



2021 4Q Present Truth in Deuteronomy Lesson 9 Turn Their Hearts

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory text: “But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29 NKJV).

What does this text mean to you?

What is the condition to finding God? Seeking with all your heart and all your soul—what does that mean?

Another way to say it is with all your **mind** and all your **being**. When God breathed into Adam he became a living soul or a living being, so the word soul means your entire self—the word heart means the inner works of your mind, affections, longings, your true heart’s desire.

Why won’t we find God if we don’t seek Him with all the heart and soul? Is it because God hides? Or is it how reality works—we reap what we sow, if we take apple seeds and label them pumpkin seeds and plant them do we get pumpkins?

If we study the Bible or go to church or join a church organization so that we can get approval from people, get a job, get contracts for our businesses etc. will we find God in doing this?

So God is making the point right here in the beginning of the Bible, that the motive of the heart is what matters. God is differentiating design law from rule-keeping. It has always been this way.

SUNDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on the Hebrew *Mi-Yitten* which has the meaning of a wish, a desire, a hope, a longing that someone wants badly.

Read Deuteronomy 5:29: “Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!” (Dt 5:29 NIV84).

Read 6th paragraph, “Here is the Lord—Creator God...” This is so well said, so many good points in this paragraph. Let’s unpack them.



First, God is the Creator of all reality—and as such His laws are the laws that reality operate upon. God is sovereign in that He is Creator and also Sustainer of all reality. His sovereignty is manifested in maintaining control of what God controls. And God controls Himself and His laws, including the law of liberty. Thus, when bad things happen this is not God causing it, but God sustaining liberty why? Because love only exists in an atmosphere of liberty. If God were to override our minds, our hearts and use power to force a change upon a person that that person didn't choose for themselves, such an action would destroy the individual, erase their personhood and create either a robot, or a new naïve being like Adam was in Eden.

The only way for God to achieve His goal of our individual salvation is by winning us to trust Him. In trust we choose Him; we actively participate in the process of our own transformation:

- The truth doesn't come from us.
- The new heart and right spirit doesn't come from us.
- The law of God that is written in our heart doesn't come from us.
- The perfect sinless character that develops within us doesn't come from us.
- The power to overcome temptation doesn't come from us.
- The love that motivates and takes away our fear doesn't come from us.
- What comes from us is our **choosing**—daily choosing to trust God, to say yes to Him and no to temptation, to place our lives, our heart's desires, our fortunes, our families, our futures into God's hands—like Joseph, like Daniel, like Paul.
- And in making that choice of faith we enter into a real union with the Creator of heaven and earth and are transformed in that process.

So God is Creator. His laws are design laws. Liberty is a requirement to healing hearts and minds. We must choose God. So, if God cannot trample our freewill and we still be free, then do you see how this truth exposes the fraud of penal/legal system. God's law cannot work like human law. If at any point God uses His power to inflict external punishment for sin that the sinner would not reap naturally from sin, then we are not free, we are being coerced or compelled, and this destroys love and incites rebellion.

So this reality raises multiple questions—how does God bring an end to sin and sinners without violating freedom?

If love cannot be achieved through rule-keeping, through law, through threats of punishment, then why did God use so much law?

Read the last paragraph, “And just as we humans...” If the choice is ours, and the benefits of choosing God are infinite, beyond imagining and counting, and the loss of choosing against God is eternal death, what prevents so many from making the choice for God?

- Lies about God that prevent people from knowing the goodness of God and the dangers of sin—two of the most effective lies are that God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering for



sin—which violates liberty and incites rebellion, and there is no God we evolved from lower life forms

- Feelings—guilt, shame, fear—which cause people to feel hopeless, too sinful or bad to be saved
- The pain of what reality requires we experience when we choose God—the crucifixion of the old nature. Once there is brokenness there are no pain free options. Choosing God may require the loss of a job, or a friend, or alienation from family, or the pain of going through detox, or the humiliation of repentance not just to God but to others.
- Destroyed faculties—some have persisted in rebellion so long that they prefer power over others to sacrificing to help others; they prefer the thrill of getting away with exploiting to the peace of living honestly; they prefer the fear of intimidation to the joy of appreciation, and God’s principles simply are not appealing to some.
- Misplaced trust—some don’t come to God because they have never trained their minds to think for themselves, they wait to see what others whom they have trusted will think and then follow what those people say to do.

Remember this quote?

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in ----- **They have not an experience for themselves.** They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, **with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. They wait to see what others will think.** If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that **they are inexperienced and weak-minded** through long yielding to the enemy, and **will always be as sickly as babes, walking by others’ light, living on others’ experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act. They act as though they had not an individuality. Their identity is submerged in others; they are merely shadows of those whom they think [are] right. Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he.** Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching. **They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God.** Neither young nor old are excusable in **trusting to another to have an experience for them.** Said the angel: “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.” A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare. 2T 129.2

I share this quote a lot and I like it, because it describes reality so clearly. What is the problem for these people? They have never learned to think for themselves and they have never learned to trust Jesus for themselves. This describes people who trust others; they trust the opinion of others more than trusting Jesus and the truth directly for themselves. This is why they will fail to have everlasting life.



A third of the angels in heaven trusted Lucifer rather than examining the truth for themselves. Their misplaced trust caused them to be sympathetic to him and this allowed them to believe his lies and be turned away from God.

This is what is happening in the world now—people are being faced with decisions, personal decisions, decisions over their own health and that of their family and people are deciding—how do we choose? Who do we trust? What methods of discernment? What motivates the choice—love or fear?

Any finite being who is in a saving relationship with God can still listen to bad advise and make choices that are not the best, not what God would have them do, but not lose salvation because of this, just be injured or diminish their usefulness for God's cause.

Remember Paul taking the advice of church leaders to participate in a Jewish ceremonial cleansing—in the book *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 404 the author calls this advice on part of the church leaders as stemming from cowardice and it was not consistent with the gospel message. Paul didn't lose his salvation for taking this advice, but he lost his freedom, had his ministry shortened and eventually lost his life.

We each have the responsibility before God for the choices we make in carrying out the duties God has given us. We are wise to be informed with the input from others, but we are foolish if we surrender the choice of what we do in governance of ourselves to others.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "All through the Bible..." I think the example of Peter denying Jesus is a great example of God's foreknowledge—if we accept the Bible record as accurate, which I do, then God foreknew Peter's choices before Peter made them.

Other examples:

- Judas betraying him
- The casting lots for his clothing
- The crucifixion by His people rather than stoning like Stephen
- Cyrus releasing the Jews to return to Jerusalem
- Only the need for one ark at the time of Noah

Consider this quotation from *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

He that ruleth in the heavens is the one who **sees the end from the beginning--the one before whom the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread**, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing. Though "clouds and darkness are round about Him:



righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." Psalm 97:2, R.V. And this the inhabitants of the universe, both loyal and disloyal, will one day understand. "His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." Deuteronomy 32:4. {PP 43.1}

God is the Creator of all reality—including time—God is not subject to time, time is subject to God. God lives outside of our linear existence.

But some genuinely sincere people, who love God and want only to represent God in the best possible light, have real difficulty with this truth. They just can't understand how God can know the future and we still be free to decide. In their way of thinking, if God knows our actual choice, not our possible choices, but our actual choices, then to them we are no longer free to make them. What would you say to this?

- Foreknowledge is not causality—knowing the future doesn't cause it, any more than knowing history caused the history. Think about that. If you read about Moses striking the rock—that is a fact of history. We know that fact, but is our knowledge of the history what caused it to occur that way? Likewise, knowledge of the future isn't the same as causing the future.
- Another way to comprehend it is this way. What informs God of what any person does in the future—is the action that the person takes at that point in the future when they choose. The individual choices is what God knows because He is there at that place in time when they make their choice.

What would it say about God, if God didn't live outside of time, if God didn't know the future?

Read the fourth paragraph, "Notice that in..." What causes people to forget lessons from history?

- Painful or unflattering lessons that some part of us wants to forget
- Propaganda—purposeful misinformation
- Lack of education, not ever being taught history

What were the lessons that God wanted them to remember that they forgot over and over again?

- That God is love and God is trustworthy
- That God doesn't need to be persuaded to be on their side
- That God's laws are design laws not rule-keeping
- That there are no other gods
- That true worship is in living God's law in how we treat others
- That salvation is healing of hearts and minds not legal adjustment

Are we still struggling today with remembering these same truths?

Read fifth paragraph, "God's grace is amazing..." What would be the only reason God would not restore them? If they refuse to allow Him.

But what about forgiving them—what comes first, God's forgiveness or our repentance?



What leads us to repentance? The kindness of God—Romans 2:4.

Do we believe “For God so loved the world that **He** gave His only Son...” or do we believe, “That God was so angry at the world that Jesus had to sneak out of heaven to pay the blood price to propitiate God’s wrath so that God would be able and willing to forgive us our sins?”

Yes, God is for us and is always for us and God is NEVER against us. The entire Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in perfect unity expending every resource of their infinite selves for our salvation. There is nothing that comes from God that obstructs our salvation. There is nothing that comes from God that condemns us—all condemnation comes from sin and the accuser.

TUESDAY

Read the first paragraph, “All through the book of Deuteronomy...” Is obedience important?

Is there more than one type of obedience?

Paul take up the issue of obedience in his writings and contrasts two types of obedience. What are the two types of obedience Paul contrasts?

The obedience that springs from law versus the obedience that springs from faith.

What is the difference in these two types of obedience?

Is difference in obedience made distinct in the action, the behavior, the deeds?

- Sabbath keeping
- Tithing
- Food choices
- Bible readings
- Doctrinal beliefs (Creation, the Bible is inspired, state of the dead etc.)

Or, can a person who obeys based on law and one who obeys based on faith appear to be the same in their behaviors and even their core doctrinal beliefs?

What is the difference of obeying out of law and out of faith?

Does the obedience that springs from law have a different impact upon the heart and mind of the obedient than the same action that springs from faith?

Consider these two quotations:



- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense **of obligation merely--** because he is **required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey.** [What does this mean, does not obey—the man is paying a faithful tithe—the church treasurer even checks his math. He doesn't do any work on Sabbath, his business is closed, TV off. He eats only the approved foods. What does this mean? Why is rule-keeping not actual obedience, even if the behaviors are the proper deeds?] When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within.** It springs from **the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God.** The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3} [What does God want? He wants to change the heart. He wants our love, loyalty, friendship, understanding, devotion—and cannot God get this from us by rule keeping, imposed law, threats, or enforced compliance. It only comes from truth and love winning the heart to trust/faith.]
- **A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel.** By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and **in the love of God.** It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897} [True obedience is when the heart is transformed to love God and others and then the behaviors are driven by the motive of love. What drives the behavior of the law-keeper, those who think they are obedient? It is still fear and selfishness—fear of punishment or desire for reward (level 1 and 2), fear of rejection or desire for acceptance (level 3), fear of legal trouble or desire for legal security (level 4). What drives the obedience of faith is love for God and others (level 5), understanding of God's design laws and methods (level 6) and understanding and willfully participating in God's purposes (level 7).]

Does our faith have levels of obedience that has different impact upon the heart and mind—for instance, is there a childlike faith that is real, but which doesn't really comprehend, it is an immature but real faith? And is there a mature faith that is real and also understands the reasons through the reasons why it works this way, what the best actual action is in any given situation to fulfill God's will and purpose? Does the maturity of the person, their level of understanding along with their faith have a different impact upon the heart and mind, and thus the specific behaviors might change?

For instance, could a childlike faith not eat foods offered to idols because they love Jesus and don't want to eat foods that they think could give false gods power over them. And could a mature faith love Jesus and recognize that the idols are nothing but wood and stone and thus have no power whatever and eat whatever they want, regardless of whether the animal was sacrificed to a pagan god?

How many things like this happen in Christianity in which two people of sincere faith have exactly opposite conclusions of what faith leads them to do?



How many times does Satan step into this situation and incite argument, division and even accusation with some accusing the other of being conservative, superstition, legalists or liberals and this infects hearts with hostility?

I see this in the SDA church most commonly around Sabbath keeping.

Do you see why we are not to judge the hearts of others? We are only to judge for ourselves what our duty is in God's cause.

What did Jesus say He wanted from us?

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (Jn 15:15 NIV84).

What is the difference between a servant and friend? Do faithful servants seek to obey? So both servants and friends are being obedient, but Jesus doesn't want the service of a slave, He wants the service of a friend, what is the difference?

Understanding and agreement—Jesus wants us to comprehend His character, His design laws, His methods and realize how good He is and how good His laws are and to agree, to be fully persuaded in our own minds. To obey because it is the most rational, reasonable, logical, sensible action that we fully want with all our hearts.

Consider this quote:

"All whom God has blessed with **reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians.** [If you don't have reasoning powers you are excused.] **They are not requested to believe without evidence;** [What? Isn't that faith, believing without evidence? No! Who has no truth, no evidence? Satan, it is our enemy who would advance a theory that faith is believing without evidence—the one who doesn't have any.] therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, **exert his mental powers** to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. [What laws are involved here? The law of exertion, the law of sowing and reaping, the law of worship, the law of truth.] **Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul.** [Why? What is the plan of salvation to accomplish? The healing of hearts and minds—can that happen without your participation? But what if we believe because we trust a really nice pastor or Bible teacher and believe what they taught us?] We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . **The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures.**" Review and Herald, March 8, 1887 (2RH 117:1:1 - 2:0); The Medical Missionary, May 1, 1892 [Why can't we trust salvation of our souls to our church leaders? Because it is in the process of wrestling out the truth with God for yourself that you



are transformed and healed. Pastors, Bible teachers, friends can function like a trainer or coach—but they cannot do the exercises for you. You must think for yourself, reason for yourself, and choose for yourself in order for you to be transformed. “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (Isaiah 1:18 NIV84).]

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks what is repentance? What is your understanding?

Consider these quotes, do they add insight?

- Again the people sought help from Him whom they had so forsaken and insulted. “The children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.” **But sorrow had not worked true repentance. The people mourned because their sins had brought suffering** upon themselves, but not because they had dishonored God by transgression of His holy law. **True repentance is more than sorrow for sin. It is a resolute turning away from evil.** PP 557.2
- When before the high priests and Sadducees, **Peter clearly presented the fact that repentance is the gift of God.** Speaking of Christ, he said, “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to **give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins**” (Acts 5:31). **Repentance is no less the gift of God than are pardon and justification, and it cannot be experienced except as it is given to the soul by Christ.** If we are drawn to Christ, it is through His power and virtue. The grace of contrition comes through Him, and from Him comes justification.... A New Life 21.2
- **No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct.** Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven. DA 555.6
- Many are confused as to what constitutes the first steps in the work of salvation. Repentance is thought to be a work the sinner must do for himself in order that he may come to Christ. They think that the sinner must procure for himself a fitness in order to obtain the blessing of God's grace. **But while it is true that repentance must precede forgiveness, [What does this mean? That God doesn't forgive until we repent, or we don't experience the forgiveness God has already provided until we repent?]** for it is only the broken and contrite heart that is acceptable to God, **yet the sinner cannot bring himself to repentance, or prepare himself to come to Christ. Except the sinner repent, he cannot be forgiven; [Without repentance we cannot experience forgiveness we cannot enter into a state of forgiveness but that doesn't mean God is unforgiving or hasn't already forgiven from His heart. Consider those who crucified Christ.]** but the question to be decided is as to **whether repentance is the work of the sinner or the gift of Christ.** Must the sinner wait until he is filled with remorse for his sin before he can come to Christ? The very first step to Christ is taken through the drawing of the Spirit of God;



as man responds to this drawing, he advances toward Christ in order that he may repent. 1SM 390.1

Friday's lesson quotes the following from *Christ's Object Lessons* p. 160:

At every advance step in Christian experience our repentance will deepen. It is to those whom the Lord has forgiven, to those whom He acknowledges as His people, that He says, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight." Ezekiel 36:31. Again He says, "I will establish My covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 16:62, 63. Then our lips will not be opened in self-glorification. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone. We shall make the apostle's confession our own. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Romans 7:18. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14. COL 160.3

What does this concept mean regarding repentance—if it deepens at every advance step is it about bad deeds or about deepening abhorrence to sin, selfishness, and all deviations from God's law as we see evermore clearly the contrast between God's character, methods, law and sin?

THURSDAY

The lesson continues the exploration of repentance and conversion and focuses on the New Testament.

Consider the story of the Prodigal Son—when was the Prodigal converted? When did the Prodigal truly repent?

- In the pigsty or when he returned home and interacted with his father?
- What brought the prodigal to repentance?
- Paul says in Romans that it is the kindness of God that leads to repentance.
- So, the prodigal found himself in terrible circumstances suffering as a consequence of leaving home and living wildly, and in that circumstance he knew he didn't like it. He knew the servants at home lived better. He was sorry for his choices and for the suffering, but he hadn't yet been converted to truly love and trust his father and embrace his father's ways.
- When he went home he fell down beginning to ask forgiveness and argue he was glad to be a servant—but then he experience the father's love, the father's kindness, the father's grace and received the restoration to sonship, with all the rights, privileges and authority—and it was then the son's heart was converted, then true repentance took hold.

When was Peter fully converted?



- “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” (Lk 22:31–32 NIV84).
- The KJV says “when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

Did something change in Peter after his denial, his conviction of heart, his weeping bitterly, and his restoration on the beach? What? Did Peter enter into a state where he could no longer make mistakes, where he could no longer be wrong, that if Peter said it then it was like God speaking—his words had the weight of absolute and undisputed truth? No, Peter still made mistakes and had to be corrected by Paul—does that mean Peter wasn’t converted, or Peter wasn’t inspired? No. He was converted and inspired by the Holy Spirit. What changed was Peter never again allowed fear and selfishness to cause him to deny Jesus. In other words, fear and selfishness were displaced and love for Jesus became the driving force for Peter after this. This is true conversion, the heart being reborn, renewed, transformed from being dominated and controlled by fear and selfishness to a heart that is governed by love and trust, yet still subject to temptation by fear and selfishness.

The lesson focuses on our need to repent of our sins—what are your thoughts on this?

Is there a difference between initial repentance/conversion and ongoing repentance?

Once we have been genuinely converted, we have a new heart with new motives and new desires, but we still live in bodies that are weak, that have conditioned responses, that have memories and neural pathways from our unconverted lives before Christ. And this can sometimes manifest in a response, a reflex, an action that our new hearts don’t want to be part of our life any more. How do we understand this? This is Romans 7, from *The Remedy*:

Therefore, your selfish, fear-ridden heart died when you accepted the truth revealed by Christ’s death, and you received a new heart from him who was raised from the dead, in order that you might grow in character—to be like Jesus—and live to honor God. ⁵For when we were controlled by the infection of fear and selfishness — which resulted from distrust — the destructive passions revealed by the law were ravaging our bodies, we were terminally ill and spreading death wherever we went. ⁶But now, as we die to the distrust, fear and selfishness that once bound us, the law no longer diagnoses us as infected and terminal. In fact, the law now confirms that we have a new heart—not by observing rules, but created within by the Spirit. We are now healthy and loving like Jesus.

⁷What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! I would not have known what evil and selfishness looked like if it wasn’t for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn’t say, “Don’t covet.” ⁸But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument—and not a Remedy—magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable. ⁹Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and



selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was, and diagnosed me as terminal. ¹⁰I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure, and thus my condition only worsened. ¹¹For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking that I could be cured by working to keep the commandments; but instead, my terminal state only worsened. **[this is describing the obedience that stems from law but only the obedience of faith saves/heals]** ¹²So understand this: The law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God to reveal what is evil and destructive. ¹³Did the law, which did good by diagnosing what was wrong with me, become the source of my terminal condition? Of course not! It only exposed what was already in me, so that I could recognize how totally decayed, putrid and near death I was, and so that through the lens of the commandment I might become utterly disgusted with evil and selfishness, and long for a cure.

¹⁴We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking. ¹⁵I am frustrated with what I do! For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, my old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed. ¹⁶And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing. ¹⁷What is happening is this: I have come to trust God, and I desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses — which present almost reflexively in certain situations — have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do. ¹⁸I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness, which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So, I find that at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire. ¹⁹For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do: No! They are remnants of my selfish, unconverted mind. ²⁰So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not myself that acts, but the vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed. And through God's grace, they will soon be removed.

²¹So I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, my old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me. ²²In my mind, I rejoice in God's methods and principles, ²³but I recognize that I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within. ²⁴What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed? ²⁵Praise be to God—for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust in God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mark Your Calendars: December 11—Class will meet at Bake Crafters at our usual time. We will have class, then a Christmas potluck, which will start right after our Q&A time. Then we will have an afternoon open discussion.

Heads up, in January we will have a special Sabbath Afternoon live-broadcast event here in Chattanooga on the 3 Angels' Messages. More details soon.

NEW TRACTS:

We have five new sharing tracts:

- Babylon the Mother of Harlots: Come Out of Her
- Loneliness Its Cause and Cure
- The Injustice of Human Justice
- How to Disagree and Remain Friends
- Knowing God's Will