

We began a new sermon series last Sabbath entitled *Going to a Brother*; thought I'd just shorten it a little bit so it would be easier to put on the system, but it's 'Going to a Brother Alone', that's the subject matter obviously with this being *Part 2* today.

We haven't even started discussing the matter of going to a brother alone because before such a thing can be practiced, applied in our lives, first we must seek to have a right and true spirit toward others that is described as a genuine and true thinking in the mind that involves the exercising of God's love toward another. And the motivation that comes from a true spirit, which only comes from God's spirit working in us and through us, must be a product, the fruit if you will, of God's love actively stirring or motivating our feelings, our care, our concern toward a spiritual brother/sister. And that's again just a terminology we use, we understand that has nothing to do with sex, it has to do with everyone. Otherwise, what comes out of us is fully selfish in motivation, and that's a good thing to think about.

It's either motivated by God's spirit or it isn't. There is really no in between, and it's good to put things in that perspective because the reality is it's one or the other and it's nothing in between. There is no middle ground in this, there is no grey area in any of this, it is absolute. It is either a matter of a relationship we have with God, we're close to God, God's spirit is working in us and through us – especially in matters like this – or it's literally coming from self, and if it comes from self the door is wide open and not generally for necessarily good things, obviously.

Last Sabbath we concluded before we were able to get through some of the scriptures that reveal the struggle of the human mind, because it is a struggle, it's a matter of bringing everything into subjection, unity, and oneness with God, and we're tried in those things. And so it's a continual learning process that we go through. Before we had a chance to get through certain scriptures back here in 1 Peter...let's go back there today, because it is a struggle in the human mind – simply a matter of God's spirit conveying His love in and through us toward others, yielding to that. And this is basic, before we can even begin to *consider* going to a brother alone, which actually requires a very strong grounding in *how* or *whether* one is yielding to God's love living through them in the first place.

Let's look at other areas concerning how we are to love others; again, picking up some of these things from last week and continuing on here. 1 Peter 1, speaking of some of these matters, some of these principles that we started covering at the end of last week's sermon.

1 Peter 1:22 - Seeing you have purified your souls; so it's a process we go through, it's something we do as a matter of a process in our lives. **Seeing that you have purified your souls in obeying the truth;** it shows that's how it's done, and that's a continuing process, it's not something that is complete, ever, it's something we always have to work on. **Seeing you have, or are purifying** is really a better way of expressing this, **your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit;** and so again, it's something accomplished here by yielding to God's spirit, by striving to be close to God, seeking God to live in and through us, **unto unfeigned,** which is a word meaning 'not hypocritical', meaning in essence, 'without hypocrisy' obviously – which is simply another way of saying genuine, being genuine. Being genuine is without hypocrisy, is not being hypocritical in how we approach something, it's being genuine, and that fully requires God's help to be that way, otherwise it comes from self, there are things that just come out of self.

...unto unfeigned love of the brethren, what is the motivation, **see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently.** And so, again, it isn't something that just happens. God desires that there be something there that is a matter of something we put into it, as a matter of fervency here, being fervent in spirit. But **you love one another with a pure heart;** and so that's what God's concerned about. He's concerned with what comes out of us, what is inside of us, and is it a pure heart, is it something that is truly yielded to God, and that's reflected then in what comes out of us indeed. That's what God desires to see. He's concerned about what's inside the heart, what's inside the mind, the inner self if you will and the change, the transformation that's taking place.

So again, this word for 'pure heart' is a word that just means 'unbiased', 'without prejudice', 'not critical', not looking down on someone; it can't be that to be a pure heart. A pure heart has to be unbiased, without prejudice, not critical, not looking down on others. Those are just human tendencies, and sometimes it's hard for people to realize that's really what they're doing. It's really hard, it's difficult to see our own heart and mind, and candidly, we really can't very well without God's help. God has to show us those things because we deceive ourselves. 'The heart is deceitful above all things' it says, 'and desperately wicked', and indeed it is by nature, and even though we are being transformed there is still that that's inside of us sometimes that we don't see until we come to certain tests and trials in life to bring it to the surface so we can more clearly see it.

Verse 23 - Being born again, not of corruptible seed, in other words, being begotten of God's spirit, that's what it's talking about here, **not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.** These things are stated in different ways in different times in different places here in scripture, but all saying basically the same thing. It's talking about being born again, being begotten. We realize that that's a matter of God's spirit; again, **not of corruptible seed,** not of that which has to do with mankind, **but of incorruptible,** showing indeed it comes from God, **by the Word of God.** It's the truth, it's the Word, it's God's Word, it's His being, His mind that's conveyed to us and we're able to drink in of that and it becomes more and more a part of us the more we come in oneness and unity with God.

Verse 24 – For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away. Shows the temporary state of mankind and the way we are, and that's a healthy thing to see in others, to realize we're all in this together. We don't live that long, our life is here and it can be gone in a moment. There are no guarantees in life, things that can happen so quickly out here on the freeways, the highways, when you travel. You think of all the deaths that happen year by year by year, high thousands, 30,000 plus, nearly 40,000, sometimes there have been more in certain years. It's incredible to think about that, how many people just die on the freeways.

So again, **All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is the flower of the grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away; But the word of the Lord endures forever.** It's about God. It's about God's word, God's way of life, and that's what's to live on. It's that unity and oneness that we're going to hear a lot more about at the Feast. **And this is the word which by the good news is preached to you.** And so again here, always the good news of that which is right and righteous, just and pure that comes from God, is not in this world of and by itself, the source is God and our desire then for that to be in our lives.

1 Peter 2:1 - Therefore laying aside all malice, it's just a word that means 'all that's bad in our life', 'all evil ways', **and all guile,** again, a word just meaning 'deceit and craftiness'. Because the human mind can be very crafty in how it deals with people, how it interacts with people. Sometimes the little

conniving, sometimes... because there is that which is just a matter of a desire to control things, to be in control, and we want others to fall into that control. In other words, we want a certain outcome and that outcome happens to be our way. And in the human mind it's very difficult for us to see that in ourselves, but that's the way we function as human beings oftentimes.

And so there are things that people get to be very crafty in, if you will, in how to try to manipulate others and work with others – and it's talking about these things in the context of getting rid of evil ways and **all guile**, all deceit, all craftiness, **and hypocrisies!** I love this word here because as I mentioned last Sabbath, this word here mean's 'play acting'; it's not genuine, it's not real, it's not the truth, and what's coming out of us, or an individual in this case, is not the truth, it's play acting. I've seen so much of this in God's Church through Philadelphia and into Laodicea and how in the Church we can 'play' this way of life almost, as it were, go through the motions, and yet when we're away on our own or back together as a family, back in the home, or back in the car going home from services, all of a sudden the atmosphere changes. I used to ride with some people when I first came in the Church, was about a hundred miles away to go to services, and it was an education, how the family lived, how they thought about people and a lot of times it was this expression we used to have in the Church about 'roast minister'. It wasn't a matter of being excited about what they were hearing and sharing what they were hearing, or moved by what they were hearing, it was finding fault with what was being said.

Verse 2 - As newborn babes; understanding always, no matter how long we're in this human flesh, no matter whether there are new people coming along, it's easier for us if someone just coming along in the last few years, but if we've been in for a long time it's still hard for us to grasp this concept of how we're to see ourselves as well before God. *We aren't even born yet!* We aren't even born into God's Family yet! We're the Kingdom of God in embryo, we're begotten of God's spirit but we're not born yet. But sometimes we get this sense about ourselves that we're doing pretty good, that we're fairly mature, and think, no, the more you learn about God, if you truly learn about God's way, the more you realize you *don't* know and you don't have yet, and we need so much more, we truly do.

As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby: If it be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, that the Lord is good. And that's God's desire, to taste of His way of life, to prove it to ourselves, to see that when we do things His way that there are blessings in it. And we should be able to come make a contrast there with our way and learn, hopefully we learn 😊 sometimes it takes a long time to learn some of these things, doesn't it? It's a lifelong process. That our way doesn't... we've tasted of that and sometimes we have to taste a lot of it until it becomes repulsive to us.

1 Peter 3:8 – There is a lot said in the book of Peter about relationships, about how we should be genuine, about how we should be true. There are things that Peter experienced early on before the holy spirit was poured out, where he saw some things in himself that were shocking to him, and those things... There are certain things in life sometimes that just stay with you. Like Paul and what helped to stir up a spirit of humility always in his life and a willingness to go through a lot of suffering to do his job as an apostle to the Gentiles, because he had gone against the Church, he had fought against God, he fought directly against Jesus Christ, he fought against those whom God had called, and put some to death, put Stephen to death. He was there giving approval to kill Stephen when Stephen was killed.

And so these things undoubtedly stayed with him, and there are certain things that... that's a healthy thing, that's a good thing. I oftentimes think about Paul in the sense of what he went through in hardships and trials and difficulties because sometimes for us if we were in the same kind of situation

people would begin to think, “Well, I must be doing something wrong,” or “This must not really be the truth because all these things are happening to me.” Shipwrecked, stoned, “Something must be wrong with me here big time!” There wasn’t, and he didn’t have that attitude and spirit. God gave him a spirit of understanding that this was a part of how people have always received God’s way of life, and it hasn’t been good, and so he received the brunt end of it.

Sometimes though when we go through trials we think about ourselves, we begin to turn inward if we’re not careful and think, “Woe is me.” Paul never did that. He’s a good example of never turning inward, never feeling “Woe is me.” On the contrary, those are the very things that stirred him up more, that gave him greater determination.

1 Peter 3:8 – Finally, all of you be of one mind; there is, of all things this is it, this sums up so much of our life, period, this unity, the need for unity, the need for oneness with God because this is what it’s all about, being at one with God, the spirit of God, the mind of God, the being of God, the love of God, thinking...everything being brought into subjection, unity, and oneness with God. This is what it’s all about, because this is what we have to go through to learn and to grow in, to be transformed into that one mind – atonement – being at one with God.

Finally, all of you being of one mind; having compassion, the word meaning ‘being sympathetic’ one to another, being able to feel for others, being able to not be so quick to judge and understanding we’re all in this together, we’re all a Family and we all go through different things at different times. There should be that spirit and that attitude, and if we’re lacking in it we have to go before God and ask, help us to put ourselves... I think we all find this through time, the more you really find out about an individual, find out about people, what made them who they are, what they went through in their life that has made them the way... Because we all have our own little battles, our own uniqueness that sometimes rubs others the wrong way. We all have those things in human life. Our weaknesses are the things that others see oftentimes, and the more you get to know someone, to understand how they became who they are, that’s a good thing, to be able to feel then, understanding where they come from, just as much as I/we should hope that they would understand us or seek to understand us and seek to get to know us and not be so quick to find fault and judge.

...having compassion, being sympathetic, in other words, one to another, **love as brethren, be pitiful,** a word that means just ‘compassionate’. Some of these in the Old King James language doesn’t mean the same to us today as other words. It just means being ‘tender-hearted’, ‘compassionate’; again, this matter of not being quick to judge. There should be a tenderness about it in our spirit and in our heart and in our mind – compassion, being able to have compassion toward others. Sometimes it’s very difficult for us as human beings. If we can have compassion then we can extend mercy.

...be courteous: this word simply means ‘humble minded’. That’s always needed because if we lift ourselves up then we tend to judge more harshly. Whenever you judge someone harshly, always remember that, that very likely what’s taking place in a lot of instances is that we’re not being humble-minded, we’re allowing self to be lifted up a little bit in our thinking and it’s easier to be judgmental. And we can’t be that way, because being humble minded really is a realization that, “I’ve got problems! Who am I to judge?” ... especially if we understand what God says. Who are we to judge His servants? Who are we to judge whom He’s called? Who are we to judge His children, those who have been begotten by Him? On the contrary, that isn’t our job, it’s His, it’s Him and His Sons, and we’re there for a different purpose, and it isn’t to judge – if you understand what I’m saying in the sense of a Family. Now, within the Church, within government, there are situations that sometimes you have to be a part of that

process and on the lectures we have on the EMC, the ministry, some of those things are very well lined out in the sense of what our responsibilities are and what they should not be.

So, **humble-minded toward one another, not rendering evil for evil**, if we feel that something's been done in a wrong way toward us, not responding in the same way – because that's just human nature. Human nature is to respond back exactly the same way we feel that something has been done to us. That's just human nature; it's an *automatic response of selfishness*! That's just the way we are! Someone gets upset at you, someone raises their voice at you, someone... and after a while you find yourself doing the same thing because it's just your human nature. And the more you know someone and know those little things, it's easier to come out, it just becomes almost automatic in life, whether it be in marriage, children, parents, friends, whatever it is. If you're together a lot and things come up, this is too often what happens. Shouldn't be the case.

...Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: in other words abuse or insult. If someone's hurting and they throw something out at you, words in the form of daggers that hurt, and you've been hurt by something that someone else says, so often the natural normal human nature is to do *exactly* the same thing to get back. That's insanity! But that's what we do as human beings, there's this self protection type of thing, mechanism, of selfishness in the human mind.

...but contrariwise a blessing; *genuine* blessing by a right response, by how we respond, not fake, not put on... sometimes just a matter of zipping the lip shut and maybe having to go away and then coming back in better control, because if you're not in control there is no sense in discussing a matter or even engaging in the matter. You have to get yourself first in unity and oneness with God, in a right spirit, otherwise what is going to come out of you is just selfish human nature and it's going to be exactly what God says here don't do.

So again, **not rendering evil for evil, railing for railing**, abuse for abuse, or insult for insult, **but contrariwise a blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called**, that's what we *should* do, that's how we *should* live, **that you should inherit a blessing**. To inherit a blessing we've got to be a blessing, we've got to... that means letting God live in and through us, not to let selfishness, because we know what that is.

Verse 10 - For he who will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, that's how you're able to do it. You can't do it by other means. There is a way that these things happen in life to produce fruit and blessings in your life. So if you love life – what life? Our life? It's God's life, the way of life that God says we're to live toward each other. If we love *that* life then there is a certain way to live.

...and to see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil... So there's a lot said here. It boggles my mind when you think about some of these things, but how can someone, if their angry, if they're upset with an individual and they start spewing out their hurt, their frustration on another individual – and if you don't respond in kind, how long can you just keep doing that to someone who just takes it. Is there something there can help begin to defuse the situation because of a right response? Yeah, and if it doesn't then that individual, whether they're in or out of the Church, they've got some things to take care of in their life. They are unhappy; they're going to be unhappy if they keep doing that. But if you don't respond in like manner, in kind, and you take it and you just let them do it and maybe say, "I'm sorry you feel this way, but I know we can't communicate right now this way," and if you have to excuse yourself you excuse yourself and maybe come back at another time when they're a little calmer, but for yourself, not to get worked up. That's a tall order! We don't generally respond that well to situations

like that, we really don't. That's not generally the rule of thumb but that's what we should strive for and that's what we should repent of, if we've done it wrong, and ask God for help to make it right. And then go back to the individual and seek to make it right.

It isn't enough just to go before God and say, "Father, forgive me, I've done it again." Now you have a responsibility to go to the individual to make it right, to seek to make it right, to talk it out and to apologize – whatever it takes! "I shouldn't have..." Even if they're the ones that came at you, it doesn't matter! If you reacted in kind you're wrong!

If you love life and want to see good days then it says, **refrain your tongue from evil**; pretty simple formula, not so simple to employ. **...and your lips, that they speak no guile**: I like this Greek word here, it's a word that means 'deceit and stealth'. Stealth: sometimes you think about certain words, about how human nature is, and that your lips don't speak in any stealth. There's a lot in there, there's a lot said in the sense of how our human nature is sometimes and how we kind of work our way in there.

There are people who turn things around on others. If someone comes at you and after a while there is this argument that takes place, and after a while the one individual that really is at fault, they have totally turned it around and they've got the other person feeling badly, that it really was their fault. That happens too often in marriage, in married life. I've counselled too many people in times past, where these kinds of things happen, where all of a sudden it's turned around and the other person... it's like it makes your head spin, how did this happen? It's this controlling thing and sometimes it's done in a very deceitful, stealthy kind of manner.

Verse 11 - Let him eschew evil, just means to turn away from it; and it's what we're talking about. Sometimes you just have to turn away from it. If you can't deal with it there, if you can't respond properly, then excuse yourself, whatever, say, "I'm sorry, I'm not going to get caught up in this. I'm not going to... because I may say the wrong thing and I don't want to do that." And just excuse yourself and then come back at another time.

...and do good; let him seek peace, you have to *work* for peace, peace doesn't just happen in human life! On the contrary – *war, battle*, that's what's *normal* with human nature, that's the *normal* way we respond because of selfish human nature. We're going to read some other scriptures here in a moment that say *exactly that!* And so the point being is you've got to seek peace, you've got to want peace, and there are things you have to do. They're not just words! To **seek peace**, means there's something you're going to have to do to find it. That means there is going to be some *work* involved in it! You know, if you seek after treasure you don't just stumble across it one day, "Oh, treasure!" People who go out and look on the ocean floor for wrecked ships – there are people who spend a lifetime looking for a particular ship or a particular wreckage, and when they find it, the work that went into it, it doesn't just happen, as a whole. You look out, you go after it. I think of some of these crazy shows on TV now about gold in the Yukon or wherever it is. What's this one I saw the other day, they're chopping out ice and going down in the Bering Sea, I think it is, they're looking for gold on the floor of the Bering Sea and they only have a certain amount of time, as a whole, that they can do it. Now they're chopping ice, through it, to get down there, and you think.... Well, anyway, there is a lot of work involved if that's what you want, if that's what excites you, and the price you pay for it.

Anyway, **seek peace**; you put a lot of work into it; **and pursue it**, pursue it. When I think of pursuing something I think of running, I think of running after something. If you're chasing after something it

takes some energy to run, and that's what we have to put into it, we have to put effort, work, energy into making change and responding the way God wants us to and yielding to this process.

Verse 12 - For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: so sometimes we can deceive ourselves into thinking we're righteous and yet our relationships don't reflect that, and so we want to make sure that our relationships reflect that, that we're pursuing peace, seeking to be of one mind, doing these things, and *then* God's going to be with us and help us in our battles and so forth. Otherwise, there are times He's just not going to do it.

...but the face of the Eternal/Lord is against those who do, and it's a word that means **practice**, here, **who practice evil**. Who just let things happen and don't make a change and just continually let a relationship go down the toilet without striving to make a change. It doesn't mean trying to change the other person, it means changing self and how we *respond* to those things in life. And that takes work, doesn't it?

Let's turn over to James 4. Have you notice we still haven't gotten to going to a brother alone? We could have a lot more sermons in this before we ever got to going to a brother alone, because there is a *right* way of doing it and a *wrong* way of doing it, and as a whole, it's done wrong in life, because these things aren't being practiced or a part of our life. First, they have to be here first before we ever, Ever, Ever consider going to a brother alone.

Now, all the elders, this is going to be very familiar because we just went through this in an elders meeting. As a matter of fact, every year, as a whole, we have gone through *these* verses in elders meetings. Shows you their importance! If God is stressing these verses to the ministry year by year by year, there is great purpose and great reason why He is, and we all need to understand that and grasp that, of what God is telling us here about how to live and how our lives should be and what we do and how we do it.

Let's notice here, James 4 – matter of fact, I think I'll back up a few verses here because I didn't put them here, but since I mentioned something earlier here, in an earlier part of a sermon about part of this, I do want to take a quick gander at this. I'm going to back up a few verses because I didn't put this in my notes...

James 4:1 – Where do wars and fighting among you come among you? Wars! Now, this is not talking to the world, this is not talking to why wars exist in the world, and yet there is the same spirit there in human life. This is talking to the Church, this is talking to God's people, and James is addressing the Church and he says, **Where do these wars...** He's calling it what it is, disputes and fighting, when we *don't* get along, it can be in a marriage, it can be in a family, between individuals, children and parents, whatever, it doesn't matter, or in the Church, the larger congregations have been through time, the more that people have gotten to know each other, especially if they've known each other a long time, generations... We were in situations in Worldwide where people had known each other, in some cases, a few decades, 10-20-30 years in congregations before everything fell apart. And people got to know each other very well in a lot of cases, almost too well sometimes. But there is no such thing as knowing someone too well if it's done God's way. That's where the joy and the fullness of life comes from. But sometimes if human nature is in the way, which is what happened, because it talks about 'the love of many waxing cold' and all the things that happened, this is what James is addressing here, when these things do occur.

Where do wars and fighting among you come from? Brawls, brawling, fighting - Don't they come from your own lusts that war in your members? Do we know where such things come from? If there is a battle going on it takes more than one to battle. If you want to go up and bang your head against the wall and take off your shoes and kick against the wall and beat yourself up, that's one thing. We don't tend to do that as human beings. But to beat someone else up? We get pretty good at it if we're not careful. And we're being told here; **Do you not know where it comes from? It comes from your own desires**, something that is in a perverted way pleasing? That's what the word even means here! It's a word that has to do with **'pleasures' that war in your members?** It's something that we want! In other words, the problem is so often in life, that there is an end to something that we want and we want it *our* way! "Why can't you see *my* way?" We want *our* way and we don't even *care* about seeing somebody else's way! There is no communication in it whatsoever, it's just... And so, as human beings this is what happens when things don't go well.

Verse 2 - You lust and have not: you kill, pretty strong word here, what it is saying. It's not really that word that has to do with envy and so forth, but it gets the point across too when it's translated here. **You lust and have not: you kill, you envy and desire to have and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not because you ask not.** So its talking here about a wrong approach and why conflict can happen, does happen. It does! It's just the way of human life, as a whole, and when we come into God's Church then God says, "No, there is a different way. Here is the good news. Here is how life is meant to be. This is where *peace* comes from. I'm taking you to Jerusalem. I desire to give to you peace, but it comes in a certain way, only one way." His way! And so we want to be of that same mind and do things the way God says to do them because that's where the peace is.

And so He's showing us here, in essence, that there is that which is in the human mind, in the human heart, it's selfish! It doesn't care first about others; it cares first about self, protecting self, putting self in a good light! On and on it goes, there is just no end to it. And that's what has to be transformed. That's what has to be changed – that nature!

Verse 3 - You ask and receive not because you ask amiss, sometimes we can pray about things in our life, and here we've had conflict with someone else, it's just been ongoing and it's never fully resolved, and it's just kind of out there and God says **you pray, you ask, but you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your own lusts.** In other words, we want things from God but we don't want to do things the way God says to do it!

You adulterers and adulteresses; God calls things what they are! If it isn't in unity with Him then there is something else we want in life and to God that's spiritual adultery, it is idolatry, spiritual idolatry/adultery – same thing. It's wanting a different way, which if we want a different way and it's not God's way God likens it to something human beings can understand – adultery – you're wanting to practice and do something else that is not right!

Do you not know that the friendship of the world is at enmity with God? It's an enemy to God! So, in other words, if we want to do it the way the world does it and we don't change, if we do it just the way everybody has always done it for centuries and centuries, then what good is it? **Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.** That gets very strong! That's one thing I love about things like this, when God explains certain things to us, He doesn't beat around the bush, it is what it is, it is reality, it is the truth, and the truth can smack you in the face and sometimes the truth *needs* to smack us in the face! That's what needs to happen sometimes in life!

Now we're getting to the scriptures that we look at year after year for the ministry, because this is speaking of a spirit and a mindset that we need to grasp in a very powerful way. It says here, **verse 5 - Do you think that the scripture says in vain, The spirit**, which is a matter of the mind; the spirit, what we are inside, inside the mind, that's what it's talking about, it's what is in the deepest recesses of the mind, your motivation, that attitude, the thoughts and thinking that is ours, that identify us. It says here, **Do you think that the scripture says in vain, The spirit that dwells in us lusts toward envy?** Powerful what it says here! And it really takes God's help to see this in our own human nature and what the real battles are, because this is what it is. This is where the battle is. This is where the war is, it truly is; it's in our mind, it's in the mind and that's what we have to fight in order to bring it into subjection to God's way, yieldedness to God, if you will, yielded to God.

Do you think the scripture says in vain, The spirit/the mind/the thoughts/the attitudes, and so forth, **that dwell in us lusts**; and this just means in Greek here, 'to deeply desire, longs for, *craves*' **to/toward envy?** In how we look at others – envy, jealousy, desire, lusts for power, something that someone else... Isn't that what happened from the very beginning? Look at what happened in the very beginning – it is that spirit that is in mankind. God has allowed that spirit to exist in human beings so we can see how ugly it is. We have to come to loathe it and realize that's everything the opposite to peace, to what brings peace that God is leading us to. We have to experience it so that we can properly judge and discern and understand this can't exist, this is the harm it causes, and it's a desire that we have that's deep inside of us, that desires in a wrong way, envy, jealousy – it's so easily able to be jealous of others, envious of others, what others have, what we think... we want things our way, having to do with, again, lust for power, for desire, recognition, authority over others.

That's why this controlling thing comes into human life. It's just a natural instinct that people have. Why? So things go our way. We want things to go our way! We want what we want! We're not so concerned about what others want but we are very concerned about what we want...and sometimes we believe that everything we want is right. Especially when we come into the Church and we get baptized, we believe that our desires and our wants are right and just, and God shows us so often through time, "No, they're not."

Verse 6 - But He gives more grace. Wherefore He says... God constantly gives us grace, abundant grace, and sometimes it takes time for us to really come to grasp and see that because grace has to do with patience, mercy, forgiveness, all the things that are a part of a process here that God pours out upon us as He calls us, knowing what we are, but having a desire that we be in His Family and this transformation that has to take place. So we go through a lot to get to where we have to go.

He gives more grace. Wherefore He says, God resists the proud, and this word 'resist' here means literally in the Greek to 'set oneself against as in battle'. **Wherefore God resists**; there's a battle going on and God wants us, desires us, as He draws us, as He calls us, it's in us, it's in our life, and there are certain things then that God lets us experience on our own and through His spirit we're able to grasp and comprehend things, if we're yielded to the process so we can be brought to repentance.

It's an amazing process when you think about how God works with us, because for the world as a whole, nothing changes, people don't change, they become worse, they become more professional in how they do things that aren't good. That's why you look back at the time before the flood, it was really, really bad, in ways we can't even begin to comprehend, because of the spirit, the mind in human beings and how they were.

And so again here, says **God resists the proud**. It's a matter of understanding here that if we're going to be lifted up with pride, and especially if it's in God's Church, we're going to hit a brick wall because God's going to see to it that we do, because He wants us to get rid of pride, He wants us to understand how much pride hurts, and so there are things we learn and wish we could learn it quickly as human beings, but as a whole we don't tend to learn it quickly. We go through a long process and at certain phases in our life, at certain periods of growth in our life we come to see pride, what it is. This desire we have of raising up self, of being seen, of self being seen, or whatever it is. You think, "Oh, I don't have that desire." Well, it just said beforehand that the spirit deeply desires, longs for, craves, this spirit there that has to do with envy, jealousy, a recognition, if you will, for power, authority over others, this ability to control situations in life so we can get our way. Because that's really what it comes down to, because we know that our way is right; generally, we pretty much feel that way.

That's why we talk about people have opinions. We all have opinions and what are those opinions? Well, it's based on what I believe is right, and generally we think our way is right. All you have to do is watch a little bit of TV and you see this all the time. I'm so sick of it; it's this quarterback mentality. It's like, Monday night used to have (I don't know if they still have it or not, I don't watch football), but anyway, they had what they called the Monday night quarterbacks. These sports figures get on there, these people who have been out there, maybe themselves former quarterbacks, or professional players, and they're up here talking about what they should have done, could have done, would have done – all these things to win the game and what somebody shouldn't have done, made wrong mistakes. Because you know why? Because they're right. If only *they* were out there playing; and that's what it's all about, because everybody believes that they have the right answers. And if you can understand that attitude and that mentality, that carries through in society.

Look at what's happened here, you talk about politicians and republican versus democrat now and the conventions and people talking about everything that's said and done, how it's done, and you go through different stations and you see these divergent opinions about things, but everybody as a whole knows exactly how it should be done, what was done wrong, how it should have been done better, what they should have done at the conventions, what they shouldn't have done, where they made their mistakes, where they did something right and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah...

But that's *us* as human beings! That's the way we are! It's like looking in a mirror if only we could see it. This is what we are! *We believe*; we don't just think it, *we believe we're right about pretty much everything we think*! We really do! And that's what God's working on to change us, to get rid of those areas, because just so much of it is totally wrong, and He's helping to change and transform the mind so that we *can* be right because it's in unity and oneness with Him. And those things have to do with how we live toward each other, it has to do with a way of life – that's what's so important - and then the other things will fall into place.

And so **God resists the proud**, battles against, goes to war against, because He wants to bring us through this and we're not going to win fighting God – and people don't! And there are people who, to the point... I think of individuals who leave at different times. Every year! Every year I've been in God's Church people have left God's Church. Every year without exception! And you think of this process that goes on and it's always been about pride. Pride is the core of it all because they can't see themselves, they don't understand their own mind and what James just addressed in the previous verses. They don't *see* that! They don't *believe* that! They believe something else and so they fight against God. And in time hopefully that can be broken because they're not going to win. And for a lot of people it's just going to be a great resurrection when finally they realize they lived a life and they just died and God had

mercy upon them and gave them another life to live. “Now will you listen? This is what you did to your life, look!”

And so again here **God resists the proud but gives grace**-mercy-favour-intervention-power, more of His spirit; isn't that what we desire? More of His spirit in our life, more of that power in our life, to see things more clearly, to change, to grow, favour and mercy from Him? And so **God gives more grace**, it says, **to the humble**. How important is humility? Right toward the very end here, what has God given? That's what He's showing us in a very powerful way, the importance of humility. That's what we've experienced the last 3½ years that we'd better be living now in our lives in this final 'day'. It's itchy, isn't it? The sackcloth itches, and you've got to be willing to wear it! You've got to be willing to... look at those sacks back there, they're coffee bean sacks. When I think of sackcloth I think of those things, what we used to call gunny sacks (I think that's what they were called?) Not the nice cotton ones that held flour, these are the ones - those don't itch – these itch! Okay? Those things itch! I just think about putting a hole, cutting out the top there, putting a head there and two arms on the sides and stick your arms out through it and wearing it next to your body. It doesn't feel good! ...and neither does humility.

And why? Because it goes against the grain of selfish human nature to take the brunt end of things! When someone is throwing something at you... when a mate, when a child, when a parent, when a close friend, whatever it might be in the Body of Christ, someone anywhere, and they're throwing things at you and you take it, *it can itch like mad but you better take it because that's Gods way, and not respond in kind*, because if you do you're not doing anything... Where's God in the picture? He's not. And what are we learning? Nothing! There has got to be change and where does change start? It starts with you. It starts with you. That's where change starts. In every person, that is what God is doing. In the beginning here with the 144,000, that's where the change has started, and now for the rest who get to go into a new age, that's where it's taking place.

Those who are called into the Church of God, that's where change begins; but in each person that's drawn and called that's where it starts and we've got to yield to that process to make the change, and it *always* has to do with *relationships*! That's what's spiritual! That's what I hope people are really starting to see far more powerfully right now, is what is spiritual, because when we first come into the Church and *especially* at this time more than any other age because of technology, because of the books that are out there and you can read it on the internet, you can read it on your ipad, you can read it on whatever it is you have, your kindle's, all these little tablets out there anymore, they're electronic and you can download them, you can be connected to the internet and you can start reading and if you want to stay up all night... I've heard of people who have read things – I don't read that fast – talking about reading a whole book in a day, day and a half, whatever it is. That's not me! I'll read it, but not fast. You think, amazing! And then you can listen to sermon after sermon after sermon and after a while people can get into this concept of thinking, because they've gotten all this knowledge all at one time and you feel so full of knowledge, and you are, but no experience yet, no understanding of it yet. Not really! Not until you live it and practice it, that's where you begin to learn, the understanding, but in the beginning it's just a lot of knowledge and people begin to think that's what's spiritual! *Knowledge is not spiritual at all!* And I truly hope that everyone is able to see that in a very powerful way – all who are new especially. Those who have been around for a long time, hopefully everyone knows that already, but for those in the last four years here, to see that and understand that, it's just *knowledge*! It's what *you live* that determines whether something is spiritual or not, and that's going to be in your relationships.

That's why I love 1 Corinthians 13 that talks about, 'if you have all knowledge, if you have...' it even talks about more than that! This is the love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. We refer to it as the love chapter because it's God's love and it's agape being spoken of here, the words that you see that are translated as charity here.

1 Corinthians 13:1 - Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, doesn't matter how 'good' you are in what you say and so forth and how much knowledge just pours out...and if you don't have charity you're just a bunch of noise. That's a good way of saying it; just as **sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.** You know, after a while... have you ever heard someone just hit on a cymbal? ...without any music around? It's just an *aggravating noise!* And that's what people can be even in God's Church when they come along if they're not careful; you can be just a big aggravating noise if you're not careful! And that's harder to love! Be careful! It's not to be heard, for all that you know all of a sudden.

That's why I try to remind people all the time that you're disciples and disciple means 'student', and a student is wise to listen and not speak so much, otherwise it's this tinkling symbol thing, it just makes a lot of aggravating noise.

Verse 2 - And though I have the gift of mysteries, and all knowledge, *all knowledge*; and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, even that is not *spiritual* God says, but obviously that can't happen because the other has to be there for that to happen, that kind of faith, it says, **I am nothing.** It's showing here the importance of God's love, agape! **And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and don't have agape, it doesn't profit me anything.** It doesn't profit a thing!

And so again, this thing about all knowledge. So we have all knowledge – don't let it go to your head! It's supposed to be in there but it's just knowledge, you don't really have anything yet, until it's in your life, until your mind is in unity with it and you're actually living it! And therein is the task and the dilemma of human life, because we don't tend to understand what is truly spiritual. It's in your relationships to *every other human being* in or out of the Church. It's in how you speak, it's in how you think toward them, on and on it goes; that's what's spiritual! Whether it comes from God's spirit, motivated by God's spirit and how we respond and how we think toward them, or whether it's just an old self coming out. That old self isn't so good! We need to wear those old fashioned things when people used to hang out their clothes – maybe some people still do as a whole, instead of using dryers, these clothespins and you just put it on your nose because... anyway, human nature stinks.

So going back here to James, this matter of being humble, of a humble spirit. That's why we look at this in the ministry, because especially as we grow in God's Church or as we live in God's Church, hopefully we're growing as we're living in God's Church, in the Body; that's the objective. And there is a process we go through here and sometimes if we're not careful, within even the Church, when opportunity is given to us, if we become a part of the ministry, we have to be very careful that it doesn't go to our heads as a human being and that we have a humble spirit and don't get lifted up with pride. Because you see, that's been my experience in God's Church. I've lived through a period of time, especially in Laodicea, where I've seen this spirit so powerfully so that I've grown to loathe and hate it, because it's so wrong. And we just addressed something here where God says He's an enemy to that if it's there. He fights against it, He goes to war against it! And so it shows how bad that is, and so we've got to really loathe and hate pride! And the place to begin hating it first is in ourselves, not in others – see? Because

people can hate the pride in others while they're trying to get it all themselves. That's what the world is, that's what happens a lot in the world in politics. Sick world, because human nature is sick.

James 4:7 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. The word 'submit' here means 'to subject', 'to place under', in other words, in a matter of order or a matter to obey, to place under in the sense of authority, government, God's government, yielding to God God's way. **Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist,** to stand against, to oppose is what it means here, **the devil,** because there are two ways of life out there.

That's one of the things I really loved about Mr. Armstrong. There were people who never really got it. He talked about two ways, good and evil, the two trees. It's so simple! There is nothing in between. The reality is it's either good or it's evil; but people kind of want to live this middle ground. Two trees, and on and on it goes, a give way, as he talked to world leaders, and a get way, very simply put. There is the give way and the get way, and that's something that world leaders understood. They understood that! There are different films they showed at different times in some of these things he would say, he would say to them, and yeah, I remember a couple of places that I see in my mind when I think about that, and they had a communication there that was very understood about peoples and nations and so forth, and why the problems are there because of this.

So there is a give way and a get way, and the reality is there is God's way and there's Satan's way – that's what it is. And what happened in the very beginning – it's so important that we grasp that very powerfully so – what happened from the beginning is what's been happening ever since, this thing of pride and how pride comes about and what kind of a spirit that is.

Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you; and if you don't he won't, as I told the ministers this year. If you don't, he won't. If you don't resist him, if you don't resist that spirit of pride, he's there, he's got something that he's going to use in your life when he broadcasts, so we've got to flee, we've got to flee the very things that we're discussing here that are wrong in our life and seek and pursue the right way. And we haven't gotten to speaking to our brother alone yet have we? ...going to a brother alone yet. Because this must be there! This mind, this spirit, this thinking needs to be there as much as humanly possible in this human life in a relationship with God and crying out to God for help, that it be done the right way.

So it goes on to say here, **Draw near to God,** that's what we have to do then, and especially going to a brother alone, but in everything in life here this is what we have to do, we have to draw near to God. What does that mean? Is it just going to happen or is there something you have to do? Before you ever go into something, so often it's a matter of prayer first. Before you ever go into a battle you better have prayer there. Before you ever go into serving God in a particular matter, God had better be there! If you just go out and do it on your own you're just doing it on your own, but if you're asking God for wisdom, for help, for guidance, for help of His spirit, to lead, guide, direct and be with you, and that you know what you're going into and you're praying about it and He's helping you to see as you discuss things back and forth the right way, He'll give you the help then because you're seeking to do the right thing. He'll actually give you the help to do the right thing. He'll give you more of His help. It doesn't mean you're going to do things perfectly, but you start learning to do it and become perfected as you go on and it becomes a part of your mind. That's what's awesome about this, our minds actually become transformed more and more and it becomes more a part of us. We'll never be perfect, but we grow in it, something we yield ourselves to and grow more in.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Because that's His desire! He *wants* to help! He *wants* to give us answers and things that we can't see and can't grasp and don't comprehend. He wants to give us those things, He wants to give us the answers through the experiences we go through, because this is the way we learn them, powerfully so!

It says, **Cleanse your hands, sinners;** that's always good to understand! That's what we are as human beings! If left to ourselves – that's why we draw near to God, because we realize and understand selfishness of human nature is going to end in sin, saying something, thinking something in a wrong way that we're just going to have to repent of. **Cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded.** I've heard ministers explain this, that basically we're not double minded, you know, and to be double minded is just... you're so off the way if you're double minded and this is such a bad.... But *we're* double minded! *Paul* talked about that, we have a spirit in the inner man that Paul spoke of, and that's what we should desire, to do it God's way, but we also have, and always will have, this human nature, a mind that's being transformed. We're not there until we're there...and that means you're body is going to change, you're no longer going to be in a physical body, but you have to grow in this body and the mind has to be transformed and changed.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, purify your hearts, you double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, your joy to heaviness. So on a spiritual plane there are things that we just have to see in ourselves oftentimes, ask God for help to see it, and it's not something you rejoice in, that's what it's talking about here in essence. If you really see human nature, your own human nature, it's not something you rejoice in, and the more you despise and loathe it, the more you will fight against it, the more you'll actually cry out to God for help that it doesn't come out, because you want to do it the right way!

...your joy to heaviness. In other words, sober minded concerning self here - that's what it's talking about here - in order to better serve others. And that's really what this life is all about. It's not about self being served, but human nature always wants self to be served, self to be taken care of, self to be pampered. We want things to go our way and we get into battles because we want it to go our way, we want the argument to go our way, because we know what's best; "If you'd just get in line with my thinking here we'd get along!" That's what we think as human beings so often. "What's wrong with you? Isn't that clear?" It's amazing how the human mind thinks.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord; and that's what it's all about. **Humble yourselves in the sight of God and He will lift you up.** This is the *only way* to be lifted up, and God is lifting us up; the more we grow in God's Church the more He lifts us up until we're in His Family, in Elohim. And what an awesome thing to understand where God is taking us!

Now to Ephesians 4 – and we're still not going to a brother alone yet in this sermon. To drive the point home even more so, that we can't even discuss it, we can't even go there until we are focused upon these other things more so in our life – *really* focused upon them and understand the weightier matters of the law, candidly, and what it's all about.

Ephesians 4:30 – And do not grieve the holy spirit of God, I think about that. I think, I know that I do too often in my life, because God's spirit wants to perform a certain thing within us. God's desire is to give us even more of His spirit, but sometimes because of our human nature it's like we're fighting against it even. And we do! We have sin or the wrong thinking, the wrong mind, or giving into temptations, but we have to keep at the battle and continually go before God and ask for forgiveness

and as time goes on it becomes more refined, we grow, we change, we become more at one with God. It's a continual growing thing *if* we're fighting the fight – but we've got to fight it all the time!

So, **do not grieve the holy spirit of God whereby you are sealed until the day of redemption.** We can't just ignore things. I think of all the people who have responded since the last several sermons we've had over time here, especially talking about what happened in the previous year coming up to May 27th and this coasting factor. It's helped a lot of new people to see this thing of a lukewarm spirit, a Laodicean spirit and how dangerous that is. And even people who've been around for a long time slipped back into it and realized that they had started doing some of that too much so in their life. It's a dangerous thing and so it's always good to be reminded of that, of the danger of that, of a Laodicean lukewarm spirit; that that can't be what it is in our life, we've got to have a sense of urgency.

When I think of that word I think of Mr. Armstrong all the time, a sense of urgency. He always had a sense of urgency; it was always stirred up in him. He had this, and when he preached that's what he had, a sense of urgency. It didn't matter what the timing was, what was happening in the world, it was constant and it was a driving force and God blessed him mightily with that. And that's what we should strive for!

So it says here, **do not grieve the holy spirit whereby you are sealed on the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath,** sometimes we think, "Well, I don't have any bitterness." Well, when the timing is right sometimes you have some bitterness. It doesn't take a whole lot, depends on the other people around you and what comes out of them sometimes. Do we have any bitterness? Does something come out of us that is a little bitter sometimes in our thinking towards someone and at someone? To have a forgiving spirit all the time. It's just not normal to be like Stephen was, who emulated what Christ did, "Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they're doing." You get caught up in something; can we have that kind of an attitude toward someone else? "Father, forgive them because they've gotten caught up in this and they don't know what they're doing, they really don't see it." That's what it's saying, that's what we're saying when that happens. We realize that someone has gotten caught up in something, and a lot of times, especially now, especially this year, especially now!

This world is so stirred up out there and where do you think they want to be stirred up toward, a spirit world that's out there? Where do you think they want to make anything go wrong where they can? It's with you first! It's not about some of these nations out here first of all, it's about you! That's not their first target! *You* are! It's *always* been that way; and there's a lot of power there in a spirit world, truly is! And so we have to realize the battles are out there...and so sometimes if you can just catch yourself and say, "They don't know what they've gotten caught up in. They don't realize what's hitting them, that's what's prodding and pushing their buttons," which sometimes we are able to do that, push people's buttons because of what we live, what we believe, and sometimes we don't even do it right and that's even worse. So anyway, always looking at self is what I'm talking about here, looking, seeing ourselves first of all, but the ability to look at others and realize if they are stirred up about something against you, to be able to say, "Father, forgive them." To have that attitude, "...they don't know what they're caught up in. They don't know what they're doing." You can't just do that in a fake way, it's got to be because you understand it, because you believe it, because you *see* it, that they're caught up in something and they're stirred up. And sometimes people get so stirred up in a matter they don't realize what's hitting them. Someone who's gotten weak, even within the Church let alone outside; it really happens outside, but even more so in the Church, sometimes we don't realize what's hit us.

Let all bitterness and wrath, a word here that means ‘indignation’ in the sense of justifying oneself for perceived injustices. That’s so often how we think in human life, “That’s not just! That’s not [fair]!” ...and thereby becoming scornful and judgmental sometimes. That’s how our human nature works. ...**and anger, and clamour**, a word that means ‘outcries in the sense of being outspoken’ about things we perceive are not fair or unjust, being vocal about where we disagree in something, that clamouring that we get caught into if we’re not careful, **and evil speaking**, because one thing leads to another, they just all kind of work together sometimes. It’s a spirit!

So **evil speaking**, especially about others, putting others in a bad light. You know, especially if it’s in the Church! What I’ve seen, forty years plus, is what *should* family always do? Come to each other’s rescue, protect each other! Really, that’s the way we should be first of all toward each other, even if it’s coming at you from a family member your desire should be to help them, be patient with them, love them, don’t get caught up in it, want to work things out. Family should want to work things out, to make things right, and that’s the way we should be...and not tearing each other down or letting someone else tear somebody down or get caught up with that.

Here one brother comes along and talks to another brother, and today it’s so easy, you can do it on cell phones, you can do it on ipads, you can do it anywhere, and they start sharing a story here and all of a sudden, “They said that to you? They did that to you?” and you’re sharing something and all of a sudden then this person here gets upset with another individual in the Church and then they might pass it along and what’s so dangerous about that – what gets passed along is *never* the same story. And frankly, what was told the person in the first place wasn’t the truth or sound and balanced and just and righteous story in the first place or they wouldn’t have been doing it in the first place, in that spirit, in that attitude. And then after a while someone else gets mad at another brother in the Church! So those things are so damning, if you will, they’re wrong, they’re so evil, and yet I have seen this decade after decade after decade in God’s Church, and it’s what we’ve got to fight against! We are a Family, a spiritual Family, and we need to be there to support and to help each other and to help each other through things like this. This gets into this going to a brother alone.

Sometimes it’s good to say, “I don’t want to hear that. I’m sorry, but that’s not good, it’s not right, I don’t want to hear what you’re saying because you’re putting someone in a wrong light and you’re pulling me into something here and I don’t want to feel wrong toward someone else. It’s not right that I should be brought into something that is none of my business in the first place, it’s something you need to work out in your life.” But this happens. I’m telling you about things that happen *every day in God’s Church!* I don’t hear about *everything* that happens but I hear enough to know and I *know* it happens every day. I just hear of some things when they get to be so big and out of control or problems and different ministers in different areas are working with different situations and seeking council and seeking advice, how to deal with it, a matter between people, and it’s just a thing of human nature and it’s what we’ve got to fight against.

And so it says here, **and let evil speaking**, and all these things **be put away from you, with all malice**: with everything that’s evil and bad, put it all away, **and be kind one to another**, that’s a tall order, **be kind one to another, tender-hearted**, see, that’s the big mistake in people going to each other alone, because some, too often, I’ve seen it where people aren’t kind to each other. There are times when you see people kind of enjoy going to someone else alone because they want to change them, and how *could* you do this, how *could* you be that way, how *could* you have... and the other person is so righteous when they’re coming to them, they’re glowing with pride.

Be kind one to another, tender-hearted, tender-hearted, **forgiving one another,** if that's already there, if that's the attitude and spirit – wow! That'll come across, if it's genuine and it's true, someone knows you're there because you're tender-hearted. There is a spirit that is going to be evident to someone else. They may not jump up and down for joy right away, and maybe in some cases they never will, but that's in their court, isn't it? But if you're doing things the right way it's so much easier to receive, if it's done this way.

...tender-hearted, forgiving one another, not judgmental. It's the opposite here of being judgmental or self-righteous. So many situations in times past where I've seen these things done, too often the person going to someone else is really righteous and it *really* comes across and it *really* hurts the other person instead of helping them because the other person knows they're coming to them and they're very righteous in the way they're coming to them. And sometimes it's going to be perceived that way even when you do it the right way, so you have to understand that too. The truth is the truth.

...even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. If we understand how God's worked with us it does a lot in how you work with others and how you deal with others. The more you understand that, the more you grasp that and see that.

Ephesians 5:1 – Therefore be followers of God, as dear children; we want to be of the same mind in unity and oneness, to do it God's way. **And walk in agape,** and you can't do that without God's help, you can't do that without God's spirit, to exercise things in a right way, to do it the way God says to do it we have to go to God first and ask for that help, and then be very much on top of our own human nature the moment it's needed to live this love. **And walk in love as Christ also has loved us and has given Himself for us an offering,** and I love these verses... **and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.** That says it all. In order to really love others, as a whole, you have to sacrifice. To love others when it's really needed... see, because otherwise that which comes easy, which is more like brotherly love, that which just comes normal because someone is kind to you, you're kind back, but it's in times of disagreement, it's in times of strife or if something is stirred up or whatever it is that's happened when you need to sacrifice. That's when the sacrifice is needed, and really what you're sacrificing, as a whole, is yourself, your selfishness, your own desire, your own want, your own way of resolving. You want your way, and so you have to sacrifice your way in order to give to someone else, to help someone else. You have to be willing to sacrifice.

It's kind of like wearing that sackcloth, to be of a humble spirit you have to be willing to take whatever comes your way. That means you're going to be sacrificing here because it's itchy, it doesn't feel good, you're going to have to do something that doesn't feel good. It's going to kind of rub the wrong way but you've got to do it in order to help someone, in order to love someone, in order to give to them.

So by digesting what we have covered, which takes a lifetime, to really digest it, it is something you constantly digest in your life. We hear sermons like this year after year. We hear some parts of some of these verses from time to time, we go through them, James 4 here, we've gone through with the ministry every year and occasionally they may come out in a sermon like they have today, about the difference between pride and humility, to understand here how God works with us, the importance of us being of a humble spirit.

And so again, by digesting what we've covered one can then begin to learn, just barely begin to learn and then apply the true basics of going to a brother alone in spirit and in truth.

Matthew 18 – we’re finally approaching it.

Matthew 18:15 – Moreover, if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: there are some key words here that are so important, because generally people don’t do this, it’s not done this way, it’s usually discussed with others, and then maybe someone will go to someone else alone. ...**and if your brother shall hear you, you have gained your brother.**

There is a word here that should tell us that there is more to the context of the instruction and not just a seemingly simple matter that we just go out and perform according to our interpretation. In the King James this verse starts out with the word, ‘**Moreover**’, which would mean that there is more that should be considered before getting to the point in the context. Some translations of this word are the words, ‘but’, ‘therefore’, ‘now’, and in all these something else comes before this that must be discerned, judged in the context, is what it means.

So if you started out by saying, ‘But if your brother shall trespass against you’... or even better yet, ‘Therefore if your brother shall trespass against you...’ There is some more to the story here. It isn’t just a matter of coming to this verse, because this is what people seemingly have done so often. They just go to this verse and read the last part of it not realizing, now, wait a minute, it says, ‘Now, if your brother shall trespass...’; What do you mean ‘now’? ...‘Therefore’? ...‘But’? When those are in a sentence like that what went ahead of it? But? Therefore? What was said beforehand, and that’s what’s important to understand here.

There are things said beforehand here that we must understand what God is telling us before we ever go on with the rest of the verse. But it seems like, my experience has been in God’s Church, that so often when people use this terminology of going to your brother alone *this is what they look at*; they just go do it, ‘Go to your brother alone if he’s trespassed against you...’ Oh, he’s trespassed against me and he’s sinned against me and he’s done this or he’s done that and... There is more to the story!

Verse 14 - this just goes on and on... it says, **Even so**, in Greek it means, ‘in this way’; **Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish...** Ah! More to the story! Something I need to think about and pray about! So we can’t just go to the previous, in this case here, even this one here... ‘even so’? ‘In this way’? There is still more to the story! You’ve got to go farther back! That’s what is so good about reading some of these things sometimes. If you look at the words and what God is saying here He’s even telling you you better get the rest of the story then about what it means about ...‘one of these little ones should perish’. Don’t start even here, ‘even so’ or ‘in this way’! In *what* way? Go farther back, see what’s being said!

So again, we just can’t go to a previous verse but much farther back in order to be certain of a complete context of what’s being said here. Let’s go all the way back to verse 1.

Verse 1 - At the same time the disciples came unto Jesus, saying, Who is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven? Where does this come from? Well, that’s what we’ve been spending a lot of time discussing. ‘Who is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?’ It comes from selfish human nature. That’s where it came from! It came from their *selfish human nature* because this is just pretty normal. If you were in this situation this is what you would have discussed. If you had experienced the things they had experienced this would come up. It came up because it’s normal human nature. You think, “Oh, I wouldn’t do that.” Yes, you would! Before baptism? Maybe even after baptism! But definitely here! Same environment, some of the same things being taught that they were hearing...

I'm going to read it again, **James 4:5 – Do you think the scripture says in vain the spirit that dwells in us lusts toward envy...?** That's what this is. 'Who is going to be first in the Kingdom of heaven?' It's this desire in human nature that sometimes we don't even recognize we have! That's why some things can test us and try us, and one thing that I have found that tries and tests people in the Church as to our spirit because... well, it's ordinations. It's always been that way! Deacons, to deaconess, to elder, to pastor, to preaching elder, to evangelist – it's happened through out the *whole gamut* where people are tried in those things. Through Philadelphia on into Laodicea, even until now, because it's about human nature and it's about how people perceive things. And so God allows some of these things to exist for a purpose and a reason, to teach us.

Because you know what? You know what? The most awesome thing of all is that we're all called to a royal priesthood by God. We're begotten of God's spirit, but we can get caught up in this thing of position or place or ordination and that begins to cloud our true understanding of what is important in the first place, and even what God does and how He works with us, within the Body, and where He places us in the Body, but sometimes because of the way the human mind thinks, these things pull some of these things out and bring them to the surface so that we can see things in us that we otherwise couldn't see, because when it's all said and done, an ordination doesn't amount to a hill of beans! We're all striving forward to become Elohim, to be in God's Family. We are called into a royal priesthood where God's spirit is to live in each and every one of us, to create something inside of us, in us, that isn't there, but He's creating it and that's the weightier matter of it all. Because I know a lot of elders and a lot of ministers who won't even be in the Millennium, so what good did it do them? Because that's not what it's about! ...and yet people can get caught up in that and then they have to begin working with envy and jealousy. "Why are *they* ordained? ...favoritism! That's got to be the answer, because I should have been! It's favoritism!" ...or something else. But it's out there, it exists, I've had to deal with it in PKG! ...and visit with people and talk to people about it because it's things that happen.

Some who deal with perhaps feeling that they should be an evangelist or a senior elder, or an elder, or whatever... I think, "You're missing the mark and you don't understand; and whatever you have isn't what you really need." But we learn through this process. If we could only understand how God moulds and fashions us and see it in the scheme of things of how God works with us in life, we would be far more astute spiritually. And God helps us to grow in that and through time we do grow in that, but whether we are or aren't is not what it's about, it's what we learn through the process, it's what is being created in us, moulded and fashioned in us, truly is. Because God's going to place us in different places in the Body as it pleases Him regardless, and it doesn't take ordination to go there, it takes God Almighty who does the moulding and fashioning and the creating. He does it; He truly does!

And if you've been around for a long time *you have seen this in the Church!* You know what? We used to, before we'd ever ordain someone an elder in God's Church, every time without exception we'd sit down with them for a time and talk to them, if it be a husband and wife team, if it just be a man at that time by himself and his wife wasn't there, we'd always sit down with them and tell them, "Your life is about to change, and what you're going to experience is going to be a little painful, because there are going to be people who are going to act differently now toward you because of your ordination...even some of your closest friends, it's going to change." Sad we have to do that in God's Church. We had to do it in Philadelphia, we had to do it in Laodicea. But do you understand and see what's there? It's this James thing again. James 4; its there! Because it brings things out inside of us, and sadly so often in times past people didn't learn from what was inside of them, when it came to the surface, but would to God they had! But it's always been the case, and sometimes people that had some of their best friends,

they were no longer their friends. I saw that again and again and again. I've experienced it myself again and again and again, just because of it happening. Because there is something that happens in the human mind and things that people are having their own battles with, and I understand that, but it can be a painful experience, it truly is. And so sure enough, every one I've ever ordained in those situations and talked to them about those things, that's exactly what happened in their life – instantaneously, instantly!

Do you know why it happens sometimes? Because people know each other so well, especially if they're close friends, and the other person knows in their mind *they* shouldn't have been ordained, I should have been. And that's the battle. "If anyone should have been ordained... I know too much about them." Not knowing how God works. God works with weak human beings! Sure, we're going to have weaknesses and problems, every one of us does in the Church, every one of us has battles, but it's by God's choosing and by God's calling and by God's design and by God's purpose that He does what He does. It's not that someone else is better than someone else, but that's so often how the human mind works.

And so the disciples – Who is going to be greatest in the Kingdom of heaven? It goes back to this same spirit.

Matthew 18:2 - And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and we all know this story, but to understand it, to live it is another thing. **And said, Verily I say unto you, Except you be/become converted, and become as a little child/as little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven/God's Family.** Because that's the big picture! It's about God's Family and it's about an attitude of mind that we have to have along the entire journey but that we don't always have the entire journey because we don't see ourselves that way. It's hard to spiritually see ourselves that way, it truly is.

As with Part 1 of this series, this is actually stating in another manner but with the same spirit that there are things of great importance for one to understand before they can ever begin verse 15 here of going to a brother alone. We have to understand, we must understand God's purpose and His motivation, His will in a matter.

See, God's motivation is a matter of understanding God's will. It's His motivation, His will in the lives of those whom *He* has created or is creating, if you will, and continues to create. So there are matters about God's will, which is motivated by His love. God's will is always motivated by His love. That's why we have discussed some of the things we have recently, talking about the ability to see that, that what God does, His motivation is love toward us, and we've talked about His love toward us and what we've gone through, and if we can see that and understand that that's a beautiful thing. He does what is best for us indeed, and that's His entire motivation, that is His will, things about what He is doing with us in our lives. And we have to focus upon those and seek to apply those things in our life as well toward others before we ever go to a brother alone. In other words, seek God's will, His motivation, His love toward others, what He's doing, what it's all about. It's about becoming a part of God's Family, that we all be able to attain to that.

Verse 4 – Therefore, whoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. Now, did you ever see that expressions where you just... it's hard to put this through the system here with people just listening, but if you take your hand and take it over the top of your head and just go from front to back...in other words , it goes over the top of their head, whoosh.

That's what happened here; it just whoosh, there was nothing there. They didn't get it, they didn't understand, they didn't grasp it. They had *no idea* what this was all about! They didn't have God's spirit in them yet, and even with God's spirit sometimes, whoosh, it goes right on by, we don't get it! They're nice sounding words, 'become as a little child', but to *live* it, to *understand* it is a whole different matter, to *apply* it to your life!

Therefore it's about humility again, this matter between the difference... James again, and from the beginning of time with what happened to Lucifer, it's this age old thing, the difference between humility and pride, lifting up self or humbling one's self as a little child. An attitude, **the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven**, because it's about humility, it's not about position and place – that's not what's important, and that's what He's explaining here. And so that isn't the answer they really wanted. They wanted to know who, which one, who of *us* will be greatest, and among us...the Messiah, obviously that's there, but what was the one question asked by one later on there, one of the mothers, and can you put one on one side and one on your other side? And who were they? Some other people out here that you felt were deserving of that or your own children? Hmmm, where did that come from?

So human nature is human nature and it's always there, always a battle. If you humble yourself as a little child the same is greatest, because that's what it's about. It's about humility, to become a part of the God Family. The God Family will never lift themselves up. The God Family will never seek to have something of someone else's. It's foreign to the mind, it's foreign to the thinking. That's not what it's about. It's about sharing in what God does and that's where the fullness of life comes from, the excitement of life, the richness of life. That's what stirs a person up! That's what should be exciting in life! That's what's exciting to the faithful angels; they've been fulfilled in essence in their lives. Through that faithfulness they become more *convicted* of that through time even! That's what's awesome to understand; that they have become more convicted through time by everything they've seen and experienced, that their choices have always been that, to do what God gives them. Because that's where their richness of life comes from; they love it, they enjoy that, that's what fills them. They've made that choice, they hold to that choice, it is who they are. That's an awesome thing to understand about spirit beings, those who have remained faithful.

And that's what we have to come to understand and come into unity with, that the fullness and richness of life is about sharing in whatever God gives, wherever He places us in the Body, and it's not about position, it's not about place, it's not about envy, it's not about jealousy! We're all in the Family! It would be like children in the family, if they all get along... I'll just go on; those analogies just break down because of human nature. I think about those and I think, "Oh, that doesn't always work, does it."

So before anything of value can come out of us, out of the human mind, that will benefit the Kingdom of God, God's Church, God's people, then this attitude must first prevail – humility. And so this is always the big test in going to a brother alone, because if this isn't there it's not going to work. My experience has been in watching this happen in the Church is that most of the time it's caused greater problems and greater hurt and suffering *because* this wasn't there – humility, care, concern, compassion, mercy. Because those other things can't be there – love, patience, compassion, empathy, sympathy – all the things we need to have in life to feel for someone else, of what they're going through, to know what they're going to go through and you bring out something and discuss something with them – all the natural tendencies are going to be there with human nature, to defend itself, to whatever it might be that you're going to come up against, and to be ready for all those things on a spiritual plane. But it has to be one of humility and how *you* come to them so that they can see that, hopefully and prayerfully,

because that's the only way it's going to work, if it has potential to really produce fruit. It's in how you do it! So this has to prevail first.

That's why, again, I'm going to read **James 4:6 - He gives more grace. Wherefore he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.** God will give the help if we can do this, and isn't that what we want? If we go to someone alone then we should want this power, this life within us, and God will give us more help if we seek to embrace that attitude and spirit and know you're in a battle when you do it. You're going to be fighting yourself, because self doesn't like to feel itchy. You want to be comfortable. It's going to be uncomfortable! And the more you'll humble yourself – that's what's beautiful about it – is God gives more help. That's what He's saying here; **God gives more grace to the humble**, and the more we'll humble ourselves the more power that God will give there because it's about favour, help, more of His spirit. Because God's spirit can only work in a spirit of humility anyway, it can't work in a spirit of pride. Those things conflict, doesn't work. God's spirit won't work in a spirit of pride.

Verse 7 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Again, you want that! Submit yourself, yield yourself to God the way God says to do it, seek to be of a humble spirit, yield to this process the way God says to do it, pray about it before you ever do it because you know you can't without His help and then prayerfully as you're praying about a part of that Satan won't be around to muddle the waters, to muddy the waters...because I've seen so many of these things turn sour, turn bad and leave such deep wounds in people's lives that what *could* have been done in a right spirit, that *could* have produced fruit created a greater problem and greater barriers and separated brethren more than what it drew them closer together. Someone has to really know you love them; they have to know where you're coming from – at least that's the desire – and if there is selfishness or pride in there that's not going to come through because it's not going to be genuine and true then. So we have to grasp the danger of our own human nature and the true value then of yielding to humility.

So this thing again of '**humble yourselves before God and He'll lift you up,**' as it talks about there in James.

Matthew 18:4 - Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. And literally, obviously, all should humble themselves, that's what we all have to do. **And whoever shall receive,** we should receive each other. That's a part. If somebody comes to you alone, telephone, in person, whatever it is, understand here even on your part of receiving it in the Church, in the Body, you need to listen. I think of king David and his attitude toward someone who's head could have been lopped off, but it wasn't because David's attitude was of a humble spirit, and he was willing to listen and learn, even in the individual's anger in throwing rocks at him, at the king – grounds back then for having your head just 'slice'...and that's what his captain basically wanted to do, was lop off his head and he (David) said, "No, maybe there is something here God's going to give to me that I can learn," in essence. That was his attitude. Beautiful attitude!

And so when someone comes to you, realize as a whole within the Body, within the Church, it's not an easy thing. You know, it really doesn't matter, but it's so much easier to reject something if someone is coming to you and you kind of have a sense of self-righteous attitude and spirit. You know what? You should still listen, shouldn't you? Even if they're angry or upset – isn't that the attitude of mind one should have to even receive a brother?

I've seen more of that in the last year or so, couple of years here, than ever before in God's Church, and it really is a pleasing thing to see individuals who have more of an attitude of they're grateful – not enjoyable all the time obviously – but a desire that someone has come to them and talked to them about something, or whatever, and more of that desire to change. That's a good thing, it shows spiritual growth. That's what it's all about. But too often when someone comes to someone else, if you're on the receiving end of it, it's not so pleasant, but you really need to receive it, you need to be of an attitude of mind to evaluate and think about it without emotion, without anger, without judgment toward the other person or anything else. You need to step back a little bit from it and think about it first and pray about it first – maybe even before you say anything.

And **Whoso shall receive one such child/little child in My name**, sometimes when someone comes to you it's hard to see the other person as a little child, but it's God's child, that's what He's saying here. Even there! **And whosoever shall receive one such little child in My name**, as one in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, **receives Me**. Receives Me...He's showing what this means spiritually, as a matter of *how* we receive each other and how we look upon each other in the Body, in the Church – whether carnally or spiritually, that's what it boils down to, whether our carnal human nature is coming out or not.

We may not have time to come back to it anyway, but you can hold your finger here in case we can come back, but let's notice another section of scripture here; Mark 9. Because again here, Christ is showing here what this means spiritually, and again, how we are to receive each other and how we're to look upon each other in the Church and what's going to be reflected as to whether it's spiritual or carnal.

Mark 9:33 - And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that you disputed among yourselves along the way? In other words, as they were coming here travelling together, walking together, Christ knew that there was a dispute, and so He asked them now point blank because He knew what was going on. They didn't realize He did, or whatever, but anyway...**verse 34** says, **But they held their peace: for along the way they had disputed among themselves – notice - of who should be the greatest.** Amazing, amazing! Human nature. Can you imagine having a conversation like that? That just blows my mind! And yet I've seen those things happen, but it still blows my mind where people do various things that kind of reflect some of that sometimes by conversations, by things that are said. But here this is just blatant, right out here in the open amongst themselves, of who of them really is the greatest of them, amongst themselves! It's kind of hard to reach your back sometimes, you know, to pat yourself on the back, by something you've done or whatever, and you're kind of asking the others beside you – “Can you? I can't reach back there, can you help me out? It's kind of hard for me to reach, please all of you help, help me out, pat me on the back.”

That kind of thinking just kind of blows my mind, but it happens and it really kind of shows how sick the human mind can be in this area, of wanting to lift up self, and it's just as natural as getting up in the morning, and yet we don't see it! It's *in* us as human beings! And that's where the battle is! And as you grow you come to loathe that more and more in human life and by experiences and by things you see. There are things that God has taught me by things I've experienced in forty plus years in the Church, that over and over and over again it didn't come overnight, it came over a long period of time, but to a point in time to where I *hate*, I *loathe* shuffling! I *loathe* the spirit involved there and yet I've seen so much of it, I've seen the damage it's done in God's Church, I have *participated* in it too, because that's what I was taught, I thought that was the right thing to do, approach, until we were finally shown in about '86-'87. God began to show the ministry in a very powerful way, “This isn't the way, don't walk in

it!” The ministry was brought into headquarters and went through the same classes and some came back and they were still the same, it didn’t faze them one iota. Repentance. You know, when we see certain things in our life we should repent and change! But God will take you through various things in your life that you will see in yourself and you’ll see in others, and you’ll see the damage of a wrong spirit, you’ll see the damage of what is done.

I’ve talked to the ministry a lot about this too, about inserting ourselves in other people’s lives, part of sheriffing. We don’t do that! God doesn’t just insert Himself into every decision and choice, otherwise we’d be like little robots, He’d be there... It’s like this concept that some have had about the world tomorrow, that somebody is going to be tapping you on the shoulder, “That’s not the way, don’t walk that way. This is the way, walk you in it.” It’s like some, all of a sudden, there are going to be people tapping you on the shoulder. You think, “How *retarded* is *that*?!” Tapping someone on the shoulder – “Don’t sin, don’t do that...” – you’d have to be there every time when they start thinking wrong... “No, you can’t think that...” You think, “Well, then give me a different brain because this...” Anyway. It’s amazing what we go through as human beings and how we think, but we have to experience various things in our life and come to loathe what we see in self first, and then we begin to see how it does damage in others in the world. And sometimes that makes it even more difficult to live in this world, it truly does. You want to change it but we can’t yet, we’ve got to wait...and then we’re going to be able to start doing it the way God’s going to do it, over a period of a thousand years, and then a hundred years, and then *finally* we’ll be in His Family.

Mark 9:33 – So He asked what they said along the way, they held their peace, they didn’t even answer because along the way, it says, **they had disputed amongst themselves, who should be the greatest.**

Verse 35 - And He sat down and called the twelve and said to them, if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. Now, you know what that did? Whoosh! Right over the top of their heads. They didn’t understand; they didn’t know what that meant, and we’re still learning it in God’s Church, and we always do. Whenever people are called into God’s Church these are the kinds of things we begin to learn and see and He’s given us examples like this that seem so far out there and yet it shows what human nature is like, you just kind of shake your head and say, “How could somebody be talking amongst themselves, friends, and supposedly, because you’re supposed to be living a good way of life, if you’re with the Messiah, and that’s representing God and God’s word is being taught to others, then surely this is being reflected in your life. And yet they weren’t able to see something in their being, the spirit. They couldn’t see it yet. That came later, where they could actually begin to see self and begin to see the spirit in their own mind.

And so **He sat down with the twelve and said to them, if any man desire to be first the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.** So He’s showing an attitude here which they didn’t grasp at that point, but it’s showing where you must be in your thinking. You don’t lift yourself up above others, on the contrary, and the more you actually grow through time the more you realize you *are* nothing. That’s what you come to grasp more and more through time.

I understand more deeply now when it was spoken of, an apostle made the comment he felt he was the least of all and he believed it with all of his being. And truly, that’s a good place to be, to understand of yourself, to think of yourself, to see yourself...and servant as well here, because it’s about serving, it’s not about getting, it’s not about being served. Whew! Boy did we have that one upside down in the Church. It was like the more you grew in the Church the more you were served. Something is wrong with this picture in a big way! I used to loathe those kinds of things where there would be a big stage

and the minister and his little helper (which was me) was sitting beside him where I was supposed to be, and the elders - I think they had elders up there on the stage too - on risers, eating off of china with silver tableware and people having to serve you with little white towels over their arms. And if I'd had my way, if I could have done it back then, I just wasn't strong enough to do it but I felt it inside, if I could have just had a little bucket to puke in I would have felt better, but I wasn't strong enough to do it yet, I wasn't strong enough to stand, to say, "I'd like to puke over this right now, what you're doing up here." But I didn't have it in me yet! I could do that today. I could have done that a few years ago, several years ago starting. And that's what we have to come to in life, to stand up for what is right before God and fight for it in your own life and for one another in the Body, and it's about serving others, it's about what you do and how you do it. It's about giving.

I love when I see that in people...I don't even know if I should talk about this, but I love a serving spirit when it's done genuine, when it's done in a genuine way where people just want to help out, or they're thinking about how to help someone else to better enjoy life. That's a beautiful... I just love it! ...of what will make someone else more comfortable, what will make their day a little bit better, and people just pitching in. And that's what it's all about! It's about making life better for others! And if you carry that all the way through your life then what an awesome thing, because that's what we're called to, and that's where the enjoyment of life comes from. God's doing that with us in such powerful ways and we don't even grasp it so often.

Verse 36 - And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, Whoever shall receive one of such children in My name... 'In My name'...I think about the Church of God and how we are to look upon each other and the high standard that God has placed there for that. We're all God's children, and it's how you receive God and Jesus Christ, how you receive each other, but to get that through our heads is such a *hard thing to do*, because we don't really tend to think that way. That *really isn't* the primary way we think. First of all we think selfishly as human nature comes out first, but if we could grab a hold of this, pray about this in our lives even, ask God to help us to have more of this kind of thinking with *every* person in the Body.

There should be no one in the Body that anyone has bad feelings toward. We want to see everyone come through every trial that's out there, have success, have blessings and truly feel that with all of our being. A lot said there! To have that desire toward every person! Not to have any aggravation, ill will, toward anyone. Want to see some do some things differently? Yes. But toward the individual? Ill will? No, the desire is to see people be able to be blessed. That means that they come through the trials and the battles and you're able to pray about those things in earnest before God.

Verse 37 - Whosoever shall receive one of such little child in My name, receives Me: and whoever shall receive Me, receives not Me, but Him who sent Me. Even more powerful in that respect, of what He's driving home here.

So again here, beautiful! It's about receiving God into our life, and certainly for them, talking, He was with them at that time and receiving of the Messiah and Christ and so forth, but He took it all the way to God. And candidly, He was talking about the Church for later on anyway and what was going to happen in the Body of Christ, the Church of God through time.

We're just barely scratching the surface. Amazing, truly! A lot to digest; it's not something that just naturally happens. It's something we have to pursue, as we read earlier, to run after, to fight for, to work for, because these things don't just happen in your life. They don't just happen because you heard

a sermon on the subject. We can be moved and motivated, inspired by things we hear, excited by what God gives to us to be able to see, because it's a matter of what we see. The scriptures come alive because of God's spirit and the more His spirit comes alive in our life, the words come alive to us, they inspire us, but it can't stop there. That's where we have to pray about them and ask for help to put it into practice then in our life. And that's where the task is. It's not just being momentarily inspired and moved and motivated by something we hear, but the desire to follow through with it, to seek and pursue what God has given to us.

So there is really a lot about going to a brother alone, but there is a whole lot more about just loving one another.

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