosted the event actually said they had one of the best days ever in Church.8

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but for some reason, I don’t think Jesus came all the way from heaven to die a horrible death on the cross just so we can sit around celebrating Porn Sundays! Hello!

And people, I’m telling you, this whole process not only tricks us into losing out on the joy of God, it tricks us into giving a bad witness for God! **Stop and think about it!** Are we not saying that a bike ride is better than the Bible? Are we not saying that a can can dance is more uplifting than the Words of Christ? Do people really need to see an ‘R’ rated movie instead of their Maker to alleviate their problems? **People wake up!** No wonder nobody wants to become
a Christian. I mean, what joy would there be in that, right? Oh, do you see the
cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The **third way** the devil tricks us into seeking a
phony high is by **Words of Physicians**. People, it’s bad enough we’ve fallen for
the **words of fun** and **false teachers** who tell us we need to seek an emotional
high instead of God, but believe it or not, we don’t stop there. Are you kidding?
We also listen to **words of physicians!** Why? Because remember the process of
addiction we saw earlier. Once you get turned into “entertainment junkie” you
have to keep coming back more and more to get more and more of a phony
emotional high, right? But since it never lasts, **and it never will**, we wake up the
next day and we have to do it all over again, right? **And so guess what?** The next
thing you know, just like a drug addict, you get all strung out, burned out, and
depressed from having to live like this, right?

And here’s where the doctors come in. Instead of turning to God and
getting it right, we turn to a physician and get a drug! **Why?** Because there’s a lot
of money to be made off our addictions and pain, people! And if you don’t think
doctors really do this, then you need to listen to this article:

“You walk into your doctor’s office for a physical exam and step on the scale.
Last year, the doctor said you were overweight. Now he says you are obese — at
the same weight.

A nurse takes your blood pressure. You have hypertension — with the same
previously healthy reading you’ve had for years.

The doctor scans your wrist bone. You have a condition called “osteopenia” —
with the same bone density that was fine last time you were measured.

You leave the office with a head full of worry and a fistful of new prescriptions,
joining more than forty percent of Americans who take one or more prescribed
drugs. You are suddenly sick, simply because the definitions of disease have
changed.

And behind those changes, are the companies that make all those newly
prescribed pills.

The drug industry has bolstered its position by marketing directly to the health-
conscious consumer, leading younger and healthier people to consider
themselves at risk and to start taking medications.
Every time the boundary of a disease is expanded — the hypertension threshold is lowered by ten blood-pressure points, the guideline for obesity is lowered by five pounds — the market for drugs expands by millions of consumers and billions of dollars.

The result? Skyrocketing sales of prescription drugs. Soaring health-care costs. Escalating patient anxiety. Worst of all, millions of people taking drugs that may carry a greater risk than the underlying condition. The treatment, in fact, may make them sick or even kill them.

But millions of them are not truly sick and may never be, even without medication. The medical profession’s term for these people is “the worried well.”

And might I add, the industry has become filthy rich! Now folks, I don’t know about you, but it sure looks like somebody is more focused on making money off our pain, than getting rid of our pain, how about you? And you might be thinking like me, “Well how do they get us to do this? To seek a drug instead of God?” Simple people. They seduce us with slick TV ads. What? You mean to tell me they use the power of mass media on us again? Uh huh, works every time! Check out what this article said:

“Researchers have discovered that doctors are easily persuaded to prescribe antidepressants — often unnecessarily — when patients mention having seen them in television advertisements.

Doctors were five times more likely to write them prescriptions after the patients inquired about them.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Assn., suggests that direct-to-consumer advertising — on which pharmaceutical companies spend roughly $3 billion a year — can trump medical need in influencing how doctors prescribe drugs.

“When patients ask for a drug, they tend to get a drug regardless of whether it is appropriate for them.”
Surveys have shown that patients ask for a prescription based on an advertisement in up to 7% of doctor visits — a rate that adds up to millions of requests a year.\footnote{10}

And might I add, billions of dollars in their pockets again! But that’s right! Apparently they’re so stinking greedy that it’s still not enough for them. Believe it or not, the pharmaceutical companies have not only devised a plan to get us to buy their drugs for a false sense of joy, but they’ve even figured out how to get us addicted to these drugs and even pass legislation to \textbf{force us} into addiction! Don’t believe me? Listen to this:

“A recent study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University has announced that prescription drug abuse is a much larger problem than the use of illegal drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

Alarmingly, the study also found that once teenagers abused prescription drugs they became two times more likely to drink alcohol, five times more likely to use marijuana, twelve times more likely to use heroin and twenty-one times more likely to use cocaine.

And because of recent legislation passing through Congress, like the Teen Screen Program just to name one, up to fifty-two million kids are now subject to mental health tests at school where they can also be prescribed powerful prescription drugs. (The bulk of them for depression)

However, the FDA has now placed warning labels on the antidepressants taken by millions around the world. Why? Because another series of studies revealed that depressed children and teenagers who were administered antidepressants had greater risks of becoming suicidal.

And the big concern? Some psychiatrists claimed the new drug warning labels would potentially slow sales, which amounted to approximately $12 billion worldwide!

And the whole time they’ve discovered that phony placebo sugar pills have about the same affect and in some cases actually work better than the prescribed drugs for depression with none of the deadly side affects mind you. Why?
Because they’ve discovered that depression is characterized by how people feel and that it’s really one’s belief in the effect of antidepressant, real or imaginary, that accounts for the improved feeling in patients.”

Boy, talk about a drug dealers dream come true! People, I don’t know about you, but I not only find that information appalling, it’s satanic! Legalized murder for the sake of cash! Tell me that’s not the devil’s doing! Oh, but it gets worse. This leads not only to a dreaded addiction of drugs, but sometimes a downright death from drugs, in epidemic proportions:

“On September 11, 2001 an act or terrorism left 2,996 people dead and four commercial jets crashed. Many feel it was the most tragic day in U.S. history. But what if six jumbo jets crashed every single day in the United States, claiming the lives of 783,936 people every year? That would certainly qualify as a massive tragedy, wouldn’t it?

Well, forget “what if.” The tragedy is happening right now. Over 783,936 people actually do die in the United States every year, although not from plane crashes. They die from modern medicine. Believe it or not, drug consumption, including deaths from over-the-counter-drugs makes drug consumption 32,000% deadlier than terrorism!

So where is the media attention for this tragedy? After 9/11, the White House gave rise to the Department of Homeland Security and since its inception, billions of dollars have been poured into it. But where is the government support for stopping this medical terrorism from happening?”

And people, I’m telling you this whole process of seeking joy from a pill is not just dangerous to your health and sometimes life, it’s dangerous to your witness. **Stop and think about it!** Are we not saying that a physician is more powerful our Savior? Are we not saying that a drug-induced state is greater than salvation? Are we not saying that God is so inept that we need a drug to make us smile! **Stop and think about what we’re doing!** Wake up! And I’m telling you, when we live like this we’re not just missing out on a joyful walk with Christ, we’re giving a false impression of Christ, like it was for these people:

- The German atheist Friedrich Nietzsche said scornfully about Christians of his day, “I would believe in their salvation if they looked a little more like people who have been saved.”
Phillips Brooks said, “The religion that makes a man look sick certainly won’t cure the world.”

Billy Sunday said, “To see some Christians you’d think an essential to being one is to have a face so long you could eat oatmeal out of the end of a gas pipe.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “I might have entered the ministry if so many Christians didn’t look and act they were undertakers.”

Mahatma Gandhi was once asked by the missionary E. Stanley Jones “Mr. Ghandi, though you quote the words of Christ often, why is that you appear to so adamantly reject becoming his follower?” To which Ghandi replied, “Oh, I don’t reject your Christ. I love your Christ. It’s just that so many of you Christians are so unlike your Christ.”

A high school girl said, “I attended your Church service yesterday. During the singing of the hymns I was surprised to note that some of the Church people weren’t singing. Between their sighs and yawns, they just stared into space. The Pastor’s sermon was very interesting, although some members didn’t seem to think so. They looked bored and restless. I said good morning to one couple, but their response was less than cordial. My parents don’t go to Church services. I came alone yesterday hoping to find a place to truly worship. But I’m sorry, but I didn’t find it in your Church and I won’t be back.”

But you might be thinking, “Come on. I’m sure those are just an isolated occurrences. Okay, so it didn’t work out to good for Ghandi or that girl, but that doesn’t happen all over the place.” Really? Then maybe you should listen to this Christian who has been all over the place:

“When I travel to give my concerts, I get a view of the modern-day American Christian Church that most people never see. I’ve played in every denominational Church I can think of, and as a result, I’ve discovered what the world hates the most about Christianity: Christians.

It would be okay if they hated us for the right reasons – for our love and our joy and our good deeds. But the problem is, they hate us for our hypocrisy.
We don’t like to admit that the world is tired of hearing us say ‘praise the Lord.’ They’re tired of seeing the bumper stickers without seeing something Christ-like going on inside of the car. They’re tired of our T-shirt philosophy and our rings and our necklaces and our phoniness.

They’re hungry and thirsty for truth. They want to see Christians being Christians, or else to them, we’re just another trip. Are you excited about Jesus? Can other people see the joy of the Lord in your face?

I’ve noticed too few Christians radiate the presence of the Lord in their life. They look like they were baptized in vinegar! They seem to have this image of Christianity that requires them to have a grim, gray look on their face. It’s like they’re saying, ‘Well, praise God, it’s such a burden to be a Christian.’

What kind of a testimony is that! If you’re happy (and you if you’re a redeemed child of God you certainly ought to be happy), then you better show it on your face. That’s what the world is looking for, to see that in the life of the Christian. The world is tired of seeing hypocrites.

If it weren’t for religion I would have become a Christian two years earlier than I did. As a result, I didn’t become a Christian through going to a Church service. I couldn’t have become a Christian, because I wouldn’t be caught dead in a Church. All the Churches I’d seen had been full of hypocrites.

I wanted to know if these supposed ‘ambassadors for Jesus’ really could show me Jesus Christ by the way they lived. I never found one. Rest assured there are a lot of searchers out there, just like I was. They may not tell you they’re looking for God, but they are. And when they look at your life, do they see him?

If you’re a pew-warmer, I’m not telling you you’re doomed. I’m telling you you’re dooming others. I’m not telling you you’re hell-bound. I’m telling you you’re sleeping while others are sinking down into a fiery eternity.

Guys, we’re in a sorry mess. The world is sick of it and God is sick of it. It’s enough to make Him vomit.”

People of God, when are we going to learn that when we walk around looking like we’ve been sucking prune juice out the end of a tailpipe, that it doesn’t just affect us? It affects people’s eternal destinies all around us! Why?
Because you got tricked and seduced into focusing more on your feelings instead of your God! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Deadly D’s and you’ve actually become a Depressing Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Depressing Christian into a Discipled Christian. And people, a Discipled Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only put on a smile for Jesus every single day, but they’ll keep on doing so, even if their face gets blown off, like this man did:

“Dave Roever grew up in a loving, committed family in South Texas and the last thing on his mind was going to war. But at the height of the Vietnam War, he received his draft notice. Soon he joined the Navy and served as a riverboat gunner in the elite Brown Water Black Berets.

All seemed fine until about eight months later, when Dave Roever was literally changed forever. He was on a patrol getting ready to throw a phosphorus grenade to burn away some brush near the banks when it suddenly exploded next to his face.

Roever said, ‘I had half of my face and my right ear burned completely away, I had blood spurting from an open artery in my right hand, and I could see my heart beating in my chest.’

And to make matters worse, the phosphorus continued to burn so when the medics put him on the stretcher he burned right through it and fell on the ground and hit his head.

So they wrapped him in a blanket soaked in river water and was finally loaded in the helicopter. However, the medics thought he was dead so they didn’t do anything to try and help him, which required Dave to take matters into his own hands.

He said, ‘From under that blanket I summoned all the strength I had left and yelled ‘Medic!’ That got everyone’s attention real fast.’ And soon he was in the burn unit of a hospital getting treatment for nearly two years going through countless painful surgeries to repair or replace his skin.
But one day, early on in the hospital, to make matters even more worse, Dave explains how he watched the wife of the man who lay in the bed beside him who was also badly disfigured and dying say to her husband, ‘You’re embarrassing! I couldn’t walk down the street with you.’

And as Dave heard the bleak words and watched that woman set her wedding ring on her husband’s bed and walk away, he knew no one could love him, especially his own 19-year-old bride.

So after seeing his own completely disfigured face in a mirror, he tried to ‘pull the cord’ in an attempt to disconnect the IV’s that were keeping him alive. And as Roever says laughing with his audience, ‘But I pulled the wrong one!’

But then the time finally came when his wife Brenda made it to the hospital ward and Dave prepared for the worst. But instead of leaving, like the other woman did to her husband, she bent down and kissed what was left of his Dave’s hand and said, ‘Welcome home, Davey.’ And when she called him ‘Davey,’ he knew he wouldn’t have to face the future alone.

So with a rock-solid faith in God and a wife who stood by his side through the toughest of times, Dave Roever learned he has something more important than a pretty face. He’s got a testimony.

Today, with his humorous style, Dave Roever is enthusiastically received both nationally and internationally as a public speaker and is involved in mission work around the globe. And in every setting his message is one of hope.

He does it by drawing upon his experiences of loneliness, disfigurement and pain, as well as life’s triumphs to weave a message of courage, commitment and survival that touches and transforms all those who hear him.

If there’s ever been anyone who’s learned to ‘turn lemons into lemonade,’ it’s Dave Roever. Why? Because the foundation of his hope and source of joy is his loyal wife and his loyal faith in Jesus Christ.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If your face got blown off and you became totally disfigured and scarred for life, would you, like Dave Roever, still be able to put a smile on what face you had left for the sake of the lost? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil to act like everybody
else who’s getting ripped off of their cash, destroying their health for a phony emotional high?”

People of God, it’s high time we in the Church wake up and stop being ignorant of the devil’s schemes! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Depressing Christian! Come on! Wake up! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Deadly D’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
“It was February and the tourist season was in full swing in this seemingly innocent town in Spain. The sun was shining and by all appearances, it seemed like a wonderful place to escape the horrors of WWI. But that was until the plague came to town. And the next thing you know, it was everywhere.

The sickness preyed on the young and old alike with one day feeling fine but the next thing you know, you have a headache and your eyes start to burn. Then you start to shiver and go to bed, curling up in a ball but no amount of blankets can keep you warm. Then you fall into a restless sleep, dreaming distorted nightmares as your fever begins climb.

Then your face turns a dark brownish purple and you start to cough up blood whereupon your feet start turning black. And finally, you start frantically gasping for breath as a bloody saliva bubbles out of your mouth and you actually start to drown because your lungs are filling up with it. It may take a few days, it may take a few hours, but there’s nothing you can do to stop it, you’re going to die!

And because of this plague, overnight, children were orphaned, families were destroyed, towns were decimated, and some populations were totally eliminated from the face of the earth. And those who lived through it said it was such a horrible time that they never ever want to talk about it again!
One-fifth of the world’s population became infected with it and thus it was described as the Biblical prophecy of the pale horse rider bringing death and hades behind it, coming to pass. Why? Because when all was over, it killed more people in a few months time than any other illness in the history of the world.

The year was 1918. The death toll was over 100 million people. The deadly plague was of course, the Great Influenza Outbreak.”

Now, we all know the Great Influenza Outbreak of 1918 was one of the worst outbreaks of disease of all time, right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disease that makes that massive flu look like a mild fever? And people, what if I were to tell you that this disease didn’t occur in just one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your witness for Jesus Christ. Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue in our study, The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

And we’ve already seen how the first internal weapon, the first Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Discontented Christian. And then we saw that the second Deadly D was the attack of the Doubting Christian. And then in the last chapter we saw that the third Deadly D was the attack of the Depressing Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually trick you and I into seeking a phony emotional high instead of a permanent joy from God Most High, which turns us into gloomy and depressed people, just like everybody on else on the planet. Yet, the whole time we should be what? We should be the most joyful people on the planet, right? Boy, talk about the ultimate rotten witness! No wonder nobody wants to become a Christian!

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember the devil’s character. He is wicked, he is evil, he hates your guts, he wants you dead! Therefore, he doesn’t stop! People, the fourth Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Deluded Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:
Revelation 12:7-9 “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. satan is not only known as the ultimate liar, the tempter, the slanderer, the accuser, and the destroyer, but what? The great deceiver, right? What did it say there? The one who leads the whole world astray! And how many of you guys would say that’s pretty deceptive? So how does he do it? Simple. By deluding people into twisting and contorting the truth of God, until they actually end up saying something false about God. And people, hello! The devil doesn’t just do this with the non-christian. Are you kidding? Some of his greatest students are those who are claiming to be Christians!

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate you’re becoming a Deluded Christian, is When You Start Preaching a False Unity in God. People, the first definition of the word deluded means, “to mislead the mind into thinking that which is not true.” And people, this is yet another internal thing the devil does to keep us from having a powerful witness. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey man, if you really want to show the world that God is love, then don’t you think you need to love others too, including their own version of God? I mean, isn’t that what Jesus would do? And besides, who are you to think you have a corner on the truth. That doesn’t sound very loving to me!” And you might think a deluded unity is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a deluded unity leads to a disintegration.

And the first disintegration is that You Start Saying We All Have To Be Tolerant.

Matthew 7:1-5 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?
You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” (NIV)

Well, there you have it folks, the Bible says we should never judge another person, including their version of God, right? Wrong people! This is one of the biggest delusions the enemy has thrust upon the Church in these last days. How do I know? Because if we weren’t supposed to judge anyone and their supposed version of God then why did Jesus also say this:

**John 7:24** “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.” (NIV)

And why did the Apostle Paul say we’re to do this?

**1 Corinthians 6:1-5** “If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?

Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?” (NIV)

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but it sure sounds like we Christians are not only supposed to be judging, but we’re supposed to be judging up a storm, how about you? So the question is, “Why in the world do people quote Matthew 7 and say we’re never supposed to judge?” Well hello! Read the context! Matthew 7 is dealing with a hypocritical judgment where a person is judging somebody for something when they themselves are guilty of doing the very same thing, if not worse! How do we know? Because the one person judging has a log in their eye and the other only has a speck of dust in their eye. But notice the rest of the passage doesn’t stop there. It doesn’t say don’t ever judge. What does it say? First take the log out of your own eye and then you can what? You can rightly judge to remove the speck from the other person’s eye, right? The whole point of the passage is to not say that we’re never to judge, but just the opposite! It says to get rid of your hypocrisy first, so you can make a righteous judgment, right? Boy, talk about twisting the Word of God!
And besides, the second passage, according to the Apostle Paul, when it comes to moral and truth issues in the Church, we’re **commanded** to what? To judge and judge up a storm, right? So how in the world did the enemy delude us into thinking that we should never judge anything about anyone at all? Simple! He did it by introducing a deceptive new word in our vocabulary called **tolerance**. And now, because of this **new definition** of tolerance, instead of judging between right and wrong, like we’re commanded to, we’re told we have to be tolerant with each other so we can all get along. Josh McDowell explains this new definition and how it crept into our vocabulary:

“Right now there are two distinct definitions of tolerance. Traditional tolerance would be defined by Webster to bear or put up with someone or something not especially liked. Or, in our circles, we’d say, ‘You know God has called me as a Christian to love the sinner but hate the sin.’

That’s one of the most bigoted statements you can make today. You make that average statement in an average classroom today and that entire class would turn on you.

The reason is that there’s a second definition of tolerance. The tolerance you were brought up with is now known as negative tolerance. The new tolerance is called positive tolerance.

It’s defined this way; ‘Every single individual’s values, beliefs, lifestyles, and claims to truth are equal.’ And if you dare to say that there is a value, belief, lifestyle, or claim to truth greater than another, that is called hierarchy and that’s the new definition of bigotry.

A bigot today is someone who is committed to moral hierarchy, that there’s a difference between values, beliefs, lifestyles, and claims to truth. Positive tolerance adds the word ‘praise.’ What it means is this.

We not only want your permission, we demand your praise and if you do not praise my value, my belief, my lifestyle, my claim to truth as equal to your own from the heart, you are a bigot and you are intolerant.”²

Now people, does that sound familiar or what? And here’s my point. **It’s even in the Church**, right? Exactly! **Why?** Because we’ve been deluded by the devil! We’ve fallen for his lies! How do I know? Because no longer is John 3:16,
“For God so loved the world…” the most quoted Scripture verse by Christians. Do you know what the most quoted Scripture verse now is? It’s Matthew 7, “Judge not lest you be judged.” Why? Because we’ve bought into this new definition of tolerance and now we’re afraid to define sin as sin, unless we appear as religious bigots who have a corner on the truth.

Well people, hello! I’ve got news for you. We do have a corner on the truth. It’s called the Bible! It came from God, and if He wants to set up some judgments between right and wrong, then I kind of think He has the right to do so! Hello! He’s God!

Besides, stop and think about it logically. How can all values be equal? For instance, what if someone’s “value” was to molest his or her children? Is that right? If you bought into the new tolerance, you would have to say yes, right? Yet, every fiber of your being judges that as wrong! Or what if it was another person’s “value” to teach their children to steal for a living? Or what if it was a mother’s “value” to introduce her daughter to prostitution as a fulfilling lifestyle? Or how about a father who has a “value” that he feels is proper for his son, that of being an abuser of woman? Stop and think about it, people!

If everyone’s values, beliefs, lifestyles, and claims to truth are equal, then does that mean that Hitler’s slaughter of the Jews was okay? Why not? Are you being a bigot? I’m sure he was just following his “claim to truth.” Do you see the danger of this lie?

Or, how about the Ten Commandments? What are they? Ten great suggestions, or ten good things to ponder over a cup of coffee? No! They are ten commandments from God, to what? To judge between right and wrong behavior. You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, etc. But hey, that’s it! If you’re caught stealing at work, you can just tell them that in “your world” your “value” says it’s okay. Yeah, you and I both know that your next stop is going to be jail, right?

And speaking of jails, if there is no right or wrong, then why do we have jails? Why do we have a judicial system with courts of law? Why would we dare prosecute someone and send them to jail against their own wishes? I mean, I’m sure they’re just following their own values!

People, the facts are this. The Bible and God’s law is a set standard of what? Judgments on what He defines as right and wrong. Therefore, with this new definition of tolerance, all that you and I stand for as Christians is now being labeled as religious bigotry that keeps unity from occurring, when the whole time its designed to keep true unity from becoming polluted. Why? Because people have fallen for the devil’s lie and started repeating his satanic mantra, “Why,
don’t you know, we all have to be tolerant.” Do you see the cunningness of the
enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all! The **second disintegration** that comes from a
deluded unity is that **You Start Saying We All Have the Same Truth.**

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do
righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light
have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What
does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the
temple of the living God. As God has said: I will live with them and walk among
them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out
from them and be separate, says the Lord.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text it’s pretty clear. When it comes to our
relationship with unbelievers, i.e. **those who do not have the truth**, what are we
supposed to do? Join hands with them and accept whatever they say? No people!
The Bible says to come out from them and be separate, right?

**Oh, but not anymore!** You see, now that we’ve bought into this lie of a
new tolerance and we’ve stopped judging between right and wrong, we’ve
moved to **stage two** and embrace anyone and anything no matter how wrong they
are! Don’t believe me? It’s called the **ecumenical movement.** And for those of
you who may not know, it’s defined as this, “The organized attempt to bring
about the cooperation and unity of all believers in Christ.”

And folks, I must admit, on the surface this sounds really good, doesn’t it? Except, what they don’t
tell you is that this so-called unity is being sought not on the basis of truth, but
from a watered down version of the truth.

For instance, they say **for the sake of the unity**, you and I need to join
hands with anyone and everyone who claims to be a Christian, or even names the
Name of Christ. Really? The only problem with this is that many of the cults
claim to be Christians and name the Name of Christ, but that doesn’t mean they
belong to Christ, does it? No! But I’m supposed to join hands with them? I don’t
think so!

But that’s right, just in case you think I’m being **intolerant**, then answer
these questions for me. Can we really “get along” with those who are claiming to
be Christians, yet state that you have to keep the sacraments to be saved, or that
satan doesn’t exist, or that hell is only make believe? Can we really “join hands”
with those who say that Jesus really isn’t God but He’s actually the archangel
Michael, or worse yet, that He is the spirit-brother of satan? Or can we really “get along” with those who believe that the world was created from the blood of an elephant, or that we will burn in a mythical limbo place to purge away our sins before we can go to heaven, or that we ourselves are gods? Or can we really “join hands” with those who say that sin and evil is just an illusion, and that heaven for some men will be to endlessly satisfy their lust with as many virgins as they want? Hello! I think the answer’s obvious. What did the Bible say. Don’t join hands with them, come out and be separate from them, right? Why? Because they stand opposed to the truth of God and since we’re the temple of God we cannot support a lie! Hello! That would make God look like a what? A liar! And how many of you guys would say that’s probably not a good thing to do?

But you might be thinking, “Okay, now wait a minute. Okay, so maybe we’ve been tricked into no longer judging between right and wrong. But there’s no way we’d ever get tricked into watering down the truth so much that we’d embrace a lie just to be unified.” Really? Well, I wish that were true, but maybe you should listen to the new Bible version that has come out, declaring that Jesus was a woman. What? Hey, that’s right! Don’t believe me? Check it out for yourself:

“A publisher is touting a new edition of the Gospels that identifies Christ as a woman named Judith Christ of Nazareth. LBI Institute says its version, was needed to correct the gender of Christ and God.

“This long-awaited revised text of the Gospels makes the moral message of Christ more accessible to many, and more illuminating to all,” says Billie Shakespeare, vice president for the publisher. He said, “It is empowering. We published this new Bible to acknowledge the rise of women in society.’

The new version, according to the publisher, revises familiar stories, transforming the ‘Prodigal Son’ into the ‘Prodigal Daughter’ and the ‘Lord’s Prayer’ into the ‘Lady’s Prayer.’ Here are a few other examples of the ‘new’ translation.

In Luke Chapter 2 the verses now read, ‘And Joseph went to Bethlehem. To be enrolled with Mary, his wife, who was then pregnant. And she brought forth her firstborn child. And her name was chosen to be Judith.’

A passage on the crucifixion, from John 19 says, ‘And She bearing her cross went forth. There they crucified Judith.’
And a resurrection passage from Matthew 28 now states, ‘Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Judith who was crucified. She is not here; for She is risen.’’

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I not only find this “new” Bible version just a little bit blasphemous, I find it completely satanic! But hey, remember the mantra, we have to accommodate other beliefs because it’s all about being unified, right?

But you might be thinking, “Okay, so maybe some people in the world have watered down the truth so much that they’re actually calling Jesus a woman. I would expect that. But there’s no way that people in the Church would ever do stuff like that?” Really? Then maybe you should listen to these so-called mainline Christians, and you tell me if even they haven’t embraced a lie, all for sake of unity:

Jerry Falwell said of Sun Myung Moon at Moon’s “Christian Ecumenism in the Americas” conference (who by the way thinks he’s God and that Jesus Christ is following in his footsteps), “Rev. Moon is an unsung hero to the cause of freedom who is to be commended for his determination, courage and endurance in support of his beliefs.”

Robert Schuller, whose Crystal Cathedral houses offices for “Christians and Muslims for Peace,” told Imam Alfred Mohammed of the Muslim American Society that, “If he (Schuller) came back in 100 years and found his descendants Muslims, it would not bother him.”

Jack Van Impe said, “In all the Pope’s writings, he has hundreds and hundreds of Bible verses. If I dare to say there are less than 7 to 10 thousand Bible verses in the new catechism, backing everything they say, I wouldn’t be exaggerating. He (the Pope) makes a statement and backs it with the Word of God.” (Really? Then why does he support evolution, pray to Mary, say that all Protestants are under a curse, and promote a One World Religion?)

Paul Crouch said, “I am eradicating the word ‘protestant’ from my vocabulary. It’s time for Catholics and non-Catholics to come together as one.”

Chuck Colson said, “We Catholics and Evangelicals have differences, but on the ancient creeds and core beliefs of Christianity, we stand together.”
Billy Graham said, “I found that my beliefs are essentially the same as those of an Orthodox Roman Catholic.” He also stated, “I’m not a literalist [about the Bible] in that every jot and tittle is from the Lord. This is a little difference in my thinking through the years.” And shockingly, he even stated this when asked whether he believes heaven will be closed to good Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus or secular people, “Those are decisions only the Lord will make. It would be foolish for me to speculate on who will be there and who won’t…I don’t want to speculate about all that. I believe the love of God is absolute. He said He gave His Son for the whole world, and I think He loves everybody regardless of what label they have.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but it sure looks like those men have embraced a horrible lie, how about you? Why? Because they’ve fallen for the devils lie and started repeating his satanic mantra, “Why, don’t you know, we all have the same truth.” Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all! The third disintegration that comes from a deluded unity is that You Start Saying We All Have the Same Path to Heaven.

John 14:5-6 “Thomas said to him, Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text it’s pretty clear. If you want to get to heaven, you go through Who? Jesus, right? And notice that Jesus didn’t say He was one of the ways, He said what? He is the only way, right? Oh, but not anymore! You see, now that we no longer judge between right and wrong, and have accepted a watered down version of the truth, we’ve now moved to stage three, and we now embrace all supposed paths to heaven! Don’t believe me? It’s the interfaith movement.

You see, if you’re going to delude people into creating A One World Religion for the sake of the ultimate false unity, then you’ve got to get rid of any one religion being superior over the other, right? And this is precisely what the interfaith movement has done. They would have you and I believe that if we’re ever going to have global peace, then don’t listen to the Prince of Peace. No! We have to have a global religion. I mean, you’ve heard the propaganda, since 9/11, right? Why, everybody knows that “religious differences” are the main cause of war, right? Therefore, we shouldn’t argue or fight over the truth. No! We just need to respect, tolerate and find common ground with everybody’s
version of the truth. And if we can just work together for this common good, we can save the earth and keep mankind from destroying themselves.

But you might be thinking, “Okay, now come on. So maybe we’ve stopped judging between right and wrong, and watered down the truth a little bit. But there’s no stinking way that a true Christian is ever going to go along with a One World Religion and promote a false road to heaven.” Well, actually if you said that, I’d have to agree. You’re right! No true Christian would ever do such a thing. Why? Because one, hello, that would make Jesus’ statement about being the only way to heaven sound like He’s being the world’s biggest religious bigot and a big fat liar! And two, a false road to heaven leads people straight to where, people? To hell! And therefore, a true Christian can’t compromise on the truth because of its drastic consequences, namely eternity in hell!

But, for those of you who don’t think this push for a One World Religion is really happening, then maybe you should pay attention to what the occult is teaching and preaching, and expecting to come on to the scene real soon:

- All is god: the earth, man, animals, and plants.
- Man is destroying the earth along with the animals and plants and unless he changes his ways, “Mother Earth” will be forced to destroy humanity.
- Christianity is the biggest culprit in destroying the earth by teaching that man had dominion over the earth when the earth is a living being.
- There is no such thing as sin and no need to repent and be saved.
- Jesus is but one of many great teachers such as Buddha, Muhammad or Confucius.
- Mankind should seek direction directly from “the spirit world” via a psychic, a channeler, a palm reader, astrology, angels, space aliens, dead relatives, meditation, etc.
- All religions (except orthodox Christianity) are of equal merit.
- In order for the world to be at peace and harmony there must be “New World Order, Universal monetary system, World authority on food, health, and water, Universal tax, and military draft, One world leader, and the abolition of Christianity.”
But you might be thinking, “Okay, now wait a minute. That’s the occult and they’re obviously full of false teachings, but that’s as far as that kind of baloney has gone.” Really? Well, I wish it were true but maybe you should pay attention to the previous Pope’s behavior, and you tell me if we aren’t living the last days:

“Specifically the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church’s Pope is currently leading the greatest ecumenical movement in history in order to unite all religions under Rome’s leadership.

In 1986 Pope John Paul II gathered in Assisi, Italy the leaders of the world’s major religions to pray for peace. There were snake worshippers, fire worshippers, spiritists, animists, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, North American witch doctors.

I watched in astonishment as they walked to the microphone to pray. The Pope said they were all praying to the same god and that their prayers were creating a spiritual energy that would bring about a new climate for peace.

John Paul II allowed his good friend the Dali Lama to put the Buddha on the altar in Saint Peter’s Church in Assisi and with his monks to have a Buddhist worship ceremony there while Shintuists chanted and rang their bells outside.

The prophesied world religion is in the process of being formed before our eyes and the Vatican is the headquarters of the movement. Is this not spiritual fornication?”

And people, what you’ve got to understand is that that’s not the only time the Pope did that. He did it many times while he was in office, and for those of you wondering, yes, even the new Pope is preaching the same false unity! Here’s a direct quote from him. “I am willing to do everything in my power to promote the fundamental cause of ecumenism.” And “I will spare no effort and commitment to continue the promising dialogue with other civilizations that was started by my venerable predecessors.”

But you might be thinking, “Okay, now wait a minute. So the occult and the Popes are full of false teachings about a false unity. But come on! No mainline Christians are going to do something stupid like that.” Really? Well, once again, I wish it were true, but apparently nobody was paying attention to what happened right after 9/11. Did anybody besides me notice how 9/11 was
immediately used to promote a **global unity** among global religions? Well, for those of who didn’t, I’m here to help you out:

“The events of September 11, 2001 have effectively replaced December 7, 1941 (the attack on Pearl Harbor) as America’s greatest ‘Day of Infamy.’ Pearl Harbor signaled the United States entrance into World War II.

The World Trade Center attacks are proving to be the spiritual counterpart of the Pearl Harbor bombing. This time, President Bush pointed out that this ‘Day of Infamy’ was a spiritual event with spiritual implications. However, he only hinted at what these implications could be.

The first inkling came a few days later at the services held for 9/11 at the Washington Cathedral. During this service, we saw clerics from Christianity, Judaism and Islam present themselves in full regalia. They were fully unanimous in their assertion that ‘we all worship the same God.’

And this was seen when Billy Graham, as well as a Jewish Rabbi, a Muslim Cleric, and a Roman Catholic leader took the stage and essentially agreed that they were serving the same ‘God’ just using a different name for this same ‘God.’ They were unified in their position of anti-evil, and no disagreements in terms of who ‘God’ is. He or she is ‘God’ as one understands him or her.

This theme would again be apparent when Oprah Winfrey led a ‘prayer service’ in Yankee Stadium. This time, we were treated to prayers and ‘words of wisdom’ from Protestant Preachers, Catholic Cardinals and Bishops, an Eastern Orthodox Bishop, Islamic Imams, Jewish Rabbis, and Hindu Clerics.

But strangely missing from these services were Christian Fundamentalists. The omissions were intentional because their beliefs are incompatible with the goals and objective of the New World Religion.

‘Fundamentalists’ groups which do not fit into the mold can now be marginalized as cults, and wiped out in the most profound fashion, while the liberal ‘Christianity’ represented by the mainstream denominations is held up as acceptable.
Ecumenism, the joining of religions with UNITY as the top principle and truth thrown out the window, has been growing at an alarming rate in the U.S. as well as the world at large, especially since 9-11.¹⁰

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but it really does appear that after 9-11 even so-called mainline Christian leaders were embracing a lie promoting a global religion, how about you? **Why**? Well, remember the mantra. It’s all about being unified, right? Wrong! Jesus Christ is the **only** way to heaven and if there’s one thing you don’t ever want to get wrong, it’s where you’re going to spend **eternity**!

But that’s where the interfaith movement throws us the double whammy! They not only teach that all paths lead to heaven, but they also say, just in case they’re wrong, don’t worry, there is no hell! Therefore, to make sure you don’t fall for this lie as well, let first look at the words of Jesus and you tell me if He doesn’t believe in a literal damnation in hell:¹¹

- **Matthew 5:22** “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of HELL.” (NIV)

- **Matthew 5:29** “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into HELL.” (NIV)

- **Mark 9:43** “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into HELL, where the fire never goes out.” (NIV)

- **Mark 9:45** “And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into HELL.” (NIV)

- **Matthew 10:28** “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in HELL.” (NIV)

- **Matthew 23:15** “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when
he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of HELL as you are.” (NIV)

- **Matthew 23:33** “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to HELL?” (NIV)

- **Luke 12:5** “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into HELL. Yes, I tell you, fear him.” (NIV)

- **Luke 16:22-24** “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In HELL, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.” (NIV)

  Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I kind of think that Jesus believes in a literal hell, how about you? But that’s right. Just in case you’re still infected with the lie of the interfaith movement, that says there is no hell, then I’m going to share with you one more description in hopes of scaring the hell right out of you!

  “Contrary to the father of lies, God Word describes hell as the place where God pours His wrath on the wicked.

  God’s Word declares in **Romans 2:5-6,9** that ‘But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil.’

  God’s Word speak of this in **Hebrews 10:26-31** that there will be a ‘certain terrifying expectation of judgment and of raging fire which consumes the enemies of God…severer punishment…for we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine. I will repay.’ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’
Will hell be a good time? Contrary to the father of lies, hell will not be a place of friendship and rock music, but of misery, darkness, and isolation. The only thing you will hear from others are their cries of torment.

Jesus Christ warned in Matthew 8:12 ‘The subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside into darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The Bible speaks in 2 Peter 2:17 of the wicked “for whom the black darkness has been reserved.”

God Word declares that there is no rest for the wicked in hell. Revelation 14:11 states, ‘And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night.’

Jesus said of the Day of Judgment in Matthew 25:41,46 ‘Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels…Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.’

God’s Word says in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 that ‘He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power.’

God’s Word also describes hell as a lake of fire. If you refuse to turn to Jesus Christ for eternal life, you too will go to the lake of fire forever! What are you going to do? Don’t go to hell. Please. I beg you. Don’t go to hell.

All of these people in the New Age movement that believe that everybody’s going to heaven, that you can worship anything, that you can worship a flea, you can squeeze a tree, you can worship a crystal, you can worship the stars, I’ve got news for you.

They’re not going unless they accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior because the Word says that the only way to the Father is through the Son.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but how much more graphic do you need to get than that! Hello! And people, hell is not only real, but you’re still going there unless you surrender your life to Jesus. I didn’t say that, He did!
And people, think of the irony here. We Christians who have the glorious gospel of truth about Jesus being the only way to heaven, have now been deluded into leading people away from heaven. And those who have bought into the lie of the interfaith movement say they’re preaching Christ, when in reality they’re preaching a curse! They’re sending people straight to hell! Why? Because you got tricked and seduced into preaching a false unity about your God! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Deadly D’s and you’ve actually become a Deluded Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Deluded Christian into a Discipled Christian. And people, a Discipled Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only take a stand for God’s eternal truth, but they’ll keep on doing so, even if they’re being burned alive for it, like this man did:

“John Huss was a faithful Christian preacher who was chosen to be the Pastor of the Church of Bethlehem in Prague. Although he was raised and taught under the teachings of Roman Catholicism, he began to see from the Bible that these teachings were not only contrary to the Word of God, but they were actually leading people away from God.

So, as any good Pastor would do, he simply set about teaching and equipping his flock with the truth. And how was John rewarded for being a faithful Shepherd. The Roman Catholic authorities charged him with heresy and condemned him to die.

The next thing you know, he was arrested, and put into a prison awaiting his trial where he was asked if he would recant his beliefs and submit to the teachings of Roman Catholic Church to which John replied, ‘No. I appeal to Jesus Christ Who is a Higher Judge of truth than any of you.’

So at this, he was stripped of his clothes, degraded and mocked at with a paper dunce cap put on his head painted with devils and an inscription saying, ‘A ringleader of heretics’ Then he was approached by the Catholic Bishop who declared, ‘Now we commit your soul to the devil.’
But John, lifting his eyes toward heaven, said, ‘But I commend my spirit into Your hands, O Lord Jesus Christ, in which You have redeemed!’ and off to the stake he went.

When the wood was piled up to his neck, they asked John if he would recant one more time to which he replied, “No. I never preached any doctrine of an evil tendency and what I taught with my lips I now seal with my blood.”

And so the fire was lit whereupon John was engulfed in flames that leaped high into the air. But as they did, John, the faithful preacher of truth, simply sung a hymn with such a loud and cheerful a voice that he was heard well above the cracklings of the fire and the noise of the crowd.

And shortly after that, he was ushered into a place called heaven, a place reserved only for the faithful in Christ.”¹³

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If you had to take a stand in the fire for the truth about Jesus being the only way to heaven like John Huss did, would you still sing songs of praise to God as you’re being burned alive? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil to act like everybody else who is caving in on the truth so as not to offend anyone while they, and possibly even yourself, are headed straight for hell?”

People of God, it’s high time we in the Church wake up and stop being ignorant of the devil’s schemes! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Deluded Christian! Come on! Wake up! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Deadly D’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
“Some say it came from a tropical monkey while others say it was a government planned disease released upon the public. But wherever it came from, the facts are this. Over forty-two million people now have it worldwide and over five million more get it every single year.

In fact, in 1998 alone, the combined wars in Africa killed 200,000 people but this virus killed ten times more than that. And now 75% of all infections are being spread via heterosexual contact through the blood, the body fluids, or even breast milk. It’s everywhere and anyone can get it.

And it all starts with a simple headache that turns into a fever, but soon leads to a case of sore muscles and a stomachache. In fact, most people think it’s merely a case of the flu, but it’s not. The killer virus is there, multiplying in your body slowly destroying your immune system.

And the next thing you know, this disease is full blown whereupon a person’s last days are spent dying from a multitude of ways such as pneumonia, skin cancer, tumors, or apparently one of the disease’s favorite ways to kill you, that of eating your brains alive.

You might live for several years or you might die in a few days and with medication you might be able to slow it down, but it’s still just a matter of time. You’re going to die. Why? Because there is no cure!
The year is 2005. In the 90’s it was the leading cause of death. The killer disease is of course, the AIDS Virus.”

Now, we all know the AIDS Virus is one of the worst outbreaks of disease of all time, right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disease that makes the AIDS Virus look like a mild case of acne? And people, what if I were to tell you that this disease didn’t occur in just one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your witness for Jesus Christ. Therefore, in light of these wars raging all around us, we’re going to continue in our study, The Attack of the Deadly D’s.

And we’ve already seen how the first internal weapon, the first Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Discontented Christian. The second Deadly D was the attack of the Doubting Christian. And the third Deadly D was the attack of the Depressing Christian. And then in the last chapter we saw that the fourth Deadly D was the attack of the Deluded Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually try to trick you and I into seeking a false unity in God. How? By repeating his satanic mantras, “Why, don’t you know we all have to be tolerant, we all have the same truth, and we all have the same path to heaven?” And boy, talk about the ultimate rotten witness! Those who believe this lie say they’re preaching Christ, when in reality they’re preaching a curse! They’re sending people straight to hell!

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember the devil’s character. He is wicked, he is evil, he hates your guts, he wants you dead! Therefore, he doesn’t stop! People, the fifth and most destructive Deadly D the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Deified Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

Genesis 3:1-5 “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden?
The woman said to the serpent, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.

You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the devil not only used doubt, as we saw before, to cause the fall of man, but apparently what was the devil’s ultimate aim in the fall of man? It wasn’t just to get us to distrust and turn away from God, but to what? To actually get us think that we can become a god, right? What did he say? You will be just like God, right?

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate you’re becoming a Deified Christian, is When You Start Preaching a False Worship in God. People, the first definition of the word deified means, “to worship or revere as a god or make oneself as if they were a god.” And people, this is yet another internal thing the devil does to keep us from having a powerful witness. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey man, I know having Jesus in you’re life is good and all, but if you really want to show the world that God is love, then don’t you think you need love yourself as well? In mean, stop and think about it. How can you really love others unless you love yourself first, right?” And you might think a deified worship is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a deified worship leads to a desolation.

And the first desolation is You Start Loving Yourself More than God.

Matthew 22:34-38 “Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.” (NIV)

Well, there you have it folks, the Bible says the greatest thing we can do in life is to love ourselves more than God, right? Are you kidding? What did it say there? The number one top priority in life is to love Who? The Lord your God, not yourself! And not just whenever we feel like it or when it’s convenient, but what? With all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your soul, right? I mean, that’s about as clear as you can get, right? Well, you’d think so, but
apparently we’ve got some problems. You see, it’s one thing for people in the world to think it’s okay to love yourself more than God. I’d expect that. I mean, they don’t know any better, right? But folks, believe it or not, people in the Church are doing the very same thing! Don’t believe me? It’s called the self-love/self-esteem movement. And what they would have you and I believe, even as Christians, is that we not only need to love ourselves more than God, but unless we do, all of society will be utterly torn apart. Don’t believe me? Let’s take a look at what these so-called Christian leaders are teaching and preaching and you tell me if that’s not what they’re saying:

**Robert Schuller** said in response to why people commit criminal behavior said, “I contend that this unfulfilled need for self-esteem underlies every act.” And that, “Self-esteem is the single greatest need facing the human race today.”

**Anthony Hoekema** said, “Parents should also handle disciplinary problems in such a way as not to damage a child’s positive self-image.”

**James Dobson** said, “If I could write a prescription for the women of the world, I would provide each one of them with a healthy dose of self-esteem and personal worth. I have no doubt that this is their greatest need. And that, “The lack of self-esteem can actually extinguish the desire to go on living. And, “We must have it and when it is unattainable, everybody suffers.”

**Ray Burwick** said, “A poor-self image can destroy us.”

**Robert Brinkerhoff** said, “The basic psychological cause of any suicide is that the individual has lost any hope of finding any meaning in this present life. Loss of hope, of love, of self-esteem in this present life is the foundation.”

**Philip Captain** said, “A mother’s second area of responsibility during pregnancy is in meeting the psychological needs of her baby. The most basic need of the baby in the womb is to have a mother who has a positive self-concept or self-esteem.” And that, “Mothers who choose to obtain abortions do so because of too little self-esteem.”

**Walter Trobisch** said, “I wonder whether one of the deepest roots of the abortion problem does not lie here. Can an expectant mother who wishes to abort her child really love herself?”
Wayne Colwell said, “Depression always has a loss of self-esteem in the foreground. Be slow to direct a depressed person to the Scriptures. No preaching. I would recommend a recess from Church if there is preaching done in the Church.”

Robert Schuller said, “Once a person believes he is an unworthy sinner, it is doubtful if he can honestly accept the saving grace that Christ offers. Instead he says we need to focus on a new reformation that “focuses on the sacred right of every person to self-esteem.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but according to those so-called Christian leaders, unless we love ourselves more than God, we’re not only going to be destroyed, but we’re doomed straight to hell, right? And people, hello, that’s not only loony, that’s calling Jesus a liar! What did He say? You are to love the Lord your God first and foremost, not yourself, right? How much more clear does Jesus have to be?

So the question is, “How in the world did the enemy trick us into doing just the opposite? How did he get people in the Church to promote a worship of self instead of a worship of God?” Simple! The first way he did it was by Getting Us to Seductively Twist the Word of God. You see folks, believe it or not, there are actually those who not only say we need to love ourselves more than God and that it’s absolutely critical, they even say it’s totally Biblical. Don’t believe me? Let me give you a few examples of how they twist the Word of God. And believe it or not, one of the most popular verses they twist is in our opening text of Matthew 22. Let’s take a look at it again.

Matthew 22:37-39 “Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” (NIV)

Well folks, there you have it. We need to love ourselves more than God, right? I mean, it said right there we need to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, right? Wrong people! That’s what they twist it to mean, but that’s not at all what the context means! First of all, if you read the context, you’ll see it’s the by-product of loving God first that gives us the ability to love our neighbors, right? That’s the proper order. And two, if we’re honest, it’s not that we have difficulty in loving ourselves. Are you kidding? Ask anybody who’s married. That’s what causes half of all marital problems, let alone the fall of mankind! Therefore, the challenge is to love others with the same natural inclination that
we already have towards ourselves, right? And three, there are only two commandments that Jesus gave there. One: Love God. Two: Love your neighbor, right? Jesus did not say there were three and He certainly did not say that a third one was to love yourself, right? And yet, the self-esteem proponents not only create this third supposed commandment out of the two, they even go so far as to say unless you do this third commandment, i.e. love yourself, then you won’t have the ability to do the other two, to love God or your neighbor! Can you believe that? Talk about twisting the Scripture!

Oh, but that’s not all. The second verse they twist is in Matthew 10. Let’s take a look at that one:

Matthew 10:29-31 “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (NIV)

Well folks, there you have it. We need to acknowledge our self-worth, right? I mean, what did it say? We are worth more than many sparrows, therefore we need to acknowledge how incredibly worthy we really are, right? Wrong! That’s what they twist it to mean, but that’s not at all what the context means! First of all, if you read the context, you’ll see that Jesus clearly says that two sparrows are sold for how much? A penny, right? Now anybody with an accounting degree can tell you that this is not going to add up to a great worth! Are you kidding? Do the math people! If your “many sparrows” meant let’s say 500 sparrows, how much are you worth? That’s right, at one penny per two sparrows you’d be worth about $2.50! Or hey, maybe you’ve been real good lately so your “many sparrows” adds up to be 1,000 sparrows. Sounds like a lot, right? But hello! Do the math, that’s still only $5 bucks! Stop and think about it people! Read the context. That passage is not dealing with the so-called great worth of us, but of God’s great providential care for us! Read your Bible!

And people, I’m telling you, I can go on and on with verse after verse that these self-love people twist, but I think you’re starting to get the gist. Nowhere in the Bible does it say we are to love ourselves more than God. In fact, what I really find interesting is how these people not only twist the word of God, but for some strange reason they turn a blind eye to the verses of God that say we need to do just the opposite. People, the Bible doesn’t say we should love ourselves. Are you kidding? It says sometimes we need to loathe ourselves. Take a look for yourself:
Ezekiel 20:43 “There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done.” (NIV)

Romans 7:18, 24 “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (NIV)

Ezekiel 36:31-32 “Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O House of Israel!” (NIV)

Job 42:6 “Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” (NIV)

2 Corinthians 5:15 “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” (NIV)

Matthew 16:24 “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (NIV)

1 Corinthians 13:4 “Love is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.” (J.B.P.)

Romans 5:6,8 “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (NIV)

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’m kind of thinking the Bible says you shouldn’t love yourself, instead you need to loathe yourself, you know what I’m saying? I mean, isn’t that the obvious reading of the text? Therefore, the only way you can miss this obvious Biblical teaching is if you do exactly what the self-esteem proponents do and that is to listen to the lies of the devil and seductively twist the Word of God.

Oh, but that’s not all. The second way the devil gets people to promote a worship of self instead of a worship of God is by Getting Us to Put More Stock in the Word of Man. You see, it’s bad enough that there are those out there who would actually twist the Word of God to make it sound like we need to worship ourselves more than God, but believe it or not, they don’t stop there. Are you kidding? Instead of getting it right and rightly dividing the word of God, they
instead seek support from the word of man! Don’t believe me? It’s called secular psychology. And for those of you who may not know, the teachings of secular psychology are not only derived from sinful man, but they’re contrary to the Word of God! Check it out for yourself:

- The Bible says that man is the creation of God. But psychology says that man is a creature of evolution.
- The Bible says that man’s purpose is to glorify God. But psychology says man’s purpose is to fit in with their fellow man.
- The Bible says that God is the Ultimate Supreme Authority. But psychology says man is the supreme authority.
- The Bible says that the Word of God is the standard of our behavior. But psychology says the norm of society is the standard of our behavior.
- The Bible says the biggest obstacle in life is sin. But psychology says that life’s biggest obstacle is mental illness.
- The Bible says that bad behavior comes from our internal sin nature. But psychology says it comes from sexual repression and our external environment.
- The Bible says that repentance and faith in Christ can effectively change sinful behavior. But psychology says that the way to change sinful behavior is to place the guilt on others, free your repressed desires, take drugs, or submit to psychoanalysis, sensitivity training, group therapy, etc.
- So the choice is yours. The Holy Bible inspired by Almighty God or modern psychology invented by wicked sinful man.³

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’m kind of thinking that not only is the one teaching of secular psychology about loving yourself more than God unbiblical, I’m kind of thinking that all the teachings of secular psychology are unbiblical, how about you?

And the point is this. Then why in the world would any Christian base their teachings on that stuff! I mean, it’s crazy, right! Well folks, believe it or not, it gets even crazier than that! You see, not only do some people in the Church
promote heretical man-made psychology, but they do so knowing the lives of these men were atheistic and ungodly! Check this out! You aren’t going to believe it:

- **Sigmund Freud** was an evolutionist who believed that man had evolved from lower animals and that the idea of an Almighty God was just a myth made up by our forefathers to cope with life. Freud was also a believer in the positive health benefits of cocaine and was a user himself for many years and had a severe addiction to nicotine to the tune of smoking an average 20 cigars a day, which eventually led to his death. Oh, by the way, Freud refused to be psychoanalyzed himself even by his own teachings.

- **Abraham Maslow** said that the motivation for his life’s work was his absolute hatred of his mother.

- **Karen Horney** decided she wasn’t happy with her marriage after 2 years so she began a life of constant sexual affairs to which her husband did not object. She also was said to have a serious sexual addiction for young men, which included her students and fellow colleagues, and even had sexual relations with other women as well.

- **Carl Jung** made a wooden man out of a ruler that he called Manikin and kept it in a wooden case and frequently talked to it in times of trouble and even had a mystical experience while sitting on a rock where he couldn’t tell if he was the rock or the rock was him.

Then he later had what he considered a major breakthrough in life when he had a vision of God supposedly going to the bathroom on a Church sanctuary from the sky.

However, what most people don’t realize is that Carl Jung was also completely absorbed in the occult and studied their teachings, attending séances, listened to mediums, practiced necromancy, and had daily contact with disembodied spirits, which he called archetypes.

In fact, much of what he wrote was inspired by such entities, one of which he called Philemon. Listen to his own words.
“Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life.

Philemon represented a force, which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversations with him, and he said things, which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I.

Philemon was a mysterious figure to me. I went walking up and down the garden with him, and to me he was what the Indians call a guru.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but why in the world anybody, let alone a Christian, would listen to anything those ungodly people had to say about God, is beyond me, you know what I’m saying? I mean, that’s not just crazy, it’s demonic! But people, that’s still not all. This man-made lie that we need to love ourselves more than God is not only demonic, it’s pathetic! It doesn’t even work! John MacArthur shares this truth:

“Society is at an all-time moral low. But statistics show Americans are feeling better about themselves than ever. In a survey conducted in 1940, 11 percent of women and 20 percent of men agreed with the statement. ‘I am an important person.’

In the 1990s, those figures jumped to 66 percent of women and 62 percent of men. Ninety percent of people surveyed in a recent Gallup Poll say their own sense of self-esteem is robust and healthy.

Incredibly, while the moral fabric of society continues to unravel, self-esteem is thriving. All the positive thinking about ourselves seems not to be doing anything to elevate the culture or motivate people to live better lives.

Can it really be that low self-esteem is what is wrong with people today? Does anyone seriously believe that making people feel better about themselves has helped the problems of crime, moral decay, divorce, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, and all other evils that have dragged society down?

Could so much still be wrong in our culture if the assumptions of self-esteem will finally solve society’s problems? Is there any shred of evidence that would
support such a belief? Absolutely none. The notion that self-esteem makes people better is simply a matter of blind religious faith.

Not only that, it is a religion that is antithetical to Christianity, because it is predicted on the unbiblical presupposition that people are basically good and need to recognize their own goodness.”

People of God, when in the world are we ever going to wake up! This self-love/self-esteem teaching is not only demonic, it’s pathetic! It doesn’t even work, as if that should be a surprise. And when are we going to wake up and call it for what it really is? It’s a lie straight from the pit of hell designed to get us to what? To worship ourselves more than God plain and simple! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all! The second desolation that comes from a deified worship is that You Start Saying You Are God.

Exodus 20:1-3 “And God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text it’s pretty clear. If you don’t ever want God to get really really mad at you, what should you never do? You should never ever worship a different god besides Him, right? And since it’s the very first of the Ten Commandments, I’m kind of thinking it’s a pretty big deal with God, how about you?

Well, unfortunately, it’s no longer a very big deal with man. You see, not only do people say we have to love ourselves more than God, believe it or not, they’ve now taken it to the next logical step. They say we need to declare ourselves to be god. Don’t believe me? Look around people! Apparently it’s the rage! It’s everywhere! Why, everybody’s talking about being a god. And for those of you who don’t believe me, lets take a look at just a few of them:

- **Environmentalism** says that all is god. “The philosophy of radical environmentalism is based in the religious belief of pantheism, that god is in all and all is god; that earth is our mother (Gaia); that all living things have equal value and that mankind has overstepped its bounds, even being a cancer on the rest of nature. As ardent environmentalist Al Gore states, “God is not separate from the Earth.”
- **Hinduism** says that all is god. “Hinduism worships multiple deities: gods and goddesses and that all reality is a unity. The entire universe (including you and me) is seen as one divine entity just in different facets, forms, or manifestations.

- **Mormons** say you can become a god. “After you become a good Mormon, you have the potential of becoming a god. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods.”

- **So-called Spirit Guides** say we are god. “Feel the millions of souls; the divine spark within each of them. We are here in your moment of realization; in the moment you come to meet with your divinity; in the moment when you finally accept, that which you truly are.”

- **Supposed UFO Space Brothers** say we are god. “Love yourself among the ones who love you, allow their love to fill you but above all, feel your own love that you have for yourself. We feel very honored this day to sit before the humans who have chosen to be among the first to step into their divinity, to walk as complete divine beings clothed in human flesh.

- **Supposed Messages from Mary** say we are god. “God is all that is. Therefore, We are Prime Creator expressing Itself as us. We are not striving for perfection as we are already perfect. What we are striving for is to remember our perfection. We are not divided into parts. Since God is us, therefore, we are God.”

- **Supposed Messages from Angels** say we are god. “It is nice to come and break bread…the bread of truth. God gives all of His creation freedom of choice to find themselves, to find their true ancestry of God-Goddess within them.”

- **New Ager’s** say we are god. One of the most ardent New Ager’s, Shirley Maclaine not only says she’s god but made a movie, “Out on a Limb” encouraging everyone to do the same.

- **Wiccans** (witchcraft) says we are god within. “The existence of a supreme divine power is known as ‘The One,’ or ‘The All’. ‘The All’ is not separate
from the universe, but part of it and from ‘The All’ came the god and
goddess and they are manifested in various forms in the universe. Divinity is
within.”

- **The devil** says we can become gods. *Genesis 3:5* “For God knows that when
you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I not only find those statements
kind of sickening, I find it kind of frightening. I mean, can you imagine the
audacity of a mere man saying he’s God? Talk about lightning bolt city! Besides,
the Bible flatly denies the existence of any other gods.

*Isaiah 43:10* “You are My witnesses, declares the LORD, Before Me no god was
formed, nor will there be one after Me.”

*Isaiah 44: 6,8* “This is what the LORD says – I am the first and I am the last;
apart from Me there is no God. Is there any God besides Me? No, there is no
other Rock; I know not one.”

*Isaiah 45:5* “I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no
God.”

Oh but people, that’s still not the half of it. You see, the devil has not
only tricked people in the world to say they’re god, believe it or not, he’s done it
to the Church as well. What? You’ve got to be kidding! Well, I wish I was, but
believe it or not, there are those in the Church who are not only claiming to be a
child of God, they’re actually claiming to be God! Don’t believe me? Listen to
their own words for yourself:

- **Fredrick Price:** “God can’t do anything in this earth realm except what we,
the body of Christ, allow Him to do. So, if man has control, who no longer
has it? God. Yes! You are in control!”

- **Benny Hinn:** “When you say, ‘I am a Christian, you are saying, ‘I am a little
messiah walking on earth. That is a shocking revelation. May I say it like
this? You are a little god on earth running around. Christians are “Little
Messiah’s and “little gods” on the earth. Say “I’m born of heaven-a God-
man. I’m a God man. I am a sample of Jesus. I’m a super being. Say it! Say
it!”
Paul Crouch: “Somebody said – I don’t know who said it – but they claim that you Faith teachers declare that we are gods. You’re a god. I’m a god. Well, are you a god? I am a little god! I have His name. I’m one with Him. I’m in covenant relation. I am a little god! Critics, be gone!”

Kenneth Copeland: “Jesus is no longer the only begotten Son of God. You are not a spiritual schizophrenic – half-God and half-Satan – you are all-God. You don’t have a god in you. You are one. I say this with all respect so that it don’t upset you too bad, but I say it anyway. When I read in the Bible where he [Jesus] says, ‘I Am,’ I just smile and say, ‘Yes, I Am, too!’”

Kenneth Hagin: “The believer is called Christ. That’s who we are; we’re Christ. You are as much the incarnation of God as Jesus Christ was.

Morris Cerullo: “You’re not looking at Morris Cerullo – you’re looking at God. You’re looking at Jesus.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’m kind of thinking we’re in a heap of trouble in the American Church, you know what I’m saying? I mean, you talk about the ultimate blasphemy, right? And maybe you’re like me thinking, “How in the world could a true child of God ever think they were God? That’s crazy!” Well one, I don’t think a true child of God ever seriously can. But two, I think the answer is obvious. This satanic desire to worship yourself as a god all begins with the lie of loving yourself more than God. Don’t believe me? Then maybe you should listen to these researchers:

“Surprisingly, this powerful form of primitive occultism has even infiltrated today’s mainline Churches. Promoted under the guise of Christian psychology, creative visualization is often practiced and falsely presented as a Biblically accepted technique.

And unfortunately, Christians today are embracing something that they add to the Bible that comes out of Eastern mysticism, it comes out of paganism, it comes out of the occult. It comes from godless anti-Christians and they’re now somehow joining Freud, Carl Rogers, Maslow and so forth with Christ for a new kind of therapy, a new kind of counseling, that mixes the Bible in with humanistic psychology.
The human potential movement with its emphasis upon self-esteem, self-love, self-acceptance, a positive self-image is simply a westernized version of the yogis self-realization, the gurus concept of the divine within, that we’re all god.

At the Congress of Hinduism in 1979, a spokesman declared that, ‘Our mission in the West has been crowned with fantastic success. Hinduism is becoming the dominant world religion and the end of Christianity has come near.’

People, how much more clear can you get than that? Loving yourself more than God is the first step in what? In declaring yourself to be a god, right? You heard it yourself, it’s all part of the satanic plan to destroy Christianity. And people, I’m telling you, when we live like this, we’re not just giving a false impression of a true Christian, we’re actually living like a dedicated satanist! I didn’t say that, the devil did:

- **First Law of Satanism**: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

- **Second Most Important Law of Satanism** is the law of self-awareness: Man is a divine being within. Life’s purpose is to realize the divine within. When this is achieved, you now recognize you are God!

People of God, when in the world are we ever going to learn that every package from hell comes disguised in ecstasy. And if you claim to be a child of God but say you have to love yourself more than God, then you’re not only acting like a satanist, you could very well be headed straight for hell! Why? Because you got tricked and seduced into preaching a false worship in your God! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Deadly D’s and you’ve actually become a Deified Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, you just became God’s child. And by His grace He’ll turn you from a Deified Christian into a real Christian, a Discipled Christian. And people, a Discipled Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only turn away from the lies of the devil, but they’ll keep on doing so, even if they’re headed straight for the gas chamber, like this man did:

“Sean Sellers started out as your typical American teenager who just wanted to have a little fun and discover what life’s all about. And so in his search for answers, it didn’t take Sean long to see through the emptiness of the so-called
normal American way of life. That of seeking happiness in consumerism, having a positive self-image, or indulging in endless mindless entertainment. It all seemed so futile. Sean knew there had to be more to life.

But to make matters worse, at this stage when Sean was desperately looking for answers, the so-called Christians he ran into were totally stuck up and completely absorbed in themselves.

So Sean decided he didn’t need their God. He was going to be his own god. He decided to follow satan. Why? Because after all, doesn’t the devil promise that if we listen to him we can become our own god?

And soon, Sean was not only consuming massive amounts of drugs and blasphemying God, but he also started drinking his own or other’s blood that he carried with him in a small vial for power. But he felt something was still missing. He felt he needed even more power to be an even more powerful god.

So Sean turned to the last of the Ten Commandments he had yet to break, that of, ‘You shall not murder.’ The first one was at a convenience store where he casually walked in and proceeded and to blow the cashier away with a .357 magnum.

The next one came at his home whereupon he did some homework, performed a ritual, and proceeded to take his father’s .44 revolver and shot both of his parents in the head. But shortly thereafter, his satanic spree came to an end and Sean was arrested and thrown into jail.

But as the One True God would have it, two days later, a man came to the cell next to Sean’s and gave him a Bible. Before, he had mutilated Bibles, burned them, urinated or poured blood on them, but now for the first time, for some unknown reason, he read one.

And as he did he came across the Book of Psalms whereupon an overwhelming sense of guilt flooded his soul. He had been wrong and he realized that satan had lied to him. It was the One and Only True God of the Bible who loved Sean, not the devil.
And so on his knees in his jail cell, Sean prayed. “Lord, here I am. If you will take me back I will serve you.” And in that moment God did touch him, and Sean began to cry.

He knew that true love was not in things of this world, true love was not in himself, and true love certainly wasn’t in trying to be his own god. No. True love is only found in the One and Only God, Jesus Christ.

And so on February 4th, 1999, Sean Sellers was executed for his crimes upon man but simultaneously pardoned by God through the love of Jesus Christ and ushered into a place called heaven.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If your life was on the line and you were about to be executed for your crimes, would you like Sean Sellers, still be trusting in the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ and Him Alone to get you to heaven? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil to act like everybody else who is loving and worshipping themselves more than God and are now in danger of the fires of hell?”

People of God, it’s high time we in the Church wake up and stop being ignorant of the devil’s schemes! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Deified Christian! Come on! Wake up! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Deadly D’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Part III

The Constant Battle
Chapter Eleven

The Twisted Christian

“It was an average day in your average run of the mill steel town in America. With a population of 30,000 this town was a pillar of success. A growing and industrious community known for the quality of its steel. Why, everyone wanted to live in this town. But that was soon to change.

You see, there was one small drawback to living in this town. It had been built on a flood plain at the fork of two rivers. And because the growing city had narrowed the riverbanks to gain building space, the heavy annual rains had caused flooding to increase each year.

To make matters worse, outside the town there was a three-mile long lake on the side of a mountain 450 feet higher than the town. And all that kept this massive wall of rising water from demolishing the community was an old dam that was poorly maintained.

And even though every single year, people were warned that the dam might not hold the next heavy rain, they considered this constant warning nothing more than a joke. But at 4:07 PM on a chilly, wet afternoon, that arrogant laughter turned to a horrible moan, as the inhabitants heard a low rumble that grew to a ‘roar like thunder.’

The dam had finally broken, sending twenty million tons of water crashing down the narrow valley toward the town. Boiling with huge chunks of debris, the wall
of water grew at times to sixty feet high, tearing downhill at forty miles per hour, leveling everything in its path.

Thousands of people desperately tried to escape but were ruthlessly caught by the wave and found themselves swept up in a torrent of oily, muddy water, surrounded by tons of grinding debris crushing them like twigs.

Those that survived the first wave faired no better for they became helplessly entangled in miles of barbed wire twisting their flesh or tying them down into the depths and an early grave.

And even those that managed to cling to a piece of wood didn’t escape. They were merely washed downstream and became entrapped in a flaming inferno of burning debris in front of a stone bridge that burned them alive!

It was the worst flood in America’s history and many bodies were never identified and hundreds were never found. But when the death toll rang out, over 2,200 people were dead and to think that it only took ten minutes.

The year was 1889. The town was Johnstown, Pennsylvania.”

Now, for those of us who know our history, we all know that the Johnstown Flood was one of the worst natural disasters in American history, right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes the Johnstown Flood look like a kid’s pool party. And people, what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one place and one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. People, I’m not talking about a one-time isolated natural disaster. I’m talking about a constant never-ending supernatural disaster. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Terrible T’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your testimony for Jesus Christ.

And we’ve already seen that the external and internal attacks the enemy fires at you and I, and that’s the attacks of the Casual Christian, the
Cultural Christian, the Compromising Christian, the Corruptive Christian, and the Counterfeit Christian. Then there was the Discontented Christian, the Doubting Christian, the Depressing Christian, the Deluded Christian, and the Deified Christian.

But people, you have to get it through your head that the devil doesn’t stop there! Are you kidding? He never stops! He’s constantly out there trying to get you to sin against Almighty God and destroy your testimony! If the devil can’t get at you externally through the Attack of the Killer C’s and if he can’t get at you internally through the Attack of the Deadly D’s he just keeps going! He looks for that chink in your armor day after day by coming at you constantly with the Attack of the Terrible T’s. He hits you and tempts you again, and again, and again, until you crack, and sin against God!

Therefore, in light of this truth, there’s no time to waste, so we better get started. People it’s pretty simple. The first constant attack, the first Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Twisted Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

2 Kings 6:8-17 “Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, ‘I will set up my camp in such and such a place.’ The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: ‘Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there.’ So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God.

Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places. This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, ‘Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?’ ‘None of us, my lord the king,’ said one of his officers, ‘but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom.’

‘Go, find out where he is,’ the king ordered, ‘so I can send men and capture him.’ The report came back: ‘He is in Dothan.’ Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. ‘Oh, my lord, what shall we do?’ the servant asked.
‘Don’t be afraid,’ the prophet answered. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, ‘O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, to keep him from freaking out, the servant of Elisha had to have his eyes opened to that which he could not see but was nonetheless real, right? And so my question is, “What was it that he needed to ‘see’ in order to take a chill pill and be calm, cool, and collected like Elisha?” He needed to see the existence of the spirit realm, didn’t he? Why? Because once God opened his eyes, he could clearly see that the armies of God far outnumbered the armies of man. They weren’t alone. They weren’t outnumbered. They weren’t going to lose. Are you kidding? God was going to war on their behalf and He never loses a fight! Therefore, there was no reason to be afraid because the battle belongs to God, right? And people, I’m here to tell you the same is true for us! No matter what we face, what we’re up against, or how big a spiritual battle it might be, we’ve got the victory through Jesus Christ no matter what!

And that’s why the first sign to indicate when you’re becoming a Twisted Christian is When You Longer Believe in Spiritual Warfare. People, the first definition of the word twisted means, “to alter or distort the meaning or character of something.” And people, this is one of the very first things, one of the very first lies the devil pumps into our heads to keep us from having a powerful testimony in Christ. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey man, you don’t really believe in all that spirit world mumbo jumbo do you? What are you, some sort of charismatic whacko? I mean, gee whiz, people already think you’re crazy for being a Christian and now you’re going to go around saying you believe in a guy who walks around in a red jumpsuit carrying a pitchfork? What are you…nuts!?"

And people, you might think a twisted belief is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a twisted belief leads to a tortured life. And the first evidence of a tortured life is when You Start Denying satan and his demons.

1 Peter 5:8-9 “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” (NIV)
People, according to our text, the Bible is clear. The devil and his demons are not only real, but they’re really out there seeking to destroy you and I as Christians, right? And herein lies the greatest trick of all. We are in the midst of the greatest Cosmic War of all time, and we’re up against the greatest enemy of all time, and yet most Christians don’t even think we’re in a war let alone face the fact that we’re actually fighting against an actual demonic entity.

And think of the irony here. Most wars go on for a few years or even a few decades. But people, this war, the Great Cosmic War, the war against temptation has been going on for 6,000 years, ever since the fall of mankind. And even so, most people will readily talk about all the various wars throughout history and their various atrocities. Why, we there’s even have channel on cable dedicated to nothing but history. Yet, how many people, even Christians, will openly discuss let alone acknowledge the longest war in mankind’s history that has destroyed more lives then all other wars put together? And folks, if you don’t believe me that we’re in a state of denial, then listen to this gut-wrenching statistic about the American Church’s so-called “spiritual” beliefs concerning our greatest enemy of all time:

In 2006 45% of born again Christians deny satan’s existence.2

What? People, that means that half of you reading this don’t even believe what I’m writing about! People of God, how in the world can we win a war that we refuse to fight? How can we enjoy the victory Christ has already won for us if we don’t even believe in the devil and the demons that Jesus came to destroy? No wonder we’re getting smacked around! No wonder our testimony is in the toilet! No wonder the American Church is so full of so much sin. No wonder we don’t take temptation seriously. Why, we don’t even believe the great tempter exists!

People of God, wake up! We Christian’s don’t just wrestle with temptation. We don’t just battle with it here and there. We are in a war against temptation! Open your eyes like the servant of Elisha and realize that the moment you got saved, you entered into a spiritual war against a demonic host who’s sole purpose is to get you to sin against God and grieve His heart! Why? Because contrary to popular belief, the devil is alive and well on planet earth and he really is out there tempting us, seducing us, enticing us to sin against God. He did it with Jesus and he’ll do it with you and I.

Matthew 4:1-4 “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become
bread.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (NIV)

Folks, I’m telling you, just as Jesus was tempted by the devil to sin against God the Father, so satan and his demons will tempt you and I. Why? Because the first reason is it’s How satan Gets Back at God. People of God, in case you haven’t figured it out yet, did you know that satan hates God? And because of this, guess what? He also hates you and I God’s children, i.e. the Christian. But since he couldn’t keep us from getting saved and join him in hell, and since he can’t take away our salvation, his only way to “get back at God” if you will is by getting back at Him via you and I His children. And whether you realize it or not, each time we give into temptation and sin, it not only inhibits our spiritual growth, but people, it grieves the very heart of God. This is exactly what David said:

Psalm 51:3-4 “For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight.” (NLT)

People, whether or not you realize it, our act of disobedience is the very tool satan uses to get back at God. And I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to be used as a tool for the devil. Amen?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second reason why satan tempts us is because he Wants to See us Dead. And the first thing satan wants to see us dead in is in Our Walk with God. Why? Because one of things he hates most is to see a spiritually mature Christian.

People of God, nothing strikes fear into the heart of the devil more than to see an actively growing victorious Christian in Christ. The devil trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. Why? Because the power of satan is no match for the Power of Christ. Now you’ve become a threat. Now you can inflict harm. Now you can wield the Sword of the Spirit the Word of God and smash the devil’s lies back down his throat! You’re walking in victory and now he’s actually scared of you!

That’s the good news. But here’s the bad news. The devil knows this! He knows this so stinking well! In fact, he knows he only has to do one thing to stop us. Not four hundred. Just one! It’s called sin! He knows all he has to do to keep us from becoming a threat is to simply tempt us day in and day out to sin again, and again, and again, so as to rob us of our power in Christ. He’s no dummy! He’s been playing this game for 6,000 years. He knows the one surefire way to make sure we never grow up as Christians and never become a threat to him, is to
simply get us to live a sinful life with him! And once he does, it’ll knock us dead in our walk with God, every single time!

Oh but that’s not all! The second thing satan wants us dead in is not just our walk with God but he also wants us dead in our walk on earth.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NAS)

People of God, when are we going to get it through our heads that sin produces death! And not just spiritual death but physical death. Hello! Adam and Eve didn’t just die spiritually when they sinned, they eventually died physically! And people, don’t kid yourself for a second if you don’t think the devil knew this! Are you kidding? He is evil, he’s wicked, he hates our guts, and yes he wants you dead just like Adam and Eve!

For instance, think about it. The sin of stealing often ends up producing a murder does it not? The sin of drunkenness can cause one or many others to lose their lives in a car crash, can it not? One sin of sexual immorality can lead to a death sentence called AIDS. Don’t you get it people? Don’t you see? The devil wants you dead! You’re not just flirting with that sin. You’re flirting with death itself! One little “lick” of sin here and another “lick” of it there leads to the next, and the next, and the next until eventually death itself sets in. In fact, it’s an age-old hunter’s trick to kill his prey:

“Paul Harvey told a story once of how an Eskimo kills a wolf. Here’s what he does. First, he coats his knife blade with blood and lets it freeze. Then he adds another coat of blood and then another.

As each coat freezes, he adds another smear of blood until the blade is hidden deep within a substantial thickness of frozen blood.

Then he buries the knife – blade up – in the frozen tundra. Soon a wolf catches the scent of the fresh blood and springs to lick it. Then he licks it more and more feverishly until the blade is bare.

But then he keeps on licking harder and harder. But because of the cold, the wolf never notices the pain of the blade on his tongue. His craving for the taste of blood is so great that he does not realize his thirst is being satisfied by his own blood.
But he never stops. The wolf will keep on licking the blade until he bleeds to death, swallowing his own life.”

People of God, wake up! The devil is a murderer and he’s been one from the beginning! If you flirt with the enemy by tasting his temptation again and again and again, then one lick at a time, yes one lick at a time, it will kill you. And not just your walk with God, but sometimes your walk on earth as well.

And think of the irony here. The child of God who has been given the ultimate victory over life and death in Christ, will actually have been tricked and seduced by the devil himself to commit spiritual and in some cases physical suicide! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. And the second evidence of a tortured life is when you Start Dwelling in satan’s Dominion.

1 Corinthians 4:3-4 “If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe.” (NLT)

John 12:31 “The time for judging this world has come, when satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out.” (NLT)

Ephesians 2:1-2 “Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.” (NLT)

People of God, if there’s one message that’s clear in the Bible it’s this one. The devil is the little “g” the little “god” or “ruler” behind this wicked world system, right? And so let me ask you the obvious question, “If satan is incredibly wicked, and he is, then what does that make his kingdom, i.e. this world?”

Wicked as well, right? Therefore, if a Christian is going to maintain a victorious life in Christ, they not only need to stay away from the devil and his demons, but they also need to stay away from the devil’s playground, i.e. this wicked world system, right?

And people, the devil knows this. He knows it so stinking well! So here’s what he does. He knows that in order to withstand temptation, all we have to do is stand with Christ. That’s it. Case closed! So here’s what he does. He gets us to lust after the world instead of living for God. Why? Because when that happens, just like food poisoning, we actually ingest things that are spiritually
poisoning. Things that not only keep us from becoming a threat to him, but things that destroy us spiritually as we eat like him! Think about it people! If we live for the things of this world instead of the things of God, we are actually dining at the devil’s table, we’re eating his food. We’re *supping* with satan instead of supping with Christ! So how in the world does satan tempt us to ingest the spiritually poisonous things of this world? Great question. I’m glad you asked. He does it in **three areas**. And that’s precisely what the Apostle John warned us about:

1 John 2:16 “For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world.” (NLT)

Now, according to our text, the **first way** satan tempts us to ingest the poisonous things of this world is by the **lust for physical pleasure**. And for those of you who may not know, the word “lust” comes from the Greek word “epithumia” which means, “a violent passion.” And when you think about it, does not everything in this world system tempt you and I to be **violently passionate** about mere **personal pleasure**? I mean look around, are not people today being seduced by the devil to spend every single dime they have and every waking moment just to please themselves? Of course they are! But people, the Bible is clear. If you give into this temptation from the devil, you’ll not only end up **physically bankrupt**, but you’ll actually end up living a life that is **displeasing to God**.

Romans 14:7-8 “For we are not our own masters when we live or when we die. While we live, we live to please the Lord. And when we die, we go to be with the Lord. So in life and in death, we belong to the Lord.” (NLT)

So I ask you, in light of our text, “Do we Christians become mature, do we become a threat to the enemy, do we become a mighty warrior for Jesus by living our lives in a violent passionate pursuit to please ourselves, or by pleasing God?” I think the answer is obvious. And believe you me, the devil knows it as well!

Oh, but that’s not all. The **second way** in which satan tempts us to ingest the poisonous things of this world is by the **lust for everything we see**.

1 John 2:16 “For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see…” (NLT)
Now folks, once again, correct me if I’m wrong, but are not people today being seduced by the devil to be violently passionate not for God but for their own personal satisfaction? I mean, are we not told that the key to a great life is to satisfy yourself with all the pretty little things that you see in this world that are supposed to make you happy, like that new car, new home, new boat, new this and new that? But people of God, when in the world are we ever going to wake up and realize that new stuff whatever it is, is no guarantee that your life will be sailing the waters of satisfaction? Are you kidding? It does just the opposite! Maybe it’s just me, but the more stuff you get, the more it not only has a way of causing you a big headache that drags you down, but it then drags you down financially! Why? Because in order to get all these new things the devil says you have to have, you need what? Money, right? And not just any money, but lots of it, right? But people, the Bible is clear. If you give into this temptation from the devil, you’ll not only end up financially bankrupt, but you’ll actually end up living a life that is unsatisfying to God.

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (NLT)

So I ask you, in light of our text, “Do we Christians become mature, do we become a threat to the enemy, do we become a mighty warrior for Jesus by living our lives in a violent passionate pursuit to satisfy ourselves, or by satisfying God?” I think the answer is obvious. And believe you me, the devil knows it as well!

Oh, but that’s not all. The third way in which satan tempts us with the things of this world is by the pride in our possessions.

1 John 2:16 “For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world.” (NLT)

Now folks, once again, correct me if I’m wrong, but are we not told that the secret to a wonderful life is to glorify yourself by boasting in your self, your accomplishments, your bank accounts, or how many acres you own? I mean, after all, everybody has to keep up with the Jones’s, right? But people of God, when in the world are we ever going to learn that boasting in your self in the sight of God is only news fitted for the bottom of a birdcage. But it’s even worse then that. The Bible is clear that if you give into this temptation from the devil,
you’ll not only end up **morally bankrupt**, but you’ll end up living a life that is **unglorifying to God**.

1 Corinthians 10:31 “Whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, you must do all for the glory of God.” (NLT)

So I ask you, once again, in light of our text, “Do we Christians become mature, do we become a threat to the enemy, do we become a mighty warrior for Jesus by living our lives in a violent passionate pursuit to glorify ourselves, or by glorifying God?” I think the answer is obvious. And believe you me, the devil knows it as well! And so, to help us realize just how deadly, how poisonous, how spiritually sickening this behavior actually is to us as Christians, that of **ingesting** the things of this world, I’m going to share a visual analogy that says it all:

This is for all of the people who order chicken from a Chinese restaurant **ENJOY.** Be careful! It may LOOK like chicken but is it REALLY chicken? Or could it be rats??!!!
To pull off the illusion, one must first burn the hair off of them…

Then you have to wash them before cooking…

Then you have to cut them up into pieces that simulate chicken parts…
Then they are well seasoned to taste extra special…

Then they are prepared for deep-frying…

And now they’re all done, ready to eat…
But let’s take a closer look and what do we see…

Rat, the “other” white meat!
Now is that a misfortune or what?
And folks, lest you think I’m pulling your leg with this visual analogy, in some parts of China rat meat actually sells for considerably more than chicken, pork, or beef. Now here’s my point. Just like Chinese rat food, so it is with satan’s rat food, this wicked world system. Oh you think it’s one thing when the whole time it’s really something else, something very sickening, when the truth comes out. Oh, you think the lust for pleasure, the lust for things, and the pride of life is so delicious, it’s so scrumptious, oh just another bite, when the whole time you are swallowing rat meat! People of God, wake up! The devil is a murderer and he’s been one from the beginning! If you flirt with the enemy by tasting his temptation again and again and again, then one bite at a time, yes one bite at a time, it will kill you.

And think of the irony here. The child of God who has been given the ultimate victory over life and death in Christ, will actually have been tricked and seduced by the devil himself to ingest “spiritual food poisoning,” dying a slow spiritual death day after day after day, bite after bite after bite! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?
Oh, but that’s not all. The third evidence of a tortured life is when You Start Disbelieving in satan’s Disease.

Psalm 51:5 “For I was born a sinner – yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.” (NLT)

People of God, according to our text, the Bible is clear. When Adam and Eve sinned they acquired a sin nature, which in turn has been passed down to every person in mankind’s history at birth. This is what David freely admitted. He knew he sinned against God. Why? Because he was born a sinner. There was a part of him that wanted to sin. Therefore, if a Christian is going to maintain a victorious life in Christ, then they not only need to stay away from the devil and his demons, they not only need to stay away from satan’s dominion, but they also need to stay away from the devil’s disease, our own sin nature, right?

And people, the devil knows this. He knows it so stinking well! So here’s what he does. He knows that if we start winning the fight over our flesh, then we’re not as likely to give into his temptation. So he gets us to deny that we even have a flesh to fight in the first place!

People of God, correct me if I’m wrong, but is this not the big lie of our society? Do they not say that man is basically good? Do they not say that man is born neutral without an evil disposition one way or another? They don’t say like David, “I was born a sinner.” Are you kidding? They say, “Don’t you dare call me a sinner!” right? But people hello, the proof is in the pudding! Look around! Our world is full of evil people who do evil things and it’s getting more and more evil by the minute. Why? Because we all have a sin nature, that’s why! We all have a dark side like the moon that we don’t want anyone to see. It’s that part of us that’s just like satan. It’s selfish, it’s rebellious, it doesn’t want to obey God. Are you kidding? It wants to do our own thing our own way in our own sweet time.

And people, this is why acknowledging the sin nature like David did is such an important Biblical truth. I mean, think about it! The reason why the devil is even able to get a foothold in our lives is precisely because we have a sin nature, right? The only reason why the devil can tempt us to rebel and sin against God is because we have a part of us that wants to do it, right? Therefore, since we still have this rebellious nature in us even as Christians, it would behoove us to not just resist external temptation but the internal desire to want to do it in the first place, right? And people, this is precisely what God said to do, right after the fall of man:
**Genesis 4:7** “If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” (NLT)

People of God, the Bible is clear. Unless you master your sin nature, your sin nature will master you. It will enslave you, it will pull you down, it will destroy your walk with God.

And people, the devil knows this. He knows it so stinking well. And so here’s what he does. He **blind us** to the fact that there really is a cancerous part of us that’s destroying us from the inside out, like this story reveals:

“There is a haunting photo in the October 1993 issue of Life magazine. It’s of a boy in a charitable institution in Colombia playing a flute. The boy, named Jensen, is only ten years old, but he probably can play some very sad songs. Why?

Because when you took at his eyes, or where his eyes should be beneath his long, dark bangs, you see only redness, empty sockets. Blindness is always tragic, but the cause of blindness in this case only multiplies the sorrow.

In the caption next to the photo, it is explained that the boy was the victim of ‘organ nappers.’ Eye thieves. Apparently, when Jensen was ten months old, his mother took him to the hospital with acute diarrhea.

However, the next day when she returned, bandages covered Jensen’s eyes and dried blood was spattered on his body. Horrified, she asked the doctor what had happened.

And the doctor answered back harshly, ‘Can’t you see your child is dying?’ and he rudely dismissed her.

So she rushed Jensen to another hospital in and after examining him, the doctor gave chilling news, ‘They’ve stolen his eyes.’

Actually, Jensen is somewhat fortunate. He is alive. You see, organ traffickers usually kill their victims, excise body parts, and broker them to those willing to pay for healthy kidney or cornea transplants.
But organ thieves in Colombia, are not the only ones stealing eyes. There is someone who steals a person’s ability to see in an even more tragic way. And that someone is satan.”

People of God, it’s not only shocking to realize that we actually live in a world today that is so wicked that people really do and really will rip out a child’s eyes for money leaving them blind for life. But what’s even more shocking is how many people, even Christians, have voluntarily lined up to have their eyes ripped out to the Biblical truth that we all have a sin nature. That we all have a part of us just like the devil that wants to rebel against God, that wants to shake a fist at God, that wants to sin against God! And acting like we don’t have a sin nature or that it’s not that big of a deal is the same as voluntarily like allowing a cancerous tumor grow out of control. It spells certain doom!

People of God, wake up! This is why it’s so hard to live a victorious life in Christ today! It’s because we Christians have to fight a war not just on one front, but three, satan and his demons, satan’s dominion, and satan’s disease, and all of them all at the same time. But if we can’t even admit that we’re in a war let alone that there’s a part of us that’s actually working against us, sabotaging our efforts to live for Christ, then how in the world are we ever going to be victorious in Christ? How are we ever going to be a threat to the enemy? How are we ever going to become that mighty army for Almighty God? Answer? We’re not! Ever! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Terrible T’s and you’ve actually become a Twisted Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Twisted Christian into a Triumphant Christian. And people, a Triumphant Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only turn from sin and live a life engulfed in Christ, but they’ll keep on witnessing for Christ even in the midst of other’s sin, like this Christian did:

“Salvation in Christ is often birthed in tragedy, and so it was for Brother Alex. He received Christ after armed revolutionary forces of Colombia seized his family farm and assassinated his father twelve years ago. Alex’s faith has been tested repeatedly since his father’s murder, but his greatest challenge came four years ago as he traveled to work by bus with twenty-six other banana farm laborers.
One morning as the banana workers traveled to the plantation, some of the revolutionary forces stopped the bus. When the four guerrillas armed with AK-47 rifles forced their way onto the bus, Alex felt a check in his spirit.

He said, ‘When I saw them, the Holy Spirit witnessed to my heart that they were going to kill us; and I began to shake, and I knew death was near.’

However, Alex then suddenly felt an overwhelming peace and joy. He began singing songs of praise while the guerrillas herded the laborers off the bus and lined them up along the side of the road.

He thanked and praised God and sang to the Lord with all his heart. ‘Great is your faithfulness, O God, there is none like You.’ Alex’s response to death came natural to him. He said, ‘Isn’t this the normal reaction of any Christian who deeply loves Jesus? It’s the time of death, the time to enter into His presence, so I was worshipping and praising Him.’

The guerrillas tied the hands of each laborer with ropes used for tying up bundles of bananas. They separated the workers into three rows and forced them to kneel on the dew-covered grass. But the armed men became agitated as Alex continued to sing praise songs. So one of them struck Alex with the end of his rifle to shut him up.

Then a coworker cried out, ‘Don’t kill me! Don’t kill me! I am totally innocent!’ And Alex says he became impatient with the brother and asked him, ‘Why are you seeking life from these men if the only owner of our lives is God?’

Then an eerie silence descended on the captives. Suddenly, a blaze of gunfire erupted, shattering the silence. The gunmen emptied their automatic weapons on the hostages. Alex expected a multitude of bullets to pierce his body, but to his surprise only one grazed his arm.

He experienced no pain. Warm blood and brain tissue belonging to the two women kneeling beside him splattered his face and soaked his shirt.

The guerrillas moved to the front of the line and sprayed gunfire along the row where Alex kneeled. A bullet struck Alex between his nose and eye and blew out the right side of his face. His eye exploded, but Alex did not lose consciousness.
As he lay on the ground immersed in a pool of blood, the guerrillas—now armed with machetes—began severing the heads of many of the fallen laborers.

Alex recalled, ‘At the moment they approached me, I suddenly realized I had not told them about Jesus. Though I was drowning in my own blood, I could hardly speak; and I was totally blind. With all the strength I could muster, I cried out to them, ‘Jesus loves you! Jesus loves you!’’

At this, an angry gunman silenced Alex by shattering his jaw with the end of a rifle. When it was all over, twenty-five of the banana plantation workers perished in the attack. Alex survived and since has had several reconstructive surgeries on his face.

Alex recently graduated from seminary. Although he was blinded in the attack, the young evangelist says he clearly sees the call God has on his life: to continue sharing the love of Christ with the Marxist guerrillas and other hurting Colombians. God has given him a vision to set the captives free!”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If you had a gun to your head and bullets were ripping through your body, would you, like Alex, have the ability to do something positive in the midst of other’s sin and witness for Christ? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil to do something negative at the drop of a hat, and instead sin against Christ?

People of God, if ever there was a time when we the Church need to be awakened from our slumber, it is now! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Twisted Christian! Arise! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Terrible T’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Chapter Twelve

The Tormented Christian

“One night, twelve-year-old Rosita was awakened by the sound of clattering jars and so she immediately sat up in bed but then suddenly felt dizzy. The clay pots were not the only things shaking. Even the floor of her home was shaking.

So Rosita cried out to her mother but she only replied, ‘Hush. It’s only the volcano shaking.’ So with her mother’s assurance, Rosita lay back down in her bed. The night was now silent. But that was soon to change.

All of a sudden Rosita heard a strange swishing sound and something like twigs snapping, so she ran to the door of her home and what she saw made her freeze right there in her tracks.

A massive wall of mud 132 feet thick filled with trees moving over thirty mph was rushing towards her so she screamed in utter terror waking the household. The father in turn bellowed out to his family, ‘Quick, up the hill!’

One survivor describes the horror of what was headed their way. He said, ‘We didn’t hear any kind of alarm, even when the ash was falling and we were in the hotel. So we turned on the radio and the mayor was talking telling people not to worry and to just stay calm, stay in your homes, no need to leave town.

Then suddenly the radio went off the air. About fifteen seconds later, the power went out and we heard a noise in the air like something toppling, falling.
Suddenly, I heard bangs, and looking towards the rear of the hotel I saw something like foam, coming down out of the darkness.

It was a wall of mud approaching the hotel, and sure enough, it started crushing walls. Cars were swaying and running people down. We turned around screaming as the mud was now dragging beds along, overturning cars, sweeping people away to their doom.

A university bus that was in a parking lot next to the hotel, was higher than us on a wave of mud and on fire, and it exploded. I covered my face thinking this is where I die a horrible death.

Entire buildings were destroyed, broken into pieces, adding boulder-sized chunks of concrete into the mud, which now became like a wall of tractors, razing the city, razing everything in its path.’

And when all was said and done, the village was not only gone, but three quarters of the people were gone. In just minutes, 23,000 people were swept away and drowned in a pool of mud.

The year was 1985. The disaster was the infamous Armero Mudslide.”

Now, for those of you who may not know, the Armero Mudslide was one of the worst natural disasters of all time, as you can tell. But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes the Armero Mudslide look like a carnival ride. And people, what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one place and one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Terrible T’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your testimony for Jesus Christ.

And in the last chapter we saw the first constant weapon, the first Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Twisted Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually trick you and I no longer believing
that we’re in the midst of a Great Cosmic War, which not only keeps us from fighting and enjoying Christ’s victory that He’s already won for us, but ensures that we never stop falling and sinning against and grieving the heart of God. And there we saw that the devil does this by getting us to Deny satan and his demons, Dwell in satan’s dominion, and Disbelieve in satan’s disease, our own wicked sin nature. No wonder we don’t experience any victory!

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember who we’re dealing with here folks. Hello, it’s satan! He doesn’t stop there. Are you kidding? He never stops! He’s constantly out there trying to get you to sin against Almighty God and destroy your testimony! The second Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Tormented Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

**Judges 2:6-15** “After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the LORD to anger because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

In His anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.”

(NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the reason why Joshua and his whole generation enjoyed spiritual and practical success with God was because of what? They not only remained true to God, but they deliberately refused to give in to the temptations of the world around them and sin against God, right? That’s
the good news. But what’s the bad news? Another generation came after them who were not only ignorant of God, but ignorant of how to deal with the temptations from the culture that enticed them to sin against God. And as a result, what happened? They were sorely distressed or literally 

**tormented**, right?

But the question is, “Who was to blame for their tormented lives?” It was nobody’s fault but their own. They did it to themselves, right? It was **self-inflicted**! And people, I’m here to tell you the same is true for us! Unless we the American Church become another **Joshua kind of Generation** and learn to deal with and defeat the ungodly temptations of this world, we too will have exchanged a life of glorious victory in Jesus Christ for a sinful self-inflicted tormented one! And it’s nobody’s fault but our own!

And people, that’s why the **first sign** to indicate when you’re becoming a **Tormented Christian** is **When You Refuse to Learn How Temptation Works On Us**. People, the **first definition** of the word **tormented** means, “to cause great physical or mental pain, or literally to flat out torture.” And people, this is one of the very first things the devil does to keep us from having a powerful testimony in Jesus Christ. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey man, lighten up, will you? I mean, come on! This is the real world. It’s a whole new generation. You can’t go around in life worshipping God twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Do you know how boring that is? Besides, what will your friends and family think? Do you want them to think you’re some sort of ‘holier than thou’ person? Get real! Lighten up! Have some fun will you?”

And people, you might think a **tormented thought** is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a **tormented thought** leads to a **turbulent life**. And the **first** evidence you’re headed for a **turbulent life** is when **You Start Ignoring the Temptation of the Mind**.

**James 1:14-16** “But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers.” (NIV)

People of God, the Bible is clear. As we saw in the last chapter, and again, right here in our text, the only reason why temptation works on us is because each of us have an evil desire or sin nature within us that wants to do it, right? And here’s my point. Where is that temptation **first conceived**? In the mind, right? That’s the **birthplace**, or birthing center, if you will. And folks, what you’ve got to understand is that being tempted in and of itself is not sin. It’s
when you give in to the temptation. That’s when it becomes sin. And James is saying here that at the very moment we start to give in to the temptation in our mind, we have allowed ourselves to conceive or in other words, to become sinfully pregnant. And we all know that once a person becomes pregnant, sooner or later, it’s just a matter of time, you’re going to give birth to something. And so it is with sin. If you flirt with temptation long enough in your mind, you’ll not only conceive but you’ll eventually give birth to sin. It’s that simple. This is how we are dragged away and enticed by the enemy. This people, is how the enemy attacks. It begins in the mind.

But herein lies our problem. We rarely ever pay attention to what goes on in our mind. We say we’re going to bring every thought captive and obedient to Christ, but we don’t! And because of this, we keep giving birth to one sin after another. Why? Because we never get around to dealing with the birthing center! We pay no attention to our thought life! And folks, I’m telling you, as long as we refuse to pay attention to what goes on in our brains and think that the lack of doing so won’t hurt us, we are headed for a huge surprise and some horrific pain, like this girl learned:

“In A View from a Zoo, Gary Richmond, a former zookeeper wrote this:

‘Raccoons go through a glandular change at about twenty-four months. After that they often attack their owners.

Since a thirty-pound raccoon can be equal to a one hundred-pound dog in a scrap, I felt compelled to mention the change coming to a pet raccoon owned by a young friend of mine, Julie.

She listened politely as I explained the coming danger. I’ll never forget her answer.

‘It will be different for me…’ And she smiled as she added, ‘Bandit wouldn’t hurt me, he just wouldn’t.’

Three months later Julie underwent plastic surgery for facial lacerations when her adult raccoon attacked her for no apparent reason.’"²

People of God, I’m telling you, just like it was only a matter of time before that raccoon was designed to turn aggressive, yes even on its owner, I’m telling you, so it is with our minds. People of God, wake up! Every thought that
goes through your head is not of God. Some of them are actual enticements to sin against God. And just like that girl, whether you realize it or not, or whether you believe it or not, every single temptation is **designed** to turn aggressive on you. And the longer you “play with it” living in denial, it’s just a matter of time before it strikes!

People of God, we’ve got to pay attention to our thought life if we’re ever going to experience the victory we have in Jesus Christ. Why? Because **that which you think upon is soon to become your behavior.** It’s the basic principle, **junk in equals junk out.** If you allow sinful thoughts or “junk” into your mind, guess what you’re going to get out? Junk or sinful behavior, right?

**And think of the irony here.** The child of God who has been given the Spirit of Christ Who was tempted in all ways as we are yet was without sin, is actually tricked and seduced into never experiencing victory over sin because they never stop it at its source! **We never stop it in the mind!** Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The **second** evidence you’re headed for **turbulent life** is when **You Start Ignoring the Temptation of the Ears.**

**Job 12:11** “Is it not the task of the ear to discriminate between wise and unwise words, just as the mouth distinguishes between desirable and undesirable food?” (AMP)

How many of you have ever wondered how temptation even gets into the mind in the first place? Well pay attention. Here it is. The Bible here clues us in to the **first method** the enemy will use to get temptation into our minds, and that is **through the ears.** You see, just as your mouth chews on good or bad food and digests it into your stomach, so our ears chew on good or bad things and digest them into our minds. And once something enters your mind, it enters your thoughts. And remember, **that which you think upon is soon to become your behavior,** for good or for bad.

So just what are some of the **bad influences to our ears** that the enemy uses to drag us down and entice us with temptation, hoping we’ll sin? Well folks, it’s pretty simple. The **first assault** the devil uses on our ears is he **Drags You Down with Lips.**

**Ephesians 4:29-30** “Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live.” (NLT)
People of God, the Bible is clear. If you don’t want to grieve the very heart of God then what? Don’t use let alone listen to ungodly conversations, right? And folks, I’m telling you, whether it’s filthy language, dirty jokes, or gossip, this is another tool the enemy uses to influence your thinking via your ears.

But once again, you might object, “Well hey, I’m not influenced by people’s conversation.” Oh really? People, if that’s true then you’ll have to explain why Hollywood has announced that because of competition from cable movie channels that are supposedly hurting their ratings, ABC, CBS and NBC has loosened what little standards they have on profanity by allowing four-letter words never spoken before on TV. And so here’s my point. If people’s ungodly conversations don’t influence us then why would Hollywood be so quick to drop what little standard they have against profanity? I’ll tell you why. They’re choosing money over morality. They know that the average person will stay tuned to their broadcast if they bombard them with even more filthy language and even more dirty jokes. So deny it all you want people, but what you allow into your ears does influence your thinking. And the Bible makes it very clear that no Christian should ever have any part in this wicked behavior.

Oh but filthy language and dirty jokes are not the only problem when it comes to being influenced to sin by people’s ungodly conversations. Another popular enticement to sin is gossip. And the funny thing about gossip is that we usually couch it in words like this, “I’m only telling you this so you can pray for them.” Yeah right! Or some might say, “Now I don’t want to gossip, so you better listen up good the first time.” Then as if that wasn’t bad enough, we seem to downplay it and think that gossip is no big deal, that is until we’re the ones being gossiped about! And the problem with gossip is that once you put it out there, it’s like paper in the wind, there’s almost no stopping it. And people, the fact is this. A Christian who gossips all the time is simply a Christian who is giving a bad testimony all the time:

“On Sunday a restaurant manager designated two rooms as a nonsmoking section to accommodate Churchgoers who come in for a bite to eat after their morning services.

And the busboy there said he was glad to see the large number of nonsmoking Christians but he then added, ‘They may not smoke, but you ought to hear them gossip.’

And then he said, ‘If we had a non-gossip section, nobody would be there.’”
People of God, wake up and get real! The poisonous words of gossip not only produce a deadly infection wherever they go, but they’re also an affective means of destroying your testimony for Christ. This is exactly what James warned us about:

**James 3:9-10** “We use the tongue to bless our Lord and Father and we use the same tongue to curse our fellow-men, who are all created in God’s likeness. Blessing and curses come out of the same mouth—surely, my brothers, this is the sort of thing that never ought to happen!” (J.B.P)

People of God, whether you realize it or not, one surefire way to destroy a relationship, a marriage, and even a Church, is to allow gossip to continue on by either speaking it or **listening to it**. And maybe the eyes are the windows of the soul, but that still doesn’t make the mouth the doorway to the brain. So if you’re not sure whether or not something is gossip and want to avoid sinning, then here’s a simple rule:

**Proverbs 21:23** “If you keep your mouth shut, you will stay out of trouble.” (NLT)

Pretty simple isn’t it? People of God, when are we going to realize that **ungodly conversations** really do influence us to sin? And if you’re going to stay out of trouble, sometimes you not only need to keep your mouth shut but you need to keep your **ears shut as well**. Why? Because a beautiful life is one that purposes to please God, not one who is a tool for temptation by **dragging others down with their lips**. But the choice is ours:

**Psalms 19:14** “May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.” (NLT)

So I ask you, in light of our text, “Are your lips pleasing to God or are they enticing others to sin. Are your ears listening to God or are they listening to sin.” You see, just as a closed mouth gathers no feet, so a closed ear to **ungodly conversations** gathers no temptation. It’s that simple.

Remember the principle? If you put junk in, you get what? That’s right junk out. So if you fill your ears with filthy language, dirty jokes, or gossip, then where is your mind? Is it on God or is it on sin? So if you’re tired of being tempted, get rid of the temptation! It’s that simple!
Oh, but that’s not all. The **second assault** the devil uses on our ears is he **Drags You Down with Lyrics**. That’s right, I’m talking about music. Now, don’t get me wrong. There’s nothing wrong with music. Just like the media, music can be a tool that is used for good or for bad purposes. In fact, the Bible says the same thing:

**Psalm 150:3-6** “Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with tambourine and dancing, praise Him with the strings and flute, praise Him with the clash of cymbals, praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. One of the best things we can do with music is to what? Praise God with it, right? In fact, Johann Sebastian Bach said, “The sole purpose of all music is to bring praise to God.” But what do we see? People in the music industry today have not only gotten away from music’s wonderful purpose, to glorify God, but they are instead using it to promote all kinds of wicked, immoral, and illicit behavior that is **contrary to God**. And people, whether you want to admit it or not, music is one of the biggest tools the enemy uses to influence your thinking via your ears. And so let’s have a moment of truth and see just what kind of influence we’re allowing into our minds via our ears with **today’s music**:

“Music is as powerful as television for people in general. The American Medical Association concluded that music is a greater influence in the life of teenagers than television.

The average teenager listens to 10,500 hours of music during the years between the 7th and 12th grades, and thus music surpasses television as an influence in teenagers’ lives.

One person stated that songs “are more than mere mirrors of society; they are a potent force in the shaping of it. Studies have found that consumers of music with harmful themes “increases discomfort in family situations, a preference for friends over family, and poor academic performance.”

Oddly enough, surveys found that more teenagers than adults believe that popular music encourages antisocial behavior. Some popular music remains part of the cultural virus that can lead some young people to violence.
One Dr. testified in U.S. Senate hearings that tons of research has been done on the interrelationship of music and human behavior. He simply says that music affects our moods, our attitudes, our emotions, and our behavior.”

But you might still object, “I’m not influenced by what kind of music I listen to.” Well folks, how is it any different than what we just discussed? We just saw that listening to dirty jokes, filthy language, and gossip clearly entice us to sin. So what’s the difference if that kind of language is put to music? Answer? There is no difference! Besides, if today’s music doesn’t really affect your behavior then why does the music industry annually rake in billions of dollars every single year, creating a whole subculture of people who not only listen to the music, but behave the way the music tells them to?

People of God, let’s be honest. Music, that which we allow into our ears, really does have an effect on our behavior. Who are we kidding? Most of today’s music is simply ungodly conversations put to music. And so whether it’s manual or musical, it makes no difference. It affects our behavior and it entices us to sin! People of God, when are we the Church going to get our heads out of the sand and stop living in denial. Music has a powerful influence upon us for good or for evil. Plato once said, “Let me control the music of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws.” Why? Because he knew what most people today deny and that is that music has the power to shape the minds of people for good or bad. And people, if we’re honest with ourselves, most of the music today is not drawing us closer to God, it’s dragging us down with its lyrics. We’re being enticed to sin.

Remember the principle? If you put junk in, you get what? That’s right junk out. And people, don’t get me wrong. This has nothing to do with legalism, it has everything to do with good ol’ common sense. If you fill your ears with music that promotes wickedness, immorality, and illicit behavior, then where is your mind? Is it on God or is it on sin? And remember, that which you think upon is soon to become your behavior! So if you’re tired of being tempted then get rid of the temptation. It’s that simple!

People of God, if we don’t take seriously these temptation in our ears, we’ll never grow up spiritually, we’ll never become a threat to the enemy, and we’ll be tricked and seduced into living battered and defeated lives. And think of the irony here. The child of God who has been given the Spirit of Christ Who was tempted in all ways as we are yet was without sin, is actually tricked and seduced to never experiencing victory over sin. Why? Because they never stop it from coming in, in the first place, through the ears! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?
Oh, but that’s still not all. The third evidence you’re headed for a turbulent life as a Tormented Christian is when You Start Ignoring the Temptation of the Eyes.

Matthew 6:22-23 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness.” (NIV)

People of God, the Bible is clear. How many of you have ever wondered how the enemy gets temptation into our minds in the first place? Well, pay attention! Jesus here clues us in to the second method the enemy will use to get darkness or temptation into our minds. Last time it was the ears, but here Jesus says that darkness can come in through our what? Our eyes, right? And boy is the devil having a heyday with this method of mental enticement today. You see, once something enters your eyes, it enters your mind. And once it enters your mind, it enters your thoughts. And remember, that which you think upon is soon to become your behavior, for good or for bad.

So, just what are some of the bad influences on our eyes that the enemy uses to entice us with temptation, hoping we’ll sin? Well folks, it’s pretty simple. The first assault the devil uses on the eyes is he Drags You Down with Dress.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 “And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do.” (NLT)

People of God, the Bible is clear. Whether it’s a woman or a man, the principle of the text here is our visual appearance. And so how should we be dressing ourselves? It’s absolutely clear isn’t it? We should dress or array ourselves in modesty and decency, right? Why? Because it is not only pleasing to God, but it avoids becoming a temptation to man!

But that’s not at all what we see today is it? Are you kidding? I’ve got this problem narrowed down to two options. The way I figure it, it’s either got to be that the clothes dryers across America are way too hot and are shrinking everyone’s clothes and we need to boycott Maytag. Or more likely it’s because people have bought into the lie that the less clothing they have on the better they will appear. Whether it’s skimpy bathing suits or guys showing off their muscles,
this is another tool the enemy uses to influence your thinking via your eyes. But as we have just read, if you claim to be devoted to God, then a beautiful appearance must come from within not without. We are to inwardly adorn ourselves with the attractiveness of doing good things for the glory of God, not outwardly for the seduction of man.

**Proverbs 31:30** “Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised.” (NLT)

People of God, the Bible is clear. A beautiful life is one who purposes to please God, not one who deceptively charms others outwardly by dragging them down with their dress. But you might object, “Well hey, come on. Get real! I’m not influenced by how other people dress.” Really? Well, if that’s true then you’ll have to explain these facts on pornography:

- There are more than 15,000 adult bookstores in the United States and outnumber McDonald’s restaurants in the United States by a margin of at least three to one.

- The pornography industry is larger than the commercial movie and record industries combined.

- The circulation of Playboy and Penthouse - 24 million - is twice that of Newsweek and Time combined. 75% of video stores sell pornography, which makes up 50% - 60% of sales.

- Americans rent upwards of 800 million porn videos and DVD’s a year. Making nearly one in five movie rentals a porn flick.

- Hollywood produces 400 feature films a year. The porn industry churns out 11,000.

- One in 4 American adults surveyed in 2002 admitted to seeing an x-rated movie in the last year.

- Annual rentals and sales of adult videos and DVDs top $4 billion.

- There are 4.2 million pornographic websites. This represents 12 percent of all websites in the world.
• Every day, there are 68 million search engine requests for pornographic material. That is 25 percent of all search engine requests.

• According to Media Metrix, 71.9 million people visited adult sites in August 2005, reaching 42.7 percent of the Internet audience.

• Pornography on the Internet constituted the third largest sector of sales in cyberspace.

• Pornography is a $12-$13 billion-a-year industry—more than the combined annual revenues of the Coca-Cola and McDonnell Douglas corporations. It has a $57 billion revenue worldwide.

• Two-thirds of the divorce lawyers attending a 2002 meeting of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers said excessive interest in online porn contributed to more than half of the divorces they handled that year.

• Nearly all (90 percent) of American children aged 8-16 view porn online.\(^5\)

People, the fact is this. If another person’s illicit dress doesn’t influence us then why has pornography become a multi-billion dollar industry? So, deny it all you want people, but what you allow into your eyes does influence your thinking. And Jesus made this very clear:

Matthew 5:27-28 “You have heard that the law of Moses says, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (NLT)

People of God, wake up. The Bible is clear. Jesus is speaking here. Another person’s dress, as well as pornography, really does seduce us into committing visual adultery, which is not only a sin against the other person, it’s sin against God!

And then, as if that wasn’t bad enough, because of people’s lax position on dress standards and pornography, it has generated a negative influence on people’s attitudes towards a healthy and natural sex life. And people, hello, don’t get me wrong. There’s nothing wrong with making love. You see, if your parents never made love, then you won’t either! Besides, God is the one who instituted it for Adam and Eve. But the Bible is clear people. A healthy and natural sex life is only between a man and a woman, and only in marriage, period! The rest of it is
sinful! So where did these negative sinful attitudes come from? Well, what did we just see? **It starts from people’s negative sinful dress** and it progresses downhill from there.

People of God, wake up! Remember the principle. If you put junk in, you get what? That’s right junk out. So if you fill your eyes with nudity, sex outside of marriage, or scantily clothed people, then where is your mind? Is it on God or is it on sin? And remember, **that which you think upon is soon to become your behavior**! And people, don’t get me wrong. This has nothing to do with legalism, it has everything to do with good ol’ common sense. If you’re tired of being tempted, then get rid of the temptation. It’s that simple! Don’t become a stumbling block to others! We are here to worship God, not to become a tool of the devil and **drag others down with our dress**!

Oh, but that’s not all! The **second assault** the devil uses on the eyes is he **Drags You Down with Drama**.

**Psalm 101:3** “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.” (KJV)

People of God, the Bible is clear. If you’re tired of being tempted, then what? Set no wicked thing before your eyes. Get rid of the temptation. It’s that simple! And folks, whether you believe it or not, one of the biggest forms of temptation **we allow** in our eyes is not just the makers of clothing, it’s none other than **the modern day media**. I call the media nothing more then **brain candy**. Why? Because just like candy, it might be stimulating but it certainly isn’t nutritious. It’s not only a tool to easily eat up and waste your time, it also puts waste into your mind. And people, whether you want to admit it or not, the media is one of the biggest tools the enemy uses to influence our thinking **via our eyes**.

And for those of you out there who are still in denial that the media has any effect on us then **first of all** I’d invite you to listen to some simple **logic**. Why would advertisers spend **120 billion dollars** every single year on commercials unless of course they really do influence our behavior? Hello! Either it works, or they’re the dumbest people on the planet who have tons of cash to burn! They’re not just throwing their money away. They’re investing it wisely because they know it works. So deny it all you want, but people, what you allow into your eyes really does influence your thinking **for good or for bad**. And so, let’s have a moment of honesty, and take a look at just what kind of influence we are allowing into our minds **via our eyes**:
• The average household combined watches almost **seven hours a day** of television.

• On the average, a child spends 1,680 minutes a week watching television. Compare that with the 38.5 minutes a week that he or she talks one-on-one with a parent.

• By the time they reach kindergarten, the average American child has seen between 6,000 and 8,000 hours of television—approximately one-third of their total pre-school waking hours.

• At maturity, they will have spent more time in front of a television than in any classroom.

• By the age of ten, most children can name more brands of beer than Presidents.

• By the age of 18 months, children can already recognize advertising logos and by the age of ten they have memorized 300-400 brands. The average adult can recognize thousands.

• Children are exposed to 40,000 commercials every year and the average adult receives as many as 3,000 advertising messages a day, or 1,095,000 per year.

• The average American child or teenager views 10,000 murders, rapes, and aggravated assaults per year on television.

• 80.3 percent of all television programs contain acts of violence. The typical program includes 5.21 incidents.

• Children born today will witness 200,000 acts of violence on television by the time they are eighteen.

• The average American adolescent will view nearly 14,000 sexual references per year.

• 56% of all programs on American television were found to contain sexual content. Nearly one third of family hour shows contain sexual references.
75% of prime-time network shows included sexual content in 1999-2000, up 67% in one year alone.

By the time today’s children reach age seventy, they will have spent seven to ten years of their lives watching television.

The question more and more concerning parents and public officials is this: What is all this viewing doing to them?

People of God, it’s really a no brainer. I’ll tell you what it’s doing to them. They’re being dragged down with drama. They are being enticed to sin via their eyes! But secondly, if you don’t want to listen to logic, then maybe you should listen to these kids. They tend to be a little bit more honest with the media and its negative influence:

Cigarette billboards tell you to smoke, so do beer commercials on TV. Too many advertisements for alcohol. They can make you buy toys, and make you buy cigarettes and beer. I feel that they want me to smoke or maybe drink. I don’t like the way they portray alcohol with men and women, especially women.

Bad language. Saying bad words. False language. A radio speaker announcer says bad words, and TV can make people do bad things. I can’t watch TV without hearing a swear word and can’t watch TV without seeing violence. The “Simpson’s” have bad language and do bad stuff. On KDWB Tone E. Fly is sick! Swearing in commercials. Songs on the radio like on The Edge and 93.X.

There are too many killings on TV. There is way too much violence on TV and causes me to think that most people are like that, and the people that they show who are violent are scruffy and dirty and causes me to think all violent people are like that. TV shows violence and gory things a lot. They talk about Strep-A and meningitis and killings and it gets me worried. Violence on TV. Too much violence and too much doing drugs. It scares me. It influences me to have bad nightmares.

It says everyone wants to be skinny, so I want to be skinny. Lies and bad pictures. Too much sex. It makes me think getting hit or hurt is cool. Sex on
TV is extremely bad. It causes people to think everybody is doing it. TV makes you feel that you have to be beautiful in order to be a good person.

- Guns and violence. The media is big on stuff like violence, bad examples. A lot of violence and killing. Too much drugs and killing. It has caused me to be more violent in some of my actions. All the killing and drugs. Fights. They give ideas about making bombs and other things. There’s a lot of violence. They show shootings. Video game that have too much fighting. Watching people getting beaten up. To get into fights. I see crime a lot; guns, kidnapping, and gangs. The media is always showing people dying. It has changed me to be not so nice because I saw it on TV.

- Violence and sex. Drugs and sex. Show bad stuff like 1/2 pornographic. All of the sex and violence. X-rated shows on cable. Women as sex objects. See other people naked on TV all the time.

- It has caused me to swear more often. Lots of foul language. Swearing on radio and TV.

- It causes me to have a bad attitude toward my parents.

- It says do what you want to do and don’t listen. Is has made me make bad choices and do something I thought was right that is really wrong. Commercials make you buy things. Candy. I think they are trying to get you to buy something. We can be influenced by choices people on TV make. It gives some people false images. It draws conclusions about people that might not be true. 7

Now folks, how does that saying go…“Out of the mouths of babes…” But that’s right, if you still don’t want to listen to logic or honest kids, then maybe you should listen to these researchers:

**Problem #1: TV Causes Addiction**

“Television viewing has the effect of discouraging development of executive systems that regulate attention, organization, and motivation. It also triggers the release of endorphins, the body’s natural opiates. People who watch the average of 4 plus hours of television daily will admit feeling unable to curb the habit. In fact, an experiment reported in South Africa’s Eastern Province Herald suggests
that television is physically addictive! 182 German individuals agreed to abstain from watching television for one year in exchange for financial compensation. Not one participant lasted longer than six months, and all showed symptoms of opiate withdrawal including anxiety, frustration and depression. Migraines are also a common symptom of television withdrawal, as opioid receptors adjust to a break in endorphin surges.”

**Problem #2: TV Causes Hypnosis**

“Researchers have shown conclusively that the radiant light from TV causes specific shifts in mental functioning. The act of viewing actually causes the brain to enter a hypnotic, non-learning state. It has since been demonstrated that the human brain effectively shuts down after a mere 30 seconds of television viewing as it enters into what is called an alpha state, characterized by slow brainwaves. The frequency of electrical impulses emitted from the screen blocks active mental processing, thus inducing a kind of hypnotic trance in viewers.

**Problem #3: TV Causes Dumbness**

“Studies have shown that higher brain functions such as the ability to critique and rationalize are deactivated by television technology. It is the lower brain, instead, that responds to the incoming images, as the intellect is effectively bypassed. Whatever information the senses produce the brain trusts as inherently believable.” This explains why even adults have trouble fundamentally differentiating between actors and the characters they play on television dramas. It also explains why advertising is so effective. Our attitudes about products become unconsciously associated with feeling states as subliminal images are planted in our minds without recourse for critical thought. Though the majority of people claim resistance to commercial advertisements, companies use these techniques because they consistently increase sales.”

**Problem #4: TV Causes Death**

“Television images appear via the projection of fluorescent light from 25,000 volt cathode-ray guns that shoot streams of electrons at phosphors (little metal dots) inside the screen, making them glow. This light is then projected from the screen into our eyes. While it appears that the flow of light is continuous, the phosphors actually light up 30 times per second, creating what is commonly known as the “flicker effect.” According to John Ott, founder of the
Environmental Health and Light Research Institute and author of Health and Light, exposure to artificial light can contribute to hyperactivity, loss of vitality, aggression, heart disease, cancer and impaired immune functioning.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say anyone who would volunteer for that brain damaging input, might really have dain bramage themselves, you know what I’m saying? I mean, that’s not only dumb, it’s deadly right? People of God, let’s be honest. If you walk away from this chapter, especially knowing what you now know, and you just can’t seem to shut that stupid TV off and instead spend some time with God, then could it be a sign that your allegiance really isn’t with God but a demonic idol in the shape of a square called Television? And gee, could this be why you never experience victory over sin in your life? Could it be it’s because you never shut off the box that spews forth the biggest amount of temptation in your life?

People of God, this has nothing to do with legalism. It has everything to do with common sense. When are we the Church going to get our heads out of the sand and stop living in denial? Remember the principle? If you put junk in, you get what? That’s right, junk out. Groucho Marx, once said, “I find television very educational. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.” And why would that be educational? Because if you fill your eyes with programs that promote violence, sex outside of marriage, and rebellion, then where is your mind? Is it on God or is it on sin? And remember, that which you think upon is soon to become your behavior! So if you’re tired of being tempted, then get rid of the temptation. It’s that simple!

People of God, if we don’t take these temptations in our eyes seriously, we’ll never grow up spiritually, we’ll never become a threat to the enemy, and we’ll be tricked and seduced by the enemy to live battered and defeated lives. Remember, we are fighting a lifelong war against temptation and everybody knows that when you’re in a war, sometimes you have to do some drastic things to keep the enemy from advancing, right? Of course! And Jesus Himself gives us some drastic advice in the war against temptation if we don’t want the enemy to advance upon us. He simply declares it’s time to check in the hospital for some radical surgery:

**Matthew 5:29-30** “So if your eye causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.” (NLT)
People of God, the Bible is clear. Jesus said that if a part of your body, yes even your eyes, are causing you to sin, then don’t make excuses for it. Don’t rationalize your behavior. What did He say? Perform radical surgery and rip the temptation from your body! Therefore, if your eyes are causing you to sin, don’t get complacent and give in. Perform radical surgery and rip not your eyes but the “temptation” from your eyes whatever the source is!

People of God, it’s not that hard to figure out. The choice is yours. If you’re tired of being tempted, get rid of the temptation. It’s that simple! And think of the irony here. The child of God who has been given the Spirit of Christ Who was tempted in all ways as we are yet was without sin, is actually tricked and seduced to never experiencing victory over sin. Why? Because they never stop it from coming in, in the first place, through the eyes! Oh, do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Terrible T’s and you’ve actually become a Tormented Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Twisted Christian into a Triumphant Christian. And people, a Triumphant Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only turn from sin and fill their minds with the things of God, but they’ll keep their mind focused on God even in the midst of other’s horrible sin, like this Christian did:

“The year was 203 AD and on this day, a noble Christian woman named Perpetua and several of her fellow Christians were condemned to die. Their crime? They were taking classes for baptism.

We have little idea what brought her to faith in Christ or how long she had been a Christian or how she lived her Christian life, but her death speaks volumes.

Her father, a pagan, immediately came to her in prison and pleaded with her to simply deny that she was a Christian.

Perpetua replied, ‘Father do you see this vase here? Could it be called by any other name than what it is?’

‘No,’ he replied.

‘Well, neither can I be called anything other than what I am, a Christian.’
What made matters worse was that Perpetua had just given birth to a new child and so her father tried once more, ‘Have pity on my gray head. Have pity on me, your father. Think of your brothers; think of your mother and your aunt; think of your child, who will not be able to live once you are gone. Give up your pride!’

Perpetua was touched but remained unshaken and only replied, “It will all happen as God wills. For you may be sure that we are not left to ourselves but are all in His power.’

When the day of the hearing arrived, Perpetua and her friends were marched before the governor and each in turn refused to make a sacrifice, an act of emperor worship. So the governor turned to question Perpetua.

‘Are you a Christian then?’

Perpetua replied, ‘Yes I am.’

He then proceeded to condemn Perpetua and her friends to die in the arena. However, when they were marched from the prison to the amphitheatre, they did so joyfully as though they were going to heaven, with calm faces, trembling, if at all, with joy rather than fear.

Perpetua herself went along with shining countenance, a calm step as the beloved of God, as a wife of Christ. Upon entering the stadium, wild beasts and gladiators roamed the arena floor.

Undeterred, Perpetua and her friends simply declared, ‘You have condemned us, but God will condemn you.’

In the stands, the crowds roared to see blood. They didn’t have to wait long. Immediately a wild heifer charged the group. Perpetua was tossed into the air and onto her back. She sat up, adjusted her ripped tunic, and walked over to help her friend.

Then a leopard was let loose, and it wasn’t long before the tunics of the Christians were stained with blood. But this was too deliberate for the impatient crowd, which began calling for death for the Christians. And so Perpetua and friends were lined up, one by one, to be brutally murdered.
And after facing down several gladiators and being tortured and literally shredded apart alive by wild beasts, Perpetua and her friends were given the ultimate victory, and were ushered into the very Gates of Heaven itself, reserved only for the faithful in Christ.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If you were about to be martyred for your faith and literally gored alive, would you, like Perpetua, have the ability to stay focused on Christ as you enter into heaven’s glory? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil to sin against Christ by gorging your mind in all the wicked temptations this world has to offer?”

People of God, if ever there was a time when we the Church need to be awakened from our slumber, it is now! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Tormented Christian! Arise! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Terrible T’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Chapter Thirteen

The Troubled Christian

“...it started off as any other typical day. The adults had just finished their lunches, kids were coming in from recess to resume their studies, and all seemed right to these small town Mid-Western people. However, in just a few minutes, everything was about to go wrong, horribly wrong.

Shortly after 1:00 pm the trees began to snap, and for the next three and a half hours more people would die, more schools would be destroyed, more students and farm owners would be killed, and more deaths would occur in a single city from this kind of disaster than in any other in U.S. history.

To witnesses it merely appeared as a shapeless rolling fog, fooling the normally weather wise people who did not sense the danger until it was too late. Then the wind picked up and this twirling beast descended from the clouds and began to move along the ground as high as 73 mph and at times as large as a mile wide, destroying everything in its path.

First it killed a farmer, then two more people, then it injured 75 others. But that was just the beginning. It then killed a child in a rural wooden school leaving 32 more kids injured. Then eleven more people died, then another 34 as another town was obliterated.

And now with its’ appetite wetted, it proceeded on to the next town, this time killing 234 people, then another town killing 69, then another town killing 127,
and still another town killing 71. And on and on and on it went, ruthlessly murdering and destroying everything in its path.

And when the wind had finally died down and this beast had consumed its fill, the death toll rang out. Thousands of homes and farms were devastated and 747 people were annihilated in just three and a half hours.

The year was 1925. The disaster was the Great Tri-State Tornado.”

Now, for those of you who may not know, the Great Tri-State Tornado was one of the worst natural disasters of all time, as you can tell. But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes the Tri-State Tornado look like a trip to the park? And people, what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one place and one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Terrible T’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your testimony for Jesus Christ.

And we’ve already seen how the first constant weapon, the first Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Twisted Christian. And in the last chapter we saw that the second Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Tormented Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually trick you and I into refusing to learn how temptation works on us, thereby causing us to live a self-inflicted tormented life. We never experience victory over sin because we never stop it at its source! And there we saw that its source was through the mind, through the ears, and through the eyes.

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember who we’re dealing with here folks. Hello, it’s satan! He doesn’t stop there. Are you kidding? He never stops! He’s constantly out there trying to get you to sin against Almighty God and destroy your testimony! Therefore, the third Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Troubled Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:
1 Peter 5:5-11 “Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, if we’re going to live victorious Christian lives, it’s not enough to just walk humbly before the Lord our God, but simultaneously we need to what? We need to keep a sharp eye out for the wicked devil our greatest enemy, right? Why? Because if we don’t, he’s going to slaughter us, he’s going to devour us, literally there in the Greek, to swallow us up and destroy us!

People of God, wake up, the Christian life is not a game. There really is a devil out there and he and his evil demons really are out there to get you, whether you believe it or not. And what Peter is trying to tell us is that unless you’re on the lookout, the enemy is going to take you out. He is constantly out there causing you and I trouble hoping he can make us stumble. Now, we don’t have to be afraid because God is fully capable of giving us the necessary strength to withstand every single time and thus experience victory over the devil every single time. Peter says if we just humbly draw near to God and stay alert to the devils’ schemes, even though we’re in the midst of the greatest Cosmic War of all time, there’s no need to be troubled at all, right?

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate when you’re becoming a Troubled Christian is When You Refuse to See How Your Enemy Attacks. Oh people, it’s the ol’ sneak attack. The devil is slick! He knows that you can’t win a war you refuse to see. He knows he can sneak right into your life and attack you, when he can get you to never be on the lookout for his attack in the first place!

People, the first definition of the word troubled means, “to be removed from a mental calm or contentment by causing pain, discomfort, or disorder.”
And people, this is one of the very first things the devil does to keep us from having a powerful testimony in Jesus Christ. He throws out the bait and says, “Hey man, what are you some sort of a wacko. Do you really think there are actual demons out there trying to destroy you and wreak havoc in your life? Come on! Get real. This is the new millennium. Why, the next thing you know you’ll say you believe in the Boogey Man! Stop troubling yourself with this nonsense!”

And people, you might think a troubled sight is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a troubled sight leads to a torrential life. And the first way the enemy attacks you hoping to make you live a torrential life is When You’re the Most Vulnerable.

Matthew 4:1-11 “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But Jesus told him, ‘No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’

Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’ Jesus responded, ‘The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’

Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ‘I will give it all to you,’ he said, ‘if you will kneel down and worship me.’ ‘Get out of here, satan,’ Jesus told him. ‘For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.’ Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.” (NLT)

According to our text here, the first vulnerable time that we are tempted by the enemy is When We Are Alone. Notice where Jesus is when the devil came to tempt Him. He wasn’t amongst a crowd of people, nor was there a single person with Him. He was all alone out in the wilderness. And people of God, it’s the same thing with you and I. The enemy knows that we are more apt to give into temptation when we’re all by ourselves. Why? Well, think about it. When we when we’re alone, we don’t have anybody around us to keep us accountable.
We don’t have anybody there to talk us out of it. And this is precisely what the devil wants. It’s the ol’ divide and conquer. Just like the predators in the wild that first separate their prey from the herd and then close in for the easy kill, so it is with satan and temptation. He wants to isolate you, making you an easy prey. Therefore, it’s common sense. If you don’t want to be an easy target for the enemy, then you’d better be doubly careful when you’re alone, right? Exactly!

But that’s not all. The second vulnerable time that we are tempted by the enemy is Right Before a Spiritual Success. If you’ll go back to the text we just read, notice at what time the enemy approached Jesus. It was before he went to the cross, the very thing He came to do. Why? Well the devil’s not stupid people. He knew that if he could get Jesus to sin by giving into temptation, then His dying on the cross would not have been a success but an absolute failure. Why? Because if Jesus ever sinned, He could never have been the perfect sacrifice that God required for the remission of our sins. Therefore, the devil targeted Jesus right before His greatest spiritual success. And so it is with you and I. God has an amazing mind-blowing plan for each of our lives. And the devil knows that if he can snare you into to a life of constant sinning then he will spoil your chances for spiritual success. It’s that simple.

Which brings us to the third vulnerable time that we are tempted by the enemy, which is Right After a Spiritual Success. And we see the timing of this kind of attack by the devil in the life of the Apostle Peter. One of his most successful spiritual moments was when he declared Jesus to be the Son of God. Jesus even then commends Peter that this was revealed to him by God. But right after this great moment in the life of Peter, just a few verses later, he surrenders his lips to be a mouthpiece for satan:

Matthew 16:22-23 “Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’” (NAS)

In this passage we see that Peter is amazingly rebuking Jesus Himself. And the reason why is because Jesus just announced that He is about to go to Jerusalem to suffer many things and there be killed. But then Jesus, who just finished commending Peter, now turns to sharply rebuke Peter for giving into the suggestions of who? The devil. And it’s the same thing when it comes to temptation with you and I. Be very careful right after a successful spiritual moment. Oftentimes, the enemy will be right there to bring you down. And it can happen just as quickly as it did with Peter.
But that’s still not all. The **fourth vulnerable time** that we are tempted by the enemy is **In Our Dreams**. Now, most people don’t seem to want to talk about this, and granted, dreams seem to be one of the least understood and/or overly abused topics in the Church. But the facts are this. Did you guys realize that your dreams are not neutral? That is, they come from somewhere? This is exactly what Solomon said:

**Ecclesiastes 5:3** “Just as being too busy gives you nightmares, being a fool makes you a blabbermouth.” (NLT)

As we see here, one of the sources for your dreams are your everyday life, right? Apparently, what you go through in a given day oftentimes ends up in your dreams. And I think many of us can easily agree with that. But the Bible also says that sometimes dreams are given by God showing us that they can come from a positive spiritual source. However, this tells us then that therein lies the possibility of just the opposite. Namely that dreams can also come from a **negative** spiritual source.

Folks, I don’t know about you, but I’ve noticed that sometimes, our dreams are conjured up not by circumstances, and not by God. Sometimes they come straight from the enemy. And it might simply be an obvious or subtle temptation to give in to sinful behavior. And the way it works is that your dreams will have a **lingering effect** in your mind. If you mull it around long enough, it might produce a **fear** of your circumstances, or a **doubt** about a relationship, or even a **sinful** activity. So, if we don’t pay attention to what goes through our minds throughout a given day, or even the lingering effect of, yes, even our dreams, then we just put ourselves in a vulnerable position to be attacked with temptation.

**People of God, wake up!** We’ve got to pay attention to how the enemy attacks. He’s always out there looking for a time when we’re the most vulnerable. Whether it’s when we’re all **alone**, right before or right after a **spiritual success**, or even in our **dreams**, he’s constantly out there setting us up with a trap, hoping we take the bait, like these hunters do with their prey:

“Men who trap animals in Africa for zoos in America say that one of the hardest animals to catch is the ring tailed monkey. For the Zulus of that continent, however, it’s simple. They’ve been catching this agile little animal with ease for years.
The method the Zulus use is based on knowledge of the animal. Their trap is nothing more than a melon growing on a vine. The seeds of this melon are a favorite of the monkey.

Knowing this, the Zulus simply cut a hole in the melon, just large enough for the monkey to insert his hand to reach the seeds inside. The monkey will stick his hand in, grab as many seeds as he can, then start to withdraw it.

This he cannot do. His fist is now larger than the hole. The monkey will pull and tug, screech and fight the melon for hours. But he can’t get free of the trap unless he gives up the seeds, which he refuses to do.

Meanwhile, the Zulus sneak up and nab him.”

People of God, this is precisely what the enemy does with you and I. He’s so wicked he doesn’t just put a trap before us. No! Are you kidding? He then proceeds to wait for that most opportune time for us to stick our hands into his baited trap, when we’re the most vulnerable, when we’re not paying attention to when we’re alone, or right before or right after a spiritual success or even our dreams. Why? Because that’s when our hands get stuck! And the whole time if we would just “let loose or open our fists,” that is, open our eyes to the bait, then we could easily be set free. But no! We get lazy, that’s when we let our guard down, that’s when we start monkeying around in our walk with Jesus Christ, and then bang! He pounces in for the kill!

People of God, we’ve got to pay attention to how the enemy attacks if we’re ever going to experience the victory we have in Jesus Christ. Why? Because how can you win a war you refuse to see? How can you engage in a fight if you don’t even know what you’re fighting against? And think of the irony here. The child of God who has been given the Spirit of Christ Who was tempted in all ways as we are yet was without sin, is actually tricked and seduced into never experiencing victory over sin because we never see it coming! When we are the most vulnerable! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second way the enemy attacks you hoping to make you live a torrential life is When You Have the Least Resistance.

1 Peter 1:13-15 “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As
obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.” (NIV)

People of God, the Bible is clear. You and I as Christians should not give into the temptations to sin and live unholy lives but holy lives, right? Why? Well, what did it say there? Because God is Holy! And since we are His children then we must also be holy! And apparently, one of the keys to you and I living holy lives is by being what? What did the text say first? By being self-controlled and always having our minds prepared for action, right? Or in other words, we’re constantly on the mental lookout for the enemy’s constant attacks. The point of the passage is that we get the victory to live a holy life when we never let our resistance down.

And people, the devil knows this. He knows it so stinking well! And so here’s what he does. He gets us to be mentally lazy, he gets us to not be on guard, he gets us to not be self-controlled and put our resistance down. And once that happens, we’re dead meat!

So, just what are those least resistant times in our lives when the enemy will seek to tempt us? Well, I’m glad you asked. The first time of least resistance that we’re tempted by the enemy to live unholy lives is When You’re Always Disobedient. Notice what the text we just read said there. Be holy, right? Why? Because not only are we to live lives that glorify God, but the more we don’t live a holy life like God, the harder it becomes to turn away from sin. This is exactly what the writer of Hebrews warned us about:

**Hebrews 12:1-3** “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text here, sin not only entangles us, but unless we stay untangled from it, it’s going to hinder us, it’s going to drag us down and keep us from running for Christ as effectively as we could. And unless you constantly resist you will eventually grow weary and lose heart.

You see, the problem with constant disobedience is that you’re not only constantly sinning against God but you’re likewise constantly stirring up trouble,
weighing yourself down, making yourself spiritually weaker and weaker until one day you notice you have virtually no resistance to sin left. It’s like beating on a hornet’s nest. If we keep smacking on it, what’s going to happen? We’re going to get stung right? And who’s fault is it going to be? Ours right? So if we keep beating on the nest of temptation by being disobedient, what’s going to happen? We’re going to constantly get stung by temptation. And who’s fault is it going to be? Ours isn’t it? And so here’s the point. If you’re tired of being stung by temptation, then simply stop beating on the hornet’s nest and start being obedient to God and build up your strength to fight off temptation. It’s that simple!

But that’s not all. The second time of least resistance that we’re tempted by the enemy is When Your Wiped Out. Whether you’re physically, emotionally, or mentally drained, or even sick, this is when the enemy will strike. Why? Because when you’re wiped out, your resistance is down. And when you’re resistance is down, you don’t feel like battling with temptation on top of everything else you’re going through, right? And this is precisely what the enemy wants. The devil will attack at the point of least resistance because he knows it’s a time when it’s much easier for us to rationalize or make excuses for our behavior and just give in to temptation because we’re wiped out. Therefore, if we don’t want to fall for this trap, then we simply need to model the behavior of Jesus Himself:

Mark 6:30-32 “The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and what they had taught. Then Jesus said, ‘Let’s get away from the crowds for a while and rest.’ There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat. They left by boat for a quieter spot.” (NLT)

You see, when the disciples returned from a busy and hectic ministry tour, Jesus simply informed them it was now time to get away. Even though what they were doing was important, they still needed rest. And people, if you and I don’t take time out on a regular basis to refresh ourselves, even though what we do is important, we will have simply allowed ourselves to become wiped out, and open to the enemy’s temptation.

But that’s still not all. The third time of least resistance that we’re tempted by the enemy is When Your Bored. And boy is the enemy having a heyday with this one. Here’s where we go to the other end of the spectrum. Instead of being constantly busy on the go running the rat race with no time to
spare and wipe ourselves out, we have way too much time on our hands leading to boredom, which contrary to popular opinion, is not a good thing to do:

**Ecclesiastes 10:18** “If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks.” (NIV)

You see, one of the problems of having **too much time** on your hands is that you often forsake those things in life that need constant attention, especially temptation. And boredom is simply a good sign that you’re headed in the wrong direction. With too much time on your hands, it doesn’t take long for you to spiritually begin to sag. Your mind looks for something to do. Your flesh looks for some way to be appeased and entertained, and bang! Your body, the temple of the Spirit, begins to leak and allow temptation and sin to come in like a flood. Why? All because you allowed yourself to become bored. You mentally let your guard down! So if temptation is pouring into your life, then simply start investing time in your relationship with Jesus, and your house will stand the storm.

People of God, wake up! We’ve got to pay attention to how the enemy attacks. He’s always out there looking for a time **when there’s the least resistance**. Whether it’s when we’re **always disobedient**, when we’re **wiped out**, or even when we’re **bored**, he’s constantly out there looking **not** for the hard way into our lives, no! But the **easy** way, just like these guys did:

“The Great Wall of China is not only the longest man-made structure ever made, but it was made specifically to keep out the enemy.

Nearly 4,000 miles long and so huge it is visible from space, it still didn’t work. The enemy got through anyway. In fact, they got through three different times. How?

Well, they didn’t get through by tearing down the wall for the wall was far too large to be destroyed. Here’s what they did. They simply got through by finding a gatekeeper they could bribe.

That’s right. They bribed a gatekeeper and they merely walked right in.

And so it is with the devil. There are gates that satan wants to pass through into our lives. He can’t get in unless we open the gate for him. But once we give into his bribes, he merely walks right in.”
People of God, this is precisely what the enemy does with you and I. He’s not stupid! He doesn’t attack us at our strongest point. He doesn’t always hit us with a full frontal assault. No! Are you kidding? Just like those invaders, he simply looks for the point of least resistance, when we’re always disobedient, when we’re wiped out, or even when we’re bored and he simply walks right in, every single time!

People of God, we’ve got to pay attention to how the enemy attacks if we’re ever going to experience the victory we have in Jesus Christ. Why? Because how can you win a war you refuse to see? How can you engage in a fight if you don’t even know what you’re fighting against? And think of the irony here. The child of God who has been given the Spirit of Christ Who was tempted in all ways as we are yet was without sin, is actually tricked and seduced to never experiencing victory over sin because we never see it coming! When? When we have the least resistance! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The third way the enemy attacks you hoping to make you live a torrential life is Whenever He Can.

1 Peter 5:8 “Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour.” (NLT)

Hey, how many of you guys have figured it out yet that the enemy never stops attacking you with temptation? In fact, the Greek here in this passage literally says that the enemy “constantly” looks for someone to devour. Think of what this means. We’re hammered not just once in awhile. But twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The devil is constantly violently seducing you and I to sin against God.

And his methodology is kind of like the ol’ Chinese water torture treatment. You know, where a person was tied to a table with their head was strapped in place so that he couldn’t move and water was then dripped onto their forehead, one drop at a time. Then in no time at all, the person would agree to do anything their captors wanted, just to get them to stop the drip, drip, drip. And people, it’s the same thing with the devil. He will constantly drip, drip, drip temptation into your mind, day after day, year after year, knowing that sooner or later you’re going to crack. That’s how persistently evil he is!

But even as horrific of a reality that is, the Bible is clear people! We don’t need to be afraid. We don’t have to give in to the devils’ temptations. No! Are you kidding? We just simply take the way out that God has provided.
People, the Bible is clear. With every single temptation, God provides a way out so we don’t have to give into it. Therefore, when the enemy attacks, we don’t have to freak out. We don’t have to be afraid. We simply high tail it out of there. It’s that simple. But herein lies our problem. How in the world can we high tail it out of there if half of the American Church doesn’t even believe in the one in whom we are to high tail it away from? How can we take God’s way out and experience constant victory when we don’t even take the devil’s constant attacks seriously? Answer? We won’t! Why? Because the devil actually tricks you and I into never seeing him coming in the first place, like this movie portrays:

“In the mid 1990’s the movie Devil’s Advocate was released starring Keanu Reeves and Al Pacino. Keanu plays Kevin Lomax, a happily married and very successful lawyer in America’s South. Down in the South he’s a man of integrity who’s focused on what’s important in life.

Then he’s offered a job in the Big Apple, New York, with a world wide law firm. Kevin and his wife move to New York only to find Kevin being seduced by the atmosphere of greed, sex and power that surrounds the firm, and more particularly it’s owner, John Milton, played by Al Pacino.

But we soon discover that there is more to this movie than the age old theme of greed versus goodness. The plot is much more sinister. It turns out that John Milton is in fact the Devil, a devil who has learned to despise God and embrace self-satisfaction.

During the movie the Devil lets us in on his plan to seduce humanity.

‘You sharpen the human appetite to the point where it can split atoms with its desire; you build egos the size of cathedrals; fiber-optically connect the world to every eager impulse; grease even the dullest dreams with these dollar-green, gold-plated fantasies, until every human becomes an aspiring emperor, becomes his own God.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 “But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can’t stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.”
(NLT)
And as we’re straddling from one deal to the next, who’s got his eye on the planet, as the air thickens, the water sours, and even the bees’ honey takes on the metallic taste of radioactivity? And it just keeps coming, faster and faster. There’s no chance to think, to prepare; it’s buy futures, sell futures, when there is no future!

‘Look at me’ cries the Devil, ‘underestimated from Day One! You’d never think I was a master of the universe, now, would you? I’m a surprise, Kevin. They don’t see me coming: that’s what you’re missing.’”

People of God, **think of the irony here.** The child of God who has been given the Spirit of Christ Who was tempted in all ways as we are yet was without sin, is actually tricked and seduced to never experiencing victory over sin. Why? Because we never see the devil coming in the first place! This is what we’re missing! The devil not only really does exist and he not only really does tempt us to sin against God **whenever he can** but he **never stops** and the whole time we’re tricked and seduced to **never taking the way out**! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this **Attack of the Terrible T’s** and you’ve actually become a **Troubled Christian**, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Troubled Christian into a **Triumphant Christian**. And people, a Triumphant Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only keep a sharp eye out for the enemy and turn from sin, but they’ll even turn their enemies sin around for the glory of God, like this Christian did:

“The country of Sudan has experienced civil war for 34 of the past 45 years. The latest erupted in 1989, when the National Islamic Front seized power. Its’ soldiers are following a policy of ‘creeping genocide’ which justifies even the most brutal acts committed against the people of southern Sudan, who are predominantly Christian.

They target Christian villages, forcing people to flee. Homes and churches are being torched. There are reports of the soldiers throwing people into their burning homes. Christian pastors are shot to death.
Soldiers are attacking the mothers of children and cutting off their breasts with knives which leaves the babies with no nutrition and the mothers must now watch their infants die slowly of starvation.

Women and girls are raped. Some are taken into slavery. And those who are able to flee into the mountains face imminent starvation. So far an estimated two million people have died and over four million have been displaced.

But it was also during this time that one Christian man, Pastor John Lasu tirelessly urged his fellow Christians to stand firm in their faith. With AK-47 rifles pointed at their heads, many Christians were forced to choose conversion to Islam or death.

Yet Pastor Lasu encouraged his flock to choose the righteousness of Christ over Islam even if it meant certain death. He said, ‘Be strong and have faith in God as Christians. It is better to die a Christian and live forever, than to live on Earth as a Muslim and lose eternity.’

A towering example of righteousness, Pastor Lasu was arrested several times by the Sudanese government and one of his darkest moments came at the infamous ‘White House’ in Juba, Sudan.

Missionaries once occupied the ‘White House’ as they evangelized the Sudanese people, but today it is known as a house of torture. Many Christians have entered the ‘White House,’ few have left alive.

Pastor John Lasu was one of those survivors, and he says he owes it all to the grace and mercy of a righteous God. He was hog-tied and hung from the rafters of a ‘White House’ torture chamber.

Four soldiers whipped and beat him with sticks and clubs as he dangled 15 feet above the dirt floor. And after seven hours of torture, they released the rope that held Lasu aloft causing the aging pastor to plummet to the ground.

Then his persecutors dug a grave for him, because after examining his bruised and bloodied body, they did not expect him to live through the night.
But when Pastor Lasu’s torturers saw he was still alive the next morning, they exclaimed, ‘Your God must be the One and True God, because no man could possibly live through the beatings we gave you!’ And so they released him.

And today while you are reading this, more villages will be burned, more people attacked, more slaves taken, and more Christians will die to the tune of 50-500 people every single day.

Pastor John Lasu’s response? With Bible in hand and rubber galoshes covering his feet, he continues to be a faithful shepherd of Jesus Christ and he bicycles through the bush along muddy trails and shoulder-high grass to minister to believers and nonbelievers alike.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If you were hung from the rafters and nearly tortured to death by the enemies of Christ, would you, like Pastor John Lasu, have the ability to not just survive, but to then turn around and share the love of God with those very same enemies of Christ? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil himself to turn a blind eye to his attacks and instead live like and enemy of Christ yourself?”

People of God, if ever there was a time when we the Church need to be awakened from our slumber, it is now! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Troubled Christian! Arise! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Terrible T’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Chapter Fourteen

The Terrified Christian

“It was your typical summer season in the Gulf Coast region with hot muggy temperatures that not only left people in a constant sticky sweat, but a serious desire for rain to bring the heat to an end. But little did these people know that in just a matter of days, a rainstorm would come to not only bring the heat to an end, but their lives as well.

The killer storm first formed over the Bahamas and then crossed over southern Florida causing just a few deaths and some flooding. With this first taste of blood, the monster storm rapidly gained strength becoming one of the strongest of its kind ever recorded at sea. Its tentacles tore through the Gulf of Mexico heading for more victims, this time in Louisiana. And so horrific was this beast that 1.2 million people fled in utter terror.

As it hit the shore the winds topped 125 mph causing complete obliteration of trees, buildings, bridges, cars, and yes, even people. But that was just the beginning. This liquid monster spewed forth walls of seawater onto the land flooding everything in its path, knocking out power, and drowning people in their very homes.

But even for the fortunate few who managed to survive the initial onslaught, their struggle for life was just beginning. The levees surrounding the city that were supposed to protect them had failed, leaving hundreds more entombed in a watery grave.
In fact, some survivors reported seeing scores of dead bodies lying or floating in streets for days before ever being collected. And when the storm was over and the monster’s appetite finally appeased the destruction was unfathomable.

Complete cities throughout several states were totally demolished covering 90,000 square miles, an area almost the size of the United Kingdom, leaving behind 81.2 billion in damages. And tears across the nation flowed for months as the news rang forth of how 1,836 of their fellow countrymen were dead.

It was the most destructive and costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States. The year was 2005. The disaster was a hurricane. Its name was Katrina.”

Now, we all know that Hurricane Katrina was one of the worst natural disasters of all time in the U.S., right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes Hurricane Katrina look like a game of hopscotch? And people, what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one place and one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Terrible T’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your testimony for Jesus Christ.

And we’ve already seen how the first constant weapon, the first Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Twisted Christian. Then we saw that the second Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Tormented Christian. And in the last chapter we saw that the third Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Troubled Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually trick you and I into refusing to learn how the enemy attacks us, thereby causing us to live a self-inflicted troubled life. We never experience victory over sin because we never see it coming in the first place! And there we saw the enemy attacks us when we’re the most vulnerable and when we have the least resistance and whenever he can.

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember who we’re dealing with here folks. Hello, it’s satan! He doesn’t stop there. Are you kidding? He never stops! He’s
constantly out there trying to get you to sin against Almighty God and destroy your testimony! Therefore, the **fourth Terrible T** the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the **Terrified Christian**. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

**Ephesians 6:10-18** “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the battles that you and I face on a daily basis are not just physical, they’re what? Spiritual, right? And notice once again whom these battles are with? The devil and his evil dominions, right? People, I don’t know how much more clear the Bible has to get than that to tell us that we really are in a Great Cosmic War against the very devil himself. People of God, wake up! You and I as Christians really are under assault from the very pit of hell twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, whether you want to believe it or not. Granted, that’s the bad news. However, the good news is this. Once again, we don’t have to worry. We don’t have to freak out! We don’t have to be afraid! Why? Because God provides the victory for us. What did He say? If you and I are going to live victorious Christian lives, we need to simply take our **stand** before the devil **in the power of God**, right? And when we do that, it simply fizzes every single weapon, every single fiery dart of temptation the enemy throws at us, every single time, right? Of course! Who can defeat the power of God?
Now here’s my point. Notice it says to stand in God’s armor. It doesn’t say shout at the devil. It doesn’t say scream at a demon. It doesn’t say bind and loose anything at all. It simply says to stand firm in God! Why? Because once again, what can penetrate God’s armor? Who can come up with a weapon that can beat God’s weapons? Answer. Nobody! Therefore, if we just stand firm in the things of God, we don’t have to be terrified by any spiritual attack not even from the devil himself, right? Why? Because we not only belong to God, but we’ve been given the armor of God and God can’t be defeated!

And people, that’s why the first sign to indicate when you’re becoming a Terrified Christian is When You Refuse to Learn How to Defeat Your Enemy. Oh people, it’s the ol’ switcheroo. The devil is slick! He knows that he can’t defeat God’s armor. Are you kidding? He knows he can’t win against the things of God. So here’s what he does. He simply gets you and I to not use the weapons of God!

People, the first definition of the word terrified means, “to fill with terror or alarm, to make greatly afraid.” And people, this is one of the very first things the devil does to keep us from having a powerful testimony in Jesus Christ. He throws out the bait and says, “Oh, so you want to live for Jesus, do you? You think you’re some sort of hotshot Christian, do you? Well you better run and run in terror because I’m your worst nightmare you little pipsqueak! I’m going to send the very demons of hell to torment you day and night until you learn your proper place in life. Don’t stand before me Christian! Kneel before me in terror!”

And people, you might think a terrified belief is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a terrified belief leads to a tyrannical life.

And the first sign to indicate you’re headed for a tyrannical life living in fear of the devil himself is When You Refuse to Have a Good Offense. People of God, wake up! Everybody knows that if you’re going to defeat an opponent then you must certainly have a good offense, right? And if that’s true in physical things then how much more true is it for spiritual things? People of God, hear me and hear me loud and clear. We do not have to run in terror from the devil every single time he assaults us with the slightest temptation. No! Just like in a war, you simply develop a strong offense toward your opponent.

So how can you and I develop a strong offense towards the enemy’s attacks of temptation? Great question. I’m glad you asked. The first way we develop a good offense when attacked with temptation is by Staying Sharp:
Matthew 26:40-41 “Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, ‘Could you stay awake and watch with me even one hour? Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak!’” (NLT)

According to our text here, Jesus clues us in on the first thing we need to do if we’re going to have a good offense towards temptation. And that is to simply stay awake, keep alert, watch, or in other words stay sharp, right? And it’s this unfortunate tendency of we Christians to not stay sharp is why sin seems to run rampant in our lives. Billy Sunday once said, “The reason why sin flourishes is because we treat it like a cream puff instead of a rattle snake.” And folks, the fact is this. If you and I are ever going to keep from constantly being poisoned with temptation, we simply need to stay sharp. We must constantly be on our guard and develop a keen eye to the myriad of constant ways the enemy will strike at us. Why? Because again, how can we fight, let alone win a fight, that we do not see?

For instance, speaking of snakes, why do so many people get bit by rattle snakes? Isn’t it because they’re taken by surprise because they’re not paying attention to their surroundings? So if we don’t daily take the initiative to keep alert of the enemy’s tactics, then just like the rattle snake who hides in the bushes, waiting to strike at a moments notice, so you and I will be overpowered by temptation.

Or here’s another example. Why does the U.S. Forestry Service pay somebody to sit down all day out in the middle of nowhere to watch the forest? Besides the fact that it’s a government job, is it not because they are an early warning system, always on the lookout for the slightest signs of smoke? And herein lies our problem. Oftentimes, we have no early spiritual warning system and thus we are constantly bombarded with the fires of temptation. And people, the best way to put out a fire is to simply do so before it ever even gets started in the first place. But again, how can you fight that which you do not see?

Therefore we must stay sharp, develop a keen eye, and pay attention to the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. People of God, you better learn to deal with the smoke, not the flames, if you’re ever going to be that victorious Christian. Why? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your offense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The second way we develop a good offense when attacked with temptation is by Staying Away. And it was this refusal to stay away that was Lot’s problem:
2 Peter 2:7-8 “And He rescued righteous Lot, greatly worn out and distressed by the wanton ways of the ungodly and lawless. For that just man, living there among them, tortured his righteous soul every day with what he saw and heard of their unlawful and wicked deeds.” (AMP)

You see, in my opinion, Lot was simply a glutton for punishment. Think about it for a moment. Did anybody twist Lot’s arm and make him stay in Sodom, watching and listening to all its wicked behavior? I don’t think so. I mean, wouldn’t it have been better to simply stay away from there at the first sign of ungodliness? For whatever reason, Lot refused to stay away from Sodom and thus he himself brought on the torturing of his own soul.

And herein lies the common sense of this principle. If a person doesn’t want to get burned by a fire, what’s the best thing to do? Stay away from it right? And so it is when it comes to temptation. But let’s be honest. Just like Lot, how many times do you and I need to be led by the hand of God and rescued time and time again from the destructive places we go to, when all the while it would have been far less painful just to stay away? It’s self-torture isn’t it?

Therefore, if you’re tired of getting burned by temptation, and if we have any common sense, we must simply stay away from the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. Why? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your offense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The third way we develop a good offense when attacked with temptation is by Stop Delaying:

2 Timothy 2:22 “Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (NIV)

People of God, the Bible simply declares that at the very instant you encounter temptation, you are to immediately flee. And herein in lies another problem. Instead of an immediate response, we give into delay. And it’s this habitual delaying that can quickly lead to some serious unnecessary trouble.

You see, sometimes we’ll actually recognize a temptation coming and we might even be smart enough to figure out that it would be a good thing to stay away. But oftentimes we make the mistake of giving into a delayed response. And once you give into a delay, you’ll be sucked right into the middle of a fiery temptation. That’s why when it comes to temptation, the Bible says it’s so much easier to be fleeing instead of flirting. It’s better to be running instead of rationalizing. And we’d save ourselves a whole lot of trouble if we’d just exit instead of excusing.
Therefore, if you’re tired of getting burned by temptation, then we must **stop delaying** and immediately start fleeing from the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. **Why**? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your offense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The **fourth way** we develop a good offense when attacked with temptation is by **Spring Cleaning**:

**Hebrews 12:1** “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us.” (NLT)

You see, even when we finally get around to stop delaying in dealing with temptation, we still heap upon ourselves unnecessary trouble by **not getting rid of** the sources of temptation in our lives.

For instance, how easy is it for weeds to grow in your garden, yard, or anywhere? They pop up everywhere and you don’t even plant them, right? And this is what the Bible says about sin. It can **easily** grow in our lives. I mean do any of us really have to think hard and long about how we can sin? No! Sin pops up everywhere all the time whether or not we think about it. And temptation is the seeds the devil uses to sow weeds in your life. And just like weeds that choke out the life of a garden, so a life full of weeds will choke out the life of your spirit.

**And here’s my point.** The longer you let those weeds go, the harder it is to get rid of them isn’t it? So wouldn’t it be wise to do some **spring cleaning** once in awhile before the roots set in and the weeds get out of control? Of course! Why? Because by doing some spring cleaning on a regular basis, we’re offensively setting up a barrier.

Or how about this common sense principle. If your home is in a fire prone area, do you not make a fire break around your property to provide protection against the flames? Of course, right? But if you never cut any of the brush down, you let the weeds get dry and out of control, and then you stack cans of flammable liquid and oily rags around your house, what is going to happen when the slightest little fire comes along? Can you say toast? And people, what do you think is going to happen if we never get around **on a regular basis** to cleaning out the potentially flammable sinful inputs in our lives? We’re simply going to get toasted by temptation.

Therefore, if you’re tired of getting burned by temptation, then we must simply take the time to **spring clean** our lives of the multitude of traps the enemy
places before us. **Why**? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your offense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The **fifth way** we develop a good offense when attacked with temptation is by **Staying Dependent**:

**John 15:5** “I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much abundant fruit. However, apart from Me cut off from vital union with Me you can do nothing.” (AMP)

People of God, the Bible declares that we not only need God’s strength for salvation, but we also need it for sanctification, or maturity. Therefore, we need to declare our own **dependence upon God** for everything. We’ve daily got to be **staying dependent** upon God for His provision, which includes the ability to ward off temptation. **Why**? Because apart from Him, we can do nothing.

Think about it people. Do you really think that you can single handedly take on the forces of evil who have been honing their wicked skills of temptation for thousands of years? I don’t think so. And that’s why Jesus said to not be dependent upon ourselves when it comes to dealing with the devil, but rather upon Him. **Why**? Because Jesus wins every single time!

**1 John 4:4** “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” (NAS)

People of God, here are the facts. Maybe a lot of our troubles with temptation are stemming from the fact that we are simply trying to overcome in our own strength. We think that greater are **we** than he that is in the world! But the Bible says the way we overcome them is by the power of God, not the hand of man. Otherwise, we’re doomed to fail.

For instance, can you imagine one person with one shovel trying to put out a whole forest fire? Do you think it’s going to work? No! In fact, it’s not only a hopeless cause, but they’re also putting themselves in a lot of danger aren’t they? So people, if you find yourself in a forest fire of temptation, don’t try fighting it yourself. Simply call upon your Heavenly Father and watch how He sends the rain of His Spirit to put it out.

Therefore, if you’re tired of getting burned with temptation, then we must **stay dependent** on God’s provision against the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. **Why**? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your offense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!
People of God, wake up! We’ve got to learn how to defeat the enemy’s attacks if we’re ever going to be that mighty army for Almighty God. Whether it’s staying sharp, staying away, stop delaying, spring cleaning, or staying dependent, we’ve got to develop a good offense. Why? Because unless you deal with temptation at its source, you’ll never get the victory, like this man discovered:

“An old deacon who frequently led the prayer meetings would often conclude his petitions with the words, ‘O Lord, clean all the cobwebs out of my life!’

Finally a man who lived next door to him could stand it no longer for he knew that he was a self-seeking, carnal Christian.

So one Wednesday night when the old fellow ended in his usual manner, his neighbor jumped to his feet and shouted, ‘Don’t do it Lord! Don’t do it! Make him kill the spider!’

People of God, this is precisely what the enemy does with you and I. He’s not stupid. Are you kidding? He knows if we deal with his evil temptations at their source in the way God says to, by staying sharp, staying away, stop delaying, spring cleaning, and staying dependent, then he can’t touch us. He can’t win. But if he can get us to let our offense down, just a little, and focus on the cobwebs, the after effects of sin, instead of the spider, the source of sin, then bang! He bites us with temptation, we sin against God and we fall into a web of despair, every single time. Therefore, you better not let your offense down, ever!

People of God, we’ve got to learn how to defeat the enemy’s attacks if we’re ever going to experience the victory we have in Jesus Christ. Why? Because how can win a battle if you refuse to do battle? How can you win a fight if you don’t have a good offense? And think of the irony here. The child of God, who has been given the very tools of God to ensure a constant victory over the devil, is actually tricked and seduced into never experiencing victory and instead running in terror of the devil! How? By not having a good offense! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second sign to indicate that you’ve become a Terrified Christian and you’re headed for a tyrannical life living in fear of the devil himself is When You Refuse to Have a Good Defense. Oh people, hear my heart and wake up! A good offense is not all we need if we’re ever going to experience victory over temptation. Are you kidding? Remember who we’re dealing with here. Hello! It’s the devil himself. This is the ultimate source of evil
we’re up against. Therefore, you need all the tools you can get to wage war against the enemy of our souls. And anybody knows that if you’re ever going to win a war, then you also need a **good defense** as well.

So, how can you and I develop a strong defense against the enemy’s attacks of temptation? Great question. I’m glad you asked. The **first way** we develop a good defense when attacked with temptation is by **Standing Firm**: 

**1 Peter 5:9-11** “Take a firm stand against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are. In his kindness God called you to his eternal glory by means of Jesus Christ. After you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. All power is his forever and ever. Amen.” (NLT)

Now folks, according to our text here, when you and I are confronted by the enemy, we are to simply what? **Stand firm**, right? And this is a huge point to consider when dealing with temptation, which unfortunately today is totally misunderstood. You see, some translations say “resist” but the word literally means to “stand firm.” And people, **this is no minor deal**. You see, many people in the Church today would have you and I believe that we need to “resist” the devil with some so-called secret formula or some sensational spiritual method. But what did our text say? When we’re tempted by the enemy, we don’t need to shout at the devil. We don’t need to call out a demon, let alone make accusations to them. Even Michael the archangel knew this:

**Jude 9** “But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, did not dare accuse satan of blasphemy, but simply said, ‘The Lord rebuke you.’” (NLT)

You see, if Michael, the mightiest of angels, simply **stood firm** against the devil himself by saying “the Lord rebuke you,” what makes you and I think that we’re are going to overcome the enemy by applying a secret formula? Answer, we’re not! People of God, the Bible is clear. It’s only by trusting in the power of God that will restore, support, and strengthen us against temptation. Only **reliance on God**, not some super duper fantastic spiritual formula that will enable you and I to be placed on a firm foundation so that we can take our stand against the devil and his evil dominions.

Therefore, if you’re getting tired of being burned by temptation then we must **stand firm** against the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. **Why?**
Because if you don’t, it only shows that your defense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The second way we develop a good defense when attacked with temptation is by Speaking in Prayer:

Matthew 6:13 “And don’t let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (NLT)

People of God, the Bible is clear. One of the best ways we know that someone is in fact relying on God’s power to overcome temptation is by what? By praying about it, right? And for some goofy reason, this is one of the most important parts of the Lord’s Prayer that we often miss. I mean, don’t you think it’s a great defensive strategy to pray to God before temptation comes? Hello! I mean, do we really have to fast for fourteen days to get an answer on that one? Are you kidding? Of course not! And people, here’s the facts. Daily praying to God for the strength to not yield to temptation is daily relying on His power to overcome temptation.

But let’s not stop there. Let’s use some more common sense. We not only need to pray before temptation comes, we also need to pray during temptation. Doesn’t that make great sense? Of course! But herein lies our problem. It’s not only before temptation, but especially during temptation that we seem to always forget about the importance of prayer. I mean, think about our usual response. Usually when we are tempted, do we not fight and struggle and grit our teeth hoping we don’t give in? But people, hello! Don’t you think it would be so much easier to just go to God in prayer instead of grunting and groaning in our own strength? And so here’s my point. When we do, don’t you think that God will provide the victory? Of course He will! But the question is, “Are we even asking Him to?”

Therefore, if you’re tired of getting burned by temptation, then we must simply be prepared to speak in prayer before and during the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. Why? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your defense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The third way we develop a good defense when attacked with temptation is by Soaking Up Scripture:

Psalm 119:10-11 “With my whole heart have I sought You, inquiring for and of You and yearning for You; Oh, let me not wander or step aside either in ignorance or willfully from Your commandments. Your word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (AMP)
People, the Bible simply declares that one of the greatest benefits of God’s Word is that it has a way of keeping us from wandering or stepping aside from His commands, i.e. sinning against God, right? And people, in a nutshell, this is why you and I need to keep our noses in the commandments of God. Wake up! When we hide God’s Word in our hearts, it defensively has a way of keeping us on the straight and narrow. And maybe the reason why your Christian path had been crooked and bumpy lately is simply because you haven’t been studying your Bible.

And just like it is with prayer to God, so it is that we need the Word of God. We need not only prayer to God before and during temptation, but we also the Word of God before and during temptation. And we see this principle in the temptation of Jesus, by the devil himself. Let’s revisit that passage:

**Matthew 4:1-11**  “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.’

But Jesus told him, ‘No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’

Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’

Jesus responded, ‘The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the L ORD your God.’

Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ‘I will give it all to you,’ he said, ‘if you will kneel down and worship me.’

‘Get out of here, satan,’ Jesus told him. ‘For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the L ORD your God and serve only him.’ Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.” (NLT)

Now according to our text, what was our Lord’s response when He was tempted? What did he use to ward off the devil’s temptations? He spoke the
Word of God, didn’t He? And as Jesus continued to quote Scripture, what did the devil eventually do? He left, didn’t he? And so here’s the obvious point! Don’t you think soaking up and speaking forth Scripture will also work for you and I when we too are tempted by the devil? Of course it will, people!

Therefore, if you’re tired of getting burned by temptation, then we must soak up Scripture, before and during the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. Why? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your defense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The fourth way we develop a good defense when attacked with temptation is by being Steadfast in Faith:

1 John 1:9 “But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.” (NLT)

Now folks, the word steadfast here means, “to be certain, unalterable, and guaranteed.” And people, this is one of the most incredible truths that you and I are guaranteed in the Bible and that is this. When we confess our sins to God, He will forgive us. You can bank on it! In fact, in the original language it says that God is not only faithful to forgive us but that He continually cleanses us from every wrong. But that’s not all! Notice it’s not just continual, but any and every wrong, not just some.

You see, this is the glorious message of the Gospel. We Christians aren’t going to heaven because we’re perfect. No way! Not one of us can or ever will live up to the perfection of Jesus Christ. But wonder of wonders, if we confess our sins to Him and call upon His Name to save us, He will continually cleanse us of every single sin, and not just the past ones either. But the present ones and even the ones you’ve yet to commit or are even aware of. Isn’t that wonderfully amazing?

And so here’s my point in bringing up this wonderful truth. The sad fact is that you and I, yes even as Christians, are going to fall, we’re going to fail, we’re going to sin. You can be certain of that! And to prove my point, let me ask the question. How many of you have fallen recently? Okay, for those of you who didn’t raise your hands, you just lied, so you just fell, and thus you’ve proven my point! But here’s my bigger point. The good news is that you can also be certain that when you do fall into sin, that God guarantees that, by faith, He will cleanse you from it through Jesus Christ! That’s what we’re to remain steadfast in! Why? Because unless we do, when we blow it, and we will, the enemy will trick us into feeling condemned by God instead of cleansed by God, and it will utterly destroy your walk with God every single time!
Therefore, if you’re getting tired of being burned by temptation, then we must be steadfast in faith against the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. **Why?** Because if you don’t, it only shows that your defense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

The **fifth way** we develop a good defense when attacked with temptation is by **Standing Up**:

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 “We are hard-pressed on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but are never deserted: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!” (J.B.P.)

People of God, the Bible simply declares that when we’ve been knocked down, we simply, what? We get right back up again, right? Of course! Why? Because we haven’t been knocked out! We stand not in our own strength and righteousness but in the strength and righteousness of Jesus Christ! And this is precisely what the enemy will try to keep us from believing.

People of God, wake up! The enemy cannot take away your salvation. Praise God! But that doesn’t mean he leaves you alone. Are you kidding? He just moves to plan B and tries to get you distracted, or better yet, **discouraged** in your walk with God. And he accomplishes this dastardly deed by getting you to **doubt your acceptance with God**. And this is why it is vitally important that as soon as we fall into a sin, we **immediately** confess that sin. Why? Because the longer you wait, the more the devil grabs a foothold into your brain to discourage you. He gets you into thinking that once you’ve fallen down that you’re knocked out, you’re done, it’s finished, you’re all washed up, it’s all over for you pal! But people of God this is a lie from the very pit of hell! The Bible is clear. We stand not in our own righteousness but in the righteousness of Jesus Christ!

Philippians 3:9 “I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith.” (NLT)

People of God, we must persevere in the truth and know for certain that when we ask God, “Got any grace?” that **He will always say yes**! He won’t nail us to the counter. He’s already nailed it to His Son on the cross. And because of this, we can stand right back up and keep on going! God never deserts us, He always forgives us, and therefore we’re never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever knocked out! Ever!
And so here’s my point! If you’ve fallen down on the battlefield of life, then don’t listen to the lies of the enemy. Get up by the grace of God and start fighting again! Why? Because how effective is a soldier if he sits down in the middle of a battle? Answer? He’s not! And people, I’m telling you, it’s this temptation to doubt God’s complete acceptance of us through Jesus Christ, is what the devil uses to trick us into not just sitting down on the battlefield of life, but in staying down and never fighting against him again! But people of God, wake up! God says to get up and stay up because your sin debt has been paid up! He has forgiven you through Jesus Christ!

People of God, the amazing truth is this. God doesn’t use us for His glory because we’re so wonderful, or in other words, because of us. Are you kidding? Rather he uses us in spite of us. Don’t believe me? Then let’s take a look at all of the great heroes of the Bible that God used in the past and you tell me if God used them because they lived such wonderful lives:

- Moses stuttered.
- David’s armor didn’t fit.
- John Mark was rejected by Paul.
- Hosea’s wife was a prostitute.
- Amos’ only training was in fig-tree pruning.
- Jacob was a liar.
- David had an affair.
- Timothy had ulcers.
- Peter was afraid of death.
- Lazarus was dead.
- John was self-righteous.
- Naomi was a widow.
- Paul was a murderer. So was Moses.
- Jonah ran from God.
- Miriam was a gossip.
- Gideon and Thomas both doubted.
- Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal.
- Elijah was burned out.
- John the Baptist was a loudmouth.
- Martha was a worrywart.
- Mary was lazy.
- Samson had long hair.
- Noah got drunk.³

People of God, if the Lord can use an adulterer, a liar, or even a murderer for His purposes, then don’t you think that He can still use you and I? But you might object, “Oh but you don’t understand the sins I have committed.” Get up by the grace of God and start fighting again! “But the sin I was involved in has left a trail of devastation.” Get up by the grace of God and start fighting again! Don’t give in, don’t give out, and don’t give up! Get up, stand up and keep on fighting!

People of God, if you’re tired of getting burned by temptation then we must stand up by the grace of God against the multitude of traps the enemy places before us. Why? Because if you don’t, it only shows that your defense is down, you’ll lose the battle, and you’ll get burned, every single time!

People of God, wake up! We’ve got to learn how to defeat the enemy attacks if we’re ever going to be that mighty army for Almighty God. Whether it’s standing firm, speaking in prayer, soaking up Scripture, being steadfast in faith, and standing up, we’ve got to develop a good defense. Why? Because even the slightest little compromise with the devil will kill you on the spot, like this story reveals:

“A scorpion asked a beaver to take him across the river on his back. ‘Are you insane?’ asked the beaver. ‘While I’m swimming you’ll sting me and then I’ll drown.’

‘Oh come now,’ laughed the scorpion. ‘Why would I sting you? Then I’d drown too. Come on. Be logical.’

‘That makes sense,’ said the beaver. ‘Hop on and off we’ll go.’

The scorpion climbed on the beaver’s back, but halfway across the river he gave the poor trusting beaver a mighty sting.
As they both sank to the bottom, the beaver asked, ‘Why did you do such a wicked thing? You said yourself there would be no logic in your stinging me. Why then did you do it?’

‘Logic has nothing to do with it,’ sighed the scorpion. ‘It’s just my nature.’”

People of God, this is precisely what the enemy does with you and I. He’s not stupid. Are you kidding? He knows if we deal with his evil temptations in the way God says to, by standing firm, speaking up in prayer, soaking up Scripture, being steadfast in faith, and standing back up, then he can’t touch us. He can’t win. But if he can get us to compromise, and let our defense down, just a little, then bang! He stings us with his temptation, we sin against God and we sink to the bottom in our walk with Jesus Christ. Why? Because that is all he can do! That is the nature of satan. He is wicked, he is evil, he hates your guts and he wants you dead! Stop kidding yourself! Therefore, you better not let your defense down, ever!

People of God, we’ve got to learn how to defeat the enemy’s attacks if we’re ever going to experience the victory we have in Jesus Christ. Why? Because how can you win a battle if you refuse to do battle? How can you win a fight if you don’t have a good defense? And think of the irony here. The child of God who has been given the very tools of God to ensure a constant victory over the devil, is actually tricked and seduced into never experiencing victory and instead running in terror of the devil! How? By not having a good defense! Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Terrible T’s and you’ve actually become a Terrified Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, because God loves you as His child, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Terrified Christian into a Triumphant Christian. And people, a Triumphant Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only refrain from the devil’s temptations to live a life of sin and degradation, but they’ll remain strong in Lord Jesus Christ, even in the face of their own threatened destruction, like Ignatius did:

“The year was 117 AD and on this day, a Christian Bishop of Antioch and convert and disciple of the Apostle of John, was confronted with evil. His name was Ignatius. He was challenged by the evil Roman Emperor Trajan, who recently authorized the death penalty for any Christian who refused to acknowledge the Roman gods of the day.
Trajan asked him, ‘Who are you, spirit of evil, who dare disobey my orders and goad others on to their destruction?’

Ignatius replied, ‘I am he who bears Christ within him.’

And Trajan replied, ‘And do we not bear within ourselves the gods who help us against our enemies?’

Ignatius responded, ‘You are mistaken when you call gods those who are no better than devils. There is but one God, who created heaven and earth and all that in them is; and one Jesus, made Christ, into whose kingdom I earnestly desire to be admitted.’

‘Do you mean Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?’ asked Trajan.

‘Yes,’ replied Ignatius, ‘the same, who by His death has crucified both sin and its author, and who has proclaimed that every malice of the devil shall be trodden underfoot by those who bear Jesus in their hearts.’

‘Do you then,’ asked the Emperor, ‘bear Christ within you?’

‘Yes,’ said Ignatius, ‘for it is written, ‘I will dwell in them and will walk with them.’’

And so with that simple confession, Trajan ordered that Ignatius should die. In no time at all, he was bound and shipped to Rome to face the horrors of the Coliseum.

But from this point on, instead of fear, Ignatius passionately responded in this manner. He simply begged his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to not do anything to prevent his martyrdom.

He said, ‘Let all the Churches know that I die willingly for God. Let me become the food of wild beasts, through whom I may attain to God. I am God’s grain, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ.’
So as Ignatius approached Rome, the faithful came out to meet him, rejoicing in his presence, but grieving that they were to lose him so soon. Some of his last words to the Church were this.

‘In face of their outbursts of wrath be patient; in face of their arrogant words be humble; meet their revilings with prayers; where they are in error be steadfast in the faith; in face of their violence be gentle. Be not anxious to retaliate on them.

Endeavor to imitate the Lord, that no rank weed of the devil be found in you.

For to be near the sword is to be near to God, in the midst of wild beasts is in the midst of God, if only it be in the name Jesus Christ, that we may suffer with Him. All things I endure, since He, the perfect man, makes me strong.’

And so it was that the Roman command was given, and two fierce lions were loosed upon Ignatius whereupon the beasts literally shred his body to pieces and ground him alive with their teeth. His prayer do be ground into the pure bread of Christ was answered.”

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If you were threatened with being eaten alive wild beasts, would you hunger for obedience to God so much so, that you’d actually be willing to be ground as wheat for Christ, like Ignatius? Or have you been tricked and seduced by the devil himself to gorge your flesh on satanic weeds and sin against Christ?”

People of God, if ever there was a time when we the Church need to be awakened from our slumber, it is now! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Terrified Christian! Arise! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Terrible T’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
Chapter Fifteen

The Traitorous Christian

“It was a wonderful sunny day in this island paradise with vacationers from around the world enjoying the soothing ocean breezes and lucious hotel accomodations. Families and their children crowded the gorgeous sandy beaches and they splashed and giggled in pure delight. But little did these people know that their island paradise was about to become a watery hell.

At 7:58 AM, unbeknowst to these people, a massive 9.3 earthquake, the second largest earthquake ever recorded, struck the ocean bottom and instantly triggered a series of waves. The only problem was that these waves initially traveled at up to an amazing 500 MPH, reached as high as 100 feet, and were speeding towards land.

When the first wave struck, nearly everyone was completely hit by surprise. News cameras even showed a man with his back to the beach totally oblivious to his impending death just seconds later.

But then came a second wave, a third wave, a fourth wave, each with enough sufficient time inbetween to fool people into thinking it was all over, when the whole time, it was just beginning. Thus, thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children continued to persih.

And even those who managed to escape the carnage on the beach, their fate wasn’t much better. Why? Because the waves were so massive this gave them the
ability to spread their tentacles of death as far as a mile and a quarter inland, deluging everything in its path.

And when the debris had finally settled, and the screams had finally subsided, the damage was assessed. Whole coastal communities had totally disappeared, completely wiped out, swept out to sea, never to rise again, which prompted the whole world to donate 7 billion dollars in aid.

And the death toll was incomprehensible with nearly 200,000 people instantly annihilated in a muddy watery grave and another 1,126,900 displaced. It was one of the deadliest disasters in all of modern history and the worst of its kind.

The year was 2004. The disaster was of course, The Asian Tsunami.”

Now, we all know the Asian Tsunami was one of the worst natural disasters of all time, right? But people, what if I were to tell you that I know of a disaster that makes the Asian Tsunami look like a game of twister? And people, what if I were to tell you that this disaster didn’t occur in just one place and one country at one time, but it’s going on right now today all over the world and it’s been leaving a trail of death and destruction for centuries. That’s right. I’m talking about The Attack of the Terrible T’s.

People of God, as American troops are still off to war fighting an external enemy, so I’m telling you the American Church needs to keep going to war and fight the internal enemy of our souls, the devil. Why? Because whether you feel it, see it, or believe it or not, the moment you got saved you entered a spiritual war against a demonic host whose sole purpose is to destroy you and extinguish your testimony for Jesus Christ.

And we’ve already seen how the first constant weapon, the first Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Twisted Christian. Then we saw that the second Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Tormented Christian. Then we saw that the third Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Troubled Christian. And in the last chapter we saw that the fourth Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I, is the attack of the Terrified Christian. And there we saw how the devil will actually trick you and I into refusing to learn how to defeat the enemy’s attacks, thereby causing us to live a self-inflicted terrified life. We never experience victory over sin because we never learn how to use the weapons of God to defeat sin in the first place! And there we saw that we can defeat the enemy’s attacks by Having a Good Offense by staying sharp, staying away, stop delaying, spring cleaning,
and by staying dependent. And then by Having a Good Defense by standing firm, speaking in prayer, soaking up Scripture, being steadfast in faith, and standing up.

Oh, but that’s not all. Remember who we’re dealing with here folks. Hello, it’s satan! He doesn’t stop there. Are you kidding? He never stops! He’s constantly out there trying to get you to sin against Almighty God and destroy your testimony! Therefore, the fifth and most dastardly Terrible T the enemy fires at you and I is the attack of the Traitorous Christian. But hey, don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s:

**Romans 2:17-24** “Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” (NIV)

Now folks, according to our text, the Bible is clear. The Jewish people, the people of God, had a major problem that the Apostle Paul was pointing out, right? And my question is, “What was the problem?” It was this. They were masters of bragging about being the people of God, and about having a relationship with God, and even how they of all people on the planet had been given the Law of God, but when all was said and done, they never got around to being obedient to God! And as a result, what happened? It didn’t just affect them. It affected the people around them! Their boastfulness without obedience actually blasphemed God!

And so here’s my point. Did you know this traitorous behavior happens to you and I today? How? When we Christians, the people of God, continue to live in sin by refusing to take seriously this war against temptation. Oh, we too can boast all we want about being the people of God, but when our lives are filled with sin, the results are still the same. God’s named is once again being blasphemed around the world. Why? Because we too are acting like a bunch of traitors!
And people, that’s why the **first sign** to indicate when you’re becoming a **Traitorous Christian** is **When You Refuse to Learn Why God Allows the Enemy to Come**. Oh people, it’s the ol’ demoralizing trick! The devil is slick! He knows that he can’t take away Christ’s victory over our sins. So here’s what he does. He simply gets you and I to get discouraged in having to **constantly** fight against sin so we’ll stop waging war against his constant temptations to sin. It’s all geared to demoralize us. Why? Because once we give up the fight against sin, the path to an unholy traitorous life begins!

People, the **first definition** of the word **traitorous** means, “a person who commits treason, or betrays another.” And people, this is one of the very first things the devil does to keep us from having a powerful testimony in Jesus Christ. He throws out the bait and says, “Aren’t you getting tired of fighting against sin, yet? I mean, gee whiz, day in and day out you have to say no to this temptation, and say no to that temptation, and on and on it goes, and there’s no relief in sight! Wouldn’t it be easier to just give up? There’s no value in this constant struggle to deny yourself. And besides, don’t worry, God will forgive you.”

And people, you might think a **traitorous belief** is no big deal because after all, it doesn’t hurt anyone, right? Wrong! People of God, this is a lie from the pit of hell because the devil knows that a **traitorous belief** leads to a **treacherous life**.

And the **first sign** to indicate you’re headed for an unholy **treacherous life** that blasphemes the Name of God is by **Refusing to See God’s Positive Purpose in Allowing Temptation**. You see folks, anybody knows that if you’re ever going to win a war, then you need not only to know the who, how, when, and the means of which to defeat your enemy, but you also need to know why your enemy is attacking you. And people, the Bible is clear. God is so powerful that He can make something **good** out of something **evil**. And yes, this even includes the devil’s evil solicitations to sin.

And the **first positive reason** why God allows the enemy to come is **To Humble Us**:

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10** “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (NIV)

According to our text here, God had personally given the Apostle Paul some incredible revelations and according to other passages, he was even taken up to the third heaven, the actual dwelling place of God the Father. And as we all know when it comes to a secret or special knowledge, the danger in knowing it, is in getting the big-head syndrome, or becoming conceited. So what does God lovingly do to protect Paul from this? That’s right, He humbles Paul with a thorn in the flesh, or literally, a demon.

And believe it or not people, this is one of the reasons why God allows you and I to be tempted by the enemy today. He’s working humility in us. You see, the opposite of humility is pride. And one of things that God hates most and one of the surest ways to destroy your walk with God is by simply being full of pride. But because God loves us, He will use whatever it takes to keep us from becoming prideful or conceited.

For instance, I recall a time when I was going to fly back to Kansas for my tenth year high school reunion. The temptation I fell for was the ol’ trying to look good and impress everyone routine, you know, being conceited. But God was faithful and He had other plans. So, there I was on the plane all decked out in my brand new white shirt, white shorts, white socks, and yes, that’s right, white shoes. I was looking sharp, I was happening. So, the stewardess soon brought the meal and after I ate the styrofoam meat cube that conveniently matched the shape of the plastic tray, I dove into the dessert which consisted of a plastic sealed container filled with purple yogurt looking stuff. And to keep me from becoming conceited, that’s right it exploded all over me and my former white attire. And even though the rest of the flight involved people staring at me like I had a serious eating disorder, I still wasn’t humbled because I figured I could just change my clothes. Therefore, God wasn’t done yet.

As the plane landed and we came to a halt, I bent down to pick up my briefcase, and to keep me from becoming conceited, unbeknownst to me, the food tray had fallen down so when I lifted my head up from the floor, that’s right, I caught the corner of my eye on it, which instantly gave me a black eye. Now, even though I had to walk through the airport with purple goo and a black eye leaving people wondering if I had just gotten into a fight with Barney the purple dinosaur, I still wasn’t humbled for I figured I could get the swelling to go down. Therefore, God wasn’t done yet.
We hopped in the rental car shuttle and sat in the back beneath the overhead luggage rack. Then we arrived at the rental car place, and when we had stopped, to keep me from becoming conceited, I forgot about the overhead luggage rack and proceeded to smash the top of my head, producing a large and rapidly growing bump on it. And at this point, it was all I could do but laugh and say to God, “Okay Lord, I’m humbled now. I get it. I have been filled with pride. Please forgive me.”

You see, God is faithful, people. If He has to use a bump on the head, a black eye, and a beating from Barney the purple dinosaur just to humble you, He will. And one of the most frequently used methods He uses to accomplish this process of humility is by allowing the enemy to come with temptations. You see, in case you guys haven’t figured it out yet, we are not naturally humble. In fact, the moment you think you are humble, you just lost it. And therefore, what I’ve learned is that true humility is seeing yourself for who you really are in light of who God is, like this person states:

“Always guard yourself from being anxious because of your faults. Most of the time your distress really springs from a secret root of pride. To put it in other words, you are simply hurt and upset at seeing yourself for who you really are. If the Lord should be so merciful as to give you a true spirit of His humility, you will not be surprised at your faults, your failures, and even your own basic nature.

The more clearly you see your true self, the clearer you will see how miserable your self nature really is; and the more you will abandon your whole being to God.”

People of God, the fact is this. It is when you and I give into temptation, that we are reminded of our sinfulness before an Infinitely Righteous and Holy God. It is here that we come face to face with our own depravity. And I think we’d all have to agree that there is nothing more humbling, more pride smashing, then to look into the mirror of self and see who we really are in light of Who God is, is there? And guess what? It’s kind of hard being conceited at that point, isn’t it?

So is God being a big ol’ meany by allowing this to happen? No! He allows temptations, not to torture us, but to humble us so that we’ll abandon ourselves to Him. Therefore, whether we like it or not, or whether we want to
admit it or not, God allows temptations to come so as to humble us. And wonder of wonders, that’s precisely what we need, isn’t it?

Oh, but that’s not all. The second positive reason why God allows the enemy to come is To Make Us Strong:

1 Corinthians 15:10 “But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me – and not without results. For I have worked harder than all the other apostles, yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.” (NLT)

You see, whether you realize it or not, we need the grace of God not only for salvation, but for our maturity as well. That’s because the word grace literally means, God’s divine influence upon the heart and it’s reflection in the life. It’s not merely the “unmerited favor” of God. It’s the power of God for salvation as well as sanctification or maturity. This is what the Apostle Paul clearly recognized. He knew the reason why he was able to work harder than all the other Apostles, and do the amazing things that we read about in the New Testament, was simply because, and only because, of the grace of God. And this is why it is so important to be humbled. Why? Because without humility we’ll never receive the grace of God needed to grow in maturity. This is what the Apostle Peter warned us about:

1 Peter 5:5-6 “All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” (NIV)

You see, unless we are humbled, we will not receive God’s grace. And if we don’t receive God’s grace, we will never have the power to grow and be made strong like the Apostle Paul. Therefore, if God never allowed you and I to be tempted, we would never be humbled, and we would never receive His grace to grow strong. Like it or not folks, it’s one of the most effective ways to get rid of our pride. Why? Because again, when our pride goes down, God’s grace goes up. And unless we grow in God’s grace, we won’t grow in His power. And if we don’t grow in His power we’ll end up being weak and ineffective Christians all the days of our lives.

Therefore, whether we like it or not, or whether we want to admit it or not, our temptations are serving as an opportunity to humble us and to make us
more powerful Christians for the glory of God. And isn’t that what we all ask for?

However, we’re not only made strong by God’s power through grace, but we’re also made strong by good ol’ perseverance. And if you think about it, you and I are constantly taught to persevere by constantly being attacked with temptation, aren’t we? And here’s God’s wonderful plan in allowing this.

For instance, how does a weightlifter get such huge muscles? I mean, do they just wake up one day with a mass of rippling muscles all over their body? I don’t think so. Or rather, isn’t the reason why they have such huge muscles and are so strong is because they have to discipline themselves to lift heavy weights over and over and over again, day after day after day?

And how about a heavy weight fighter? I mean do you just wake up one day and take on a boxer like Mike Tyson? Or rather, isn’t the reason why a person becomes a skillful and strong fighter is because they have to discipline themselves to practice in the ring over and over and over again, day after day after day?

Now here’s my point. Whether we like it or not, or whether we want to admit it or not, this is what God is doing with you and I by allowing temptation to come. He’s teaching us to daily persevere so that we can daily grow stronger. We may not like it, but it really is what’s best for us, like this person learned:

- I asked for strength and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.
- I asked for wisdom and God gave me problems to solve.
- I asked for prosperity and God gave me brain and brawn to work.
- I asked for courage and God gave me danger to overcome.
- I asked for love and God gave me troubled people to help.
- I asked for favors and God gave me opportunities.
- I received nothing I wanted. Yet I received everything I needed.

People of God, it is by having to discipline ourselves and say no against sin over and over and over again, and by daily having to step into this ring of temptation day after day after day, that we find ourselves, by the grace of God, becoming stronger. It may not be what you wanted, but if you persevere, you’ll discover it was exactly what you needed. And it is here that amazing victories will start to take place in your life and you can finally begin to say with the Apostle Paul, “Yet not I, but the grace of God in me.”

Therefore, whether we like it or not, or whether we want to admit it or not, God allows temptations to come, to make us strong. And wonder of wonders, that’s precisely what we long for, isn’t it?
Oh, but that’s not all. The **third positive reason** why God allows the enemy to come is **To Help Others Grow**:

**Luke 22:31-32** “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have all of you, to sift you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up your brothers.” (NLT)

If you look at the life of the Apostle Peter, one of his greatest failures was when he denied Jesus three times. But as we read here, Jesus not only knew that it was going to happen, **and** even that it would come from the hands of the enemy, but **He also knew** that when all was said and done, after Peter repented, that God would use the pain that Peter experienced **to strengthen the brothers**, or in other words, to help them grow.

And people, believe it or not, it’s the same thing with you and I. Did you know that God not only allows temptation to come, but that He also knows **when** we’re going to fall? Now is God being a big ol’ meany? Not at all. Believe it or not, even though we are responsible for it, God allows it to occur **so that others can grow**, like this Minister learned:

“There was a boy who had lost his right hand and he felt so badly about it that he did not want to see anyone. His father said, ‘I’m going to bring the minister in to see you.’ The boy said, ‘I don’t want to see him.’

But out of his concern for his son, the father brought the minister anyway. When the minister had arrived, the boy looked up and noticed that the man had no right arm; there was an empty sleeve.

The minister came over to the boy and said, ‘I haven’t any hand, either. I lost mine when I was a boy, and I know how it feels.’ And because of this, it wasn’t hard for the boy to get acquainted with the minister who knew how it felt.”

People of God, when are we ever going to learn that God is so powerful that He lets nothing, not even our pain, go to waste? He’s the Ultimate Recycler. Why? Because whether we understand it or not, God is so powerful that He, and He alone, can take our painful experiences and turn them into a powerful blessings for other people, like that Minister was to that boy. And folks, the great news is that it’s the same amazing truth for all of God’s children.
For instance, who better to minister to those being tempted by drugs then one who had, in the past, fallen into the devastation of drugs? Or who better to minister to those being tempted with adultery then one who had, in the past, fallen into the horrible pain caused by adultery? And on and on and on it goes! People of God, listen up. Whatever it is that you have fallen into in the past, God certainly knows about it. But like the Apostle Peter, get right back up by the grace of God, and strengthen your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Therefore, whether we like it or not, or whether we want to admit it or not, God allows temptations to come to help others grow. And wonder of wonders, that’s precisely what we pray for, isn’t it?

Oh, but that’s not all. The fourth positive reason why God allows the enemy to come is To Glorify God:

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 “We are human, but we don’t wage war with human plans and methods. We use God’s mighty weapons, not mere worldly weapons, to knock down the devil’s strongholds.” (NLT)

Now folks, in light of this text, let me ask you this question. Does a person go into a sword fight swinging and jabbing at their opponent with a carrot? No? Well, how about a lion tamer going into a lion’s cage, threatening them with a bagel and a string of spaghetti? Ridiculous you say? Well, as goofy as this sounds, many Christians are doing the same thing when it comes to battling with the enemy. People of God, the Bible is clear. The weapons we use to battle our enemy are not of this world. They are spiritual in nature and from God. Yet, for some goofy reason, many in the Christian community think that we overcome our spiritual enemy with worldly methods. But once again, what did our text say? We don’t wage war by means of human trickery, but rather, by God’s mighty weapons. And once again, one of God’s greatest weapons is His grace.

Here’s how it works. You see, when you and I grow in God’s grace, we grow in obedience, because we are tapping into the very power of God. And when we grow in obedience by saying no to temptation, the enemy is defeated, and thus God is glorified, right? Do you see how it works? And people, its this daily cosmic battle going on with you and I stuck right dab in the middle, if you will, is why you and I are likened unto soldiers in the Bible:

2 Timothy 2:3-4 “Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. And as Christ’s soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of
this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army.” (NLT)

You see, when you got saved, you joined the army of God. And whether you like it or not, you’re in a daily war against temptation. And each one of us needs to decide just what kind of soldier we’re going to be. Will we allow ourselves to be tied up with the affairs of this world and be beaten down on the battlefield of life by the enemy? Or will we seek to glorify God by saying no to temptation with the weapon of obedience?

And I don’t know about you, but I personally would like to give the devil a big black eye, how about you? Or how many of you would love to punch satan right in the nose for all the trouble he puts you in? Well, guess what folks? You can! God has given you the spiritual weapon to do just that. It’s called obedience! That’s one of the spiritual weapons we are to wage war with! People of God, if you want to knock out the devil himself, you simply do it by being obedient to God! And in that, He is glorified, like these people learned:

One guy said, “As I reflected on my own spiritual journey, I can see the many times God was with me. One of those times came when I was in high school. This was just after I got saved and began to go to Church services.

A friend who I very much trusted came over to my house. My parents and brother were often out working or doing their thing. When I was not looking, he pulled out a glass pipe and lit up a small white rock. I went back downstairs to find him smoking the pipe. I remember the words clearly to this day, ‘Come on, I’m your friend, just try it. I wouldn’t ask you to do anything that would hurt you, would I?’

I was totally caught off guard. At that moment I had a decision to make. Would I compromise and take a smoke, or would I refuse? It seems easy right now, but in that moment, when nobody was looking, the pressure almost made me give in. But then a thought came to my mind, that it wasn’t just him and me in the room. God was there and I knew I would be hurting God if I gave in.

I asked him to leave, but he wouldn’t. So I FLED and tried to avoid being around him alone after that.”

Sounds like that guy slapped the devil in the face, how about you? Or consider this example:
“It was a warm November morning in Southern California. Just two months earlier, my family had moved to the area so my dad could begin serving as Pastor of a Church. Up to now, school was going ok, but on this particular morning, I was being threatened intensely. I had never experienced it this way before.

Everyone knew I was a Christian and that I was a ‘Pastor’s kid’ so they teased me about it. Sometimes I would get hit from behind, knocked in the head, or tripped in the hallway, but on this day, people were getting in my face.

Our P.E. class was waiting to get in the gym and there were no monitors or teachers to be seen. There were about five boys trying out different moves with knives, real knives, when one of them came up to me and asked me to fight. I turned him down and he called me a wuss and returned to his group.

Then he came at me again and hit me and said, ‘Come on you pansy.’ And again, I turned him down. He started back to his group, but turned back around. The next thing I remember was being picked up in a wheelchair by my P.E. teacher. I was covered in blood.

Later, I learned from my classmates that I got knocked out and two of the boys went crazy and kept beating me! They kicked me so hard that it lifted my body off the ground. They took my head and lifted it off the ground and kicked it into the pavement. It was only by the grace of God that I even survived.

After the attack, I was very angry. I wanted revenge, but I refrained. By the time I returned to school a week later, I was swamped with cards, phone calls, and e-mails from people I didn’t even know. They praised me for being a great Christian example and succeeding in fending off satan’s attack.

When I went to school, I was showered with friendship. Teachers cried as they told me how proud they were of me and how ‘such a good kid like me’ didn’t deserve what I received. I followed their cue and became the ‘good kid’ at school. I joined the tennis team and received all-league player for my talent and my attitude. I had a great year. God was good!"

Gee, it looks like this guy came out on top when He chose God’s way instead of satan’s way. But not only that, in doing so, he gave the devil an uppercut! Or how about one more example of victory:
“With a gun in one hand and a Bible in the other, Sharon Ast knelt beside her bed and was about to take her own life. It wasn’t the first time her fate was about to be decided at gunpoint. Growing up, her alcoholic father would often hold a shotgun on Sharon and her brothers as he decided whether or not they’d be better off dead. The only difference that afternoon was that Sharon’s finger was on the trigger, not his.

What would drive this mother of four children to conclude her life was so hopeless she had no better option than to throw it all away? Take a brief glimpse into Sharon’s past, and you might say her entire life had been leading up to this moment, persuading her to pull the trigger. The real question is, what miracle had allowed her to survive for as long as she had?

To say Sharon grew up in a dysfunctional home would probably win you the prize for ‘understatement of the year.’ Describing herself as ‘a child of rage,’ Sharon and her two brothers were raised by a mentally challenged, drug addicted mother and a violent, alcoholic father. Besides periodically holding a gun on his children, Sharon’s father would also beat them regularly. Sharon often received the brunt of the punishment as she tried to protect her younger brothers. ‘He beat me into the concrete every night,’ she says.

Her mother was no better. When Sharon and her brothers were young, she tied them to chairs with belts when they ate and beat them if they dropped any food. She would also lock Sharon in a wooden closet for days, making her share the small space with rats and spiders. And when Sharon was six, her mother forced her to hold and kiss a neighbor’s dead baby because she was alarmed Sharon hadn’t cried when she heard news of the baby’s death.

Several years later, Sharon’s father changed her birth certificate to make her appear older than she was and sent her off to the Marine Corps. For the next two years, Sharon was safer than she had been at home, but by then she had become an angry, bitter young woman.

Eventually she married a man named Skip, and it seemed like she was finally on the verge of a new start in life. But even this quickly turned into a nightmare. Seeing that her new husband drank just like her father, Sharon went ballistic, turning loose on everyone. ‘Our home became a place no one visited, just like when I was young,’ Sharon says. Not even Skip’s friends would come by.’
And so one day, after putting the house in order and sending the kids next door, Sharon pulled out a gun, loaded it and went to her bedroom. Knowing enough about Christianity to realize God would not be happy with her decision, Sharon dug out a Bible someone had given her while she was in the marines.

She turned up the radio so the kids wouldn’t hear the gunshot. Then she got on her knees, opened the Bible and began to read. She also started talking to God and said, ‘You know how tired I am, how old I feel.’ While Sharon was having this conversation, her mind suddenly tuned in to the radio she had turned up in the kitchen. Someone was preaching.

As she listened, she heard him invite listeners to give their lives to Christ. In that moment, Sharon heard God’s voice in her mind. ‘What came through to me was, ‘I have sent my Son, and He will love you far more than anyone could ever love you. He will teach you how to live your life right.’

‘I told God I don’t know anything about his Son, but God kept coming back by saying, ‘Give your life to my Son.’

This argument went on for a while, but eventually, Sharon put the gun down, lay on the floor and, weeping and sobbing, offered her life to God. ‘I didn’t understand what I had done,’ Sharon says. ‘I just understood I was ‘home’ for the first time in my life.’

When Sharon got up, she was calm for the first time in six months. But that wasn’t the only thing that was different. From that point onward, she was never without her Bible. For three years she studied it intensely. She was so amazed that Jesus loved her enough to die for her.

Feeling her own healing was complete, Sharon started helping other women who were in crisis. She understood what they were going through, and she could get through to them. This ministry grew quickly until Sharon was helping many women.

Today, Sharon is fully recovered and continuing in her ministry, called Tea and Comfort. Furthermore, she has twelve women or ‘comforters’ who surround her at all times. Together, they deal with hurting women, in a nurturing way, giving them leadership, watching for signs of suicide and pointing them toward Jesus.
Over the fifteen years *Tea and Comfort* has existed, they have worked with over 1,500 women, many of whom have been healed of their past hurts.

Although Sharon wouldn’t wish her own past on anyone, she’s thankful she didn’t suffer in vain. ‘No matter what we’ve been through, God does expect us to use our experiences for the benefit of others.’

People of God, there’s no better way to give the devil a big black eye then to simply say no to his evil temptations and instead say yes to obedience to God. Whether it’s the temptations to sin against God by using drugs, seeking revenge, or killing yourself, punch satan right in the nose by saying no to him and yes to God! And when you do, as those people learned, you will **always** come out on top and God will **always** be glorified!

Therefore, whether we like it or not, or whether we want to admit it or not, God allows temptations to come in order that He be glorified. And wonder of wonders, that’s precisely **what we live for**, isn’t it?

People of God, wake up! We’ve got to pay attention to why the enemy attacks. He’s always out there trying to get us to glorify him in our sin, instead of glorifying God. And lest you think that this daily cosmic battle of saying no to sin is not that big of a deal, then **one**, you need to ask yourself, “Do you really love God?” like this man did:

“One day, I woke early in the morning to watch the sunrise. Ah, the beauty of God’s creation is beyond description. As I watched, I praised God for His beautiful work. As I sat there, I felt the Lord’s presence with me.

He asked me, ‘Do you love Me?’

I answered, ‘Of course, God! You are my Lord and Savior!’

Then He asked, ‘If you were physically handicapped, would you still love Me?’

I was perplexed. I looked down upon my arms, legs and the rest of my body and wondered how many things I wouldn’t be able to do, the things that I took for granted. And I answered, ‘It would be tough Lord, but I would still love You.’

Then the Lord said, ‘If you were blind, would you still love my creation?’
How could I love something without being able to see it? Then I thought of all the blind people in the world and how many of them still loved God and His creation. So I answered, ‘It’s hard to think of it, but I would still love you.’

The Lord then asked me, ‘If you were deaf, would you still listen to My Word?’

How could I listen to anything being deaf? Then I understood. Listening to God’s Word is not merely using our ears, but our hearts. I answered, ‘It would be tough, but I would still listen to Your Word.’

The Lord then asked, ‘If you were mute, would you still praise My Name?’

How could I praise without a voice? Then it occurred to me: God wants us to sing from our very heart and soul. It never matters what we sound like. And praising God is not always with a song, but when we are persecuted, we give God praise with our words of thanks. So I answered, ‘Though I could not physically sing, I would still praise Your Name.’

And the Lord asked, ‘Do you really love Me?’

With courage and a strong conviction, I answered boldly, ‘Yes Lord! I love You because You are the One and True God!’

I thought I had answered well, but God asked, ‘THEN WHY DO YOU SIN?’

I answered, ‘Because I am only human. I am not perfect.’

‘THEN WHY IN TIMES OF PEACE DO YOU STRAY THE FURTHEST? WHY ONLY IN TIMES OF TROUBLE DO YOU PRAY THE EARNEST?’

No answers. Only tears.

The Lord continued: ‘Why only sing at fellowships and retreats? Why seek Me only in times of worship? Why ask things so selfishly? Why ask things so unfaithfully?’

The tears continued to roll down my cheeks.
'Why are you ashamed of Me? Why are you not spreading the good news? Why in times of persecution, you cry to others when I offer My shoulder to cry on? Why make excuses when I give you opportunities to serve in My Name?’

I tried to answer, but there was no answer to give.

‘You are blessed with life. I made you not to throw this gift away. I have blessed you with talents to serve Me, but you continue to turn away. I have revealed My Word to you, but you do not gain in knowledge. I have spoken to you but your ears were closed. I have shown My blessings to you, but your eyes were turned away. I have sent you servants, but you sat idly by as they were pushed away. I have heard your prayers and I have answered them all.’

‘DO YOU TRULY LOVE ME?’

Never had I cried so hard before. How could I have been so cold? How could I have hurt God as I had done? I asked God, ‘How much do You love me?’

The Lord stretched out His arms, and I saw His nail-pierced hands. I bowed down at the feet of Christ, my Savior. And for the first time, I truly prayed.”

People of God, if you are not taking seriously this war against temptation, then maybe you better stop giving God lip service, saying that you love Him, and start giving Him life service, by showing Him you love Him. And do you really think He doesn’t know the difference? And lest you think that having a lackadaisical attitude toward sin, and think that fighting against it is no big deal, then two, would you please remember one of the signs of a Counterfeit Christian:

Titus 1:15-16 “Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are defiled. Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are despicable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.” (NLT)

PEOPLE OF GOD WAKE UP! If you’re behavior is in the toilet, and you could really care less about the fight against sin, then it may not only be a sign that you’re a traitor, but it may be a sign that you’re not even a Christian in
the first place! And is that really a chance you want to take? Do you see the cunningness of the enemy? Do you see what he’s up to?

Therefore, if you’re suffering from this Attack of the Terrible T’s and you’ve actually become a Traitorous Christian, what do you do? It’s simple. It’s called repent, and ask for God’s forgiveness. And people, this is the great news. Once you do, you just became God’s child. And by His grace, He’s going to go right to work and turn you from a Traitorous Christian into a real Christian, a Triumphant Christian. And people, a Triumphant Christian isn’t that hard to spot. You see, they’ll not only profess loyalty to Christ when things are good, but they demonstrate their loyalty even when times are at their worst, like the Staines family did:

“Graham and Gladys Staines were Australian missionaries in India, southwest of Calcutta. They worked in a treatment center and lived in an old house within the Mission compound with their three children, Esther (14), Philip (11), and Timothy (7).

In January, Graham took his two sons with him on an annual trip to a leprosy hospital that he was in charge of, a place where there was the highest incidences of attacks against Christian churches in India. Graham was aware of this, but he wasn’t worried. He had decided a long time before to follow Christ wherever He led him to minister to lepers, and this was one of the places.

At night, Graham and his two sons slept in the back of their Willys station wagon, which had more than enough room for them, and comfortable bedding, which they carried on their trips to these remote areas. The boys always enjoyed the trips with their father, and he enjoyed having them along.

They had already developed a love for these simple people and the lepers that their parents treated. Graham hoped that someday they would follow in his footsteps and join their parents in this work to which they had devoted their lives. India was now his and Gladys’ home and always would be. They loved the people of India and could not imagine living and working anywhere else.

God had brought them here and God poured His love through them as they ministered to the lepers and treated their sores. One former leper said about the Staines: ‘Our world was darkness. We always faced death. None of the religious leaders bothered to give us even one meal. Then we begged for alms, they would throw stones at us and chase us away. We were untouchables. These religious
leaders used to tell us that we deserved leprosy because of our sin in our previous birth—because of our karma. And we were left to die in the jungles all alone, like worms.

But then came Staines Dada and his friends. They stretched forth their hands of mercy to us and to the Leprosy Home. There we saw the love of God. Dada and his wife would personally wash our sores and dress the wounds with medicines and when we were cured, they would teach us some skills and give jobs to us...Philip and Timothy, what loving kids, they used to come and play with us lepers, the outcasts of society.’

But on this particular night, Graham fixed the bed in their station wagon not long after dark and they all climbed in to settle down for the night. It had been a hard day, and they were all tired — the boys more from running around the village and playing with the other children than from work, though they always willingly helped their father when he needed them. Before they went to sleep, they did what they always did on these trips, talked about Jesus for a while, and then each said a prayer. Graham loved to hear his boys pray, especially Timothy who still prayed in the innocence and simplicity of a young child.

Not far from their station wagon, about 300 yards, a group of young men were playing drums and enjoying a traditional Indian dance. The rhythmic beat of the drums helped Graham and his two sons fall asleep quickly and soundly. Tomorrow was going to be another busy day. But there wouldn’t be any tomorrow for them.

At about 12:20 AM, a radical group of Hindus approached through the fields, armed with axes and tridents (three-pronged spears). They had just one pre-determined target, the Staines station wagon where Graham and his two young sons slept. As they got near the vehicle, and they started screaming as loud as they could. The leader struck first, swinging his axe at the tires and slashing them open so the vehicle could not move.

The others broke open the windows and struck at the Staines, beating all three unmercifully with their fists and clubs. Graham received the worst beating as he tried to shelter the children with his body. After beating all three nearly unconscious, the raging mob then repeatedly stabbed them — thrusting their tridents through the broken windows time and again in a wild frenzy.
Then the leader piled straw under the vehicle and set it on fire. In seconds, the station wagon was engulfed in flames. Through the broken window Graham could be seen holding his two young sons close to him. Any one who knew him was certain that the one name he would be speaking over and over as the flames consumed them was Jesus. The murderers watched as the three in the vehicle were roasted alive.

However, a number of villagers who fled the raging mob said they saw a wide beam of bright light shining down on the burning station wagon. ‘I do believe,’ said Gladys Staines, ‘that my husband and children were specially strengthened by my Lord and the angelic hosts from heaven.’

Asked if she would now leave India and their work with the lepers, she replied, ‘Never: My husband and our children have sacrificed their lives for this nation. India is my home. I am happy to be here. I hope to die here and be buried along with them.’

And even Esther, the only remaining child, when asked how she felt about the horrible tragedy said, ‘I praise the Lord that He found my father worthy to die for Him.’

People of God, search your heart and ask yourself, “If your family was literally roasted alive for being a disciple of Christ, would you, like Gladys Staines, still show your loyalty to God by being obedient to His mission for you? Or are you listening to the devil’s call to be a traitor of Christ by constantly sinning and being disobedient to God?”

People of God, if ever there was a time when we the Church need to be awakened from our slumber, it is now! There’s a war going on and it’s not just abroad, but it’s right here in our own country. It’s a cosmic battle for the souls of men and women all around us. The stakes are high and millions of lives are at risk. And if we’re ever going to win this war, then the American Church needs to once again shine for Jesus Christ. People, this is no time to be a Traitorous Christian! Arise! The alarm has sounded. We are under attack! It’s The Attack of the Terrible T’s. Don’t let the enemy get you!
How to Receive Jesus Christ:

1. Admit your need (I am a sinner).

2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent).

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the Cross and rose from the grave.

4. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Him as Lord and Savior.)

What to pray:

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as Lord and Savior.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.
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