

2021 3Q Rest In Christ: Lesson 3

The Roots of Restlessness

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

The memory text is James 3:16, let's read James 3:16-18 from the *Good News Translation*

Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there is also disorder and every kind of evil. But the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy. And goodness is the harvest that is produced from the seeds the peacemakers plant in peace (Jas 3:16–18 GNT).

Do you hear a contrast between the principles of the world (the principles of sinfulness) and the principles or wisdom of God?

How would you describe that difference?

Is there a causal relationship between jealousy/selfishness and disorder/evil?

What is evil—in every culture of the world, evil, at its root, is defined the same, regardless of a belief in God or not, regardless of religion or not—what is evil?

Evil is exploiting others for selfish gain. It is not seeking success for self—that is not considered evil (remember the Bible says we are to covet earnestly the best gifts 1 Co 12:31 KJV). Evil is seeking success for self through means that take advantage or exploit others. For instance:

- Cheating in school so you get a scholarship would be considered evil as it advances you through falsehood and takes a resource away from the person who did not cheat and would have received the scholarship had cheating not occurred. However, it is not considered evil to get the scholarship through honest application and hard work even though others who also worked hard didn't get it because you had higher grades.
- Spreading lies about a competitor's product to ruin their reputation so you can gain market share is considered evil. However, making a better product, or working harder in marketing your product which gains market share is not considered evil.
- Passing laws that give advantage to some while denying others the equal opportunity, such as Jim Crow laws, would be considered evil. Creating laws that ensure equal opportunity for all people to apply themselves is not considered evil.

This definition exposes two antagonistic principles—love, which protects others seeks to benefit others, and selfishness or the survival drive which seeks to advance or protect self even at the expense of others.

What is the emotional basis that drives jealousy and selfishness? Fear—fear of death, injury, failure, rejection, not being good enough, not being esteemed enough, fear of inadequacy.

What is it that casts out all fear? Love, from where does such love come?

The fear we are talking about is the fear of sin, of selfishness, it is not the startle response you get when a car swerves into your lane—that is an alert mechanism. It is not the fear of heights, that is a wired warning measure.

The fear that causes evil is the fear of being inadequate, fear of not being good enough, fear of not being loved, of being rejected, being defective, being guilty, shameful, fear of failure, fear of not surviving that leads one to see others as enemies, as competitors, as opponents to be defeated so you can get ahead, rather than seeing others as loved family members who have their own fears, insecurities, weakness and struggles and who need our love, encouragement, support and friendship.

When we experience others through the lens of common brotherhood the various differences become irrelevant and we grow stronger together. Can anyone think of an example from our society in which people from all different cultures and backgrounds and races and religions come together and form friendships, cohesive, life-changing and life-trusting relationships? The US military.

In the US military, units are formed with people of all races, all religious backgrounds, various political views, different beliefs about the environment. But, in training and in combat they unite around their shared and common values—of respect for each other as Americans, the principles of liberty, the value of respecting the other's individuality, and they grow to love the other person. Bonds of real friendship form—the bonds of brotherhood. We call this morale, or cohesion and it is these bonds of love that overcome fear and allow military units to succeed in the face of real life-threatening dangers. It is the only power that consistently overcomes the inherent fear of combat and causes people to put themselves in danger, to sacrifice self and not flee.

If you wanted to ruin a military, undermine their strength, make them less capable of succeeding in their mission and thereby undermine and weaken a nation—what strategy might you use?

- You could equip them poorly
- You could educate and train them poorly
- You could infect them with biological agents to get them sick so they couldn't function
- But you could also infect their minds and hearts with ideas that break down morale and cohesion, ideas that would prevent the bonds of brotherhood from forming.

Is there anything like that happening in both society and the military and if we are not careful in the church today? Yes, Critical Race Theory—this is a corrosive and racist philosophy that undermines unity, cohesion, morale and incites bigotry, prejudice, jealousy, and inflames selfishness.

But in Christ it is not to be this way. Jesus praying to His Father right before His crucifixion, looks through the corridors of time and prays for you and me. He prays:

I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that **all of them may be one**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us **so that the world may believe** that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one**: I in them and you in me. **May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me** (Jn 17:20–23 NIV84).

It is through our unity in Christ, one on common values, love for God and each other, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality—this is how we reveal that we are part of God's family!

Paul wrote:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus** (Ga 3:26–28 NIV84).

Who do you think is behind a philosophy that divides, increases jealousy, inflames selfishness and undermines love and cohesion?

From where does fear come? Two sources—lies believed break the circle of love and trust—broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness.

So, the first source is believing lies that lead to fear and selfishness. But fear and selfishness lead to acts of sin, acts of seeking to protect self at the expense of others, the survival drives and this causes more fear and more selfishness.

Once we commit an act of sin, we have more fear, fear of getting caught, fear of being punished, fear of being rejected, fear of not being loved and therefore we seek to increase our security, to make our fear go down and if we don't repent, if we don't experience God's love in our hearts healing us so that we seek the best for others, then the only means left to make ourselves feel better is what?

- More lies! We tell ourselves “it wasn’t me it was the woman you gave me; I deserved that; it isn’t evil; sin is an outdated term; well at least my sin isn’t as bad as those priests who molest children; they deserved it...”
- We seek to gain more physical or political or economic power in order to both protect ourselves, be a greater threat to those we fear, and to force others to comply with our views and agree with our lies—all so that we can avoid the truth, because the truth convicts and brings fear to the unrepentant. So, the unrepentant, the evil, need to ban free speech as truth exposes lies; they will seek to censor others because they are afraid of free speech, afraid of those who speak the truth because their lies cannot stand up to the truth. If the liars cannot shout down the truth-speakers, then the liars seek to take away the truth-tellers opportunity to speak; they

remove their channels or remove them by imprisoning them or even killing them. They will seek to remove their influence by labeling them with the vilest allegations—racist, bigot, child-murderer, or, as they did Jesus, crazy or demon possessed—conspiracy nut. The Dark Ages Church did this to all who stood up for truth and so is the anti-God political parties in the US today

- Watch for these methods. Those who don't follow Jesus, who don't practice God's methods will always end up attacking people, they will write blogs about people or make videos about people attacking the messenger with various allegations. They do this because their message can't stand up to the truth. The true followers of God don't do this, they present the truth in love and leave others free. So our ministry attack lies, not liars; we attack falsehoods not falsifiers; we attack selfishness, not the selfish; we attack fear, not the fearful. As Paul said,

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2Cor 10:3-5 NIV84). [We demolish the lies, the falsehood, the pretensions, we do not attack the people. Those who attack others, who accuse others, are not acting as Jesus would act. Recognize it; don't fall into it.]

- But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9 NIV84).

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Matthew 10:34-39:

"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn

" 'a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (Matthew 10:34-39 NIV84).

thoughts?

Read second paragraph, “Matthew 10:35-39 is really...” What do you think about this idea that honoring our parents is a legal requirement?

What law lens does it sound like they are advancing?

How many of you honor your parents because it is a legal requirement? How many parents want their children to honor you because it is a legal requirement?

Does making the commandment a legal requirement enhance or undermine God’s kingdom? Does it enhance or obstruct the actually honoring of our parents?

If a person hates their parent in their heart, but on the surface acts in ways that appears they are honoring their parent, in order to keep the law, because it is a legal requirement and the law is all about behavior—what actually happens in the heart, mind and character of such a person? They solidify the character of a liar and a fraud. This type of teaching actually injures souls and obstructs the plan of salvation!

Man looks on the outward appearance the Lord looks on the heart. God’s primary concern is about the character, the heart, the mind, not the behavior. Behaviors are always secondary, never primary. But the imposed law lie has people focus on behavior, irrespective of the heart.

The lesson also introduces a point that many get confused upon, “if that love would trump the hearer’s commitment to Jesus, it required a tough decision.”

Can we love anyone, genuinely, with godly love, without God’s love in our hearts? No! Fallen humanity is not capable of generating actual love, we can only receive God’s love and share that love with others as we are loved by God.

To the degree anyone lives out real love for another, it is *always* a manifestation of God working in their heart via the Holy Spirit, regardless of that person’s claimed belief in God or not.

Thus, when we have God’s love in our heart and we live out that love, we will never love others in a way that denies God. Any action that denies God under the idea of love is not godly love, it is a counterfeit to love.

The term love has many nuanced meanings. In the Greek there are multiple words for love, but in English we have one word and we confuse the different types of love all the time.

- A person can love their car or love their house or love certain colors or foods. This is not godly love—other-centered love.
 - This is an expression of pleasure, of personal enjoyment or preference in one’s experiences in the things of life.

- This is our hearts affections, what we cherish. It can be selfish or not. God wants us to love life, to experience pleasure and joy in “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8 NIV84). So if we cherish things that draw us closer to God, and it is their connection to God that makes them valuable to us, then such love of things is not evil.
- But this can also be selfish when these things become a source of our security, our worth, our identity, and we value things over God and people, and when we will deny God and exploit people to get things that we love, that make us feel better, and not to lose them.
- So we must love God more than things.
- Another type of love is erotic love, these emotions of attraction, of desire to *have* another person physically is not godly love. It is a corruption of God’s design in which love seeks to uplift and bring pleasure and joy to another, not get pleasure and joy from another.
 - Physical arousal and attraction are absolutely part of God’s design, but when it becomes primary, when it is no longer the pleasure of bringing joy to another, but what one can get for self, then it is not love. And erotic love in our society is not godly love, it is pleasure seeking. And this type of love, of seeking for self, gets exploited selfishly through porn, sexual addictions, prostitution etc.
- Another type of love is, in the Greek *phileo* or brotherly love. This is the love we are to have for one another, our family members, but also our church family and human family—and is the love seen in the bonds of brotherhood in the military.
 - This is very close to godly love, but can also be perverted by selfishness, in which people seek to fill a void in their heart through being loved by another human being, rather than God first. Thus they *need* others to “love” them in order to feel good about themselves; they need someone to find them attractive, to want them. The relationship isn’t sought to give and uplift and love another, but to get from the other. It can be quite tricky to see because the needy person, in order to get accepted, to get the affirmation, validation, love they crave, will often abase themselves and do all kinds of self-injurious behavior just to be accepted. This is not driven by love for the other, but by fear for self and it is the most destructive counterfeit to love and is called co-dependency. If you haven’t watched our lecture on [Healthy Love versus Love Addiction](#), I would encourage you to do so.
 - Chapter 8 of my book *Could It Be This Simple?*, entitled Love’s Counterfeits, is about this false-love and the last paragraph in that chapter contrasts the differences between a true love relationship and a dependent relationship. You can use this as a test to examine your relationships to determine if they are operating upon genuine godly love or are a fear-based counterfeit.
 - Godly love casts out fear—dependency is driven by fear and the need to make the fear go away.
 - Love is healing—dependency is destructive
 - Love is freeing—dependency is controlling
 - Love is interested in another—dependency is about self

- Love is stable—dependency is unstable, chaotic
- Love is fearless—fear ridden
- Then there is agape love, godly love, the love that cares for another more than self, the love that sacrifice self to protect others. The love that gets out of a foxhole and runs into danger to save a friend. The love of a mother running into traffic to save her child. This type of love is antagonistic to the survival drives, to me-first. This type of love casts out all fear.

So, the lesson's point out the need for hard decisions in deciding on whether we love God or our family. Well, if we practice godly love, loving God first and then apply His love to our actions to others, then all actions toward others will be intended for their eternal good. It is when we allow our feelings, our fear of rejection, our fear of loss, our fear of what another will think, the false belief that we are responsible for what others think, or how they will react to impact our decisions that we find confusion over love for God and others.

When we need others to like us, approve of us, validate us in order for us to function, to feel whole, then we have placed others in the place in our hearts where God should be and will deny God in order to keep attached to the other. Further, we will fail to actually love the other because fear of losing them will cause us to compromising living and speaking the truth in love and setting healthy boundaries.

There is a natural transition from childhood to adulthood. In childhood, the child will naturally listen to and follow the parent, even if the parent is leading against God's will. But, as the child matures, they will go through separation individuation in which their heart, mind, individuality separates and individuates from their parents. They will form their own identity be able to grant their parents permission to think differently, so the adult child can stand for truth and tolerate the rejection of their parent. This is what God wants, for each person to mature and come to know Him for themselves and to have His law written in the heart.

So, Matthew 10:34-39, from *The Remedy*:

Don't think that I have come to make peace with a selfish world. I have not come to bring peace with selfishness, but a sword to cut selfishness out of the hearts of people. I have come to cut dysfunctional family ties: to free a son from selfish loyalty to his father's ambitions and feuds, to sever a daughter from the control of an oppressive and manipulative mother, to cut through the fear and hostility a daughter-in-law has toward her mother-in-law. A person's worst enemies are often members of their own family.

"Those who love parental approval more than they love me are untrustworthy of me and the Remedy I bring; and those who love the approval of their children more than me are untrustworthy of me and the Remedy I bring. Anyone who refuses to die to selfishness and follow me — loving others more than self — cannot be trusted by me to distribute the Remedy I bring. Whoever seeks to save self remains infected with selfishness and will die of their unhealed condition, but whoever surrenders self in love to me will experience healing of heart, and will find eternal life" (Matthew 10:34-39 *The Remedy*)

Do we see similar struggles in society today as people have not formed their identities upon God, and thus have a terrible loss of sense of self, and desperately need to be validated by others? They live in fear of rejection, of what others think of criticism and go along with all kinds of distortions in order to be accepted?

MONDAY

Read the first paragraph, “As in the case of aspen...” Is there an expression of sin that is not selfish? Well there are results of sin in the world that are not acts of selfishness, like a person being born blind, or all nature groaning under the weight of sin—but all these results of sin are a result of selfishness even if they are not acts of selfishness.

Is there any sin that is not selfish?

Consider these historic quotes—do you agree or disagree?

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. **A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God.** And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. **The design of the gospel is to confront this evil** by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. WB September 9, 1902, par. 3

There is a great work to be done for many of us. Our minds and characters must become as the mind and character of Christ. **Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us as an inheritance, and has been cherished by many as a precious treasure.** No special work for God can be accomplished until self and selfishness are overcome. To many everything connected with themselves is of great importance. Self is a center, around which everything seems to revolve. {Historical Sketches 138.7}

At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown. {DA 57.2}

The lesson points us to the story in Luke 12:

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Lk 12:13–15 NIV84).

Jesus goes on to tell the parable of the rich fool who built bigger barns for his wealth only to die.

There are some very powerful lessons in this story and parable, what are they?

First, what law lens are we reading the Bible through and understanding life through?

Did the man who approached Jesus believe an injustice had happened to him? Did he want justice to be done?

But what law lens did this person seek to get Jesus to use to give him justice? What did he want Jesus to do?

- The man wanted Jesus to make a ruling—what kind of law requires a judge to make a ruling? Human law, imposed law.
- And what kind of law is property law? It is imposed, made up human law.
- And what did Jesus say to him? He was not appointed as judge. He didn’t come to administer imposed law, to make legal rulings!

Jesus didn’t come to the earth to take up a legal issue, and He uses this encounter to again expose the difference between God’s kingdom and the kingdoms of this world. The man wanted a legal ruling, but Jesus said that a legal ruling wasn’t what he needed nor what Jesus had come to do.

What was needed? A change to the actual condition of the man’s heart. These two brothers cared more for property than they did for one another. Jesus wanted to restore love into their hearts, to bring them out of this world’s kingdom that seeks to get for self and into the kingdom of God, which seeks to give to others. He made it plain that it doesn’t matter how much earthly wealth one accumulates, if the heart is not healed then all is lost.

This sinful world focuses on self – our rights, our privileges, our inheritance. We want a ruling by someone in authority – a judge, an umpire, a referee, a magistrate, a pastor, a CDC official. We want someone to make a ruling, tell us the answer, to decide for us. But Jesus said He was here to change hearts, not act as judge. He said:

As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. For

I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it (John 12:47–49 NIV84).

There is a judge, and it is not Jesus. Rather, the judge is “that very word,” the truth, reality itself. Sheep are sheep, and goats are goats; wheat is wheat, and weeds are weeds. A judge doesn’t make a sheep a sheep or a goat a goat; they are what they are. Reality is the judge. Those who reject the words of Jesus – the truth – retain lies about God; they refuse to trust Him and, therefore, they harden themselves in selfishness and fear. They solidify themselves into evil people who hate love, truth, and freedom.

But those who love the truth that Jesus reveals reject the lies of Satan and are won back to trust in God; they open their hearts and experience the indwelling Spirit and have God’s design protocol for life – His living law – written upon their hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10). They are transformed and healed.

Too many people today are jealous of another’s possession, envious of someone else’s achievements, covetous of some other’s station, and they want someone in authority to pass laws to ensure they get what they think is their fair share—and there is a name for this perversity—it is called equity. Equity is the application of external power to arbitrarily force outcomes to be of a certain result, regardless of reality, ability, achievement. Equity is not equality—equity—is the catch phrase of the liars, the jealous, those who are warring against the principles of God’s kingdom. Be very clear on this. God is not about equity—God is about equality—God’s laws impact all people equally. But people do not choose to live in harmony with God’s law equally. You CANNOT get equitable outcomes with unequal actions—equity is a philosophy based entirely on fraud, deceit, and lies.

We must be careful that we are not like this jealous and selfish brother. We don’t want to hear Jesus say to us, “You fool!” We don’t want to be tricked by Satan, tempted by fear and selfishness, into exchanging the riches of God’s kingdom – which is a heart that loves, one that is true, one that respects the individuality and freedoms of others, one that values what God values – for the meager baubles of this world.

TUESDAY

The lesson points to the dangers of selfish ambition and directs our attention to the disciples vying for who would be the greatest in Jesus’ kingdom.

Read third paragraph, “Conversion is foundational...” this is well said. Notice what the lesson said, “We experience a transformation of our values and ambitions.” This is the heart of salvation—transformation of character, renewal of heart, recreation of the inner person, death to fear and selfishness and arising to a new life of love as Jesus indwells the heart.

This is not legal—it is actual! This is righteousness by faith!

The lesson points out that after 3.5 years with Jesus the disciples were still struggling with this selfish ambition in their hearts and this is a very sad commentary on the human heart.

But, what changed the disciples? What finally broke through and resulted in their heart transformation? Was it:

- Finding the right Bible quotes and reading them? (though there is nothing wrong with memorizing Bible passages)
- Was it a threat of punishment?
- Was it realizing they were in legal trouble for their selfish attitudes?
- Was it a rule—a new commandment, you are to love one another and once they had that new rule it fixed their hearts?
- Was it the truth and love of God revealed at the cross? The truth about God's character and methods of love, contrasted with the methods of the world—fear and selfishness, power over, force, intimidation, versus “Father forgive them they don't know what they are doing.”
 - Did the cross convict them? Did the revelation of Jesus cause them to realize that they were harboring the same motives of selfishness that the Jews and Romans acted upon in crucifying Christ? I submit it was the Cross that revealed to them the love of God and the sickness of sin in them, and they wanted the selfishness and fear out of their hearts. They wanted to be changed, they fell down and were converted and their hearts were changed.
- The only power to free us from fear and selfishness is the power of truth and love, the Spirit of God working in the heart to win us with the evidence of truth and the outworking of love.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “A hypocrite is somebody...” Was Jesus trying to publicly shame them? Do you see it that Jesus was seeking to humiliate them, or is this the final act of grace from Jesus for them before His crucifixion? Was this Jesus giving them the strongest presentation of truth, the clearest description of their condition, and the most accurate diagnosis of their problem in order to give them one more opportunity at repentance, healing and salvation?

Also, notice Jesus speaks to them as a group, not to them individually. He is speaking of their methods and describes their actions; thus He is not saying every Pharisee is like this, consider Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea. He is saying those who practice these methods, who act in this way are, and each individual would have to consider whether this applies to them or not. It is not the same as saying, “Pastor Joe, you are a hypocrite...” etc. It was not a personal attack nor an action designed to humiliate or shame, but an exposure of methods designed to convict and lead to repentance and also to stand as a witness down the generations for all people to examine themselves so we don't fall into the same trap.

Let's read Matthew 23, starting in verse 13 from *The Remedy*:

"Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! [Why did I paraphrase it this way? Most translations have "Woe to you" what is woe? grief, distress, affliction. So, Jesus is saying they will be afflicted and distressed. What law lens? If we have design law we understand that deviating from God's design only brings pain, suffering, distress, affliction—thus the only future they will have who do this is a miserable one.] Your false teachings obstruct people from being healed and entering God's kingdom of love. You certainly are not healed and do not enter into salvation, but worse still, you actively work to prevent others, who want to be saved, from being healed.

14 Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You con widows from their homes, yet you make public displays of praying long prayers. Unhealed you choose to remain! Your suffering will be most severe. [Why will their suffering be severe? From where does their suffering come? Under Satan's lie about God's law the suffering comes as a legal infliction from God upon law breakers. But the truth of God's kingdom is that breaking God's law injures those who refuse God's healing and the only possible result is suffering and death]

15 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go around the world trying to convert one person, and when you do, you indoctrinate them so deeply into your false penal system that they become twice as much the child of lies and selfishness as you are.

16 "Misery is yours, you irrational and unthinking teachers! Unbelievably, you say: 'If anyone swears by the temple, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, then they are bound by the oath.'¹⁷ You make no sense at all! Think about it: Which is truly most important—the gold, or the temple that makes the gold holy?¹⁸ Another of your sayings is: 'If anyone swears by the altar, it doesn't count; but if anyone swears by the gift on the altar then they are bound by the oath.'¹⁹ You don't understand the simplest truths! Think about it: Which is truly most important—the gift, or the altar that makes the gift holy?²⁰ Don't you get it? The one who swears by the altar swears by it and everything on it.²¹ And whoever swears by the temple, swears by it and by the One whose dwelling place it is.²² And oaths sworn before heaven are promises made before God's throne; and the One who sits on it knows the true intent of the heart. [Do you see the contrast between imposed law and design law? The religious leaders embraced the lie that God's law is imposed, made up rules like humans make. And just like lawyers always do they find loopholes, or applications that are inconsistent or even contradictory. Jesus is making it plain that God reads the intent of the heart—it doesn't matter what you swear by, the attitude of the heart is what matters and not ritual, no oath, no place, or material can change the heart. It is about reality of character or heart, not public pretense or proclamation.]

23 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You keep rules, such as proudly paying a pre-tax tithe and even giving a tenth of the herbs in your garden, but you fail to do what actually matters—to live in harmony with God's Law, which is his design for life. You fail to 'do what is right because it is right.' You are not

merciful but judgmental and critical, and you cannot be trusted to protect those struggling with sin. You should have lived lives of love for others, without neglecting the simple instructions of God.²⁴ You are truly irrational and unthinking teachers! You are so focused on keeping the rules — such as dietary laws — that you fail to understand that their purpose is to promote health. You're so confused that you actually think it would be a virtue to die of starvation rather than eat something not on the 'approved' list.

25 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You work so hard to make yourselves look good on the outside, but the inside—the heart—is full of selfishness, arrogance, and greed.²⁶ You truly don't understand anything about God's kingdom! The mind, the character, the heart — they all must be cleansed first, and then the outside will also be clean.

27 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You are like highly polished burial vaults: they look beautiful on the outside, but inside are nothing but the bones of the dead, and everything that defiles.²⁸ You are just like that. On the outside you appear to people as good and righteous, but on the inside you are full of lies, selfishness, and evil. You are great counterfeits!

29 "Misery is yours, you who teach a legal religion, you penal theologians, you counterfeits! You go to great lengths to give praise and honor to God's spokespersons and church leaders of the past.³⁰ You say, 'If we would have lived back then, we would never have rejected God's spokespersons or joined those who killed them.'³¹ By such claims you condemn yourselves, because you acknowledge such actions are wrong, yet by your actions today you reveal you are the true descendants of those who murdered God's spokespersons. You're just like them³² and your sins pile on top of the sins of your forefathers! [In the SDA church, how many leaders say if they would have been at the 1888 GC they wouldn't have rejected the righteousness by faith message, while they go right on teaching the penal/legal lie of declared righteous even though we are not!]

33 "You slippery serpents! You brood of venomous vipers! You think you can cure yourselves with your own snake oil?³⁴ It's because of your false remedy — your penal legal trickery — that I am sending my spokespersons, instructors and Bible scholars, some of whom you will attack, kill, and crucify; others you will beat—some physically, some verbally—right in church, running them out of town with beatings and the most vicious gossip.³⁵ The pure and holy lives that have been sacrificed through history — from Abel, all the way through to Zechariah the son of Berekiyah, who was murdered right in church, at the altar — testify the truth to you.³⁶ But the sad truth is that this generation will reject all this evidence.

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you sick and hard-hearted people who have rejected the Remedy, killed God's spokespersons, and stoned those sent to you with the cure! How my heart has longed to pull you to safety, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me.³⁸ Look around: I leave your house to you abandoned without Remedy, and infected without cure.³⁹ For I tell you plainly, when you see me next, you will say: 'He is the One sent by God to reveal God's true character and provide the Remedy.'"

THURSDAY

The lesson rightly points out that overcoming restlessness always begins with Jesus! And asks us to read John 14:1-7:

From *The Remedy*:

"Don't let fear and doubt trouble your hearts. Put your full trust in God and trust me too. 2 In my Father's home, there is room for all who want to be there; if this were not true, I would have told you. I am going there to direct all my Father's resources who are not only preparing heaven for you, but also preparing you for heaven.**[Do you think I have introduced something unintended by Jesus or is this truth that Jesus intended?]** 3 And when all things are ready, I will come back and take everyone who has been brought back into unity with the principles of heaven to be there with me, so that we may all be together. 4 You now know the way to the place where I am going."

5 Thomas was confused and said, "But Lord, we don't know where you are going, or how to get there, so how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus answered gently, "I am the Way back to my Father, I am the Truth revealing my Father's character and the principles upon which life is based, I am the Source of all life. I am the Bridge, and no one comes to the Father except through me—because all truth revealing the Father has been provided by me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well, for the Father and I are One. From now on, you do know him and have seen him, for I am the Father's thoughts made visible and audible."

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Vision for Come and Reason: We have found a building that will work for our ministry and have the building under contract to purchase and hope to close in the next week or so, then we will have to do renovations.

It is not our way to do fundraisers and we will not do a fundraiser or send out donation requests, however, several people have recently approached us and asked if our ministry has any needs and recommended that we make our vision and plan to have our own facility public so that anyone who want to support us in this endeavor can do so. We also are resistant to going into debt, so we are quite cautious and have already turned down a couple of options because the cost would have required significant debt.

So, please keep us in your prayers that the Lord will lead us to find the right property and bless the process that any resources we use will be spent wisely and most economically.

NEW RESOURCE SOUTH AFRICA: *Could It Be This Simple?* is now available in Afrikaans. We want to give special thanks to Jacques van den Heever, who spent many hours proof reading and working with editors and translators to get this resource available. Thank you Jacque!

It is available as a FREE download on our website, but if you are in South Africa and would like one in print, then email Jacque at comeandreason.sa@gmail.com

There will be a small postage charge of R50 (around \$4) or you live near Somerset West you are welcome to pick one up in person.

It is our prayer that this will be a blessing to many to enlighten their minds to see the truth about God.

Special Baker Books has made the digital version of *The God Shaped Heart* available for a short time for \$1.99 for either Kindle readers on Amazon or Nooks at Barnes and Noble.

God is Love Children's Book Available on Amazon! We are happy to announce that our children's book, God is Love, is now up on Amazon and is available for prime shipping! You might have trouble finding it at first because it's new and doesn't have any reviews yet. Reviews are paramount in helping others search for and find items on Amazon. If you search "God is Love Stephanie Land" you should be able to find it. For a limited time, we are offering it on Amazon for only \$10, which is cheaper than it is currently being sold on our ministry website. If you purchase it through Amazon, you can leave a "verified purchase" review which will help to get the book to populate when people do a search. The more reviews the better!



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SHARING campaign: We have just completed a 12 month sharing campaign and want to thank all of you for requesting our resources and sharing them in your community. If you get any feedback on the impact on how the resources are received, please email us and let us know.

We are now pausing our sharing campaign to focus on closing on a property and then renovating it. Our plan is to continue free give aways on a quarterly basis. We have some new products in the development pipeline.