

The Greatest Lie Ever Told:
The End Time Deception

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Introduction

I want to take time to talk about one of the biggest lies that has ever been told. If you could take a survey in hell to see what was one of the lies that caused most people to be there, this lie would probably get the most votes. It is surely one of the devil's prime tools to deceive people. I call it the End Time Deception, because as Jesus' coming again draws nearer, this deception is taking over the world. It is actually shaping history in the world sense. It shows up on the political scene of country after country, especially here in America. It is causing the mighty church to stumble and fall. It is causing individuals who have served God strongly for decades to become deceived. It is leading a new generation of Christians so far from the Lord that they cannot even begin to hear His voice of truth. I believe that this lie will eventually lead to the imprisonment of Christians, to the shut down of many churches who stand for the truth, and eventually to the death of Christians even here in America. And still the church world is lining up to take it in using this lie as a basis of many of their precepts they build their church's doctrines on. In many churches if you aren't a follower of this lie, you are criticized as being self-righteous and evil. In many churches, if you don't accept this damning deception and allow it to influence your every thought and reaction to others, you are told that you don't have God's love, and you become an outcast because "how could you be that way". You are even told world over that you can't be a Christian if you don't walk in this lie. How far from the truth could you get? Still we march on toward destruction following after this teaching. I titled this book, *The Greatest Lie Ever Told*, and I wholeheartedly believe this to be true.

This teaching has caused the church to become a mockery of God's word instead of being a lighthouse set on a hill. It has caused the church to become something that Revelations 3:4 tells us God will spew out of His mouth. We have become lukewarm. We have only started to see the effects of what this lie has on the collective church as a whole, and on the individuals making up the church. It will bring about the destruction of both. I believe that this lie is actually the foundation that the last day's church, a one-world church, will be built on, the end time church that will bring about the advance of the anti-Christ. I believe that it will be the basis for an end time church that will unite the world against Christians world over and eventually lead to their imprisonment, and even death. Legislation in America has already begun to open the door for this to come about. This legislation has already caused many, many churches to stop preaching the truth, to stop being a light to the world. This lie is a creeping lie that takes over slowly but steadily, and the full effects are steadfastly advancing against us at an alarming rate.

Today's church world is seemingly ignorant of what is going on. I am not going to tell you in this book about some kind of strange doctrine that you have never heard of. I believe that you have already seen some of what I am going to tell you about, but you have not maybe seen how dangerous this lie is. I hope that reading this book fires you up to stand against this deception, to be a voice crying out that keeps your church, your family, your friends, and those around you from falling prey. If we don't make a stand, what hope do we have? Read on to hear about what *The Greatest Lie Ever Told* is all about.

Chapter 1.
The Lie

One of the greatest sermons that I have heard preached about “the greatest lie” was one of the shortest sermons I ever heard. This little sermonette came from a highly unlikely source. But this little sermon gave me an illustration that I have used for years to open up people’s eyes. It was actually told to me by an alcoholic who came to our food bank for a box of food. Here it is in his words. “I have had to come to the food bank for a box of food because I am an alcoholic. I know that God can help me to be delivered from this. I have gone to most of the churches in this area to find God’s help, and to find their help. I know that if I can get in a church that has the Spirit of God moving in it and His Word preached, I can get delivered. But the churches that I have been in tell me this. They say that they love me like I am. They tell me that God loves me like I am. They tell me that I am welcome to come there and be like I am. I don’t want to be like I am. I want them to tell me how to change, how to be set free from this. I want to be in services where God’s Spirit can deliver me, but they don’t have God’s Spirit in there. I want to hear God’s Word preached to give me strength to overcome this. They have some kind of teaching, but it isn’t God’s Word. I have tried most of the churches around here, and they don’t have any of this. They want to counsel me and tell me what the world tells me about how to deal with this, but I don’t want to deal with this. I want to be set free from this.”

Wow. That really opened my eyes to what was going on in the church world in our little community. I work with churches around the world. Sad to say, I hear this report world over. What has happened to the church? How many people have given up coming to the church to get set free because all we have to offer them are watered

down truths, and we might as well call it as it is, they are lies. How many people have given up coming to the church to get help because God no longer is there, His presence, His Spirit, no longer comes? Why does His Spirit no longer come? Sure, in some churches you have an emotional high that gets pumped up by those who are in the flesh working up a buzz to entice people to their services. This isn't the Spirit of God that delivers, strengthens, saves, and heals. Instead, it is a cheap imitation. We don't preach God's Word. Sad to say, it is because we were told that we don't want to offend anyone. So we stopped telling people that sin was wrong, and how to be delivered from it. I believe that all of this has come about because of the greatest lie ever told.

I was talking to a lady one day. I had known her daughter years before that. I asked her how her daughter was. She told me this. This is her words. "She is doing really great. She has become a man. She/He has a significant other in her life. She/He is going to a church here in the area. They have accepted them like they are. They have welcomed them like they are. She/He is doing well." What a mixed up world we live in! What a mixed up church world! What hope does this couple have of being set free from the mess they are in, if the church doesn't tell them the truth. You can bet that this particular church doesn't tell them. It is one of the biggest churches in the area. People flock to this kind of stuff, because they are taught that they can do anything that they want to, and still get to go to heaven, according to their teaching. They are taught that they can have whatever life style they want, and God is pleased with that. They are told that God wants them to be free to choose whatever lifestyle they

want, and He loves them and supports them in that decision. This church's pastor, teachers, and deacons, aren't going to tell the truth, even if they know it, because they like the crowds, and the money that the crowds generate. The people want to believe that God loves them like they are and leaves them that way, because they don't want to change. But this isn't what God's Word says. This isn't what the truth says. We had better find out the truth, and walk and talk it, because a lie will only send us to hell. And yes there is a hell and the wages of sin is death. You can pretend that this couple in this illustration will have a well adjusted, peaceful, emotionally sound life because this is the life style that God has ordained for His people to have and it will work out for their best, but is that the truth? Can you tell me that the wages of sin is not death? Who is there to tell them that this disaster in their life is not what God wants? Who is there to tell them that there is hope for them? Who is there to present the truth to them? Who is there to tell the world that this is wrong, and there is a better way? Who is there to tell them that God's Spirit can deliver them, that there is hope for them to be free? It takes the Spirit of God and the preaching of the whole truth of God's Word to open our eyes. Who is there to allow God's Spirit to come in the midst to convict them, to show them their needs, and to deliver them?

What does God say about these churches that we have talked about in this chapter.

We read about it in Ezekiel 13:22-23, "Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: Therefore ye shall see no more vanity,

nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.” These churches may seem to grow because so many people go there. This verse tells us though why God’s Spirit isn’t there. It also tells us why the people who are sincere in heart toward Him won’t stay there. He will deliver them out. He will set His people free from this sort of church. Do you really want to go to a church or have a church that would cause God to say this about you and yours???

I hope that through these illustrations (which are both true) that you have begun to see the *Greatest Lie Ever Told*. I’d like to share a couple more illustrations with you before we tell you in plain words just what this lie is all about. I want to give you another example that is close to my heart. I want to tell you about someone whom I was very close to that I have known all my life. This person was an alcoholic. He didn’t go to church when I was growing up. He saw no need. When I would try to witness to him (after I found the Lord myself), he would tell me that he had his own relationship with the Lord in his own way, and he was convinced that this was true. Before he found out better, he thought that he had all that there was. Sad to say, His God the way he thought He was left him an alcoholic. I look at all he accomplished, and all he was, and I sometimes think, wow, what would he have done and been if he had given his life to God earlier in life, and had gotten delivered from this. If he had gotten to know God for real earlier on, God wouldn’t have just left him that way. He would have set him free.

That is just what God did. Just a few years before he died, he met the Lord for real. He gave his heart and life

to Him. There was a change. He started living for God. He was delivered. He found true happiness. He found God's love for real. When that happened he wasn't just finding out about it, he was experiencing it. You see, we can think we know what it is all about. We can hear what it is all about. Or we can experience it. He found out what he had been missing. He found out that what he had, what he thought was all there was, was only the beginning of what he could have. Now, in heaven, he knows more than all of us know about all the possibilities of all that is available in God. He knows about that last and final change. The one that makes us all perfect.

I guess the saddest things about this was that before he got to know God for real, I am sure that in his eyes, God was a cruel God. Before he got to know God for real, I am sure that He appeared to be a God that didn't really care about him. If He did love him, then why did he let him have such a mixed up and sad life? If that was the way God was, then why did He leave him that way? I am sure that he often thought that God wasn't very powerful, because He sure didn't help him. He thought he knew God, but he didn't. That was because he was following God from a long ways off. He was trying to accept God's love on his own terms. He was doing it his way instead of God's way. If you want to love someone and have them love you, you have to yield to them. You have to yield to even get to know them. You have to let them get to you. Real true love will change you for the better. Especially God's love. You have to get to know Him on His terms. If not, then you only know about Him. If you are not willing to change then you will never really get to know God or His love.

This last illustration is more personal. It is my testimony. I grew up in church. If we had something going on at church at all, my Mom had us there. I was saved when I was just in Middle School. I went up to the altar at a revival because everybody else went up. I am not even sure that I knew what I had gotten. Looking back, I see that I only had a surface salvation experience. It wasn't very deep. I didn't even know exactly what it was all about even though I had grown up in church. That was sad. I remember that when I told my Aunt that I had been saved, she was so happy. She hugged me and really went on about it. I remember thinking that I wondered why she was so happy. I didn't feel the same way about it all.

After that, I professed to be a Christian, and I was as far as I knew. I read my Bible. I prayed. But I lacked a real relationship with God. I thought I was OK. I thought that I had a relationship with Him. I didn't spend much time with Him at all. I only prayed when I needed something. I didn't grow in my relationship with God. It wasn't a priority in my life. I knew very little about what it meant to fall in love with God, letting Him fall in love with me. Serving Him wasn't a priority. At one time, I got a little closer to Him because of a friend of mine who went to a fired up, turned on church. I went to church with her and rededicated my heart. But that didn't stick. I would go to church camp and have the experience around the campfire thing that most churches have, but that didn't last very long either. Sad to say, I thought that I had all there was to have, and I was very disappointed with my experience. I was disappointed with God.

I want to take a little side trip here. One of the problems I see in the church world today, which is something that I had fallen into when I was a young Christian, is the lack of commitment and priorities. If we aren't careful the devil will put us to sleep in a "seem-right way". To survive the world and the devil trying to destroy you, to make it through this messed up world, you can't be halfway committed in a halfway relationship with God. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

When I think back to when I was a young Christian, I am reminded about something that God showed me several years ago. I am a simple person, so sometimes He shows me things instead of explaining them. A picture is worth a thousand words, as the old saying goes. God showed me a group of people crawling around on the floor picking up crumbs. They were fighting over the biggest crumbs. They were so proud of their crumbs. Then I saw what was just over their head. They were crawling around under a table. The table was filled with a huge banquet. My life when I was growing up and later as an early Christian reminds me of those people under the table. All I had was crumbs, but I thought that this was all there was. I was proud of my crumbs. But when things got harder, the crumbs weren't enough to sustain me. They weren't enough to keep me through the storms. I thank God that later, I pulled up to the table.

My worst storm came when I went away to college at a university. I was only 18. I had grown up in a sheltered home. (Which by the way was a wonderful way to grow up.) I wasn't ready for college life. (I now wish that I

had gone to a community college first.) I went to one of the biggest party schools that there was. I wasn't ready for that. I split the world wide open. It split me wide open in return. In just a few years I became an alcoholic. I had tried about every drug there was at least once, and there was a lot available. It didn't take me long to totally mess up my life to the point that I had no hope. I had done so many things that left me with scars so deep that I no longer wanted to live. I had long ago severed ties with God, the church, and with those who loved me, and severed ties with the sound people in my life. Or so I thought.

I found a relationship with God because of all this. Or maybe I should say, He found me. I hit bottom so hard that I lost all hope and all desire to live. I tried to kill myself. I tried to drive my car off a hairpin curve over a cliff. I prayed as I was driving, "God, I have no hope. If you are real, please help me. If you are not real, then I have no reason to go on." He heard my prayer, and I am writing this today, so obviously He was real. He helped me get my life back together. He forgave me and loved me. But praise God He did more than that. I had so messed up my life, that it took a while to get it back together. He didn't say He loved me, then left me in a mess. He delivered me. He set me free from the life style that had destroyed me. He delivered me from drugs. He delivered me from alcohol. He delivered me from my messed up relationships with messed up people that only had gotten me down. Most of all He delivered me from my messed up self. He changed me. I am no longer the mess that I was. God's love makes a difference. It doesn't make excuses for our mess. It changes our mess

into something wonderful. I can look in the mirror today, and I am proud of who God has helped me to become.

Does that mean I am perfect today? Ask my husband. He is the one that is closest to me. If you asked Jim if I am perfect, he wouldn't say much, but he would probably give you a shocked look. No, I am not perfect. But the Lord and I are both working on me. We used to sing this little song in our children's church program that says, "Jesus on the inside. Working on the outside. Bringing forth a change in my life." No, I am not perfect. But there is a world of difference from who I am compared to who I was over 35 years ago when I got saved for real. That was the beginning of a change in me, a change that will keep on getting better and better.

Like I said, I thought I had all there was to have. I thought that I had all God had to offer. I was hurt and disappointed in Him when what I had wasn't enough to keep me. It wasn't God's fault. It wasn't the Bible's fault. It wasn't the church's fault. It was my fault. I had spent my life as a Christian up to that time crawling around on the floor thinking those crumbs were all that there was. I had been caught up in a lie all my life thinking that I had the truth. Let me say that again. I had been caught up in a lie all my life thinking that I had the truth. When I found a relationship with God that was real, it changed my life. It changed me. It is still changing me.

Now think of this for a minute. What if I had believed that God loves me like I am so I don't have to change? What if I had gone to a church that said, "We love you like you are. You don't have to change. There are no more rules

for you to follow. There are no more guidelines for sound living. It is all up to the individual how they choose to live. God is no longer putting restrictions on what we do. He loves us too much to do that. We won't do that either. You are welcome to come as you are, and you are welcome to stay that way." I can say without a doubt that if that had happened, I would have been dead a long time ago. My lifestyle would have destroyed me. Thank God that instead of finding a church like that, I found New Life Ministries. That was over 35 years ago. I started traveling with Bishop Goad's evangelism team. I learned how to have a sound relationship with God based on the truth of God's Word. I heard sound Bible teaching being preached. I learned about the Holy Ghost. I learned how the power of God could deliver. I learned about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through all this I received total deliverance. It changed my life so dramatically that I have served God in this ministry since then in appreciation for what He did. I found God's plan for my life and learned how to obey Him. That changed the total direction of my life. I am happy, fulfilled, and at peace with a God who I know that I know that I know loves me, because I walk with Him every day.

I wrote a song not long ago. There are a lot of churches who have this philosophy called "Out of the Box". I saw a sign on one that said, "Not your parent's church". They stress the thought that you don't have to be in anyone's box. They say that God doesn't put restrictions on you, so they won't either. They say, "Come as you are and you are welcome to stay that way". Our church is different. We welcome people in because of God's love that is in us. Some have had situations, and lifestyles that

were destroying them. But, praise God, because of the power of God's Holy Ghost, and the fire of His Word being preached, they don't have to stay that way. Here are the words to the song *Out of the Box*.

Verse 1

*I hear so many times today
A church say they have a new way.
We'll not restrict you, come as you are.
It's OK to stay that way.
But I read in the Bible that you can find power.
You can find power to change.
Get real with Jesus, and leave the old man behind.
Be a new man made the old way.*

Chorus

*I want to be in the box not out of the box.
The old ways are working for me.
The old ways were settled a long time ago
On a cross at Calvary.
You can have your new thing,
The way that's not tried and true.
But remember the broad way leads to destruction.
The narrow one will take you through.*

Verse 2

*Come as you are, you're welcome to stay.
Jesus will meet you that way.
But the power of God here
Will make you new,
Long as you're willing to change.
If you want a watered down truth,
It won't hold through the storms.*

*If you want a house on the rock that will stand
The old ways will work for you, too.*

The world acts like having something new is a good thing. The Bible says in Jeremiah 6:16, “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” It is better to walk in the ways that have been tried and true for generations.

Now that you have heard these illustrations about this lie, you have begun to see what it is all about, let’s hear some details about just what this lie is.

Chapter 2.

What Is It and Where Did It All Start

Just like any lie, you could say that it all started with the devil. The Bible says that the devil is the author of lies. John 8:44 says, "...there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." He has an agenda. We read about it in 2 Corinthians 4:4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." He doesn't want us to get the truth. He will blind us from seeing the truth. That is how he destroys us. If the world saw the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the world would come to God. Sometimes they don't come because they don't see, because the enemy has blinded them. Sometimes they don't come because they don't want to see. Either way, the light of the truth doesn't shine. That is the devil's job. It is our job to give them the truth. In this chapter we will talk about the lie, and about the truth.

I hadn't been saved long when I heard that the church world as a whole was starting to teach a doctrine that said there was no definite right or wrong. I first heard it from the church that I had grown up in. My Mom always had a strong sense of what was morally sound. That was something that she had gotten from her parents and she had passed it down to us. My sisters have passed that down to their children. I am so glad for this, especially when I see the parents today who don't know about morals and standards, and they can't pass it down to their children because they don't know. The parents are a mess and their children's lives are a mess because of this. When my Mom first heard about this mixed up teaching that there is no right or wrong, she was troubled. She

talked about it with me. She had read in their Sunday school book a statement that had dismayed her. It said that, "What might be wrong for you might not be wrong for someone else. What might be right for you might not be right for someone else. There is no definite wrong or right. We should never make someone uncomfortable because of the choices that they make in their lives. That is not the job of the church. The job of the church is to love them." I learned that this teaching wasn't just in that denomination, but it was spreading throughout the church world. Then I saw that it was spreading not just in America, but throughout the world. It started in just certain denominational organizations, but has spread throughout them all. That was over 40 years ago. When I look at how the church as a whole has changed since then, I see why my mother was dismayed. I am dismayed especially when I see how the world as a whole has changed because the church is no longer a lighthouse. The world has gotten dark indeed.

My mother recently passed away at age 86. If she had lived 14 more years, she would have lived a century. Several years ago, I had learned that I couldn't talk to her about problems that people were having. When I would talk to her about some of the situations that people were going through, she just couldn't understand what I was meaning. She couldn't understand that drug abuse would be so bad in our area that those businesses who required drug tests would not be able to find enough employees to keep their businesses running. She definitely couldn't understand when I told her that prescription drug abuse is a bad problem in the churches. She couldn't understand that teen pregnancy was such a problem, that through our

school's young mother program, we were working with 14 year olds who had babies, and many of these pregnant teens had grown up somewhere in church. When I told her about a survey that I had heard about that said that a large number of the churches today no longer believe in the virgin birth, or in Jesus' crucifixion, she couldn't fathom that at all. When I told her that most churches no longer have an altar in them, and no altar calls were given that really dismayed her. That is when I stopped telling her how bad the church world, and the world as a whole was getting. It was too much for her. I never did tell her that they were teaching things in the public schools that were causing children not to know whether they were a boy or a girl, and that the church world was condoning this teaching, even teaching it themselves. The world had changed so much in her lifetime that she couldn't even grasp the changes. She couldn't stand the thought of all the sadness, all the grief that this change had brought to people's lives.

I remember when my grandmother, Virginia Kaiser Young who was my Mom's mom, first heard about the idea that there was no wrong or right. She held up two fingers of one hand. She put her other hand between those two fingers like a divider between the two fingers. She said this with fire in her eyes. "I don't care if they are saying that there is no wrong or right, that doesn't change any thing. There is a definite wrong and a definite right, and there is a world of difference in between. If we lose sight of that, we will be destroyed." She passed away in 1995 at the age of 93. Years before she died, I had stopped telling her about the changes in the world at that

time. Could you imagine how shocked she would be today?

I have a little sign on my desk that says, “Sin will take you further than you’ll ever want to go. Sin will keep you longer than you’ll ever want to stay. Sin will cost you more than you’ll ever want to pay.” At the bottom of the sign, it has this verse found in Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” I am deeply saddened, and even terrified at the number of young people who are dying in our area, and in other areas. It is unreal how many have died. Mostly it is because of sin. Alcohol related deaths, drug related deaths, car accidents, suicides, so many of them that I have been up nights grieving before the Lord, begging Him to help me be a light to as many as I can to pull them out of this before it is too late. The church world is no longer being a light to the world. It is just of the world. We are supposed to be in the world, but separate from the world. We are supposed to be a light to the world, not just like the world. Romans 12:2 tells us not to be conformed to the world. But today’s church world is so conformed to the world that there is little difference between the two. There is no longer a lighthouse on the hill to guide us from the rocks of sin. We don’t know what sin is. Our children are paying a dear price, and if we don’t wake up, we will pay an even greater price. That is the nature of sin.

I saw a sign on the edge of town that advertised the beer bash that our town actually sponsors. It does it several times during the summer. They call it a beach party, and they put out sand in the street so it looks like the beach.

Children are welcome too, so they are wandering in and out of the adults who are getting drunk. I have heard that beer is spilled all over the kids while they are playing in the middle of this party. When I saw that sign, it really grieved me. I started praying for our town. God spoke to me and told me that as a town we had chosen sin. We had chosen this lifestyle, this lie. Even the churches in our town had chosen this lifestyle. (As an example of that, we had voted in liquor by the drink in our town limits. When looking at the percent of our town's population who profess to be Christians and the percent of the population that it took to vote this in, then it was evident that a large part of the professing Christians had voted it in. If the Christians had stood up for what was right, we wouldn't have it today. But we are not being a light. Now look what is happening.) God spoke to me and told me that the town had chosen this way of life, and that we would begin to reap the wages of our sin. That is how it goes. He showed me that sin is like a cancer, a deadly cancer. He showed me that this disease would spread to the place that nearly every family in our area would reap the sorrow caused by this sickness. This happened several years before I became grieved in my heart about the number of young people who were dying. That is just in the young people. We have one of the highest crime rates in any county around. We have a large number of murders especially when you compare it to the number of people in our area. We have one of the largest numbers of teen pregnancies when compared to other counties around us. We have a bigger drug problem in our semi-rural area than Roanoke city has. What is going on? We have chosen sin, and we are reaping the consequences of that choice.

It is not OK to do whatever you want. God is not OK with that. Sin is sin, wrong is wrong, and there are consequences from bad choices. Numbers 32:23 says, "...ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." We are being destroyed by the lie that says this is not so. Many years ago, it became bad form for a church to make anyone feel uncomfortable. We stopped using our altars. We actually stopped God from bringing conviction in our midst, because conviction makes people uncomfortable. His Spirit was no longer welcome in our midst. Now I feel that I need to explain what conviction is, because we are so far removed from that, that I believe many people who read this book may not even know what that means. That is sad. Conviction is when God's Spirit shows us our wrong. That is the only way that we can be set free. We have to realize that we are doing wrong. We have to be sorry for our sin. We have to repent with a Godly sorrow that causes us to be so grieved over what we have done that we won't do it again with God's help. If we do sin, then we know that God will forgive us, if we have repented and we ask for His forgiveness. We also know that we serve a righteous God who doesn't wink at our unrighteousness. He doesn't take it lightly because He knows that the wages of our sin is death. He doesn't let us get by, but He does all He can to change our direction. He loves us that much. He doesn't forgive us and leave us. He leads us out. Where do I get all this? It is in God's Word.

Let's find out what God has to say about all this. How do we know what sin is? According to the worldly way of looking at it, there is no set guideline. There is no definite

wrong or right. We see that isn't true according to God's Word. Job was concerned about this issue. In Job 13:23 he prayed, "How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin." God's Spirit will convict us of our sin. He will show us when we are doing wrong. In John 16:7-8 Jesus told us, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin..." God will let you know in no uncertain terms when you are doing wrong. He loves you enough to do that. When we were growing up, my Mom would let us know in no uncertain terms when we were done wrong. Why? She loved us enough to guide us in the right way. God loves us even more. When I have done something wrong I will feel like my chest is tearing out of my body, I feel so bad for what I have done. After I repent, I don't turn around and do the same thing again. Sin has a price even after you are forgiven. That is just its nature. You pay for what you do wrong. After I paid the price for my sin, I wasn't anxious to jump in and do it again. I pray nearly every day that God shows me if I am sinning, that He shows me my wrong attitudes and actions, that He shows me anything in my life that will cause me to be separated from Him, and prey to the devil who wants to destroy us all.

Then what is the next step after conviction? God doesn't just leave us feeling sorry and all torn up for what we have done. My Mom didn't either. After the conviction, after the punishment, then there is forgiveness. John 3:16-17 tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in

him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” God doesn’t want us to go to hell. He doesn’t want us to suffer all the misery that we suffer from a lifetime of sin. He sent His only Son to die so that we could be forgiven. Jesus took the punishment of sin so that we could have eternal life. God watched His son die, so that we could be forgiven. He will definitely forgive us. He will definitely help us to overcome.

To understand the depth of the price that was paid for us, read this section of scripture in Isaiah chapter 53. Please read it, it will touch your life. I want to put here this section of it in verses 3-6, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” What a picture of love. That is the price that Jesus paid for us. And we go our own way and do our own thing in spite of it all.

So why do some people just stay in their sin and make excuses for everything that they do? John 3:19-21 goes on to tell us, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than

light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." If you really want to know what you are doing wrong, God will show you. He will help you to overcome. If you don't admit your sin, if you choose a life of sin, then you will die in your sin because that is what you choose. You will be like the people in John 9:41 that Jesus told, "...therefore your sin remaineth." You will for a lifetime suffer the wages of your sin. So will those around you that you love. Why? Because that is the nature of sin. That is how it works. Then after having a lifetime filled with the miseries caused by your sin, you will die in your sin and you will go to hell for eternity. You can go to a church that says it is OK to sin, that there isn't a definite right and wrong. You can make every excuse for everything you do and make believe that you are OK the way you are. But you will still suffer the wages for your sin.

The good news is Jesus. For a glimpse of what Jesus did for you, and for a blessing that will strengthen you, read Isaiah 53. This is worth taking time to get your Bible out and read this passage. Verse 5 says, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Verse 6 closes with, "... and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." God has done His part. We have to do ours. We have to repent in response to conviction. We have to repent with a genuine and Godly sorrow. We have to submit enough to ask God to forgive us. We have to

accept His forgiveness. Then we can be set free. Isaiah 6:7 tells us "... and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

God promises this in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." There is a little song that says, "Wash me in your washing machine, Lord, get me ready for life eternal." Isaiah 55:7 says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." If we forsake our wicked ways, he will pardon us.

There is more good news. God doesn't leave us there. He lifts us out of our sin. He delivers us. He sets us free from it. Let's read more about this in the next chapter titled *Free Indeed*.

Chapter 3. Free Indeed

When I was saved, God delivered me out of alcohol. He set me free from it. For the past 40 some years, I have been free. I am not “a recovering alcoholic” as the world calls us. I am not even a delivered alcoholic. I am not an alcoholic at all. I am free. I believe that the reason why so many people settle for a halfway relationship with God that is far from victorious is because they don’t realize they can have something better. They can have a victorious, abundant life in the Lord. They can be set free. They settle for their sin because they don’t realize that they can do much, much better. We read about this in Romans chapter 6. Please read the entire chapter in Romans chapter 6. Let me say that again. Please read Roman 6. Hey, get your Bible out ☺. To summarize this we could say that sin brought about death, but grace reigning through righteousness brings about eternal life through Jesus. Then we go on to read about an old man and a new man. We have an old man, a flesh man. That is the part of us that is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Trouble is the direction that our flesh heads in naturally. But we read in the verses coming up how we can overcome that trouble. We read about Jesus who took our sin on himself. He died, then was resurrected. Then He comes to live inside of us by the power of God’s Spirit. If we let the Holy Ghost reign in our hearts, lives, and minds, then He will overcome that old man, that flesh man. We can then be a new man in Christ through Him.

Galatians 2:20 puts it plainly, “ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” This is one of my favorite verses. It was one of the verses

that opened up to me as a young Christian how to overcome my sin when the devil was trying to destroy me, and keep me from finding victory over it. I found out that my old man, that past, the sins of my past, my bondage and addictions were part of the old man. I learned how Jesus died to take these away. I learned that I could live a new life by the faith of Jesus who loved me. I didn't have to even use my faith. I had His faith to help me overcome. And I did overcome. I didn't have to make up excuses. I didn't have to seek out a church that didn't intimidate me because of my sin that I was hiding. I didn't have to hide any sin. I was set free. And so can you be.

John 8:32-36 says, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." We can know the truth, and that truth will set us free. Jesus says in John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He is the truth. He is the way to eternal life. You can't get there unless you go to Him. Mohammed won't get you there. Buddha won't get you there. The Indian gods won't get you there. The only way to get there is by the truth, and His name is Jesus. When you get to know Him, you understand the truth of

how He can keep you and guide you. You have to have a relationship with Him that is real. You have to get to know Him, walk with Him, submit to Him, yield to Him working in your life to be set free. Knowing Him will set you free. Knowing His truth will set you free. Letting God's Spirit work in you will set you free.

One of the things that will help you to overcome sin and stay free is to understand God's righteousness. We will talk about that in the next chapter coming up.

Chapter 4.

God's Righteousness and Ours

I am including here a chapter from my book titled *Holes In Your Armor*. This book talks about all the parts of our spiritual armor and how it protects us. This chapter talks about God's righteousness and how this influences us. It talks about how keeping our heart right with God is important as a key to overcoming. Here is the chapter from *Holes In Your Armor*.

The Webster's dictionary defines righteous as being, "Acting justly; upright; virtuous; morally right; morally justifiable. Our guide for knowing what righteous means in the scripture is God Himself. The Bible continually refers to God as being a righteous God. Jesus is a reflection of God's righteousness. The first time the Word righteous is mentioned in the Bible it was referring to Noah. Genesis 7:1 says, "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." God spared Noah when He destroyed the world by flood because of Noah's righteousness. I think this scripture also reflects the righteousness of God. Why did He destroy the world if He was righteous? We read in Genesis 6:5-6, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at this heart."

You may be thinking how can God destroy all those people if He is a righteous God? You should be thinking, how could God let that go since He is a righteous God? God's righteousness is perfect. God hasn't destroyed the world since then, and it is plenty evil right now. So you

can imagine how bad it was. It was bad enough that God regretted that He had ever made man. The verse says, "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth." (The Bible mentions several times that the Lord repented, or it repented the Lord. That isn't an idea that matches with all the verses in the Bible that talk about God being righteous. We know God is perfect. He doesn't have to repent. So what does this mean when it mentions God repenting? I think that a truer interpretation of this would be using the word regret. God regretted that He had made man. Regret and repent are similar in meaning. When you repent, you regret. I think that what the scripture is saying when it uses the word repent in this situation it means regret.)

There was only one man, Noah, who could even think good thoughts. Everyone else's hearts were continually evil. Wow, what a world. It is bad enough now. Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a world that bad? Now think about this. We know that the evil in the world has gotten worse through time. Can you imagine what our world would be like now if God had let this continue? It would be so bad that the righteous wouldn't be able to endure. So again I ask, should you think what kind of God would destroy the world for their evil, or should you think, what kind of God would have let that go?

The world (and the devil that leads them) paints a false picture of God. If we aren't careful this type of thinking can enter the church, and has in many of them. It paints the picture that God is a loving God and does not discriminate against people. This picture portrays that He does not judge people. We are supposed to accept

everyone exactly as they are. God does and they don't have to be set free. So we are not supposed to talk about people who have "alternate life styles" from ours. We aren't supposed to preach about this not being accepted. We aren't supposed to infer that people should repent, because it is not Godly to be made to feel bad about ourselves. This is all straight out of hell.

It doesn't matter what the world says. It doesn't matter what the law says. There is a right and a wrong. Read the Bible. God is a righteous God. The Bible says this phrase over 40 times. That isn't even counting the times it uses the word righteousness. Countless more times than this the scriptures talk about our righteousness, our call to be righteous, and the judgment when we fail to do this. If you are taking God's righteousness, His requirement for us to be righteous, and the eternal punishment when we fail to be righteous, out of the scriptures then you are leaving out pages and pages of scripture. You have a very thin Bible, a very thin relationship with the Lord, and a thin chance of ever making heaven your eternal home. Before you form an opinion here of what I am saying, wait and hear me out. Do yourself a favor and wait until you finish the chapter before you cut off what I have to say. There is more to this than what I am saying here in this paragraph. Wait and read it all.

I think that it is wonderful that the first time the phrase "God is righteous" is used in the Bible, Pharaoh in Egypt said it after he had seen God's mighty acts in setting His people free. Exodus 9:27, "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are

wicked.” Pharaoh himself acknowledged that the Lord was righteous. This was a man who at the beginning didn’t acknowledge God as a god. He served a different god. Matter of fact, in some Egyptian periods of history, Pharaoh was worshipped as a God. By the time God got through with him, he knew that God was the true God and he knew that God was a righteous God.

Here are other verses that talk about the righteousness of God. These I have listed come from the Psalms. There are many more verses, but I am using the ones out of Psalms for a reason. You’ll find out why in a minute. David talked a lot about the righteousness of God. Psalm 11:7, “For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.” Psalms 19:9, “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Psalms 112:4, “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.” Psalms 116:5, “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea our God is merciful.” Psalm 119:7, “I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.” Psalms 119:138, “Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.” Psalms 129:4-5, “The Lord is righteous; he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked. Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.”

All those scriptures are from the book of Psalms. There are over 40 scriptures that I could have picked from, but I picked these for a reason. As I mentioned, David talks a lot about the righteousness of God in Psalms. I love

those scriptures, because I know that David knew more than most about the righteous judgments of God. If you remember, after David became king he was out on the rooftop porch one night and noticed a lady. Her name was Bath-Sheba. She was married, but that didn't stop David. He invited her over and she visited a lot because her husband was in the army serving his king (David) faithfully. Bath-Sheba got pregnant. David didn't want anyone to know what he had done, so as soon as he found out he sent for her husband Uriah. He knew that because Uriah had been gone for months, everyone would know he wasn't the father of the baby unless he came home. Uriah came home, but he was such a faithful person, that he refused to go to the comforts of home and wife while the others in his regiment were at war. David was even more desperate now because if a woman were caught in adultery she would be stoned to death. I am not sure of the man's punishment in this situation, but it was probably not a good thing for a king to be in that situation. So David's plan didn't work. He couldn't marry Bath-sheba and make it right since she was married.

David then did what many a man has done down through time who is caught in this kind of situation. David killed her husband. He didn't really do it with his own hands, but just as good as. He sent him to the front of the war where he knew he would die. Her husband was killed there. David thought all was well, that no one knew what had happened. He thought that he had pulled it off, and all was going to work. He thought that he had gotten by with it all. He was wrong. We don't get by with our sin even when we think we have pulled it off, and that no one

knows about it. There is One Who knows and He is righteous.

After he was married, David got a visit from a prophet of God, Nathan. God had sent him a message. This was what David's punishment would be. The sword would never depart from his house. God would raise up evil against him out of his own house. The child that was born out of this would die. All this would come about and more as acts of God's righteous judgment of his sin. But David served his righteous God until the day he died, praising His righteousness all the more.

You see you can't have it both ways. I am so glad that I serve a righteous God. I know that I can trust Him to do what is right. I am glad that I can trust His judgments. The Word of God continually talks about the judgments of God being right. I can trust His judgments when it comes to taking care of those people who are trying to destroy both me and the work that I do in the Lord. This thing goes two ways though. We want to be able to trust the Lord to be upright. That is easy. But when He punishes us because of our unrighteousness, because of our sin, then we think He is acting unrighteously. We think that He shouldn't do that. What is that about? God called David a man after His own heart. Why? Few of us have done anything so terrible as he did. It was what David did after his sin that mattered. He repented. We don't ever read of him doing anything like this ever again. He knew and loved God's righteousness. Even when he went through God's punishment, he loved God's righteousness.

I am not sure of this, but I wonder if David wrote Psalms 51 during this time. Get out your Bible and read it and see what you think. It starts out with these four verses, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." David understood all about the righteousness of God. He loved it. That didn't change in the middle of his sin when he was the one that was being judged.

I am so glad that the God that we serve is a righteous God. I might not always understand Him, but I can trust in Him. I can trust Him to do right in every circumstance. What if we served a double minded God who didn't even know what was right, but who served his own agenda at our loss? What if the God we served was like the Greek and Roman gods who were so busy sinning themselves, that often the mortals were destroyed by their sin? What if we served a God like Allah (who by the way is not our God) who encourages those who serve him to die for his cause? Praise God that we serve a righteous God. He never changes. He isn't double minded. He is the same way that He was when David praised Him. We will serve Him forever, and throughout eternity He will be the same. We can count on His judgments and decisions to be right. You can trust Him. You may not always understand Him, but if you hold on, He will reveal what you need to know. I don't want a god that winks at sin. I want a God who

knows what is right, and what is wrong and who requires us to do the same. He doesn't wink at sin; He delivers us out of our sin. He expects us to be righteous because He is righteous. He doesn't just require this, but He provides a way for this to happen in us.

It isn't any accident that the part of armor that is given the name of righteousness is the breastplate. The breastplate protects our heart. The mind is a battlefield that we have talked about. The other main battle that we have is the heart. Jesus said in Luke 6:43-46, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" We can't serve God if our heart isn't right with Him. What we do comes out of our heart. We can have the best intentions to do right, but if our heart isn't right, then we will just fail. There are many verses in the scripture where it mentions that God knows the hearts of men. God knows the intentions of our heart. Out of our heart proceeds what we do and who we are. When Jesus comes in, when the Holy Spirit comes in, He takes resident in our heart. It is very important to protect our heart.

How do we get our heart right? How do we keep our breastplate from getting holes in it? It is important that

we want to do things God's way instead of our own way. We have to want things to be His way according to His Word. David didn't keep on sinning, doing his own thing after he repented. He let God bring His victory in his life. He overcame this sin after he repented. He didn't run and do this same thing again. That is the key to getting your heart right before God. You have to love God enough to want to get it right. David loved God with all His heart. He knew God's love for him. He didn't want to stay stuck there in the mess he was in. He reached up to God, God reached down.

Salvation is the beginning step of getting our heart right. When we get saved there is a change that takes place. That is the beginning. To be saved, we don't just say we are saved. There is a lot more to it than that. Salvation comes when God's Spirit draws us and we respond. It comes because we say in our heart that we are ready for a change, that we are ready to give our life, our heart, and our mind to God. It comes when we repent because we haven't been doing so. We repent for the sins that we have committed. We yield to God. We allow His Spirit to come into our heart to rule us. We submit to Him. We commit all we are to Him. That is what it means to be saved.

Every day we have to allow the Lord to work in our heart and in our mind. Every day we have to allow His Word and His Spirit to work in us perfecting us, bringing us to be like Him. We have to put a priority on our soul's salvation. We have to guard our heart and our relationship with God. We have to spend time with Him, fellowship with Him, and allow His Spirit to work in us.

That doesn't just mean while we are at church but every day we do this. We work hard on our relationships with so many people. Do we work that hard on our relationship with God? Isn't that relationship the most important one that we have? Our heart can only stay right if the love of God is there for real. Stay in love with God. Stay in love with Jesus.

In Revelations 2:4 Jesus is speaking to the church of Ephesus. He said that He knew about their works. He had something against them though. In verse 4 we read, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." He warned that if they didn't repent then He would remove their candlestick. Remember when you were first saved. You glowed with His love. Nothing was like God. You wanted to do whatever He asked. You wanted everyone to get to know Him. Do you still have that first love? Do you wake up and look for His presence? Do you desire above all else to serve Him? Do you need to go back to your first love? Maybe you need to repent and return to Him. Return to His love. Jesus is waiting for you. His Father is waiting to welcome you in. Love Him. After all there was a dear price paid to welcome you home to their love. Return to your first love. That is the number one way to protect your heart. We'll talk more in this chapter about God's love and our love for Him.

Another key to keeping our heart right is repentance. When God convicts us, when He deals with our heart about our sin, we have to repent. We can't make excuses. We can't blame everything on everybody else. We can't change the Word of God so that we justify our sins and

ourselves. We have to fess up. We have to admit that we have sinned, and we have to be so sorry that we will not do this again with God's help. That is the key. When we do this, wrong attitudes, wrong ways of thinking, wrong ways of acting can't creep in. Wrong attitudes are dangerous. Some of the most dangerous ones I have found are: rebellion, half-heartedness, hatred, bitterness, lack of concern, hardening of the heart, and many others. These can destroy you just like a worm destroys a huge oak tree. We have to get real with ourselves, ask God to show us things that are wrong in our hearts, and ask Him to deliver us from these. Through this process we can trust God to keep us, to keep our heart right. His righteousness protects our heart.

How do we live righteously before God? The Bible says repeatedly that we are to be righteous. It also says that there are none righteous. So if we can't be righteous, but we have to be righteous, then boy are we stuck. What is the answer to that? When we get it right, how do we keep it right? We see a glimpse of the answer to how we can do this in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." What is this saying? Jesus died for us. That is part of what Calvary is all about. We also have to die with Him. Our self will, our flesh, our weakness, our stupid humanity, has to die with Him there on Calvary. Then the life which we live we live by faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. God didn't just say, hey you have to be perfect. You have to be righteous. I know you can't, that is tough, but that is the rule. Even

though you can't you have to any way. Most Christians never get past this way of thinking. They know that they have to be righteous, but they don't know how. They try and fail, then eventually give up, never knowing that God has made a way for them. They get discouraged in their heart. They get holes in their breastplate and their heart is destroyed in the battle. So then how are we supposed to do this?

We live this life through faith in God, through His Spirit working inside of us, through His love keeping us, through His power strengthening us, through His Word empowering us, through the fellowship of the saints keeping us, through Jesus who is praying for us. With all that going for us, we don't need to ask how we can do what is right, we need to ask how can we fail. We just don't see it right. We are out there trying to do it all on our own. We fail to see the big picture. On our own, forget it. With God, all things are possible.

Paul knew about this. He wrote about this throughout the books he wrote. Romans is one book that is filled with teaching about how we can overcome our flesh, our stupid humanity, and live victoriously in spite of it. Read the book of Romans for some great teaching about this. Romans 6:15-25 and chapter 8:1 is a great passage. In this passage, Paul talks about how the things that he wanted to do, he failed to do, and the things that he didn't want to do, he was doing. He had the law of God in his inward man, but there was another law warring against that bringing him captivity to the law of sin that was in his members. In verse 1 he said that there was no condemnation for those who walk not in the flesh, but

after the spirit. What is he saying in this passage of scripture? Is he saying, “We all know what we are to do, but we can’t do it, so forget it. There isn’t any condemnation. It is fine to fail. We don’t have to stay away from sin. We don’t have to do what we know is right, and it is fine to do what is wrong.” We all know from all we have talked about that this isn’t right.

Let’s read on in chapter 8. The key phrases that we see over and over is “walk in the spirit”. We read about the carnal mind, or the part of us that is the opposite of the spirit man. We talked earlier about walking in the spirit. Let’s discuss it more. When you read chapter 8 of Romans, we see that if we don’t walk in the spirit then we can’t find victory in our lives. We see that we can’t even please God. What is walking in the spirit, and how are we to do that? The key is to quit trying. Let God do it in and through you through the power of His Spirit in you. Yield and let Him rule in you. Let His Word do its work. God will perfect Himself in you through the power of His Spirit. You can’t, but He can. Let Him. Put yourself on hold and submit to Him.

Why is it so hard when it sounds so easy? Our human nature doesn’t want to give up and give in. We don’t want any one to tell us what we are to do. We don’t want any one else to get in front of us in line. We don’t want to get behind any slow drivers on the highway that slow us down. We want to get where we are going without any interference. We want the fast food meals and we get angry when we have to wait in line for those. Face it. Our flesh is a mess. And it is a spoiled mess. We don’t want to let God have His way in our lives. How do we get

there? He can bring us to that place if we really want to in our heart. He knows how to humble us. He knows how to get our attention. He can stop our pride in its tracks. He can stop our self-will in its tracks. We just have to desire it with all our heart.

If we don't guard our hearts, we can get little foxes. We read about little foxes in Song of Solomon 2:15, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." It isn't the big things that we easily see that can spoil vines. It is the little things that slip in that do the worst damage. That is the same with our soul. It is the little sins that, little things that the enemy slips into our lives that we need to guard against. If we aren't careful, we allow the devil to sneak in what we call creeping sins into our lives. This is something that might not seem so bad. We have already talked about attitudes. Those are some little "foxes" that creep in. It may be habits that control us, or things we like to do that we have put above God (fishing instead of going to church is one example). These things may seem small, but so is a fishhook. Ask the big fish hanging over the mantle in the seafood restaurant if that little hook was insignificant. Watch out for the creeping sins. They may seem small, but they can put holes in our armor that are big enough for the devil to march in.

When I think of "little foxes" and how little things turn into bigger problems, I think of Samson. When we first read about him in Judges 13, we read that an angel appeared to his mother to tell her that she would have a special son and gave her instructions for his life. That was his beginning. When we read about the end of his

life in chapter 16 we read about him being imprisoned and made to work like an animal by the Philistines who mocked him daily. What happened? He was a promise of freedom from bondage to the Israelites, but became bound by the very people who he was supposed to deliver them from. You know I haven't studied this out, but I don't remember very many people in the Bible who had an angel announce their birth. Isaac, (an angel appeared to Abraham), John the Baptist, and Jesus were the only ones that I could remember. These were all key people. So Samson must have been very important in God's plan. What happened?

Samson had a little fox, something that he desired above God. He kept messing around with the Philistine women. The Philistines were his enemy. They were the reason that he had been born. He was born to deliver Israel from the Philistines. The enemy began slowly to become the apple of his eye, the thing that he desired most. God knew that Samson's purpose was to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines. He also knew that the enemy had become the apple of Samson's eye. Judges 14:4 tells us that when Samson asked for a wife from the Philistines, "...his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel." I believe that God was trying to turn Samson against the Philistines. He allowed the thing that was trying to entrap Samson to become the thing that he was angriest at. God works many ways in our lives. This must have worked. Judges 15:20 tell us, "And he judged Israel in the day of the Philistines twenty years." Often when we think of the story of Samson, we think just of his

failures. We think of Samson and Delilah. We forget the 20 years that he judged Israel as an upright judge.

There were 20 years that he served the Lord in the purpose that the Lord had for him. Then things started to go wrong again. His old problem cropped up again. Why does this happen? We have seen so many people in the limelight as well as those that we are familiar with in our own lives who had served God faithfully for years. Then something went terribly wrong. I was talking with someone who was telling me that a pastor in their church had to be dismissed because he was having an affair with a woman in his congregation. How do these things go so terribly wrong in the lives of those who have served God for years?

Sin is like a weed that grows in our spirit. Have you ever weeded your garden on a hot and dry day when the soil was baked? When you try to pull up that weed, you get everything but the roots. Then before long you go back again and you can't even tell that the weed has been pulled. It is thriving more than ever. When the soil of our heart is allowed to get hard and dry without the watering of God's Word and His Spirit, it is hard to get out the roots of sin. God will convict us over and over. We will pull up the part that is showing. We change our behavior or the part that can be seen above the soil. However, we fail to deal with the part that is beneath the surface, the root of why we sin. The sin keeps coming back. The devil begins to condemn us for this sin, and this sin gives him a hook to catch us with. This sin gives him a stronghold over us in our spiritual lives, which leads to a stronghold in our physical lives. He is very gifted at manipulating

our sins and weaknesses. The struggle eventually wears us out spiritually. We give in to that sin. These “sudden falls” that it seems people make are not sudden at all. This process might have gone on for years. In Samson’s case it was for 20 years.

(Here is just an added note: Habits like cigarette smoking have taken over the house of God. I have driven by some churches and I would think that surely they were having a holy service because of all the smoke that was outside. I would wonder why they were having church outside though. Little did I know it was a smoke break. As a congregation, they had voted on having a smoke break between the service and Sunday school. They couldn’t stay free from their addictions long enough to stay in service for a couple of hours. That is sad. No wonder the world doesn’t see much help in the church from addictions. We are addicted. If it isn’t to cigarettes, then it is to prescription medicine, and so many other things. Church, we are a mess. These addictions separate us from God and lead us away from Him. They cause us to feel convicted, and if we don’t deal with our conviction, repent and let God deliver us, this will cause a breach in our relationship with God. I have heard Brother Goad say many times that he has no confidence in any one that the devil can control using a little 5 inch long stick. If the devil can control this much of your life, then can God count on you? This is a huge hook in your jaw. No wonder we fail to have the anointing in our churches.)

God’s conviction is a blessing. It is one of the most loving things that God can do. When God convicts, he

shows us the places where the roots of sin are hiding in our lives. When we repent of these and submit them to God, He delivers us and these roots are pulled out. The key is that we have to really want Him to do this. That is where so many fail. In the deepest part of their heart, they really don't want to let this go. The soil of their heart becomes harden. They pull and pull but only get out the top part. If the soil of your heart is tender toward God, then God can pull everything out, root and all. Let God do a complete work. There will be no roots left to crop up later. How would Samson's story have ended if he had done this?

The roots of Samson's sin cropped up again in Judges 16:1, "Then went Samson to Gaza and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her." Now remember that Gaza was Philistine territory. Here he was in the enemies' camp because of the roots of sin that he hadn't allowed God to deliver him from. When the enemies' camp becomes the apple of our eye, be sure that our eyes can be put out by that sin that drew us there. Whether it is our physical or spiritual eyes, we will loose our vision. That is just what happened to Samson. We read in verse 2, "And it was told the Gazites saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all night, saying, when it is day, we shall kill him." I think that this trip was the beginning of Samson's fall. Why? The enemy now knew his weakness, and they began to devise a plan to use that weakness to destroy him. The enemy will know about that little root that you allow in your life. He will devise a plan to destroy you by using this against you. In the next verse, Delilah came on the scene and we

all know what happened from there. Samson was blinded, he was bound, and he was grounded by the devil.

I love the mercy of God. We are blessed to serve such a wonderful God. God had mercy on Samson on that last day, and he let his strength return once more. The house that day was full of Philistines. Probably many of them were enemies' that Samson had regarded as friends in the compromised state of his sin. Just on one roof the Bible says there were 3,000 Philistines. They had gathered there that day not only to mock Samson, but also to mock his God that had been the source of his miraculous strength against them for over 20 years. God gave him a last touch. Judges 16:30 tell us, "And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

God was merciful to Samson. Here is one thing to think about though. How might Samson's story have ended if it hadn't ended there? What if he would have continued in his supernatural strength as an upright judge for another 20 years or more? What if Samson would have been like Joseph in Potiphar's house when he ran out so fast that he left his coat in the hands of the "harlot", Potiphar's wife? Because of the price of sin that he had to pay, we will never know. Sin demands a price. It doesn't matter that no one knows what is going on in your heart, or it seems like no one is watching. You will pay. So will your family and those that love you. Sin is never worth the cost. The devil can paint a pretty picture but it is not

reality. Sin is reality. It is never worth it. That is why it is so important to keep our breastplate of righteousness on to protect our hearts.

One of the biggest holes that we can get in our breastplate of righteousness is when we justify our sin, when we make excuses for what we do. I know someone who as long as I have known him has never found totally victory in his life. He knows the truth of the word of God. He knows about salvation in its true sense. He has something in his life that is sin. He knows that he needs to get free from this to be able to have a sound relationship with God. He knows about the Baptism of the Spirit and how to find victory through this experience. The sad thing is he knows but he doesn't do. He doesn't do because for over 20 years he has been making excuses for what he fails to do. He is a master at this. He has an excuse for everything. He doesn't want to live in reality. He has successfully talked himself into thinking that everything is fine. He has self-justified himself. This is one of the most dangerous ways to be. This is one of the largest holes in our breastplate that we can get. It is so dangerous because no one can tell him any different. The Spirit of God can't convict him because he justifies it away. I think that this is very close to what the Bible calls blaspheming the Spirit, which is an unpardonable sin. When we stop letting God convict us, then how can God turn us around? How can God deal with us for our sin? How will we ever repent? If we don't repent, how will we make heaven our home? Beware of ever starting down that road.

I had a friend who was always walking on the edge of what he could get by with. Matter of fact, he used to wear a T-shirt that said “Doing what I can get by with”. For years, he traveled with us in the ministry and sang. “The other side of the fence”, the sin side, started looking too good to him. He left church and gradually started drifting away from God. What was the end of all this? Today he is a professing homosexual. His life is very unstable because of what he has reaped from sin. He is in and out of mental institutions. His health was so bad that I am not sure that he is alive today. The wages of sin is death. Don’t start down the “sin road”. It isn’t a joke. Don’t make excuses for what you do. God sent His son to save you, His Spirit to deliver you and set you free. Why play with destruction?

*How do we keep from getting holes in our breastplate? Walk in the Spirit instead of the flesh. Trust in God and allow His Spirit to convict us. Repent when we feel His conviction. Don’t shake off His conviction, but repent. Get real with God. Let Him work in your heart and mind. Love Him with all your heart, and let Him love you. Keep His Word close in your heart and mind. Meditate on His Word. It will keep you. Let His Spirit dwell in your heart. Let His Spirit move in your life. Get filled up with His Spirit. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a very real and powerful experience that will keep you. Find out about that. I have written a book titled *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost* that you can download for free on the Internet. You can find all the books I’ve written at my website at www.freechristianonlinebooks.com. You can also find it on www.amazon.com. I won’t go into details here, but it is important to find out about this amazing gift of God,*

and how it can empower you to serve God. It is in the Word of God, and it is for you.

The main way that we can guard our heart is to stay in love with Jesus. Love is the key to any relationship. Love is a key to keeping your armor free from holes. Out of curiosity, I went back through what of this book I had written before this to see how many times I had used the word love in regards to all parts of your armor. I was amazed at how many times I had used it. We talked before about how being a Christian is about really about having a relationship with God, and a relationship with Jesus. Keeping your relationship with the Lord is more important than keeping any relationship with anyone, husband or wife, or family member. Staying in love with God, Jesus, in love with His Word, His righteousness, all of Him, is a key to overcoming the enemy. Fall in love with God. Fall in love with Jesus. Fall in love with their righteousness, their Word. David talked about how He loved the Word of God. The longest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 119, is a Psalm David wrote talking about how He loved God's Word. It has 176 verses in it. Throughout the Psalms we hear David talk about the love of God, or his love. The word love or loved is mentioned nearly 30 times in the Psalms. God is love. If we don't let Him love us, and we don't fall in love with Him, you miss out on this thing entirely. David knew about that love that God had for him, and he fell in love with God. That love kept him through the hard times, and David knew about hard times. That love kept his heart from departing from God. That love guarded his heart as part of his breastplate. That is why it is so important to guard our love.

Another thing that causes us to be separated from God's love is when we face tribulations, when we go through things that are really hard. Our love can get worn out. We face things that cause us to doubt God's love for us. I know you have wondered why, if God loved you, you had to go through something. David did. If you have studied the story of David, you will remember the story found in I Samuel 30. David and his men had been out to war. They came home to find that their women had been made captives. Their city had been burned by fire, their sons and daughters taken captives. To make things worse the hearts of the people were so grieved that they took it all out on David. His men talked about stoning him to death. Now I know that you may have faced some things, but you have to admit, this might even be worse than what you have gone through. David, I am sure, wondered about God's love for him at this time. He probably thought, why God did you let this happen. Why do I have to go through this? You love me more than this. Why am I having to face this?

When we go through heartaches and trials, we wonder where God is and if He loved us so much, why did this happen. Sickness is one thing that is so hard to overcome, because of this. When you are sick, it is easy to fall into self-pity because you don't feel good. It is easy to doubt God because your mind isn't right, it is sick. You don't think right. When your finances are falling apart, you get stressed out. Stress is a bad thing. Another word for it is fear. When you are afraid, you don't think clear. You can't concentrate on the Word of God. Fear separates you from God's love. Any time you go through a trial, if you aren't careful, you can lose sight of God's

Word and His love for you. You get holes in your breastplate. Your love can grow dim. You must guard your love. You must guard your heart. Keeping in love with God is the key. We know this, but sometimes when you are going through the battle, it is easy to forget it. What did David do that helped him through this time in his life?

We read a key to getting through the hard times in I Samuel 30:6, and in verse 8. Verse 6 starts out with “And David was greatly distressed”. It closes with “But David encouraged himself in the Lord.” When we are in the middle of a battle, and it seems like the world is falling around us, we need to encourage ourselves in the Lord. We need to step back and remember. We need to remember God’s word. We need to remember the times that He has seen us through. When I face a battle, I remember the times that the Lord saw me through something that was similar to what I was facing at the time. I remember God’s love. I go to Him. The devil tries to get us to draw away from Him when we go through things. That definitely puts a huge hole in our armor. Instead of running away, or drawing back, draw to Him. Let Him love you. Let Him encourage you. Let His Spirit fall on you and strengthen you. Steal away in the hours of the morning when it is just you and God, and let Him love you. Feel His presence. Let Him encourage your heart. Remember His love. Remember what He has done before. I am sure that when David encouraged himself in the Lord that day, he remembered Goliath. He remembered all the battles he had faced and the Lord God had stood with him and caused him to triumph. He remembered the victories. When you go through the

battle and the battle is clouding out God's love, encourage yourself in the Lord, like David. Encourage your heart in God's love. That will fix that hole in your breastplate.

Then verse 8 tells us the next thing that David did. It tells us that "David enquired at the Lord". He found out what God wanted him to do about the situation. When he found out, he did it. He didn't debate about it. He didn't think about it and go on and do whatever he thought. He did what God told him to do. If you want to stay encouraged in the Lord, you have to obey Him. That is the key. If you want out of the battle, you have to listen to the commanding officer, and do what He tells you to do. If you don't, then you will just continue to stay there until the enemy defeats you. Obedience is the key to keeping your breastplate intact. Obedience comes from love. If you have really fallen in love with God, you will delight to do His will. Love helps us to yield ourselves to the point where we can obey. If we don't obey, then eventually what love we have for God will die. The battle will get so hard that we can't continue. Obedience is a key to keeping your heart right.

When we encourage ourselves in the Lord it is important to remember that everything isn't always instant, and that this thing comes often by faith and not by sight. Sometimes we have to trust and have faith. We have to remember that it isn't over until it's over. We have to wait on the Lord because things happen in His time, not in our time. God knows what He is doing. We have to trust that. We have to also remember that sometimes bad things happen because we live in a bad world ruled by

bad people. When this sort of thing happens, we have to remember that all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord. All things. Not part of the things some of the time, but all things. Even the bad things. The last part of Galatians 5:6 says, “faith which worketh by love.” It is our love that will keep our faith whole. It is also our faith, which will keep our love whole. They work hand in hand. When you encourage yourself in God’s love, it will encourage your faith.

One way to guard your faith and love is to keep bad attitudes out of your heart, mind, and out of your mouth. There are some people who I dread asking how they are doing, or how this or that situation is going. For one thing, I don’t have time to spend listening to their two-hour monologue on what is going on that is bad. For another thing, it gets me down listening to them. Watch out for those old attitudes that can steal your faith. The devil is a master at getting us fixated on the bad so that every time we open our mouth something negative comes out. We can get this way in our minds as well. The Bible tells us what things to dwell on, and it isn’t negative things, worry, depressing thoughts, all the bad that is going on, dwelling on the devil and what he is doing, dwelling on the bad that is in the people around us, stressing out about the problem. When I think about these thoughts and how they can get you down, I am reminded of a commode. When you get caught in them they are like a commode, just taking you down and out the drain. The Bible tells us in Philippians 4:8 what to think about. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,

whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Wow. If you go by this scripture it will turn your world around. We will talk more about this later when we talk about your shield of faith. Keeping your mind on these things will keep from getting holes in your breastplate, and in your shield. It will also keep your love for the Lord and His love for you from getting torn up in the battle.

How can your love grow? Find out about God’s love for you. Find out about Jesus’ love for you. Fall in love with Him. Encourage yourself in your love for Him and in His love for you. God’s Word has a lot to say about His love for us, His children. Encourage yourself in the Word of God by reading these. Already we have covered many up to now throughout this book, but let’s find more. Zephaniah 3:17 says, “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” I love that scripture. God loves us so much that He rejoices over us with singing. II Thessalonians 3:5 is a prayer that Paul had for the church there. “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” Sometimes we have to patiently wait for Christ to come into the situation. Remembering, His love for us will keep us through these times. Read about this in Ephesians 3:13-21. Please read all this section of scripture because I am not going to write it all out here. We read I verse 13 that Paul isn’t writing this because he is going through a great time when it is easy to remember God’s love, but he is writing it during times of tribulation. He is writing it to

encourage their faith in God's love. (This section of scripture won't do you a bit of good if you don't get out your Bible and read it.)

It isn't all about God's love for us. Our heart has to stay encouraged so that we are renewed in our love for God. Deuteronomy 6:5 is a verse that is repeated throughout the scripture. It is one that Jesus Himself used. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." When Jesus quoted this he stated that this was a requirement. We must guard our love for God and keep the enemy from stealing it out of our heart. Psalm 18:1 says "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." Our love is a key to our strength. Psalm 91:14-16 says, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." We love God because He first loved us. But have you ever thought about this. God loves us because we love Him. Love works two ways. Our love for Him unlocks all these things in our lives. Romans 5:8 reminds us of the number one reason why we need to love the Lord with all our heart. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." What a love.

Now back to the *Greatest Lie Ever Told*. Knowing the truth, walking in the truth, guarding our relationship with the Lord is a key to overcoming the world's lies. Falling in love with the Lord is also a key. Not letting anything

or anyone come between you is another. You don't have to fall for a lie. You can be victorious in the truth. If we don't stay away from sin, then we will pay the price. No matter how hard the devil tries to convince us this isn't so. Coming up is the chapter, *The Wages of Sin*. There are many prices to pay when we choose sin over righteousness. Let's talk about some of them.

Chapter 5.

The Wages of Righteousness and the Wages of Sin

We have talked about sin, but to introduce this chapter, we need to talk about what sin is. We mentioned it before that we know if we have sinned because the Holy Spirit convicts us. Sad to say, the church world has become so separated from God that they no longer know what that means. That is scary. Without this, we are not able to know the difference between right and wrong. By reading the Bible, and submitting to the Spirit of God, we can know the difference. If someone tells us that something is OK, but deep down we know that it is not, this is conviction. Listen to it. It will keep you from evil. It will help you to keep your heart right. Our heart is where the motivation for our lives comes from. When you love the Lord with all your heart, you won't be sinning every time you turn around. When you are submitted and yielded to Him, you won't go where you aren't supposed to go, and do what you aren't supposed to do. But it all starts in your heart. We have to love God and be sold out to Him. Sin actually starts in your heart, then it goes to the flesh. Sin isn't just drinking, doing drugs, and committing adultery. Sure, those are sins, but sin is more than just that. In the last chapter we also talked about how sin starts in our heart. When our heart gets wrong, then we are apt to sin. These things are sins of the heart: rebellion, pride, fear, coveting (wanting what someone else has), jealousy, bitterness, self-righteousness, being stiff-necked (unyielding), and lust. This is just a short list. In our heart is where things start getting wrong.

The enemy has two main battlegrounds. One is the heart, and the other is the mind. When he gets us in those two places he is able to destroy us. The Spirit of God can guard our heart, and mind, if we submit and yield to Him. If we choose to continue with what we are doing wrong even after He speaks to us, and convicts us of it, then we walk into the territory that is called sin. Even more dangerous is when we go from it just being in our heart, or mind, and we willfully continue to practice it, even after God has convicted us. That puts us close to spiritual destruction.

We have talked about how when we sin, we need to go to God and repent. The worst thing to do is to make excuses. Romans 2:1 says, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man.... Romans 1:20 says that we are without excuse. No need to go to God and make excuses. When you are busted, you are busted. Just admit it, repent, and go on. If you don’t, then things will only get worse.

We have talked about how God is a righteous God, and He expects us to strive to walk in that same righteousness. We have also talked about how we can do that. He has made a way for us to be able to walk uprightly. His Spirit comes in. When we submit and yield to Him, He will help us to be able to walk in righteousness. His Word instructs us, lights our paths, strengthens us, and keeps us. His church strengthens us when we are in unity with those who are like-minded with us. The Bible tells us that Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us, praying for us. So we are without excuse. If we use the

tools that God has provided for us, there is no way to fail. He will keep us. If we fail it will be because we choose sin over righteousness. It will be because we quit trying. We can't say that we can't do what He expects, because He has made a way for us to be able to. He has also provided forgiveness for us when we fail. The key is that we desire with all our heart to serve Him and walk uprightly in that service.

So what are the wages of walking uprightly before God, not playing games with Him, having an upright heart determined to follow after Him, yielding and submitting to Him. Let's see what the Bible says about the righteous. Here are just a very few of the promises to the righteous that we find in the Bible:

Deuteronomy 4:40 says, "Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, forever." Wow, what a promise. This should inspire you to keep God's statutes, and commandments.

Isaiah 3:10 says, "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." We eat of the things we have planted. If we plant good things in our life, we will eat of that good fruit.

Isaiah 65:24 says, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." God hears the righteous; those who are trying

with all (and I said all) of their heart to do right before Him.

Titus 3:7-8 says, “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” If we want to be profitable at all, we have to maintain good works. That just makes good sense. Look at the people who are around you that are eat up with sin. Are they really profiting in their life? Are they really healthy, sound thinkers, happy, having good relationships with others, and profitable?

Joshua 1:7-9 gives a really good glimpse of the blessing found by obeying God. Joshua was standing at the edge of the Promised Land giving the children of Israel instructions for how to inherit and inhabit it. He said this, “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” Follow God’s ways and prosper and have good success. Don’t follow them and your life will just be a disaster. That is a wage of sin.

Psalms 112:1-3, "Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth forever."

Now that we have reviewed all that, let's talk about the wages of sin. We have already talked about the scripture that says the wages of sin is death. Let's talk more about the price that we have to pay for our sin.

We will have heartache from our sin. Our family will pay and so will those who love us.

We will be separated from God, (Psalms 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me). Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.)

We will face destruction (Proverbs 11:3, "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. Proverbs 11:19, "As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death).

You will have loss (Jeremiah 5:25, "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.")

You will have spiritual death, (Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”)

Sin isn't worth it. Don't stay there. The only reason why you will stay there is if you choose to.

One thing that we need to consider is our children. If your children see you walking in righteousness, loving God and serving Him with all your heart, then they will be prone to do the same. The saddest thing I see when working with the young people at our school is those children who have no idea how to walk uprightly before God because their parents are professing something that they don't have. They think that the way that their parents are doing is right, so they do the same. I have worked with a couple of generations of children through our school. I see so many things passed down from generation to generation. How you live before your children may be how they live themselves, and how their children live.

Here is an example. I know someone who professes to be a Christian, but they drink a lot of wine. Sure the Bible says to take a little wine for your stomach sake, but that doesn't mean for the sake of getting a buzz. I am more prone to think that the wine mentioned in the Bible was not fermented, but grape juice. Where do I get that idea? The Bible says not to look upon it if it has turned. I know that there is a prevalent teaching in the church that it is fine to drink wine. A word to the wise, don't mess around with things that are addicting. That isn't God's will for you. And for heaven's sake don't pass the teaching on to

your children that this is OK. I was concerned when this person started taking her daughter to all the wine tasting events. Then her standard gift to her at Christmas was a bottle of wine. Then I heard her daughter talking about a trip that she took with her friends, and she was laughing because they had all been so drunk that they didn't know what they were doing. What makes all this worse is that alcoholism runs in their family. Church, it is time to clean up our act so that our children will know what that even means. Get real and get right with God so that you can guide your children in their lives. Remember, the next generation is often removed a step behind the parent generation. If your children are a step away from God than you are, where are they?

We have talked about the wages of sin. Later we will talk about how our country and how the world is paying for this lie that it is OK to do whatever we want, that there isn't any real right or wrong. Next, though I want to talk about the conviction, repentance, and the power of forgiveness.

Chapter 6. Forgiveness

I don't want to close this book without covering the topic of forgiveness. I know I have mentioned it throughout the book, but I want to be sure to cover it thoroughly. Forgiveness is the issue that gets clouded when talking about the end time deception. I remember one of the first times that I began to realize what was going on with this deception was when I heard a teenager make this statement, "I know I am forgiven. God loves me. So I can do whatever I want. I can smoke cigarettes. I can have whatever attitude I want to have. I can have sex with my boyfriend. It doesn't matter because God loves me and I am forgiven." Yes, God forgives us, but can we just do whatever because of that and get by? Lets take time to get this issue of grace worked out. Understanding it is a key.

We know that we have been forgiven because Jesus died for us. There are some that take this to the extreme. I heard a preacher preach this. He said, "We no longer have to ask for forgiveness, because Jesus died to forgive us. Because of that, we no longer have to repent or feel convicted. God won't make us feel bad. The Spirit won't make us feel bad." We have already talked about how that is wrong, and given scripture about why it is. One of the greatest sections of scripture that talk about the issue of forgiveness and sin is the first chapter of Romans. Please read it. Please read it. Hey, this is important. When you

read it, don't take out the part that sounds good to you. Read the whole chapter, and put it all together. In Romans we not only learn a lot about sin, forgiveness, but we also learn about how to overcome it, and how God makes a way for us to do so.

Let's start out by reading chapter 1. It is surely timely for today. It closes with this verse in 32, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Chapter 2 starts with this, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man." We don't have an excuse for our sin. We have forgiveness, yes, but not excuses to go ahead and continue in our sin. Romans chapter 1 talks about people who hold the truth in unrighteousness. They know the truth, but refuse to walk in it. Read this section. We can see why we are reaping what we are reaping in our country today.

We are reaping like the teen I mentioned in the last paragraph. It has been years since I saw her. I often wonder what her life is like. If she hasn't changed her way of thinking, it has been filled with sadness, and turmoil. Romans 12:1-2 would have offered her some good advice, but she was too deceived to hear it. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." It is God's grace that He forgives us, then makes a way for us to overcome. He doesn't leave us in

our mess. (Sad to say, we have even used this scripture as an excuse to do wrong. I have actually heard this preached that there are three wills of God: one is good, one is acceptable, and one is perfect. Now I teach English, and I know adjectives when I see them. You can plainly tell in this section of scripture that this is talking about three words used to describe the one will of God. Not three levels of the will of God.) God wants us to find His will and walk in it so that can have a good life. That is our reasonable service. No matter what the world says, we need to think God's way and prove that His will works. If we continually, habitually, and purposefully choose to disobey God and walk contrary to His will then we read in the section of Romans chapter 1 what will be our end. Hebrews 10:26 tells us "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

Let's look for now at Romans 5:21, and 6:1-2. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein"? Yes, God's grace is wonderful. We don't deserve anything that He gives us. We don't deserve His love. We don't deserve His forgiveness that He paid such a dear price for. His grace is what will carry us through to the end. But just because His grace is so wonderful, should we continue in sin?

I have to be careful when I am talking about all this that I don't cause you to think that you have to be perfect to

serve God. I have known so many people who were hesitant to even get saved because they were afraid that if they messed up, God would kick them out of His presence. We will sin, but the difference is that we can't willfully sin over and over and after coming to the knowledge that this particular thing that we are doing is wrong. If we barrel on past God's conviction, and we run every roadblock He puts up to stop us, then we will crash. That is a given.

We read in this scripture in Romans 10:16 how God helps us to overcome sin. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." He writes His laws in our hearts and in our minds to keep us. He sent His Spirit to live in us to strengthen us. He sends His Word to empower us.

God knows that we are weak. He has been helping people get through this world for a long time. He knows us. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...." Paul was telling us something that God had told Him about how His grace would keep him. He was telling him that His grace would keep Him, that His strength would enable Him. His grace is much more than just forgiveness. His grace strengthens us, and enables us. His love makes a way for us to be victorious. Yes, He forgives us, but He also does so much more. You don't have to be afraid that you have to be perfect, and can't. He knows you can't. That is why He does all He does to

keep us in His love. We just get in trouble when we refuse to let Him because we would rather have our sin.

I want to close this chapter talking about God's love. It is His love that will keep us if we have committed ourselves to following Him, and if we are yielding to Him so that He can keep us. My Mom loved me. She tried to tell me to leave certain attitudes alone when I was growing up. I was so rebellious. She constantly tried to tell me not to be. The things that I got into later that destroyed my life started by my attitudes when I was young. I didn't want to hear anything anybody told me. I wanted to do my thing my way. That was the beginning of my destruction. My Mom tried to get me to see this, but I went my way. I paid the price for my sinful attitude. God's love is even greater than my Mom's love for me. He loves us. He tries to turn us around when our attitudes get on the wrong side. He deals with our hearts when we head in the wrong direction. When we sin, He forgives us, and then opens up to us how to overcome this. If we will just let Him. That is all grace.

He loves you. He will forgive you. He will keep you. He will make a way for you. He will strengthen you. He will enable you through the power of His Spirit inside of you, and through His word to overcome. Our greatest enemy is ourself. He makes a way for us to even overcome ourself. Let me close this chapter with this verse, Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That is what true forgiveness, true grace is all about.

Chapter 7. Just How Dangerous Is This Lie

When I started this book I talked about how dangerous this lie is. I am sure that when many of you read the beginning introduction you thought I was going a little over the top. Here is what I said about this lie we have been talking about. Please go back and read the *Introduction*. I am putting highlights from it below.

I call it the End Time Deception, because as Jesus' coming again draws nearer, this deception is taking over the world. It is actually shaping history in the world sense. It shows up on the political scene of country after country, especially here in America. It is causing the mighty church to stumble and fall. It is causing individuals who have served God strongly for decades to become deceived. It is leading a new generation of Christians so far from the Lord that they cannot even begin to hear His voice of truth. I believe that this lie will eventually lead to the imprisonment of Christians, to the shut down of many churches who stand for the truth, and eventually to the death of Christians even here in America. And still the church world is lining up to take it in using this lie as a basis of many of their precepts they build their church's doctrines on. In many churches if you aren't a follower of this lie, you are criticized as being self-righteous and evil. In many churches, if you don't accept this damning deception and allow it to influence your every thought and reaction to others, you

*are told that you don't have God's love, and you become an outcast because "how could you be that way". You are even told world over that you can't be a Christian if you don't walk in this lie. How far from the truth could you get? Still we march on toward destruction following after this teaching. I titled this book, *The Greatest Lie Ever Told*, and I whole-heartedly believe this to be true. As you read these pages, I believe that you will also come to believe this as well.*

This teaching has caused the church to become a mockery of God's word instead of being a lighthouse set on a hill. It has caused the church to become something that Revelations 3:4 tells us God will spew out of His mouth. We have become lukewarm. We have only started to see the effects of what this lie has on the collective church as a whole, and on the individuals making up the church. It will bring about the destruction of both. I believe that this lie is actually the foundation that the last day's church, a one-world church, will be built on, the end time church that will bring about the advance of the anti-Christ. I believe that it will be the basis for an end time church that will unite the world against Christians world over and eventually lead to their imprisonment, and even death. Legislation in America has already begun to open the door for this to come about. This legislation has already caused many, many churches to stop preaching the truth, to stop being a light to the world. This lie is a creeping lie that takes over slowly but steadily, and the full effects are steadfastly advancing against us at an alarming rate.

Am I exaggerating here? Let's take another look at this. We mentioned earlier how several years ago the church world started saying that there was no real right or wrong, and that we shouldn't cause anyone to become uncomfortable because of their life choices. That is how it started. I believe that this was a part of the devil's plan to bring about the one world church. When this thing started, who knew how it was going to end. It started there, then the world started echoing this teaching. We started hearing everyone say that you had to be politically correct and not make anyone feel put down. It went from there to the point that it was against the law to say anything against another person. (It's called the hate crime.) If you look at it in God's way of thinking, it is against the law to stand up against sin, against the law to preach the truth of God's Word. What was the outcome of all this? We as Christians have lost our rights, but the devil has certainly gained power. One example, our children cannot bring a Bible to a public school, but it will soon be mandated that the Moslem religion be taught. We can't have the Ten Commandments posted in government sites, or say a prayer at a ballgame, we can't make a stand for what is right, but we have no say in the public schools to stop our children from having to learn about a homosexual life style. It will be taught in a way that will say to them that Christianity is wrong to stand against it, and that you are wrong when you teach your children that they should not accept this lifestyle. They will be taught that the Bible is wrong when it speaks against it

Now let's take a step further, and that is what the devil is going to do. Already we have churches that are saying,

“Come to our church. We love everyone and accept everyone.” They say, “If you are a church that preaches against sin, then you are wrong. You are a part of an occult. You are not one of us. We want the world to unite in love. We want to love everyone.” The hippy culture is on the rise. We see peace signs making a come back. (By the way, the peace sign originated as a broken cross, a cult sign. Look it up.) Everyone wants to have world peace. The message is to love everyone. The message is that everyone needs to be free to do whatever they choose. So those radical Christians that are standing up for what is right are really problems in the eyes of the world and in the eyes of this movement. What will be the final outcome? You will see the world church begin to unite together more and more. You will see this “love” movement grow stronger. You will see especially the homosexual movement grow stronger, and they will take the forefront in coming against God’s people who are standing up for the Word of God. You will see more and more churches being deceived by this lie. Christians who you thought would stand strong no matter what will fall into this trap. The church world will be rocked to sleep in a seem-right way. Our only hope, God’s Spirit and His Word, will be silenced if we don’t hold on through the night; their light will be extinguished. Eventually Christians will be persecuted and killed for their faith. We are one of the few countries left in the world where this isn’t already happening. This one world church will be the stage that will enable the anti-Christ to come to the forefront. Where am I getting my information? The Word of God.

It is time for us to understand what this greatest lie is all about, and it is time for us to make a stand against it individually, in our families, and in our churches. We don't need to hide in fear, we need to make a stand. We need to speak up for what is true. It is time to let the world know what we believe in. This needs to be done with wisdom. This needs to be done by listening to the Lord. You can't do this in the flesh, or it will only turn out to be more of a problem, and a hindrance to God's people, then it will be a help. Pray. Ask the Lord to lead you where you need to stand, and stand there. You can't do this if your heart isn't right with the Lord, and if you aren't truly submitted and committed to the Lord walking in His Spirit. You can't do this if you aren't filled with God's Spirit, letting His anointing use you. You can't do this if you don't know the truth yourself. I challenge you to get right and get real with God, and be a light where God has planted you. I am reminded of the clerk in a court that said that she would not sign for homosexuals to be married. She had to go to jail. But God really used this lady. The world took notice of her stand. She got to keep her job, and she is a light to people the world over as a testimony to how God can use you if you will make a stand and obey Him.

There is a string of churches across the world where there are lighthouses. God won't let His truth be extinguished. God won't let His light go out. Shine where He puts you. Make a stand for the truth. We are all called to be ministers, to minister the truth to others, to be a witness to those around us. We need to be careful that we are not like the ministers that Paul talked about in 2 Corinthians chapter 11:2 and 13-15 "For I am jealous over you with

godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” Here Paul told the church there that it was his job to present them as a chaste virgin to the bridegroom, Christ, as a clean bride to the Lord. Then he talked about how there were many ministers and workers who weren’t doing that. Evidently, they were not preaching that you had to be a clean bride for the Lord. They were transforming themselves to be ministers of righteousness, but they weren’t preaching righteousness. Satan was using them. Paul said that their end shall be according to their works. I believe that hell will be full of preachers who failed to preach righteousness to their congregations. They will spend eternity watching those who they preached to that they deceived. They will watch their agony and not be able to change anything. I said before. We are all ministers. We all have someone that we can reach. If we fail to witness righteousness to them, then you may wind up in hell with the people that you failed to share the truth with.

To be a light, you have to be filled with God’s Spirit. To be able to stand in this last day, you will need the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. If you don’t have this, you need to seek God for this experience. For more information about it, please see my book titled,

A Three Book Volume: Salvation That Sticks, The Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and Such Were Some of You. It is available on Amazon.com, and on my website at www.freechristianonlinebooks.com.

Closing

I want to close with this scripture that I mentioned earlier. It is found in Ezekiel 13:22-23, “Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.” I present this as a challenge to you. Make a stand. Let God use you to stand for the truth. The world needs a light. It thinks it doesn’t, but that doesn’t change the fact that it does. Without the church to stand for the Word of God, what hope does it have? It isn’t so dark that the light can’t shine. It isn’t so dark that the light can’t make a difference. When you have come to an understanding of all this, then pray for those around you that don’t see it. Pray that the Lord open their eyes.

Shine. Several years ago the Lord showed me something that has begun to be more and more important to understand. He showed me a light shining. It was daylight, and the light wasn’t that bright. Then the daylight got less and less bright. As it did, the light that

was shining seemed brighter. Finally it was night, and that night was really dark. The light that was shining was then shining with such a strong intensity that it lit up the darkness. God's light is such a light that as the darkness of the world gets darker, and it will, God's light will grow even brighter. As the darkness gets darker, it will shine with a brilliant shine. Shine your light. You may think that it doesn't do any good. That is God's job not yours. It is your job to keep shining. You will make an even greater difference to your world than you can ever dream.

A verse that I keep hearing that to me has a last days message is 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." If there is any hope for our country, we must humble ourselves, seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways. This has to start with the church. I challenge you as a minister, a teacher, a leader in the church, and I challenge all God's children to humble yourself, seek God's face, repent of your sin, and let Him deliver you so that you can lead others to God. You can't lead others if your life is not victorious. Who will listen to you if they don't see any evidence of God's work in your own life? The world needs a light. The hour is late. We don't have long before the Lord is coming back for His people. Church, it is time to shine.

I'd like to close with the words to a song that I wrote titled, *Cheated*. It is my hope that you are encouraged to not let the devil cheat you again.

Cheated

Verse 1

When I was a sinner I paid an awful cost.
Watched everything good leave.
I knew that I was lost.
I lied to myself, even called it fun.
When God came toward me you could see me run.
Then He sought me, and He bought me,
Praise God He caught me.
And there definitely was a change.

Chorus

Cheated (have you been cheated.)
Lied to, (have you been lied to.)
When Jesus comes in, there will be a change.
Don't let yourself be cheated.

Verse 2

I see a lot of people who say they know the Lord.
Funny they're no different than they were before.
They still lie to themselves saying they like it as it is.
I think they've been fooled, by the cheater.

Verse 3

The devil sells a bill of goods not even worth the price.
He paints a pretty picture where even sin looks nice
But I know the score, I've walked there before
I won't be a loser again.
When I see the cross and I know the cost.
I won't get cheated again.

About the Author

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