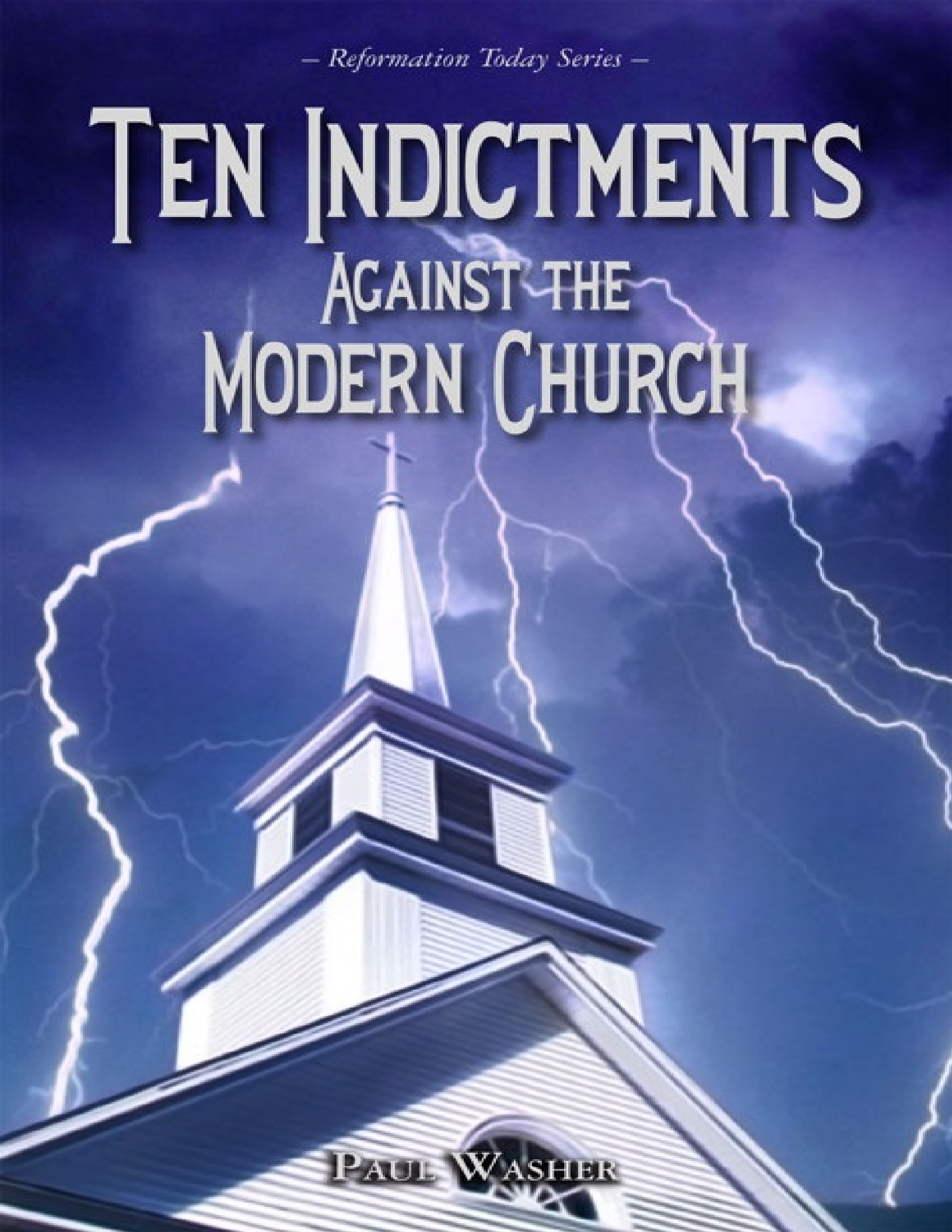
— *Reformation Today Series* —

Ten Indictments

Against the Modern Church



Paul Washer

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Ten Indictments Against the Modern Church was preached on October 22, 2008, at the Revival Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The two-hour message can be heard in its entirety at *www.tenindictments.com.*

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Introduction

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." —1 Timothy 4:1

Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

> Father, I come before You in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, You know all things. They are all before You like an open book. Who can hide their heart from Your presence and Your eye? The deeds of the most clever men are exposed before You. Your omniscience knows no bounds—and if it were not for grace, I would be of all men most terrified. But there *is* grace, abounding and glorious, poured out upon the weakest of men, and abounding to Your glory. Father, I praise You and I worship You; I thank You for all that You are and all that You have done. There is no one like You in the heavens or the earth or under the earth. You are King and there is no other. You are Savior and You share that glory with no one.
>
> Father, this day You know me and my great need of grace. Why am I here except that You called the weakest among men, the most ignoble among brothers, and that by Your grace, often times, the lesser teaches the greater? That is always my case and I praise You. I worship *You*.
>
> Father, help us today. To the wind with eloquence, to hell with the brilliant intellect, Father. Let the truth go forward. Let me be changed that the state of your Church be more glorious. I pray for grace upon grace and mercy upon mercy for myself and for those who hear. Help us, oh God, and we will be helped; and we will boast in that help in Jesus' name. Amen.

It is a great privilege for me to be here today, an astounding privilege to stand here before you and to speak about things such as revival, reformation, the working of God among His people and among men. But today I am going to share with you an indictment—yet it is an indictment of hope.

As I was praying through what I should say to you, I came to a great conclusion, a great burden that was laid upon my heart: *We need revival.* We need an awakening, but we cannot simply expect the Holy Spirit to come down and clean up all the mess *we* have made. We have clear direction from the Word of God with regard to what He has done through Christ, how He expects us to live, how He expects us to order His Church. And it does little good for men to cry out for extra-biblical manifestations when biblical principle is violated all around us.

I want you to know this: There is little need for the devil and evil men to oppose a man praying for revival unless he is also laboring for *reformation*. We have been given truth, and we cannot simply do what is right in our own eyes and then expect the Holy Spirit to come down and bless our labors.

As we look into the Old Testament, we see that Moses is given very, very

detailed explanation on how to build the Tabernacle. Now, was that given for Moses' sake or for the Church's sake? I think that what is being explained there is that God is specific in His will, and that we are not to presume that we can take the smallest detail and ignore it.

Now I know that I am a frail man, buffeted by many weaknesses, but I have an indictment. I can't call it *my* indictment, because who am I to indict anyone? And I dare not call it God's indictment, for how can I presume upon His name? But I will say this: As I look around at the Church and compare her to Scripture, I see that there are certain things that *must* change.

I am not Martin Luther.[1] This is not 95 declarations nailed to Wittenberg's door,[2] but this is a burden on my heart and I must share it. *I must share it!* What I am going to say will anger some of you, but let me warn you. It may be true that you will be able to accuse me of arrogance. It may be true that you do not like my delivery. I have many times been arrogant, and I have many times delivered truth in a wrong way; but don't allow that to be an excuse for you. The question is this: Is what I am saying *true*, whether it is delivered through a faulty messenger or no?

Others of you will rejoice in what you hear and you will want to say, "Amen," and maybe pump your arms. But please don't do that, because *all of u*s bear a measure of guilt. And if you have attained to some spiritual state, then I would say what my brother has said. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1Co 4:7). Would it not be better to worship God in humility?

If you are a younger minister, I do not want you to get caught up in these truths and take them back to storm your church without *love*. See to it that your knees are bleeding before you begin any sort of reformation. And if you are an older minister serving the Lord for many years, I beg you not to be arrogant. An old foolish king can learn from the weakest of his servants.

I also beg you this: Have the courage to change everything, even if it is the last day of your life. At least you can go into glory knowing that you attempted a reformation that was biblical.

And I will say this as a warning to the older men. Please, listen to me carefully. I know the admonition in 1 Timothy chapter five of the way I am to address you,[3] and so I do address you in that way. But, there is a great awakening going on in this country! And not only in this country, but also in Europe, South America, and many other places. I see young men going back to the rock from which we were cut. They are reading Spurgeon[4] and Whitefield;

[5] they are still listening to Ravenhill,[6] Martyn Lloyd-Jones,[7] Tozer,[8] and Wesley[9]—and it is a great, *incredible movement!* Just because popular media and Christianity Today[10] haven't discovered what is going on, I want you to know that I would have never dreamed 15 years ago that we would see the awakening we are seeing, not through my ministry, but through what God is doing *without any* of our ministries.

Whether it is in Holland, with a thousand young men declaring, "Things have to change," crying out all night in prayer for the power of God and the truth of Scripture; or in South America, recognizing that they have been so influenced by psychology and all sorts of superficial techniques coming from America with regard to evangelism—and now, weeping and broken, they are going back and evangelizing their churches. Or the inner city of the United States, where I have sat up at times until two and three in the morning discussing theology with young African-Americans, whom God is going to raise up to do more preaching than anyone will ever be able to imagine. *There is an awakening!*

Now, I am going to say this with tenderness: Most people over forty don't even have a clue about this awakening. Many young men are turning back to the great teachers from prior centuries, and to the old ways, and to truths that have brought awakening time and time again in this world. Most of these young men are quite young; and they will go to their leaders and say, "Look at what we have discovered! Look what happened in Wales.[11] Look what happened in Africa.[12] Look at this! And look at that! And look at this teaching! It is absolutely amazing!" And most of the older men today will either turn away or say, "It is nothing any different than what I have been preaching for 25 years." But in fact, it is *completely different* than what they have been preaching the last 25 years. And so we need to be very, very careful to understand that God is doing a great work. And "he who began a good work in you will finish it" (Phi 1:6)!

Many people have the idea that they are going to pray-in a revival. And other people say, "Revival will come whether you pray or not." I am not in either one of those camps. Because I know this: When I see men, women, and young people all over the world praying for an awakening, to me that is the first fruits of revival! And I can count on the fact that He who gives these first fruits will bring in the full harvest.

Now I want to look at ten indictments—things that I believe that we must change in the modern church.

1. The First Indictment: A Denial of the Sufficiency of Scripture

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Timothy 3:15-17

First of all, the first indictment: a practical denial of the sufficiency of Scripture, especially in my denomination. Over the last several decades, there has been a mighty battle with regard to the inspiration of Scripture. Now some of you have not been a part of that battle, but many in more liberal denominations most certainly have seen this battle for the Bible.

But there is a problem. When you come to believe as a people that the Bible is inspired, you have only fought half the battle, because the question is not merely "is the Bible inspired?" i.e., is it inerrant? The major question following that, which must be answered, is this: Is the Bible *sufficient*,[13] or do we have to bring in every so-called social science and cultural study in order to know how to run a church? That is the major question! Social sciences, in my opinion, have taken precedent over the Word of God in such a way that most of us can't even see it. It has so crept into our church, our evangelism, and our missiology that you barely can call what we are doing "Christian" anymore. Psychology, anthropology, and sociology have become primary influences in the churches.

Many years ago when I was in seminary, I remember a professor walked in and started drawing footprints on the blackboard. And as he marched them across the blackboard, he turned to all of us and said only this: "Aristotle is walking through the halls of this institution. Beware, for I hear his footsteps more clearly than those of the Apostle Paul, the team of inspired men who were with him, and even the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

We have come to believe that a man of God can deal in certain tiny areas in the life of the Church; but when it really gets tough, we need to go to the social experts. That is an absolute *lie*! It says here that the Scriptures are given "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2Ti 3:17).

What does Jerusalem have to do with Rome? And what do we have to do with all these modern day social sciences that were actually created as a protest

against the Word of God? And why is it that evangelism, missions, and so-called "church growth" is more shaped by the anthropologist, the sociologist, and the Wall Street student who are up on every cultural trend? All the activity in our churches must be based upon the Word of God. All the activity in missions must be based upon the Word of God.

Our missionary activity, our church activity, and everything we do ought to flow from the theologian and the exegete—the man who opens up his Bible and has only one question: What is Thy will, Oh God? We are *not* to send out questionnaires to carnal people to discover what kind of church they would attend! A church ought to be seeker friendly, but the church ought to recognize there is only one Seeker. His name is God!—and if you want to be friendly to someone, if you want to accommodate someone, accommodate Him and His glory, even if it is rejected by everyone else. We are not called to build empires. We are not called to be excessive. We are called to *glorify God*. And if you want the Church to be something other than a peculiar people[14](Ti 2:14; 1Pe 2:9), then you want something God does not want.

I want you to listen to Isaiah chapter eight for a moment. Listen to what he says: "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter" (Isa 8:19a). This is a perfect description of the church growth gurus, because every two or three years all their major theories change—not only about what a man is and how you fix him, but what a *church* is and how you make it grow. Every two or three years there is another fad coming down the line about what can make your church into something super in the eyes of the world. Just recently, one of the most well known church growth experts said that he discovered he was entirely wrong on all his theories. But instead of turning people to Scripture, on his knees broken and weeping, he goes out to find another theory!

They give no clear word! It says here in Isaiah, "should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?" (Isa 8:19b-20). Should we as churchmen, as preachers, as pastors, as Christians, should we go out and consult the spiritually *dead* on behalf of those whom the Holy Spirit has made *alive*? Absolutely not!

2. The Second Indictment: An Ignorance of God

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"—Acts 17:30

At times I am asked, "Brother Paul, please come and do a week long series on the attributes of God." And many times, I will say this: "Well, brother, have you thought this through?"

I remember one specific conversation, and the pastor replied, "What do you mean, 'Have I thought this through?' "

"Well, it is quite controversial, the subject that you are giving for me to teach in your church."

"What do you mean it is controversial? I mean it is God. We are Christians. This is a church. What do you mean it is controversial?"

I said, "Dear pastor, when I begin instructing your people on the justice of God, the sovereignty of God, the wrath of God, the supremacy of God, and the glory of God, you are going to have some of your finest and oldest church members stand up and say something like this: 'That is not my god. I could never love a God like that.' Why?—because they have a god they have made with their own mind, and they love what they have made."

> "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."—*Jeremiah 9:23-24*

> "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."—*Psalm 50:21-22*

Now, what is the problem here? There is a lack of the knowledge of God.[15] Many of you possibly think, "Oh, talking about the attributes of God and theology, it is all ivory tower stuff that has no practical application."

Listen to yourself speak, saying, "The knowledge of God has no practical application." Do you know why all your Christian bookstores are filled up with self-help books, and five ways to do this or that, and six ways to be godly, and 10 ways not to fall?—because people don't know God! And so they have to be given all sorts of trivial little devices of the flesh to keep them walking as sheep ought to walk! "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" (1Co 15:34). Why the rampant

sinning even among God's people? It is a lack of the knowledge of God!

Now let me ask you a question. When was the last time you attended a conference on the attributes of God? When was the last time, as a pastor, you taught for a solid year on who God is? How much of all the teaching that goes on in America all week has anything to do with who God is? Isn't it so easy to go with the flow, to just follow everybody else? And then one day you hear something like this and all of a sudden, you realize, "I can't even remember when *anybody* taught on the attributes of God." No wonder we are a people as we are!

To know Him, that is what everything is about; that is eternal life. And eternal life doesn't begin when you pass through the gates of glory; eternal life begins with conversion. Eternal life is to know Him. Do you honestly think you are going to be thrilled about swinging on gates of pearl and walking down streets of gold for an eternity? There is One there who is infinite in glory, and you will spend an eternity of eternities and never get your arms even around the foothill of His mountain!

Start now. There are so many different things you want to know and do, and so many books you want to read. Get out a book on God—this one, the Bible—and study it to *know* Him, to know *Him*!

Because of all of this, I would submit to you that it would be better not even to have a Sunday morning service. Sunday morning is the greatest hour of idolatry in the entire week of America, because the great mass at least of people are not worshipping the one true God. They instead are worshipping a god formed out of their own hearts by their own flesh, satanic devices, and worldly intelligence. They have made a god just like themselves—and he looks more like Santa Claus than he does Jehovah. There can be no fear of the Lord among us, because there is no knowledge of the Lord among us!

3. The Third Indictment: A Failure to Address Man's Malady

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."—Romans 3:10-12

The book of Romans is one of my favorite books of the Bible. It is not a systematic theology; but if you could say any book in the Bible was a systematic theology, the book of Romans would be the closest. Isn't it amazing that Paul spends the first three chapters of that book seeking to do one thing: to bring all men into condemnation? But condemnation is not the great *summum bonum* [16] in his theology; it is not his end or final purpose. It is a means to bring salvation to his readers, because men must be brought to a knowledge of self,[17] before they will surrender self over to God. Men are made in such a fallen manner, that you must cut away from them absolutely every hope in the flesh, before they may be brought to God.

It is important in everything, but it is especially important in evangelism. I was 21 years old and had just been called to preach, when I walked into an old store in Paducah, Kentucky, where they sold suits to ministers for half price. They had been doing it for 50 or 60 years. All of a sudden, the door opened; I heard the bell ring; it closed. There was an old, old man standing there. I never caught his name, but he walked in and looked right at me. He said, "Boy, you have been called to preach, haven't you?"

I said, "Yes, sir."

He was an old, old evangelist. He said, "You see where that building is right outside this building?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "I used to preach there. The Spirit of God would come down and souls would be saved."

I said, "Sir, please tell me about it."

He said, "There wasn't anything like this evangelism today. We would preach for two and three weeks and give no invitation to sinful men. We would plow and plow the hearts of men until the Spirit of God began to work, and break their hearts."

I said, "Sir, how did you know when the Spirit of God was coming to break

their hearts?"

And he said, "Well, let me just give you one example. Many decades ago, I walked into this store to buy a suit. Someone had handed me $30 and said, 'Preacher, go buy yourself a suit tomorrow.' And when I walked through the door the young clerk taking care of the shop turned around and looked at me; and when he looked at me he fell down on the floor and cried out, 'Who can save a wicked man like me?' And I knew that the Spirit of God had fallen upon the place."

Today we just walk in and talk to them, give them three exploratory questions, and ask them if they want to pray a prayer and ask Jesus to come into their heart. We make a two-fold son of hell who will never again be open to the Gospel because of the religious lie that we, as evangelicals, have spewed out of our mouth.

When we treat sin superficially, first of all we are fighting against the Holy Spirit. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin" (Joh 16:8). There are very popular preachers today who are more concerned about giving you "your best life now," than they are about eternity. And they brag about the fact that they do not mention sin in their preaching. I can tell you this: The Holy Spirit has nothing to do with their ministry, lest He be working against Himself. Why? When a man says he has no ministry dealing with the sin of men, nevertheless, the Holy Spirit *does*. It is a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit to come and convict the world of sin. And so know this: When you do not deal specifically, passionately, lovingly with men and their depraved condition, the Holy Spirit is nowhere around you.

We are *deceivers* when we deal with the malady of men lightly, like shepherds of Jeremiah's day. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer 6:14).

We are not only deceivers, but we are *immoral*. We are like a doctor who denies his Hippocratic oath, because he doesn't want to tell someone bad news—because he thinks that person will be angry with him, or be sad. And so he does not tell them the news most necessary to save their life.

I hear preachers today, saying, "No, no! You don't understand, Brother Paul. We are not like the people of the day of John and Charles Wesley. We are not like the culture that Whitefield or Edwards[18]addressed. We are not as hearty as they were; we are broken. We don't have as much self-esteem; we are feeble—we can't bear such preaching." Listen to me: Have you ever studied the lives of these men? Their culture couldn't bear what they preached either! No one has

ever been able to bear the preaching of the Gospel. They will either turn against it with the fierceness of an animal, or they will be converted. Our world is overrun with this disgusting malady of self-esteem[19]—our greatest problem is that we esteem self more than we esteem God!

We are also *thieves* when we do not speak much about sin. We are thieves! Let me ask you a question: This morning, where did all the stars go? Did some cosmic giant come by in a basket, pick them all up, throw them in, and carry them someplace else? Where did all the stars go this morning? They were there, but you couldn't see them. But then the sky grew darker and darker, and as the night turned black as pitch, the stars came out in the fullness of their glory. When you refuse to teach on the radical depravity of men, it is an impossibility that you bring glory to God, His Christ, and His Cross—because the Cross of Jesus Christ and its glory is most magnified when it is placed in front of the backdrop of our *depravity*. "She loved much because she has been forgiven much" (Luk 7:47)—and she knew how much she had been forgiven because she knew how wicked she was.

Oh, we are afraid to tell men of their wickedness, and they can never love God because of it. We have robbed them of the opportunity to boast not in self, but to follow the admonition, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (2Co 10:17).

4. Our Fourth Indictment: An Ignorance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."—Romans 5:8-9

I submit to you that this country is not Gospel hardened; it is Gospel *ignorant*, because most of its preachers are. Let me repeat this. The malady in this country is not liberal politicians, the root of socialism, Hollywood, or anything else. It is the so-called evangelical pastor, preacher, or evangelist of our day; that is where the malady is to be found. We do not know *the Gospel*.[20] We have taken the glorious Gospel of our blessed God and reduced it down to four spiritual laws, and five things God wants you to know, with a little superstitious prayer at the end. And if someone repeats it after us with enough sincerity, we popishly declare them to be born again! We have traded *regeneration*[21] for *decisionism*.[22]

First of all, I am amazed after I have talked about this, how many godly believers of 30 and 40 years walking in the faith come up to me with tears, saying, "Brother Paul, I never heard this before in my life." And yet it is the historical doctrine of redemption[23] and propitiation.[24]

Let us define the problem very clearly. The Gospel begins with the nature of God; it goes from there to the nature of man and its fallenness. And from there, these two great columns of the Gospel come to set up for us what should be known in every believer's mouth as the *great dilemma*. And what is that dilemma? The greatest problem in all of Scripture is this: *If God is just, He cannot forgive you of your sin*. How can God be just and at the same time the justifier of wicked men, when Scripture throughout the Bible says (I will draw especially from one text in Proverbs): "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD" (Pro 17:15). And yet all our Christian songs boast about how God justifies the wicked!

This is the greatest problem. This is the acropolis[25] of the Christian's faith, so said Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Charles Spurgeon, and anyone else who has read Romans chapter three. You see, you have got to set this before people. The great problem is that God is truly just and all men are truly wicked. God, to be just, must condemn wicked man. But then God, for His own glory, with a great love for us, sent forth His Son, who walked on this earth as a perfect Man. And then,

according to the eternal plan of God, He went to that tree on Calvary. And on that tree, He bore our sin; and, standing in the law-place of His people, bearing our guilt, He became a curse. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal 3:10). Christ redeemed us from the curse, becoming a curse in our place (Gal 3:13).

So many people have a romantic, powerless view of the Gospel: that the Christ is there hanging on the tree, suffering under the wounds of the Roman Empire, and the Father did not have the moral fortitude to bear the suffering of His Son, so He turned away. NO!! He turned away because His Son became *sin* !

And so, when He is in the garden and cries out, “Let this cup pass from me” (Mat 26:39), people speculate, “Well, what was in the cup? Oh, it is the Roman cross. It is the whip. It is the nails. It is all that suffering.” I do not want to take away from the physical sufferings of Christ on that tree, but the cup was the cup of God—the Father’s *wrath* that had to be poured out on the Son. Someone had to die, bearing the guilt of God’s people, forsaken of God by His justice, and crushed under the wrath of God—for it pleased the Lord to “crush him” (Isa 53:10).

I was in a Germanic seminary in Europe a while back, and saw a book, *The Cross of Christ* (not John Stott’s book, it was another). I pulled it down and began to read, and this is what it said: “The Father looked down from heaven at the suffering inflicted upon His Son by the hands of men, and counted that as payment for our sin.” *That is heresy!* That physical suffering, that nailing to the tree—that was all part of the wrath of God. It had to be a blood sacrifice; I will take nothing away from that. But, my friend, if you stop there, you don’t have the Gospel.

When the Gospel is preached today and shared in personal evangelism, do you ever hear of God’s justice and wrath? Almost never. It is seldom made clear that Christ was able to redeem because He was crushed under the justice of God—and having satisfied divine justice with His death, God is now just *and* the justifier of the wicked.

It is Gospel reductionism! We wonder why it has no power. What happened? I’ll tell you: When you leave the Gospel behind and there is no longer any power in your supposed gospel message, then you have to do all the little tricks of the trade that are so prominently used today to convert men—and we all know most of them. But none of them work!

Several years ago, graduating from seminary, I had to make a decision whether I was going to go for my Ph.D. God, in order to save my spiritual life,

sent me to the middle of the jungles in Peru—as far away from the academic world as He could get me. And there I began to realize something. As Spurgeon said, “Greater men with greater minds than I have approached this doctrine of the Second Coming, but to no avail. It is a great and mighty doctrine.” He said, “I will set myself to this: seeking to comprehend something of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

It makes me so angry when men treat the glorious Gospel of Christ as though it was the first step into Christianity that only takes about ten minutes of counseling—and after that you go on to greater stuff. That shows you how pathetic we are in our knowledge of the things of God.

My friend, on the day of the Second Coming you will understand absolutely everything about the Second Coming, but in the eternity of eternities of heaven, you will not even begin to comprehend the glory of God in Calvary. It is what *everything* is about. Young man, young preacher, listen to me. Get at the truth on that tree, what it means. You will need nothing to build strange fires in your oven (Lev 10:1-3), if you only catch a glimpse of what He did on that tree.

I love to say this. I have said it a million times. Abraham takes Isaac up that mountain—his son, his only son whom he loved. Do you suppose the Holy Spirit was trying to tell us about something future? And that son put up no struggle, but laid himself down. And when that father gave his will into the will of God, he brought down that flint knife to pierce his own son’s heart. But his hand was stayed, and it was told the old man that God had provided a ram. So many Christians think, “Oh, what a beautiful end to that story.” It is not the end; it is only the intermission. Thousands of years later God the Father laid His hand upon the brow of His Son, His only Son whom He loved, and took the flint knife out of the hand of Abraham and slaughtered His only begotten Son under the full force of His wrath.

Now do you know why that little gospel you preach has no power? Because it is no gospel! Get to the Gospel; spend your life on your knees. Get away from men; *study the Cross* !

The fourth indictment is actually an ignorance of the doctrine of *regeneration.* I know that there are both Calvinists[26] and Arminians[27] here, and I know that there are all sorts of strange animals in between. I guess I call myself a “five point Spurgeonist.” But I want you to know this: Calvinism is not the issue. No, I’ll tell you what the issue is: *it is regeneration!* And that is why I can have fellowship with Wesley, Ravenhill, Tozer, and all the rest—because regardless of where they stood on the other issues, they believed that salvation

could not be manipulated by the preacher, that it was a magnificent work of the power of almighty God. And with them, therefore, I stand.

There is a greater manifestation of the power of God in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit than in the creation of the world, or even of the universe, because He created the world *ex nihilo*: out of nothing. But He re-creates a man out of a mass of *corruption*. It is parallel with the very resurrection of our Savior from the dead.

I understand that in preaching there are teachers, preachers, and expositors; and all of them are very necessary for the health of the Church. But you must understand this. I have heard of old G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945) that when he would go up that majestic tower to preach, he would quote to himself, "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers" (Isa 53:7). He knew that apart from a magnificent manifestation of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, everything he said would be dead. It is the Spirit that gives life (Joh 6:63).

In that sense every one of us that proclaims the truth of God's Word must proclaim as a prophet. What do I mean by that?—we are always Ezekiel standing in that valley of dry bones, and they are very dry (Eze 37:1-2)! And we walk out there and what do we do? We prophesy; we say, "Hear the Word of the Lord." And we know that the wind of God must blow on these slain ones, or they will not rise again. And when you have fully grasped that in the innermost part of your being, you will no longer give yourself to the manipulation that is so often carried out in the name of evangelism. Instead, you will proclaim the Word of God—the doctrine of *regeneration*.

Look at the Wesleys; look at what they had to face. And look at my dear Whitefield too. Everybody at that time believed they were Christian, thoroughly Christian. Why?—because they were baptized as infants, brought into the "covenant," and confirmed. But they lived like devils! Regeneration was traded for a type of credalism[28] that was given authority by the religious leaders of that day.

Then here came the Wesleys! No, they said, it is not right with your soul. You are not *born again*. There is no evidence of spiritual life. Examine yourself. Test yourself to see if you are in the faith (2Co 13:5). Make your calling and election sure (2Pe 1:10). "Ye must be born again" (Joh 3:7).

Here in America, because of the last several decades of modern evangelism, the idea of "born again" is totally lost. Now it only means that at one time in a crusade, you made a decision and you think you were sincere. But there is no evidence of a supernatural recreated work of the Holy Spirit in your life. "If *any*

man," not if *some* men, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2Co 5:17).

5. The Fifth Indictment: An Unbiblical Gospel Invitation

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."—Mark 1:15

And now, just as it was in the time of the Wesleys and Whitefield, it is the same today! What do we face? It is not necessarily a sort of infant baptism most of the time; it is not a High-Church confirmation by an ecclesiastical authority. What we face now is the "sinner's prayer." And I am here to tell you, if there is anything I have declared war on, it is the sinner's prayer.

Yes, in the same way that dependence upon infant baptism for salvation,[29] in my opinion, was the golden calf [30] of the Reformation, the sinner's prayer is the golden calf of today for the Baptists, the Evangelicals, and everyone else who has followed them. The sinner's prayer has sent more people to hell than anything on the face of the earth!

You say, "How can you say such a thing?" I answer: Go with me to Scripture and show me, *please!* I would love for you to show me where anyone evangelized that way. The Scripture does not tell us that Jesus Christ came to the nation of Israel and said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, now who would like to ask me into their hearts? I see that hand." That is *not* what it says. He said, "Repent and believe the gospel" (Mar 1:15)!

Men today are trusting in the fact that at least one time in their life they prayed a prayer, and someone told them they were saved because they were sincere enough. And so if you ask them, "Are you saved?" they do not say, "Yes I am, because I am looking unto Jesus and there is mighty evidence giving me assurance of being born again." No!—they say instead, "One time in my life I prayed a prayer." Now they live like devils, but they prayed a prayer! I heard of one evangelist who was coaxing a man to do that thing. Finally, the man felt so uncomfortable, the evangelist said, "Well, I'll tell you what. I will pray to God for you and if it is what you want to say to God, squeeze my hands. Behold the power of God."

Decisionism, the idolatry of decisionism. Men think they are going to heaven because they have judged the sincerity of their own decision. When Paul came to the church in Corinth, he did not say to them, "Look, you are not living like Christians, so let's go back to that one moment in your life when you prayed that prayer, and let's see if you were sincere." No, he said this, "Examine yourselves,

whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2Co 13:5).

I want you to know, my friends, salvation is by faith alone! It is a work of God. It is a grace upon grace upon grace. But the evidence of conversion is not just your examination of your sincerity at the moment of your conversion. It is the on-going fruit in your life.

Oh, my dear friends, look at what we have done! Isn't a tree known by its fruit (Mat 7:20)? Today 60% or 70% of Americans think they are converted, born again. But we kill how many thousands of babies a day? And we are hated around the world for our immorality. Yet we think we are Christian!

And I lay the blame for this squarely at the feet of the preachers. I have seen this everywhere. The Calvinist, the Arminian, a lot of them share something in common. It is this: the same superficial invitation. They talk a lot about a lot of things and then they come to the invitation, and it is almost as though everyone loses their minds.

Walk up to someone and say, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." Can you imagine telling that to an American?

"Sir, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."

"What? God loves me? Well, that's great because I love me, too. Oh, this is wonderful. And God's got a wonderful plan? I've got a wonderful plan for my life, too. And if I accept Him into my life, I'll have my best life now. This is absolutely wonderful."

But this is not *biblical* evangelism. Let me give you something in its place. God comes to Moses, and He says, "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exo 34:6-7). What was the reaction of Moses?—"Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped" (Exo 34:8).

Evangelism begins with the nature of God. Who is God? Can a man recognize anything about his sin if he has no standard by which to compare himself? If we tell him nothing but trivial things about God that tickle the carnal[31] mind, will he ever be brought to genuine repentance and faith?

1. We do not begin with, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan." We must begin with a discourse of the full counsel of who God is. And we must tell the person from the start it may cost him his life (Mat 16:24)!

2. And then, after that beginning, we have exploratory questions. “Hey, you know you are a sinner, don’t you?” That’s like years ago, when my mother was dying of cancer, the doctor walking in and saying, “Hey, Barb, you know you’ve got cancer, don’t you?” We treat it so superficially. There is no weight; no solemnity.

Instead, we must tell them: “Sir, there is a terrible malady upon you and a judgment coming.” Because if you just tell a man, “Sir, you know, you are a sinner?” you do not touch heart conviction at all. Go ask the devil if he knows he is a sinner. He will say, “Well, yes, I am. A mighty good one at that, or a mighty bad one depending on how you look at it. But, yes. I know I am a sinner.”

The question is not “do you know you are a sinner?” The question is: Is the Holy Spirit so at work in your heart through the preaching of the Gospel, that a change has been wrought, so that the sin you once loved you now hate, and the sin you once desired to embrace, you are wanting to run from it as though you were running from a dragon?

3. And then people today ask the question: “Do you want to go to heaven?” This is the reason I would not let my children go to 98% of the Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools in evangelical churches, because some well-meaning person stands up and says, “Isn’t Jesus wonderful,” after showing the Jesus film. “Yes,” the children respond.

“How many of you little children love Jesus?” “Oh, I do.”

“Who wants to accept Jesus into their little heart?” “Oh, I do.”

And they get baptized. And they may walk like Christians for a little bit because they have been taught well. They are being raised in a Christian culture, sort of, a church culture anyway. But when they turn 15 or 16, when they have a strength of will, they begin to break the bonds. They begin to live in wickedness. And then we go after them saying, “You are Christians; you are just not living like it. Stop your backsliding.”

Instead, we must go to them biblically and say, “You made a confession of faith in Christ. You professed Him even in baptism, but now it seems as though you have turned away from Him. Examine yourself. Test yourself. There is little evidence of any true conversion in you!”

And then after college, when they are 24 or 25, or maybe 30, they come back to church and rededicate their life. They join right in with that pseudo Christian morality that encompasses “churchianity” in America. And in the last great Day, they hear this: “Depart from me you worker of iniquity. I never knew you” (Mat 7:23).

You say, “Brother Paul, you are so angry.” Have I not a right to be? Somebody must be crying out for revival. But we haven’t even got the foundations straight. Oh, that revival would come and straighten our foundations! But while we have open eyes and ears, and have Scripture in front of us, should we not correct these things about the Gospel invitation?

So why do we ask this question, “Would you like to go to heaven?” My dear friend, everybody wants to go to heaven—they just don’t want God to be there when they get there! The question is not, “do you want to go to heaven?” The question is this: “Do you want God? Have you stopped being a hater of God? Has Christ become precious to you? Do you desire Him?”

That is what political theory is all about, my dear friend. Everybody wants to go to heaven; but men are haters of God. So the question is not do you want to go to a special place where you will no longer hurt and you will get everything you want. The question is: Do you want God? Has Christ become precious to you?

Often, to get a person to pray the sinner’s prayer, he is asked, “Would you like to go to heaven?” “Well, yes,” is the reply. “Well, then, would you like to pray and ask Jesus into your heart?” Now, my dear friend, let me say this. There are people who get saved using that methodology, but it is not because of it. It is in spite of it!

Instead, we must be asking this: “Sir, do you desire Christ? Do you see your sin?”

“Oh, yes, yes, I do.”

“Sir, let’s look at a few Scriptures here that lay out for us what repentance looks like, the Spirit bearing witness that this is happening in your life. Do you see brokenness? Do you see the disintegration of everything you thought, and now your mind is filled with new thoughts about God and new desires and new hope?”

“Yes, I see that.

“Sir, that may be the first fruits of repentance. Now, throw yourself upon Christ. *Trust* in Him. Trust in *Him* !”

Listen to me. You have the authority to tell men the Gospel. You have authority to tell men how to be saved, and you have authority to teach men biblical principles of assurance. But you have no authority to tell men they *are* saved. That is the work of the Holy Spirit of God!

But instead, you take them through that little thing, “Did you ask Jesus into your heart?”

“Yes,” he replies.

“Do you think you were sincere?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think He saved you?”

“I don’t know.”

“Of course He saved you because you were sincere and He promised that if you asked Him to come in, He would come in. So you are saved.”

And they walk out of the church after five minutes of counseling, and then the evangelist goes to lunch, and the man is lost. The man is *lost* !

It is an unbiblical invitation. And if they ever doubt their salvation, then you do it all again. You say, “Was there ever a point in time in your life when you prayed and asked Jesus to come in?”

“Yes.”

“Were you sincere?”

“I think so.”

“Then that’s the devil bothering you now.”

And if they live without growth, even in the context of a church without growth in continued carnality—no fear. We blame it on the lack of personal discipleship, and we write it off as the doctrine of the “carnal Christian.”

The Myth of the “Carnal Christian”

The doctrine of the carnal Christian[32] has destroyed more lives and sent more people to hell than you can imagine! Do Christians struggle with sin? Yes. Can a Christian fall into sin? Absolutely. Can a Christian live in a continuous state of carnality all the days of his life, not bearing fruit, and truly be Christian? Absolutely *not* !—or every promise in the Old Testament regarding the New Testament covenant of preservation has failed, and everything God said about discipline in Hebrews is a lie (Heb 12:6)! “A tree is known by its fruit” (Luk 6:44).

I have seen preachers who understood much about the things of God, but when they come to an exemplary Gospel presentation, they will enter, once again, into this unbiblical methodology.

Let me give you a story, a story that is one of the most precious moments in my life as a Christian.

I was preaching in Canada just 30 kilometers from Alaska. There really were more grizzly bears in the town than there were people! It was a little church of

about 15 or 20 people, and I was to preach. And just when I got up into the pulpit, this mountain of a man walked in, in his 60s or early 70s. He could have whipped every one of us in this building. And as I preached, as I saw his face, I just threw everything away and started preaching the Gospel. He was the saddest human being I had ever seen. I preached just Gospel and more Gospel, and when I was done, I walked from the pulpit directly to him.

I said, “Sir, what is wrong? What is troubling your soul? I have never seen a man so sad and down-hearted in all my life?” He pulled out a manila envelope; it had some x-rays which I couldn’t understand. But he said, “I just came from the doctor. I am going to die in three weeks.” That is what he told me. “Now I have lived all my life on a working cattle ranch. You can only get there by float plane or riding horses across the mountains.” He said, “I have never been to church; I have never read a Bible. I believe there is a God, and one time I heard somebody talking about some guy named Jesus.” He said, “I have never been afraid of anything in my life—and I am terrified.”

I said, “Sir, did you understand the message, the Gospel?”

He said, “Yes.”

Now what would have a great majority of preachers done at that moment? “Well, would you like to ask Jesus to come into your heart?”—that is what they would have done.

I said, “Sir, you understood it?”

He said, “I understood it, but is that it?” He said, “A child could have understood that. Is that all it is, that I understand it and I pray, or...?”

I said, “Sir, you are going to die in three weeks. I have to leave tomorrow. I will cancel my plane ticket and we will stay here over the Scriptures wrestling and crying out to God until you are either converted or you die and go to hell.”

And so we began. I began in the Old Testament, the New Testament, every verse of Scripture dealing with the promises of God regarding redemption and salvation, over and over, time after time, reading John 3:16, praying for a while, crying out to God, questioning the man regarding repentance, regarding faith, regarding assurance—working till Christ be formed in him.

And then finally, just exhausted that evening, there was no breakthrough; there was nothing. And I said, “Sir, let’s pray.” And we prayed.

I said, “Sir, read John 3:16 again.”

He said, “We have read this a million times.”

I said, “I know, but it is one of the greatest promises of salvation. Read that text again.”

And I will never forget it. He had my Bible on his lap in those big mountainous hands of his and he said, “OK.” He said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave...—I’m saved. I’m saved! Brother Paul, all my sins are gone! I have eternal life! I’m saved!”

I said, “How do you know?”

He said, “Haven’t you ever read this verse before?”

What was going on? A working of the Spirit of God, instead of those little tricks you try. What!—you want to go eat? What!—you think preaching is a spectacle, and after that you go back to the hotel? No, after the preaching is when the work begins. It is dealing with souls. People come forward in meetings for counsel by someone who shouldn’t be counseling. And after five minutes, they are given the sinner’s prayer to pray and the card to sign. And then, quick, give the card to the pastor, and the pastor says, “I would like to present to you a new child of God. Welcome him into the family of God.” How dare you!!

If you are going to present him, say this: “This man tonight has made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. And because of our fear of God and our love for the souls of men, we will now be working with him to make sure that Christ has truly been formed in him, that he truly has a biblical understanding of repentance and faith, and great assurance and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is what we are going to do.”

Look at what we have done in modern Christianity. I plead with you, look at what we are doing. And this is not some strange cult. This is us that we are talking about. I plead with you: Stop it. *Please, stop it!*

6. The Sixth Indictment: An Ignorance Regarding the Nature of the Church

"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."—1 Timothy 3:15

God has only one religious institution: It is the Church. And our ultimate goal and the ultimate result of revival in this world will be the planting of biblical churches. I have the greatest fear that the local church today is despised. Tell somebody you are an itinerant preacher, that you have a world-wide ministry, and they all bow down. Tell someone you are a pastor of a group of thirty, and they make you sit in the back during the conference. Jesus Christ is not the Prince of itinerant preachers; He is the prince of *pastors*.

Several years ago, Bill Clinton had a slogan during the election: "It is the economy, stupid!" My pastor, Jeff Noblit—one of the elders in our church,[33] the primary teaching and preaching pastor—he said to me one day, "You know, I'd like to have a bunch of shirts made up."

"What would they say, brother Jeff?"

"It's the Church, stupid!"

Jesus gave His life for the Church, a beautiful, virgin, pristine Church. If you want to give your life for something in the ministry, give it to the Church: to a church, a body of believers, a local congregation. It is all about the Church.

Now, I want you to listen well. There is not a remnant of believers in the Church. We all know about the remnant theology, you know, that throughout all the course of Israel there was Israel the people of God and a remnant of true believers. That is not true about the Church. There is not a remnant of believers or a small group of believers inside a larger group called the Church. The Church *is the remnant*.

If pastors have ever come close to blaspheming, it is with regard to this. I hear theologians, itinerant teachers, and pastors saying these sorts of things: "There is just as much sin in the Church as out of the Church. There is just as much divorce in the Church as out of the Church. There is just as much immorality and pornography in the Church as out of the Church." And then preachers say, "Yes, the Church is acting like a whore." I want you to know this: You ought to be very careful calling the bride of Jesus Christ a whore.

I will tell you what the problem is: Pastors and preachers don't know what

the Church is. I want you to know that the Church of Jesus Christ in America is beautiful. She is frail at times. She is weak. She is buffeted. She is not perfect. But I want you to know: She *is broken*. She is humbly walking with her God. The problem is that we don't know what the Church is.

Today, because of the lack of biblical preaching, the so called "church" is filled up with carnal, wicked people identified with Christianity. And then, because of all the goats in the midst of the lambs, the lambs are blamed for all the things the goats are doing. And then the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of us (Rom 2:24).

> "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—*Jeremiah 31:31-34*

Now I do not want to take away anything from the people called Israel, but this text is also applied to the Church. Understand that. I don't want to get into any battles on eschatology, but in the Bible, in the New Testament, it is applied to the people of God. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (vs. 32).

I hear preachers saying all the time, "Well, when you look back and you see Israel, you see a bunch of godless people, idolaters. And in the midst of them there was a tiny remnant of true believers." That is true, but don't apply that to the New Testament Church, because God says, "I am going to do something different, Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD, I will put my law within them" (vs. 33).

If you are converted, God hasn't given you just a stone tablet of laws. He has supernaturally, through the doctrine of regeneration, written those laws in your heart. And because He has done that, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (vs. 33).

And look what it says: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all

know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (vs. 34).

Again, this is the doctrine of regeneration. God is doing a new work these last 2000 years. We don't have a lot of churches in America; we have a lot of really nice brick buildings on finely manicured lawns! Just because someone says they are of the Church or they are Christian, doesn't make it so. Look what God says: "They will not even have to teach one another." That doesn't mean there won't be teachers and preachers, but there will be an outstanding knowledge of God among them all, particularly with regard to their sins having been forgiven.

Look at Jeremiah 32:38-40.

> And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

"And they *shall* be my people, and I will be their God." God does not say, "I hope so, maybe, if I get lucky, oh, if I can get enough evangelists to work with Me, maybe this will all come out right." No! Instead, He says, "I am going to pull a people for Me, a people that I am going to give to my Son." And He says, "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Now look at this: "And I will give them *one* heart, and *one* way." Do you see the contrast? The 70s and 80s had many "Jesus marches," and thousands of people weeping and crying things like: "The Church is so divided. The Church is not one." My dear friend, let me tell you something: If the Church is not one, this new covenant promise is assailed.[34] And there would be a prayer that God the Father did not answer for His Son:

> "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be *one*, as we are…Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be *one*, even as we are *one*."—*John 17:11, 20-22*

So, I want to submit to you: The Church is *one*! She has *always* been one.

Have you ever sat down on an airplane, or maybe in a marketplace, and met someone you didn't even know. And you, being truly evangelical, truly Christian, you talk to him for no more than a few minutes, and you discover, "He is a believer. This one is the real thing." And, at that moment, you know you would give your life for him if need be. You would give your *life* for him!

I remember one time we were in the mountains of Peru, and it was during the

time of the civil war there. We rode twenty-two hours up in the back of a grain truck under a black tarp. At about midnight the truck stopped, we pulled the tarp off, and we jumped off into the jungle. We stayed that night just at the edge of the jungle, and made our way up to a small town on the mountain. About half-way up we got lost in the dark, me and my dear friend Paco, so we were praying, "Oh, God, give us some direction. We are lost. If we are found in here, the terrorists own this place. The military wouldn't even come in to find us." We cried out, "Oh, God, give us some direction. Help us."

We heard a bell. And then we heard somebody talking. It was a strange conversation at first, we thought. Then we realized it was a little boy coming in from the fields with his burro, and he was talking to his burro. And so we got behind him and followed him. Then we stood on the edge of a little village, with huts and adobe homes, and I said, "Paco, you know, if terrorists own this thing—we are dead."

"Yes, but we have come to somewhere." So we came out, walked up to a man who was drunk in the dark, and said, "Are there brothers here?"—because everybody knows what that means in the mountains: it means a real Christian.

And he said, "The old woman over there." So I went over there. There was an old Nazarene woman, and I knocked on the door. I said, "I am an evangelical pastor. Please help us!"

That old woman reached out with that lantern. She grabbed me. She pulled me inside. She grabbed Paco. Her house was cut out of a kind of a cliff in the mud, and she took us down into a basement where there was some hay and chickens and things. And she sat us down there and she lit a lamp. Then a little boy came in, and she called to him and said, "Go get the other brothers." And men started coming in from nowhere, bringing chickens and yucca and everything else—risking their lives for us! Why?—because the Church is one!

Stop saying all these silly things that you are saying, that the body of Christ is divided, and that it is a mess and full of sin. I would not talk about the bride of Christ that way if I were you.

What you actually have in so many congregations today is a bunch of goats and tares among the sheep (Mat 25:31-46; 13:24-30). And because very little biblical, compassionate church discipline is practiced, they live among the sheep, they feed on the sheep, and they destroy the sheep. And those of you who are leaders in those churches are going to pay a high penalty when you stand before the One who loves them—because you did not have enough courage to stand up and confront the wicked.

Now, listen to me. The average scenario in North America with regard to churches, by and large, is that the churches are democracies. And I don't want to get into the pros and cons of that. But here is what happens. Because the preaching of the Gospel is so low, the majority of the church is carnal lost people, and because it is a democracy, they by and large govern the direction of the church. And because the pastor doesn't want to lose the greatest number of the people; and because he has wrong ideas regarding evangelism and true conversion, he caters to the wicked in his church. And his little group of true sheep, who truly belong to Jesus Christ, are sitting there in the midst of all the theater, worldliness, and multimedia, crying out, "We just want to worship Jesus. We just want someone to teach us the Bible!" Dear friends, these pastors are going to pay for this terrible condition of their churches.

So many pastors are trying to keep together a bunch of wicked people, while a little flock in the midst of them is starving to death and made to go in directions they don't want to go. They are made to go along with the carnal majority!

Listen to me. If my wife were at a store late one night, and, as a man, you walked by and saw several men abusing her, and you put your head down in the name of self-preservation and walked right by, I want to tell you something, my friend: I will not only look for those men—I will look for *you*.

The Church is the bride of Christ, and she is precious to Him. It is going to cost you to serve Jesus. It could cost you your church, your reputation, and your denomination—it could cost you absolutely everything.[35] But the bride of Jesus Christ is worth it!

Look what it says. I love this. "I will give them one heart and one *way*." And what is that way? It is Christ and His holiness. All true believers I have ever met speak much of Christ—and have a longing desire to be more holy than they are, more conformed to Christ.

"I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an *everlasting covenant* with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good." Now, so many lost people go to church on Sunday, and they hear this verse. And they say to themselves, "Yes, God has made an everlasting covenant with me. He will never turn away from me—never, never. I am secure because of God's grace." But, they fail to read the second part.

Look at what it says: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put *my fear* in their

hearts, that they shall not depart from me." The evidence that God has made an everlasting covenant with you, sir, is that He has put the *fear of God* in you, so that you will not turn away from Him. And if you turn away from Him and He does not discipline you, and you continue turning away from Him, it is evidence that He has *not* put His fear in you. This is evidence that you have *not* been regenerated—you have no covenant with God at all! This, dear friends, is biblical truth.

7. The Seventh Indictment: A Lack of Loving and Compassionate Church Discipline

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—Galatians 6:1

Most evangelical pastors in America today ought to take Matthew 18 and rip it right out of their Bible.[36] But you can't do that; you have got to take the whole Bible—or not any of it at all! Many pastors leave their theology behind when they come out of their study. They are theological in conversation; they are theological in their office—but when they step out, they run the church by *carnal* means.

I am not an elder at my church and so I can say this without boasting. Our church practices church discipline.[37] It is a very large church, with about one thousand attending. The pastors estimate they have saved thirty marriages in the last several years through loving, compassionate church discipline—church discipline that does not begin with excommunication. It begins with, "Ye which are spiritual, restore..."

You say, "We can't practice discipline—we are just too loving." You are more loving than Jesus? He is the One who commanded this!

"Oh, but, it will cause so many problems." Yes, you're right. Maybe that is why there are not a whole lot of problems between the church and worldly culture today, because we are not confronting the culture around us. And we don't confront culture just by going out there and picketing Hollywood. We confront culture by obeying God! Noah built the ark and condemned the world. You don't have to have a protest sign. Just walk in obedience—and the world will hate you.

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Mat 18:15). *Oh, what a wonderful thing!* "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Mat 18:16). Friends, the witnesses are not there to be on your side. No, they are there to listen objectively and to render a judgment. Maybe *you* are the one that is wrong; maybe your brother is not in sin—maybe you are overcritical and legalistic. Who knows?

"If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to

hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican," i.e., as an outsider and a tax collector. My dear friend, I believe that we need to hear this. Either we start obeying God and disciplining ourselves, or we can have God discipline us. And maybe the hour is come and now is the time when that is going to happen!

Now, I am not talking about critical, legalistic, hateful men—there are enough of those. I am talking about a pastor, a group of elders, leaders who love enough to lay their lives on the line because they know this is not a game. This is not something that we do just for this life, but *eternity* is at stake—the salvation of souls. Look at the old books from the Spurgeons and the Whitefields, from the Puritans and the Reformation. Most of those books dealt with what is the Gospel, how do you preach it, how do you bring someone to Christ, how do you discern true conversion, how do you become a doctor of souls.

We have joined Rome in this matter. In the Roman Catholic Church, the baby is baptized, and the baby is pronounced "Christian." Henceforth, the baby *is Rome's*. Never again do you deal with conversion. You just create all sorts of worldly means to try to keep them in the church!

But listen: Evangelicals have done the same thing! Pray a little prayer with them after two or three minutes of counseling, after half an hour of preaching—twenty-five minutes of which were very funny stories—and then you draw the net for five minutes at the end. Counsel them for a little bit, and then declare them "saved." Then you spend the rest of their days discipling them, and wondering why they don't grow!

I believe in personal one-on-one discipleship. But, my dear friend, the Church got along for more than a thousand years without it, without what we now know as personal discipleship with all the books and helps available today. I want you to think about this. One-on-one discipleship became gigantic in the late 70s and it remains so until today. What is the cry? "Just as many people are going out the back doors," they say, "as are coming in the front doors, and the reason why this is happening is because we are not discipling people." No! The reason why it is happening is because people aren't getting converted. They show themselves as unconverted because Christ's sheep hear His voice and follow Him (Joh 10:3), whether you disciple them or not.

Now we ought to disciple, but that is not why they are leaving. "They went out from us because they were not of us" (1Jo 2:19). And they hardly got a chance to be "of us" because they never heard a true Gospel—no one ever dealt with their souls. So we spend a fortune discipling goats, hoping they will

become sheep. You can’t teach a goat into a sheep. A goat only becomes a sheep by the supernatural working of the Spirit of Almighty God.

I moved my family to our church because it practices church discipline, and because I need to be under church discipline—the watchful care of elders and other members who take this seriously. If my children, who are all tiny right now, make a profession of faith and then go awry, I want to know that they will be brought before the church, if necessary, for the salvation of their souls.

Some of you would get so mad if a pastor walked up to you and said, “Honestly, I have been praying about your child and I fear that he is unconverted.” You would get so mad, you would rally a group to have that pastor dismissed—instead of realizing, “Oh, praise God, we have got a man of God here.”

8. The Eighth Indictment: A Silence on Separation

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"—2 Corinthians 6:14

Today there is a void of serious teaching about *holiness* in life.[38] There is, of course, a general teaching on holiness that everyone agrees on. "Let's be holy," they say, "We need to be more holy. Let's have a holiness conference." But when you get specific about what that means, that's when everything boils over.

"Pursue peace with all men," the writer of Hebrews tells us, "and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). Does anybody believe this? A pastor says, "But Brother Paul, I have been blamed so often for teaching, you know, 'works' religion." Listen to me. Listen. It goes back again to regeneration and the providence of God. If God truly converts a man, He will continue working in that man, through teaching, blessing, admonition, and discipline. He will see to it that the work He has begun will be finished. And that is why the writer says, "Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Why?—because if there is no growth in holiness, then God is not working in your life. And if He is not working in your life, it is because you are *not His child!*

Look at the difference between Jacob and Esau. "Jacob I loved...Esau I hated" (Rom 9:13). Yet God fulfilled all His promises to both of them. Jacob was blessed; Esau was blessed. How did God demonstrate His judgments and wrath against Esau, and His love toward Jacob? First, He let them both run wild. But in Esau there was no work of discipline, no work of godly correction, nothing—this was the wrath of God upon him! But God severely disciplined Jacob almost every day of his life—this was the love of God upon him! It was the loving discipline, the correction of God, to bring him to holiness. And it is the same for all true believers today.

> "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—*Romans 12:1-2*

Why does he say "to present your bodies"? I think the reason is to avoid all this "super-spirituality" of today. You say, "I have given Jesus my *heart*, and you can't judge a book by its cover. You can't judge my inner condition by my outer works." But, as a matter of fact, you can judge a book by its cover. Jesus never

said you couldn't; rather, He specifically said that you could: "You will know them by their fruit" (Mat 12:33).

Now, if you think that you have given Christ your heart, then He will have your body too. And I will tell you why. The heart, my friend, is not some blood-pumping muscle or some figment of a poet's imagination. In the Bible, *heart* refers to the very essence or core of your being. Don't tell me Jesus has the very essence and core of your being and it doesn't affect your whole body and life. It just does not happen that way!

And so, we need to go through Scripture—and not legalistically and not just drawing inferences. No, instead we go through Scripture and stand on its clear commands. Commands about what? What sort of commands guide us in our families? I do not agree with everything the Puritans said, but I do love the Puritans, and one of the reasons why I love them is because I believe they honestly made an attempt to bring everything in their lives under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Everything!

Everything, such as their *minds*! They wrote 800-page books on what we should think about according to the Scriptures. And what should not enter into our minds according to the Scriptures. What we should do with our *eyes*. What should go in these *ears* and what should not go in these ears. How the *tongue* should be ruled. What should be the *direction* of our lives.

And yes, I am going to scare you to death: How we should *dress* ! Now I am going to be careful here; I don't want to just speculate. My dear friend, my wife says it this way: If your clothing is a frame for your face from which the glory of Christ springs forth, it is of God. But if your clothing is a frame for your body, it is sensual, and God hates it. The nature of God guides our decisions in every detail of our conduct.

Now I can't go through everything of holiness, and holiness isn't just outward expression, but we have come to be a people that uses the interior work of the Spirit as an *excuse* to say nothing needs ever to happen on the outside. And that is *not* true! Some of you young men, you cry out probably more than I do that the Spirit of God would fill you and work in you, but it only takes one-half hour of television to so grieve Him, that He will be miles from you. If water is ninety-nine percent pure, and 1% sewer, then I am *not* drinking it!

One time I was struggling, and Leonard Ravenhill heard about it from my friend, and he sent a tract to me. I still have that tract. I will never, never part with that. It says, "Others can; you cannot." Young man, listen to me: I don't go to malls. I don't, and not because I am more holy than you. It is because I know

what I am!

There is the story of one of the finest, greatest violinists in Europe playing his final concert as an old man. And when he finished, a young man, a violinist, walked up to him, and said, “Sir, I’d give my life to play like you.” And the old man said, “Son, I *have* given my life to play like me.”

You say, “I want the power of God on my life”—then something has got to go. “I want to know Him”—then some separation from the world has to occur!

Let me tell you something, young man. Everyone else is running around in all their little retreats and conferences, and getting together with group hugs and singing Kumbaya[39] and everything else. Maybe you need to get alone in the wilderness with God, and fast for seven days on your knees studying the book of Psalms—just being alone with God, belonging to Him.

To be a man of God there has got to be a sense where sometimes even your wife, who is of your own flesh, one with you, she looks you in the eye and she knows: she can’t go where you are going.

Today in our churches, there is a silence on separation from the world. “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness?” (2Co 6:14)—nothing! Or “what fellowship has light with darkness?” (vs. 14)—nothing! Darkness is the opposite of God’s revelation. Or what harmony does Christ have with devils? (vs. 15)—nothing! Or what has the believer in common with the unbeliever? (vs. 15)—nothing!

The Lord says, “Come out from their midst” (vs. 17). Come out from the midst of what? Come out from the midst of lawlessness, darkness, satanic devices, and the life and worldliness of the unbeliever. Come out from it!

9. The Ninth Indictment: A Replacement of the Scriptures with Psychology and Sociology Regarding the Family

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."—Colossians 2:8

I have a ninth indictment, and this is very important to me as an older man with a young family. I didn't get married until I was 30. My wife had something of a little brain tumor for the first eight years. We couldn't have children and then, oh, praise God, a child was born and then another and then another and then, who knows?

My dear friends, pastors, and leaders, think about this. Our Sunday morning services are so *cosmetic*. Just because there seems to be beautiful worship, and the sermon went well, and people seem to be moved, that is not evidence of real spirituality. I will tell you what evidence is: the home, the marriages, the families.[40]

"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jdg 17:6). When I travel, and I meet all kinds of people, I try to find a godly man who has raised godly children, and I go and latch on to him. But in most cases do you know what I find out? Most of the people I talk to in church want to discuss old wives' tales and sociology and every other thing. It is all about what is right in their own eyes, and they can't give me one Bible verse. But every once in a while I find a man and a woman who set themselves to rear their family according to Scripture—and the difference is overwhelming!

When I am on an airplane, I love to do this. Men will sit down beside me and they will ask, "What do you do?" I say, "Oh, I'm a husband."

They ask, "Oh, what else do you do?" "Oh, I'm a father."

"What else do you do?" "Well, if I have any time left over, I preach a little."

What does it matter if a man wins the whole world and loses his own family? Let me put it to you this way: Upon what are you rearing your children and loving your wife? Based upon what? If you can't start going into Scriptures right now and showing me how your family is founded upon it, I can assure you, you are a captive to psychology, sociology, and the whims and lies of this age.[41] You see, you don't have the right to follow all these other things. You have no authority apart from the Word of God.

Look at Genesis 18:19. “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the *way of the LORD*, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” What a beautiful way this is!

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and *perfect, will of God* ”(Rom 12:1-2). Verse 2 tells us that the will of God is *perfect*. So if you ever come up with this idea as a man of God, “I am sacrificing my family for the sake of the ministry,” I will tell you: you are a bold faced liar. You are sacrificing your family for the sake of the little kingdom you are trying to build. I can say that because the will of God is perfect; that means I do not have to violate the will of God with regard to my family, in order to fulfill the will of God with regard to my ministry. God doesn’t need you! He does require, however, that you be *obedient*.

It is like when someone asked me one time, “Brother Paul, are you against evangelism?” I said, “Yes and no. I am not against biblical evangelism, but I am against the way you are doing it.” “Are you against Sunday school and youth groups?” “Yes and no.” I want to give you two examples in order to explain something to you. For some of you what I am going to say will not be strong enough, and for some of you I am going to be too strong. I just want to use these two things to point out what is wrong with us.

Sunday school. No matter what denomination you are a part of, if you are a part of some denomination that is kind of organized, I can assure you that your denomination spends multi-millions of dollars on Sunday school material, on conferences, on teaching teachers how to teach Sunday school, and on doing everything in the book to promote Sunday school. I know that for a fact.

Let me ask you. How much money does your denomination spend, and how many conferences and man-hours are invested, to teach fathers to teach their children? God doesn’t have a plan B; He only has a plan A. When you circumvent plan A, then you discover that plan B won’t work!

Now I am not saying that children can’t come together in groups and be catechized or taught anything, but if that ever even begins to supplant the ministry of the father in the home,[42] you must blow it to pieces!

Do you see what I am saying? Look at just this one tiny example. There is everything available for Sunday school. But there is hardly a conference in this

entire country to teach men how to teach their children. And most of the time in the Sunday school it is nothing more than entertainment, because the Sunday school teacher doesn't have the authority to discipline your child. And even if they did, most wouldn't do it because they don't believe in it. That's just one tiny example.

Now let's look at *youth groups*. "Well, youth need to be together. You know, they just need to be together." Really? What does the Scripture say? "He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm" (Pro 13:20)! Who ever told you youth ought to be together? I'll tell you who told you: the 1960s psychologists who created the "generation gap." No!—youth need to be with adults so that they stop acting like naïve fools, join adulthood, and put away foolishness—which leads to their destruction. Now I am not saying you can't bring youth together, but I submit that if you do, you should have all their parents there.

And you say, "What about the lost youth that comes into our church?" Well, what are they seeing now? The lost youth come into your Christian youth in church and they see almost the same thing they see in their own homes: no parents, and kids teaching kids. Or one guy a little bit older with mousse in his hair teaching kids. But what would happen if lost youth came into your church and they saw the youth there in a loving, wonderful relationship with their parents? They would go, "Whoa! I have never seen anything like this before. His dad, look at him. He loves his son! And the son, he loves his dad! I mean look at the love. So is this Christianity?"

Our situation in the churches is very needy, but we tend to be blind to it. It is like the situation where a man comes up to me with a bleeding forehead, and he says, "Brother Paul, I have been everywhere. No one can diagnose my problem." And I say, "Well, I am no doctor, but I'll follow you around for 24 hours to see what we can see." And I notice that every time the hour strikes, he hits himself in the head with a brick. If it strikes one he hits himself one time. If it strikes two, he hits himself twice. If it strikes twelve, he hits himself twelve times in the head with the brick. After observing this, cautiously and carefully, taking notes for 24 hours, I come up to him and I say, "You know, I am no doctor, but I think I have figured out your problem."

It is that pathetic among us, Church! Why do our children do what they do? Why is everything so turned upside down? It is like one dear saint who wouldn't let his teenage son go out with a young lady to be in some private place. Someone asked him one time, "Don't you trust your son?" He said, "No, I don't

trust my son. What ever made you think that? I don't even trust his dad! I wouldn't put his father alone with a woman that wasn't his wife, and yet I have much more to lose from impropriety than my son. And I have much more control of my will than a teenager with raging hormones. So what would make you ever think I would trust my son?"

We violate biblical principle after biblical principle, and then we wonder why everything is a mess.

10. The Tenth Indictment: Pastors Malnourished in the Word

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—2 Timothy 2:15

I was listening a few months ago to all the horrendous things that are happening to our country (I don't know what you would call it anymore: republic, democracy, country, socialistic state?). I was so burdened as I sat there listening; I was saying, "Oh, God, what can I do? Right now, Lord, honestly, with all that is in me, I will jump in the middle of the fire. If there is a charging rhino, I will jump in front of it. Just tell me what to do! Do you want me to go to Washington and just stand in front of the White House and preach until they throw me in jail? I am tired of just preaching to Christians and in churches and conferences. Oh God, the country is going to hell! What do you want me to do? Just throw me at them."

Listen to 1 Timothy 4:1-16.

1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. 7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. 10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. 11 These things command and teach. 12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

1 Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter

times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Paul goes on to tell young Timothy that, basically, all hell is going to break lose in culture, that everything is just going to be maddening, with men acting as beasts! I was with Conrad Mbewe a few months ago and heard him preach. He said this: "In Africa we no longer have a fear of beasts. We don't run from beasts. We fear men and run from men." He was, of course, talking about the effects of radical depravity[43] in mankind. Paul tells us here just that: "The world is going to come unglued, Timothy."

Now what does he also say? "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith" (vs. 6). And right there this text just started opening up for me. Yes, the world has lost its mind! Everything bad is going to happen. God is telling us, "It is all under My providence, but listen to Me! Here should be your reaction in the midst of all hell breaking loose, in the midst of apostasy, in the midst of persecution. Here is what you need to do: Be constantly 'nourished up in the words of faith.'"

Instead, we always want to run out there and *do* something. We want to fix something. But God is seeking men of character, polished swords. First of all, son, be constantly "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine whereunto thou hast attained." This "whereunto thou hast attained" is very important. It means "that which you have been following." I think it is indicating to us that a simple intellectual study of Scripture *will not* achieve the goal that God has for His people. They must obey it. They must begin following it. You cannot learn doctrine well until you follow the doctrine you learn!

And then he says this, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables" (vs. 7). My dear friend, let me tell you something. All this "emergent church" stuff, much of the "church growth" stuff, all of the cultural sensitivity stuff, throwing out the window *biblical* sensitivity—it is just a bunch of little boys wanting to play church without the power of God on their lives. (And I will stand on that statement.) It is a lesser than David trying to fit himself into Saul's armor. I say: To the wind with it! The more you trust in the arm of flesh, the less you are going to see the power of God.

Paul then says this, "exercise thyself rather unto godliness" (vs. 7). He says, on the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. Man of God, you want revival?—so do I. We need an army, though. If powerful swords, if mighty, flaming pipes and swords and weaponry are to be dropped out of heaven for us to fight with, then we must be the caliber of men who can wield those

things to fight with sound character. We should discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness.

Young men, discipline yourself to prayer. Discipline yourself to the systematic reading of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation over and over and over again. Discipline yourself in your speech. Discipline yourself in the company you keep. Discipline yourself in when you go to bed and when you rise up. This is a war. Discipline yourself !

Young men, I can tell you this. Being born in the age that you have been born, unless you are some exception, if you are under 30, yea, even under 40—you probably lack discipline because you have never been required to really work. You have never needed to work for your food—and your fathers probably never made you work so hard that your bones cried. The men who have accomplished much and have been used of God, have been men of labor in the ministry. Effectual ministry is *hard*, and it will cost you everything! And by the time you are an old man, you will be broken—but strong in the things of God!

"Exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (vs. 7-8). Oh, my dear friends, who cares about "your best life now"? It is all about eternity! Someday you will stand in those granite halls before the Lord of glory, and kings and the greatest men on earth will be divided and split and culled—some cast into eternal hell and some invited into eternal glory to live for eternity. These Olympic athletes, how majestic they are—but only for a moment. They start training when they are four and five years old. They never do anything but train until they are twenty-two. They run a nine-second race for a medal they hang up on a wall, and that's it! There moment of glory and all they have lived for is over! Cannot you give equal for *eternal* things?

Some of the greatest men of God have been men very limited in their bodies. In their abilities, they were so limited that they had to focus themselves into one thing: the ministry. "For bodily exercise profiteth little…This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God" (vs. 8-10) This is not some martyr thing in which we uselessly give our lives to one thing, only to be pulverized without hope. No. We serve God, and God will honor us. We affix our hope on Him and He gives us strength!

Oh, this life is a vapor. I am 47, but yesterday I was 21. Where did it all go? It is a vapor! While you have strength, preach. I praise God that, in His

providence as a young man, I spent myself in the Andes Mountains and in the jungles of Peru—doing what I no longer have the strength to do.

While you are a young man, while there is strength in you, labor with all your might. Take those stupid video games of yours and crush them under your feet. Throw the TV out the window. You were made for greater things than these. If you are a child of the King, nothing on this earth can satisfy you, *nothing* ! "These things command and teach" (vs. 11)

Now, there is so much here, but look at vs. 15. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." Let's say that on a wooden table my child spills a glass of water. And by the laws that God has placed in nature, the water heaps up a bit on the table, so much that you can see it as a pool. You walk by it and you say, "There is water spilled on the table." It is apparent to all. But then I come by, take a towel, lay it across the spilled pool of water, and lift it up. And you say, "I no longer see any water." Where is it?—it is absorbed into the towel. Men, you are to meditate on, be absorbed in these things of godliness and character. Pastors, I plead with you; listen to me—this is so important: You are not errand boys! You are not to spend your days wiping the noses of carnal churchmen. Get yourself in your study. Drink deep. Be so absorbed in the knowing of God that people say, "Where is he? He used to be such a man about town, such a friend to everyone, such a personable fellow. Where is he?"—well, just like the water in the towel, he is absorbed in these things!

We are men of God. We are ministers of the most high. There should be an otherness about us. We should have a distant gaze in our eyes towards a distant star. The greatest thing we can do for our people is to be men of God, absorbed in the things of God, so that when we open our mouths the Word of God comes out.

Where I go to church, Jeff Noblit is the main preaching pastor. He has always given himself to study, but when I got there, I talked to him and the other leaders. And any time someone asked me something I said this: "Please do this one thing. Take as much of the burden off of brother Noblit as we possibly can and let him live in that study with God, because I have got children out here. And the greatest gift that man could give to me is to study to show himself approved, and to come out in that pulpit in the power of the Holy Spirit and proclaim, 'Thus saith the Lord,' correcting and rebuking, giving great promises and warnings. Please, do that for me."

Pastor, please do that for your people, because God says, "Take heed unto

thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." This verse means almost nothing in the evangelical community today. How many pastors and preachers do you think take it seriously? How many say to themselves, "I need to pay close attention to myself [44] to insure salvation for me and for those who hear me"?

I have a question, pastor: when was the last time you examined your own life to see if you were in the faith, to see if you really know the Lord? You see, my dear friend, I have great assurance when I study my own conversion, when I discuss it with other men, when I look over the twenty-five years of my pilgrimage with Christ, I have great assurance of having come to know Him. But even now, if I were to depart from the faith, and walk away, and keep going in that direction, into heresy, into worldliness, it could be the greatest of proofs that I never knew Him—that the whole thing was a work of the flesh.

I know what I am saying is outstanding to you. You think, "Oh my, I have never heard such a thing," but this is the old timeless biblical truth you need to hear. Just read *Pilgrim's Progress*.[45]

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

May God bless His Church!

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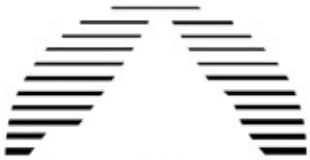
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[1] **Martin Luther** (1483-1546) – a German Roman Catholic monk, theologian, university professor, and church reformer, whose writings and preaching inspired the Protestant Reformation and changed the course of Western civilization.

[2] **95 declarations…door** – Luther posted 95 objections to the doctrine and practices of the Roman Catholic Church onto the door of the church at Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517, which began the Protestant Reformation.

[3] "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father" (1Ti 5:1).

[4] **Charles H. Spurgeon** (1834-1892) – influential English Baptist minister who preached weekly to 6,000 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London; his collected sermons fill 63 volumes.

[5] **George Whitefield** (1714-1770) – the best-known evangelist of the 18th century and an itinerant preacher that God greatly used in England and the American Colonies during the "Great Awakening."

[6] **Leonard Ravenhill** (1907-1994) – English Christian preacher and author who focused on the subjects of prayer and revival; he challenged the modern church to the example of the first-century church in the Book of Acts.

[7] **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones** (1899-1981) – well-known expository Welsh preacher; after successful medical studies, he nearly became a physician when God called him to preach the Gospel; known for his Christ-centered expository preaching.

[8] **Aiden Wilson Tozer** (1897-1963) – American Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor, preacher, author; known for deep personal piety and prayer; often challenged the modern church to repent of shallowness and compromise with the world.

[9] **John Wesley** (1703–1791): Anglican minister and theologian; largely credited, with his brother Charles, with founding the English Methodist movement, which began when he took to open-air preaching in a similar manner to George Whitefield.

[10] **Christianity Today** – a monthly magazine addressing a variety of modern evangelical issues.

[11] **what happened in Wales** – the Great Welsh Revival of 1904-1905, which began in the fall of 1904 under the leadership of Evan Roberts (1878–1951), a 26-year-old former coal miner and minister-in-training; the revival lasted less than a year, but in that period 100,000 converts were made and many churches returned to biblical faith.

[12] **what happened in Africa** – the evangelization of sub-Sahara Africa beginning in the colonial period of the 1800s and continuing today through missions and indigenous churches.

[13] **is the Bible sufficient** – see Geoff Thomas, *Satisfied with the Scriptures*; Charles Spurgeon, *The Bible*; John Piper, *Is the Bible Reliable?* All titles listed in footnotes are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

[14] **a peculiar people** – a people of His very own.

[15] **knowledge of God** – see J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*; A.W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*.

[16] ***summum bonum*** – (Latin) the greatest or highest good.

[17] **knowledge of self** – see A.W. Pink, *Vile*; Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. All titles in footnotes are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

[18] **Jonathan Edwards** (1703-1758) – American Congregational preacher and evangelical theologian; well known for his preaching in the Great Awakening along with George Whitefield.

[19] **self-esteem** – see Jay Adams, *The Biblical View of Self-esteem*.

[20] **know the Gospel** – see Robert Hawker, *The True Gospel*, and the *Free Grace Broadcaster*, issue 198, "The Gospel." All titles listed in footnotes are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

[21] **regeneration** – see A.W. Pink, *Regeneration*, and the *FGB*, "The New Birth" (#202).

[22] **decisionism** – the belief that "making a decision," usually practiced by walking a church aisle as a method of showing belief and/or praying a sinner's prayer is equivalent to repenting of one's sins and trusting Christ alone for the pardon of sin; see James Adams, *Decisional Regeneration*.

[23] **redemption** – the deliverance of God's elect from a state of sin into a state of salvation by the means and merit of the ransom paid by Christ on their behalf.

[24] **propitiation** – appeasement; a sin offering that turns away wrath.

[25] **acropolis** – means "highest city" in Greek and was the fortified part of an ancient Greek city, usually built on a hill; hence, high point.

[26] **Calvinists** – those who believe, along with the French-born Swiss Reformer John Calvin (1509-1664) that the Bible teaches the supreme authority of the Scriptures, the sovereignty of God, predestination, and the doctrines of grace; these doctrines were the response of the Synod of Dort (1618-19) to the Arminians' remonstrance (protest) and are commonly known by the acronym TULIP.

[27] **Arminians** – followers of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch theologian, born in Oudewater, the Netherlands, who rejected the Reformers' understanding of predestination, and they taught that God's predestination of individuals was based on His foreknowledge of their accepting or rejecting Christ by their own free will.

[28] **credalism** – outwardly following a formal creed or statement of faith without a new heart, without saving faith, and without a true heart love for God; see J.C. Ryle, *Formalism*.

[29] **infant baptism for salvation** – see Charles Spurgeon, *Baptismal Regeneration*.

[30] **golden calf** – reference to the golden calf constructed by Aaron at Mount Sinai, which allowed the rebellious Hebrews to defy God's order (Exo 32:1-30).

[31] **carnal** – fleshly, sensual; as opposed to spiritual.

[32] **doctrine of the carnal Christian** – see L.R. Shelton, Jr., *The True Gospel of Christ versus the False Gospel of Carnal Christianity*. All titles listed in footnotes are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

[33] **in our church** – Paul Washer attended First Baptist Church of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, for many years, where Jeff Noblit continues to serve; in the spring of 2010, Paul and the staff of HeartCry Missionary Society moved to West Virginia to plant a new church.

[34] **assailed** – to attack with violence.

[35] **cost you…everything** – see A.W. Pink, *The Cross and Self*, and Horatius Bonar, *Christ or the World.*

[36] "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Mat 18:15-17).

[37] **church discipline** – see John Owen, *Church Discipline*, and Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*. All titles listed in footnotes are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

[38] **holiness in life** – see *FGB*, "Love Not the World" (#163).

[39] **Kumbaya** – an African spiritual song from the 1930s, popular in folk music, then later in youth camp gatherings; used here to represent superficial religion and emotionalism.

[40] **the home, the marriages, the families** – see J.C. Ryle, *Duties of Parents*, and *FGB*, "The Godly Home" (#170), "Marriage" (#200), and "Biblical Parenthood" (#204). All titles in footnotes are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

[41] **lies of this age** – see Erroll Hulse, *Postmodernism*.

[42] **the ministry of the father in the home** – see *FGB*, "Family Worship" (# 188) and "Godly Manhood" (# 192), and J.C. Ryle, *Duties of Parents*.

[43] **radical depravity** – see A.W. Pink, *The Doctrine of Human Depravity*.

[44] **pay close attention to myself** – see Charles Spurgeon, *The Minister's Self Watch*, and Horatius Bonar, *Words to Winners of Souls*. All titles in footnotes are available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

[45] ***The Pilgrim's Progress*** – the classic allegory by John Bunyan (1628-1688), in which the main character Christian seeks relief from the guilt-burden of the Law, finds forgiveness at the Cross of Christ, and proceeds to face many trials in this world on his way to eternal life in the Celestial City. At every turn,

he finds he must rely upon the Word of God to keep him on the strait and narrow path that God has marked out for him. On the way, he meets many false professors who seem at first also to be pilgrims, but all except Faithful and Hopeful fall away. Part One, complete with George Offor's notes from 1849, is available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.