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WHEN MY LOVE TO CHRIST GROWS WEAK

James E. Rogers

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Peter thought he loved Jesus with a love that would never grow weak. He proclaimed: “I will lay down my life for thee” (John 13:37).
- B. Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. Jesus told him: “The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice” (John 13:38; 18:17,25-27).
- C. I may love Jesus, but I am also in danger of allowing my love to him to grow weak.
- D. How may I prevent my love to Christ from growing weak?
- E. Let us study this subject carefully.

II. WHEN MY LOVE TO CHRIST GROWS WEAK, IN THOUGHT I GO TO GETHSEMANE

- A. Matthew 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-50; Luke 22:40-53; John 18:1-11
- B. The Garden of Gethsemane has special significance in connection with the betrayal of Jesus. It also serves to strengthen my faith when I think of what Jesus endured in that garden for me.
- C. In Gethsemane, Jesus endured intense sorrow for me.
 - 1. Jesus and the disciples came to Gethsemane. Matthew 26:36; John 18:1
 - 2. Jesus told the disciples to sit in a certain place while he went yonder (“about a stone’s cast,” Luke 22:41) to pray. Matthew 26:36
 - 3. Jesus took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and John, Matthew 4:21) with him further into the garden. Matthew 26:37
 - 4. Jesus began to be sorrowful and sore troubled (*ademoneo*, “to be troubled, much distressed.”¹). Matthew 26:37
 - a. He “began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled.” Mark 14:33 “Amazed” is from *ekthambeo* which is an intensive form of *thambeo*. *Thambeo* is akin to *thambos* which means “amazement, wonder, [and] is probably connected with a root signifying to render immovable; it is frequently associated with terror as well as astonishment”²
 - b. He said his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Matthew 26:37,38
 - (1). “Exceeding sorrowful” is from *perilupos*, which means “very sad, deeply grieved (*peri*, intensive)”³
 - (2). Here one sees the agony of Jesus. Hebrews 5:7
 - 5. An appropriate summary of these events and what was about to follow is found in Hebrews 5:1-9 and 1 Peter 2:21-24.

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D. In Gethsemane, Jesus submitted to God's plan for salvation for me.

1. Jesus went forward a little and prayed. Matthew 26:39

a. He assumed a lowly posture. He fell on his face.

b. He addressed his prayer to his Father.

(1). "He said, Abba, Father." Mark 14:36. "Abba" "is an Aramaic word . . . It approximates to a personal name, in contrast to 'Father,' with which it is always joined in the N.T. . . 'Abba' is the word framed by the lips of infants, and betokens unreasoning trust; 'father' expressed an intelligent apprehension of the relationship. The two together express the love and intelligent confidence of the child."⁴

(2). His request was based on the power of God. "All things are possible unto thee." Mark 14:36

c. He asked if it was possible that the cup of death might pass from him. Matthew 20:22. He prayed that "if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him." Mark 14:35

d. He affirmed his dedication to the will of God. John 6:38

2. Jesus went back and prayed a second time. Matthew 26:42. Again, he affirmed his dedication to carry out the will of God.

3. Jesus went back and prayed the same prayer a third time. Matthew 26:44

a. An angel from heaven came and strengthened him. Luke 22:43

b. He was in such agony that he prayed more earnestly. Luke 22:44

(1). "Agony" is from *agonia* denotes "intense emotion. It was more frequently used eventually in this last respect, to denote severe emotional strain and anguish."⁵

(2). "More earnestly" is from *ektenesteron*, "the comparative degree of *ektenos*" in which "The idea suggested is that of not relaxing in effort . . ."⁶

c. His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. Luke 22:44. "Drops" is from *thrombos*, "a large thick drop of clotted blood (etymologically akin to *trephe*, to curdle), is used in Luke 22:44, in the plural . . ."⁷

D. In Gethsemane, Jesus endured the stress of his disciples for me.

1. Jesus told Peter, James and John to abide there and watch with him. Matthew 26:38. "Watch" is from *gregoreo*, "to watch, is used (a) of keeping awake . . ."⁸

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2. Jesus came back to Peter, James and John. Matthew 26:40,41
 - a. When he arrived, he found them asleep. Matthew 26:40
 - b. He addressed Peter. Matthew 26:40,41
 - (1). He asked if Peter could not watch with him for an hour. Matthew 26:40
 - (2). He cautioned Peter to watch and pray that he not enter into temptation. Matthew 26:41
 - (3). He stated that the spirit was willing, but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41
 3. Jesus came back to Peter, James and John. Matthew 26:43. Again, they were asleep because their eyes were heavy.
 4. Jesus came back to Peter, James and John. Matthew 26:45,46
 - a. He told them to sleep on and take their rest. Matthew 26:45
 - (1). They were sleeping “for sorrow.” Luke 22:45
 - (2). Here we see the emotional stress borne by the apostles.
 - b. He stated that the hour was at hand and that the Son of man was betrayed into the hands of sinners. Matthew 26:45. John 12:27; 13:1
 - c. He told them to arise so they could be going. Matthew 26:46
 - d. He told them that his betrayer was near. Matthew 26:46
- E. In Gethsemane, Jesus endured the subversion of Judas for me.
1. While he was speaking to the apostles. Matthew 26:47. “The time was probably past midnight when Judas came.”⁹
 2. Those who came. Matthew 26:47
 - a. Judas, one of the twelve (Matthew 26:14-16), the leader (Luke 22:47).
 - b. A great multitude composed of soldiers and officers of the Sanhedrin (John 18:3). This would have been the “temple guard.”¹⁰
 3. How they came. Matthew 26:47
 - a. With swords (*machaira*, “a short sword or dagger”¹¹) and staves (clubs).
 - b. “With lanterns and torches and weapons.” John 18:3

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(1). “Lantern” is from *phanos* which “denotes either a torch or a lantern.”¹² Here it is distinguished from torch.

(2). “Torch” is from *lampas* which “denotes a torch . . . frequently fed, like a lamb, with oil from a little vessel used for the purpose”¹³

(3). “Weapons” is from *hoplon* which is used “for weapons of warfare.”¹⁴

c. With authority from the Sanhedrin. Mark 14:43

4. The sign of betrayal. Matthew 26:48,49

a. Judas gave the mob a sign by which they would know which one to arrest (Matthew 26:48). The sign was a kiss. *Philema*, a kiss.

b. When they saw the sign they were to take Jesus.

(1). “Take” is from *krateo* which “signifies to hold or hold fast, i.e., firmly”¹⁵

(2). “Judas used the kiss as a weapon, not as a sign of affection. In that day, it was customary for disciples to kiss their teacher. But in this case, it was not a mark of submission or respect.”¹⁶

(3). Judas wanted Jesus led away safely (*asphalos*, securely). Mark 14:44

c. Judas came to Jesus (Matthew 26:49), addressed him as Rabbi (26:25) and kissed him much (*Kataphileo*, “to kiss fervently”¹⁷).

5. The response of Jesus. Matthew 26:50

a. He addressed Judas as friend. “Friend” is from *hetairos*, “a comrade, companion, partner, is used as a term of kindly address”¹⁸

b. He asked Judas if he would betray the Son of man with a kiss. Luke 22:48

c. He told Judas to do that for which he had come.

6. The arrest of Jesus. Matthew 26:50

a. The multitude came to Jesus.

(1). Jesus went forth and asked them, “Whom seek ye?” John 18:4

(2). The multitude told him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” John 18:5

(3). Jesus replied, “I am he.” John 18:5

(4). The multitude went backward and fell to the ground. John 18:6

(5). Jesus asked them again, “Whom seek ye?” John 18:7

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(6). The multitude replied, “Jesus of Nazareth.” John 18:7

(7). Jesus replied, “I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.” John 18:8. He did this to fulfill the word he had spoken that he had not lost any of these whom God had given him. John 18:9

b. The multitude laid (*epiballo*, “used of seizing men, to imprison them”¹⁹) hands on Jesus. “They had no right to arrest Jesus. He had broken no laws, He had committed no crimes.”²⁰

c. The multitude took Jesus and bound him. John 18:12

7. The reaction of the apostles. Matthew 26:51

a. They asked Jesus if they should smite with the sword. Luke 22:49

b. Peter drew a sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. John 18:10

8. The reply of Jesus. Matthew 26:52-56

a. He told Peter to put up his sword. Matthew 26:52

b. He touched the ear of the servant and healed him. Matthew 26:51. Notice that Jesus was arrested in spite of confirmation of his deity.

c. He stressed that this was not a time for defending him with a sword which would bring death to those who tried. Matthew 26:52

d. He reminded them he was not in this alone. Matthew 26:53. He could still call on his Father and he could send more than twelve legions (a large number) of angels to help him.

e. He stated his dedication to his mission which was to fulfill the Scriptures. Matthew 26:54,56,24. The Scriptures had prophesied his death. John 18:11

f. He asked the multitudes why they came for him as they did. Matthew 26:55

(1). Notice that Jesus is in control of the situation.

(2). He noted that the demeanor of the multitude showed they viewed him as one would view a criminal (robber).

(a). They had come with swords and staves (clubs) to seize him.

(b). “Robber” is from *lestes*, “a robber, brigand . . . one who plunders openly and by violence”²¹

(c). It is interesting that this mob, led by a thief (John 12:6) had come out as if to arrest a robber!

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(3). He reminded them that he had mingled with them daily in the temple during this week and they had not attempted to take him. Luke 19:47,48; 21:37; John 8:20

(4). He told them this was their hour and the power of darkness. Luke 22:53

9. The response of the apostles. Matthew 26:56. They all left him and fled. Matthew 26:31-35

III. CONCLUSION

A. The Garden of Gethsemane pictures the sadness of the night Jesus was betrayed. It is The Garden Of Despair.

B. As you look at the things found in this garden, where do you stand in your relationship to God? Does a contemplation of what Jesus did for you not increase and strengthen your faith?

C. Obey the Gospel.

D. Live faithfully.

ENDNOTES

1. W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, (Old Tappan, NJ:

Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1966), Volume 2, p. 210

2. Vine, Volume 1, p. 52

3. Vine, Volume 4, p. 53

4. Vine, Volume 1, p. 9

5. Vine, Volume 1, p. 43

6. Vine, Volume 2, p. 12

7. Vine, Volume 1, p. 341

8. Vine, Volume 4, p. 201

9. Rex A. Turner, Sr., Systematic Theology, (Alabama Christian School of Religion, Montgomery, AL: 1989), p. 242

10. Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), Volume 2, p. 97

11. Vine, Volume 4, p. 100

12. Vine, Volume 2, p. 310

2012 Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

13. Vine, Volume 2, p. 307
14. Vine, Volume 1, p. 75
15. Vine, Volume 2, p. 224
16. Wiersbe, p. 97
17. Vine, Volume 2, p. 296
18. Vine, Volume 2, p. 132
19. Vine, Volume 2, p. 319
20. Wiersbe, p. 98
21. Vine, Volume 3, p. 301

2012 Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

WHEN MY LOVE TO CHRIST GROWS WEAK – PART II

Daniel Rogers

Introduction

1. Why do many second – and subsequent – generation Christians fall away from the Lord’s church or simply produce no fruit? What can be done to instill in those whose parents and grandparents were faithful Christians the kind of fervor we often see in first-generation Christians? How do we break through the often unconscious sense that religion is a matter of tradition and inertia that seems to characterize many Christians who were reared in Christian homes?
2. The answer must lie in an honest examination of the question, “Why did you first obey the Gospel?”
3. For many, if they are honest, the answer will be, “That’s what my parents expected of me,” or, “That’s what my family has always done.” Such answers simply are not good enough. While it is a genuine blessing to be reared in a Christian home, for many, the simple fact that Christianity has “always been part of my family” leads to a sense of complacency and taking Christianity for granted.
4. The answer is that these people, well-meaning though they may be, have never been converted to Christ – in fact, they were never *converted* at all because conversion requires *change*. They merely ritualistically repeat the acts they have learned through rote repetition of routines they observed from their parents without coming to appreciate the reasons behind those acts.
5. The solution is that we must convert people – regardless who and what their parents may be – to Christ, and not to tradition or unthinking repetition. To the parents and grandparents, these were not mere routines, but acts of deep-rooted devotion to the Lord to whom they were converted. But to the children, often *conversion* –being convicted of sin, convinced that the Gospel is the only solution and committed to life-long service in love and appreciation for what Christ did for them – is not ever accomplished.
6. So how do we convert people, rather than merely indoctrinating them? We show them Jesus the Christ as their parents saw him – at Calvary.

Body

WHEN MY LOVE TO CHRIST GROWS WEAK, WHEN FOR STRONGER FAITH I SEEK, HILL OF CALVARY, I GO TO THY SCENES OF FEAR AND WOE.

Calvary is a place of conversion.

At Calvary, we see the single event in history that is specifically designed to produce a change in the hearts and minds of people.

I John 4:9, 10

John 3:16

Romans 5:6-8

Romans 12:1-2

At Calvary, we learn the pattern for our own conversion.

I Peter 2:21-24

Matthew 16:24

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Galatians 2:20

Hebrews 5:7-9

Calvary is a place of commitment.

At Calvary, we learn the extent of true devotion.

Philippians 2:5-8

Revelation 2:10

Hebrews 12:1, 2

I Corinthians 15:19-20, 55-58

At Calvary, we learn to love others.

I John 4:19-21

Hebrews 10:23-25

Romans 12:9-21

I John 3:14-18

THERE BEHOLD HIS AGONY SUFFERED ON THE BITTER TREE, SEE HIS ANGUISH, SEE HIS FAITH – LOVE TRIUMPHANT STILL IN DEATH

Calvary demonstrates the repugnance of sin – Romans 8:3

Calvary destroys the reign of sin – Romans 6:1-18

Calvary defies the rule of self – Philippians 2:1-8

Calvary deposes the regime of Satan – Colossians 2:13-15

Calvary discloses the regard of our Sovereign – John 15:13

Calvary displays the righteousness of the Savior – Romans 3:25-26

Calvary deploys the regenerating substance – Colossians 1:14

Calvary discharges the redeeming scheme – Ephesians 1:9-10

Calvary dispels the repressive shadow – Colossians 1:13

Calvary was devised to restore sinners – I Timothy 1:15

Calvary was designed to revolutionize souls – Colossians 3:5-11

Calvary discovers a renovated self – II Corinthians 5:17

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Calvary delivers a renewed security – I John 2:1, 2

THEN TO LIFE I TURN AGAIN, LEARNING ALL THE WORTH OF PAIN, LEARNING ALL THE MIGHT THAT LIES IN A FULL SELF-SACRIFICE

Life after the cross is forever different.

The problem of unconverted and uncommitted Christians can be solved only by taking them to Calvary and exposing them to its transformative influence.

Those who will view the cross anew and truly appreciate its significance cannot leave Calvary unchanged.

Their conviction about the Gospel, commitment to God and compassion for man will be forever altered.

At Calvary

*Years I spent in vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified;
Knowing not it was for me he died at Calvary.
By God's grace at last my sin I learned, then I trembled at the law I'd spurned,
Till my guilty soul imploring turned to Calvary.
Now I've giv'n to Jesus everything, now I gladly own him as my King,
Now my raptured soul can only sing of Calvary.
Oh the love that drew salvation's plan, oh the grace that brought it down to man,
Oh the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary!
Mercy there was great and grace was free, pardon there was multiplied to me
There my burdened soul found liberty – at Calvary!*

Self-sacrifice is the great lesson of Calvary.

It is essential to Christianity

Matthew 16:24

Galatians 2:20

Romans 12:1-2

It can only be accomplished when a person “sees with his eyes, and hears with his ears and understands with his heart and converts, and is healed” – Isaiah 6:9, 10

Sometimes, for those who have heard the Gospel the most, familiarity breeds contempt. We must get them to look anew at the cross of Calvary and everything it represents.

Then – and only then – can they be converted, committed Christians.

Conclusion

1. Christians struggling with commitment need our help to see the reason they became Christians in the beginning.
2. We can only help them see that reason by taking them back to the cross of Calvary.
3. The cross of Calvary shows us both how and why to become a Christian.
4. The cross of Calvary also shows us why we should persevere as a Christian.

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LEST HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF

David R. Pharr

1. My grandparents were concerned about the kind of world their children would inherit. They were afraid my parents' world would become even more worldly—and it did. My parents were concerned that my own generation would have to deal with new and powerful temptations—and that's the world we are living in now. For myself, I see my children, and especially my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, living in a world wherein immorality is the norm, a world in which Christians are shunned and openly persecuted, a world in which governments declare themselves against God, a world in which even the church of Christ has lost its convictions, and wherein only a few will be strong enough to be faithful to God.
 2. History moves in cycles and it does not take a prophet to see that we are on the downhill side. Paul spoke of this I Tim. 3:1-5, 13. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. . . . But, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Jesus' own words seem especially appropriate: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith in the earth?" (Luke 18:8).
- I. We need not be pessimists because our faith is in God, but we have to be realists when we review the cycles of history.
- A. Every famous civilization has risen to great heights, only to collapse under its own corruption. Where are the great builders of Egypt? What trace is there of the old Assyrian might? What happened to Nebuchadnezzar's head of gold? Is the world of Cyrus the Great still great? Where is the glory of Greece today? Rome fell to the enemies without, but more especially to the evil within. Or what shall we say of the glory of Solomon's throne?
 - B. Ancient Israel were a people chosen of God, but their history of departures from God repeated itself time and time again.
 1. "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger" (Judges 2:7-12 emp. added).
 2. For almost four-hundred years the history in judges involved: drifting away from God; suffering and oppression; turning back to God seeking mercy; then deliverance under judges. Norman Geisler (A Popular Survey of the Old Testament) summarizes these cycles in Judges as: "sin, servitude, supplication, and salvation."

(Numerous were the crimes and corruptions over those years. The book tells us of stealing, cruelty, immorality, prostitution, homosexuality, oppressive government, murder, gambling, political conspiracies. It's like today's news! But:)

II. The root of it all was in their turning away from God to serve idols.

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- A. Judges 2:12-13. “And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, . . . and followed other gods . . .”
- B. We first think of idolatry as statues, altars, material objects, or maybe sun and stars. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (Exodus 20:4). In the time of Josiah there were those “that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven” (II Kings 22:5). But such outward tokens only symbolized the corruptions that were within their hearts. What is the appeal of idolatry?
1. Sometimes in Israel it was political correctness, to get along with other nations. Solomon married foreign wives for political connections and compromised with their religions. Why does our president say that the Muslim call to prayer is the sweetest sound he has heard? Politicians will say they believe in God, but the real question is whether they believe in the God of the Bible.
 2. The appeal of idolatry is in getting free of the restraints of a holy God (Romans 1:28ff). Idolatry thrives on licentious conduct, no moral inhibitions. When politicians and sociologists say, “You can’t legislate morality,” they’re really saying, “Let’s keep God out of it.” For example, Bible marriage includes man, woman, and God (Matthew 19:6). Gay marriage is man, man, and no God. If God is my Creator, I must answer to him, but if I am just a product of evolution I can do as I please.
 3. The New Testament warns of idolatry (I John 5:21).
 - a. “Covetousness which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5). “Get all you can get!” It’s the American way.
 - b. “Whose god is their belly” (Philippians 3:19). Serving their own appetites—what I want is all that matters. “Grab for all the gusto you can get.”
 - c. “Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” (II Timothy 3:4).
 - d. Gods of man’s imagination (Romans 1:21f). People say, “I think God . . .”
 - e. Humanism, inordinate reverence for science (Romans 1:25). The idolatry of humanism is the official religion of the U. S. Dept. of Education.

(If idolatry is the greatest detriment to faith and faithfulness, what is the answer?)

- III. More than anything else we need to instill into every generation a profound awareness of the living God.
- A. Faith cannot be taken for granted. The same lessons must be taught over and over (II Timothy 2:2).
- B. God is not a theory, but a Person. He is not distant, but ever present. “For in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). “The heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), but it is only by the Bible that we can know his righteousness, his grace, his justice, his mercy, his power, his goodness, and love. (A Muslim wrote in our paper that their “Allah” is just another name for God. I wrote in reply: “No, because the God we believe in is the God that ‘so loved the world that he gave his only begotten . . .’”)
1. He is the One whose name is “I AM that I AM” (Exodus 3:14), the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob.
 2. He is the “God that made the worlds and all things therein” (Acts 17:25).
 3. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psalm 90:2).

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4. “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psalm 8:3-4).
5. “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20).
6. With him there is “no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning” (James 1:17). He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
7. His knowledge is without limit, because “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13).
8. He is the God that “spared not the angels that sinned,” and drowned the old world saving only Noah and his family, and burned up Sodom and Gommorrha, saving just Lot. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (II Peter 2:4-9).
9. “Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God” (Romans 11:22).
10. “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea” (Job 11:7-9).
11. “My heart standeth in awe of thy word” (Psalm 119:161).

Conclusion:

It is important that we teach morals, that we teach baptism, the church, scriptural worship, but first and foremost people need to be impressed with the awesomeness of the eternal God. Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

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ISRAEL, A CASE STUDY OF APOSTASY

Hosea 8:1-14

James Pharr

1. As a medical student continues his education to become a doctor, he conducts case studies.
2. What is true in the physical realm of medicine is just as true as in the spiritual realm of Christianity.
3. God indicted the false prophets of the Old Testament for their superficial healing (Jer. 6:14).
4. But true messengers of God deal with the cause of the disease.
5. The Bible makes it plain that the greatest threat to the church is not persecution from without but poison from within (II Pet. 2:1-2; II Thess. 2:1-3)
6. The church is in constant danger of apostasy (I Tim. 4:1-2; II Tim. 4:1-4)
7. Hosea chapter eight magnifies and clarifies the symptoms of apostasy. (Rom. 15:4)

I. Departure from God's word (Hos. 8:1-7)

- A. Israel professed to know God but they were disobedient to His word (1-3)
 1. They did not know His word (Hos. 4:6; Isa. 5:13).
 2. They did not teach His word (Deut. 6:4-12, 20-25).
 3. They profess to know God but did not obey Him (Mt. 7:21ff)
- B. Israel left God out of their decisions and brought idols into their religion (4-7)
 1. It all began with a golden calf (Ex. 32:1-6).
 2. It still continues today (II Tim. 4:1-4).
 3. It can be stopped (II Tim. 2:15; I Pet. 3:15).

II. Defilement with the world (Hos. 8:8-10)

- A. Friends with the world (10)
 1. Apostasy does not happen over night. It starts with a step in the wrong direction.
 2. Apostasy begins with "pitching our tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12).
 3. Apostasy picks the wrong kind of friends (Jas. 4:4-5).
- B. Lovers of the world (9)
 1. II Tim. 4:10
 2. I Jn. 2:15-17
 3. Heb. 11:24-26
- C. Conformed to the world (8)
 1. Apostates conform to the world in an attempt to be relevant but become irrelevant.
 2. Rom. 12:2

III. Deceived by works (Hos. 8:11-14)

- A. Crowds do not make a church (11).
- B. God's word applies to all (12).
- C. Life must be consistent with worship (13).
- D. Materialism is a great sin (14).

Conclusion – Hosea 14:1-9

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FAITH FOR LIFE

1. **2 Tim. 3:15**
 2. **Psa. 1** - Proper attitude toward scripture.
- I. EXAMINATION OF TEXT.
- A. **2 Timothy 3:15.**
1. Paul is writing to the young preacher Timothy (1:2), his *“son in the faith”* (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2)..
 2. Paul has reminded and praised the faith of his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois (1:5).
 3. Paul reminds Timothy of sin’s advancing movement against right (3:1-12).
 4. He encourages Timothy, *“continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them”* (3:14).
 5. He reminds Timothy of his training in the scriptures and their usefulness (3:15-17).
 6. Today such training includes both Old and New Testaments.
 - a. **Rom. 15:4**
 - b. **Jn. 5:39, 46-47**
 - c. **Matt. 22:29** - Jesus to Sadducees - *“Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”*
 - d. **2 Pet. 3:15-16**
 - e. **1 Tim. 5:18**
- II. THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTION AT HOME.
- A. **Parents make children.**
1. Children are what we make them.
 - a. By what we are ourselves.
 - b. By the way we train them.
 - c. By our set of values.
 2. **Ezek. 16:44** - *“Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter.”*
 3. **2 Chron. 20:32** - *“And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord.”* (Jehoshaphat)
 4. **Prov. 22:6** - *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”*
- III. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR INSTRUCTION.
- A. **The instruction to instruct.**
1. **Eph. 6:4, 1**
 2. **Prov. 22:6**
 3. **Deut. 6:4-7; 4:5-9**
 4. **Joel 1:3** - *“Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.”* (palmerworm, locust, cankerworm, caterpillar)
- B. **Examples, both good and bad.**
1. **Gen. 6-9** - Noah and his wife and their three sons.
 2. **Gen. 18:19** - Abraham, *“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.”*
 3. **Josh. 24:15** - Joshua, *“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the*
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other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

1. **1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22-25** - Eli did not correct his sons.
 2. **1 Sam. 8:1-5** - Samuel’s sons walked not in his ways.
 3. **2 Chron. 21:16-22:4** - Jehoram was a bad example on his son, Jehoahaz (Ahaziah), along with his mother Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.
- C. **The instruction should include:**
1. Absolute, final authority of Scriptures (**Deut. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**).
 2. One’s soul is of more value than the world (**Matt. 16:26**).
 3. Consequences of sin (**Rom. 6:23; 1:18-32; Isa. 59:1-2**).
 4. God loves man (**Jn. 3:16**).
 5. The church is the kingdom of God (**Matt. 16:18; 6:33; Acts 8:12**).
 6. Respect for authority (God’s; Christ’s; Elders; Parents; Teacher’s; Civil).
 7. Severity of God (**Rom. 11:22**).
 8. The gospel way is the only way to salvation (**2 Thess. 1:8**).

IV. WHAT IF WE FAIL?

- A. **We sin.**
- B. **We will be held accountable.**
- C. **Poem: “Don’t Blame The Children” or “Are Kids Really To Blame?”**

We read in the paper, we hear on the air,
Of killing and stealing and crime everywhere;
We sigh and we say, as we notice the trend;
“This young generation ... where will it end?”
But, can we be sure it’s their fault alone?

Too much money to spend; too much idle time;
Too many movies of passion and crime;
Too many books not fit to be read;
Too much evil in what they hear said;
Too many kids encouraged to roam;
By too many parents who don’t stay at home.

Youth don’t make the movies; they don’t write the books
That paint the pictures of gangsters and crooks.
They don’t make the liquor, they don’t run the bars;
They don’t make the laws, and they don’t make the cars;
They don’t make the drugs that addle the brain:
It’s all done by older folk, greedy for gain.
In how many cases we find that it’s true...
The label, “Delinquency,” fits older folks, too.
~~ Sister E. B. Grant

CONCLUSION:

1. God has shown us through His word concerning the importance of instructing our children in His scriptures.

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FAITH FOR LIFE: HOW TO GIVE IT & WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

By Aaron Cozort

For context of discussion, see: Keith Cozort, "FROM A CHILD THOU HAST KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES" -- III. The Responsibility for Instruction.

We have seen that God has expectations for parents when it comes to their responsibility to instruct their children in spiritual matters. Let us consider these examples further.

1. Abraham's Commands:

- A. God testified that He knew what kind of father Abraham would be before Isaac was born.
- B. Consider God's testimony: Abraham commanded (Genesis 18:19).
 - a. He commanded two groups:
 - 1) His children.
 - 2) His household.
 - b. He commanded two things:
 - 1) That they keep the way of the Lord (cf. Mat. 22:37).
 - 2) That they do righteousness and justice (cf. Mat. 22:39).
 - c. **How do you give a child a Faith For Life?** By commanding them after you in the ways of the Lord and in a life of righteousness and justice.
- C. Consider God's testimony: Abraham led (Hebrews 11:8-19).
 - a. He led his family by obeying God's command to leave home (Hebrews 11:8-10).
 - 1) He left his country, his family, and his father's house, and by all indications, he did so unquestioningly (Gen. 12:1-4).
 - 2) Why did he leave? He left because he had faith in God. He was an example to his family.
 - b. He led his family by trusting the seed promise of God (Hebrews 11:11-12).
 - 1) Abraham was not perfect (sinless) in this life. He even doubted the promises of God at times and questioned God, but what He also did was trust God when those questions were answered and those promises reassured.
 - 2) Of Sarah it is stated, "she judged Him (God--AJC) faithful who had promised."
 - 3) The object of Abraham and Sarah's faith was **not** just the promise of God, but the Person of God.
 - 4) They acted upon that for which they had no proof except for the testimony of one who was FAITHFUL. They trusted in that which was unseen.
 - c. He led his family by obeying God's command to sacrifice his promised son (Hebrews 11:17-19).
 - 1) Again, Abraham's faith was based upon the Person of God and not just the promises.
 - 2) He believed that God was able to raise up Isaac because he knew that God would not, could not, be unfaithful to His promises.
 - d. **How do you give a child a Faith For Life?** By leading them with your example and showing them the actions truth faith requires.
- D. Consider God's testimony: Abraham's Results.
 - a. His servant (at least one, if not all) worshipped the same God that Abraham worshipped (Genesis 24:11-14).
 - 1) When his servant prayed on Abraham's behalf, he didn't bow down to an idol, but instead he prayed to the God WHO IS ABLE!
 - 2) Abraham influenced his family as well as his "greater" household to serve God.
 - b. His son, Isaac, followed Abraham's example of obedience to God (Genesis 26:1-6).

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- 1) When Isaac could have done the natural thing during a time of famine--leave the land-- God told him to do what was unnatural and stay.
 - 2) God put a high bar in front of Isaac, "because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."
 - 3) He called for Isaac to live before Him the way Abraham did, and from all indications of Scripture, Isaac did exactly that.
- c. Abraham succeeded, **will you?**

2. Joshua's Confidence (Joshua 24:15).

- A. Joshua challenged Israel to be as faithful to God as his own family was.
- B. FATHERS: What kind of challenge would it be if everyone in your congregation was challenged to be as faithful as your family?
- C. Joshua had confidence in their obedience.
- D. This wasn't an attitude of, "As long as you're living under my roof, you will go to church!"
- E. Instead, their obedience to God was a result of effort, action, teaching, diligence, preparation and love.
- F. **Can we be so confident?**

3. Lois & Eunice's Cooperation.

- A. Sadly, there are many "single mothers" (physically) in our society.
- B. Sadder still, there are many "single mothers" (spiritually) in our congregations.
 - a. Fatherless homes in our society are almost the "norm" when you consider the number of children born out of wedlock and the current divorce rate.
 - b. Spiritually, fatherless home are abundant in the church.
 - c. Have you ever asked yourself why there is a shortage of qualified men to be elders? It is because we have a shortage of spiritual fathers.
 - d. Why do we have children whose spiritual training comes primarily from the Bible classes and sermons? Because we have a shortage of spiritual fathers.
- C. Why discuss Lois & Eunice?
 - a. For the women who are trying to raise spiritually minded children by themselves, know there IS HOPE!
 - b. Let us notice Timothy as an example (Acts 16:1-3).
 - 1) Timothy was a disciple (vs. 1).
 - 2) His mother was Jewish and believed (vs. 1).
 - 3) His father was Greek and didn't believe (implied--AJC) (vs. 1).
 - 4) He was respected by the congregation (vs. 2).
 - 5) He was willing to endure pain for the benefit of others (vs. 3).
 - 6) Lois & Eunice had raised Timothy to be a faithful Christian.
 - 7) Paul, after meeting Timothy, would become a spiritual father to Timothy (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18 - "Son Timothy").
 - c. Mothers, there are spiritual "fathers" to be found--even if your husband isn't one.
- D. How did Lois and Eunice do it?
 - a. First, by having their own "unfeigned faith" (2 Timothy 1:5).
 - 1) It was genuine.
 - 2) It was without hypocrisy.
 - b. Second, by starting early and through continual teaching (2 Timothy 3:15-17).
 - 1) "Things which you have learned."
 - 2) "things which you... have been assured of."
 - 3) What did they teach? The Holy Scriptures.
 - 4) When did they teach? From childhood.
 - 5) Why did they teach? It was able to make him wise for salvation.

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- 6) How did it make him wise for salvation? Through FAITH in CHRIST!
 - 7) What were the results? A Complete Christian (vs. 16-17).
- E. **How do you give a child a Faith For Life?** Recognize your responsibility to teach your child; leave that responsibility with no one else; begin at the earliest age possible—today; set an example for them, and teach them the Scriptures.

If we know we have a responsibility to our children, and we know that we have to raise them to have a faith for life, we should ask, **“What does a faith for life look like?”** Daniel is a great example of one who had a Faith for Life.

1. A Faith for Life is Cross-Cultural (Daniel 1:1-16).

- A. If you are planning on your child growing up in a culture that appreciates, worships, and serves the God of Heaven acceptably, you’re going to have to live somewhere other than the United States of America.
- B. If, though, you plan on your child or grandchildren growing up in America, you better prepare them to be cross cultural (i.e. living in opposition to culture).
- C. What do I mean by cross cultural?
 - a. Imagine in your mind that society and our children are two different rivers. One is flowing east, the other is flowing south. Think about what would happen when those two rivers intersected. Considering the natural forces involved in rivers, and the topography around the area they meet, you might find one of two results.
 - 1) Option 1: You might find one river will completely overpower the other river and the rivers will merge into the direction of the first river (east river might start flowing south; south river might begin flowing east). We’ll call this option “succumbing.”
 - 2) Option 2: You might find the rivers to be of similar strength and the result is that the waters (topography allowing) come together and begin flowing south-east. We’ll call this option “Compromise.”
 - b. Would it be possible, by natural forces alone, for the east bound river to meet the south bound river and for them to intersect with one another and yet both of them to remain unaffected in their course? The answer is, absolutely not. Such would be naturally impossible.
 - c. The idea of “cross cultural” is that you are living in a way that when your actions and life intersect with the culture you live, the culture doesn’t sweep you onto its path (you don’t succumb to the world), and the culture doesn’t get you to go with them “half-way” (you don’t compromise with the world). Instead, you traverse across the path of culture and continue going your own direction.
 - d. In America today, you can be cross-cultural (i.e. opposed to culture’s current status) without being godly, but I find it hard to believe that you can be godly without being cross-cultural.
 - e. Why? Because God said so.
 - 1) He said, “Be holy for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).
 - 2) He said, “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” (2 Corinthians 6:17).
 - 3) Because Jesus said, “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”
 - 4) Because in at least 682 verses in Scripture, God talks about “holiness” or “sanctification” both of which mean to be “SET APART.”
- D. Parents, if you are not preparing your child to look, talk, act, think, and live differently from the culture around them, you’re not giving them a Faith For Life.
- E. If your child’s goals and aims in life are to look, talk, act, think, and live like their friends and the culture around them, they don’t have a Faith For Life.
- F. If your child sees you wanting to look, talk, act, think, and live like the culture around you, then they will know YOU don’t have a Faith For Life.

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G. Daniel, our example for a faith for life, and his friends found themselves in a place where everyone else was living a life that was the exact opposite of a life of holiness. But they determined not to defile themselves with the king's meat. They wouldn't succumb and they wouldn't compromise. Will your child?

2. A Faith For Life Understands the Power of Prayer (Daniel 2:14-28).

- A. When in a tough situation, Daniel didn't search his almanac.
 - a. He didn't review his horoscope or even consult his tarot cards.
 - b. He prayed.
- B. Daniel made a promise before he said his prayer—at least the one that is recorded.
 - a. Daniel chose a path based upon the prior actions of God in blessing his actions (cf. 1:18-20).
 - b. Daniel placed his confidence in God's power to reveal this thing, but wasn't foolish enough to think he would receive it without asking.
 - c. God isn't unaware of the needs of our lives.
 - 1) He wasn't unaware of Daniel, Hananiah, Azaraiah, and Mischael's needs at that time.
 - 2) He wasn't even holding back what they did need, yet they still had to ask.
 - 3) Jesus emphasized, "For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8).
 - 4) But he also said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened..." (Matthew 7:7-11).
- C. Do your children pray?
- D. Do they pray in faith (cf. James 1:5-8)?
- E. Do they see you praying in faith knowing God can provide?
- F. Do they see you despair when troubles come that are too big for you to handle, or do they see you turn to God for help?

3. A Faith For Life is Humble and Realizes the Limitations of Humanity (Daniel 2:26-30).

- A. Daniel had no hesitation in declaring to Nebuchadnezzar, "This power does not belong to me."
 - a. He also turned down riches and a place as the third in the kingdom of Babylon in exchange for giving the meaning of the writing on the wall (cf. Daniel 5)—though these things would be given to him anyway.
 - b. Daniel was not a man of haughtiness, but of humility.
 - c. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- B. Daniel additionally recognized humanity's limitations.
 - a. He said, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand." (Daniel 2:20-23).
 - b. This implies Daniel recognized his own humanity, and with humanity comes **imperfection**.
 - c. It is not acceptable to be satisfied with a sinful life. But it is impossible to be without sin (1 John 1:8). Yet, we are to continually purify our lives (1 John 3:3) in anticipation of eternity.
 - d. A faith that doesn't understand the reality of imperfection, and is not prepared for failures in this life—both physical and spiritual—is not a Faith For Life.
 - 1) A person who, out of pride or naivety, expects sinless perfection from themselves is ignorant of the nature of a true Christian life.
 - e. Parents, give your children a Faith For Life that is humble and understands the reality of being human.

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4. A Faith For Life is a faith that won't allow anything to keep it from worship (Daniel 6:9-14).

- A. Daniel knew:
 - a. The decree.
 - b. The consequences.
 - c. The instigation behind the decree.
 - d. The probability of getting caught.
 - e. He prayed anyway.
- B. Daniel's Circumstances:
 - a. He didn't have the opportunity to worship in God's House (the Temple) for it no longer existed as a physical structure.
 - b. He didn't have a priest (that we read of) present to offer sacrifices for him.
 - c. He didn't have an altar to offer burnt offerings upon (as the law prescribed).
 - d. He didn't have a high priest to enter into the holiest of holies on a yearly basis for him.
 - e. He didn't have the congregation of the children of Israel to worship with.
 - f. But none of this stopped him from worshipping.
- C. Parents, give your children a Faith For Life that demands that they worship God at every opportunity they have.
- D. Parents, if you children see you taking "opportunities" to miss the worship assemblies of your local congregation, they'll know about your faith.
- E. If you give you children a faith that finds it acceptable to worship God at their own leisure, you've not given them a Faith For Life.
- F. This is **not** the same as telling them, "as long as you're in my house, you'll go to worship!"
- G. They should know that is true, but they should be worshipping because you have taught them their Heavenly Father is worthy of their praise and His people are worthy of their presence.

5. A Faith For Life is one that honors the Truth above individuals (Daniel 4:19).

- A. Nebuchadnezzar had a vision.
 - a. He told the vision to Daniel after the wise men of Babylon could not interpret it.
 - b. After hearing the vision, Daniel knew the interpretation and it troubled him.
 - c. Daniel wanted the vision to be about someone else. He said, "My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!"
 - d. But when it came time to interpret the vision, Daniel told the truth.
- B. A Faith For Life will always honor the Truth above one's own preference.
- C. Paul said, "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might **learn in us not to think of men above that which is written**, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." (1 Corinthians 4:6).
- D. Parents, teach your children to love the truth. To buy it and sell it not.
- E. Teach them to know that no amount of desire, money, influence, independence, or appearance of goodness can change the truth of God's word.
- F. If your children watch you "fudge" the truth (i.e. LIE) in order to spare the feelings of someone else, or to keep someone from "getting hurt," they are seeing your faith.
- G. If you teach your children to honor anyone or anything above the truth, you're not giving them a Faith For Life.

Conclusion:

1. More attributes of a faith for life could be seen in the life of Daniel and in the rest of Scripture, but these show us the necessity of diligence in preparing our children for the life ahead of them.
2. The whole book of Daniel has a single theme. That theme is "God is in Control."
3. A Faith For Life will never forget Jesus' words, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good,

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unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because **I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.**” (John 5:28-30).

4. We will all give an account. And on that day, we will all be “unprofitable servants” (Luke 17:10). But those who live by faith will be covered by the Blood of the Lamb (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-25; Heb. 10:38-39).