

We're going to continue today with *Part 3* of the series entitled *From Curses to Blessings*. The more I get into this the more in awe I am of what God is having us focus upon because there are some things that are so deeply imbedded in us as human beings that so often it is just impossible to see unless God gives us help and especially in an area like this of what we're covering. There are things that are passed down from generation to generation; and this probably tops the list. I believe indeed it does; things that are passed down from generation to generation in families, in life, in society, in nations and so forth.

We were talking about this last night, of how that some things are passed down and it sometimes is a marvel. This time of year we see a tree out here that goes all the way back to Jeremiah 10 that talks about cutting down a tree and how it has no life in it – it means nothing to us, but to some it means something in a distorted religious way. And thinking about that serpent on a pole that took seven hundred some years before a king finally had to destroy it, grind it up, get rid of it – but it's still with us and it still stayed with them through time that the symbol had some kind of healing power. And that's how it was looked up to, that there's some kind of healing power associated with a symbol like that. And I marvel at how those things are passed down.

It's much deeper than that in our lives when things are passed down from generation to generation; prejudices, feelings and how people treat one another. And the greatest of that really is what we're covering. The most important that's ever happened in life is what we're covering that started 6,000 years ago – how people treat each other - and it's the foundation, it's the focal point, it's the building block of family, a husband and a wife, a man and a woman. The more we go into this the more that God is giving us to see and it is truly awesome to understand what He's getting ready to take us into in a new age, that there's going to be so much that we're going to be freed from.

If I'm able, there are more sermons following this that is going to be very challenging to go into, for me to give, to do it in a good way and a balanced way and a sound way in all aspects. And I may be able to mention more of that today later on, but that keeps us imprisoned even more so with these prejudices, these thoughts and ideas because of the way God has made us as man and woman and the way we function as human beings. So there is a lot of baggage, in a sense, that we carry as human beings, with a lot of prejudice that comes out of that. And if you will ask God for help (as we mentioned in the beginning of these series); God knows the mind, He knows what's inside of us. We don't know our own minds. We don't know the power that exists there. We don't understand unless God shows us those things that are so deeply in the recesses of our being that affect the way we think – unless God brings it to light.

We go through very basic things in the very beginning of our calling that have to do with a particular day, the Sabbath, and God begins to help us to see those; and those aren't deeply hidden in the recesses of our being, they're just there. When God gives the truth and shows us the truth... first of all the truth about that which is false, Christmas, Easter, Sunday and where that came from and how it's been with mankind *long* before Jesus Christ ever came along; and then He shows us the truth – the Sabbath, the Holy Days and the plan in that from Passover to the Last Great Day and we're deeply moved by that – but that's a change in thinking that takes place rather quickly and it's not as difficult as behaviour. Behaviour is another matter. When you get to behaviour and the weightier matters of the law,

judgement, mercy and faith that has to do with behaviour, how we act toward others... It is one thing to stop disobeying God concerning the Sabbath, concerning stealing from God and those kinds of things – it's another matter to change the way you think about people and treat people. And therein is the great challenge because that requires God's spirit and growth through time to be able to address those things that are *deeply embedded in the mind*, that are far different from making a change, a transformation from Sunday to the Sabbath, from Easter and Christmas to Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and on – much different! *Big difference!* And sometimes those are truly the hardest to see anyway; our behaviour, how we treat people, how we think toward people. So often we think that which is *spiritual* in this book, this Bible, has to do with *prophecy* – and it *doesn't!* *That's not spiritual* – it really isn't!

That's why in I Corinthians 13, which we call the love chapter because it talks about charity in the Old King James; and it starts talking about... though you have all these things, though you speak with tongues of angels, though you know all prophecy – on and on it goes – though you know *all the truth* it comes down to how you live your life toward each other. It's about God! It's about behaviour! It's about the way family treats each other in the love of God – agape. Its behaviour; and those are the hardest things to address in our life. That's spiritual! It's not about how much you know. That's why it's difficult sometimes for those that are new. So many of you coming along so quickly, so rapidly, learning so much – sometimes that's a difficult thing to come to grasp and understand because all that knowledge has been poured into your mind by God, by His illuminating your mind and helping you to see things that you've never seen in such a massive and fast fashion that sometimes we can begin to think that's what's spiritual. It takes God's spirit to do that, *but* there is that which is far, far, far, beyond that.

Please understand that *that which is spiritual* is far more important when it comes to, as it says, the weightier matters of the law – judgement, mercy and faith – how we think, how we think toward others, how we react to various things, how we think in our minds towards people; and candidly then, what comes out of our mouth and what we say to them, what comes out through our actions. Because all those things go back to what? The mind and how we think. They come back to patterns of how we think and live our life. God is blessing us to see certain things about the most basic of relationships, and to me, this is exciting! I hope you're getting as excited as I am about some of these things because it's about the foundation of family! And what is more important than family? It's how to live life in family which goes into community, it goes into society, it makes up the nation, a nation of people; and soon we're going to be one nation – truly one nation under God.

I look forward to that; not the distortion we have today in nations; but that which is absolutely true because it comes from God because it has to do with being God's Government. One Church on the earth! ...and the foundation of it all, of where God is leading us is into His Family. And so we have family where God is having us focus at the very beginning here before Jesus Christ returns and then we're going to focus on it even more because *massive amount of knowledge* from times past, things that have been hidden in peoples, in societies, has to be changed quickly in order to get on with everything, in order to build a right society of people who think right toward one another and toward God. And this is an awesome thing that's taking place because there's so much to correct in this world; but that's where it all begins... and this is the most fundamental and foundational aspect of all.

To become a part of God's Family we have to understand what it's like in basic human life in the human family and of those things we learn to live and apply there that have to do with the way we think that help us to become a part of God's Family. So it's exciting, inspiring!

Let's pick up where we left off. We had been reading in Colossians going through chapter 3. I want to quickly review and make comment about some of the context where we left off last week in some of this. (Just a quick review here.)

Colossians 3:1 – If you then are arisen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. And so we discussed this. **Set your affection** – and as I mentioned, the Greek word here is 'set your mind, your thinking, your attitude' **on things from above**, is what it's talking about; that come from God. In other words, as it says here, **not on things on the earth**, in other words, not on that which is physical but rather on that which is spiritual.

Now, sometimes we think that by what we do, by how much we read, by how much we listen to sermons – those are all good, that's good to do – but that isn't what makes us spiritual, that isn't what is *spiritual!* It isn't by how much *time* we put into those things – it's by what we *gain from it that changes in our life!* *IF* we have the changes that follow, that those things speak of in behaviour, in the ways we treat one another, then that's what it's all about. *THAT* is what is spiritual! There's nothing more spiritual than agape, God's love. That's God! And God wants us to, as we're filled with His spirit, that's what comes out of us – is God's love. The more of God's spirit we have within us – *that's what determines how spiritual you are!* It's not by how much knowledge, it's not by how much you *read*, it's not by how much you *pray*, it's not by how much you *fast* – those things aren't to make you *feel better*, that somehow now you are *spiritual* as compared to someone else who maybe doesn't do as much as you do. *That isn't what makes you spiritual!* Because if you don't *change* what good is that?

If you don't *live better* toward other people – men toward women, women toward men, women to women, men toward men – just how we treat each other, period, in life – what is it all about? *That* is what determines what is spiritual. The more that God's spirit is in you and producing fruit in the sense of what comes out of your mouth and what comes out of your actions towards others around you and those that are closest to you; that's the greatest training area of life and it happens to be family, as a whole. And from there it then goes out into society, into the workplace, into community and so forth; but it starts there. And *that* determines how spiritual you are – truly – how you treat each other, how you talk to each other, indeed, what your actions are toward other people. That's what's spiritual in life, in nature, in measurement of life, in our conduct toward others.

And I hope we can grasp that in a greater way in God's Church. I hope we can come to *see* that and understand that in a greater way in God's Church – because in that is much freedom and much happiness and abundance of life that God wants us to experience. And so it's about the change in the mind, the transformation in the mind that our thinking is different having to do with speech and behaviour. That's why the Bible talks about these things *over and over* again; it's about speech and behaviour. You don't see things about how much time people spend in prayer or how much time they spend in fasting – on the contrary, there are cautions in those things – to not let it go to your head, to not do it in public, to not spout it out to others in order to be seen that I am religious, so that others can see it and hear and think, "Oh man, you're religious! You're *spiritual!*" I've seen a lot of people who do those things that are *far (and in God's Church), FAR from being spiritual!* How much stronger can I say it? Instead, sometimes that can turn out to be hypocritical in nature! And we don't want to be hypocritical! That's why, again, these *exact* things are addressed in different wording throughout the Bible.

Set your affection/your mind/your attitude on things which are spiritual, and we're talking about things that are spiritual here. Sometimes we get off on the wrong track and think other things are spiritual that aren't spiritual at all, they're just what you can do and you're looking to yourself to lift yourself up in what you think is spiritual when really it goes back to something very basic – how you think, how you treat people, how you talk to people. And if you don't treat people right, if you don't talk to them in a right way or have right consideration toward others – where is God's spirit?

Then it goes on to say, **verse 5 – Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication**, 'pornea' - immorality as we talked about which can involve sexual immorality and so often does, that's used in scripture as well. But it can go to other things as well. But again, things like this are mentioned over and over again in scripture – why? Because of how we are as human beings! And this is the area that in time, if I'm able to, if it's what God is leading me to, which I feel and believe that it is – like some things I really don't want to go into but I realize that this is where I've been brought to a point in time of addressing something of this nature – is how to address things of sexual relationships, of what is right before God and what is wrong before God and *why*; and to be able to talk about those things, hopefully and prayerfully, in an open manner so that we can become more balanced in family, in our conduct, in life. Things that sometimes people feel embarrassed about or think it shouldn't be discussed – but we do all other kinds of things in the world but act as though that topic is one you don't talk about, you don't mention certain things. Well, why not? Why not?

Because some of it goes back to an idea that Adam had when he was walking around and all of a sudden he thought, he believed all of a sudden something that God hadn't told him yet... "I'm naked. I don't have any clothes on. God will see me." ...or somebody, I don't know – who else is around? The serpent? I don't know. Where'd that come from? How did that get implanted in the mind? We're held prisoners to things. I don't want to get into that, maybe later on...

Verse 8 – and it goes on and talks about uncleanness and so forth and then it goes on to say – **But now you are to also put off all these; anger, wrath**, another way of saying some of the same things are 'outbursts of anger or rage, a spirit of vengeance'; can even be regarding how sometimes people act when things don't go their way and it's the way they treat each other. Sometimes people go off and pout, "I'm going to punish you!" Vengeance. *Vengeance!* "I'll show you!" You know, we're *distorted* in our thinking sometimes in how we treat each other! This attitude of different ways it's done by people in society, in the world! And this is one of those kinds of things of...sometimes it can just be a total outburst and outrage and really, really nasty – other times it can be the flip of that, the quiet side, "I'll show you!" It's just as bad! *It's just as BAD* as the rage! It's uncontrolled! And it gets to where it controls people; they can't control it, they don't know where it comes from, of why they treat someone a certain way... "...going to pout for 3-4 days; *then* maybe I'll talk to you...then maybe I'll give you *my presence!*" It's a way of punishing! We're so distorted sometimes as human beings in the way we think and treat others.

...**malice**, another word it talks about here, **malice**, in other words evil, that which is just evil in the way we treat others or things we do; because these things have to do with *speech*, they have to do with *actions* that come out of our being toward others – just flat-out wickedness in how people live and think.

And so again, all this begins with the most basic process that one must follow in order to change a way of living. Paul does this over and over again in scripture. If you go to other places in Ephesians and

Corinthians you'll see some of the same patterns in his writing. He's saying some of the same things but he organizes it in different ways to different audiences because of the way they are and he addresses something specific; but he goes through and discusses some of the same things because it's a pattern of coming to understand how we think and things that have to be gotten rid of and changed.

And so it's unique in how Paul addresses some of these things, it truly is, and the way God works with us because we have many different ways that we're told the same most basic things sometimes because every once in a while saying it a little bit different, in a little bit different manner by a different person in scripture, or even in sermons sometimes, something will hit us and we think, "Why didn't I see that before?" And it's the way God's spirit works with us, to *convict* us, to help us to see, to work with our minds – because human nature doesn't want to see. Human nature *resists* the truth; even once we're baptized we still have a resistance in our minds that we have to battle against.

And so again, some of the most basic things here are being shown to help us to see how to become transformed in thinking and action; again, for purpose of a richer life, a more abundant life that God wants us to experience. And within God's Church, as a whole, when people are called, and this goes all the way back through time, life does change, people do change so many of their actions and the way they think and how we live life. It's always been that way. But God is bringing us to a different plateau right now, to make a quantum leap forward, if you will, because of where we are in time. We're blessed to get a bit of a preview of what's coming, of what has to be changed in a greater way that's *deeply* hidden in the recesses of our being, that you could talk to the average person out here; they might understand some basic things out here in God's law and so forth and resist the change. We're talking about that which is truly spiritual in a very profound way that takes God's spirit to see and grasp and understand on a higher plateau, if you will, of life that others can't even begin to comprehend in the world. But we're blessed to be able to begin making those changes in a greater way in ourselves right now.

And so again, as one acknowledges their baptism and laying on of hands then we're told that you must then set your mind on that which is spiritual and *not continue* to live as you have in the past – and therein is the battle. We can't live as we did in the past; we have to change those things that led to wrong actions, wrong talking, the wrong things of the past.

Verse 12...that's why it says here – **And put on therefore as the elect of God/the called of God**, those who are dealt with specially by God, drawn. God Almighty, God the Father has drawn us and brought us to the Church, given us to Christ. **Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies**, because we need them. We need them because we're *not naturally that way* in how we *treat* others and how we *think* toward each other – that if we have bowels of mercies, that which comes from the deepest innermost part of our being, with the power of God's spirit living within us to help us to accomplish that on a spiritual plane, this is an awesome thing.

Judgment, *mercy*...it's a powerful, powerful thing, being able to be merciful toward others. It has to do with an incredible healing of the mind even because it has to do with how you think toward someone in order to be merciful to them, to grant them mercy. It has to do with instantaneously not having an attitude of vengeance, not having an attitude of you're going to hold something against someone because you're not forgiving them. We don't have that prerogative!

God is the one who forgives sin. We don't have the right to hold things against others; when we do God says, in essence, we *sin* against Him. We are not judges in that respect. Now we have to judge things... (I don't want to get into that in this sermon), we have to judge things, we have to decide things and so forth, but how do we treat people then, how do we respond to people.

Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness... Kindness! In families sometimes kindness isn't shown. Sometimes by human nature we can be selfish; and when we're selfish and we're not comfortable or something's gone wrong or we have stress of life or whatever it might be, job, different things...of course we don't have much of that in the world do we? And when those things happen sometimes we don't treat others around us in a proper way, with kindness; and those who are the closest to us are the ones that sometimes get the brunt end, sadly. That's the way life is. It's not to be that way. That's to be *changed*.

...humbleness of mind, how we see ourselves and how we see others. Do we think we're better than? Do we lift ourselves up? Oh, this is a powerful part of human nature! That's why there are difficulties in a *great way* between men and women – because there isn't that humbleness of mind, sometimes on either side because people have been so burned and had so many battles in life and they get to a point where it just totally affects the way they think. It affects relationships... oh man, in a big way!

...humbleness of mind; how we think toward someone else. If you think you're better than someone else you're going to be judging in a wrong manner and you're going to treat them in a wrong way. You know how you're going to treat someone? You're going to speak down to them. And you know what? People generally know. You know if you speak to someone openly and you're on the same plane of life you can pretty much tell that; but if someone's speaking down to you you pretty much know that too. And how's your response to them? "Oh, I really want to be your friend! I want to be closer to you! I want to work at this relationship." Generally that's not how we react when you're talked down upon because you're treated in other ways as well then when that happens.

It happens all the time, but it especially happens within the sexes, it truly does in a very great way. And people don't even know they're doing it because they don't think this is the way they think; and that's where we need God's help to see where our weaknesses are and understand what is deeply buried in the recesses of our being in our minds.

...meekness, longsuffering; just that thing about a teachable spirit. There are huge difference in the way men and women think as a whole. And one thing that men sometimes have a battle with that is by nature is listening to a woman when a woman has a desire to share more than a man does. A man, it's just cut and dry, we don't think the same way. Where a woman would like to talk something out, discuss something – for men, it's just, "No, this is it, this is all that needs to be said about it and we don't need to go into this anymore. It's clear cut! It's clear to me and it *should be* clear to you!" And we want to go on and really escape it...really is what it amounts to sometimes – don't even want to address certain things sometimes.

I've counselled tons of people through time in God's Church who are really struggling to do it the right way. Because we do in God's Church – we truly do want to do it in a right way and we strive and we battle with self, we battle with our minds. And some of these things we're talking about, things that are so difficult to see – and it's about being able to see ourselves in the mirror spiritually; how and why we think the way we do. And I'm just telling you – that's not an easy thing to do! It's hard! And that's why sometimes there are some books, because it has to do with behaviour, that are written out there that

sometimes can maybe get through that thick, thick, thick, thick mind of a man – to help you see a better way of treating a woman and to see some errors you're making.

Now, I don't like a lot of them because they're so unreal in some ways and syrupy in some ways – but sometimes, just like that film that I suggested that one time that had a Protestant twinge to it that I really was repulsed by, but some of the principles were right down the line of if people will practice – the movie was 'Fireproof'. It reveals things about how people think, and people think differently. And candidly, men and women do think differently. But so often, you know what? People take offense to that which is different. It's as though they're threatened, especially men. It's like men are threatened by that which is different that they don't understand (because they really don't try) and that threatens their masculinity – that *threatens their authority!* ...especially when God has given you the *head* of the family. And I have seen it over and over and over in people's lives who are basically striving to live what is right. It's amazing! Our minds!

...longsuffering; forbearing one another, in other words, allowing for the differences; not only allowing for them but... and not being threatened by them either – because that's a lot of what happens sometimes in relationships, especially with men; things of jealousy, things of power, things that threaten a man's masculinity. And that's what it is, because someone is not yet settled in life with who they are, they don't really know themselves yet. There's so much to just knowing yourself, learning about yourself and how you think and why you think the way you do so you can be at peace and get rid of the things that *imprison* your mind, that keep you in Egypt; because there are things that do, the chains, the shackles that sometimes is on a spiritual plane that keep people captive to sin because sin is the wrong reaction and response to these kinds of things and how people treat each other.

...forbearing one another, allowing for the differences; not only allowing for them, but learning to enjoy them; learning to enjoy the differences of life. Thank God there's variety, thank God we're not all the same. I would get so *sick of you* if you were like me, because I get sick of myself, my own nature. If you had no one but you to talk to you would get sick of it after a while. What kind of a life would that be? Think the same way, share the same things... what a sick world that would be! Can we understand why God has a desire for variety? A Family to share life with, what sharing is all about in the first place? And it's enjoying the variety and the sharing in it – things of creation that should remind us of that, of the variety that's out here, thankful for those things.

Colour! Do you ever think about things like that and just thank God that we're able to drink all that in? We tend, as human beings, just to take it for granted instead of enjoying it, instead of enjoying everything that's out there. It's there to be enjoyed! ...to be able to drink it in! And so it is with people *even more so*. There are people that grow... I'm not picking on anyone from the Midwest because I grew up in the Midwest and this is just what I witnessed as a person growing up: "Just bring me the corn, peas and potatoes and steak, or beef..." or pork, whatever it was at that time, "and that's all I really want. I don't ever want to try any other kind of food." You know, you go into a restaurant and, "Give me the steak! T-bone is all I want, it's the manly thing." Even with foods there is just an enjoyment of life by learning to try other things – but some people won't. They just won't! They won't branch out, they won't think about... now maybe you won't like something, but you might shock yourself. And there's enjoyment in that if you learn to savour things about foods, things about what you drink – trying something different than the same old thing that you always have.

And what about people? That's so much more important! What about the differences in backgrounds and what makes each person the way they are? Do we learn to savour that and enjoy that and have this meekness of spirit that we want to learn from them? ...we want to see what their experiences were in life? ...especially within the Church of examples of things you battle and maybe learn from some of that.

When I went through the sermon on wisdom, and I think... God says it's out there crying in the streets, but so often we shut ourselves off to things out there because we already have our opinion pretty much set about everything. We don't need any input; we pretty much have it all. We rob ourselves of things that are out there to enjoy life even more. I hope you're understanding what I'm talking about. These things are mighty in life, the *differences* in relationships and enjoying that – truly.

And men, *listening*, learning to listen. Maybe you can only do it to a certain point, but strive to do so better, because you're fighting against your nature. And women, understand that men have that nature, because it's a two way street. We have to understand the differences – that you *like* to express those things more and maybe he doesn't want to listen to that too long and that he's having a battle and if he... the longer he's learning to listen to it and learning from it then he's growing. So there's give and take. Do you understand what I'm saying? There's give and take on both sides to appreciate each other.

...forbearing one another, forgiving one another, and then this is even magnified even more by the following verse; it's exactly how I led into the sermon today here in discussing some of this, specifically how this is accomplished...

Verse 14 – and above all things put on agape, God's love. It comes from God, the source is God, it's God's spirit. You can't live it, you can't express it, it can't come through you unless it comes from drawing closer to God. And you know what it has to do with? Over and over it has to do with relationships, how you treat people, how you think toward people. As a whole, that's how it affects us. Now it has to do towards God as well, just like the first four commandments, but the last six, it's all about relationships, it's about *family* and how we think.

...which is the bond of perfection. God's spirit, God's love. That's what's spiritual. **And let**, this is how it's done, by doing that; **and let the peace of God rule in your heart**. That's what it's discussing here, it's showing you where peace comes from, where that being at peace comes from – not being on the defensive, not being offended by, not backing up and feeling like your masculinity is being threatened or it's being questioned, that your authority's being questioned... *authority*... and people bristle up because something else is going on in their mind that they don't even understand. Is that what it's about?

And let the peace of God rule/govern your heart/your actions/your thinking, the way you react to and act toward others, **to which you are also called in one Body; and be thankful**. The more we learn to be thankful for what we have, what God has given us in the sharing and what He's showing us because we can taste it, we taste that peace of mind, we taste of that life, then the more exciting life becomes, the more fulfilling it becomes. And we all have battles; we have things to change. I'm asking God for help for myself to change more, to be refined even more. Every one of us can grow, we *need* to grow wherever we are, ever how long we've been in God's Church. As long as you're in this body you have things that can be *changed* and *made better* in how you treat others around you...and starting with family. We're talking about, primarily, in marriage, because that's the foundation of life, of marriage, of family, of community and so forth – what starts in the family, what children learn.

My wife and I were talking a little bit about that today. So many things are not learned in society because children aren't taught it. She was relating to me a story. Mr. Dowd was in an elevator with someone here the other day, a couple of women, and he backed up to let them out. My wife and I notice this all the time. We do a lot of travelling, staying in a lot of different places and there is such rudeness out there in society and people don't care, children don't care because they're not taught by their parents, men don't care – they want to be the first one on and the first one off. They'll run right over a woman – they don't care! Where's the courtesy? Anyway, the comment was made that they said, "You don't see much of that anymore." And said something about being 'old-school' or whatever and they said they needed more of that 'old-school'. That's true.

And we got to talking a little bit more and thinking, you know, we see this so much with children – that they don't show respect to their elders. Where do they learn it? Where are they going to learn it if you don't tell them, "No, have respect to your elders ...to give way, to yield to them," so that they learn that in life, how to treat others. It has to do with your mind and how you think – and *especially* young boys as they grow up and the way they treat girls or treat women around them. I'll tell you, there's much to be moulded and fashioned in their minds to help them to see that's wrong behaviour, you're not doing right there. Because if we don't do that how can they learn it? But sometimes the problem is we don't know it, we don't see it. So much to be changed in a new age that's exciting and inspiring!

Colossians 3:18 – this is what we came up to, where we left off last week... **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands**, unique how it's said here. **Wives, submit yourselves unto your**, and I like this, **unto your own husbands**. Some men think that all women should submit themselves to them. No, no, no, no, no! Bad, bad, bad! But that's how they're treated sometimes, because they [men] have this *arrogance... arrogance that stinks*, that's a *stench* and they think that all wives, all women should treat them in a certain way because they are the 'head over women'. No they're not. *Amazing* the arrogance of human beings and how bad our society is today – truly is.

So God has given something as a matter of order that He has set within the Church, within life that is to be followed and for wives...this is their challenging part – to yield to. Because you know what they're told to yield to? To that which is very imperfect. But what it's talking about here too is something, when it's really understood, doesn't have to come up that often when it comes to submission, which has to do with authority, which has to do with government. But some people like to wield that club because to them it means authority for everything in life – how to cook the meal, when to do it, what to have on the table, how to stock the shelves, what to buy at the store, how to make the bed, how to... do my stuff this way, how to treat me this way, serve me... it's like being a servant; it's like having a servant! To some people, it's almost what it's like. God didn't intend it to be that way – this is *not* what this is about! This *is* about government, but you have to understand, when does government ever have to be exercised in life? How often do I have to exercise government? Do I have it within the Church under Jesus Christ? Absolutely! Without a question. Do I have to go around wielding a club and stick? Absolutely not! I preach, I give correction that's in the Bible through that on a wide plane where I step on my toes as I might be stepping on yours. You might feel that way, but it's because of God's spirit and it's because of the truth. But that's a different matter there. But we strive to learn and grow and understand how God's working.

But I'm talking about matters of conduct or things that happen within the Church. You know when I have to get involved in something? When something is being done that's wrong, that's going against

God's way of life, that's going against government or the structure of the Church and the way the Church should be. And sometimes things have to be done within a family and a decision has to be made. But you know what as whole? That's rare, or should be rare – truly.

And so sometime... not sometimes, this is really carried far too far in the so called Christian world and that which has been in the Christian world, the world of Traditional Christianity has had a big impact upon God's Church. Just like we've had to conquer and overcome certain things of Judaism, influence of Judaism that aren't right and true, things about 14/15th Passover as an example and understanding that at the time of Christ they had gone off course; and since that time it has gone off course even more. Traditional Christianity went off course very early on. We understand that in history, what took place. But nevertheless, when you're called out of the world sometimes we carry that baggage with us; sometimes the way we think we should be that makes us so called 'religious' we carry with us, not understanding because of our past or because of the way we thought it was supposed to be from our past and we carry some of that baggage with us and it can be a lifetime to deal with...

That's why I'm very thankful that God worked with me as a matter of someone who didn't have a strong religious upbringing. I was around it very little, but I was still around it. I got a little bit interested when I was going to college, with friends who went to these Bible studies and the like and I always had tons of questions that could never be answered, so something wasn't fitting and thank God those things didn't. So I never really had a great desire there by any measure. And sometimes that's far better because the more religious in a sense that our background is the more difficult it can be to change, to get rid of all that baggage.

There are, candidly, things that Mr. Armstrong, because of his growing up as a Quaker, had to battle with – Pentecostal things that were a part of the Church early on, that God brought him to see and understand because he didn't come into a Church like we did, a Church that is already established and set. He had to come out of *the world* fully; and so what an incredible thing that took fifty some years to finally bring it to the point where he wrote 'Mystery of the Ages'. Awesome that journey! But he came into a time when Sardis was there and there wasn't anything as a whole left, a very little bit to latch onto and then God started helping him to grow. But there were those things that lingered around, different things that continued on for a time and it was a part of coming out of darkness...and we're *still* coming out of darkness.

And what we're covering now is still coming out of darkness, where God is revealing more to the Church because of where we are and what's getting ready to happen on the earth that's exciting, it's because of the way God works with us. And so our journey is always one of striving to come out the darkness, to do things God's way, but we carry some of this baggage with us sometimes that makes us the way we are, where we think the way we do; and it's so difficult to see...and this is one of them. This is one of them that has not been fully addressed within the environment of the Church like we're addressing it now because of where we are in time.

We're to *shed* that Protestant approach, or we're to *shed* that distorted approach that started with a being who has wanted to imprison the minds of human beings to sin, because that's what it amounts to, that's his power. And so this thinking that began because of sin... You go back in time and you see what we do in life and we sin – I think of the way God said it about Satan, about Lucifer, what happened to his mind – he perverted his mind, he perverted his way of thinking. He couldn't think right anymore.

Because of a choice he made, literally his mind became twisted, perverted and distorted. It couldn't think right anymore, there was no desire to think right anymore because of being spirit as it was.

And we're made differently, which is an awesome thing because we can change, because it's connected to a grey matter over a short period of time where God is working with us and that's what's so awesome about the sermons we went through and discussing some of these things at the Feast this year, of how God works with us as human beings. We can change! We have a desire to change when God's spirit begins to work with this mind – to do it a right way. But every time we've ever sinned in our life you know what it's done? It's perverted your mind; your mind can't think right. That's why I love the way the Bible talks about the healing of the mind. It is a healing process that takes time; and we go through much struggle to be healed. It's a lifelong process. It's not a two-week process, it's not a two-year process, it's not a five-year process. We struggle for a long time *with* God's spirit to change, to be moulded and fashioned, to have holy righteous character begin and being developed within us. It's a beautiful thing.

And so here it says, **wives submit**, which means 'to yield to' in the sense of 'willingly placing oneself in such submission'. It's an attitude of a spirit of mind. Not to every whim – that's not what it's about, and this is such a difficult thing because it takes both people to live right to grasp and comprehend this, to strive to live right. But even there, a woman who is called in the Church and a man isn't... there is still that which may be more of a challenge, but there are certain things that you have to judge and work with to strive to do and maybe we will break some of this down and talk about it as we go along; because people battle with these things. I've known of people who have been around for a long, long time who still battle with these things and have these guilt feelings. But again, it's not to every whim or wrong decision that is harmful or unrighteous. In the Church we strive to live what is right before God and there are times that choices and decisions have to be made – just like within the Church of certain things that you can't do because it's wrong as far as God's way of life is concerned.

So all this has to do with order, with government, with what's best for a family and sometimes it may not be the best or the most perfect decision, but there are things that are supported and yielded to as long as it doesn't break God's law. There's a difference there too. Do you understand what I'm saying? Sometimes there are decisions and choices made within a family, maybe financially or whatever, a decision has to be made, perhaps having to do with something like a car, a car loan, finances, where they are in life; and you come to a certain point and maybe a decision has to be made because there's not an agreement. God has set it up so that a decision has to be made; and I can tell you later on what decision it should always be in most cases, at least 99% of the time – and I hope I get back to that. But sometimes a wife makes a decision of yieldedness, to not contest a matter but rather to support a matter, to be behind a matter...because you know what? Maybe there are 10 decisions here and 5 are really bad and there's an incremental way where the next 5 are okay, they're fine before God, they're decisions that can be made – and maybe a man makes one half way – like a 7. He makes a decision there. It's not the best one that could have been made, but the wife, she sees the 10 and she's saying, "We ought to do this...no, this is really what's best..." And they speak about these things, they share these things together. And that should be done; and a husband should have that kind of input and so forth and the wife should give that kind of input and so forth; but then a decision has to be made and the husband says, "No, we're going to..." He doesn't say, "We're going to go with 7 – because he really thinks that's the best one." But you know what? If the wife supports it and strives to make it work, you know what? It's not one of the bad ones that would be totally destructive, but it's one of those that there's several decisions that could be made. It may not be the best, it may not have been as good as

the one you had or had a desire for...and sometimes you really don't know because you really don't know the full outcome of something, but you just have this sense or whatever...and sometimes that can cause battles and disagreements and arguments and fights and so forth. But you know what? If you support it and get behind it – it's like... (Well, I don't want to get into that either)... We'll go on here.

Let's go on here and then maybe we can come back to some of this... It says, **wives submit yourselves**, and again, not to every whim or wrong decision that is harmful or unrighteous, in other words, before God, but as a matter of order, an attitude within the family. And I could give sermon after sermon after sermon on this but I can't give it to you to fully understand, only God can. It's a matter of your prayer life before God in asking God for help, women, to understand what these things mean and how they can be applied in life. And men, for you to pray about these things, to help God to help you to see yourself and your thinking so that you can do these things in a better way in how matters are discussed in family; because there are a lot of things that cause problems in families, in marriages from the get go! That's why we try to tell people about certain things and we can give the advice and the encouragement... "Is your house in order? Can you do this financially?" Whoooo... sometimes people just think they can live on love. After a while some of that seems to dissipate with battles and trials of life, crazily so.

And so that's where sometimes arguments and battles come from – disagreement about things of sexual life. People have battles and fights sometimes because people don't understand each other's background and things they've had to battle with and deal with in life... on and on it goes. Those are two biggies that I've counselled with over and over and over again in God's Church since I've been a minister. They're not small, they're big...and we go through these battles of life then because this is where battles... 'where do wars and fighting's come from among you?' God says.¹ If we understand those things... because it always takes us back to something inside. There's so much to learn about ourselves.

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, not to other men. You do not have a responsibility...you are to be feminine in your approach to life. There is, even today, that which is sometimes hard for people to understand concerning what is feminine and that which is masculine, and not to misuse those in relationships and conduct and how people treat each other and so forth.

And so, women, if some man tells you something that you realize is wrong and they don't have a right to do so, it's fine to stand your ground and say, "Wait a minute, where's that coming from." You want more input. "What are you telling me?" Sometimes people can't do that. I wish everyone could. It might help some men to begin to see themselves in the mirror.

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as is fit/proper in the Lord. There is a right way of conduct within the Church and God is showing this is an order within the family that God has given for structure for government within the family, which has to do with the Church, but there's different government that comes from God through the Church and in family. And some of that we're seeing in different ways now because of different kinds of ordinations that are challenging people to know how to rightly balance some things in life; and this is very wide spread. We have a lot of women who are ordained in God's Church now and it's putting a challenge upon the Church to address some of these things and address them righteously before God – and that's good, it's healthy. And God is leading us to understand things in a better way through this process.

¹ James 4:1

Notice the next thing it says, **Husbands love your wives... love your wives**. It doesn't say wives love your husband's; it's a given. But it doesn't start out that way, the focus right here in the very beginning is **Wives submit/yield yourself to your husbands, as is fit in the Lord**, as God has given it within the Church of a structure *when* decisions are made, when a decision has to be made in order to have an end what could otherwise become a confrontation or a battle, and that's a difficult thing sometimes.

It's just like on the job. There are times that the boss has you do something a certain way that you've already done another way that's a little bit faster, or whatever; but you know what? There's that expression out there, "The boss may not always be right but the boss is the boss." In other words in the sense of that maybe the best way; and sometimes people come up with a faster way of doing something and if they don't want it done that way, you know what? You're working for them as a matter of a company, as a matter of a job, and you're to do it that way. To do otherwise is really wrong, it really is.

And so it is within the family; there needs to be that unity and cooperation and order and when support is given to back it upport it and make it work the best it can. If all employees would do that what kind of a better world... Is that the way it's done out there on the job? Do employees respond to their bosses that way or do they just kind of go off and do their own thing really convicted and convinced in their own minds that they're doing it the best way anyway. They're not going to have the boss telling them what to do, so as soon as the boss is out of the way they're going to go back to doing it the way they want to do it. That's the way the world is. Nothing about order within companies and loyalties and stuff like that. But anyway, going on here...

It says, **Husbands love your wives and do not be bitter against them**. It says so much here. Why does it...? You know, if we look at scriptures like this and we ask, "Why is God telling it this way? What is it we need to see?" Differences here, order of things – what is it we're to grasp from this? Why would God say something like this through Paul to the Colossians, to us, to the Church, that for husbands, your task is to **love your wives!** *Because this isn't natural for you! This isn't what comes natural for you!* And wives, it doesn't necessarily then come natural for you to submit and yield to the husband! It isn't what is natural. Do you think your nature resists that? Do you think it's tough to do? Absolutely it's a tough thing to do, but God says that's what's proper and right.

And for husbands to understand what it means to indeed, **love your wives**, the way God says that husbands are to *love their wives*...because then it takes on a whole different dimension in life, it truly does. Not like the world is at all! The world is sick, the world is upside down in so much of this, it truly is. And as we come into God's Church we begin to get our minds adjusted, get our thinking adjusted and start to change.

Husbands love your wives and do not be bitter against them, the word 'bitter' or 'embittered'. Why? Why does it say this? Scripturally and in the use of the Greek language this captures a response and a normal or natural male attitude that comes from 'becoming jealous concerning what a male *feels* or *believes* is totally *owed* to them and what is often associated with this is an inferior threat to one's masculinity or authority. And this often stands alone as a male feels threatened or challenged in their authority. You think this exists in human life? In families? Because it does – it truly does – *especially* if they believe it is 'God given and God like' because that's not Godlike. Because we've already talked about some of this, how it's taken by nature for a male to take something like this in a way like it was used within the Church, that finally the love of many, including in the ministry, 'began to wax cold', because the love began to wane within the environment of the Church which has to do with agape,

God's love, and people began to resort to that which is normal and carnal in nature and within the ministry this thing of being lifted up, or this authority and this matter of being served rather than serving – this matter of sheriffing, as we used in times past, or 'lording it over' with Jesus Christ we made clear in this series already, that that isn't God's way of governing – and it isn't God's way of governing within the family, to lord it over someone because of supposed authority that is God given. God doesn't give the authority to lord it over anyone and yet that's the way society is in so many marriages in life! And also within the environment of the Church oftentimes, *especially* when we think that something is God given.

The ministry began to believe in large part that this was something that God gave to them; and men have oftentimes thought that this is something that God has given to *them* within the structure of the family, because it says, 'wives be submissive to your husbands,' and then that's misused – to lord it over. And that isn't God's intent and God's purpose. Does that make sense?

And so sometimes if we understand as males our own nature...and the sooner you capture this, the younger you are, the better off you are – to understand that a lot of things have to do with jealousy, feeling threatened, your authority, your masculinity feels threatened because sometimes we don't know, we don't fully comprehend what is masculine - because we've learned it from the world. We think what's masculine is what we see in TV and the way men treat women – and that's not masculine at all, it's just sick, it's wrong.

Sometimes then the response of women toward men is jaded and off as well... you know, back in the seventies – Mr. Armstrong had to deal in a great way within the ministry and within the Church, because of wives, things that were happening in the Church at that time – women's lib (liberation). And that was a response to being mistreated for so long in society, struggling in the job to be treated equally in equal pay for an equal amount of work, which still isn't being done as a whole, and all these things that were happening in society. And so there was these kind of rebellions in time in society because of something that hasn't been done right. It still isn't a right response though so often in so many of the things that came out of that. And candidly, Mr. Armstrong had his hands full in the late seventies dealing with this type of response; because it was in society it crept into the Church. The battles of society so often, the way society is affects us within the Church because we're bombarded by those things and we're bombarded by a spirit world, by what's in society. Does that make sense?

And so there are battles out there that we've had to fight at different times, and just because something has been done wrong, just like we see in society, so many of the things that happen in these situations are a wrong response to something that isn't being done right. But the response isn't right either and it doesn't solve the problem. Sad world, it really is, and people are so imprisoned to so many things that are false and not understood.

Anyway, it reminds me here, I'll just read the scripture **James 3:14** where this word is used, **But if you have bitter envying**...why? Where does this come from? That God would tell a man and a husband not to have this toward his wife?! Is that possible? ...that a man, if he's not careful can have bitter envying and strife in his heart toward his wife? Because this is what it's talking about – strife – because he feels that she isn't responding the way she is *supposed* to or she's not *submissive* like she's supposed to, she's not doing *this* right or *that* right and beginning to look down upon her and beginning to be irritated by certain things that he thinks are his *right*, or is his right. His *right*?! His *authority*?! His misunderstanding. So I'm talking about, again, things that go way back, in things I can't help but when I

go through some of this sermon here to think of marriage counselling after marriage counselling after marriage counselling that I've seen since the early eighties all the way through time within God's Church. And it all goes back to, if we understand our own minds, understand our own place that God has given to each one of us that's to be done properly and rightly before God, God's way.

And so again here, what does all this mean? **Husbands love your wives...**because if you do that you'll never have bitter envying and strife in your heart toward the one who God has given to be the closest in life to you, to have the richest relationship possible in human life. Do you realize that? That God gave, and has given, that a husband and wife, that in marriage, that the potential is there indeed, God given, and it should be when it's done in a God like manner, that it will be the greatest relationship *possible* in life. But we don't see that in the world and we struggle with it in the Church because God has called us out of the world and we don't change overnight.

I am so thankful we are where we are in time. I am so thankful that not too many months up the road we live in a new age, an age where incredible freedom is going to be given and a time of taken out of Egypt in a way that the Church has never been able to come fully out of Egypt because of being freed, of being able to see and understand things by a greater power of God's spirit being in our lives and society being able to begin to be changed because God is going to teach and work with families and give extra help and power and might to conquer and overcome; and to have that education there to start at the foundation, at the very beginning in marriage, that things be the way God intended them to be. The Millennium is going to be awesomely exciting because of these things that the world has never been able to experience, as a whole, in 6,000 years. We have tasted of it within the Church, within the environment of the Church depending on how much we have learned and changed within the time we've been able to change and grow and be moulded and fashioned. I'm talking about all the different eras in God's Church.

So again, such bitterness is being warned against, we are to guard against such attitudes; and sometimes people don't guard against it because they don't think they have it, they don't think that's there. *Don't. Be. So. Quick. To. Throw it aside* and disregard it and say, "I have none of that whatsoever in my life." Why would Paul be inspired by God's spirit, by God Almighty, from Jesus Christ, "Tell the Church this..." over and over.

So again, these things, bitterness, being warned against, is to guard against such attitudes that stem from one's masculinity. And I'll tell you what. God made us different. God has given hormones in the human body that affect *this*, they do; and some have different kinds that work with them – and men and women have different kinds that work with them and even at different stages in life that affect our thinking and our behaviour and our battles that we might normally have or not have. And we change because these things are powerful. God made us this way for a purpose and a reason; they try us, they test us. When God's truth comes along we're able then to see the things we're to battle against and to understand things that we could otherwise never comprehend and learn in the mind by the power of God's spirit that are very powerful, because God has a plan for a Family to come out of all this and this is an awesome process of what God has given to us.

And so again, sometimes stemming from ones masculinity feeling threatened or *challenged*; when masculinity feels challenged in the world. I've seen it happen when people go down the freeway and they're *challenged*, and all of a sudden you have to fight. I'm thankful I've gotten to a place of peace in a lot of these things because I get so riled up when I see selfishness in the world. It may just be old age

but you get to a point in time when you say, “Let them fight it out – look at these crazy people.” And the world’s full of crazy people that get caught up in all these things and they’re almost ready to shoot each other sometimes... they don’t know the power of a vehicle – just in something simple and basic like that alone that you see out there in the world. Incredible!

So when people feel challenged how do they respond, how do people oftentimes treat each other and how do you see women sometimes responding even to some of those things, and aggression that happens out there in the world. We live in a unique world indeed. The warning here is given because masculinity can feel threatened or challenged; and then can become resentful toward one’s wife. And so many people don’t even know what’s happening and they become resentful. It can happen to a wife too. See, these things can happen to both, but there is more proclivity for a man because of his nature and because of his hormones.

There are certain things that happen to a woman that are a little different and are addressed because of their battling and what they’re to address first of all because of God’s structure and what He’s given in life.

So there are these kinds of feelings of feeling threatened by a wife or challenged or whatever it is which leads to sometimes people becoming angry – a man can become angry about certain things that happen in a relationship and with a wife, which is a response that is the opposite of loving and the way God says that you’re to love. Incredible, to love a wife, and actually one that can grow from resentment and bitterness to anger that is the loss or the absence of love. That’s what happens in marriage in life over and over again in society in the world.

Let’s read this section again; **Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as is fit/proper in the Lord. Husbands love your wives and do not be bitter against them.** So understand your weaknesses, understand why God say’s your first challenge is going to be in your thinking in a right attitude toward God, because it’s an attitude toward God and a desire to do right. And for man to understand your weakness as a male, of testosterone sometimes that’s uncontrolled that can affect some of these other areas in thinking in life as well, because God has given us those things to learn to control and to learn from. And those things, if not handled right, lead to insecurity and inferiority...insecurity in men and inferiority in how we respond and think. And those two things, if you can start looking at those in life, you’ll see that that has affected society in a very powerful way and men have a unique way of hiding those things – truly do – but they exist in a very powerful way.

But if you grow in time and begin to understand in time you grow in a confidence and a boldness that is right toward God because it’s right toward God, because you understand the mind and therein is great peace, awesome peace – and therein love can flourish. Because until that, love, God’s love, has a hard time flourishing.

I’ve said some things here in the last couple of minutes that are very, very *hard* for the human mind to see because they’re spiritual, powerfully spiritual – they truly are.

Then it goes on, notice here; it goes on to add more concerning the family. Look at what it says, **Children obey your parents in all things.** Now, again here, when it says ‘all things’ it’s understood, ‘all things that are right’. There are certain things that are written in a way God writes in scripture here because this is about the Church and so forth and it’s to the Church. And there are some things that

sometimes young people, and especially today because they hear something on the internet – it makes it tough; and so there’s a battle there sometimes. And sometimes I am amazed at young people who stand up to do what is right because it’s right before God; to no longer steal, to no longer curse, to no longer talk in a certain way – even when their parents preferred them the way they were before – because you know what it does sometimes when somebody starts to change something in their life, they become pricked in their heart and they start changing... it makes other people feel uncomfortable because of what they’re doing. Guilt – it’s a powerful thing! And especially for a parent to feel a certain way toward their own child, it’s a powerful thing.

And so again, it says, **Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.** It’s well pleasing to God, it’s well pleasing to the parents; but there’s work involved in that from parents as well and how to love their children.

It goes on to say, **Fathers do not provoke your children to...** and I don’t like the way this is stated here, it says, **‘to anger’**, it’s not actually there – it doesn’t mean it this way, it’s *wrong* when someone is provoked to anger, obviously, and it can be a response that can lead to that kind of a response, but it’s not as much about what this is talking about here right now, but it has to do with ‘stirring to a wrong response to life as though they begin to believe’, in some cases like...an example here, especially that comes from a father; because there’s this natural desire children have toward parents and toward a father. There is something unique about a relationship that is toward mother and toward father; and the one toward father is that they are able to *please* their father. They want to be pleasing – we want to be pleasing as we grow up in life to our father, because why? He acts a little differently. He responds a little differently than the mother. The mother, as a whole, has a natural love that’s more there on the spot and is able... it’s easier to be seen. In a man, sometimes, it’s a little more difficult to see because of this thing of masculinity he’s got to go through and learn about himself and learn how to deal and work with his own children and so forth. Do you understand those things exist? Of how people think and how they feel – a natural proclivity that sometimes children have that is unique to a mother that is a given, to a father that is yearned for.

I have known *so many people in God’s Church* who have desired, who have had battles because they have desired a love from their father that they never experienced, that came from their mother more naturally, that they didn’t have... (sometimes it doesn’t work the other way either), but has come... it’s been more challenging and has sometimes just warped their minds in their life toward things in life that have been hard to conquer because there’s been that yearning desire to have been loved and that been expressed to them in a greater way. And sometimes parents go to an extreme where the parent, the father especially, can never be made happy. It’s as though he can’t be pleased no matter what they do.

I remember that as a kid growing up. Some things become very personal in life; but I remember one time, I wanted to please my dad when I was really small. Wanted to go out, and I got in the back of this pick-up that was loaded with grain (and I was pretty small); had to just shovel this stuff over (we had hogs at the time – so thankful when we learned we didn’t have to have hogs anymore) – we had these bins out there that we had to throw over a huge fence where the hogs were, to throw this grain in there so they could lift up this feeder and feed themselves. And I wanted to surprise him so I got out there and I started unloading this thing, something a young fellow that size generally just couldn’t do; but I was determined to do it. Anyway, it became my job after that... because I could do it. And I understand that. And it was one of the things I learned from in life as time went along. But it’s a natural thing – some things happen like that in life – they’re just things that happen. And I didn’t receive what I was

looking for in that particular instance. I don't know why that one stuck with me in time; I guess because it turned out rather poorly from what I'd hoped. ☺ Those things happen. We all have different things that have happened to us in life that have made us the way we are and the way we think. And there are these things that are in us.

My father grew up in an environment where his father treated him a certain way... this is passed down generation to generation – it was this *masculine* way of treating – and so some of that was learned; I understand that fully. See, and only because I understood that could I begin to change some of that when God called me. I remember the first time I shook hands with my father *in the Church of God* after a few years of being in the Church. I can't tell you what that meant for me – a young man in his early twenties – shook my father's hand – because of what it meant to me.

Do you have any of those kinds of things in *your* life? Maybe you don't...but I would say a lot of you do, of things you have yearned for in life that you didn't receive. My father had been called into the Church and even then within that environment both of us were in the Church and yet he had a battle in that respect, of being able to express that because that isn't what he learned growing up of what was, I guess, a relationship with his own child – that I yearned for, that I desired to have. And I have counselled with so many people in God's Church that have things that go far, far, far, beyond what I just said – that have affected their lives in a very powerful way – of how they grew up in their homes, of what they learned from their father or from their mother or how certain things were done or within families that weren't right...and some things become really, really, really bad in life and people carry those scars, *in the Church, the rest of their life*. Maybe later on I can give a sermon and talk about some of those things that affect people's life in *deeper* ways that carry scars with them and that affect their marriages in horrifying ways. We live in a tough world and human beings have learned a lot of wrong ways of life to be lived toward each other. I mention these things because I, again, have counselled with so many different things through time. And that's why I feel that even in some of these things, that God has brought me to this point of being able to express some of these things, to be able to teach some of these things, to come to this point to be able to share some of these things especially in what can be coming, what I believe is coming later, to help people to deal with certain things in their own minds, in their own lives in their own families – to have greater freedom and greater richness and greater joy and happiness that God wants us to have that we just naturally yearn for.

I'm expressing things, talking about things that we just naturally yearn for – that's why things are stated like this in scripture – because there are things that are yearned for. And yet I think of some people that grow up that are made to think that they never do anything right, that they can't do anything right. What a *horrible thing* when it comes from a parent – that you're made to feel as though you can't do anything right. You know what? That can be a kind of a natural proclivity within children anyway because they have this desire to please. Is that not a desire that children have through life? And it's a right desire that God has placed within family – that children have this desire to please their parents – both parents! It's just that the masculine part is a little bit harder to communicate with because we're pretty thick up here, men are; we really are, compared to women.

That's why I loved Mr. Armstrong's example when he gave the example of the greatest love that could be expressed physically was that of a mother's love toward a child – because by nature, as a whole, not always in society today, but as a whole through time, that has been one that has been the height of something that human beings can generally understand – a natural love that a mother has toward a child. She went through a lot, there's a lot of emotion of what it's like to be there in pain and all of a

sudden from within your being comes a child. And the wife, the mother is more attached because of the way she's made anyway and because of that experience than the man is. The man may not even be around. I was told not to be. "Get out of here!" No! ☺ I was looking at this monitor and saying, "It's about over..." you know these different peaks and stuff, "It's about over..." "It's not over!!"

But there is that which we're attached to in thinking that's different; and so that to me was a beautiful thing that Mr. Armstrong gave. And yet, he said, it's still a selfish love. He was trying to show the difference between God's love and mankind's love – because the reality is that that mother does not have that same love toward other children around her, it's toward *her* child because of that unique experience and that of sharing that isn't shared with others. And so that's just what is natural, or should be as a whole by nature, natural.

And there's much we go through to learn about ourselves that's deeply embedded within us that sometimes is a *lifelong battle*. And so it warns fathers in how you treat your children – be careful because you can unwittingly communicate something to your own child that can become a battle the rest of their life, that makes it harder for them *in life*, that helps to take away from a confidence or a boldness that they might otherwise have in life.

And so you must be careful in those things indeed, not to put down, not to take away, not to destroy but rather to encourage, to say "Yes, you can." ...and not to say, "Oh this is horrible! This is what you did?!" Now it's one thing if they bring home an 'F', then you can deal with that a little differently – but I'm talking about chores or different things that are given in life, different tasks, or something they do or make on their own that you're not supporting the way you need to. Some of those things aren't natural, especially for men, fathers. And so that's why God has gone through and expressed some of these things because there are things we don't normally necessarily see until we come into the Church and God's spirit begins to work with us so that we can change the way we are.

So, **Fathers**, it says, **do not provoke your children lest they be discouraged**. In other words, whatever it is that causes this response from them that they become discouraged or upset and that attitude that can begin to work that, "I can never please..." or, "I can't have this desire, this relationship that I want to have..." that they don't even understand what they're expressing at their age. ...**lest**, it says, **they be discouraged**. This is the outcome; which means to lose heart, to become timid and feeling inferior. You don't want that in your child, you want them to be *encouraged*, to encourage certain things in life for them. And none of us do these things perfectly. We all learn through life how to do them better as time goes on. And sad to say, there's no quick manual or quick learning way when you're 20 or 25 or 30 or whatever time it is in life that a child comes along and you begin to learn through the experience that God has placed there in life and within the environment of the Church so we can learn how to do it better.

And we're getting ready to be taught and learn how to do it much, much better within the family because we're talking about things here that can scar a person's life and the mind all the way through their life, affect their jobs, the kind of jobs they have in life and so forth, the kinds of profession they enter into and how they work on the job, how they work, how they treat their wife, how they treat their husband; on and on it goes. It all starts as a child is growing up in the environment of a family. That's why this world is in such pain and agony today – because where is the family? ...as a whole because of things like divorce and because of a lack of commitment. It's for *life*...and that should be foreign that it's

anything different. We as well, sometimes, bring that into God's Church and that is a difficult battle there as well. And you can't make the other person change in life; you come to learn that you're the only one that can change and respond to what you see and that you have to change yourself. Hopefully when people come into the Church both people do it; sometimes it just doesn't work that way. And so we have all kinds of situations; but we also learn within the environment of the Church how things need to be done, a better way of doing things and we see the scars and the hurt that is caused when things aren't done right.

Let's go over to Ephesians 5; another area of scripture where Paul is addressing some of the same matters, but stated a little bit differently as I said earlier. **Ephesians 5:1 - Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children**; it's interesting if you read the verses before; it's very much like what we've gone through in Colossians. But here it comes to a point where it says, **Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children**; in other words we're God's children, we're God's begotten children – we want to please God! Isn't that your desire? I have mentioned at different times that I desire to have the attitude, the mind of David where God would say, "He's a man after My own heart." Isn't that what you want to do? That's our desire; we want to be pleasing to God! Do you realize that there is a type of that within a child, within a family? That a child has a desire in a childlike way – but it's a deep rooted thing of wanting to please their parent? And how a parent responds to that then has incredible repercussions in life for positive things in life; both can develop or not develop depending on how the response is to the child.

And we have then a relationship with God and we're being told here **Be you followers...**this is the way of doing it, strive to live this way of what's given to you **as dear children**, to be pleasing toward God. **And walk in agape**, God's love; walk in God's love. And then we learn within the Church, especially in the latter part of the last era, we began to learn in a better way what this meant – that you have to have God's spirit to have agape. You can't work it up. The source is God Almighty and God alone. ...**walk in love**, which is what? It's how you talk to each other, it's how you treat each other, it's how you think about each other; and this primarily starts within the environment of the home.

You know, if you're faithful in that which has been given to you and that which is closest to you in life, then God says we can be faithful in much. But if we aren't in that and if we don't do that right you know what? If we live something else in community around us and people see something else because we're putting on a show, an air of how we want everybody else to see us; but at home we're different. Do you think that doesn't happen in people's lives? That at home they're one way and then out in the world they're totally different? I *know* that exists in a very powerful way in the world and sometimes we bring it into the Church and it's not supposed to be there. Because if we don't do it right *there* then we just become hypocritical – false, fighting against God's spirit. *Fighting against God!* We become anti-Christ! It's sin. There are things we can cut ourselves off from God – if we're living hypocritical within the environment of the home.

And the most important area of life where this is given to us is the RELATIONSHIP of a husband to a wife and a wife to a husband in God's Church, it truly is. From there comes a mother and a father so often in life. From there comes society, community and so forth. But within the Church we're talking about something awesomely powerful and awesomely important that God has given to us to grasp and to understand? Relationships, how we treat each other.

I say this because I so hurt inside when I see people doing it wrong, when I see the fruit in their lives, I see the unhappiness in people's lives – *in God's Church*...because they haven't learned, they don't know how to learn, they have battles; and they must fight those battles to become something different. Because to let those things continue to exist is sin and people cut themselves off from the flow of God's spirit. Fight against that, don't let that happen, yield yourself to do things the way God says they're to be done. Look into your own heart and your own mind and understand these things *do exist* and to whatever degree, whatever place they exist - that is what we're to fight. We all have something to fight. We all have something to do in order to become better. If you disregard it as it's nothing in you, because I've seen that reaction in people when counselling – that that's not them. It might be their mate, but it's not them. If you have that attitude then God can't help you because you're not going to look at it in the first place. So if you won't begin someplace to change something the battle is already lost.

And walk in love, notice this...**as Christ also has loved us**, husbands love your wives... it's gets really, really specific. **And walk in love as Christ also has loved us and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.** *This* is what's pleasing to God. It's how we live, it's how we think toward one another. And so in order to *love your wives* it requires sacrifice on your part. To fight against your normal carnal testosterone masculine human nature – it truly does. And do you know the responsibility is greater upon you than upon the *wife*? It's like the Church; the ministry and what God said in Ezekiel and what happened to the Church of God. Where was the greater responsibility? And where was the greater condemnation? And where is the greater punishment? That's why God made it very clear that they have to wait a thousand years...have to wait a thousand years; cannot be a part of some of those who are brought back and have an opportunity as a remnant of what's coming. Only because God has a plan and a purpose am I here, otherwise I wouldn't be here either and I understand that; but then neither would you... not a one of us. But that's because of God's plan – because God has a purpose for a remnant. But it's a very specific remnant and when it has to do with what happened in the ministry the greater condemnation is what happened with the ministers within the Church in the past.

And so it is in the family, *because* God has given certain order and structure within the family the greatest responsibility of living what is right, of doing what God says here *is upon the husband*. And I have found and know with all of my being that if husbands will do their part above and beyond in the way that God says to do it, that as a whole everything else will fall into place in a far easier manner and life becomes far richer, more enjoyable to be lived as well. But you have to do this, men, in your own lives. I have found, because of the world and because of coming out of the world and into God's Church, that there is great baggage carried along when it has to do with how husbands treat their wives; and it hasn't been God's kind of love. It hasn't been, as a whole, a sacrificing kind of love; because you have to sacrifice self. And that's a *toughie!* That's a toughie for a normal masculine testosterone given human being; it isn't natural. And that's why things are addressed in scripture the way they are then.

God defines what is truly masculine in the Bible. *This* is masculine; *this*, what we're talking about, a willingness to sacrifice yourself, a willingness to take the brunt, a willingness to give, to give to where it hurts yourself because you're fighting against pride, as a whole, in the beginning. You're fighting against your own human nature; and it's a lot to sacrifice one's own human nature. Isn't that what God says about all of us? He does. It's about a sacrifice we're willing to give to God; anything less is unacceptable.

When we come into God's Church we must sacrifice self because that's the task. Self doesn't want to be sacrificed. Self wants it own way! Self is filled full of pride! And to correct oneself and receive that from God is not natural, it takes God's spirit. And so we cry out to God. **And has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice**, to offer up self, your time, your energy, your pride, your supposed, perverted (in the world) masculinity that isn't giving up anything at all. When you give it up, when you sacrifice it – oh let it burn please! Burn it up! Get rid of it, let it turn to ashes. That's a great blessing! The more you can get rid of self...that's what we're talking about here! The more you can get rid of selfishness and wanting things your way and wanting to be served (because that's just natural by men in the world). That's the way so many marriages are; it's a matter of being served! And that's not what marriage is about. Or as a matter of lordship! And that's not what marriage in the world is supposed to be about; and if it doesn't go that way they go out and find somebody else that they *think* that they're going to receive it from, that will give into their every little whim and make them feel 'masculine'. That's what happens in the world! "She understands me...my wife doesn't!" BULL!

This world is sick! We carry it with us sometimes. We carry the influence of what we see in movies! And I feel for young people today. They're fed a diet of what they think love is like, what they think marriage is like and you get into the marriage and you find out it's not like the movies! It's not like TV, and it's not real, that's not real. It's like the Protestant world, it's not real! But it's hard to distinguish that! And yet this stuff is so embedded in the mind it's hard for people then to have right relationships because things are so distorted.

Verse 3 – But fornication, 'pornea', immorality. It's a spin-off of not sacrificing self **...and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as become saints**; great battle there; great battle men. And if you don't think there is *you are awesomely deceived and lying to yourself*. Truly! Your makeup is unique, and sometimes that's hard then for women to understand as well. And so there's this battle in life sometimes that takes place. Maybe we'll come back to those in future sermons.

Verse 4 – Neither filthiness, which is a word here for 'improper or disgraceful actions or speech', things that so often happen. And we're talking in the context here, which God is talking in the context, talking to us about relationships, husbands and wives, family...that's what it's all leading up to. It's about family. The focus that Paul gives over and over again here is about family; it starts with the structure that comes from God and with Jesus Christ, the order of the Church and then it goes to family because that's what it's all about in order to become a part of God's Family, what it's all designed to be – that creation that it talks about here in Ephesians and in Colossians. That's what it talks about; it talks about the creation of *God, and the creation of God is always in the context of Elohim, the Family of God*. And so how do we get there? And that's what we're being told. And we're entering into a new age where *awesome doors* are being opened up for us to escape this sick perverted backward world. Everything gets to be changed. *Everything* in education, everything in *entertainment* – because it's all so horribly perverted and distorted and sick and evil. Music... things that people don't even realize how sick and distorted the message is and what is in the mind, what it really gives and what it really teaches and what does indeed infect and affect the mind. That's a hard thing to get across to people, and young people especially sometimes.

Neither filthiness, nor foolish, and I like the Greek as it gives it here, it just says 'stupid'. 'Stupid talking.' Well, that comes, by definition sometimes with people, what is stupid and what isn't, because most people don't think they're stupid in their talk, but there's that kind of conversation sometimes that's just

plumb stupid in how people talk to each other and the situations they get themselves in.... stupid, stupid, stupid. Sometimes, men that will get into a conversation with a woman... not their wife – stupid, stupid, stupid. And one thing can lead to another in time and...stupid, stupid, stupid; sometimes naive... usually just stupid. Even within God's Church!

We have things pop up from time to time where someone's been communicating with someone else on the internet and thinks it's okay to do. If you're married, it's *not okay* to be sending emails back and forth with anyone of the opposite sex unless you're both together on the computer and it's from the both of you as a whole, husband and wife. Why something separate, why something different? Are we to be friends with each other? Yes, just like we are in services; we can talk to each other, we should talk to each other. We should have right relationships and visit with each other. Sometimes people do things that are stupid and they get into conversations... and after a while their emotions become involved, things happen. This has happened a lot! Far too often in God's Church! That's why we have certain rules within the ministry about counselling and about being with others and how you're to do things that are very specific.

...nor jesting, it goes on here saying, as in a playful manner; but coarse, vulgar, obscene. Sometimes these things happen on the job; supposed to come across as innocent but it's not innocent, there's innuendo behind it, certain things that are said – especially men toward women often times, sexual connotations that are given out there. And sadly, sometimes then there is that which is reciprocated in society. Perverted sick world! It happens! And we just have to admit it and acknowledge it because from there is wisdom, to learn from that – that we don't want ourselves getting caught up in dumb things, stupid things! Because they happen and they happen to God's people as well! You've got to fight and fight and fight and fight against self and fight against your normal human nature; because you know what? Just because you went under the water doesn't mean your nature changes! *IT DIDN'T CHANGE WHEN YOU WERE BAPTIZED! You had an impregnation of God's spirit that says now you are to WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE, which is your responsibility! ...which means you have to fight for it!* You do! Isn't that amazing? It doesn't just come naturally and all of a sudden you lost your human nature and all of a sudden you're just as spiritual as can be! It doesn't work that way! You have to fight to grow spiritually, and to *change* your behaviour and to *change* the patterns of thinking that lead to certain patterns of behaviour and how people are treated. It's a lifelong process and it's always in the fight! You don't quit fighting. You don't quit looking in the mirror to examine self.

God tells us every year as a part of our *conduct* that we should learn how to do that throughout the year... but we are *told* to focus on it *more so* around Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. We are to *examine ourselves* before we come before God and take the Passover. It's a powerful thing that God gives to us and if we're not willing to do that or we don't do it then we bring curses upon our self, damnation, judgement, God says, upon ourselves. Things are not going to go right in your life in the following year, truly! So there are things we have to do, we must do, and respond to God in a right way because we want to do things right and please God.

You're familiar, you've seen these things on the job; perhaps you've involved yourself in them in time's past – whatever. They're not to be a part of life, nothing that's coarse or vulgar or obscene. What does that mean? How does a person think toward a woman, a man to do such things? What does that mean in the mind? How do you think about yourself? How do you think about your wife? How do you think about your family? How do you think about the Church of God? On and on it goes...

It says, **which are not convenient**, meaning, proper or fitting, **but rather giving of thanks**. Look at those things that God has given that are right, to bring true happiness within a family and reward and blessings of life – that He says by doing it a certain way we receive certain reward and happiness.

For this you know that no whoremonger, or immoral person; and it comes from different words that have different things there, but a lot of immorality in life and how people think that are not natural. ...**nor unclean person, nor covetous man/person who is an idolater**, because to involve yourself in any of these things, God says you're raising something else up as your god – not God. ...**who is an idolater has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you**, no person in other words ...**deceive you with vain words: for because of these things**, in other words, there's always those things we have to be on guard against in this world, truly, all of us, all the time – men *and* women. It's a sick world out there and you have to be on guard not to yield yourself to something that's wrong, that leads to wrong thinking.

For because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the children of disobedience. It's why we're at the end of 6,000 years and the world is going to experience the kind of horrifying things that it has to experience in order to be humbled to the degree that it's willing to say, "Help me! I have *nothing!* I have *nothing* to rely upon, to trust in! I have *nothing* to save me but God." That's what the world is getting ready to be brought to; to where there's *nothing* left. *Nothing* in religion that they have been taught, that saves them. *Nothing* in finances or money or hoarding away or putting in the bank or trusting in paper...or now in the binary code that goes through the world and is stored that can disappear quickly and be gone. Whatever our trust is; in your country, your nation... it's not going to save you. Every one of them gets destroyed here at the end. That's what it's talking about here. After 6,000 years that's what God brings it to in order to usher in a new age, a new world.

Let no one deceive you with vain words: for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the children of disobedience. Therefore, be not partakers with them. We're on a constant battle to fight against participating with the ways of this world and it's out there pulling at you all the time, it truly is. It's a continual battle and fight in life.

For in times past you were in darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light: so again here. You have to feel for the world; they don't see what you see, they don't grasp what's happening to them and why it's happening and they're not able to even to begin to deal with certain things that you see and can deal with in life, that you're able to begin changing in your life, that you have hope for of a new world that's coming and why and so forth. They're walking around in the dark; but you can see. You're able to see certain things and the more you live it and the more you draw closer to it the brighter it gets as far as what you're able to have as a part of your life.

(For the fruit of the spirit, the fruit of God's spirit working in your life – that which it's going to produce, **is in all goodness...** and that has so much to do with how you live toward others. That's where the goodness of life comes from, it's about the relationships, it's about obeying God's way of life toward others and how others are treated and so forth. ...**and righteousness**: Righteousness is about right living. Again, doing things right before God. ...**and righteousness and truth**;) it's what the truth is about. It's about a way of life that God has given to us the world doesn't have. We see it, we understand it.

...**proving**, powerful word here when it says, **proving what is acceptable unto the Lord**; and this word here has to do with...you know the example of the oxen where it talks about, 'he goes out to try the oxen to prove them, to see how they perform...' It's something today we can liken to a farmer that buys a combine, buys a new tractor. If you've been around farming, they can't wait to get out there and try it! This is their baby and they can't wait to go out there and 'prove' it, to see what it's able to accomplish and see if it's able to do as much as the salesman told them. Or a computer, it's always changing aren't they. You get a new computer and you can't wait to get in there and get your hands on there to see how much faster it might be or what you might be able to do with certain programs when you hear about them and you start using them. iPods, whatever it is today that people like to mess around with, iPads and all the things that are out there. You get out there, you can't wait to try it yourself, to prove it to see how it works, to see if it does what everybody says it does. And it's exciting when it does do well. And that's what God says. Prove His way. You have to live it and apply it to see the result then. He says this is how it works; it's up to us to prove it. And you do it by doing it, by applying it.

And so **proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness**, do it God's way! Taste the fruit! Taste the joy of it! Taste the richness of it! Because then you'll grab onto that in marriages, in life, and family – the more you're able to do what is right, to see what is wrong and to conquer it and overcome it – and the more you experience that is good, that's productive, the more you... it's like the *Feast of Tabernacles* as an example! Don't you look forward to if we're so blessed to have another one this year...and some of you that only had four days of an organized site together with other people...how much better were the eight days, the full eight days that you were able to have with everyone else? You've *proven* something to yourself about what God says we're to experience, and you love that fellowship and you long for being able to have that for eternity, the thousand years, the hundred years beyond that. You long for that kind of closeness within a family, that kind of relationship within a family that goes beyond physical family. And so because you've proven that to yourself you know what that means. See? You've proven it, you've tried it!

And the same thing is true; the more you live God's way of life within the family, the more you change as husbands, the more you change as wives, the more you do things the way God says to do them the richer your life becomes, the more fulfilling and the more thankful you become for what God has given to you, for what you're able to experience in life. But you're still physical and still carnal and you always have to fight no matter where you are in your growth, against self, because you will *never* do things perfectly. Never, never, never in this physical body; you have to wait until a change comes. *Then* you'll be able to do it perfectly.

Well, I think we'll stop there. I was intending to end this series today but I'm very happy that we get to continue on with part 4 next week.

This thing about proving God's way – that's what it's about because the more you prove it to yourself the more exciting it becomes, the more fulfilling it becomes, the more you want to do it because it's right and you receive the reward and the blessings of it and are willing to keep in the fight.

~~~end