



## 2022 3Q In the Crucible with Christ—Lesson 2 The Crucibles that Come

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

### SABBATH

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Read memory text: “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed” (1 Peter 4:12–13 NIV84).

Why do painful trials come?

- We live in a war zone with an enemy who hates God, Jesus, and all who are loyal to Jesus, and wants to hurt us.
- There are evil people who intentionally do evil and the innocent suffer.
- We live in a world in which all of nature is infected with the law of sin and death. God’s life-giving glory no longer bathes Earth in its sustaining rays and thus all kinds of genetic, physiological, and random events happen that injure and harm. And we are physically slowly decaying toward the first death.
- As consequence of our own choices—either sinful or not. For instance, going skiing and taking a run beyond one’s skill level and losing control and breaking a leg is a trial, but it wasn’t because of evil people attacking, it wasn’t because of sinful choices, it was because of sin in the world and our bodies being frail and subject to such injuries and our choice to over-estimate our ability. But this wasn’t a sinful choice.
- God disciplines those He loves. God brings events to bear upon us via His grace for our benefit that are designed to help us, refine us, purify us, mature us, and ultimately settle us into the truth so that we cannot be moved.
- As a witness to our spiritual wellness and God’s kingdom—Daniel, the 3 worthies, Stephen, Job...all of these suffered because of evil forces attacking and God permitting it to reveal truth to others and bring others out of sin-sickness into His kingdom.

But regardless of the reason for the trial “we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28 NIV84).

Not all things are good, not all trials are good, not all trials are brought by the goodness of God, but in all difficulties and trials, for those who trust God, God works for the good, including for the strengthening of their faith, the growth in their trust and wisdom and maturity.

But, we must not fall into the trap of relegating all trials in life to one or two categories. It can be harmful to do so, can anyone think how?

So, with all of these reasons in mind, why should we rejoice to participate in the suffering of Christ?



But what type of suffering is the type Jesus experienced?

Peter himself tells us at the opening of this chapter, in 1 Peter 4:1-2, just ten verses before our memory text Peter writes the following; consider what type of suffering Peter is talking about:

“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, **for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (1Peter 4:1-2 NKJV).

What does this mean?

What type of suffering should we count it joy to share it? The suffering that is a result of overcoming sin, that occurs when we say no to temptation, when we refuse to sin, or when we are repentant and healing from some sin, for it is in this suffering that we gain victory, maturity, solidify our trust in God, overcome our own weaknesses, witness the kingdom of God and are freed from the control of fear and selfishness.

Consider a person struggling with smoking. They have come under the conviction that they need to quit. They surrender to Jesus and choose to quit. And for a short time they experience cravings, temptations to smoke, but if they say no to the cravings, their flesh suffers, but they are done with smoking.

But does the person continue to suffer if they remain faithful to Jesus or does the suffering stop and joy come? Do they experience greater freedom and health, not just physically but emotionally and spiritually?

Consider every single temptation and how when we choose to say no to the temptation, there is often an initial suffering in our flesh, in our human emotions, in our selfish nature, but if we cling to Jesus, if we stay with Him, something changes, the longings for the earthly fade and we gain ever increasing freedom from whatever our weakness was.

Read second paragraph, “A crucible is defined...” Does this bring any Bible text to mind?

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver” (Malachi 3:1-3 NIV84).

What does this text mean? What is this text talking about? Who are the Levites? The priesthood of believers, and what is being described? The cleansing of the people who believe in Jesus. When does this text indicate this cleansing takes place? When Jesus comes to His temple. What temple?



When Jesus was on Earth, did He go to the temple in Jerusalem and cleanse it? What did His driving out of those frauds from the temple courts do? Did it complete the plan of salvation? Did it cleanse the people from sin? No, the cleansing of a physical building from people who are misrepresenting God does not remove sin or fix the sin problem. Christ's actions at the physical temple in Jerusalem was an acted out lesson, it demonstrated theatrically His real mission.

Remember the temple in Jerusalem was merely a stage for God's plan of salvation to be acted out so the people could learn the larger reality of what sin has done and how God through Christ redeems us from sin. But the stage and the play itself were not the reality and had no saving power—it was all to teach the reality of Jesus who is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world and who has the saving power.

So, what did Jesus' actions in cleansing the temple 2000 years ago teach?

One Bible commentary describes it beautifully, this is from *The Desire of Ages*:

**In the cleansing of the temple**, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, **was designed to be an object lesson** for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God's purpose that **every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.** [Understand the reality—we are living beings created by God to be living temples where God dwells by His Spirit. The temple in Jerusalem was only theater, just a teaching tool, to teach the true reality. The law in that system was in a box in the Most Holy Place, but in the New Covenant it is to be written in our hearts. Why? Because God's law is a living law, it is the law of love, the protocols life is built to operate upon. It is not imposed rules like humans make and cannot operate or function written upon stone. It only functions in living beings, thus we are the repository of God's law. But when Adam sinned and replaced God's law with the law of sin and death, fear and selfishness, God wrote a distilled version upon stone as a diagnostic tool, and Jesus came to restore His living law back into the species human.] Because of sin, **humanity ceased to be a temple for God.** Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, **the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity**, and through saving grace the **heart of man becomes again His temple.** [In the person of Jesus, God's living law of love is restored into humanity. Jesus becomes the connected link between heaven and earth.] God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high **destiny open to every soul.** [That temple is an object lesson for what God wants to achieve in you and me, to cleanse us from sin and write His law in us.] But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. [And far too many Christians don't understand it either.] They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly **the temple of the heart**, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil**



**habits, that corrupt the soul.** “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.” Malachi 3:1-3. (*The Desire of Ages* 161)

This commentator specifically connects Malachi’s description of Jesus coming to His temple with the cleansing of the sanctuary which is described as cleansing the people from sin.

Is this cleansing a legal adjustment or an actual healing of hearts and minds?

Where does sin occur, in record books or in people? From where does sin need to be removed if we sinners are to be reconciled to God, historical records or our hearts and minds?

But what happens to the healing of our hearts and minds if we believe salvation is about getting our records cleansed rather than our hearts cleansed?

Do you see how Satan tricks some, like the Pharisees in Christ’s day, or the church of the Dark Ages into legal accounting of sin rather than healing of the soul from sin? They develop, as Paul described, a form of godliness but with no power. A system of legal accounting of acts and deeds seeking legal pardon, erasure of records, but no healing of hearts and minds is a counterfeit to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In reality, when the heart and mind is cleansed the history of sin in that person’s life doesn’t need to be erased, it needs to be retained because that history stands in contrast to who they are in their restored righteousness and they become powerful witnesses to the power of God to cleanse and redeem. But if we erase the history of sin, then we lose the significance and power of what Christ has done for us. If in eternity future we all view each other like we view Gabriel, sinless and loyal beings, but we have no recollection, no memory of our past, no realization of what we have been healed, delivered, and saved from, we undermine the significance of God’s grace, Christ’s sacrifice, and the power of God to heal and save sinners.

## SUNDAY

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The lesson highlights that Peter is reminding believers not to be surprised when trials and struggles come, to understand such difficulties are not foreign or alien to the Christian journey but an expected part of it.

Why are trials and difficulties an expected part of the Christian journey?

**Because once there is brokenness of any kind there are no pain free options!**



We have all been injured, wounded, broken in some way by sin and the restoration to health, to wellness, is a painful process, but “painful” is not the same as harmful.

**One of Satan’s traps is tricking people into choosing what feels good rather than what is good.**

Read last paragraph, “Many of us...” This is well said. Feelings are unreliable in determining truth. Feelings are signals to us that something is going on, but the feelings themselves cannot tell us whether what is going on is good or bad, only the truth can tell us that.

For instance, if you feel pain does that mean something good or bad is happening? The feeling of pain cannot determine that, only the truth can.

If you are experiencing pain because you are being stabbed then what is happening is bad (the pain is still good because it alerts you that something bad is happening), but being stabbed is not bad because it is painful, it is bad because it is harmful. If you were for some reason numb and being stabbed and therefore didn’t feel pain it wouldn’t make the stabbing good, it is still bad to be stabbed.

Conversely, if you feel pain while removing a thorn from your finger, that pain does not mean something bad is happening. If you refused to remove the thorn in order to avoid the associated pain, it would not be good.

I have patients whose entire lives are one long history of chaos, dysfunctional relationship after dysfunctional relationship, poor choices in school, work, and often various substance use problems. And for many of these people the root process is that they have developed as their primary mode of decision-making doing what feels best right now—avoiding anything that feels bad and doing that which feels good.

Until they learn the reality that once there is brokenness there are not pain free options they will continue to live chaotic lives. Once they learn this and stop trying to avoid pain and instead commit themselves to choosing to do that which is healthiest even if painful, they begin healing.

## MONDAY

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Read 1 Peter 5:8:

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8 NIV84).

What does this text mean to you?

Read first paragraph, “Have you ever watched a hungry lion...” What do you think? Does Peter say that Satan is prowling around in the same way as a hungry lion?



He certainly says that the devil is prowling around looking for someone to devour, but Peter makes one very important and critical distinction between a real lion seeking prey and Satan seeking prey. It reveals the method that Satan uses to capture his prey, what is the distinction?

Do real lions roar when they are stalking their prey? Why not? The prey will run away and they will lose their catch.

So, why does Peter describe Satan as roaring when stalking his prey?

Because it exposes Satan's primary method in this world of sin and that is to incite fear. What does fear do to people?

Fear and love are antagonistic, like a seesaw. As one goes up the other goes down. The more fearful we are the stronger the temptation to act selfishly and less capable of both thinking and acting in love. The more we love God and others the less fearful we are and the better we can think and act in harmony with God's law of love.

So, Satan roars to incite fear and lure people to leave the path of love and enter the path of survival-of-the-fittest, of protecting self, of justifying Satan's methods as a means to protect self and even claim it is to benefit others or perhaps the institution.

Why did Caiaphas recommend crucifying Jesus?

“You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish” (John 11:50 NIV84).

What is the stated motive? We need to protect the nation—which could mean the people or the institution. After all, they knew they were God's chosen people to bring the promises of God to the world. They had an obligation to make sure the nation survived. It seemed only right to them to do whatever was necessary to protect the nation, even using coercion and force to protect the nation, even fraud, perjury, and murder. God's nation and people must be protected!

Have we seen this same line of thinking in Christian history? What about in the Dark Ages?

What about during COVID? Did we see some Christian organizations justify mandates, terminating employees, coercing consciences because it was right to do so in order to protect the institution? The institution is called by God to take the gospel to the world, it has a mission, it must be protected.

What is the motive? Is it love for people or is it fear—fear of government sanctions, shutdowns, loss of funding? Is it fear for self of getting a disease or being infected by others? Satan roars and people sacrifice truth and the principles of God's kingdom in order to protect themselves.





We will see more and more threats of various kinds before Jesus comes. These threats will inflame fear and are designed to undermine thinking and get us to choose the methods of this world rather than the methods of God.

What do you think of the description in the lesson that describes Satan's desire to kill and says "Death, suffering, and the twisting and perverting of morals and values are everywhere. We cannot escape seeing the work of Satan."

Do you agree that the death and suffering and torment and abuse we are seeing in society are from Satan and sin?

This is correct—the Bible is clear, Satan is a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). Jesus came destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil (Hebrews 2:14).

So, we agree that pain, suffering, death come from Satan, correct?

Then why do many Christians teach that one day God will use His power to inflict torture, pain, suffering and death upon the wicked to make them pay for their unrepentant sin?

This idea, that God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death for sin is a lie of Satan that is rooted in believing the lie that God's law functions like human law.

As long as people believe God's law is imposed rules they cling to the idea that justice requires God to use power to inflict punishment for rule-breaking and the minimum punishment is eternal death.

We are not saying the wicked will not suffer for their unrepentant sin, they will, but from where does the pain and suffering come? Does it come from Jesus who uses power to inflict pain and suffering upon people that they would not otherwise reap, or does it come from unremedied and unremoved sin in their lives when God let's them go to reap what they have chosen?

The Bible is clear, sin when full grown brings forth death (James 1:15) and those who sow to the carnal nature from that nature reap destruction (Galatians 6:8). God is the source of life, not the source of death. Sin is the cause and source of pain, suffering, and death.

But some people did more wickedness in this life than others, like Stalin and Hitler, who did more evil than a 20 year old college student who never accepted Jesus and died by a drug overdose. So, some teach, it would be unfair for the college student to suffer the same punishment as Hitler and Stalin. Therefore, it is argued, that because God is fair, God will perform a miracle to torture some for many days making them suffer in ways that only an infinite powerful God could in order to make them pay for their sins before He kills them.

If this description is true,

- What kind of being is God?
- What is the problem with sinning?



- From where does death come?
- If God restrained Himself and didn't use His power to inflict suffering and death then what happens to the wicked in this scenario?
- If the problem with sin is the punishment inflicted by God then from what or who do we need to be protected?

Read last paragraph, "Peter writes these words..." What do you think of this idea that Jesus has beaten Satan and Satan is a defeated foe?

It is true that when Jesus was here on Earth, Jesus was victorious over Satan, and that Jesus has won the ultimate victory. But if Satan is defeated why is he still on the playing field?

When we defeated Germany and Japan in WWII—was the war still ongoing? Or with their defeat did the war stop?

Jesus absolutely defeated Satan; this is not in dispute—but does that mean the war has stopped? Why not? If Satan is defeated why does the war continue?

"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" (2Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV84).

Does this give us a clue as to why the war continues if Satan is defeated?

Where is this war being fought? In hearts and minds. Satan uses weapons of lies, coercion, physical might, intimidation, fear, etc.

What is necessary from God's perspective to win the war?

Can God win the war by eliminating Satan from existence? Why or why not?

What does God want from us? Our love, trust, devotion, loyalty, friendship—can this be achieved through force, coercion, threats of punishment? Can it be achieved through power over others? Can it be achieved by God forcibly rewriting our hearts and minds to be loyal?

What is necessary for God to win? For everyone to be fully persuaded in their own mind (Romans 14:5). For each person to be settled either fully into the truth that they cannot be moved or fully into the lies that no amount of truth or love will have any redeeming impact upon them.

God wins when every single savable person has been healed and restored from fear and selfishness.





Satan was defeated by Jesus Christ. As a human being, Jesus overcame every temptation, eliminated the death causing principle from the humanity He inherited through Mary and developed a perfect sinless mature human character restoring God's living law into the humanity He assumed.

Thus in the person of Jesus Christ the species human was saved, redeemed, and not merely restored to God's original intention for it in Adam, but in Jesus humanity has been elevated to the throne of God. Jesus sits upon the throne.

At the cross, Jesus defeated Satan, saved the species human in His own humanity, provided the remedy for every other human who chooses to partake by faith of what Jesus has provided. And Jesus solidified the unfallen beings in heaven in their loyalty. As Scripture says,

**“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Colossians 1:19-20 NIV84)**

The war continues on earth, but not in the rest of the universe. After the cross Satan was restricted to planet earth, why? Because the rest of the intelligences in God's universe were settled, they saw Satan exposed at the cross as a liar and murderer and none of them would listen to his lies any more. Thus he was restricted by reality, by the truth revealed by Jesus doing its work in the hearts of the loyal angels.

The only place Satan continues to wage war is on this planet where billions continue to believe his lies. And the war continues because the only way for God to win people is through truth, presented in love, leaving people free to decide for themselves.

But it will not continue forever. Events are unfolding right now that are bringing more and more people to decision points in which they must decide how they will treat others. And it is how we treat others, either by living out God's law of truth presented in love while leaving others free, such that we would protect others, sacrifice self for others, allow ourselves to be mistreated rather than coerce the consciences of others, OR we embrace the methods of Satan and the ends justify the means and we will use force, coercion, mandates, threats, censorship, misinformation, manipulation, to pressure people to do what we think they should.

COVID was a warmup and preparation for the final movements. A philosophy was introduced and embraced by many that in order to save lives it is okay to violate morals and ethics and coerce healthy people to do things they don't want to do.

This philosophy is satanic and when embraced and practiced hardens the hearts of people and solidifies them into the camp of God's enemy. They will become like Caiaphas and do just like the Jews did 2000 years ago, kill the innocent to protect what they think is more important than the innocent.



## TUESDAY

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The lesson asks us to read Romans 1:18:

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Romans 1:18 NIV84).

What is the wrath of God?

This is from a Bible commentary entitled *Hard Sayings of the Bible* published by IntersVarsity Press. It is specifically commenting on Romans 1:18:

In some sense, **God’s wrath is built into the very structure of created reality.** In rejecting God’s structure and establishing our own, in violating God’s intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, **we cause or own disintegration...**

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is **not something caused by God.** The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the inevitability of human debasement which results when God’s will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God’s truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God’s nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32).

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the **sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God’s punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves.**

In light of these reflections, **the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained...** God loves us with an everlasting love. **But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death.** (Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, IntersVarsity Press, 1996, p. 542-543).

This is absolutely brilliantly stated and correct. This is understanding the Bible as God intended, with God as Creator and God’s law as design law upon which life is built to operate. Breaking God’s law breaks the protocols of life and result in ruin and death.

When one believes the lie that God’s law functions like human law, then one falsely concludes justice is the infliction of punishment and wrath is God using power to torture and kill for sin. In that false



model, Jesus must plead His blood as a legal payment to the angry and wrathful deity in order to propitiate away the wrath so that that god won't kill us.

But the truth is that God's wrath is exactly what Jesus experienced upon the cross—God letting go. God let Jesus go on the cross so that Jesus could experience exactly what Jesus chose—to complete His mission to eradicate the sin condition, destroy death and bring life and immortality to light and provide salvation for all who trust Him. And God lets the wicked go in the end to reap what they have chosen to be separated from the source of life and the result is ruin and death.

## WEDNESDAY

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The bottom green section asks, “If God were going to refine and test you today, how might He do it? What actions could you take now to deal with this before God would need to take drastic steps with you, as He did with Israel?”

What does this question lead you to consider? Do you think, “What sin in my life needs to be overcome or removed?”

But did the question actually ask that? I like this question because it asks about God refining us, does that lead us to think differently than what sin needs to be eliminated?

If we think of sin in our lives what is the typical focus? Isn't it usually on deeds, behaviors, and acts?

But from where do all acts of sin originate? From something amiss in the heart, from lack of love and trust, from fear and selfishness.

This is why Paul says, “everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23 NIV84).

The issue isn't primarily about the behavior itself, it is about the heart attitude that leads to the behavior. Are we motivated by love and trust or by fear and selfishness? Are we seeking to glorify God or glorify self? Are we seeking to benefit others or benefit self at the expense of others?

It is the motive, not the specific action, this is why one cannot write a list of rules for the godly. Rules and commandments and imposed laws are only for the ungodly as a hedge to restrain them, but not as a method of righteousness.

Paul wrote:

“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary



to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me” (1 Timothy 1:8-11 NIV 84).

When we have the lie that God’s law functions like human law we want to make up rules to dictate behavior, and any behavior that doesn’t conform to the rules is considered sin. This is what the Pharisees did. But love is not constrained by rules and love heals on Sabbath, but rule-keeping harms while keeping the rules.

Rule-keeping is only for the immature, for the children until they grow up. And rule-keeping can become, for those who refuse to mature in Christ, a form of selfishness, it is a way for selfish people to feel good about their performance while refusing to live in harmony with God’s design for life. Remember the Pharisees and Corban?

Further, with rule-keeping what is sinful changes from place to place and time to time:

- At one time it was sinful to pick up sticks on Sabbath and the one doing it must be stoned
  - What about today. If you were on a nature walk with your family and your child picked up some sticks, would they be sinning? Would you stone them to death?
- At one time it was sinful to start a fire on Sabbath.
  - What about today. If you were cold one winter and started a fire in your fireplace on Sabbath afternoon would you be sinning?
- It is considered sin today for people to engage in polygamy—what about when Jacob married Rachel. Was Jacob sinning to do so? Do we ever find him asking God to forgive him for marrying a second wife, or God condemning him for it? Was polygamy in Jacob’s day in harmony with God’s design? Absolutely not, yet was Jacob’s heart in rebellion against God for doing so?
- What about David’s sin of adultery with Bathsheba—adultery was sin then and is still sin today (as was/is murder of her husband). But, after he committed adultery, after he murdered Uriah, when did David’s physical and intimate relationship with Bathsheba stop being sin? Or, was David’s marriage to Bathsheba wickedness and evil and condemned by God and David never really repented from his sin but continued living in sin and he was not a man after God’s own heart?
  - When did his relationship with Bathsheba stop being ongoing lived out and active sin?
  - When he repented? Isn’t repenting turning away from sin? Did he turn away from her or to her? Did he stop his relationship with her or continue it?
  - When he married her? So God’s law is subordinate to local culture? If we move to a country today where polygamy is still legal and practiced it would be not be sin in that country to have more than one wife?
  - It is about how we understand sin—what is sin? Behaviors, or attitudes of the heart?
  - What was the attitude of David’s heart that caused him to have the affair and murder Uriah? Selfishness and fear. This is sin.
  - When David converted what happened in his heart? Selfishness and fear were replaced with trust in God, and love for God and others. As a person reborn in heart



and mind to God's kingdom, what became David's motive to action? Was it still fear and selfishness or love and trust?

- And what does love desire to do for another? Was David, after his sin and subsequent conversion more concerned with himself or with honoring God and helping others? And in specific regard to Bathsheba was he more concerned with making himself look good or healing the damage to Bathsheba that his sin caused her?
- Did David, as a repentant sinner, have a responsibility to, as far as possible, restore to Bathsheba what he took from her? And what did he take from her? Her good name. Her position and station in that society, which was through her husband. She would be a homeless widow, in danger of becoming a prostitute as her adultery became known. And he took from her the love and affection that her husband gave her. So, in that culture, the only way to restore her name, reputation, station, provide security, and return to her the love and affection of a husband was to marry her and love her genuinely.
- His actions based on selfishness resulted in a child born terminal and who died—an apt object lesson of what sinful living does, it results in death. But once converted and living out the principles of love, he marries Bathsheba and has another child, Solomon the child of wisdom, the wisdom of God.

## THURSDAY

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The lesson make the observation that there is a big difference between cutting down a plant and pruning it.

How are they similar, how are they different?

What is the object lesson for us?

Can we sometimes find ourselves being pruned but misperceive into thinking we are being cut down?

I see this a lot in relationships that have dependency a.k.a. codependency ties.

These are emotional connections between people that are inappropriate and don't belong. Such as feeling responsible for what others think of you, or feeling responsible for what others feel, or what others do. Or deriving your own sense of security and fulfillment from the approval of others.

All such emotional enmeshments, which derive from another person that which God designed to come only from a relationship with Him or from oneself, are unhealthy and when moving toward health these ties must be severed, pruned, cut back.

However, many people resist because they misperceive what they are experiencing.



So I give the metaphor of Siamese twins joined at the hip. Is their connection normal or abnormal, healthy or unhealthy?

Will cutting that connection be healthy or unhealthy?

Will cutting it feel good or be painful?

Because it hurts does that mean it is bad?

Might it feel like the person is losing a part of themselves? Are they?

Might it feel like they are losing the other person out of their lives? Are they?

In reality, once the unhealthy connection is severed does that mean the relationship is broken and they can no longer do things with their twin, or now they have the opportunity to do so much more?

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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**Podcasts:** We have a weekly 15-minute podcast you can subscribe to. Go to [comeandreason.com/category/media/podcasts-toc/](https://comeandreason.com/category/media/podcasts-toc/)

**Building update:** Our HVAC delay issue has been resolved by answered prayer. A highly reputable mechanical company had a narrow window in which to schedule our system installation. All other companies were declining new work. Ductwork is being manufactured and installed. The new systems will be finished by the end of July or sooner. Painting of walls and ceilings will be concurrent. After a week of building and flooring material acclimation to the new temperature and humidity, we'll then install the various flooring.

**July 15-16, 2022:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the United Healthcare Summit in Grand Rapids MI. His talk will be entitled COVID and the Manipulation of Your Mind. More details at <https://unitedhealthcaresummit.com/>

**August 13, 2022:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Sligo by the Sea, sponsored by Sligo SDA church at the First Presbyterian Church — 1301 Philadelphia Avenue, Ocean City, MD 21842. Dr. Jennings will lead SS at 10 a.m., sermon at 11 a.m. and have Q&A session in the afternoon.

**September 8-10, 2022:** Dr. Jennings and Dr. Curt Thompson will be presenting an Intensive together at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Conference in Dallas, TX. You can find more details about the event at <https://nationalaacc.com/>