

Today we're continuing with *Part 2* of the sermon series started last Sabbath entitled *Reviewing the Curse*. We are reviewing and building upon deeper understanding that God has been giving to us that began nearly a year ago concerning the removal of a curse upon the family; and more specifically a curse upon women (a curse upon women is a curse upon the family), that happened right at the beginning of human life on earth and has continued now for 6,000 years.

Adam and Eve both sinned before God and because of their disobedience (as we've been going through and discussing this), as with all disobedience, curses follow and blessings are removed. We're either blessed or we're cursed; obedience/disobedience. It's like laws in motion; it is a part of life, it is a way of life, it is what God established in life. There are ways to be blessed – obedience; and there are ways where we are cursed – blessings are taken away that we'd otherwise be able to receive and have in human life. Life goes awry, life goes astray – things don't go right, unhappiness is incurred in human life; and that's what we've been experiencing for 6,000 years.

As with all disobedience curses follow and blessings are removed; it is just the natural consequence of working against the laws of God. And so this is what we've been reviewing in part last Sabbath; and as a part of the process of reviewing what God began to give us a year ago. I look back at this and I think it's been less than a year since we began addressing some of these things. To me, the context of why we started addressing some of this is awesomely inspiring as well – God opening up an incredible door for us of understanding, of something He is going to start to change, which He has started to change within the past year in God's Church. It's an awesome event! We don't perhaps recognize it as that, but this is an awesome thing that's taking place in God's Church that's going to go on into the Millennial period when Jesus Christ returns.

As part of the process of reviewing what God began to give a year ago we've gone back to look at some of the scriptures covering this subject as well as that posting that I referred to in my personal website on the subject as well. Toward the end of last Sabbath's sermon (I want to catch up to where we were and go back and read just a little bit), we had gone through things in Deuteronomy 28 which is well known by some of you who've been around for a long time. We call it the blessings and cursings chapter. It's about obedience and disobedience, the result of obedience and the result of disobedience. That's what Deuteronomy is about in the Old Testament.

Let's go back to II Peter 2 and just read this again. We ended that particular sermon after reading **II Peter 2:14** that was speaking of people who would not obey God's way and it said... (so this is what was being stated here); **Having eyes full of adultery**, again, speaking of people who would not obey God; this is the result, this is what's happened in human life. **Having eyes full of adultery, who cannot cease from sin; beguiling**, this word here comes from 'to lure', meaning 'to entice', or 'to be enticed'; beguiling – to be lured; **unstable/unsettled souls**: this is what happens to people who go astray; this is what happens to people who sin. So again here **...unstable/unsettled souls: with a heart they have exercised**, it's talking about **beguiling, unstable souls**; this is what happens when people disobey God. This is what happens in human life; the mind – you can't think right! You can't think the way God made us, purposed us to live life. When people make wrong choices the mind changes. We talked about that in the Feast this year, about what happened to Lucifer. It happens in the human mind as well, but

thankfully with the human mind we can repent and God can work with our minds to change them, because it isn't set yet. Spirit, as we talked about that in the angelic realm, is set. It can't be changed. Once it decides to go against God's way of life, that's set. They have no desire to repent, they cannot repent; it's the pollution of the mind that takes place that determines to go against God and go some other way. That's just the way they think then; that's a choice.

Thank God in human life... that's what the marvel is of His creation of human beings, that we have this grey matter with a spirit essence in it that God can mould and fashion; that within time a change can occur to live eternally, to live spirit life, to live in a spirit body.

...**beguiling, unsettled souls: with a heart that they have exercised**, this is what happens with people. It's just like a muscle; you exercise it and you become stronger in it; and this happens in a perverted way. If you exercise the wrong things, as it's talking about here, **with covetous practices**; what's the result? ...**cursed children**: You know what it is? Children who do the same thing as the parents; it happens generation after generation after generation. And the reality is it's just a part of human life.

Let's go on to Jeremiah 17; continuing on in today's sermon, because that's where we left off. In recent time we covered a couple other areas that have covered this area and have spoke of being cursed and most recently we read **Jeremiah 17:5 – For this is what the Eternal has said: Cursed is the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm**, in other words, his strength. He looks to whatever, human life, or to others, or whatever as their strength. In other words, **whose heart departs from the Eternal**. So if you know about God, if you know of God, anything about God... The more that people will obey something from God – any of the commandments. I don't care which... if it's all of them, which man can't do fully, but physically they can strive to do that even as some do; and the more that some strive to live life right, with morality, with the right kind of morality, the better their life is, the more blessed their life is – truly. They're blessed! There are blessings that they can have in this life without even being called! Because they obey and do certain things in a certain way that bring along blessings. And if they disobey then they bring upon themselves heartache and sorrow and twisted minds and twisted lives and distorted things that happen in their life as a result of wrong choices.

If man would just obey *one law: DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY*, what a much better world this would be. A lot of country music would have to change overnight! A lot of other kinds of music would have to change! If people would just obey God in that one area! And *FAMILIES* would be better off. *What a HORRIBLE THING when children grow up in life and don't have what God created them to have – SOMEONE TO LOOK UP TO, to KNOW what marriage is SUPPOSED to be like, to SEE a husband love a wife and a wife love a husband. And we don't SEE that in this world today! What a SICK WORLD we live in because people are selfish by nature! SELFISH! It's sick! We ARE sick as human beings!*

...and so what do children see? They see that bad example – parents who don't love them, parents who use their children as a *weapon* against each other because they *so hate each other* and they go through divorce and they use a child, or children, as a *weapon*! How *sick* is that? I get riled up about that; I hope you do inside! And the more you hate what is evil, the more you'll do what is right. The more you *loathe* those kinds of things in life the better *your* life can be, the better *your* marriage can be. And when a lot of you, because so many of you are new and *not* married yet... God is preparing something great here; and when you become married that *you want* what is right, that *you want* for your children what is right.

This world is SCREWED up! ...in the western world! Truly! So much so because of what parents have done. And children haven't had a chance to grow up and understand what it's like to have a good home, a right home; instead they grow up with twisted distorted minds! You know why? Because they've seen the fighting and they *loooooong* inside, they *miss* not having had what by nature God wants us to have. And so because of this longing of something they don't understand, a child with a *father*, as an example... How many children grow up in life not having a father figure, not having a father who loves them?! ...and because of that they *hurt their entire life* because they're missing something they *never had!* Do you understand what I'm saying?

There are a lot of scars in life in this world because children have not seen and understood what it's like; and God has made something within us that we *long* for. There are people who *hurt*; they go into adult life and they have this *vacuum!* How old can you be and still have battles that go back to how your father treated you, or mistreated you, or didn't care about you? How much trouble have you had in life?

I could go down through here, since there are several of you that I know, and I could ask others of you that I don't know, and you have battles today. I don't care what your age is. You have battles today because of that imbalance in your life – cursed children. Children who aren't able to be blessed and have happy rewarding lives; of things that happened to them. It's common in the world. How many end up in divorce in the United States? I don't even keep track of the percentage anymore but it passed 50% a long time ago. Once? Twice? Three times? Four times? What does it mean after a while? We have a *sick, sick* world we live in; a world that needs to be *healed* – all because man will not obey God. Incredible! Incredible how much we suffer, how much suffering there is in the world today just because people don't have a happiness and a fullness and a confidence in life because of something they've experienced in a *bad* way, they've experienced bad, they've experienced evil in their life.

Another area that we've talked about recently where people experience curses: **Malachi 3:9 - You are cursed with a curse:** speaking to a nation, a nation of people God says, **for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.** And it's under the subject of tithing because we won't give to God what God says is His. It's *all His*, that's the point – *everything is His!* But because some won't obey God... and sometimes even in God's Church people experience this and then they are *cursed even more so* in God's Church because you know what? God won't let you get by with it; whereas the world, they suffer and they don't understand why they're suffering, but in God's Church God makes sure you're going to experience it and you're going to learn from this. In time you're going to understand why *more* has happened to you than might happen to people in the world.

So the use of blessing and cursing; obedience/disobedience – that's really what it's all about.

Let's return to where we left off in the posting entitled 'Women & "The Curse"'. I want to continue reading from where I left off in discussing this last Sabbath. In the subtitle section 'A Curse on Women' starting with that last paragraph we covered last Sabbath.

Satan's success in leading these two people...

Speaking of Adam and Eve.

...to sin (due to the selfishness and pride of human nature) led to consequences. It resulted in that which all sin leads, the opposite of being blessed for obedience, but instead reaping curses for disobedience. Curses are the result of not being blessed and given favor by God. It is a matter of natural physical consequences that God has imposed upon nature when His sustaining power of preservation and favor is removed.

A lot is said there. Sometimes we read right over things in scriptures, whatever it might be, and we don't *grasp* the significance and the depth of what's being said – hence a need to go back through some of this again, and read it again, and emphasize it and explain it in different ways to drive the point home in a great way in our lives because God is giving us the ability to see and to understand these things in a deeper way.

Sin infects the mind and alters how a person thinks.

That's what Peter was just talking about, what we just read; 'beguiling, unstable souls/lives'. That's what sin does. It *infects* the mind and alters how a person *thinks*. It distorts your thinking. The more sin that people allow into their life the more distorted, unnatural, unbalanced, unsound the mind becomes, unable to deal with difficulties and problems in life; it begins to be eaten up by those things instead, their life, the unhappiness that ensues, that comes upon them, that *overtakes* them. Isn't that what it said in Deuteronomy? 'And this will overtake you?' That's what it's talking about! Amazing!

It distorts the capacity for sound and practical thinking as it leads to perverted and distorted reasoning that is further fueled by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

That's what human life is like. That's why the longer I live in this body and the more understanding that God gives me, the more ability to see and comprehend the more I am so thankful for what He's offering us. And that's a part of a process. That's why we get to experience different things, like appendicitis attacks; even physical things. And we're so thankful that it isn't about this body! We're so thankful that it isn't about this physical life; that it's far beyond that – *especially* when it comes to relationships and the healing power that God has, for a desire for Family. Healing that needs to take place in so many people's minds that start with family.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the mind of man began to turn farther away from sound mindedness that can only come from God.

That God gave from the very beginning. Only God can give that – sound mindedness, otherwise we're not sound, we're not balanced in the way God created us to be.

Only God can reveal the way to right thinking and right relationships among people,

That's what the law is about. *The world* doesn't grasp it! The world likes to say, especially the religious world like in the south of the United States, the 'Bible-Belt' "Huh...The law? You're not talking about the 10 Commandments are you? *Thooooose* were nailed to the cross!"

What cross? Anyway, that's another story.

“They’re done away with!”

“Oh, wow, so I can have your car? I can go out and take your car?”

“Oh no... that’s...”

You go through every law, pretty much, and you get down to the Sabbath – “Yep, that was done away with. The 7th day requirement of the Sabbath, the Holy Days – done away with.” Incredible! Human mind, human reasoning. And yet the first four Commandments tell man how to have a right relationship with God. It’s about relationships! It’s beautiful! The Old Testament, people who see do’s and don’ts, who see law... they *don’t get it!* They don’t understand what it’s all about! They don’t understand how God shows us we can have a right relationship with Him, because it all has to do with your thinking and how you think toward your God! *Do you recognize that He is the one that placed you on the earth?* ...and you owe everything to Him, your existence, every breath of air you breathe, every blessing of life comes from God. And we come along and distort it and besmirch it... Sad. Only God can reveal the way of right thinking.

And then the last six Commandments, it’s about family, it’s how to love within a family. It starts in the family and then it goes into community, nations, peoples. And all of the commandments are disobeyed! They’re all disobeyed in the world – that’s why man is so unhappy, mankind; can’t get along, why people can’t get along, why there are so many prejudices, and on and on it goes.

Only God can reveal the way to right thinking and right relationships among people, and that is especially true in the context of this posting of how men think toward women. Even in reading this, many men will “think” that their thinking is right toward women, and yet it is not, and much must yet be changed!

And a year later from when this was spoken, less than a year, and it’s just as true today. I’d say the vast majority of men listening today think that this isn’t a problem and I’m telling you it is. You don’t understand your own mind yet, you don’t understand what God is freeing this world of in thinking and how people think. It’s not something that is removed overnight; it’s not something where God comes along and waves some kind of a magic wand and all of a sudden you’re in some kind of utopia. It doesn’t happen that way. That’s what this sermon series is about – how it happens, how it comes about, how change takes place – which we already really know, but not as well as we need to in this context.

And so, because of so much of that wrong thinking it has affected women as well and how they think about *themselves*, or about men, or about other women. And so this has been *massive* through the families in how people think in the world in societies. It is *totally* upside down in the world!

I’ve said a lot in that last sentence...

Even in reading this, many men will “think” that their thinking is right toward women, and yet it is not, and much must yet be changed!

So how true is it? How real is this? Or do we think maybe this applies to someone else? “I know (so and so). Man, I hope he’s listening!” Or do we see ourselves in the mirror and realize yes, I have changes yet to be made in my life.

Let's go back again to what we were covering in the beginning of this sermon series, Genesis 3:15 – again, just to bring us back on line in thinking about it, what's being said here. **Genesis 3:15 - And I will put enmity between you**, speaking of Satan, **and the Woman**, speaking of the Church as I've already explained in last Sabbath's sermon; **and between your seed and her Seed; it shall bruise/crush/break your head, and you shall bruise His heel.** So again, we went through and explained going back in the New Testament and some other places showing this is the first great prophecy about the Messiah who was to come – born of woman, to come into the world; to have that which is physical in life teaches that which is even spiritual – leads us to that which is spiritual in understanding.

It's like physical healing leads us to understand spiritual healing! And yet my days in Worldwide were primarily filled with people hung up on physical healing and they *didn't comprehend* what it taught – the healing of the mind that is *spiritual* in nature! And so people got far more hung up about doctors and what you should take and medicines and whether you go to a doctor or not or whether that's *sin or not* and you *don't have enough faith* if you do that and *didn't understand at all* what was being said – and were totally unbalance in that area of life! So thank God He's brought us through that to understand what is balanced in life.

I think I mentioned last week where one individual out in Texas one time came up and asked me if he could have a shot of novocaine when he went to the dentist. I said, "It's either that or bite the bullet!" I said that tongue in cheek. I'm going to have novocaine; you can do whatever you want. No sin in that! No lack of faith toward God! It's a misunderstanding of what faith is about, and yet that's the way the Protestant world thinks about faith. They don't understand what faith is. I hope we do now in a greater way than we ever have. And so it's a maturing process that God is taking us through; and so it is here.

This prophecy's about the Church, the Church who is the mother of us all. We're in the 'womb of the mother', as it were, the Church of God in embryo waiting for a time when we're going to be born. We have that umbilical cord, the holy spirit, and that's why when that umbilical cord get's squeezed off and we have no blood flowing you will die; and that's what happens to us spiritually if the blood flow, the spirit of God, that flow of life into us is cut off. That's why we always want Jesus Christ coming into, dwelling in, living in us – Jesus Christ and God the Father. It's essential to growth and development. Sometimes we cut off the flow and we fall asleep and sometimes people do die, spiritually, when they commit the unpardonable sin.

I don't need to go back through all that; we discussed that in last week's sermon.

(Verse 16) - Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; this is primarily about the result of sin in life beginning in families; **in sorrow you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.** We're going to break this down through these sermons and what is being taught here and what God said and why He said it so that we can come to a deeper understanding of these things, truly, on a spiritual plane.

Verse 17 - And unto Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; you, because of what you did, now what was being provided for you, your food, as freely as it was being given to you, now you're going to have to work and you're going to have to toil and your life is going to revolve around, and things are not going to go well in life for you when you disobey. And

thorns and thistles and things you're going to have to deal with, and lack of rain, is what God was telling them; you're going to have to deal with these things and fight for and work for that which was being handed to you on a silver platter – because of your disobedience. And all mankind's going to have to follow suit because of what started here.

...in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the produce of the field; that way, because you have to work and toil to receive it, to get it. **In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread,** I think of the way societies have been through time – you realize that so much has revolved around an agrarian society and the work that people did from sunup to sundown, had to do with providing food a lot of times for families and sustenance in those things, the work that was involved in that? The toil in bringing things in, of growing things and etcetera, etcetera... far more than today. Today we go down to the supermarket, we pay and we take it home and we throw it in the microwave, or we don't even do that – we let somebody else do it for us. We stop by a quick place or wherever it is and take it home and eat it – this fast paced society; and because of that we're falling apart.

In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, until you return unto the ground; for out of it you were taken: for dust you are, and into dust you'll return. Reminding us what we are, where we came from. Everything we have is from God.

A lot revealed here that God said in the very beginning, just as much as there is in that one verse that's prophetic about Satan and about the Church; that the Church, as far as I know, throughout the entire time of Philadelphia as a whole, from close to the very beginning of it when Mr. Armstrong began to teach the Church – that these truths were here – Genesis 3:15 about Satan and about the Church and that this was a prophetic matter. Even the world, in a physical plane, not understanding it spiritually fully, grasped that this is what this is about. It's a prophetic scripture about the Messiah. Little did we know how much it was, which was here, about Him, Jesus Christ, crushing Satan, his head, bringing a total end. Another story that we started to address at the Feast.

The reason for reading part of this is because I want to read to you an answer that came from the teachings of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong concerning these verses that goes way, way back. Here is that answer concerning this beginning of sin in the human family that was sent out to thousands of people who would write in and ask questions about these verses in the literature of the Worldwide Church of God.

ANSWER: When Adam and Eve sinned, they cut themselves off from God and brought the entire creation under a curse.

In the very beginning they were told that they could have something that was unique – access to their God; something that would lead to something in life that we, or a few through time, received in a personal relationship with God because they were called to it, those of us in the Church who all have that opportunity to receive that relationship with God because of the mercy and the grace of God in bringing us out of sin, blessing us and being able to be baptized and having our sins forgiven us because of our Passover, through our Passover. This is where it all began; and all human beings would have chosen the same things because we all have human nature. It's not their fault, in the sense of we can blame...like they were blaming each other, or one was blaming the serpent and one was blaming the wife and on and on it goes. We can't say, "Adam and Eve, if they hadn't have done that... I wouldn't!" Yeah you would! We have to accept our own responsibility for our own sins.

...that brought the entire creation under a curse.

Why? Because... well, let me read what he said...

That curse affected Eve as well as Adam. Eve's punishment may well have included a significant amount of birth pain during delivery. Nevertheless, the *greater part* of her sorrow was the realization that she and her offspring would be cut off from God and His blessings.

Now, she didn't grasp the spiritual significance of that, obviously, but that is what happened, followed in her experiences of life of what she saw and what she witnessed in the life of her children, because what does every parent have a desire for? Especially if you know, if you have anything as far as... even if it's distorted and you don't have it right; people have a desire that people live a right moral... Sadly today so much in the world don't care if their children live a right moral life, but a lot of parents used to, and I think a lot of parents still do; that their children grow up living a right moral life, that they have happy families, that they have happy marriages, that they have happy children... and on and on it goes. I think that most people would really like to have that for their family. And when they don't experience that there's a lot of sorrow when you see families suffer, because they didn't learn certain things, or wouldn't listen to certain things that you try to pass along in your own way that was very imperfect. You know, you don't go to school to be a parent. Isn't that an amazing thing?

Eve lived to see her children grow from bad to worse. Her first born son-Cain-killed his brother Abel.

They saw it; they saw the feuding, the murder. What a horrible thing! The first two human beings saw one child, one of their own children kill another, saw the result of that.

Violence and hatred became *so rampant* in the pre-flood world that God finally had to destroy all life, save Noah and his family.

I'll tell you what, there are some incredible lessons in this that sometimes escape us, in how long human beings lived, hundreds of years at that point in time, and the evil that was in human life because you could live that long – was so sick and perverted because people became so *expert* in evil, in conniving ways, in selfish ways. It led to what God did, finally; and sometimes that's hard for us to grasp and comprehend. Thank God He reduced it to a time period of three score and ten years basically for human life, seventy years. It's all we really need to have evil, to learn from evil, to see evil, to experience evil in this physical life.

Eve lived to see her children and their children's children...

The children's children and *their* children's children...

...living in a totally degenerate and unhappy state.

Curse? That's what this is about! Not about physical pain and suffering that may be, as in birth; yes that's a small thing that existed there, that is there. But the *sorrow*? That's another thing! There's one thing about a pain, there's another thing about *sorrow* because you lived through it, because you see things over a period of time...and that's what this is all about first and foremost.

The mistake she made when she listened to the devil and disobeyed God must have weighed heavily on her mind for as long as she lived. The curse of sin...

Interesting... 'the curse of sin'. I had no idea that he wrote and taught this.

The curse of sin will be removed after Jesus Christ returns and establishes His Kingdom on this earth.

Now, I know that it wasn't given to him to understand all that, how it was going to take place, the how was not fully understood; but what an incredible thing that God gave to him to know that it's going to happen. And just to let *you* know... that process is already starting within the Church and it's going to take a lot of work through time. And just like Mr. Armstrong said; 3 – 4 generations to work with people, to work in teaching and helping people to understand. It's going to take that length of time to really get things set in a proper direction. It doesn't mean there won't be sin, doesn't mean that there won't be things in wrong thinking and some of these things that happened and prejudices between men and women...because some of that will always exist through time. But I'll tell you what, there's going to be a great deal of cleaning up and the majority of the curse is going to be removed because of the kind of world that people are going to live in, because of the kind of peer pressure and the truth that's out there – how to live life. And people are going to be *blessed now!*

When you're blessed, the curses go away! When you begin to be *blessed* curses begin to disappear and if you know how to accomplish all that, that's what this is all about. And God's letting us see that in a greater way now. We have always understood in part what this meant but never grasped it fully to what God is giving us and showing us – that we need to put a lot more into because there's a lot up here in the mind that needs to be addressed in a greater way and that's what God is letting us know and understand. And He's giving us the opportunity to begin that process *now*, just before His Son comes back...and then to be able to thrust into a world where this is going to be able to be taught and given in a far greater way and with God's spirit poured out on the earth.

What an awesome thing! That societies are going to begin to change! When women don't have to peek through something with slits for their eyes and be able to walk around with their whole head covered thinking this is pleasing to God, or this is right to a man. *What a sick world we live in* to where they say that's what God wants! That people are so distorted, and the mind is so distorted that people would think that way. What a blessing to have that removed from life! Just in that one society alone... and then in so many other societies of how men treat women – literally – that they're to be behind, not heard, or don't have a say. We live in a really sick world! And some people come out of some of these different societies and the way that people and men treat women, and it's affected the mind, *infected* the mind in a *horrible* way, it truly has. Such a sick world we live in! And the blessing of beginning to be freed from that – what an awesome thing!

So again, found that inspiring to go back and see something written so long ago that God had given, a timeframe, that yes it is going to be removed. What an incredible thing, that all of a sudden that's where we are! And I have *never*... I remember reading a lot of things, but I have *never* remembered reading anything ever like this. Incredible...and here it is! It's like something that's hidden from you for a time for a purpose.

I remember something about Passover one time that was hidden for a purpose. We were over in Erie when some of these things were sent out. It came out in the DELS (Deacon Elders Lecture Series) and so we had all the deacons and elders in the area come in and it was about Passover; and it was presented as being something that we need to understand more about why the Jews keep Passover the way they do. It was the only time I never listened to one of the DELS programs because I thought... "How stupid!" ...presented by Dr. Hoeh... "How stupid! *Why would we care why the Jews keep Passover the way they do?* We know what we're supposed to do before God; what do we have to learn from them?" 14th/15th – that was what it was all about; a perverted, distorted manoeuvre to try to turn the Church to a 14th/15th Passover. That's what his teaching was all about and many ministers swallowed it up... (Those of you who understand what I'm talking about...), about Passover.

So again here, some things sometimes are hidden. The reason I mention that is because if I'd addressed it back then I'd have been probably kicked out the ministry, kicked out of the Church – wouldn't be where I am today obviously. It's like my eyes were blinded to it. I didn't know that's what was being taught. My wife told me some things about it and I said, "I don't care! I don't want to listen to it; I don't want to hear it!" So she saw something different than I did. Interesting.

It's also interesting to note another answer to a question that was sent out by the Worldwide Church of God that came from Mr. Armstrong's teaching as well; from him, here it is...

This individual asked the question...

QUESTION: My church teaches the fall of man. Did Adam and Eve "fall"...

So this has to do with this same area here of scripture...

...or what really happened when they ate of the forbidden fruit in Genesis 3:6-7?

ANSWER: The Bible nowhere teaches that Adam and Eve "fell". To fall implies an accident. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, it was no accident! God clearly told them what would happen if they ate from the forbidden tree. The penalty was death! When the devil (represented by the serpent) talked to Eve, he deceived her into eating the forbidden fruit by appealing to her five senses and to her vanity. However, Adam was not deceived. He ate of the forbidden fruit knowing better.

"But my wife, the one You gave to me... she..."

He simply went along with his wife. This single act of disobedience on Adam's part cut him and all of his progeny off from God's holy spirit. His action, in essence, showed that he did not want to go God's way to eternal life (symbolized by the tree of life). Instead, he decided to determine for himself what was right and what was wrong – apart from God. Adam's progeny has followed in his foot-steps ever since. Adam did not "fall". He disobeyed his maker.

Awesome! I like the way it was stated back there by God in Genesis 3; I'll just read that to you quickly here... at the end of the point where it say being cut off, basically when God addresses all this finally and shows what this means in a greater way as far as the holy spirit is concerned and being cut off from the Tree of Life, from the holy spirit.

Genesis 3:21 - Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Eternal God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And so something that God was going to give to them, the example there of we were naked and grabbed a 'fig' leaf... anyway, going on... or whatever the leaf was, big leaf.

Verse 22 - And the Eternal God said, Behold, the man has become as one of Us, in other words, making himself like, not that he was; but this is what man has done, this is the way man does when he disobeys God – makes himself as God. That's what idolatry is all about, that's what raising up like an obelisk – something you kneel before, before God... and what you point up toward God, that pride and that haughtiness that you decide that you're going to do something different from the way God says to do it, that you're so filled with pride and haughtiness that you're going to tell your Maker, "I know a better way." Or "I know what I'm going to do; I know what's better for me in life." And the spiritual idolatry, the adultery spiritually that's committed there; and people don't understand what it's about; and this is what it's talking about here.

And the Eternal God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: In other words, to determine for himself what is right and wrong. Who has that right? No one! You have no right, I have no right, no human being has the right to determine for himself what is right and wrong different from what God says. God tells us exactly what is right and wrong in life, how to live life. He made us, He created us, He knows the mind, He created the mind, He gave us the ability to be blessed, He gave us the ability to have great minds and great lives and happy lives. But man has done everything the opposite of God; and because of that the happiness that God said could be there hasn't been there in life, the fullness of life. You don't begin to experience that until you come into God's Church...and then you begin.

You can't experience the love of God – a word that people had a difficult time understanding in times past in the Church of God – Agape – it's synonymous with the holy spirit. It's synonymous with God's spirit. It's synonymous with God's mind, with God's being! *GOD IS AGAPE!* It is the way He lives; it is the way He thinks! Totally outgoing – giving – sharing. Man is the *exact opposite* – inward – selfish, dull of pride. Incredible!

And so you don't even begin to experience... people talk about it in the world, they talk about "Oh, I love Jesus. I love God..." And they don't! You tell them about the Sabbath and, "Oh, *that's done away with!*" You think, no, you're a liar... you're lying. Some people even know better – they know what the Bible says but they lie against it. There are a lot of ministers out there in the world who teach and preach things; they've gone to cemeteries/seminaries... where they bury the truth. That's what they do! They learn how to bury the truth of God and there are a lot of them who've studied enough to *know what God says*...but they can't teach that – they'll lose a job.

And the Eternal God said, Behold the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil, and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also the tree of life and eat and live forever: receive the holy spirit. So God's showing this can't happen – they don't work together. You can't receive the holy spirit into your life and live something different from what God said. That's why through time then God showed us the importance of repentance and the blessing of being able to be forgiven of sin so that we *can* receive of that spirit into our life. And so God is just showing here these things don't work, these things don't go together – you can't have it.

Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and placed in the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way to the Tree of Life. Just making it clear here that there is that which is absolute, that is beyond the physical realm, that's in the spirit realm that's of God that man *can't have* a part of until certain things happen in his life.

And so we begin to experience that in the Church. We begin to experience receiving of the holy spirit, we begin to experience something we have *never* experienced in human life. To me it's exciting! I *love* it! Now, we all have human nature and we all have personalities; and look at what God brings in the Church – people with different personalities, people with different backgrounds, different problems and different hang ups. We all have hang ups, we all have things we have to conquer and overcome; but we are a Family and you begin to experience family in a way you've *never experienced* family in life because it's mixed with the power of God's spirit. And there are things sometimes you just know automatically – she's my sister, he's my brother. What an awesome thing! They're God's! They belong to God! And the more you *believe* that, which if you believe it, the more you believe it in how you live your life, reflects your faith – because faith is a matter of what you believe and how you live it then. I hope we understand that process.

What you believe in your mind because you believe in the Sabbath, you begin to live by it, you begin to live by that faith in the Sabbath and what God has given; that this is the day that God gives to teach, that this is the day that honours God, that this is the day we're to set aside so you begin living it...and you're living by faith regarding the Sabbath. And the more we do that, the more we live by faith, the more we obey God in things, the more we believe what God gives us and the same thing true in all these things that God is giving to us, the more you believe it.

And the more you *believe* that we're a family, the more you *believe* that someone is your brother and your sister, the more you *believe* that they belong to God and they're God's... *How! How could any of us IN ANY FASHION OR FORM...WHETHER IT BE YOUR OWN MATE WHO IS IN THE CHURCH OF GOD... HOW ON EARTH COULD YOU SAY A FOUL WORD TO THEM?!* Because if you do, you're saying it to God! But we don't get it! We don't understand that in the human mind! Sometimes we just don't get it! We're so thick-headed! Isn't it amazing?

So, we don't live by faith sometimes the way we might *think* we are. Sometimes we're disobeying and sometimes we have things to repent of that we don't really grasp that we need to repent of them until God lets us see ourselves in the mirror in that particular area of life; and then the more we see it, the more *repulsive* it is, and then the more repulsive it is, the more you cling to what is right and start living it more and live by greater faith.

It's a beautiful thing – family. That's why I *ache* inside, that's why I look forward to being in the God-Family so I can deal with these things even better, because I really hurt and I sometimes get really agitated when I hear people who have said things to one another, have done things to one another in God's Church and I think, "Why? Why? *WHY* do we *do* these things to ourselves? *WHY?!* How can we *do* something like that? We're God's Family!" We do it because we still have human nature. But the more we see that the more we seek to conquer and overcome. So it has to do with living by faith and how much we're really able to love the way God says to love.

So isn't it a beautiful thing – family – when it's God's Family and we begin to experience something. I've known of people who've come into God's Church and because of a wrong concept toward a father have had a difficult time understanding God as their Father, of receiving God as their Father, of loving God as their spiritual Father.

So again, going back here over some of these things; I think of this expression that's used back up here going back and discussing what we did in Genesis 3, because we're going to hit these things and re-hit them and revisit them and God is going to help us to see things in a greater way and understand things that need to be addressed in our lives in a greater way, to see our own human nature and the way we think. It's a tough thing admitting who we are and what we are. The more you grow the better that becomes, the more exciting that becomes; but sometimes in the beginning of our changes and so forth it takes a lot to humble ourselves. But when you see it as a blessing in life, when you see this is an opportunity for great growth and drawing closer to God and receiving greater blessings of life because God wants to give them to us, it becomes more exciting, it becomes more inspiring when you can look into a mirror and see something that's ugly and say, "Father, forgive me." And to know that you're forgiven and that you can begin to change the way you think and your mind can begin to be sound in how you *think* toward others and how you *deal* with others and how you *work* with others and how you *judge* others. On and on it goes...

So this thing about 'ruling over' when it said about the husband... What did it say here? How did it say it? **Genesis 3:16 - ...your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.** Whoo hoo... I've known a lot of husbands in the Church of God who've used that one! "Yeah! Give me a club! Let me remind you I'm to rule over you!" Well, if you ever did that you sinned, if you ever did that you didn't get what it means to rule over and you didn't understand what it said back in Genesis I'll guarantee you, and you're sure not doing it the way God says it's supposed to be done. Amazing! *Much to learn here!* Some people take that as scriptural authority. No it isn't. Candidly, it's just the opposite. This wasn't a nice thing being said here. What's being said in Genesis 3 here, through these verses, *is not flattering* to the family! It's not a positive thing to say! Not at all! These things that God is saying were not about blessings – these things were not about authority and government! Not at all!

Although God has given government in the Family, that's not what *these verses* are talking about. And yet people have used these things in society and religion in a very distorted, perverted, sick, disgusting way thinking that they're *right!* Incredible the human mind; sometimes it's so exasperating! Our nature really is! We are sick! Our human mind is sick; and it's a blessing to see that and to realize that God says we can have healing! And if you don't see the sickness you won't see the need to be healed. Amazing! If you *don't see the sickness* you won't see the need to be healed! You might think that applies to somebody else – they need healing. No, you need healing too. Our minds have to change, our minds have to be transformed – completely and entirely through time. And you *never get rid of it all* in this human life – you can't! I came into the Church in 1969 and I'm still fighting this nature; and as long as I'm in this human body (thankfully it's not too much longer) I'll still be fighting this human nature. As long as we're in a human body there's a fight, there is a battle!

But it becomes more exciting the more you conquer, the more you overcome the richer life can become, the more blessings in life that can be there, that are there, if you yield yourself to God. And life just becomes more and more exciting and inspiring and awesome indeed; but you have to fight for it and never quit! You have to continually seek to repent and see yourself in the mirror and understand this nature can change, *must* change! Thank God we can change!

And if you don't see enough of yourself yet and loathe what you see as far as the human nature part is concerned – give it time. God'll help you to see it through time.

So this 'rule' that's being talked about here, it's not a compliment. God's intent from the beginning was that man should be the head of the family, beginning with the wife – because that's where the family begins... but not in man's way of ruling. 'Ruling over' is not a compliment when used this way. Man's way is selfish and demeaning toward women – selfish. Selfish – it's not about the welfare, it's not about the benefit, it's not about love to the wife when man thinks this way.

And sadly I have seen this same spirit at work in the Church of God in the ministry. See, because the misuse of government is a sick and perverted thing and so whether it be in the Church of God as far as the ministry's concerned or whether it be in the family it's sick and perverted if not done God's way. And that's why I know and know that I know that back in 1987, approximately, that's when I think that Laura and I went into the refreshing program; that this was the last great thing – and it was a great thing. He didn't understand it, he didn't grasp and comprehend the magnitude of it, but God moved Mr. Tkach to address something in the Church, in the ministry, that far too many if not all as a whole, were ruling over the Church; and terms like 'sheriffing' were used. There's a right way to govern and there's a wrong way to govern in God's Family. It's God's Family! And so the physical family is where you can begin to learn these things.

I couldn't help it today; I was moved and inspired by going back and listening to some of the things that I was addressing as I was editing stuff to put on the site for the ministry. Awesome to see what God gives to us whether it be a spiritual Family, in the sense of the Church and the ministry, or whether it be a spiritual Family in the sense of the physical family in the Church and what God gives to us. When it comes to God's mind and God's law and God's way of life and the way of administering His love there is a right way to administer His law, His word, His mind, His being, and there's a wrong way. And by nature man will do it the wrong way.

So 'ruling over' is not a compliment here and it's not the way God intended it, desired it and giving it. This was not a carte blanche thing, if you will, that God was just giving to man over woman...that you shall rule over them. "Where's my supper? Bring me my shoes! Where's my paper?" ...that attitude. "Give me a beer, honey!" ...and don't even bother saying 'honey'. To be served? That's what the ministry became like – to be served. *Wroooong* spirit! It's not what the ministry's about. It's to serve, it's to minister unto others. It's not to be served, and yet I saw from area to area to area where the ministry felt that they should be lifted up, where *respect was demanded to them* because *they* were the minister. No, respect is earned; it's not owed to any human being.

Now, please understand – a person should strive to respect what God has placed over them. But sometimes there's a limitation on that; if somebody's doing the wrong things you realize this is wrong and the more disrespect that someone brings to their place, their position, the more harm and the more difficulty and consternation it causes within a congregation... and in a family – husbands to wives.

See, a lot of people have this idea that once they're married that there's a certain respect, and sometimes even within God's Church, that's owed to them just because of where they are... "I am the head of the home...!" Do you understand what I'm saying? I'm getting into some things here that are maybe uncomfortable in some part; because I'll guarantee you, when I listened to those things that Mr.

Tkach was giving I was uncomfortable. It was quiet in there as the ministers were sitting there hearing these things, that this is about the Church, this is about the ministry, this is about *you*. And I hurt for over a year in a deep way because I saw that I had learned from some people and some teaching on some things that were out there – things that were not right and a wrong way to handle some things; that there's a better way.

And it's like what happened in God's Church back in the fifties when society was teaching about punishment of children; and it was based on things happening in society. Some things happen sometimes in the way you think because this is how society is, of certain corporal punishment that was exercised and emphasised back in the fifties in society. That's not encouraged today at all! On the contrary, if you have any kind of punishment you've got to really be careful, parents. The world has turned upside down from the fifties; it's the exact opposite almost. And so because of some of those things there was emphasis... what is the expression? Thankfully I've even forgot the expression there... spare the rod, spoil the child... yeah, whoo whee... But love wasn't taught, love wasn't emphasised.

Yes, there's a time to discipline children and how parents learn how to do that; but there's the aspect there then of how to love and that wasn't emphasised. And so when those things began to be taught in the Church later on in the late sixties, early seventies, in through there it began to be addressed more, there were parents... I've counselled with some in times past who still were beaten up because they felt like they're the ones that caused their children to make wrong decisions and leave and they were the cause because they emphasised too much the correction rather than the love, and they didn't understand the part about the love.

The point being is – when you learn something that you didn't know before you repent and you change. The past is the past and you go on with what God gives to you and that's the way it was in the ministry. I came to a point in time when I had to see that I couldn't beat myself up over things, that I could have done better because I didn't see them then, I wasn't to that place spiritually. But now I can make some changes, now I can do things in a better way, in a right way, *strive* to do those things in a better way and grow. And that's the way we are in our lives in the Church. The past is the past. What you did in the past is gone and you can't continue...

I was talking to someone before services here about the blessing of repentance; and sometimes it's hard for us just to forgive ourselves. We tend to beat ourselves up and continue to beat ourselves up sometimes. And we don't have that faith to know that when we repent it's *gone*! There's a faith, a confidence in knowing that when you repent before God it's gone – it's not held against you anymore and you're free from it. But sometimes because of our human nature we don't allow ourselves to forgive ourselves.

And so why I'm saying this is because some of you men out there listening today, you may feel a little uncomfortable and we're going to have a lot here for men *and* women – families – of how to do things better, of how to be blessed more fully in our lives and within the family and within the Church. And this is good and this is positive; but the reality is as you begin to see some things in yourself, which God is going to show you if that's what you want... because that's what I wanted back in the mid-80's. I didn't want to do things wrong in the Church. I didn't want to hurt anyone – that's the last thing you want to do in God's Church is be the cause of someone's hurt.

And so if you realize you're doing something that hurts someone, then you can repent and change and become something different. And that's what God is offering us right now. It's not a matter of beating yourself up but it's a matter of repentance and the excitement of change and to realize things can become far better. Love between a husband and a wife can become far better. Your example in family can become far better. Your example in the Church can become far better. The blessings we receive from that, the excitement of life you can receive from that can become far better. The closer you draw to God in repenting of things that we don't see – because that's what your whole life consists of. God calls you into the Church to see what needs to be changed, to see what must come in to unity and oneness with Him. How often do I preach *we need to be at one, we need to be in unity!*

I tell this to the ministry over and over again; the more *we're* in unity and oneness with God the more we can help the *Church* to become in unity and oneness with God – and that's exciting and inspiring! What greater blessing in life can there be? And then the joy and the reward you receive from that... how awesome, how great is that?

So again, this expression 'to rule over' is not a nice one. It's pretty ugly. Let's notice Ephesians 5 – let's notice some of the kind of rulership that God expects mankind to exercise because that isn't what was being spoken of back in Genesis. But from the beginning it was intended that the husband be the head of the home. That can have different meanings to different people – but you have to desire, you should desire to see it the way *God says it's to be!* And we have not seen that as clearly, as much as physical healing was in the Church during Worldwide that taught about spiritual healing. We have not understood *this* to the level that God is now bringing us to see and to understand. Why? It's because of where we are. It's because of what Mr. Armstrong said, that God gave to him to know, to understand – that that curse is going to be worked on, it's going to be removed. But how it's removed becomes an awesome thing!

Paul is talking about Jesus Christ and it makes profound statements in that respect of what is written here. So let's notice some of the kind of rulership that God expects mankind to exercise; and we're going to look at just a couple of verses here and come back and build upon these in sermons that are going to follow. **Ephesians 5:1 – Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children;** 'followers of God', the word means 'imitators'. We want to do things God's way, we want to live by what He's given us to live by, to do things the same way, to follow that example, to follow the example of Jesus Christ. That's what we're told over and over again, to follow that example that's before us. And what is that? Notice this...

Verse 2 – And walk in agape; now this is something you can't decide to do in the morning when you wake up. "I want to walk in agape today." No, it doesn't work that way. This is God's love; that's why the word is unique in the Greek language – it is love, the love of God, it comes... the source is God's. It's like the holy spirit – it comes from God. You can't make it up! You can't work it up! It's either genuine because of God's spirit living in you and Him giving you of that love, or it isn't there; and it's going to be there only to the degree of God's spirit dwelling in you because they're synonymous with each other, candidly. And so it has to do with how you think and how you treat others, how you live toward others. Agape, God's love, Godly love. and so it says **...and walk in,** so that's something we should seek to do – to walk in this kind of love, this mind, this mind that was in Jesus Christ. He said, "Let it be in you!" How? You cry out to God for it, you want to change, you want to repent, you want to do things in a better way and **walk in love, as Christ also has...**so it gives a type of love here showing that this is a

specific kind of love being talked about, is agape, and **has loved us and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour**. Beautiful, beautiful verses... as an offering.

It's just like the offerings when they're presented to God and they had the incense, and the incense was thrown upon the fire and a puff of smoke went up and it had this aroma. When you go by some of these stores today it about (to me it's nauseating sometimes) some of the incense that's out there; but this is something that God had made special that was of a special mixture and when thrown on the fire there was this smoke that went up that smelled good. And it teaches something, it was to be an example of something. As the smoke went up before God – that's what they were presenting in the offering to God – and God received it – sweet smelling incense; it's the example used for prayers of the saints in Revelation when it talks about it. And this is talking about something that was sweet smelling to God...that Jesus Christ offered Himself in this way.

That's what it's talking about; and **has given Himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour**. Something pleasing to God, something sweet smelling. What an incredible thing to say – that you're willing to sacrifice your life for others, that you're willing to give up of your life, that you're willing to expend your energy, your time – whatever it might be for the benefit of others – to be that giving to the point of even if it requires something be taken from you, your own life or whatever it is. This is the example of Jesus Christ! And that God is telling us the same thing! It means it's sacrifice! When you love God's way, *for human beings it requires sacrifice! It doesn't come natural* to love like this! That's the whole point; otherwise everybody out here would be doing it, or they'd be doing it once in a while. It's not in the world because it comes from God – the source is God.

And so for us to experience that means we have to follow an example and the example is Jesus Christ. It means you have to be willing to sacrifice for others. You have to be willing to sacrifice. To truly love God's way means you *will* sacrifice. You're going to sacrifice...oftentimes you know what it is for human beings? Your own pride. To love God's way means you're going to be willing to acknowledge your sin before someone else, that you said something wrong – "I'm sorry." How *hard* it is for a human being to tell... in marriage... how *hard* is it sometimes for a husband to tell a wife, or a wife to tell a husband, "I'm sorry, that was wrong what I said; that was wrong what I did." How hard that is for human beings in this world! It really is a toughie sometimes – especially for a *man* to a woman; it's often harder oftentimes for a man to tell a woman, "I'm wrong. I was wrong, I'm sorry. Give me another chance; I was wrong." Sacrifice. What are you sacrificing? Your ego, your pride, this 'macho' thing – whatever it is; being better than, or whatever that it isn't required that you'd have to say this to *your wife*.

That's the way some people are toward their children. You have to tell your child you've made a mistake, you were wrong – you're smart if you do. They know it; man, do they know it! You were fouled mouthed, you did something wrong, you cursed somebody out – whatever you might have done, whatever it was you did – they know! "I didn't hear that in Sabbath services..." They know when you're doing something wrong. What a blessing to reinforce God's way before them and to humble yourself and to say, "I'm sorry, I was wrong in what I said. I was really wrong and I want to tell you that and I've repented before God for that – it's wrong. Whenever you do that, if you ever do anything in your life, please do the same – repent, make it right with others." What an incredibly valuable thing to pass along and teach by that example. A willingness to do something like that; but sometimes it's so hard to do. And you know why it's so hard for a parent to do that to a child? "You have to tell your *child that?*" It's kind of owed to you this honour and respect that they're supposed to show.

I learned a long time ago respect only comes if you earn it. It is not owed, in one respect, to anybody, if you understand what I'm saying. There is the other flip side of that that has to do with God and your attitude toward God. But again, if you understand the person receiving it you had better be acting respectfully, had better be acting in a right way, had better be doing things in a good and a decent way.

It's like in the ministry at one time; it used to be required that people would say Mr. So and So; and that was fine for an age, for time and things we needed to learn within the Church and have taught within the Church because people are called out of the world and they don't show respect, they don't have respect and it's good sometimes, in that respect, to learn that there's a better way of doing things. Something I appreciated about the South – they teach their children to say, "Yes Sir. Yes Ma-am. No Ma-am. No Sir." That's a good quality to teach children – to have respect to their elders. A parent has to teach that. "Yes Ma-am. Yes Sir." Nothing wrong with that, it's a good thing to have. But there's the flip side of that sometimes.

And so again here, a matter of having respect. I came through the Church at times knowing that somebody might be saying 'Mister', but I knew they didn't mean it. I know what was in their heart. They might be saying 'Mister', but it's like... so the point being it's either there or it isn't; and you will know by how people treat you. It's either there or it isn't. You can't make it be there by legislation.

So today that's one of the reasons why in the Church today it's, for *adults*, Ron and Laura. It shouldn't be for children, but sometimes that's another matter; sometimes children aren't taught in their homes and there are things to learn in that area too. And that's the way we prefer it, that's the way it should be and that's been hard for some people in the Church when they've come back from that past and they still want to say it. For me, Mr. Armstrong will always be Mr. Armstrong – it can't be any other way, it's in my mind, it's the way it is. Because that was for a different time, a different situation, it was ingrained in that respect and is deeply there.

So again here, going back to verses like this, it says so much because human beings do have to sacrifice; and so much is just about your own pride. That's what God wants you to sacrifice – yourself. And what are we? Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the *pride of life* – that's what He wants us to get rid of because if we only understood it, that's what we hold onto. We hold onto those things, human beings do, and it's hard to let go. It's hard to put them on the fire; it's hard to sacrifice them.

So the way of man and the way of husbands in the world especially, there is the matter of the natural selfish human nature – *and women*, you have the same nature – selfish human nature, that's the way of the world. But in the structure of the home and the structure of the family that has been so misused, that's been void of the kind of caring, nurturing, sacrificing love that God says is supposed to be there, whether it be in the Church or whether it be in the family.

Let's notice Matthew 20. Tell you what, there is so much here, so much that God is offering us to begin to break through, just as we're breaking through in a new era of time. We're right at the doorstep. That's why I'm excited about some of the things taking place.

I didn't mention it last Sabbath but we went from a transition in time – 3rd day to the 4th day. To me it's like Jericho and going around the city; and we went from one day to another day. It's divided up into seventh's – half a time. We went from another half a time; we're in the 4th half a time now starting last Sunday. And I marvel that we can be in a time like this and continuing to march forward and realizing it

may come down to the 7th day. What an awesome thing if it turns out that way, that the major things that happen on this earth happen very powerfully and we just keep marching around the city every day as every day goes by – they're long days. A half a time is a pretty long day. But what an awesome thing to be living like we are right now, to be able to meet together like this, to still have the blessings in life that we're able to experience... and they can be scrunched down to a period of time like this – thank God, indeed thank God.

Matthew 20:20 - interesting story here. I'm going to read the whole story in context. It's about human nature. They weren't yet baptized, they had not yet received the impregnation of God's spirit in that respect, in the sense of that which was full. The baptism of John is one thing, but there was that which had to follow later in the sense of the baptism of the holy spirit.

Matthew 20:20 - Then came to Him, to Jesus Christ, the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshiping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What is it you would like? She said unto Him, Grant that these, my two sons, that they may sit, the one on Your right hand, because she was believing, obviously, the things that He is the Messiah and that He's going to have rulership. He is the Messiah that's going to rule the world! ...that one might sit on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your Kingdom. But Jesus answered and said to her, You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said, We are able. Little did they know. And He said unto them, You shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: and some of this was prophetic because of what they were going to have to go through, the disciples; but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given of them for whom it is prepared of My Father. God places us in the Body. What an *incredible* thing to understand; that through time God places us where *He* wills, it's a part of His doing; and everyone, wherever they're placed are going to be the most fulfilled, have the most abundant life as we yield ourselves to that and are placed where God places us – because He does the moulding to where we fit perfectly if we yield ourselves to that place.

But this story shows a little bit of human nature, doesn't it? I think of different ones that come along at times and they want to be part of the 144,000. Sorry, taken. Not mine to give. On the contrary, it's mine to tell you you're not there, you're not going to be there – you have something else that God has planned for you; and sometimes there are those who want to be one of the two witnesses – we've had that. On and on it goes... human nature, the way human beings think.

Verse 24 - And when the ten heard it, reaction of human beings sometimes; they were moved with indignation against the two brothers. Human nature; human nature is a funny thing when we see it for what it is. **But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, You know that the princes of the Gentiles,** now this is not a complimentary thing; in other words the non-believing world around us – that's what the term is about. **...that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them,** they 'lord it', that's what the word means here, 'they lord it' **over them and they that are great exercise authority upon them.** That's what they like to do. This wasn't a complimentary thing. It's showing here this is human nature, of how people are in government, this is how the princes are, this is how those who are esteemed and lifted up and have rulership – this is what they're like and this is what they do. They like to do this, they like to 'lord it' over others, they like to exercise and control. Control. How many people in life like to control? Like to control the actions of others, like to be in control – that it's going to be done whose way? You know, a husband that loves his wife, you know what he'll want? He'll want to do

it her way. Why would he want anything different? Why? Why? Why? ...unless that way is wrong of course. Unless it's against God's way, but I'm talking about things that happen in life sometimes and not that you can always have those or do those things; and so sometimes decisions have to be made – that gets into another subject matter.

But it shall not be so among you: because He's saying this is wrong. This is *wrong!* This is the wrong use of authority... of God's government, of the way God does things. This is not how God is. It's not about 'lording' it over; it's not about being over someone. Sometimes that's the way people think; they're given a job and they think they're *over* some. I knew ministers who used to get into arguments and debate about who they were over, a member that might live half way between two different areas. "They should be coming to this congregation because they have family over here." Different excuses that went out there because they wanted to be *over* them and they wanted them to be in *their* congregation. Human nature is sick. It's not what it's about. What's best for them? Why? What are your reasons? Is it about giving? Is it about really what's best for someone else?

But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister/servant; it's about serving, it's about sacrifice, it's about giving – it's what it's talking about here. **And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave:** interesting; because it's a different way of thinking. It's a *different way* of thinking. **Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto...** Oh that back in the late eighties, after Mr. Armstrong had died, and into the nineties – Oh that the ministry of the Church of God would have gotten this scripture here – if we could have seen and understood it deeply! But it was missing. How many... it was more about being ministered to, looked up to, esteemed, elevated, than it was about giving. It was about self.

I remember a man who misused truth. I think of a man who so misused truth and had talent and ability of throwing out questions; and I learned from that because I saw it was a good thing. To be able to throw out questions in a unique way to cause people to think rather than giving an answer that was – we used to call it, from your inspired margin. Because you can be told something in a sermon about a scripture, and you can have it in what we... see, some of you have margins on the side, you've written down notes what was said in times past; and so in some of the speaking clubs that we had, he was very talented in being able to have a unique way of teaching, which I had never witnessed in God's Church before, in the sense of understanding that people would give these answers that were from their inspired margin but they still didn't get what the verse was about. And he had this unique way of questioning things and throwing out questions to cause people to think about it so that they would have to give an answer because of... it couldn't be just something... they had to give the reason why and get back to the basics of what it was all about; and very talented in that.

And so much so it became an air in the Church that if *all* the leading men weren't always up there listening to him after services, discussing spiritual things, listening to that which was spiritual, that something was wrong with you. It was like you feared not to be up there because you weren't going to be able to serve in the Church, you weren't going to be able to help in the Church if you weren't up there. Is that the way it kind of was? Yeah. I have one who was there along beside me. I knew that if I didn't do that as a trainee, one who was being trained as an associate pastor at that time that I may lose my job. It was expected of me to stay there and yet I knew that this was not good, this was not spiritually healthy for those who were doing it because it was a matter of elevating the individual as some 'master teacher' and that's not what it's about; and that was the wrong environment and wrong expectation of people.

I can't give to you who are new, to understand that because you maybe haven't seen that kind of a thing, so I'm sorry... but those who've been with us for a long time, you've experienced things like that from area to area. I've often talked about how when there were meals and such, I think of the same minister as a matter of fact, we had to be on risers that were a foot higher than the brethren who were in the audience. And all the elders were expected to sit up there and we had to have china and crystal to drink and to eat from – silverware, real silver. And yet the rest of the church didn't have that; but we had to have that because we had to be 'elevated' literally in front of the brethren, as though that was something. And sometimes if we're not careful that's exactly how people think. That's sometimes the kind of mind and attitude that I have witnessed in God's Church that husbands have toward their wives and they don't understand. Something that began to really hit strong with me through time was the very thing we went through in the ministry is the very thing that exists in *families – it's the same spirit* that has to be conquered. And we have to be able to see that first and foremost, that it exists, in order to love properly, in order to serve within the Family properly.

Let's turn over to Colossians 3. And so this expression here, 'to exercise dominion', that it's talking about here – 'to subdue' is what it means in the Greek language; is the word translated in some places as 'lordship', 'to lord it over', 'lordship', 'to exercise dominion', 'to subdue'. Sometimes that's what people desire to do – they want to subdue...control! Different words we might use. But that means you make the decisions, you make the choices and it's not a matter of desiring or understanding what a family is, or an understanding of something, anything that's basic; to have a desire... what is the input of the other half of your life?

She is the other half of your life! God says the two of you become one! There's a lot said in that that sometimes people just don't get! If you understand it, men, you understand you're kind of half way there. You're not complete; you're incomplete. And marriage, two people together, two minds of how people think – because we do function, as a whole, and think differently. God created us that way for a purpose. And there are qualities in both that when brought together you learn something in life, that you become far more complete, far more whole in life. And both need to learn from each other; they need to learn and understand where they're coming from, why a person thinks the way they do and how to deal with and work with those things in life in a right way.

So again, it's not natural nor possible to love as Christ loved the Church. I hope we understand that. It's not natural and it's not possible *unless* we have God's spirit. It requires God's spirit. And so for all of us to grow in the way God wants us to we, obviously, must first have God's spirit and then we must exercise God's spirit. And right now He's offering us an opportunity to grow in things, to exercise His spirit. He is pouring out more spirit upon the Church now than ever before. I wish we could see... I can't give that to you to understand. Some of you who've been around a long time you understand that more clearly, more fully because you've seen, you've witnessed through time things in the Church and you see what's happening now and you can relate that to the past and see that things are more intense now, we're getting down to the wire where... and what God is pouring out upon us is far greater, far more extensive. But it's exciting; it's inspiring to be a part of it! I can't put it into words how awesome it is. But again, we have to exercise God's spirit and to live as God shows us, and He's showing us more.

And to understand how God loves, how the Church works, starts in the family. It *starts* in the family.

Colossians 3:10 – and so it's going through here talking about various things, about being risen with Christ and things that Paul is teaching. Breaking into the context here it says, **And have put on the new man**, so when we come into God's Church, this is what we're doing – we're seeking to put off the old, we come up out of that watery grave and we want to live a new life, a new person. **You have put on the new**, 'man' has been inserted there, it's in italics, it's not really in the Greek language there. But **you have put on the new**, knowing what it means here – that a new person, a new life by that baptism; you come up to walk in newness of life, **which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created Him**: talking about some things that God is giving us, the ability of something in the mind; that we can change, that we're to change and become something different – **after the image**, speaking of those things that are in Christ Jesus, that were in Him, that we're to put on that same mind and be moulded and fashioned after that same image if you will, of who He was.

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, it's not a matter of nationalities; people who hold onto nationalities and think someone is better than another – they're sick! To think that one race is better than another race, or one nationality in one part of the world is better than another? Sick! Stupid, frankly, ignorant! A lot of ignorance in this world, isn't there? Sad. Pathetic. The prejudices that exist in this world, that's handed down from generation to generation. And you know what? Children are cursed. I think of Ireland. I think of what they've gone through generation after generation, the prejudices, the hatreds that are there in just one little part of Dan, if it's Dan. I say that because we don't necessarily know 100% all things that are out there. We know this is Manasseh for sure, and Judah for sure and probably the rest. But anyway... making a point here that these things are handed down from generation to generation like in Islam – Shiite and Sunni – hatreds that are spawned down from generation to generation because of two different types of thinking here. And so we can look in this country here about religion and we can look at Catholic and Protestant. There are some deep prejudices that have existed through time there.

I think of someone I met recently who made a comment of how that he changed from the way he grew up to become Catholic. He was Protestant, became Catholic because he married Catholic, and children are being raised Catholic and now his own mother feels like they're all going to 'hell'. What a horrible thing in society in the world – and those prejudices then are passed down from generation to generation. What was it? Some of your family in the past there – they wouldn't let them go ... they were upset at... with the Catholics because of the graveyard and they weren't taking care of it – it wasn't fenced in. The Protestants were fenced out of the Catholic area – that's what it was. Anyway, some of these prejudices of how Protestants felt about Catholics in part of the world where she grew up. Deep rooted prejudices people have – and so it goes into nationalities, it goes into religion; it's rampant in this world! Sick world we live in!

Where there is neither Jew or Greek; because with Christ these things don't exist. These differences do not exist; these prejudices aren't there. And if we want to be moulded and fashioned in that same image they won't be in our mind. If you have any of those things – get rid of them! Ask God to wipe them out of your mind; to get rid of prejudice because they're there! You have some because of the way you grew up! You *can't help* it! Ask God to help you to see where they are and to learn to hate them; and the more you hate them and the more you loathe them the better life becomes. When you see all people as God's people; just like in the Church, like I mentioned... we all belong to God, we're all God's! It doesn't mean everybody's obeying God, but we're God's. In the world, and especially in the Church of God, how do we think about them?

Do we understand where **there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free**, nor man or woman... there's one scripture that talks about that. It's not a matter of man or woman, the difference there – that doesn't exist with Christ! It's not in His mind...shouldn't be in ours, but it is because you either grew up a man or a woman; and there are certain things from society that are just a part of you and you can't help that. They've been moulded into you; you have lived them because of society, because of music, because of TV, because of parents, because of school... whatever it is! You have *become* where you live, society, like I wrote in the book – people grow up believing certain things. If you were raised a Catholic, that's what you believe as a whole. If you were raised Southern Baptist, that's what you think...and you don't think so good towards others – you know you're right. And it is with every religion that's out there. If you grew up Sunni, that's how you *think*. If you grew up Buddhist, that's how you *think*! If you grew up communist, it's how you think.

If you grew up a woman, if you grew up as a man – there's a way you think; and so much of it is *wrong* and has to be changed. And in God's Church we can change it, and in God's Church people have changed it and made great progress and growth, until sin started creeping back in and people began to lose the love of God; 'the love of many began to wax cold'. Agape. It says, 'the agape of God began to wax cold' and families began to suffer. I have lived through it; saw it take place in God's Church where marriages and families were no longer bound by the same power and life and purpose.

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies... the way we think toward each other – to be merciful. It's a beautiful trait to have. It's the opposite of being hard and demanding and controlling and judgemental and harsh in judgement. Mercy is a great quality of life. Judgement, *mercy*, and faith, the weightier matters of the law; but something that's hard to learn and to understand and is learned through time. ...**bowels**, that means your insides; that you can *feel* for people. Husbands, can you *feel* for your wives? Wives, can you *feel* for your husbands? That's not as necessary sometimes. I hit the husbands first because you are the head of the home.

...**bowels of mercy, kindness**, kindness to each other. There are times that I get upset in the world when things aren't going right, things aren't going the way I'd like to see them go. Plane get's delayed, and delayed and delayed... there are things that sometimes hit you in life when things aren't going really well and other things may hit you – and if you're not careful you can say something cross to someone else, maybe to someone behind a counter. Did that one time in a really bad way (and I've done it more than once); but afterwards I saw myself in a way that made me sick. I thought, "They can't help that – look at their day. They don't have control of this you absolute total stupid idiot!" And sometimes we treat people badly because things aren't going as nicely as we'd like them to go... boo hoo...

And that's why I do like to use Paul oftentimes in travelling. I do try to think about that sometimes because I think about him being in the hold of a ship. He never had what I have when I'm sitting on my rear end on a jet plane with nice temperature control. He's out there in the Mediterranean bobbing around – it wasn't a pleasant ride. And here we have cushions and we have smooth rides and air conditioning and it gets a little warm in here and... "Oh, it's bad!" And we have it so good; but we get used to that and we become expectant of that and sometimes in how we treat others – sometimes we don't use kindness towards others around us, nor in God's Church, nor in our own family if we're not careful. Kindness.

...humbleness of mind... What's that? Humbleness of mind in how we think about ourselves and understanding our frame and understanding a spirit mind we need to have, the opposite of pride and being lifted up and truly being humbled.

...meekness, a willingness to learn, to learn from others, to learn from someone else – maybe behind the counter. What was their day like? I think of the TSA, the individuals at the airports right now – several people have asked, “How was your travel up here this time?” It was unique. They were friendlier than I've ever seen them because of the publicity that's out there – to the point that I think both of us felt sorry for them when we were going through the line. And there was a lot of that sentiment, I think, at the airport at that time, and because of that there was probably a friendship and a bond that was kind of unique in going through security. It was like they were happy to receive a nice comment or whatever; and they were far more receptive of that and willing to give it back. It was like there was this bond that was there that didn't exist before because of their being beaten up a little bit. And my heart went out to them, it truly did; and a willingness to learn what they're going through and why they're going through it and how we think sometimes towards them.

I thought, what an incredible thing – some of them have a job to do that they don't want to do, but they have to do it, it's their job. They're told to do this. Now there might be a few in there that do like to do that, and sometimes some people in times past are hired for certain jobs because that's the kind of person they are, the kind of personality that just rubs people the wrong way and what does it tend to do? It tends to bring out that attitude so... you can test people.

...humbleness of mind, meekness, that's a teachable spirit. It means a willingness to learn about why others are going through what they do; and then that ability to feel for them.

...longsuffering... a willingness to suffer long with something, not putting limitations on it. Boy, all these things here are *so hard* for us because they're just not natural. If you think these are natural you're not dealing with a full deck. This isn't the way we are by nature.

...forbearing one another; in a right way, in a positive way. That means this has to do with a right kind of tolerance in the sense of appreciating the differences in life – that's what this is about; appreciating the differences.

...and forgiving one another, being of a forgiving mind; **if any man have a quarrel against any:** if any person; **even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. And above all these things put on agape**, you don't have it; you have to put it on. God says it comes from Him. You have to cry out to God to help you to live a right way toward others, to live a right way if there are some things that have happened in your family, to live a right way toward your mate, toward your children, toward your parents, toward your employer, toward whatever, whomever... **which is the bond of perfection.** It's what purifies us and helps us to be perfected in life and what God is moulding and fashioning in us.

Verse 15 – isn't it amazing how this word just pops up over and over again so powerfully so... **and let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, that's what should rule. It should be that which comes from God and He's just told us what comes from Him – the image that we're to be moulded and fashioned after, that which is in Jesus Christ that was His life. And this is what God says that we're to have – **the peace of God rule in your life;** which we have already covered in past sermons here, but how powerful is this?

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one Body; and be you thankful.

I'm going to continue with the posting because I want to finish this part of the posting and we'll go into another sermon series that's a different subsection if you will of this overall subject with men and women. But again here, continuing with this posting...

God is now starting the greater process (which only partially started in the Church over the centuries) of restoring the dignity and honor that He intended women should have from the beginning.

I'll tell you what, when I went back and read this I was a little bit *dumbfounded*. There's a lot here! There's a lot said here that's powerful and strong for God's Church, it truly is. Going on...

This is part of the "healing" process that is prophesied to fill the earth in the Millennium, as Satan and his demons are removed from the presence of mankind, and as Jesus Christ receives rule of all the earth. This healing process is now beginning to be restored in God's Church as we accelerate toward that new age for all mankind. In this context, this is the greater fulfillment of the prophecy that states, "And those from among you shall build the old waste places and you shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and you shall be called, 'The repairer of the breach..."

I'll tell you what; right now this just causes my spine to tingle to understand what that means; the hair on the back of my head to stand up. This is awesome, beautiful, powerful because it's about us, it's about what's taking place.

'The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in'" (Is. 58:12).

Of even greater inspiration is the literal translation from Hebrew that states, "And those from among you shall build from the destruction caused of old [ancient times]...

...literally the word. 6,000 years; *6,000 years ago*...

...and you shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and you shall be called 'The repairer of the break, the restorer [Heb. – "to set again," "to reestablish"] of paths to dwell in.'"

That's what God's doing, that which didn't start in the beginning that He's going to give now to the world in a very powerful way.

Those who will be part of this work are blessed to help restore the God intended role and purpose of both man and woman in marriage and in society. When God's government, love, and true purpose are more firmly re-established in the foundation of marriage, the structure of the family will become far stronger than ever experienced in the previous 6,000 years.

We have to have this to have God's way on this earth! This is what the fruit is; this is the blessing of what God places before us. *It's about Family!* It's about *one Family* on the earth! What an *awesome* thing to understand what God is doing. Going on...

The human family will be given a giant boost that more readily leads into the very Family of God—Elohim.

The liberation of all races and nationalities is rapidly approaching, and at the top of that list is the true liberation of women from the demeaning state in which they have been “ruled over.” This also produces a liberation for man that yields a more fulfilling and rewarding life, a greater unity and oneness with God, and the greater experience of what true masculinity was intended to be from the beginning.

~~~end