

I have an announcement that I wanted to make as a follow-up to last week's sermon, a question that came in that I thought would be good to comment on. I wanted to get through that sermon last week to conclude it, so there was one area that I probably went over a little quickly and that has to do with the subject of gambling. There was a question that came in, I'm just going to read it as it is, and then answer some of it as we go along, because people's concept of gambling, again, in some of the things we talked about, some of the things associated with it aren't wrong by themselves, it's how it's used, as with so many other forms, if you will, of entertainment. The problem with that is that human nature tends to go too far with it, as with alcohol and drugs and so forth. To play a game...I saw something the other day here, back like in the 30's or whatever, a mayor in New York City outlawed the use of pinball machines because to him it was a form of gambling, putting a quarter in the machine and playing the machine.

So people have different ideas about what gambling is. There are different definitions for a lot of things but this one here has to do more with the misuse of funds, the lack of control of funds, the wrong spirit that goes with it where people can't control themselves and that's the problem with it, it's human nature. And because of that there should be...and even the environment today is wrong, because it draws people to that, as with so many other kinds of environments today when it has to do with music or alcohol use in various kinds of places, especially where young people gather together so often in their 20's, in through there, there is a strong pull to use alcohol to enhance or to make things supposedly better in the sense of their being able to enjoy themselves more in certain environments and communication. Well, that's not true, it's a lie.

So anyway, same thing is true in part here in gambling. I don't want to spend too much time on this but I just want to answer this quickly. When it comes right down to it, people who are in the stock market, people who have stocks, people who have monies in various other kinds of programs, or even a farmer here that goes out to farm - today it's a gamble, if you want to look at the strictest definition, because you don't know whether you're going to get a crop. I've known of different ones in times past who have planted things, who have had drought several years in a row and basically have gone bust because of it and life becomes much harder because there are no guarantees. But that's a part, again, of what man has done to himself because of disobedience to God overall and because of those things that are on mankind because he hasn't lived the way of life God said.

But the point being here, when it is a matter of a location that offers something like this...again, those things like we have today in so many areas of life, are not going to exist in the future, and we do have people, as people are called out of the world, who have difficulties with everything in life...drugs, alcohol, sex and a wrong use of it, gambling, and so forth, because God calls us out of the world and it can take a lifetime of battling with these things, and sometimes people get sucked back into some of it through various kinds of weaknesses or things that happen in their life, different kinds of stresses.

So, anyway, this question here was asked:

"In last week's sermon you mentioned about gambling. What happens if someone is gambling like you said for fun, which is okay..."

Again, there are certain kinds that is fine if you have control. Sadly, a lot of people just don't exercise that, they don't have that and that can hurt families, that can hurt society in a very powerful way, especially the way things are designed around that today anyway, because it brings in crime, it brings in all kinds of things, and obviously is not good in any fashion or form. But it went on to say...

"...but you find out that it's offending someone else in the world?"

In other words, if it's okay if you have that control and if it's, again, within limitations.

"...but you find out that someone else in the world is offended by it. Here is an example of what happened to me at work. I would flip a quarter with a guy everyday to see who would buy coffee that day. We did this once a day and people in the world watch everything we do - while one of my friends at work talked about gambling, lottery tickets and such, and I told him I didn't gamble. He told me that I gambled everyday when I flip a quarter for coffee."

Now, you get into something else in something like this. There are people in the world who will find fault about anything you do. They called Christ a 'wine-bibber' because He used alcohol, He had alcohol, He used wine, He drank wine, in other words. If He ate a meal people saw this, they saw it around other people so they called Him a 'wine-bibber', because in some people's minds, especially in that kind of a society at that time, there were some religious organizations just like today that said any kind of use of alcohol is wrong. And so again, moderation! Seems like it's a tough thing for man to grasp a hold of, to understand moderation and balance and soundness of mind that God allows various kinds of liberties. But the tendency of human nature is to go too far, just like with technology that we're going through in this sermon series. Man can't handle it properly, he misuses it even more so.

Anyway, this individual went on to ask a question. He said that this person told him that...

"...this was no different than Catholic churches for their gambling or those in the world gambling. There was a time when God was working with him but he had issues with tithing and the Sabbath."

Maybe he'd been given an opportunity. But again here, it went on to say here.

"Since he couldn't understand the difference about gambling what I did was not to flip another quarter at work again so as not to offend him or anyone that might be watching. My question is, what should I have done?"

Well, again here, you've got to weigh those things out in life. If you choose to do this that's fine, especially more so toward someone who's being drawn into the Church. Our desire and concern should be more to young individuals, meaning young in faith, than someone in the world, because you're always going to find people in the world who are going to find fault, and it doesn't matter what you do in life there are going to be offenses because of that. Christ spoke of that. And there are going to be people who look for fault and who look for things to condemn you or criticize you, and in some of those cases there I just come right back at them, in some of those situations whether it has to do with alcohol or various other kinds of things in moderation, tell them that "Your definition is not the same as mine, and drinking alcohol does not make you an alcoholic," as an example, "and so is this."

So again, people have their different definitions of what some of these things are, but you have to go through those things, work through them in your mind to make determinations and judgments, just like I said in last Sabbath's sermon. Anyway, we may have more on that in the future because it is a good area to begin to look at, to see "Why is it right in some cases; why is it wrong in some cases?" Because I've known of some individuals who get together at a card game, put a little bit out there just as an enhancement of the game. There is nothing wrong with that, but if it causes problems with people and people don't have control of that because of the environment, because of the world we live in, than that can become a problem. So again, it's the use of things.

And my definition - I'll just tell most here - would be much different, obviously, than people in the world and how we use it...so again, just like for alcohol or for anything else. Man doesn't seem to know what moderation is in so many cases and doesn't have sound judgment in how to handle things and goes too far with it, and that's the problem.

So continuing on with this sermon today. This sermon today is a continuation of what God is revealing to His Church concerning the impact of technology on human life. We have focused on how Satan has received more *power* over mankind through this period of time than any other time in the past 6,000 years because of technology, and his destructive power, if you will, or the *power to entice* mankind farther and farther away from God has only multiplied many times over because of technology.

This is our training ground! Life, human life is our training ground where we learn things that have to be learned now before we can enter into God's Family, and this is the whole history of mankind, and man hasn't done that properly over the past 6,000 years at all except for those few whom God has called through time...and that's what the 1,000 years is about, everyone having the opportunity to be called.

So again, we have focused on how mankind can't handle technology but he is lured and enticed because of his own nature to misuse it in destructive ways. And even today there are a lot of things that it's misused, especially in things having to do with some of the things that we discussed last Sabbath. I'm not talking about some of... oh, there is all kinds of technology, but a lot of it is used by individuals as a form of escapism, just like alcohol, just like what I do classify as gambling and the misuse of it, if you will, drugs, immoral sex, and so forth. There are various things in life that have to do with escapism or just outright sin, but a lot of it is to escape their life or to escape dealing with reality in life, when in reality, people need to face up to what is happening in their life.

And again, this sermon is heading in that direction today, but we're going to take another step farther as God begins to show us an overview of how technology has affected vast changes in society itself. Some of the things we've covered God has been leading us in a progressive process here, especially beginning in the family, in a family unit and in the structure in the family - things have flip-flopped upside down, truly! As a matter of fact I'll just say, going back and looking at some of these things as God has been going through this process, revealing this to us, it is really astounding and amazing as you go back and recognize what happened as we left an agrarian society, as a whole for mankind, because that's primarily the way mankind was established - to an exact opposite now where people live in cities and are involved in all forms of commerce and so forth... whereas in times past there was less commerce and the moving of goods and so forth and things were more local, because transportation, the ability of transportation and communication was extremely limited in times past.

But because of technology that's flip-flopped and it hasn't been good for man because man hasn't used it well and it's affected family life incredibly so. Things in the structure of the very home have changed

concerning the work of women, the work of men, the work of children, the interactions of family and how people function. Things have flip-flopped in a powerful way. It doesn't mean that those things, the technology, is bad, it's just that man hasn't recognized a slow and a subtle shift that has taken place over the past 100+ years that hasn't been good. And because it happened slowly, even more so those things have tended to imprison, if you will, bind, bring into bondage, mankind in a stronger way than ever before, by Satan, because again, it's the misuse or misunderstanding of where these things have led and man hasn't dealt with it well. Truly. And that's what this series is very much about.

I think of the luxury of technology that's led to greater bondage, distortion of thinking and perversion of God's purpose for family itself. Because that's what's happened, the very family structure has been perverted and distorted - even the role between husbands and wives - because of technology, has shifted and changed through time, and man hasn't grasped what has happened to him. But because of human nature it hasn't gone well, it's been bad...truly has.

This sermon today is entitled *Strengthening Family* with this being *Part 1* - meaning, yes, next Sabbath I'll be giving part 2, unless I'm ill, with all the things going around right now, with flu's and bronchial problems...but anyway, 'Strengthening Family - Part 1'.

The very nature of this title is very broad in itself but in one respect we're striving to keep it in a narrower focus, if you will, because it has to do with technology, that's a part of the flow here. Strengthening the family in the context of technology and how technology has led to the changes that have taken place through time in family. Matter of fact there is a definition probably today that is closer to what technology has brought the family to than anything else and it's called 'dysfunction'. There is even the term 'dysfunctional family', and the reality is that's the way the world is. Sometimes people think that they know of others who may have some dysfunction in their family, or we may indeed recognize that we have some dysfunction in family life because of society and the world around us, but the reality is that's what God is calling us out of, dysfunctional life, life that isn't going the way that God intended it to, and that is truer yet when it comes to family and family life!

I'm excited by this because God is blessing us to begin to see some things, to understand what has subtly happened to man through the past 100, 150 years, a little longer perhaps, but it's been a slow process and it's had an incredible impact on how people think, how families function.

So again, all this is being viewed in the context of the impact of technology on the family. And even in that context it can be broad but we're going to try to keep this fairly narrow and leave some things there for you to contemplate, to think about, to meditate upon, because God is going to give the framework of a lot of this that we're to build upon. And that's really what these last two series, or the two series before this, have been about. They've thrown things out there, just like the subject matter we discussed in the announcements here, one thing having to do with gambling. Even that, if you will think it through, you will be blessed, if you understand, if you learn how to judge God's way. Too often we judge by what we think or by what we've grown up with or by ideas and thoughts of things we've seen in the past. That isn't the way to judge. The way to judge is by what this book says, the Bible, what God has to say about soundness of mind, of that which comes from Him, of what makes something sin, what makes it wrong in the first place. Otherwise, God gives us incredible liberties within His law, He truly does, it's just that man tends to want something different, he wants *more* than what God is offering.

You think, what a horrible, perverted, twisted thing, because what God is offering is the ultimate of life and enjoyment and excitement of life that can be acquired in no other way. So man's mind, the mind of mankind becomes distorted and perverted.

But anyway, going back to this thing of dysfunction. I just want to read you a definition here about dysfunction or being dysfunctional:

Dysfunction - abnormal or impaired functioning...

Especially when you put it in the context of God's way of life!

...especially of a bodily system or social group.

And here we're talking about family or society. Another part of the definition here:

Abnormal or unhealthy interpersonal behavior or interaction within a group.

You know, husband with wife, parents with children, children with parents, and on and on it goes in society. And that sums up so much of the way the world is today - messed up, dysfunctional, because it isn't living the way God wants us to live and what He's offering to us, that which begins to change first within the Church when we're called.

Another definition worthy of consideration was one given by the term itself:

Dysfunctional Family - A dysfunctional family is a family in which conflict, misbehavior, child or spousal neglect and/or abuse occur continually and regularly...

And what's sad is that it really sums up so much of the way the world is today, and people don't understand it, because to them... well, that's part of the definition here, that's their norm, they think that's normal. That's what it goes on to say.

...leading other members to accommodate such actions. Individuals then grow up or live in such an environment and develop the understanding that such an arrangement or an environment is normal.

How many people in life...? I think of situations where people get themselves into pickles and into relationships and perhaps have grown up in a home environment where maybe one parent has been abusive, an alcoholic as an example, and has been abusive to children - because this is very common - and they are mean, they are hurtful to other family members, especially to a spouse, oftentimes especially to a wife, in this particular case, that is kind of a norm with alcoholism. And so what happens there oftentimes is that the children grow up, especially girls, and they tend to marry the same kind of people who have the same dysfunction in life because they think that's normal, they have experience... Their understanding of what love is, or what family is in a distorted environment, and they go out and capture the *exact same life* because their mind is distorted and they equate love and affection in a distorted fashion. Does that make sense? Have you seen things like that? I've seen it a lot in God's Church because of all the kinds of counseling and so forth we've gotten involved in through time, and

you become more aware of it then, of what the cycles are then sometimes that people go through in life.

And so dysfunction becomes a norm for people and it becomes worse from generation to generation. That's what's different about the Millennium and exciting about the Millennium, that a flip-flop is going to take place and still Mr. Armstrong gave that excellent example there of how it's going to take 3-4 generations to really get things cleaned up in a good way. It takes that long, candidly, to get rid of the dysfunction, of things that *aren't* normal, so that God can teach and show this is what is normal, this is what is right, this is how you're blessed, this is what gives you happiness, this is what makes your life fulfilling, this is the way to live, walk in it. And so it takes time to learn those things and incorporate those things in life to where you begin to reap more and more the knowledge of it, to where you try it and live it, just as God says, 'Try Me now, herewith...' in different areas of life and prove His ways. And that's what's going to take time as people learn to prove and realize, yeah, this is what life is all about, this is what God intends life to be about, this is where the fullness and the happiness is.

So how did technology enter in and cause greater dysfunction and what kind of dysfunction was created or magnified by it? It's a good thing to think upon, to pray about, to begin to understand, to begin to live now.

I received an email from someone out west...a wife was talking about a husband that made a comment about his being excited about this. He said, "It's like we're being given the opportunity to live the Millennium now." ...in essence... How was that put? Yeah, before the Millennium is here. And that's true in a greater way, in a greater sense. In other words there are things we can begin focusing upon now in a greater way than we have in time's past. Now, we should be living this way of life but God is giving us an opportunity to see some things that we ourselves need to focus upon more and understand more because of the changes that need to take place, and understand those changes. And we can begin to incorporate those more into our life now - that's what that comment was about - and that's what we should strive to do, and that is what God is giving us opportunity of now.

Last Sabbath we touched upon briefly the movement farther and farther away from an agrarian society, that I mentioned toward the introduction here, and how it worked to change a structure of family in society. We could go into depth on this but we're just going to have, basically, an overview so we can begin to see patterns...patterns that create, or have created a growing dysfunction in society and in the family unit.

There is one pattern that has changed the most concerning the use of technology, that has brought about some of the greatest changes in family structure as a result of moving away from an agrarian society and it has to do with the subject of work, because that pattern changed mightily as technology began to come along, and slowly but surely through time, because it covered a long span of time, we're at a point now where it is a bigger problem in society and in the world than ever before, to understand this subject and what it means in family and family life, in one's personal life.

So again, massive shifts in the structure of society, cities, commerce, and industry have had a horrible impact on the structure of family and *work ethic* that's the backbone of support to the family structure. It truly is. In a lot of counselings when I counsel with individuals about marriage and so forth I talk about the work involved, and then spell it out what that work is oftentimes, discuss it so we can put things in the light of, yeah, I understand, there are things you do, there are things you have to work at in all of God's way of life to reap the blessings and the benefit, the product. It's like anything that's given in some

of the parables even; you go out and you plant a crop in agriculture, you go out and work with the vineyards, you work hard at it, and then in time you receive the fruit of it. Those analogies God uses as His way of life, He uses those over and over again to get a point across because an agrarian society, if you will, or an agrarian example like that helps to drive the point home even more so about what His way of life is all about! The fruit of it, the product of it comes from *hard work*, and the more *hard work* you put into it the more you're able to receive out of it.

The same is true in marriage! The same is true in children and in family, and on and on it goes! *It doesn't just happen!* And yet today, in today's world, we live almost as though it'll happen! ☺ But the fruit that comes out of it, because of technology, if it's left to technology and human nature *is-not-good!* It isn't good! Family is about interaction! Family is about sharing! And there is so much to be learned by that! But technology, because of man's misuse of it, has taken away the sharing in life! ...sharing that husbands and wives used to do more of! ...sharing that children and families used to do more of! ...and the things you would learn from that together, working together just by itself.

Now, if you can start understanding some of that you can begin to understand in a more powerful way exactly what God is beginning to show us and that we need to grasp a right use of things, and a lot of things need to be *changed* as to how we handle things, how we work with them, how we work with technology and get things turned back right-side up again, because we have gone off course. Mankind has gone off course and has used things of so called 'convenience' to enhance laziness, to enhance escapism. That's what happens! You know, if we buy our children enough electronic gear they can go up in their room and *we can have peace* when we come home at night! We don't have to have any interaction. We don't have to be around too much, because that'll keep them occupied. Give a baby or a small child a machine now and they get... Now they do it as young as you can get them, as young as you can get them to use it.

Now, there is nothing wrong with learning the use of machines and so forth, but without guidelines, without management of it the tendency of human nature is to misuse it and to use it in a wrong way...to use it like a babysitter in one's own family. That's the society in the world we live in - babysitters - so we don't have to have that responsibility of work involved in being with our children and interacting with our children, conversing with our children and that's what's happening. Now that's not good! That's happened with husbands and wives! That's happened with children and parents! And God doesn't intend life to be like that!

Do you know what one of the primary things about His Family life is that we'll get to as time goes along in the sermon series? Sharing! And that means sharing *time* together, *interacting* together! And so today people get so involved to where they can't even communicate in their own family because of the use of technology it's warping the minds of young people, it really is! It isn't healthy! Thank God we're at a point where this is going to get turned around, because if it went farther we'd be like a world of zombies...and the crime that would go with it, the detachment from reality. Do we see that in society? A detachment from reality? It's happening more and more in the world around us, and people scratch their heads, "What's happening? What's wrong?" *DUH!* We can't see it because it's spiritual in nature!

Anyway, let's go over to Genesis. It's amazing to me how much we've been going back to Genesis, because the framework... God really showed us everything at the very beginning with Adam and Eve. That's why Mr. Armstrong used to go back there so much. There is so much there that if you can understand something very basic in a small outline that God gave, a few words here and there, you can understand the rest of humanity and what mankind would do, and the way of mankind. It's awesome, it

really is! Yet it's all right here at the very beginning. God has everything touched upon that man needs to really grasp in a powerful way...it's right here in Genesis. Over and over again we've already been touching on some things, but let's notice another one today, because in all this *God sets the example* and God reveals the *basic structure* that should be one of the *primary patterns* for family life, and candidly, it's about work.

God wants us to reap the fruit, the produce, the good of life that comes from right work. That's His way of life, that's what He's done, that's what He's been doing in ways that we are just barely even scratching the surface. It's awesome!

Genesis 2:1 - Then the heavens and the earth were finished, well, we understand they were here. There were things that God remoulded and refashioned, separated the water and the firmament, the clouds and so forth that covered the earth and there was no light that could get through...and it sounds like the possibility being the axis and everything, that everything wasn't in its proper orbit. God established everything for a proper timing of days and nights and so forth and began this process for the world once again, created life upon it.

Then the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work - HIS WORK which He had made; and He rested on the Sabbath day from all His work which He had made. For a *great purpose*! To give us guidelines, to give us a pattern of what human life was to follow...and as a whole mankind has lost so much of that. **And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it:** set it apart for holy use and purpose, that's what this means, **because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.** And so it's showing us from the very beginning that God set the example. He set the example of what He wanted man to see and what He wanted man to do. His desire was for a pattern for mankind, that there would be six days for man to accomplish his work and so forth of life, in life, productivity, to reap the fruit and the benefits of life in the way that He designed it, and then on the seventh day to set it apart for special use and purpose that was focused upon the Creator Himself, God Almighty and His way of life that He would reveal to us on these days, on the Sabbath day week by week. Awesome! This is the pattern!

God set a perfect example in this in the very beginning, in Genesis, for us to follow. And before this there was *work* done by God that we can't even begin to comprehend, and the *time* to bring it to pass is far, far, far beyond our ability to even begin to comprehend, truly is. And the more we learn, the more we see, the more shallow we grasp we are and the greater God becomes. He truly does.

This past week someone sent me the address to a website that arranged sightings of the Hubble Telescope in relation to becoming farther and farther away from the earth and I want to go through some of these, just again to meditate on, to think about a little bit, and to realize the work that was involved in this. You know, God just didn't one day say, "Okay, there it is! There is the universe! It just took one day and there is all the universe!" It said in six days God remolded and refashioned the things about the earth and put human life and animal life and other things upon it; and there was a lot of planning and work that went into that ahead of time.

Those things don't just happen! You know, when you go out and build a building, do you think things are different with God? There is time involved in things that God has done. And so it is in the construction and the building of something, and God has an incredible plan from the very beginning about Elohim and that's what it's all about, but everything that's out there is still about this eventuality, us, and the opportunity God is affording us to become a part of His Family, to *share* in His Family. And

so there is much work that God has done through time that we can't even begin to comprehend that has to do with our future that we don't know about yet - things beyond our comprehension that we couldn't grasp right now that God's going to show us, maybe begin showing us a little bit as we go through the Millennium, especially toward the end of it as we get ready to go into The Great White Throne. Awesome, things that are out there. Everything is there for a purpose and a purpose for His Family, that's the focus, that's the desire. But when you build something there is as much time sometimes in the preparation, the planning of things, especially when you think of life, when you think of how things work, when you think of making things function in a certain way.

I tell you, you look at things through the Hubble Telescope and everything is different out there. I couldn't help but think about snowflakes...but yet we look at a snowflake and they pretty much look the same to us, and there is a certain structure and everything but they say there are no two alike. That's the reason I mentioned that one. But you look at the universe out there, and you look at different galaxies, and it is amazing the variety, the awesomeness of it! It's just something that you have to be in awe of, if you look at those things, and nothing is the same. And even within each galaxy there are things there that are so unique, just as we have different Nebula and so forth in the Milky Way. It is so incredible the things that are out there. It didn't just happen, and it didn't happen in a moment because God just decided, "Nebula there... star there...make this the Milky Way here..." A lot of time went into this, just like it does in life, of bringing things about, of planning and preparing it. And then when God brought it into being He brought it into being, when it was ready.

But there are things to do with structure and architecture and laws that God set in motion to function in a certain way, and He brought it all to pass. Incredible!

Anyway, going on here... And this is God...this is God - *work*, the work He's done through time for a great purpose, to share with His Family, work that we should learn from to share with *our* families, things that are the backbone of family, things that... Because it's in the *fruit of life*, it's in the things you receive of life because of laws that God has in motion *that enhances life*, that makes it better, that makes the enjoyment of it better where there are rewards and blessings from things we do, and we don't seem to grasp that so often in life.

Going on here... I think beginning with the moon here, we don't even understand things like this... you know, how far is it across the United States? You can go on a 1,500-3,000 mile trip by plane or whatever... take it by car and you really get a good concept of distance and time. And if you can go a little faster with a plane, that's great; 3,000 miles or 14,000 whatever, going around parts of the earth. And so from here to the moon: 380,000km, or 235,000 miles. I don't comprehend that, it's up there, it's a long way away. The distance? I can't grasp.

Then to Venus: 38,000,000 (38 million). So we're going from 380,000 (380 thousand) now up to 38,000,000, (38 million) that much more, or 23.5 million miles away. Later on it gets farther away, it shows the sun, the distance to the sun: 150,000,000km (153 million) or 93,000,000 miles (93 million) miles. These are just numbers to us and they don't mean anything, but the farther you go the more awesome some of these things become, the vastness of what's out there and what God created and what God made. But please, as we go through this, think about the work...*the work*, the *planning*, the planning itself to bring things about, to do things in a certain way, to make things function in a certain way. The reality of life is those things don't just happen! They're thought out, they're planned! A building, a machine, the work that goes into it to make certain that it works the way you want it to work and function the way you want it to function, to do what you've made it to do. Incredible!

After leaving our solar system with the earth and the planets around it here; just after leaving our solar system it finally jumped to the distance of the nearest star or sun to ours and it had to start stating things in different terms now. Now it doesn't do it in km or miles anymore because that loses its total meaning....that was lost in how we get to the sun, the distance there, but anyway...(actually the moon). But 4.2 light years away. Pshew! Incredible! So the light out there at that star takes 4.2 years to reach earth it's so far away, at how fast light travels. I can't comprehend that and *neither can you*, it is so great, it is so mighty. Then one of the nearest constellations, Pleiades, which is 400 light years away. 400 years, people look out in the sky and they see these things that they've given bad names to [i.e. names of constellations], and Pleiades, 400 light years away. 400 years ago that light started that you can see today here in a telescope.

Then various Nebulas were given, as with the Horse Head Nebula which is 1,500 light years away. You have to go back 1,500 years to be able to have light that was coming from it then, at that moment, to be able to have it seen today from earth. Incredible! Again, the vastness of these, we can't comprehend. One called the Eight-Burst Nebula, you have to go back to the time of Christ, 2,000 years ago. 2,000 light years away...within the Milky Way galaxy, the Horse-Head Nebula. 2,000 years! So at the time of Christ, it's taken that long for that light that they're seeing today to reach the earth.

Later, the Red Square Nebula, nearly back to the time of creation, 5,500 light years away...almost back to the time of creation for that light just now to be able to be reaching the earth so that we can see it. And then at this point we're not even getting close to getting out of the Milky Way Galaxy and they gave the distance to the center of the Milky Way galaxy to where we're located here, to the center of it, 27,000 light years away to the center of our own Milky Way galaxy - can't comprehend it - with the Milky Way galaxy being about 110,000 light years from one side to the other. What does that mean? All the stars that are there, all the things that are there, the glory, the majesty, the power of a being, our Great God to put it there and the work, *the work* that went into the planning of it, to the putting it there in the universe? These things didn't just happen by the snapping of a finger! Awesome!

Then the next jump into the distance of other galaxy's finally leaving the Milky Way and going to others like the Andromeda Galaxy, 2.540 million light years away. It's taken 2½ million years for the light they can see now in the Hubble from the Andromeda Galaxy. It took it that long to get here! You and I, we cannot grasp those things! And then later another jump, the Tadpole Galaxy, 400,000,000 (400 million) light years away. Incredible! 400 million! And then it continues forward and it lists the largest known galaxy - this is incredible - the largest known galaxy that they can see. In other words, the Milky Way is 110,000 light years across from one side to the other. The largest one they've seen out there, the largest galaxy is called IC 1101, it's 6,000,000 (6 million) light years across from one side to the other and it's about 1,070,000,000 (1.07 billion) light years away from here. In other words, it took a billion years for the light to travel from there to here that the Hubble can see now.

And then it continued on. We know that the farthest they're seeing out there right now, that they believe something is out there is 13.5 billion light years away. 13.5 billion light years for light to travel, that long to reach the earth. *Man can't grasp that!* And the reality is that just keeps growing and growing and growing. Man doesn't really know how much is out there. And I want to give some other stuff after a while to show you that we're just scratching the surface of what we really know is there...and God Almighty put it there, He designed it, He planned it for a purpose; everything different, nothing alike fully, the uniqueness of difference. *Awesome!*

To say that God sets the example for us, of life, of productivity, of that which you glean from something - hard work, good work. There is a purpose in those things in life. Nothing just happens. It doesn't just come about out of nothingness, but sometimes we as human beings treat life that way, that certain things will just happen through time. No, they don't. That which is good, that which is proper, that which is right, that which is productive, fulfilling in life, takes work to have it, to receive it...truly does. And things that can be learned from that? We'll get to that as we go along in the sermon.

Exodus 20:8 the commandments - **Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work:** Now, some have asked, "Does this mean you're to work all six days?" Well, there is work to be done - doesn't mean that that's how much you are to work in order to make a living. No. But you are to have things you do throughout six days of your life, and candidly, much of that is to be geared toward work, productivity, whether it be at home or on a job or whatever. It's not lazing around, it's not lying around, it's work. There are things we're to do that have, that involve work in life.

Verse 10 - But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Eternal your God: in it you shall not do any work, so there is only one day that God says, "No work." ...as a whole, unless it's His work. ...**you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your cattle, or the stranger that is within your gates: For in six days the Eternal made/He worked with/He fashioned,** that's what the word means; **He made heaven and earth and the sea,** referring to what was remoulded and refashioned here on earth that was already here, it had already been created, but in that six days He remoulded and refashioned the things to have human life, to have other life on the earth... **and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: therefore the Eternal blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.** So He made that day separate, different...and indeed, we generally focus on the Sabbath day but we don't think as much about what He said concerning the other six days of things we can do in life, or are to do in life, and the gleaning and the blessing of life we can receive from that.

Let's turn over to Luke 13. Now, it's easy to read all kinds of things into this when it comes to family life and to how structure of life is, and the reality is we're to learn from that as well, from that of growing older, from that of what is worked for through life to get to the time that a person doesn't have to do the same *kind* of work or the amount of work. So there is a structure of life even there to be considered, as a matter of soundness of mind and balance that God has given to human beings.

Luke 13:12 - And when Jesus saw her, he called to her and said to her, Woman, you are 'loosened', meaning in the Greek, **you are 'set free'**; literally means you are set...**you are released from your bondage,** because it's about being bound up like your arms are in handcuffs or your hands tied or whatever; **you're released now from your 'infirmity'** or as the word means, **weakness. And He laid His hands on her and immediately she was 'made straight'**, what the word means here is it means to 'set straighter, set upright again'. So in other words, to a previous condition that was healthy, that was right at that point in time. So it's a matter of making something right and setting it back as before, **and glorified God.**

And then **verse 14,** notice here - **And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said to the people, There are six days in which men ought to work:** now, that's a true statement, to do their work. It's true! 'Ought to' is a Greek word that has to do here with 'should', in other words, 'it's necessary'. It comes from the word meaning 'to tie or to bind', which is showing what we have as a part of life that we should be tied into, bound to as far as the way of life that's proper and right before God, that's necessary. **...in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.** So their contention was over the Sabbath...but this part here, again, they were

wrong about that, and Jesus Christ goes on to explain some of this. But again, the point being is that indeed it is a true saying here that there are those six days that man is tied to to do his work, that's what God gave. The other day is a day of being released from it, a day to honor God, a day to worship God, a day to focus in a different way. But there are those things we should understand we're tied to in life that give blessings in life if we yield to it - being productive, sharing in family, a time to build, a time to work.

Verse 15 - The Lord then answered him and said, *You hypocrite, don't each one of you on the Sabbath unloose your ox or your donkey from the stall and lead them away to watering?* Even there, isn't that amazing, the soundness of mind that was lacking. It was lacking in religious leaders at that time and it's lacking in so many people in life until God calls us and begins to help us to understand what the soundness is, what He is revealing to man about life and how man should live. And He said, "Your yourself, you're a hypocrite! You go out here and you know that you can lead them to water or else they're going to die! You have that much common sense!" In other words, where is the rest of the common sense? Because people can't take it that far - especially when it comes to religious matters it becomes about their righteousness.

Verse 16 - And shouldn't this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years now, be loosened from being bound on the Sabbath day? Isn't this a good day to do this? Which is better? Taking the donkey here, the oxen or whatever, out to have water or for this woman to be loosened from what's kept her bound all this time, eighteen years? **And when he had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed:** because they got the point...not fully, but they got the point of what he was saying. They realized the hypocrisy involved there and they were ashamed that they made such a statement like that in realizing their hypocrisy, of what they would do for their own animals and here is a 'daughter of Abraham' as Christ was saying. ...**and all the people rejoiced for all the wonderful things that were done by Him.** Because this is exciting, seeing something like this come along, seeing someone come along, especially, teaching something that made sense, that has soundness that comes from God, that is sound indeed.

Let's turn over to John 5. Again, sometimes we read through some of these things and we don't stop to consider all that's being said, the other side of the story here when it talks about work, in this case, work that's to be done and the time we have to do it. That doesn't mean that God is expecting you to work 8 hours, 10 hours, going out here slaving somewhere to where you're putting in 60 hours a week laboring outside or doing something to bring in. Now, if you choose to do that there is nothing wrong with that either, but it doesn't mean that you have to do it that way. But to work and to work at different things in your life, better as a whole be doing it...and then as you get older in life then you're able to receive the greater reward of some of those things. That's where the fruit and the productivity of various things come into life, where you learn from that process. Because our life is fleeting, unlike God's. Our lives end and it gets older and it gets weaker as we go along, things have to be planned for, or should be in life.

John 5, another scripture here just to drive the point home in some of this. See, now there is a fine balance there, because with technology now a person can do something behind a computer working 40 hours a week or longer, behind a computer, and producing and receiving the benefit and the blessings of that productivity. But with technology we have to be careful, because there are wrong conclusions and things that people can draw from that that are not healthy, and we'll come back to that as we go along through the series here. Balance, soundness of mind, work, productivity, fruit.

John 5:15 - here is another situation of healing that's referred to. It says, **The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. Therefore the Jews did persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him, wanted to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day,** just as the other example we read.

But Jesus answered them, beautiful verse, I love this... **My Father works until now, and I work.** Some of the most basic nature of God Almighty. It's one of the most basic patterns of God Almighty: **My Father works until now, and I work.** Now, God's work we understand has an awesome focus. It's Elohim. It's His Family. That's why it started from the very beginning. His work is all about Elohim. And Jesus Christ, His work was all about Elohim. But they work. God has done different kinds of work for a long period of time, things we can't even begin to grasp - some of what we've mentioned already - a lot of work involved but all planning, *all planning*... You know, what an awesome thing in life when people can plan. You know, that's one of the most exciting things of life that God gives to us, making plans.

That's what marriage is supposed to start out like. It's about planning, it's about the plans you have of life together, that you're sharing in life together and then the work that goes into it to reap the benefit and the blessing of the fruit of that planning together and growing together. That's what *binds* you closer together! That's what makes you one more than anything else, it's the things you do and work to accomplish, the planning in life. That's where the blessings come from! And somehow so much of that has escaped mankind more so because of technology than in times past. Think about it. Why? Why and how? Because it's there staring us in the face, it truly is.

And so He says, **My Father works until now, and I work.** And we understand the focus of that work. But it's very much the structure and pattern that God has given us for family, because there are things we're to learn in a short period of time of something that God has been doing for we don't know...in the span of time, if you want to talk about time, something we can't even begin to comprehend. We just... we don't get it. It's been a long time! ...been a *loooong* time. All of God's planning and all of God's work about His Family, and we live 70 so years on earth, how much of that together in a marriage, in a family of our own? 50ish as a whole in life, human life. That's the number you can have, less or more, but you know, that's what's afforded, given to mankind to reap great blessings of life, to grasp and comprehend things, especially when you know the truth then, especially as we begin to drink in of the truth of life that God intends for us to experience. Rarely happening unless or until the time when we come into God's Church, and then there are battles we have to fight and deal with, but we're learning *slowly*. We do, we learn slowly. That's why God inspired Mr. Armstrong to say it's going to take 3-4 generations, even in the Millennium, to get things turned around.

Verse 18 - Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. The point being there was about '**My Father works until now, and I work.**'

Now, I mentioned earlier, we can't begin to grasp the magnitude of, even here, of what Christ is saying here. We really don't get it. We read over it, **My Father works until now,** we might go back to the creation and think about that and the past 4,000 years to this point in time; **My Father works until now, and I work,** so He's entered into that same work. But it goes far beyond that...and all about us, all about sharing with us. Family is about sharing, and that is about *time spent* and so much of that *does involve work*, and as a society we're getting more and more away from that because of and due to in large part, technology. Man has not done well with it anyway but even more so now because of technology the gap is getting greater and greater, truly.

We cannot grasp what God has done, what He has worked to accomplish in all of His creation beginning with the spirit creation, because we can go back to that beginning. All the planning - it didn't just happen. God determined Elohim so... if we looked at time we couldn't grasp it. If He told us, we couldn't grasp it, but it was a *loooong time ago*. Then He created a spirit world and He planned it all and He brought it into being, created heaven, things in a spirit world that spirit could see, that when the angelic beings were created that they could see each other and they could see the things that God had created in a spirit realm. Nothing physical! And we can't comprehend that, we don't know what that means. We believe it and we try to understand it by physical comparisons.

And then God began with the universe. And this universe didn't just pop in overnight, just like they want to say, 'the big bang'. Didn't happen that way. God designed every solar system within every galaxy and He designed every galaxy. Incredible!

So the planning, the work in planning and the designing and so forth involved in all this from the moment God first began with a spiritual creation, and then on into the creation of the universe was all about a *time* that led up to the creation of mankind, with this in mind.

So, going to throw another one out here, just about *time*. Speaking of the universe, as we did earlier, this concept now of *time* that God has been working to bring us to our time now. This is awesome, where we are now. That's why we can't even begin to grasp the excitement. We want it now. We would like to see this end now. We wanted it so much so back in May, but there is more to be learned and some of this, candidly, about time and about how everything is so precise with God, indeed. So precise, you just look at the things that are out there and you know, people talk about 'like a Swiss clock', things that you think, yeah... or the design and structure of computers or various kinds of machines and so forth, and the universe that is so awesome, the beauty, the awesomeness of it, the power.

But we think about some of these things in very limited fashion and it's good to stop and think about *time* that God has been working to bring us up to our time now at the end of 6,000 years. And again, it's almost... it's not almost, it *is* unimaginable because we can't grasp it. So if we look at our solar system, the Milky Way galaxy, just to talk about numbers, it's estimated that there... you know, a long time ago you could read it was estimated to have 100,000,000,000 (100 billion) stars in it. Well, now today they guesstimate that there is between 2-400,000,000,000 (200 to 400 billion) in science textbooks. 200 to 400... that's quite a gap right there! As sharp as we are, as much as we think we know as human beings, we have a 200 billion gap of the number of stars that might be in the Milky Way galaxy. We don't even grasp that. We can't *begin* to grasp our own Milky Way galaxy...200 billion. It's like the debt we have, we don't grasp it - in the trillions - and so what is another 200 billion stars? And it's estimated that there are approximately 200 billion galaxies in the universe, or at least it has been. I remember a time when it was a hundred, because they thought, well, there is a 100 billion stars here so there might be a 100 billion galaxies out there too. Now they're talking about how there are, well, more like 200 billion galaxies in the universe. Galaxies! However, in 2009 a German super computer simulation put the number higher, closer to 500 billion. 500 billions galaxies, each one having 200-500 or whatever billion stars in it. Can't comprehend it!

Now, just to grasp the little thing about time here. If you take a lower number of approximately 250,000,000,000 (250 billion) stars per galaxy and a lower estimated number of only 250,000,000,000 (250 billion) galaxies, the number is so vast it's quite literally impossible to truly grasp. It is over 6×10^{20} ...for mathematicians, 6×10^{20} number of stars in the universe that God designed, planned, designed and

then created. And that's not even talking about their solar systems, planets and stuff that are very likely to have the same pattern as what we have and the timing involved in bringing everything about, planning it let alone doing it. *Those things didn't just happen overnight.*

Now, let's consider the magnitude again of time associated with all the planning and creating all the work that God has done that we can't comprehend. If each star had a name assigned to it - I did this many years ago at the Feast, at a Feast site many, many years ago and went through some of this about time. But now there are a lot more stars out there than what we thought, so now the time has gotten longer. But if you had each star out here that had a name assigned to it and you were given the task of naming every one of them, that was your job, you're supposed to name every one of these stars. How long would it take you? Well, we can't grasp that one. But to speed things up a little bit let's say that you can name 1,000 per second...can you imagine? I can't imagine that because I know it's ridiculous, human being, 1,000 stars per second. We don't move that fast! Our brains surely don't work anywhere near that fast, just to say 1,000 in 1, that's about how fast we can work...anyway, that would be 60,000/minute or 3,600,000/hour.... Now how long would it take to name all the stars in the known universe at this point in time? It would take you 20,000,000,000 years (20 billion). Can you grasp time and God Almighty in what He's done through time? ...in planning it, designing things, putting them into motion, bringing them into being? I can't. Do you think work is important to God and one of His most basic attributes in matters of character that show who He is, what He is, what He does?

My Father works until now, and I work. *We don't begin to grasp the magnitude of what He said, but God is blessing us to think about it a little more and to contemplate a little more and to hopefully learn from it a lot more. And do you think this is an attribute that He desires to be in Elohim? You know it! Because it's God, it's the way our God is, it's what He does. He works and Christ works...and yes, it's about Elohim but it's about everything that makes up the Family, everything that the Family is to enjoy, everything that the Family is able to share in in a future time that we can't begin to grasp and comprehend.*

I thought at times we have a hard time grasping 70 to 100 years of human life...and a thousand as a being in the God Family...millions of years? Well, God has it all mapped out. He already has it planned out. There are things there about it that are already planned out, that go far, far into time that'll be exciting, fulfilling, meaningful... and I'll tell you what, so much of it is going to involve work, but that which is fulfilling, exciting, inspiring and meaningful in life. Today, work, because of the world we live in, we don't always receive the fullness of what we could otherwise, if it were in the Millennium, but nevertheless, there is a fullness of life to be gleaned from that when it comes to family life and productivity and things that you just receive that is a matter of what you do. And God gives a lot of guideline and direction in the scripture about things like that, about the work of your hands and things to do, 'do it with all of your might', because that's where the greater fullness is going to come from.

It doesn't come from taking it easy. It doesn't come from sliding along. It doesn't come from smoking weed and dulling your mind, "Man, you know, uhhhhh, can you see how fun this is....?" And that's the kind of talk that people get into and then they have these studies out there, "Well, weed doesn't hurt the mind." I beg to differ, I've known too many people that weren't the same in the beginning as they were at the end. And maybe it doesn't affect everyone the same way, just like so many things don't affect everyone exactly the same, but you know, man's concept of enjoyment and fullness is so distorted; to come from drugs, to come from misuse of alcohol, to come from marijuana - how crazy....how crazy is man to come from, oh, your idea of life would be, is it, to sit in front of a TV with a video machine, then the more realistic it becomes, the more lifelike it looks the more exciting it is?

'That's really a fulfilling life to have!' ...and yet there are people who do that. I know of a woman, a wife, that basically that's all that she does in life. I think, what a horrible life to have! It's not her husband, not her children, it's the games. What kind of a mind has developed because of that? What kind of fullness of life is there of something that's so distorted it isn't real, and yet people get into these things and it occupies their life and their mind. That is not of God. That is of a being that wants people in bondage, to distort, to hurt the mind, to hurt the potential of the mind. Incredible!

I'm mentioning some of these things as a beginning about God, about family structure, because to have the kind of Family that God desires, the kind of Family that God has been working for *takes work*. And I'm mentioning this because work ethic is becoming more and more a problem in society and it's becoming more a problem in the environs of God's Church, because it's the age we live in. And so much of it has to do with technology, it truly does, and we need to examine ourselves and make sure that we are not allowing this to happen, and to realize that this indeed is something that we, that God has given to us to turn around and to change totally in a new age so that it can be learned and taught from youth on up. Because that's where it really begins. And so the entire structure of family has deteriorated through life to something as basic as this, which is a backbone of the greatest of fulfillment, enjoyment in life, comes from hard work, and we've robbed ourselves as a society because of those things and more and more it's entering into the world, it's becoming a part of the world. You don't want it to become a part of your life, indeed.

So again, technology has had a powerful effect on people, especially upon those who are younger today; it's just a pattern of life. Those who have grown up with more and more ease of things in the world, it's had a powerful influence that's worked to move people farther and farther away from a true and a sound work ethic, truly. So the bottom line in this is that technology has provided greater ease in life, and there is nothing wrong with that, but with human nature and not using it properly it can be an awesome detriment, and that's what's been taking place because of man's natural nature and inability to use it properly. It hasn't been good, and a lot of things we've robbed ourselves, unwittingly so, that God says is the very thing that gives you greater fullness and satisfaction and joy in life, from what you put into whatever it is in life, your marriage, your job, those things that are necessary in family and in life *to make life work* and work right.

So again, technology has provided greater ease in life with less work being done by family together in the home. Far more use of time has shifted away from spent in work or working together, chores, skill development, because we have so many things that take care of those things that we used to be able to do in the past, opportunities to teach people, especially if you look at an agrarian society, *you learned* how to work. It's just a part of life in an agrarian society. And the productivity of things that can be accomplished, to learn the satisfaction of things that are done, the reward and so forth; if those things aren't experienced how can one learn it? And so because of technology a lot of that has been taken away, so how is that going to be addressed? How do you address that in life, to teach those things? What do you do? What do you do as a parent to teach principles about work and work ethic, because it needs to be done...so what do you do? Think about it.

And so again, sharing time together, families that spent time together, things you did together, there was so much more in times past that it's not even funny in comparison, truly, especially when there was no TV. Can you imagine the time without TV? ...and then a time without radio? I remember a time when radio was coming along, when it was actually out there, but there was no TV, and so I remember 'Fibber McGee and Molly' and some of those old shows - some that tell your age for sure. There was some of these detective shows, I can't think of what some of them were called - 'The Green Lantern' or

something like that maybe? 'The Green Hornet', there you go, 'The Green Hornet'. There were some other kind of detective shows, I can't remember the names of them now, but I remember at this one aunt's home she had a radio, big old tall radio. It was the showcase compared to TV's today of the living room there. That's where you went and focused in the evening to listen to a particular show. So we might go over there and all gather around and listen closely, being on the floor there or whatever, and listening to a program like 'Fibber McGee and Molly' for maybe half an hour, maybe an hour program, and that was it. You know what the rest of the time was? People spending time together talking and things you did, things you shared in life.

Now, there is a balance in all these things but that just gives a little bit of sampling if you can begin to understand something that began to change, and then TV came along and more and more...and then TV that went past 10:00pm, because they used to sign off around 10:00pm...and then at midnight, and then it was around the clock, and then more TV stations, more choices, more time! There is a balance and soundness of life to the use of things and if you're not careful human nature can misuse those things to where you become a part, in essence, in bondage to them. It's happened to all of us, one degree or another, and we need to recognize that, the use of things becomes vital as to how much time is spent in them then, truly, that they don't control your life, that they don't take away from your family, that they don't take away from husband and wife relationships, that it doesn't take away from time with children, etc...etc...etc... And now add to that all the other gizmo's and gadgets we have in the last 5-10 years.

You think it's done a number on society? You think it's *doing* a number on society because we're not learning, we're not being taught how to properly use them, that there are limitations to how much certain things should be used? That from the time a child gets home from school to the time they go to bed at night is not to be spent in their room upstairs in front of a computer or whatever it is, electronic gadget they have? That isn't sound, it isn't balanced! Does something need to be done? But you know what, that means more work, doesn't it? Aaaah... yeah it does, a different kind of work, a different kind of planning because you want a different product. So what do you have to do in order to have it? Well, it's more work. *Things don't just happen in life*, and in the Millennium they're not going to just happen because Jesus Christ is here and because there is 144,000 on the earth. People are going to be taught how to use technology properly and not to abuse it like it is today where it so consumes people's time, where it's taken the place of parents and parenting.

What a horrible place to learn what life is supposed to be like, off of electronic gadgets and TV and music, etc...etc... an uncontrolled, unregulated - remember how we talked about it in the previous sermon? Our lives need to be regulated. We need control in life. It's not something that can be done without control. We need restrictions in life, and so do all people when it comes to the use of technology, and we need to begin learning and thinking about some of those things now.

So again, slowly but surely the shift has taken place through time to where man totally misuses things today, very powerfully so, and it starts in the family. I hope we can see that, hope we can grasp that, things that *must be changed*, things that *must be changed*. So, that time of sharing together as a family is so important. And because of fast foods and microwaves and other things and because of TV, you know, even the conversation that used to be spent around a dinner table is no longer there. It becomes a pattern of life, doesn't it? Well, there are things we need to reverse in life to where we spend time together, where you talk about the day and what's happened, where you share about it, where you don't feel bad about, "Well, they don't want to hear about my day and how it went." Well, you learn how to share certain things but you learn from that process as well, things learned, things that someone

can learn from, things that children learn from, whatever it is, but it's about sharing, and we've gotten away from that. We don't know how to share life.

You think about your life. How well do you really know about how to share your life with others? ...and how much do you share it? And so frozen dinners, microwaves, dishwashers, quick foods, video games, TV, tweeting, surfing the internet, surfing social media on the internet, etc...etc... it just goes on and on and on, and the farther it goes and the more there is the more we misuse it and the more distant we become from each other and the less people are able to communicate effectively with each other. Incredible!

So the result, indeed, is that less and less time is being spent together in families as people are being pulled farther and farther away from each other through the ease and the misuse of technology. That's the bottom line. It's a giant problem, it's not a little problem, and it's affected every one of us. Every one of you, to one degree or another, in some form or another, has been affected by it in your life. Maybe not as much at this moment in time but it's a part, it's around you, whether it be in family members or others around you as well, there are things you can see, there are things you know.

So rather than spending a long time or a long period of time expounding on this each of you should begin to focus on these changes in the world and how this has affected family life, marriage, parenting, child development etc... This is for each of us to pray to God, that God help us to begin to grasp and see these things...and candidly where some can begin to be made in our life as far as change is concerned.

So where is *time being spent*? Look at your own life. Where is *time being spent*? What's being molded and fashioned in the mind of youth, as an example? How is work ethic learned and what is it in technology that interferes with proper development, *especially* of such attributes, of such basic patterns of life that must be learned. Work, work ethic. You talk to people out here and people that hire others today... The world truly has changed a lot and it's changing very fast in these areas. People that don't grasp the concept of time or the importance of time, of managing their life in accordance with time. And yet God gives us some very basic principles, that there are things even within a relationship with Him that we have to keep track of time and to honor Him. Just like coming to Sabbath services, you walk in 15 minutes late, a half an hour late? ...or is it something you plan for because it's so important to you in your life? And to what degree then is it? And then the extra fellowship we're able to have and the planning for that.

Now, those principles need to be applied to the rest of our life, in family, in life, truly, and God wants us to learn from that. It *doesn't just happen!* And so today, what is the cause, what are some of the things that lead a mind to develop and grow to where this concept of showing up on time for work isn't important...or not even showing up at all?! I've known far too many situations in life I can give you examples of, "Well, just didn't feel like going to work today so I didn't go." "Really? And what kind of a temperature? A hundred and what? Oh, you didn't have a temperature, you just felt kind of bad that day, huh?" Where is the sense of responsibility, work ethic? Those of you who are older know *exactly* what I'm talking about - some of you who are younger may not, I don't know, that are listening out there today, because there is a definite shift and change that's been taking place in time and so much of it has to do with technology. It truly does! ...if you can begin to understand it and see it and what it's done to the mind, the thinking, and I'm just scratching the surface there about work and showing up on time, or the importance of work and so forth...even that which should be shared in husbands and wives, and we'll get to that in the next sermon.

I just want to mention that within the ministry over the past couple of decades it is clear that there is a growing problem in society and in the Church with appreciation or even the most basic of understanding about good work ethic. It's something that you want to learn. It's something that all of you need to grab a hold of and strive to pray to God about, that you be able to develop that in a stronger way in your life let alone grasp the need as far as the things that are happening, the need for such a thing...that sadly that's become more and more of a problem through time. There has been an accelerating trend in society where people do not grasp the importance or need for work, and especially not *hard* work. But you know, hard work is good, especially in the beginning of your life, to work hard. It's even more important and you'll look back at it in time and recognize the value of it even more so through time, what you've put into. Because, what you put into it is going to be proportional to what you receive from it. It's true in agriculture, at least in an agrarian society, and those principles are very true as far as laws that are in motion concerning what God has given in life through all things. Planning, thinking ahead, sharing, planning for your future.

There is a term that's being used a little bit too much in the Church that I want to warn people about that I don't like, because when I hear it I understand part of what's being said but on the other hand it kind of perturbs me, and that is if somebody has 'put their life on hold because of where we are in time'. Baloney! Garbage! An excuse! Another excuse, in essence! You've got to be careful that that's not what's happening to you, because I'm hearing this from different parts of the country by reports that are sent in on a regular basis, that there are some who feel this way. Why? Why is your life on hold? What does that mean to you? Does that mean then that you don't *plan* as far as schooling is concerned right now because why bother, my life is on hold because... of jobs and the way the world is? Well, la-tee-dah! You're *robbing yourself* of lessons to be learned right now of those very things. **WORK! PLAN! GO TO SCHOOL!**

I've tried to explain that in times past, the importance of continuing on with education, and *WHAT IF* - and I don't believe it for one iota - but what if time were to go on? What are you going to do? "Well, I thought my life was on hold, and it was for a little while because I put it on hold...and I put it on hold again." And that's a part of what I've been trying to explain to the Church! You've got to be careful of, in the Church even, that you don't do that as far as a mentality is concerned. Because you know what happens? *La-o-di-cea!* Lukewarmness! Coasting! ...which happened up through May 27th in the year before. I saw an absolute trend take place in the Church for a year of that mentality entering in and its there again in part. I think there is greater wisdom now, greater understanding now, and indeed there should be, because the reality is in life you keep working, you keep planning no matter what happens as far as a change, and that includes the Millennium, because there are lessons you're going to learn.

Matter of fact, some of you, if it be a matter of work and jobs is a matter... now, if you can't get it, that's one thing - and I'm going to get to that a little bit later here, I'll come back to that a little bit later. But what you learn from work, especially... You know, people who work in the Millennium, they're not going to have to contend with or have the opportunities for growth and understanding that you have now, and if you don't enter into those things you're going to rob yourself of things you could learn and be molded and fashioned by God in now because it's in *this* world. It's like the training I received for the ministry, I know because I lived it. I know that God prepared me a long time ago to be where I am today, and what He did with me after situation after situation in Church area to Church area and the ministry I was under in my training, was to learn so much. If I hadn't have gone through those things and learned those things I wouldn't understand a greater balance and soundness of mind of what God says, "This is the way it's supposed to be." If I hadn't of had those experiences and seen those things I wouldn't have had the ability to judge and discern certain things that I'm able to today with such clarity

and conviction because of *knowing* what is God's will, of things that *shouldn't* be done in the Church and things that *should* be done, things that *shouldn't* be done in the ministry and things that *should* be done, because *this* is God's way and *that* isn't! But I couldn't have learned those things or had that molded and fashioned in me if I hadn't worked at it, if I hadn't been a part of it, if God hadn't put me in those environments, because they were different environments.

And the same thing is true with a job. I don't care what you have... I remember before I came into the ministry, before I was hired in the ministry back in 82. Before that I had a particular job, one in particular (they were all that way), but I think of especially even the last one I had working in Houston, Texas for a company out of Chicago, and so I'd fly back and forth on occasion for various kinds of training up there and then they'd send me to different parts of the United States in trying to build up another part of the corporation. And as a part of doing that, and because of the individual I worked with that was over me, I wondered myself at times about some of the jobs I had, "How is this benefiting in the sense of learning things for God's Kingdom? What is there to be learned from some...?" Later on after I'd gone through it and was in the ministry I thought, "Wow! In those jobs God taught me things that I needed for the ministry, that I wouldn't have learned if I hadn't been in those jobs."

And there are things you can learn, just about human nature, things you can learn about the thing we're talking about today, *work ethic*! We should embrace the things that are *good* and *right*, and in this world you can see a lot that's wrong, but if you experience it that can be a *deeper conviction* then in you of what *must be changed*! But if you don't experience that you won't know and you won't be able to apply that in the future, you'll have to be taught what it was like. But you have an opportunity to live it now! There are things you can learn in this world, powerfully so, principles and so forth that you can't learn any other way, and because you're in God's Church God will mold and fashion things in you to benefit you later on in greater service to Him and to His Church. That's the way it works, because it's about a Family!

But so often we so rob ourselves because we don't grasp... and we have to be shown and we have to be taught, and that's what God's doing right now, He's teaching us, that no, your life is not on hold, if it's on hold you ought to have your you-know-what kicked up around your shoulder blades. Get with the program! Push yourself, drive yourself, make a job out of finding a job if you've got to! And if you can't, if that doesn't open up, what about some schooling, what about *something*? *Do something and learn*, because it's *still* going to go on, it's going to be needed in the future, and the opportunities of education now are *very unique* from what you're going to be able to learn in the future, in the world that's coming. You have extra opportunity, benefit and opportunity now that sometimes we just don't grasp.

Let's turn over to Proverbs 6. So again, there has been an accelerating trend in society where people do not grasp the importance of the need for work, for hard work. Too many are developing a mindset of 'its owed to me'. That's what's happening more and more in the world...or 'I deserve more' without earning it! That's a big one from technology and the use of various things out here and the lies that are pumped into the human mind as a result of some of the garbage that's out there, and it becomes a part of thinking then; it's like, "Well, I deserve more!" And people don't understand, no, you deserve more if you work more, you deserve more if you put more effort into it. That's what God shows us, how you receive the fruit and the product of something is by what you put into it! But people don't want to put much into it today, they don't want to work hard, they don't want to be on time, and they want to go home when it's 5:00. "I want to be home, I want to be going home! Don't ask me to do any overtime, to work longer!" That's the mindset of society today more and more, and people rob themselves of what they can learn from the environment they're in...positive and negative.

So, the concept of 'I want it now', the lies that Satan has done even through the use of technology. 'It's owed to me', 'I want it now', 'I expect more for doing less', 'I expect others to do it for me', 'I shouldn't have to work so long'. I've heard people comment about how it's been tough - "Well how long have you been working? What kind of a work week?" "30 hours!" "Oh, *horrors!* You're having to put in *30 hours* a *week!* Oh! *Whew!* I don't know how you *do* it! ...don't know how you manage that one!" But I've known of people who honestly feel that way, they truly believe that that's just too much! Wow!

Anyway, Proverbs 6. There are so many things that are given over and over and over again by God that have to do with work, that have to do with human nature, that has to do with learning things of character, things that are so important, as how to receive the blessings and fruit... It's just like this way of life spiritually, if we can't learn them physically how on earth can we learn them spiritually? If we don't learn it's by what you put into it that's what you're going to receive out of it...what you put into your spiritual life is what you're going to get out of it, and if you don't put things into it, if you don't work hard at it you're not going to get much out of it. That's why Laodicea *crapped out!* Okay! It got *lazy* - 'rich and increased with goods' - that's the way of society today, 'rich and increased with goods', expect more, think you're better than what you are, think that something greater...

"Oh, I want to start out with a management job." "Oh." It doesn't matter what it is, but that's the concept sometimes of human beings, "I've had this training. I went to college, I shouldn't have to start out with the grunt work." "Well, if you want to be in this corporation you've got to start out learning the grunt work because if you don't know what's being done out here in this field, if you don't understand how to do things, *how on earth are you going to MANAGE it?*" And that's the way life is! And all of you that are older, you know, but sometimes if we haven't lived that we don't *get* that picture, we don't understand that.

Proverbs 6:6 - Go to the ant, you sluggard; God condemns things; if there isn't productivity, He calls it what it is and He says, so **Go to the ant, you 'sluggard'**, a word that means, 'slothful, sluggish, lazy', literally in the Hebrew 'avoiding work'. Avoiding work! And you think, yeah, but that's how you... you learn from that, your productivity, the way you feel about yourself, the way you feel, the fruit of something you're going to see is a result of what you do, you're not going to be able to experience those things. It doesn't matter, the simplest things in life you can receive satisfaction and fullness from.

I remember when I was working my way through college at different times in the summer time, I'd follow hail storms in Kansas because it hailed a lot. So we'd go to some city that got wiped out with hail storms and here the insurance agents are out there, they're giving people immediate checks to get their houses roofed and everything so all we had to do was go up and down the street asking people if they needed a crew to come in and do their roof. And I'd hire 5-6 fellows to come out and help me, some in high school, some in college, and we would go out and we'd do roofs. And I got into the habit that I wanted them done *right* and to have the lines straight, in three tab shingles, if you know what those are, to have those right on t-locks and everything is straight. I got in the habit sometimes of looking at other people's work and thinking... I'd be driving down and looking at roofs and looking at the *lousy job* some people did and thinking where is the enjoyment in that? And I used to do shake shingles, I loved to do that! But I loved the product when it was done, to do a good job and the satisfaction of that. And sometimes we rob ourselves and we don't realize whatever you do in life there is fullness there, of doing a project, of doing a job, whatever it is, and putting yourself into it and striving to do it in the best way you can. There are rewards and blessings from those things.

Think, "How can I have rewards and blessings working at Burger King?" Well, you can. You can. And if that's where we need to begin then that's where we begin, and you won't know... I'm not going to give you the answer. That's where you begin. You learn from it, truly. But sometimes people think, well...and that's another thing in society, "That jobs beneath me." It's kind of like this thing, "I expect to start out as a manager. I want to start out up here on top. I don't have to learn anything else in between because I'm better than that." That's the Laodicean spirit, 'rich and increased with goods'. We think we're better than what we are. And a lot of this is because of ...and you need to think about it. Where does it come from? How does it develop? Why is it there?

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways and be wise: I like another translation, it says...

New Living Translation: Take a lesson from the ants, you lazy bones!

Now, please understand, I'm not trying to beat anybody up, because it is a problem in society and it is a problem that's coming more and more into the Church because that's what is God calling you out of, this world, but now is a time to learn from this and to change the tide and turn things around. And so the reality is in most cases out here, candidly, you haven't been taught, because you haven't been shown by parents as a whole or by society. But that's not an excuse now, now is the time to turn that around, to take the opportunities that God gives to us and change that and to learn what we can, indeed.

So it says...**consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.** Well, what are you to learn? It's about planning ahead! God wants us to plan ahead in life! He's made His creation like this! We're to learn from His creation, even from something like an ant; you know, there it is, that's what you do! You plan ahead, and not only that, you share in it, you're a community, just like a community of ants, we're a family, we're to work together, we're to enjoy... we receive the fullness of life from that, but if we don't plan ahead and if we don't think ahead and if we don't think about where we're going... Don't let your life be on hold! What a *shameful* thing! Move ahead, keep going!

...provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest. How long will you sleep, O sluggard? How long? When will you arise out of your sleep? If you can understand the Laodicean spirit this is *exactly* the same spirit, it really is; it's that spirit, Laodicea, sleepy, falling asleep, lethargy, lukewarmness. You can't have life that way. Life is not meant to be lukewarm, just to kind of coast. You've got to apply yourself, you've got to work in life to receive the benefit and the fruit of life, you truly do. And those who don't rob themselves and don't realize what we rob ourselves of. Just like in marriage, people have different concepts that they receive from society, from technology especially because of the boob-tube and things over the TV and over movies and stuff...and life isn't like that! Sometimes I see some of the things that are out there and I just want to put my finger in my throat and just gag, because people are watching this, young people, they think that's what marriage is like or that's what life is like, and it's not true, it's not *real*! And there are things you do to work at making things work, but it has to be God's way.

How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep? Yet a little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep: it's like it just continues on, it gets worse and worse, a little more, a little more - people lose motivation, and when you lose motivation in life that's a spiritual thing, it's not just a physical thing. If you lose motivation and you start coasting in life what's inside the mind that creates such a thing, where is the drive, where is the excitement of

what... where is the picture of what God has given to us, of what we're to work toward and to attain that takes effort and energy in it, where the blessings come from?

And so it goes on to say here, **and so shall your poverty come as one robbed when traveling, and your want/your scarcity/your need will take you as a robber.** In other words, that which God wants us to have in life will be like it's been taken away from us, period. We'll never have it because it's never going to happen with this kind of mind, with this kind of thinking, and we just become weaker and weaker, falling deeper and deeper into sleep and a deeper and deeper sluggishness. It's a horrifying, horrible thing to the human mind, and you don't want that to happen. It's the *exact opposite* of God. It's the *exact opposite* of the way of God. Taking it easy, slumbering, coasting... What if God put *His* life on hold? What a horrible thing! If it was just, "I'm tired of this, going to go off over there in that part of the galaxy." ☺ "Rest for a while because I've had enough of these humans." ☺ Anyway... that's the exact opposite of God, taking it easy, slumbering, lukewarm. God doesn't do anything lukewarm! *God doesn't do anything lukewarm*, He puts His entire being into what He does. Awesome!

I was thinking the other day here about how God worked with individuals for the first 4,000 years and what He molded and fashioned in the different ones. 4,000 years - because of what He's creating that is far more important and far greater. ...and the time He spent doing it? Noah. Abraham. Moses. David. On and on it goes, individuals He picked out and chose and worked with, to mold and fashion to be a part of something far greater than what we can see out here in the universe, and the time He spent doing that because He's molding the mind, He's molding things into character that can come in no other way, experiences in life around them?

You think of the life of Daniel and the things he experienced and the things of Joseph and different ones and God was involved in that, all around him all the time, just like He does in our lives. But then Christ came after 4,000 years and now it escalates, because now God has set in place a means whereby He can work with many more at a time, because what He's molding and fashioning is so precious, so important, so profound, and so the work of preparing during the first 4,000 years leading up to the time of Christ and His coming and the history that had to be there, and Israel and all the other things that had to be there, and then Jesus Christ coming and teaching what He did, and then the formation of the Church, and then through the period of time, most of the 144,000 are going to come out of the last 2,000 years, and think of the *time* and the *dedication* and the *work* and the work load and how much God is involved in our lives to mold and fashion things in us as we yield to it. It's more than we can grasp but it's beautiful, it's exciting, truly is.

That might be a good place to stop today. The other is going to take too long to go through, the next set of scriptures here.

Start examining things in your life. We're starting in this thing about family with a focus on work because it is the backbone of family. Families don't just happen! The God Family isn't going to just happen because the Millennium comes. It's because of the structure of it, it's because of everything that God has prepared. Everything that happens in life, there is a lot of work that goes into it and God has been working *hard*, truly.

I think of my life; I'm a handful. Put us all together, we're a big handful. ☺ You think God's job hasn't been difficult, it hasn't been hard? You think there is not a lot of hard work that goes into it? There is! We ought to honor that and respect that and be thankful for that because there is a lot said there.

Examine your life. Think about how technology has affected thinking and hurt the work ethic.

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