



2023 1Q Managing for the Master Till He Comes Lesson 1: Part of God's Family

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read Memory Text: “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1 NKJV).

What does it mean to be a child of God?

Have you heard some pastors ask if only your obedient children are considered your children? They say, aren't your rebellious children still your children and then ask, so aren't the wicked, the unrepentant, considered children of God—just children behaving badly?

Some might point to the genealogy of Christ in Luke chapter three which ends:

the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. (Luke 3:38 NIV 84).

And from this verse conclude since Adam was the son of God, and we are all descended from Adam then every human is a child of God, either good or bad, obedient or disobedient. What do you think of this idea?

What did Jesus mean when He said to the Jewish leaders:

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44 NIV84).

Does the Bible mean something more than merely being part of the *human* family in order to also be part of *God's* family?

Consider these verses:

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12-13 NIV 84).

What does it mean to be born of God? In order for a human to be part of the family of God, to be considered a son or daughter of God, must that individual first be born into the world, but then also be reborn and it is at the rebirth experience that they become a part of God's family?



Consider these verses:

You are all sons of God **through faith in Christ Jesus** (Galatians 3:26 NIV84).

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you **received the Spirit of sonship**. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Romans 8:14-17 NIV84).

So how does one become a part of Satan’s family? And how does one become a part of God’s family? Consider this verse:

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. [What is the devil’s work? What has Satan been working to accomplish? To destroy the image of God in man and put Satan’s image where God’s should be. Think about what it means to be a child of someone—don’t the children of the parents resemble the parents, carry within them attributes of the parents, genetically, physically in appearance, but also in attributes of language, character, practice, and often beliefs. Does this have a bearing on what it means to be part of God or Satan’s family? Would those who carry within themselves the attributes, characteristics, methods, principles of God, thereby resembling God, being restored to the image of God be the ones considered part of God’s family. While those who instead internalize the methods, principles, practices, and characteristics of Satan and thereby become like Satan are considered part of Satan’s family because they resemble him and carry around his image? Consider what John says next.] No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: **Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.** (1 John 3:8-10 NIV84).

Does this verse make you uncomfortable? “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.”

Do we believe that via the Holy Spirit we are reborn, that we receive new hearts and right spirits, that the “seed” of God is planted within us. In other words, we receive the very life of God, we become partakers of the divine nature and it works a change in us and our motives, desires, attitudes, understanding, perspectives and practices change, we grow, develop, transform and become ever more like Jesus!

Or do we instead believe that we have a legal adjustment in a book and have adoption papers filed in the heavenly court and we are legally declared to be part of God’s family even though we go on living sinful lives and still look like Satan in character?

Which idea are you more comfortable with:



- those born of God will go on sinning until Jesus returns
- those born of God will not go on sinning

What law lens do you understand this through? What is the essence or root of sin? Is it deed and task performance or is it attitudes of the heart? And the root attitude of sin is distrust of and disloyalty to God predicated upon fear and selfishness. Those born into the family of God may be tempted by fear and selfishness, they may have struggles in personal performance, they may make errors in judgment (like Peter when he didn't associate with the uncircumcised), but they do not break trust with God, they remain humble, they have hearts that love truth and are willing to be corrected and grow. They love God and love others. They do not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11). Thus, they develop, advance and grow in godliness—just like children grow—this growth in godliness is evidence that they are children of God, that they are part of God's family.

So how do we know who is part of the family of God or the family of Satan? John tells us:

- This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are:
Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

When we are reborn to lives that love God and others we are part of God's family. As you have done it unto the least you have done it unto Jesus!

Read first sentence,

“As Christians, an amazing feature about our relationship with God is that He trusts us to manage His affairs on this earth” (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 6).

Why does God do this? What is God's purpose and goal?

What design laws are involved?

God does this for our growth and development, via the law of exertion. God wants us to mature, to develop, to comprehend, to become masters of ourselves and our environment—but not masters of others. Therefore, God places real responsibilities in our hands for it is by exertion, by application, by challenge that we develop and grow.

Jesus taught this principle in the parable of the talents. Those who invested their talents received more. Those with musical talent who apply themselves, practice, and play, will advance in their skill, and more talent will be gained—perhaps additional instruments, understanding the mathematical elements of music, becoming a song writer or composer etc. All of this happens in the brain as neural networks expand with use.

But if we don't use it we lose it!



As we love others our capacity to love grows. As we exercise our faith/trust in God our faith and trust in God grows.

Thus God gives us opportunities for growth and development, but does that mean God trusts us?

Did God give to the Jewish people various truths to take to the world via Scripture and the lessons contained in the sanctuary service?

Did Jesus trust those religious leaders when He was here? Why didn't Jesus trust them if God gave them this responsibility?

Did God choose for King Saul to be the first king of Israel and have Samuel anoint him? And in the end, could God trust King Saul?

Did God place Lucifer in a place of responsibility? And did Lucifer eventually become a being who God could not trust?

This is an important point to understand, people can be in positions of responsibility for God and even called by God to that position but that doesn't mean God can trust them or that we can trust them.

I have had people tell me that I have no right to question what a pastor says because they are the Lord's anointed and placed in that position by God. The implication was they were to be believed and trusted because of the office they held. But this is a lie. The Bible principle is that every person must be fully persuaded in their own mind. That people placed in positions of responsibility by God are to lead like Jesus did, truth, love, and freedom. Jesus left people free to disagree and leave and so must we.

Yes, God gives us responsibilities for our growth and development and God wants to trust us in those roles, like He was able to trust Job, and Daniel, and Moses, and so many others. But what is necessary for us in order for God to trust us?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Ephesians 3:14-15:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. (Ephesians 3:14-15 NIV84).

What does it mean that God is called our Father, that Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father"?

When you think of God as our Father does it bring comfort, peace, security, confidence, or fear, doubt, and a desire for an intercessor?



Does our concept of what a father is and how our fathers treated us have any bearing on our ability to experience God as our heavenly Father?

If we had a father that was abusive, how do we get past that in our relationship with God?

Does God require us to consider Him our Father?

In the book *The Shack* by Wm. Paul Young, he describes a man's encounter with God where God presented Himself to the man in for the form of a woman. In the context of the story, the man had grown up with an abusive alcoholic father and the man had terrible anger, resentment, and trauma issues around his father. So in the story God approaches this man in a way that would avoid having all that anger and resentment directed at God and allow the man to get to know God and work through his doubts, fears, anger, and hurt and ultimately find healing for his soul.

What do you think of this? Do you think God would stoop down and interact with us in humble ways in order to reach us in our struggles and lead us back to Him?

Consider what Paul wrote to the Philippians about Jesus:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, **he humbled himself** and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5-8 NIV84).

Do we believe what Jesus said that if we have seen Him we have seen the Father? Do we believe the Father would also humble Himself to reach us?

Do we have any other examples of God approaching sinful humanity in gentle, humble ways, or describing Himself in humble ways?

- Calling out gently to Adam in the garden, “Where are you?”
- God and Jesus veiling their glory in order to reach us
- “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9 NIV84).

So how might a person who has had a human father that mistreated them and therefore struggles with connecting with God as our Father get past that?

What about the idea of God presenting Himself as female, as a woman? Is this biblical?

First question, who created Adam and Eve, male and female? And were they both created in the image of God or just the male partner? And in God's design is the image of God realized to its fullest extent



with just one of them, or does it take both Adam and Eve united in holy marital love to be a complete unit of godlike humanity?

So is the female, godly femineity, equally a part of the image of God as the male—godly masculinity?

Are there Bible examples of God taking feminine or female aspects to teach things about Himself?

- Jesus describing how He would like to be like a **hen** calling her chicks under His wings for protection? (Matthew 23:37)
- You deserted the Rock, **who fathered you**; you forgot the **God who gave you birth**. (Deuteronomy 32:18 NIV84)
- Can a **mother forget the baby at her breast** and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands (Isaiah 49:15-16 NIV84).
- As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you (Isaiah 66:13 NIV84).
- Yet I was the one who **taught Israel to walk. I took my people up in my arms**, but they did not acknowledge that **I took care of them. I drew them to me with affection and love. I picked them up and held them to my cheek; I bent down to them and fed them.** (Hosea 11:3-4 GNT).
- Like a bear robbed of **her** cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. (Hosea 13:8 NIV84).
- Like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions (Deuteronomy 31:11 NIV84).
- For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, **like a woman in childbirth**, I cry out, I gasp and pant. (Isaiah 42:14 NIV84).

There is one more I want to share with you. It is a parable from Jesus, as I share this, I want you to note that this parable is one of three about finding that which is lost, the first is the lost sheep and the shepherd goes out to find the lost sheep. The last is the lost son who comes home to the father, and then there is this one placed right in the middle:

“Or suppose a **woman** has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:8-10 NIV84).

In the parable of the lost sheep who is represented by the shepherd who finds the lost sheep?

In the parable of the lost son, who is represented by the father to whom the son returns?

Then in the parable of the lost coin who does the woman represent?



Did you know that the Bible represents God as a woman or with various female attributes this many times?

So, if a person has serious problems, like in the book *The Shack*, with God as a father, but they have many positive experiences with a loving and trustworthy mother, would God be okay with that person approaching Him as their loving mother, the hen who wants to take them under her wings?

Do you think there are aspects of the Godhead we have not fully appreciated because we tend to focus almost exclusively on the male aspects and minimize the female?

And has Satan exploited this in society today by advancing an ungodly, corrosive philosophy under the guise of promoting something good for women? Today's modern feminist movement is not about equality as God designed it for both men and women, it is about destroying godly masculinity, destroying the godly role of women as mothers and men as fathers, and destroying families under the guise of self-advancement. If you doubt it, just look at where the modern left has gone in advocating for biological males to compete against women in women's sports claiming honors, scholarships, and other advancements that women would have obtained. The goal of the modern feminist movement is not on godly equality that uplifts all parties and protects families and children, it is based on selfishness and exploitation and is destructive to all parties involved.

MONDAY

The title for today's lesson is "God Is the Owner of Everything" what do you think of this idea?

What is the Biblical basis for this idea?

- God is Creator and all things are His by the reality that everything was created by Him and everything holds together because of Him
 - "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters." (Psalm 24:1-2).
 - "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:16-17 NIV84).
 - "For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine." (Psalm 50:10-11 NIV84).

If God owns everything, what role do we play in God's design?

- We are God's agents, representatives, ambassadors, stewards, delegates. People who have been given abilities, resources, talents, and responsibilities by God to carry out God's purposes.



- We are to live as God's friends and representatives using the resources God has placed in our hands for the advancement of the kingdom of God.
- And the more we give in God's kingdom the more we receive from God!

Are there competing methods in this world of sin when it comes to ownership? What are the two primary competing methods?

- Capitalism
- Marxism

Are either one of these God's methods? Do both of these methods result in abuses and injustices of various kinds?

The foundation of all human economies is the idea of ownership, of buying and selling. Nothing is free in this life; we must pay for it, and in this world we are taught that safety and security is found in owning things, the more we own, the safer we feel.

This is exactly the opposite of how God's economy works; it operates upon free giving, everything that lives gives and gives freely without expectation of payment.

- Freely you have received, freely give (Matthew 10:8 NIV84).
- Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed (Proverbs 11:24, 25 NLT).

The Bible describes God's economy as a system of free giving. It is by giving away that we become rich. But this is nonsense to a fear-driven, selfish world.

In Satan's kingdom, the more you take—hoard, store up—the more you have; if you give it away, you merely deplete your resources. It is only by consuming, taking, and possessing that one gets ahead in this world.

This is the opposite of God's economy, in which everything operates upon the design law of love—the principle of free giving.

“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45 NIV84).

Satan hates God's system and design and in this world of sin there are two modern economic systems that Satan pits against each other to cause conflict and division in society—Capitalism and Marxism (socialism).

Capitalism is a system in which people, individuals, can own property—it is a system of personal buying and selling. Its primary motivator is the accumulation of wealth. Businesses and business



owners and board in capitalism have their number one priority is for their companies to make money for their shareholders, not do what is best for people. Without governmental regulation and self-restraint, this system always results in abuse and exploitation, with a few becoming extremely wealthy at the expense of the masses.

Marxism identifies the principle of “ownership of property” as evil, but it proposes a solution that creates an even greater corruption and more vile outcome than Capitalism. The Marxist solution is that no one can own anything; all property is owned by the state. Marxism, which is supposed to solve the problem of worldly selfishness and ownership by restricting all property ownership to the state, creates a system in which the state becomes supreme over everything—including the people. The state replaces God as the true owner, and people no longer answer to God as His stewards, but to the state. And this inevitably results in a functional outcome that most people who support socialism are blind to: In all socialist, Marxist, communist societies, the state is more valuable than the people. In Marxism, the individual is only useful as long as they serve the state. Rather than people owning private property, in Marxism, people ultimately become the de facto property of the state. And in every instance in human history in which socialism has been established, the governments eventually committed mass abuse—imprisonment, impoverishment, and even genocide—against its own citizens, which is why it’s an even grosser perversion of God’s economy than Capitalism.

But again, these two systems are not God’s and Satan plays them off each other to divide society and cause conflict and harm

God’s economy is the kingdom of love and free giving, the gospel of grace. The biblical metaphors of payment are not economic; they are objective achievement. If you donate a kidney to save your child who is dying of renal failure, you “pay a high price”—but the price isn’t an economic (or a legal) price, nor is it arbitrarily or artificially set. It is the price reality itself requires to fix or heal the condition; and it is a price that love freely gives. God and Jesus *did* pay a price, but it wasn’t economic (it also wasn’t legal); it was the price our sin-condition required in order to heal and restore—and what love freely gave to save the object of their love.

Do we see conflicts in the world today based on these two economic models? But do you recognize the intrusion of Marxism when it focuses on something other than money?

Classic Marxist philosophy divided society based on economic power, focusing on the economic relationships in society. Those without wealth were pitted against the wealthy. But classic Marxism failed to make serious inroads in Western populations.

Various Marxist philosophers struggled to understand why Marxism failed to take hold in the west, and they finally realized Western countries were protected by the historic values and beliefs of Protestant Christianity, including the idea that God is the true owner, not the state, and we are His stewards.

Various Marxist philosophers realized that if Marxism remained focused exclusively on economic differences, its influence over people in the West would be limited. They concluded that to overthrow



the Western democracies and economies it would require a new ideology, specifically overthrowing the belief in the Christian God and biblical values and principles.

Therefore, these Marxist scholars developed and advanced what is today called Critical Theory, which is distinctly different from Traditional Theory.

Traditional Theory seeks to study and understand why people groups behave in certain ways, but it doesn't seek to change a people group. By contrast, Critical Theory specifically and intentionally seeks to change a society, particularly toward Marxism. M. Horkheimer, Marxist scholar, wrote the following in 1937:

Whereas a Traditional Theory is meant to be descriptive of some phenomenon, usually social, and aims to understand how it works and why it works that way, a Critical Theory should proceed from a prescriptive normative moral vision for society, describe how the item being critiqued fails that vision (usually in a systemic sense), and prescribe activism to subvert, dismantle, disrupt, overthrow, or change it. ... This use of the word “critical” is drawn from Marx’s insistence that *everything* be “ruthlessly” criticized and from his admonition that the point of studying society is to change it. <https://newdiscourses.com/tftw-critical-theory>

Critical Theory seeks to understand society *in order to criticize it ruthlessly and to subvert, dismantle, disrupt, and overthrow the prevailing social order*. Critical Theory shifts focus away from *actual* economic power differences, from business owners and workers, and toward *perceived* “power” differences—the *oppressor* and the *oppressed*. Classic Marxist philosophy focused on economic relationships in society, those with wealth and those without, whereas Critical Theory focuses on the “power” relationships in society, those *identified* to be part of the power group versus those *identified* to be among the powerless or exploited.

Understand that in Critical Theory, objective individual power or powerlessness is not relevant; the focus is on group identity—to what group one belongs. If one belongs to a group that is *identified* as “oppressed,” then one is automatically considered disadvantaged and as being exploited by the “oppressors.” And if one is identified to be a member of an “oppressor” group, then one is automatically considered to be abusive, exploitive, sexist, or racist by virtue of membership in that group, irrespective of personal belief, attitude, or conduct.

Critical Theory has multiple branches of *identified* oppressed classes, with multiple branches of study to advance its philosophy. Subgroups of Critical Theory include:

- Intersectional Feminism
- Critical Sexual Studies (LGBTQ)
- Post-Colonial Studies
- Indigenous Studies
- Fat Studies
- Critical Race Theory



In Critical Theory, it is taught that these and other *identified* “oppressed” groups must take power from the “oppressors” in order for there to be “equity” or fairness. But because the inequities are presumed to be inherent in the institutions built by the empowered group, the only way to be rid of the inequities is by overthrowing the societal institutions that, as they claim, sustain the “oppressor” group in their position of power.

For instance, in Critical Sexual Studies, the “oppressed” are non-binary people or LGBTQ individuals and the “oppressors” are those who hold traditional Christian values of monogamous heterosexual marriage. Critical Sexual Studies teaches that it is not enough to gain equality under the law so that same-sex couples can marry. According to Critical Theory, a society that advances heterosexual marriage based on a divine design for human wellbeing is sexist, discriminatory, and abusive; and that any person who merely *identifies* as heterosexual is automatically part of the “oppressor” group. Whereas any person who *identifies* as LGBTQ is automatically part of the “oppressed” group.

So, according to Critical Sexual Studies, a gay actor or athlete millionaire with a private jet, \$20 million home, chauffeur, personal chef, personal trainer, and exclusive access to the most elite elements of society is still “oppressed”—whereas, a heterosexual single mother living in poverty receiving food stamps is an “oppressor.”

The goal of so-called equity along gender and sexuality lines in Critical Theory is to change the ideology of society regarding human sexuality, male-female relations, and even what it means to be male or female. In order to do this, the philosophical underpinnings for traditional marriage must be removed, which means destroying Christian values, and specifically in America, Christianity.

This same philosophy, methodology, and practice underpins every mode of Critical Theory, including Critical Race Theory (CRT).

In CRT, a nuclear family with a father and mother holding power over children would be deemed racist and “whitism,” as parents having power are deemed “oppressive” and the children are understood to be “oppressed.” CRT’s solution is for the children to be raised by the community—in this case, the state—which is exactly the philosophy of Marxism and, by extension, Communism. This explains why in the USA today, wherever CRT is advanced, school officials believe it is their right and mandate to teach children various ideas, such as gender fluidity, that typically violate the values, morals, beliefs, and educational goals of the parents.

These CRT school officials intentionally exclude parents because the philosophy views traditional two-parent homes as racist and part of the institutions of society that need to be subverted and overthrown. This explains why, in some districts, school officials advance gender-affirming care, hormone therapy, and even gender reassignment surgery on minors without parental involvement. Traditional parenting is, by CRT standards, racist and a form of “whitism” and, therefore, must be opposed.



What is being opposed is Protestant Christianity, the belief in God, and the idea that God is the owner and we are His stewards to carry out His purposes. Socialism can have no other god before it, thus the state must become the most powerful and most sacred entity in the hearts and minds of the people. All Critical Theories have as their primary goal to destroy the belief in Jesus and the God of the Bible.

So recognize what is happening here on the US and other places is not a racial war, it is a culture war. The godless forces of Satan are working not merely to change capitalism to Marxism, but to destroy the principles of Christianity in society. And they are doing it through the guise of seeking various forms of so-called social justice. But all of it is a lie and part of the movements of God's enemy.

We need to not get caught up in the political fights, but we are called to a cultural war. Jesus said we are to fight with the weapons of heaven, truth, love, and liberty. We are to advance the kingdom of God by exposing the darkness and calling people back to God's kingdom, God's methods, God's principles in how they live their lives. And if people put God first all the Critical Theories would be destroyed.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on what God has given to us and provides to us for our welfare and eternal success.

What is the greatest gift God has given to humanity? Jesus Christ, "God so loved the world that He GAVE...."

God did not loan His Son to us, He gave Jesus to humanity. Even though Jesus is fully God, He is now also a real human being, a part of the species human. And He will retain that humanity for all eternity. Consider the implications, consider the condescension, consider the sacrifice, consider the love of God and Jesus in doing this for us!

And in addition to the Son, what else has God given us for our success? Jesus said,

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26 NIV84).

Can we be saved without Jesus? No!

Can we be saved without the Holy Spirit? No!

It is the Holy Spirit that brings truth, convicts of sin, and leads us to repentance. It is the Holy Spirit that when we respond to the love and truth of God and open the heart, takes the victory of Christ and reproduces it in us, giving us the new birth, making us members of the family of God by reproducing God's character in us.

The Holy Spirit makes effectual in us what Christ achieved for us!



Another way to say it in a medical metaphor is, Jesus procured the remedy to our sin condition and the Holy Spirit administers or applies that remedy to our hearts and minds.

Thoughts?

Is there anything that is necessary for our salvation that God has not provided?

What other gifts has God provided for our healing and salvation?

- The Bible
- The lessons in nature
- Christian people and resources
- Angels
- Spiritual gifts
- Wisdom, discernment, insight
- Repentance, faith, love, forgiveness

Others?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on obedience and commandment keeping, as Jesus said, “If you love me keep my commandments.”

Read, third paragraph:

“Keeping the law? Obeying the commandments? For many Christians, unfortunately, the idea of obeying the law (especially the fourth commandment) is legalism, and they claim that we are called, simply, to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. However, God is clear: we reveal our love to God and to our neighbors by, yes, obeying His commandments.” (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 10).

Any questions? Any concerns? What do you think the lesson is trying to tell us?

Is the principle right? If we love God do we live in harmony with His law, in other words obey the commandments?

If you love someone do you steal from them, or cheat on them, or lie about them, or murder them, or even covet their success?

So, the principle is quite right, if we have been restored to love and trust in God we live in harmony with God’s law.



Then what about law-keeping? What is the relationship to love and law-keeping?

Can you get more love and trust by more rules and rule enforcement, more threats and punishments?
Can you get love by commanding people to love you?

So how does this work? What law lens do we see this through? If we have a human law model, then God's law, including the Sabbath, is an arbitrary test of obedience, rules made up that God enforces with inflicted punishments. Such a construct will lead those who claim loyalty to God to keep the rules, but not love or trust God and ultimately become God's enemy.

This was demonstrated by the Jews 2000 years ago who had the right Sabbath and were the most rigorous Sabbath keepers in history, they were all about the law and obedience, but they had the wrong understanding of law, they operated from a human law model and they rejected and crucified Christ while keeping the law.

The same thing happens in every human heart that operates from law instead of love and trust. The Bible repeats this lesson over and over again, that salvation cannot come from the law or law keeping, it comes from faith or trust in God which is established by the truth that sets us free from the lies that broke our trust. It is the kindness of God that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4).

So what about the Sabbath? How do we understand it? What is its purpose? Why did God make the Sabbath for angels—oh wait, the Sabbath wasn't made for angels, it was made for humans.

Wow—think about that. In heaven when Lucifer rebelled and sin started there was no Sabbath.

The Sabbath was created after sin entered the universe, it was created at the end of creation week of this planet, for what purpose? It was a gift to humankind, why? What does it provide for us? Why do we need it? How does it benefit us and why does Satan hate it?

Read the last paragraph,

“In Matthew 7:21-27, Jesus said that those who hear and do God's words are likened to a wise builder who built his house upon the solid rock. Those who hear and don't obey are likened to a foolish builder who built his house on the sand—with disastrous results. Both heard the word; one obeyed, one didn't. The results made the difference between life and death.” (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 10).

What is the lesson trying to teach us? Is the lesson trying to tell us we must have the right law and law keeping we must obey or else we will be like the fool who builds on the sand and when the storm comes his house collapses?

Consider the parable for what it actually teaches—why will a house on a rock stand and a house on sand collapse when a storm comes? Is it because of some rules, some legal pronouncement, some



failure to get the proper building permit, or is it because of the laws of physics, design laws, how reality works?

And in the metaphor, what is the house? It is our character, and what is the rock? Jesus of course, and Jesus is the source of truth and reality, so building our character on Jesus means we build upon the truth, upon God's designs and methods, and a trust relationship with Him.

What does the sand represent? The shifting concepts of human philosophies and the ever-changing nature of made up laws and rules, including religious laws and rules, including Sabbath keeping. When we approach Sabbath keeping legally it creates confusion, uncertainty, conflict:

- Is it okay to swim on Sabbath or only wade?
- Can we bathe on Sabbath or do it before Sabbath?
- Is it okay to go out and eat on Sabbath so our families don't have to work?
- If we go out to eat on Sabbath should we pay for it ahead of time?
- What about travel on Sabbath how far can we travel?
- Is it okay to ride a horse on Sabbath? Is it work to saddle and unsaddle it?
- What about throwing a ball on Sabbath is that work or play and is that allowed?
- What about if a person lives in Tromsø Norway where the sun set this year November 27 and won't rise again until January 15. If Sabbath begins at sunset and ends at sunset, they have no Sabbaths for almost two months in the winter and two months in the summer when the sun rises and doesn't set again for almost two months. Better hope the winter sunset doesn't happen on a Friday, you won't be able to go to work for almost two months....

Do you see how the legal approach to Sabbath is sinking sand?

What is the design law approach?

The Sabbath is a sign, a gift, an evidence, built into the fabric of time itself so that it cannot be removed or hidden that reveals to us the truth about God, His character, His methods, how He governs. The Sabbath is the sign of God's creatorship, His design laws, and how He presents the truth in love and then rests, stops using power and leaves His intelligent creatures free to decide for themselves. In other words, the Sabbath is a sign of liberty and the way God runs His universe. And this is why we are to remember it all week so that we remember the kingdom of God, the character of God, the methods of God and we apply them to our lives all week long.

THURSDAY

Treasure in heaven—what do you understand this to be? How do we get treasure in heaven?

What do you think of this passage, does it have any bearing on the question of treasure in heaven?



By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15 NIV84).

Consider how I rendered it in The Remedy:

By using the wisdom, insight and understanding that God has given me regarding his plan for rebuilding the human heart and mind, I laid a foundation in harmony with his original design, and others are now building on it. For Jesus Christ is the only true foundation—the real source of God's character, methods and principles—and no one can replace him. One can build on this foundation using pure, holy and costly materials, or using ordinary, common and cheap materials, but ultimately, the work will reveal itself for what it is, because the day on which Christ returns will bring everything into the light of truth. On that day, the quality of a person's character-building will be revealed by the fiery glory of God's presence—for only those whose characters are in harmony with God's character will be able to stand in the fiery presence of his life-giving glory. And if those whom the builders have worked to build up in Christ survive, the builders will be rewarded with happiness and joy. ¹⁵If, however, the builder's work is burned up, the builder will suffer great sorrow and loss: the builder will be saved, but only as one whose misunderstandings, errors, misconceptions and mistakes are consumed in the fire of God's truth and love. (1 Corinthians 3:10-14 REM).



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Christian Psychiatrist Wanted: If you are a Christian psychiatrist, or know one, who is interested in coming to Liberty University to be part of our team in building a world-class scientifically sound but biblically consistent treatment program and residency program, then contact me at trjennings@liberty.edu.

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NEW MAGAZINE: The Wedding of Christ to His Bride: Preparing the Church for the Second Coming is now available.

Materials in Australia: Simon and Maani Harrison have a Facebook group in Australia and have the following Come and Reason resources available in Australia:

- CIBTS
- God is Love Children's book
- The Heavenly Sanctuary for the Modern World
- The Final Message of Mercy
- The Remedy NT
- The Remedy of the Lord in Song
- First set of tracts

You can email Simon to order them at australia@comeandreason.com

Materials in South Africa: Jacques van den Heever has materials available in South Africa! You can email him to order them at comeandreason.sa@gmail.com

Unmasking the Beasts of Revelation 13 & 17 - Now Available in South Africa!

The Final Message of Mercy to the World—The Three Angels: You can read the digital “flip book” at <https://comeandreason.com/files/flipbooks/3Angels/>