

We're going to review a couple of areas of scripture that reflect so directly what this series is all about. This was stated at the beginning of *Part 2*, what I'm going to go through right now. So I'm just going to repeat a couple of things here, touch upon them, maybe add a couple of things as well.

But this is from Revelation 3:17. Basically, the comment was made if we're not fighting against our own nature and seeking to work on these matters that we've been addressing in our life that reflect what we should be doing if we're walking in the spirit, if we're not doing that then we're being lukewarm and that's a spirit that is going to have to be fought from this point forward in people's lives. All through the Millennium, in the Great White Throne, it's just a spirit. Either we see it, either we recognize its danger and fight against it, or we don't.

Because of all we've been given and because of that it does something to the mind. We have to be very careful and on guard because our nature takes advantage of those kinds of things in a wrong way, misuses those things. Just as mankind is misusing technology with all the knowledge that we have we tend to misuse what we've been given and we tend to misuse things that God gives to us as well.

So, in **Revelation 3:17** it said, **Because you say, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.** I hope this really rings true to us because this attitude is one that we don't see our need for God. We just don't really see it realistically. We may think we do because we believe what we've been given, we attend Sabbath services, we go to the holy days, we look forward to those things, we talk about them, we tithe, we save for the Feast as well, we give holy day offerings, and we go through the motions and do all those things, but again, how we live our lives day to day is so important, to understand here we can do it one of two ways.

One of these ways, that has been done a lot in God's Church, especially over the last forty years, thirty some years, has been this thing of self-reliance. Because when you've been given a lot, it's easier to begin to think, "I have a lot. I have a lot of understanding. I've been given great understanding of things and see God's purpose and God's plan. He's revealed those things to me." But it's how we live our lives day by day that counts. It's not the knowledge. It's what we're doing day by day with what we've been given. We can't just get into a state of mind where it says here "we have need of nothing," where we're self-reliant, we're relying on our own knowledge, we're relying on something that God had just gave us anyway and feeling like that's going to carry us through. It doesn't. We have to make changes. That's what this sermon is about, fighting for God's way.

...and have need of nothing—and do not know, it's a matter of knowing this, of being convicted of this deep, deep down inside, **and do not know that you are wretched.** It's hard for us

sometimes to see this. I know that there are situations where I've dealt with people's lives that they don't see this in themselves. That's my nature. It's your nature. Without God, without God dwelling in us, just with all the knowledge we have isn't enough. That nature we have of and by itself is sick, it's wretched. That's why Paul said, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" If we don't see that battle, if we don't see that realistically in ourselves then we're missing the mark, we're missing the boat.

So it says here, **and do not know (know/see) that you are wretched.** That's why we need God. That's why we can't be self-reliant. That's why we can't straddle a fence. We have to be engaged in a battle. It's a fight. **...and miserable.** Our nature. I'll tell you what, the more you grow, the more you see human nature for what it is, the more you're able to see it in self, because that's where it really has to be seen. It's easy to see things in others. "Boy, they're being selfish." "Boy, that's a selfish motivation if I ever saw one." We don't see ourselves in the mirror.

It's so easy. And candidly, that becomes a great battle the more you grow if you're not careful, because the more God lets us see human nature, the more He lets us see selfishness, the easier it is to see in others. It truly is. The more you can see it in yourself the easier it is to see it. I joke with my wife on occasion of driving down the freeway (one of my favorite subjects), and I see what someone is doing. I know what they're going to do before they do it because you know why? That's me. The only thing that keeps me from acting like that now, hopefully, is growth, because otherwise I'd be doing the same stupid things. So with maturity, in time, hopefully we're growing in those areas and fighting those battles.

But if we don't, we're out there with the rest of them, we get caught up in it, we're doing the same things. You know, it kills me sometimes. You know when someone is going to try to pull in. They don't use blinkers. You know when they're going to pull in. You just know by the way they're driving. How do you know that so well? If they don't use their blinker, if they don't understand what that invention was on the side of the column, you know? So we learn because we are that way, because we're selfish and we all do certain things that are easy to spot, so the more you know what you're like in society, in the world, on your job, the more you see that nature coming out of you in your marriage, in your home, in your family, in the Church, the more we see that nature the easier it is to see when someone else is giving into it. "Oh, brother..."

These things go on in our mind, these judgments that go on and here we're not seeing this great big mirror. It's all around us. All we have to do is look around, "It's me." It's all we have to do. Incredible!

...and do not know that you are wretched and miserable. Our nature, our spirit apart from God, our human nature is miserable. It sucks! It's ugly! It really is. It's just downright ugly.

...and poor, and blind, and naked. That's what we are without God. So if we really see that we're going to want to cry out for God's help, for God's spirit. That's where the motivation comes from. The more you see this the more you know it the more you've got to cry out day by day,

because if you're not doing that, you're relying on yourself and you're not fighting this battle. So just having knowledge of certain things isn't enough. Because we know this, because "I" know "I" can't see as "I" need to, "I" can't be as sharp in my vision of seeing God's way, of being able to rightly divide the word of truth, if you will, this matter of being spiritually naked, that's the way we are if we're not staying close to God every day. Every day! If we don't see that every day this is us, we're lukewarm, we're practicing that which is being lukewarm, we're just relying on ourselves. We think we're okay. No, we're not. I know I'm not.

Then **Romans 8:1—There is, therefore, now no condemnation...** So that's what we want to be concerned with, because if we're lukewarm there's condemnation, judgment. Like I mentioned before, at the end of the Great White Throne they're going to see the same reward. Those who are being lethargic, lukewarm, of a Laodicean spirit, they're going to receive the same reward as those who hate God's way of life, who fight against God's way of life. Because God can't give that mind eternal life, spirit life in His Family because it's contrary to God.

There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Joshua the Christ. How do we do that? How are we in? Well, we know what it means to be out of the temple, to be out in the courtyard. You want to be in the temple. So to be in Joshua the Christ, to be in God the Father, to dwell in them means they have to first dwell in us. That means because we're crying out to God for His holy spirit, that it fill our lives, that it fill our minds, that it lead, guide, and direct us, that we're repenting of sin so that He won't cut us off, so that we're not out in the courtyard or blind or naked spiritually, but that we see and we're practicing and living this way of life like we should be.

So there is **no condemnation to those who are in Joshua the Christ.** First it starts with the repenting of sin, seeing these conditions, acknowledging what we're like, "I'm 'O wretched man that I am.' God will deliver me. I just have to repent when I see those things, when I recognize those things in myself." ...**who do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit.** So we're doing one or the other - in God's Church! It's not about the world. It's about God's Church. So again, we're either walking in the flesh (lukewarm, relying on self) or we're walking in the spirit, we're practicing and living what God has given us to know in the mind. Just knowing it doesn't save us. Just knowing it doesn't change and transform the mind. Going through the motions and knowing certain things isn't enough in the sense of going through the motions of Sabbath services, holy days, and so forth. It requires more in a daily battle of life.

Romans 8:5—For those who were after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, just consumed with physical things around them, become too consumed with things, with life, with drama in life. That's not what it's about, more concerned with whatever is going on in our life physically on the job or whatever it might be. We should want, first of all, to make sure that we're right with God. That should be above everything else in the day; in whatever we do, to strive for that. If we're not doing that we're more concerned then with other things, whatever that is.

...but those who are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. So we're going to be concerned about that. We're going to be concerned what it means to dwell in Christ and dwell in God the Father, and to ensure that they will continue to dwell in us.

For to be carnally minded is death, it's what it produces. Lukewarmness, being of a lukewarm spirit is carnally minded, being carnally minded, reliance on self, not on God because you can't live this way of life without God. You can't do it on your own. ...but to be spiritually minded is life, the right kind of life, God's live in us, spirit life. It's not talking about just physical existence. ...and peace. So that fruit will be there, peace, peace of mind up here.

Then we ended *Part 2* in these verses, **Revelation 3:18**, dropping way down here in Revelation now, going back to that. We were in 17 at the beginning. **I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire.** So we talked about that, what that means, at the end of that sermon. ...that you may be rich. Because, again, it's not a self-reliance, it's a matter of realizing I need to go through hardships, trials, but do it the right way. Because this life is filled with hardships and trials, but I need to make sure it's done the right way. The only way I can do that is if I'm staying close to God, crying out to God for His spirit to help me to see realistically what's around me and to deal with it.

So buy of Me gold tried in the fire that you may be rich; and white raiment. See, the opposite of being naked, but clothed as we're supposed to be clothed. That's what this is talking about. ...that you may be clothed, so that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see. So we want to be able to see spiritually. We want to be able to see ourselves realistically.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. So repentance is always in this. Repentance is about change. I love that word in the Greek language. "Think differently," that's what it means. We have to learn to think differently, and that means different from what we normally do as human beings with self-reliance, out of selfishness, out of coasting, out of being lazy, whatever it is, but fighting in this fight that's before us. So, "Be zealous, therefore..." So to be zealous you have to be working. Zealousness isn't something that just happens. You've got to ask God for help to be spiritually zealous, to have a zeal toward His way of life, to have a zeal toward Him, to want to draw closer to Him, to want to be fighting the battles that are out here. You have to be zealous about that, because if you're not, it's not going to happen. ...therefore, and repent.

2 Corinthians 7. We're going to continue on now starting there. In 2 Corinthians 7 Paul is addressing a specific matter in Corinth with the people there. But as with so many things that are written by Paul and he's addressing specific manners they have happened, they are recorded for a reason because they are things that happen with human nature, with how we think, with how we are, and then they're addressed. But they're addressed on a spiritual plane so we can learn spiritual lessons. That's what's important to glean out of this. It's not the specific problem they

had or what that might have been at that time. That's irrelevant. The lessons are spiritual and the application is spiritual because we all need it. It's just the way it is.

So it goes on here then, all this applies to matters regarding this process of repentance that I mentioned there that we ended on in verse 18 of Revelation 3. This thing of repentance becomes exceedingly important if we want to change, if we want to walk in the spirit. To walk in the spirit means you want to change. To walk in the spirit means we have to be continually be repenting. Because self has to change, and it doesn't just change when we first come into the church and make the big changes. The refining of our lives on a spiritual plane, those are the greatest changes of all. Those are the things that determine whether or not we're going to be able to be sealed one day and become a part of Elohim, a part of the family of God.

2 Corinthians 7:8 he's addressing here what he had written to them and the reaction that it had in their lives. Hit them pretty hard, which they needed, because it had to be addressed. He's talking about some of this. He says, **For even if I made you sorry, to grieve, with my letter...** That's what the word means, "to grieve." They grieved over what he addressed. You know, they had this communication back and forth and he learned upon this upon the time of the second letter, that what he had stated before now, they had grieved in response to what he had stated. So he's addressing this.

He says, **I do not regret it**, that you're grieving, that you came to a point of grieving over this, over what I said before in the first letter, **even though I did regret it**. Because there are things you don't want to have to address (let's put it that way), as a minister. You don't want to have to address difficult things, but you have to. You don't want to have to address things that are not pleasant, but you have to. You have to in your own life. There are things in family sometimes you have to address, or with others that you have to address because it's right before God to do so. To not address it, to ignore it is a big mistake when it comes to spiritual matters or our spiritual lives.

So he says, yes, it's hard, yes, it was difficult. He said, "Though I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it, even though I did regret it." See, it's saying this was hard, this was difficult. I didn't like doing it. I regretted having to do it. It's like something I've said in the sermon that's pre-recorded that's coming. I got a little bit strong in one particular area. Afterwards I thought... like that same feeling. But there are things that just have to be said sometimes.

...even though I did regret it. For I know that the same epistle made you grieve, although it was only for a while, just a short time. "You got through it." Yes, it's difficult when we first hear something.

You know what? It's difficult when we see certain things in our self that hurt. When you see self for what it is. That's why we don't have to see it magnified. Sometimes there are certain things that happen in our life that bring certain things to the surface, like, wow, this is ugly. There are certain time that are stronger in that regard than others because of something we probably have

done, in that respect, we've succumbed to something else in the world, something else in "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life," that God has blessed us to be able to see. That's a blessing, because if we can't see those things, if we don't see them, then we're in exceedingly dangerous territory.

So thank God He shows us and helps us to see things in us. It's not good. It's not a pleasant thing to have to go through. But we have to go through it from time to time. That's why I said earlier here when we read that, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." It's not a pleasant thing, but it's a needful thing. It has to happen because our nature needs to change.

...although it was only for a while (short time). Now I rejoice... Now, after this length of time, now writing you again, I rejoice because of what it did. I rejoice that we went through this. I rejoice that this happened. **Now I rejoice, not because you were made to grieve, to sorrow, to grieve over what was brought to the surface that you'd been doing in your life, but that your sorrow (grief) led to repentance.** What a blessing. If we can be brought to that from time to time in our lives, to see certain things, especially when we're not doing what we should be doing and that needs to be addressed, maybe a specific matter in our life and that needs to be addressed because it needs to be changed, because it's destroying us, because if we don't change it we're going to be on the outside!

Every year people are gone! Every year people leave! Horrifying to see that process! I hate it! But that's their choice. It's a choice and it's exactly what we're talking about here. It's a choice.

If we can be brought to a point where we grieve over something we see in our life then that's a good thing. It's a really good thing! It really is. If you can be brought to the point where you feel like you'd like to crawl under a rug, you don't even want to be around anyone for a while, you feel low. There are times we need to feel really low. There are times you can do that by practice and learn from it or there are times that God will bring you face to face with something and then hopefully we'll respond properly. Sadly, sometimes people don't respond that way. Usually when it comes to a point of time of someone being separated from the Body they've gone too far and they can't even be brought to that anymore. Can't even happen. Can't be shaken to that reality, to that thinking, to that potential for being brought to a point of grieving for what they're doing.

Verse 9—Now I rejoice, not because you were made to grieve, but that your grief led you to repentance. It's beautiful. It's absolutely beautiful because that means you want to think differently, you want to change, you don't want to be the way you are. And candidly, we just have to change because there are things that God will not accept. So when things are brought to the surface like that and we're able to see it, that's our moment; how are we going to address it, how are we going to face it? Are we going to cry out now for help to change or are we just going to kind of feel bad because it was found out, because maybe some conversation with somebody else, but we don't feel bad enough that we're going to fight against it, we don't feel bad enough that we're going to change it, we don't really grieve on a spiritual plane. You understand that difference?

That's like Esau. He grieved. He doesn't get the blessings. He doesn't get the inheritance. But it wasn't to repentance. He just felt bad. So we can just feel bad about something without change, without making a change because it doesn't lead us to repentance.

So Paul is addressing something here that is needful. It's something that has to bring us, motivate us to want to change, to desire to repent, to think differently. "I don't want to think like this! I don't want that in my mind!" Boy, those are blessings. The more you can do that, the more you can see when your thinking isn't what it should be, to cry out to God and say, "I don't even want to think that way! I don't even want it to come into my mind! But it does because of my nature, but I don't even want it there." So the more you repent in those areas, the more it's not a part of you. The more you hate it, well, that's what this is talking about.

It goes on. So again, **but that your grief led you to repentance. You were made to sorrow (grieve) after a godly manner...** See, there's a difference between a godly manner and a carnal manner. Esau did it after carnal manner. "I don't get... I don't..." Look, just over a bowl of porridge. You know, different things that happen in people's lives. Sold his birthright. You think, what a horrible thing. But then he was sorry about not receiving what he thought he could have. Anyway, that's what we're like so often as human beings. We might get caught in something. We might have something happen in our lives. We might come even face to face with it without knowledge of anyone else, but if we don't hate what's wrong that we see, that it comes to the surface, that God lets us see... Because so often God's involved in that. He is. Our ability to see it.

Now, sometimes if it involves others then we really see it and then we have grief. But it better be the right kind of grief. It better be the kind that's a godly type of thing and not a carnal thing. Because the selfish part of it is you just can't continue to have what you want to have. "I can't just continue to go to services and have my friendships with everybody." That happens! Sometimes people come to a point where they're grieving more—I could read you lots of letters even in the last couple of years—where people are grieving over something physical that they can't continue to have, but they don't change. They don't grieve to a point where they seek to repent and change what they've been doing that's wrong.

So that kind of grief is selfish. So even there we can grieve selfishly or we can grieve after a godly manner. The godly manner leads us to repentance, leads us to focusing upon God and realizing, "I don't want to be like this. I want to change," and that's the purpose of it. The choice is ours. Carnal, selfish, feeling bad, or is it because we really want to change because we loathe what we see, we loathe what we see. You've really got to loathe selfishness to change it. So again, incredible how these things are stated.

You were made to grieve after a godly manner, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. So he's talking about himself, about those serving in the ministry and what had to be told to the Corinthians and he said, "So there is nothing negative about any of this. It's all positive." Now, it's negative if you don't respond properly. It's just going to be hurtful to you and to us

because you didn't hear, because you didn't listen, because you didn't cry out to God for change. But if it's after a godly manner and it leads to repentance and you're changing then that's only everything that's positive and good.

Verse 10—For godly sorrow (godly grief) works (produces) repentance. That's what it produces. So we can know in our own lives if we're really repenting, if something happens. If we're not repenting of something that's been shown to us, told to us, maybe we try to justify it, whatever it might be, because those things go on in the human mind where, "You don't really understand the situation." A lot more than you will ever know, a lot more than you will ever know because of God's spirit. God manifests things. At times I've tried to tell the ministry things like this in this nature, that because of an ordination sometimes, not sometimes but so often, depending on what you are working with, there are times where you may have to deal with a matter that it's a matter of God's spirit giving you the ability to see something that otherwise you wouldn't be given the help to see it because you don't need to. But there's a need for the ministry to see it so that they can work with it so that they can be informed, so that they can realize, and so that hopefully, prayerfully, when the timing is right God works with whatever the situation might be, to bring something to light, to be engaged. Not to interject, but to be engaged in following whatever God leads in. May or may not receive that in different levels here.

The reality is that there's a process here that we go through and so we have to be careful in those kinds of situations when something is given, the ability to see. That's why I say no one can ever make excuses and say, "Well, you don't really understand. I don't think you heard the whole story." It's like, "I don't even really have to see the whole story. I already know what's happened. Expressions like, "I wasn't born yesterday," could be used. But especially in the ministry because God trains and works with us to be able to help His people, and that process is an ability to see and perceive things in order to do so. Because without that help then how can someone truly be helped themselves? God gives that ability. Otherwise there's no need for it.

So people have to be very careful how they use that, so that's why I mention, even within the Church, within the Body you have to be so careful because you can see your own human nature, or you should be able to. The more that you do see it, the more you grow spiritually, be careful of how you deal with people in the world around you or even within the Church. Because if you're really growing there are going to be situations you're going to be able to see, because the more you see it in yourself the more you're going to be able to see it in others. It's the way it works. The more you do, the more you have to be careful about how you judge then because then you can condemn yourself before God.

We've had sermons like that not too long ago about judgment. You can condemn yourself before God in the very thinking that you can see, but you're not dealing with it properly with the gift that God has given you. So we have to be careful, have to be on guard.

For godly grief (sorrow) works (produces) repentance that leads to salvation. That's what it's about. That's what our whole life is, isn't it? It's one of constantly needing to repent of what we

are, of what we do, and when that selfishness does pop up to repent. How often do we have to do that? Well, if you really see your nature you're pretty much going to have to see that every day of your life because it is there. It's there! You're in a human body. Guess what? It's there. Deep, deep down inside it's there, selfishness. You're going to do things to take care of this first. That's your nature. That's my nature. That's why when things don't go the way we want to we can be irritated or unhappy or frustrated or whatever emotion comes out of us, "Because I don't feel good like I want to feel and you're the cause of it!" You know, "You're driving like that? You're nuts!" See? No. If I let it bother me, I'm nuts. Seriously. It's our reaction to things around us in life that count.

For godly grief works repentance that leads to salvation. That's what God wants in our life. What a beautiful thing. **And that is not to be regretted.** On the contrary. It's to be rejoiced in. That's what Paul said. He says, "I rejoice." If it produces the right thing, wow, that's what it's about. We're all on the same boat. We're walking in this together. That's what makes us a family.

...but the sorrow (grief) of the world works (produces) death. Why? Because there is no change. There is no change, if we don't change, and if we kind of stay in this status, state of being lukewarm about things and kind of relying on ourselves and not really practicing and living what Christ over and over again said we should be doing, and seeing our need for God's spirit.

There is that water that we need on a daily basis. There is that bread we need on a daily basis. If we don't grasp those principles and what he was saying then we're missing the mark, we're not understanding "I need it every day." That's why it's likened to water. How often do you need water? How often do you need bread or food? Every day. Say, "Well, this is spiritual so that lasts longer; I don't need it necessarily every day." I don't know what we think, if we're even thinking, obviously. But the point, the analogies are there for a purpose and a reason. Yes, we do. If you're breathing, your nature is there. If you're breathing... Well, you may be asleep though if you're breathing, so maybe it isn't acting right then. But as soon as you're up it's going to be there.

Good morning! How we wake up may have a big bearing. You know, that's a good one there. How do we wake up? You know, I don't know, people wake up in different ways sometimes. It's like, "Okay. Get a hold of it."

...but the sorrow (grief) of the world works (produces) death. Because a person isn't changing, and that can happen within the Church. **So look at what has happened to you by having sorrowed (grieved) after a godly manner.** That's what he's saying. You know, some of these translations sometimes kill me because they can't help it. They don't understand things spiritually. They don't understand some of the words, what they mean in the sense of what God is showing to us and revealing to us about this process that goes on in our life.

He's just telling them, "Look at what's happened to you. Let's look at this realistically now because of this has happened. Now, look at this, learn from it." That's what he's saying, "Learn from this." So, "Look at what's happened to you by having sorrowed (grieve) after a godly

manner.” It’s good to learn this. **What diligence it’s worked... What diligence...** Because, you see, it reported back to him all that had transpired because of what he had to address in the first letter, and so this big change took place in Corinth, in the Church, as a whole.

So he said, **What diligence it has worked**, has produced. Diligence. What does that mean, diligence? Well, it’s talking about this process of repentance. That’s what it’s addressing here. He’s talking about a right kind of repentance, a kind of grief and sorrow of seeing the ugliness of self, seeing what it’s capable of doing, how it’s able to say hurtful things to others, uncaring things, how it’s able to judge so harshly, so critically and not be filled with the mercy, the mind, the love of God, the peace of God. So those things should grieve us inside. The more we grow, the more those things will be active in us.

So he says, “Look here! Look at the diligence now that’s been produced in you. You weren’t diligent before. These things just happened! You just gave into them. Now you’re not. It’s produced something in you that’s good, a diligence to repent.” That’s why if we’re not diligently repenting on a daily basis, looking and understanding our motives for things we do and think?

So again, **What diligence it has worked** (produced) **in you**; it says there “what,” yes, but it’s saying, **but the clearing of yourselves...** That’s what this is about. It’s a clearing of yourselves, your desire to be cleared of the sin. You want to repent. You want the sacrifice of Christ as your Passover to be placed in your stead. You’re crying out to God to have mercy upon you, to forgive you, and you’re thankful for that. Thank God we’re able to be forgiven of our sins so we can go on and keep fighting this, to be diligent about fighting whatever it is we’re in, doing, addressing in our lives.

But the clearing of yourselves, but of indignation, this is what’s there now. What a good thing this attitude toward sin and to be riled up about it, what’s inside of us. **...but of fearing.** That’s healthy to have a right kind of fear of where if these things continue and we’re not making changes where will it lead?

...but a vehement desire. That means a longing, a longing to be different, a longing to change, a longing to grow, a longing to become different, a longing not to remain the way we are.

...but zeal... Again, this thing of zeal. You have to be zealous. To fight this fight you have to be zealous about it. It’s not just putting on the sword and going around, looking around, seeing where the battles might be and doing it nonchalantly and, “Well, I’ve got my sword on... I’m all ready.” But zeal, to do what we do zealously, seriously, taking it seriously. We’re on guard. We’re ready.

...but revenge, or vengeance, as the word is, **against sin!** You don’t want it to happen again. You’re fighting against it. That’s where the battle is. You’re battling self. You’re battling against the wrong things that come out. There has to be a zeal in that. To have zeal there has to be work being done. It’s the way we think. It doesn’t just happen.

Sometimes, too often, candidly, people live as though it's going to happen because I went to Sabbath services, I heard that sermon. Okay, what did you do during the week after? Zeal? To fight? To recognize you're in a fight? To engage in prayer life more fully? To make sure that every day we're addressing certain things about our nature and a desire to conquer and overcome it, crying out to God to dwell in us? We don't want to lose that. We fear losing it. What fear? We should fear not having God's spirit in us every day.

But if we don't pray, you know what? Where is the fear of being without God's spirit? I'm not talking about the attitude in times past where people thought they had to put in long periods of time. It's not about that! It's about just doing it and realizing there's a relationship there. How long does it take to address certain things about self and about our own nature? Some things don't take a whole long time, but we do it because we fear not addressing it, because we fear going out in the world, out in the day without God's help. Because if we're just relying on ourselves, we're going to be of a lukewarm spirit and we're not even going to see all, we're not even going to see all this spiritually.

So what vengeance, again, what zeal? In all things you have proved (are proving) yourselves. So this is the report he's receiving back. "You're proving yourselves. You're putting these things to work." That's what it's about. You know, you go out and prove the oxen; you go out and prove something to see how it works, to see if it's producing like you want it to. You're doing it yourself, you're proving it, you're putting to practice these things, this desire to change, to think differently. You're doing this. You're proving yourself. You're engaged. And if we're not engaged it's not going to happen. It's not going to happen.

So in all things you have proved yourselves to be cleared (purified) in this manner. So this is, "Look at the fruit that's been produced. This is what you did. Now apply this to all aspects of your life continually." That's what this is about. That's how you repent.

It's not just repenting when all of a sudden something really bad happens and all of a sudden you see a giant whiff of self. It's like you get into something big that happens. Well, hopefully if we're growing we're going to catch things sooner, we're going to catch them more quickly so that the big things that we maybe did in the past, things we said or judged or whatever conflict or gave into "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life" will become less and less the more refined we become.

So again, we cannot be lethargic and lukewarm about living God's way of life. We can't just go through the motions; we have to fight for it. That's what this is all about. Fight! That's where zeal comes from. It comes from being engaged, fighting.

We won't be fighting if we fail to grasp that we really are in a battle, if that's not real to us. How real is it that you're in a battle? How real is that? Only you can answer that. If you see your nature, the more you see your nature, the more you're going to realize this was a battle. It's a daily battle. If you try to do it without God's help during that day it's exactly what it's addressing

about Laodicea - rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. Because we don't see what we need, we don't really grasp it spiritually.

Matthew 6:16. So again, we have to grasp that we really are in a battle and that we have to have God's life dwelling in us in order to fight that battle. Because there is no other way to fight it. You can't fight it on your own. You can't rely on your own abilities to fight what we have in front of us. That's what people do when they don't pray on a daily basis, they're relying on themselves. They're not looking to God. They're not keeping focused on God and where the help comes from, that we are in a battle. So we have to see ourselves realistically.

At the beginning of the last sermon we were reviewing the outline of prayer that Christ gave us. A few verses later, this is where we're going to break in now, on the subject of fasting was covered. Matthew 6:16.

Now, I will say this very clearly because it happens too often and sometimes it can happen a lot. That if someone hasn't fasted since atonement or even for a year now, you're kind of leaning toward just that thing of relying on yourself. Because you know what? If you really see the battle you're going to realize that you need God's help. There are things you need to go through in humbling yourself before God more often because it's a focus.

This is being driven home in some of the things. I think about writing, and I'm on Chapter 9 right now because Chapter 7 got split up into two chapters. So I finished seven because I split them up, because it was already done. There was so much, it was getting so large so this needs to be broken up. So anyway, I made Chapter 8 and I was almost at the end of Chapter 7 anyway, so two chapters, seven and eight. There you go. So I'm on Chapter 9 now, the last chapter, and talking about the Sabbath, the holy days, God's plan, how we can know these things. It's a marvel. The only way that one can be focused on God's holy days, God's plan, and grow in those things is because of the very process God's given us to observe what we do as often as we do. The weekly Sabbath, once a year the annual holy days that magnify God's purpose, those things help us to keep focused.

Even some of the things for us in this end-time, the markers we talk about now. Those help us to keep focused. Those have been a great blessing to God's Church, because without them most would not be here today, if any, if we hadn't gone through some of the things we've gone through and being able to have a hope, a focus that's not so far away, but a little bit closer to keep focused to be in a race. Because it's just like a race, it really is. Those things help us to keep running, to keep focused. We need them because of what we are as physical human beings. We have carnal minds, physical minds, and to deal with them on a spiritual plane, well, that's where we need God's help on a daily basis and we can put those things together and learn from them.

See, just like the physical food. How often do you need that? Well, you better get the point because if you need the bread of life, how often do you need that? Sabbath morning pray about it? The weekend? Oh, please, hopefully it's every day.

Matthew 6:16—Moreover, when you fast... So it's taking for granted that we fast. It's what Christ is saying to the Church, because they couldn't understand all the things they were saying then, until you have the impregnation of God's spirit. What he taught was for later, primarily, obviously. They all had principles, even the parable, everything was about that which would come later when people would be able to grasp and understand what he's saying.

So it's a given here, "When you fast." So that reveals a very powerful thing within us. Prayer does, of whether we're relying on self. Those are two of the greatest things that really reveal whether or not we're just going through the motions and relying on ourselves, whether we're rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing. Because if we really get it we're going to know, "I need help." This is another one.

Moreover, when you fast do not be like the hypocrites who have a sad countenance (gloomy look). At that time there it was this show. He's showing here that even more so than prayer, it's something that's private between you and God. Because you have to be very careful. Human nature is so deceitful and if it begins to share with others... It's kind of like that prayer closet thing I mentioned in Big Sandy. People go in all these closets there and some would wax eloquent and you'd have to find another time for prayer because you can't think because they're so loud. They don't realize, no, you shouldn't be able to hear anything. God will hear you. You can move your lips, you can think it. God hears it. That's something unique with God because there is a spirit essence in here that's spirit, that's of spirit, and we communicate through that to God. It's our mind.

God doesn't rely upon, "Hey! Can you hear me? Can you hear me now?" like we do. It's not like that. It's spiritual. God hears. God knows everything you're thinking. He knows everything that's churning around inside there. That should be scary. But it's good to know that, and to be thankful for that, because He can bring out the scary parts. There's a lot of scary stuff in here that needs to be brought out, that needs to be looked at, that needs to be fought against.

I marvel when I think about God's plan. It's so dumbfounding to know that He created an angelic realm first for such a great reason, because it's all mapped out. It was all mapped out from the before anything was ever created, how He was going to create Elohim, and that way that He gave by creating the angelic realm as He did and one being who was given more than all the others. It was his choices, because he was given everything, but God knows what we'll do. God gives us the ability when He calls us to change those things inside of us.

But for them they had everything. They had knowledge of everything, what God gave to them to that point in time, of what He was doing. They didn't know anything else. To me that's such a marvel, to see what developed in this one being, a different spirit, a spirit that God would one day allow to be created within human beings. A selfish spirit. That's why we're made physical. Because as soon as you come out "Waaaaah!" If you're not happy? As you grow and you go through various stages - I think of terrible two's. We had one that I'll never forget that. But when you live through those things you watch human nature develop. Have a grandchild and I marvel sometimes

because you see that human nature. You think, that's the way we are. We just get big and we become worse, but we don't realize we're much worse because we become expert.

That's why I think about those who lived for hundreds of years. They were so bad. To live in a human body, to have that carnal nature, that for hundreds of years to become so professional at what you're doing, so deceitful in how you're living? Because that's the way they were. They were expert at it. They would run circles around you in some of those kinds of things, to manipulate to get their way. Because you know what? Human beings do that. We try to manipulate. We try to get people to do things the way we want them done. Why? Because that's when we're happier. "It's my way." Oh, isn't that amazing.

So to marvel at how God created us, starting there, so that we are made physical so that we can experience that first. To know then something so incredible that's beyond the angelic realm, so undeserving of?

Just to have physical human life, what a blessing that is. To recognize that God gave us everything we have to experience, to enjoy, but to understand that can go on through time we don't grasp with no end. But we have to get rid of this. It's the selfishness. That's why we have to come to see how ugly this is. Because it can't be in Elohim. It can't be in God's family. And He ensures that. It's not going to be there.

That's why the comments were made, that's why God made it very clear that at the end of the Great White Throne those who are lukewarm they're not going to be there. It's not going to happen. It's wrong. It's contrary to God. It's contrary to the mind of God. It's contrary to the purpose of God. To give such a person eternal life? That would be disastrous, far worse than what happened in the angelic realm.

So we're to marvel at what we're in. We have to come to see the very things we're talking about here, about this battle, and fasting is a powerful tool in combating that. It's one of the most powerful tools that God's given us spiritually in an arsenal, to battle. Because it helps us to focus upon things that unless we're kind of just going through the motions and, "Well, it's been a year. I need to fast." Uh, wake up! That's a good one to see. I'm being a little facetious in some of this. I hope you understand.

But we need that in our life just as we need daily prayer in our life, a relationship with God. Fasting is something that helps us to focus on - what did we just talk about earlier? Hmm. You're without food and water and how joyful is that? It's not a fun thing. It wasn't meant to be fun. Atonement isn't a time you get up and just, "This is fun! I love this." Now, we do spiritually by knowledge and we recognize the value of it, but as far as our carnal human nature, "What are we going to eat tonight? Man, that glass of water is going to be so good." It's good to look forward to something, you know, to realize what you're going through, but to learn the lessons in the midst of it all.

You know, it's hard for the human body to go without food and water, and that's good to learn, to know. Because what is that supposed to teach? Every time we fast that should be the predominant thing in our mind because we're humbling ourselves to focus on something, like God has us focus on holy days and the Sabbath and the purpose of it.

So is fasting. "I need God! If I can't go without food and water for a day and this hurts and doesn't make me jump up and down for joy," I do spiritually, please don't misunderstand. But physically your body doesn't. After a while it's just a part of routine of life and there may be certain time when it's harder than others and you're reminded again because you realize you're fighting this and you're going to do it no matter what because it's time you set aside. You humble yourself before God, and your prayer is about, it should contain those things. "I know the importance of humbling myself before You. Thank you for teaching us that. Help us to do this. Help us to do it more often," if need be, whatever it might be in our lives. Because I know what it means to go without food and water and I know what I do to my body because it gets weaker. It just gets weaker pretty fast. Isn't that an amazing thing? Certain things can happen to you, whatever that might be. Anyway, we're all different in what we go through when we fast, but it can teach us spiritually if we're learning from it.

If we're just doing it as an exercise, "Well, God commanded it, so sunset, it's going to be Atonement," and we go and do it, it's what's in the mind, the value of it. "Father, I know that I need daily food spiritually. I know that I need the water of life daily." See, that's what it's teaching. The physical leads to understanding the spiritual, and if we can get those things then we can keep better focused upon them, what they teach, just like all the physical things that God has us do. Like with Passover, Unleavened Bread and on and on it goes, they are physical things we do to learn spiritual lessons because that's the way we are in this physical body. We need those things to help us to grasp more deeply than with God's spirit to drive it home. That's what He does in us, thank God.

So he's saying here there is a right way of doing this and there's a wrong way. So the wrong way is to do it out of vanity and pride or whatever, and to have others know, "I'm sorry, I can't do that tonight, today, because I'm fasting. I know I won't feel like going out afterwards because sometimes I don't feel so good afterwards. So, I'm fasting. Did I mention I'm fasting?" Anyway, you understand what I'm saying.

If we're not careful we can be like the guy that goes into the temple and they had this metal container so they throw the coins against the side, "Whew! Man! Look!" They don't do them all at once. They just do one at a time and they want it to be loud. Why? Well, it's not about the giving to God and the blessings of life they have. It's, "Look how much I have to give." That's the way it got with the sacrifices. "Oh, I brought up a pigeon. Look, he's bringing a bull. Boy! Man!"

Human nature. That's how people think. That's the way we are as human beings too often. God doesn't want any of that in that. He just wants it to be done in secret. Just like the prayer, we

just do it in secret between us and God. Now, in a family people are going to know sometimes or catch someone, “Sorry I barged into the room,” or whatever.

This thing about fasting, he says, don’t do things where you disfigure your face, change your appearance so that you appear to be fasting to others. It’s amazing what people went through back then at that time. But those are physical things, very physical things, but we learn the spiritual part of it, the aspect of it, that this is between myself and God, as a whole. Now, obviously, if it’s in a family others in the family are going to know, need to know that you’re not going to be eating at that particular time. But you’re not calling up your neighbors and people in the Church, “Oh, I can’t do that today. I can’t, I’m sorry, I got you in my plans, because I’m fasting.” Anyway, you understand what I’m saying.

Candidly, just so that’s not even brought out, I would find almost anything else as a purpose of something I have to do and not mention that, see? Because that’s private between you and God. It’s about a private relationship between you and God. That’s what He wants us to see.

Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. The ones that go in the temple and they throw it in there and everyone hears it?

But when you fast anoint your head and wash your face, in other words, do what you do every day, clean up. If you’re not doing that every day you’ve got some other problems. So it says, **anoint your head and wash your face so that you do not appear to others as fasting, but unto your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.** So again here, it’s mentioned as something that is just taken for granted this is what we do. Again, the reason we’re talking about this today is because it reveals a lot about our human nature and whether or not we are engaging in something periodically.

There is no specific time or amount of time that God says we have to do that. But it’s up to us. Sometimes when you’re confronting the greatest battles, those are the best times to cry out to God, “I need help to see things properly, to work through this. Something is coming up and I need help so I can think clearly and think right and be right and be right with You and do this in a proper manner. I’m asking for help to do it Your way spiritually, not my carnality to come out.” So there are things that happen in our life where we know about maybe in advance, or maybe as they’ve just happened, perhaps sin in our life that’s come to the surface, that’s a time to fast. It’s about humbling ourselves before God, “I need Your help to quit, to change, to control my tongue,” or whatever it might be, “because it’s an unruly member in this body.” It really is.

That’s what God says. Like a small rudder on a ship, look what it does to a huge ship. This thing here, it’s full of evil, God says, basically. It’s like a match that starts a forest on fire, those analogies that are given. Something so little, so small can do so much damage and we can hurt people. What a horrible thing to hurt others, but we can do that. We can do it on the job. We can do it, whatever it is, because we’re more concerned about self.

So anyway, battles. The greater the battle, candidly, the more the need for something like this to add to our arsenal of prayer now with fasting. That's like bringing the cannons up, okay? It really is. It's bringing the cannons up. You want some big ole' Gatling gun? That's it. It's fasting.

I think of some of the things... I don't know if I can mention any of those or not. I think of this area. I won't go into too much here. Maybe I shouldn't even go into it at all. When I was here a long time ago getting certain training I had some of the greatest spiritual battles of my life in the sense of having to deal with things that I was seeing and had to address. It was difficult and those are the times that you have to fast more if need be. Those are the times you have to cry out to God more because you know you need help to do things properly, to do things right. So whatever they are in life. I don't want to go into anything.

But anyway, fasting, it's a powerful, powerful tool. It really is, and if we're not using the one of prayer we're missing the mark and we're relying on ourselves. Fasting, if it's been a year, several months, we need to think about it. Are we really doing that well? Are we so good? Are we rich and increased with goods? Are we really doing so well that we don't need to do that very often? We just kind of do it once a year at Atonement? You can't. If that's all that's in our life then we're missing the mark and we are relying on self. Self-reliance.

I was going to go back and read some of these other things, but I'm not going to. Let's go on and look at an area here that I thought was interesting as going through some of this. I'll just read the verse; you don't need to turn there. Well, you're going to have to go to Revelation 3 anyway, so you might as well.

There are some things over here that we're going to look at concerning the different eras of the Church, of what God had to say because it all has to do with warfare. It had to do with fighting. It has to do with battles. Every era was reminded that they were in a battle, that you have a war that you're dealing with. Because there is no other way to come through all this, to become a part of God's Family, without recognizing this as a reality in our spiritual lives.

Again here, just as a reminder what it said to the last era of the Church, **Revelation 3:19—As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous...** Be zealous, the opposite of just coasting. The opposite of being lukewarm. The opposite of being unengaged. Because that's what it is, being unengaged in those tools and using the tools that God has given us to conquer and fight against this, and we're not. **...and repent.** That's what it's all about.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. You know, God gives us every opportunity. He does things in our lives every Sabbath, every holy day, and other times in our life too where He is there reminding us. There are things that God will communicate to our minds, that something will come to our mind. Maybe fasting. "Oh, I'm pretty busy this week." It goes out of your mind because you have so much going on. It's like you have so much going on you don't have time for it, you can't do it. Hmm. Sometimes because you've got too much going on is when you need to do it.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door. So it's up to us. What are those doors? Prayer, fasting, and crying out to God. If He's knocking on the door and we're not answering and we're not crying out to God and we're not praying, it's like being on the other side of the door and "Meh. I don't think I want to let you in today. I've got too many things going on."

There is a poem I used to keep in my Bible. I used to read it on occasion. But it goes through this process of talking about how they had so much to do, had to rush right into the day type of thing, and it was this thing of God being left by the wayside, basically, on the side. I wish I had that still. But toward the end it came around to the point finally where they talked about there is so much going on and because they realized there was so much going on that they know they needed to pray. Anyway, it's a great poem showing the importance if we really see what it is we're engaged in in our life without God we're missing the mark. If we see these things and we recognize the need for God then what an incredible blessing.

So here it's talking about this process of knocking and if anyone will hear will we open the door? That's what prayer is about. It's opening up the door to the blessings of life, that God has a power that we're able to experience, and a communication with Him, a relationship, to ask for those things, to seek those things, to keep our minds focused on the battle that's before us. Because that's what it's about. It's about this fight and it's about learning to pray for others, learning to whatever it might be that we're engaged in, that we recognize this need for prayer in our life. Not just for self but for others as well. So we learn from these things.

There is a desire that God has then to give us more. Because if we let Him in, man, that's what it's about. We want God. We don't want to just let Him into our life; we want Him to stay there all the time. We don't want Him to have to knock at the door, you know, "I want You here all the time." So again, these are the things we're to learn as we go through and read things like this.

It says, **and I will come into him and will dine with him and he with me.** Spiritual food. Where does it come from? It comes from God. So we're dining. There's a relationship there. The more that relationship grows the more God gives us, the greater strength God gives us, the ability to see things in a greater way. I think of the growth the Church has made over such a short length of time.

It's like even writing this book. I've had to go back at times and write some things because of something else God has given to make it clearer. I'm thankful this one is becoming the clearest of all, thankfully, because I don't want to write another one and I want us to be there. I want us to be ready. So anyway, who knows. But prayerfully, this is the outcome of it all.

I'll come in and dine with him, and he with me. To anyone who overcomes... See, that's a Greek word that means "to conquer." What is conquering? It's about a battle. It's about a war. It's about what God tells us we're engaged in. We're engaged in warfare. We're to put on spiritual armor. So we should understand all these physical analogies that are given to us. It's about war

and we have to conquer. To conquer something, you don't do it by relying on self, you want to have weapons, you want to have the things that will help you to conquer, because you can't do it on your own.

So this is what it's talking about to Laodicea. **To anyone who overcomes, I'll grant to sit with me in my throne.** What an awesome thing! To understand what God is offering us - to share everything? To be a part of everything that happens in a grander scale, in a greater way of things that we can't even begin to fully understand yet, but we get a taste of it here and there of what those things mean.

Even as I also... So this is what was being given here from Christ to the Church. This is the message that God gave to him to give to John. **Even as I overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.** So to be at the height of everything, of the purpose God has given us in life. He's going to raise us up and give us things of power, of ability to accomplish and do things that we can't even begin to imagine that makes human natures desire for power and recognition and lust of various things about self and raising up self puny and meaningless, and to have meaning in it because it's a part of what God is doing and we get to share in that.

So again here, the point is that it's about conquering. It's about conquering self first to be a part of this, and that's a battle. If we're not engaged in that battle we don't understand what we're in. If we're not crying out to God regularly and understand that this is a battle, that we have to fight against self, then we don't get it, we really don't get it, we're relying on self. That's the opposite and we're not really overcoming, we're not conquering. What are we conquering if we're relying on ourselves?

Because you can't do anything of yourself. We can't do anything of our own ability spiritually. We can't do anything productive by our own ability, by getting up and saying, "Well, I'm going to do 'this'" or "I'm going to do 'that,'" or "I'm going to go participate in 'this.'" No, you can't do it in a right mind and right thinking without being fully selfish about it as a human being unless God's spirit is in it. You just can't. It requires God's spirit.

Backing up to Ephesus, Revelation 2:7, the very first era. Then to think of what he says, this is what you'll receive. All these things.

There used to be a time when some would take some of these bits out and say that this is for "this" era. My wife and I joke about some of those things, the things that have happened in times past and how people could think about some of those, and they did. A certain thing was offered to Philadelphia, but man, look at this, Laodicea, to rule with God? So it's like Laodiceans were looked down upon, but the reality is if you conquer and overcome this is what you receive. Well, we receive all the things of all seven eras if we conquer and overcome.

Revelation 2:7—Anyone who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says unto the Churches. So are we tuned in? Are we hearing the knock at the door? Are we hearing what God wants to give

to us? Because He wants to give us of His holy spirit. Christ died. That's the reason that Christ died. That's the reason! Not just to be forgiven of sin. That's the beginning of the process. But the desire of God Almighty is to dwell in us, to live in us, to give us a continual flow and supply of His holy spirit so they can continually come into our lives on a continuing basis. Because if that's not happening, we're not growing, we're not changing, we're not overcoming, we're not conquering.

To anyone who overcomes, to anyone who is seeking to conquer, working at conquering, who's engaged in the battle, **I will give to eat of the tree of life...** What is that? The water of life, the bread of life, God's spirit. It's just common sense. That's what He wants to give to us.

So if we want to fight and conquer and we're engaged in the battle, that's the choice. If we're doing that and we want that and we're crying out to God for it then He's going to give us abundance on a spiritual plane. His desire is to pour out His spirit upon us, to help us to grow more and more and more.

So that's why I marvel at how fast things have been coming, what God is giving us right now. ...**which is in the midst of the garden of God.** It's God's to give and only God's to give. It comes from God. The source is God.

Smyrna, **verse 11—Anyone who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the Churches.** So it's again, it's this thing here deep down inside in the spirit, candidly, because it's not just in here. But if we hear these things that God tells us and we recognize the spiritual importance in them and we respond and seek to change and repent and do something different than we've been doing if we're doing it improperly or not doing it enough, or whatever it might be, engaged in a relationship with God, then we need to work to improve upon it, so hearing these sermons, these last three sermons, if we're not doing better in our prayer life and planning to fast, setting times when we realize I need to do this more regularly, it would be good to do this more often.

Anyone who overcomes will not be hurt of the second death. Well, what a blessing, something that God promises. So if we're conquering, if we're engaged in the battle, God will provide everything you need. You don't have to be concerned with such things. I'm not concerned with that because I know the process. I know what God's taking me through. So we have to know those things. We have to know what's in our mind, our response to God and what we're doing.

Verse 17, Pergamos, Anyone who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the Churches. To anyone who overcomes... See, it's "Churches." All the eras. It wasn't just for one era that these things are being said. It's for all time, these principles. There are just certain traits that certain eras had and God brought up certain things that were a greater battle for them. But all of them applied to us, just like I've mentioned that Laodicea's going to be something that's going to be in sermons throughout the Millennium and the Great White Throne. That has to be driven home powerfully so.

To anyone who overcomes I will give to eat of the hidden manna. See, what is this? It's being spiritually fed again, that which only comes from God. It's not something you can see. It's not something in the world. It's not physical. It's from God. Only God can give it.

And will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written... Don't know what that means. Something unique in a relationship with God. It has meaning. It has purpose of what's being stated here, but all about a relationship with God because He wants a personal relationship with every one of us that's unique to us. He's molding and fashioning each one of us to serve in a specific place within the temple, within His government, within His family, and we're going to be more fulfilled than we can even begin to imagine. We can't comprehend those things now.

And will give to him the white stone, in the stone a new name, which no one knows except the one who receives it. So it shows God desires a close personal relationship. What an awesome thing, the Great God of the universe. You can look out there or you can look in magazines, you know, where they've taken pictures of things way out there, and think, God is so incredibly great. Our minds can't begin to comprehend that greatness. And look at what He wants to do; His plan from the beginning of time, before any of this was ever created out there, things that we don't even begin to know that are out there. A personal relationship. How blessed are we that we can have a relationship with God?

I can't help but think about Psalm 8 and what's repeated in Hebrews, "What is man..." "What are we that You're mindful..." "What am I that You're mindful of me? But I'm thankful you are, thankful you have a plan for all of us if we can hear, if we'll listen, if we'll humble ourselves, if we'll fight the fight, if we'll be engaged in it."

Thyatira, **verse 25—But that which you have, hold it fast until I come.** That wasn't for them. This was the longest era. It went for hundreds of years. Wasn't for them to have at that time. It was for later on. It's for all of us, an admonition, "Hold fast whatever God has given you, your present truth." Whatever the truth is at any moment in time, He says to hold fast to it. I look at what's happened to the Church and I realize the Church wasn't able to do that, and primarily because of Laodicea, because of being lukewarm, and only because God had a purpose to wake up some and give them opportunity to be a part of a remnant are some of us here. Well, all of us, because if it weren't for the waking of the remnant the rest wouldn't have been called either. What would you have been called to?

And anyone who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end... So it's this thing of conquering again. Anyone who engages in this battle, if we fight it, if we see it for what it is, **and keeps My works unto the end.** His works. See, there's work involved. He tells us what we need to do. Prayer is one of them. That's something you work at doing. It's not just going to Sabbath services. Those are works. Going to the Feast? Yes. Obeying God in other areas of your life. But obeying that, to understand that's how you grow spiritually - it's the only way to receive of God's spirit on a regular basis is to cry out to God because He's the source of it! If we don't do that we're not going to receive that. So it's work and we have to be engaged in it. It's not just work,
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it's a battle because you have to fight against self to do it, to recognize its importance. The sin you see, you have to fight against this. So we have to conquer.

...**And keeps My works unto the end.** End of what? The end until you don't breathe anymore. It's just a way of life. That's what it's talking about, whatever that end is, or for those of you who are just changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, that's another matter. But no pun intended, don't hold your breath on that one. No guarantees. Some will fit that and others won't so you just do it until it's over.

Anyone who overcomes and keeps My works unto the end, to them will give power over the nations. Now, this especially even focuses more upon that because it's talking in these eras of those who are going to become a part of the 144,000, but there is that which goes beyond that, still is a part of this but in a different plane, in a different way. You think that's not going to be in the hundred year period? You talk about the nations then, all the people who have been resurrected out of every nation through all time, and there's going to be rulership and power given there, responsibility and authority to help people to grow, to change, and to rule.

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in pieces, even as I received of my Father. So, in other words, it's about the authority to help bring about change, the authority to not allow certain things to exist, to take place. There's going to be a lot of power that has to be exercised in the Great White Throne, but in a right way, in the way that God works with us perfectly so then at that time.

Sardis, **Revelation 3:5—Anyone who conquers, fights, battles, overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white garments.** That's what this is all about. Isn't that what it said in Laodicea? Naked? You don't want to be naked. But that's our nature. So we want to be clothed in white garments. That means we're repenting and we're seeking to grow spiritually, closer to God, living by His way more perfectly so that He will account that to us as righteousness.

Because no matter how hard we work at and do those things we're still going to have sin there and we still have to be forgiven it. But He'll forgive us and He'll count that work, that mind, that which we're putting forth in the conquering and the battling as a matter of listening to Him and applying the things He told us that we know so we're living by faith. That's attributed to us as righteousness even though we're not. As long as we're in this body we're not righteous. We're to be walking in it, but every day we have that stuff that just pops up, it's there.

They shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out their names out of the Book of Life, because a lot are. A lot can't be there. A lot won't be there when this is all said and done. Maybe the majority? Time will tell. ...**but I will acknowledge their name before My Father and before His angels.**

Then Philadelphia, **verse 12—To anyone who overcomes.** It means conquers, it means battles, who fights. Not once in a while. Not once in a blue moon, but constantly fighting against our nature.

So again, **To anyone who conquers (overcomes) I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and they shall go no more out of it. And I will write upon them the name of My God.** So we understand that we're able to become a part of a spiritual temple. That's what God is doing, Mount Zion, the Temple of God, Holy Jerusalem, all those things that are used to talk about that which is spiritual, that which God is creating on a spiritual plane in His family.

And I will write upon them the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. Because everyone has to go through the same thing: 144,000, Christ ascended, came back down, we, you know, the 144,000 go up, come back down, after the Millennium there are those who are going to be resurrected and come back down. Everyone has to go through the same process. The bride, that's being received of God and coming back down to do whatever is to be accomplished until it's over. **And I will write upon them My new name.**

So again, over and over again here, things, the blessings God promises, of what it means to be in Elohim, a part of His Family, the great plan that He has, but to be there over and over again, every era - To him, to her that conquers, overcomes, battles, fights. You have to fight for God's way of life.

Romans 12:18—If it be possible, as much as lie within you, live peaceably with all people. So that should be our primary motivation. It doesn't mean that all people are going to respond. There are times to remove ourselves from that which is not a place of peace, if you will, if it's going to be that which pulls you into war and fighting in a wrong way, then, again, strive to do what you can do in the sense of being a peacemaker. That's what it's talking about here.

Dearly beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, to carnal, our normal, natural human response to certain situations. There are just a lot of things that aren't just in life. They're not going to be that way in this life and we have to deal with that.

...for it is written, Vengeance is Mine. What does that mean? It means you want to do things God's way and you want to turn things over to God. There are things that we are not to be involved in. There are things we're not to engage in. We're not to engage in the wrong kind of battles. There is one kind of battle, the one to conquer and overcome, yes, but the battles that are in this world, there are times to back away from. There are times to work for peace. If there's not any peace there you still have to respond in a right way. Sometimes it means to back away totally, to take whatever is thrown at you, whatever it is.

So he says, **Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Eternal.** He'll take care of it in His time...in His time. Sometimes immediately, sometimes a little bit later, sometimes not until the Great

White Throne. But if our mind is right and our attitude is right we really want everyone to come through this. We really want to see people being given the opportunity, if they'll receive it, to change and have the same opportunity I had, hopefully. Not all will, but that's a beautiful thing for those who will, for those we know. We have that desire to them, but it's a personal choice.

Therefore, If your enemy hunger, feed him; If they thirst, give them drink. So there are people who look at this physically and I don't even want to go there. Makes me gag when I think about some of these kinds of things sometimes how we can take them physically. This is a spiritual thing. It's about our spiritual lives, and when it's talking about some of these things, the focus can involve a physical thing, but that's not what it's about at all. It's about something spiritual.

So, "If your enemy hunger, feed them." What does that mean? Is that how you make peace? "I know you hate my guts, and how now you just chewed me out, but let me go buy you a steak dinner. Let's have a bottle of wine. Let's pop a champagne bottle. Oh, this is a great time to..." You understand what I'm saying? It's not what it's about. Do you know how you feed them? Do you know how you help them? By living God's way, by treating them the way God says we should treat others, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." To not respond in kind. To not treat them ugly like they're treating you.

Look at today. I think of politics especially. People are just so downright disgusting and evil and hateful. There is so much hate. This world is stirred up right now in hate in a very powerful way. What a horrible thing.

If your enemy hunger, feed them. It's about God's way of life. It's about living it. That's the only way you can help them. What they take from that they may not be able to do so now, but God says there's coming a time when many, obviously, are going to be able to have a time when they give God thanks for what you did and for how you were and they're going to say, "Now I understand what I did," and they're going to be brought to a kind of repentance that Paul talked about because of what they did to you when God's spirit is working with them.

But if you act in kind or you do things that are wrong you know what would be in their minds? "They're a part of the God Family and the way they treated me and the way they talked, the way they lived?! You've got to be kidding!" So that wouldn't help too much would it? That's why we've got to understand the importance of living this way of life and living it properly.

Therefore, if your enemy hunger, feed them; if they thirst, give them drink. Same sort of thing. It's how you talk to them, it's how you treat them, and it's how you act toward them without any evil in your intent and your heart toward them. That's something that requires God's help to be able to do that in all situations that happen in life.

For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on their head. Well, sadly, sometimes that's how people think, "Bring on the coals!" I'm sorry. You know, it's like, "I want vengeance and I want it..." So we're really not responding in the way God said. If we're doing that we're not giving

them food and we're not giving them drink. We're not reflecting something that's right because deep down inside we're just ugly.

So again here, God just driving home the point, "I'll take care of it. And if it's really evil, what they've done, and the more evil that it is, even if they lopped off your head, I'll take care of that." They have brought things upon them, but what is your attitude toward them? Well, if your head is lopped off you can't think about it. But it should be what it would be in the future, "I want them to succeed. I want them to hear." That's what we must learn from this.

So it says, **Don't be overcome by evil**, don't be conquered by evil. That's a beautiful thing that's being stated here. "Don't be conquered, overcome by evil." That's what the whole point of it is. In other words, don't respond in kind, don't respond the way they're treating you, don't respond with vengeance in your heart; don't respond with a desire to see them have to suffer even in the future. Don't respond in kind, get away from that. Talk to them the way God would want you to talk.

Do not be overcome by evil, but conquer (overcome) evil with good in self and in the world, and that good comes from God.