

Today we're continuing with the sermon series entitled *Take Action*, with this part being *Part 3*.

As it's been pointed out, after we have started owning our own choices, it's a part of a process, and primarily in our *wrong* choices, our *wrong* responses, our *wrong* words, words that come out of our mouth, *wrong* actions, and *wrong* thinking, etcetera, etcetera, when we take ownership of those things ourselves for what we're doing and recognize the change that needs to take place in us then that's what has to take place. We have to do something about it then. That's just the beginning. So just beginning to see the problem or seeing the things we need to address, then you have to do something, and that's why we talked about fasting. That's why we've discussed those things and gone through those scriptures, especially in Isaiah that talk about that. And that is the most powerful tool that God has given to us to humble ourselves, to understand what we're actually going through when we do that.

So again, awesome scriptures there in Isaiah 58. And one thing to me that was even more exciting was to be able to share with you the reality that's for us. There has never been a time...there has never been a time that a group of people in God's Church have known and understood what that is talking about to the degree that we have, that God has blessed us to see and to understand - the purpose, the deeper purpose of fasting. So often as a part of growth we see the physical aspects, but to understand the spiritual and what God is leading us to is another matter. And to me it's exciting because it reveals He's giving more and more as we're getting closer and closer to Christ's coming because of what the world has to... or at least the Church, if you will, has to have a certain amount of ability, understanding, knowledge, and so forth that God is pouring out upon us so that that's a smoother transition and not a giant transition for people.

So the opportunity to receive what we have, the opportunity for thousands who were once a part... That's an awesome thing to understand! Again, not that everyone will accept it. 63,000, given an opportunity, of people who were a part of Worldwide, that's not just baptized people, but children who have grown up as well. Children have grown up and learned some of the things they have, have a bit of a smattering here and there of understanding - some a lot. And yet those things are in a state of sleep as far as their minds are concerned, but what an incredible thing when God begins to open people's minds, of those individuals who have that in their mind as far as so much of the foundational truths that were given through the time of Mr. Armstrong. And as soon as they begin to "see" and grasp what God has given, added to the Church, especially if we understand the beginning of a process after the Apostasy, they're going to be able to grow so fast! So fast! And then that opportunity to live into a new age and be a light and an example in a world that is just coming out of darkness finally, and those individuals, and even this body doesn't grasp the magnitude of that yet. You really can't until that time has arrived. And then to know that

there are thousands and thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people who want to hear, who would *love* to meet someone who was a part of the Church at the end-time, whether it be a part of what fell asleep and was awakened at the end, or of you that have been molded and fashioned as a part of a remnant, or able to join in to be a part of supporting that remnant group.

So again, we have no comprehension of the power and the might of the things that God is about to unleash on this earth, let alone the physical things that are going to happen, but the spiritual that follows. It's inspiring! It's exciting and it should stir us up.

So again, we're being blessed to more fully get our act together. *We cannot stay the way we are! We cannot remain the way we are! We are to change!* God is giving us an opportunity for advanced growth, an ability to grow a lot more spiritually! And that which has happened in the past, especially when it kind of levels off... I'm amazed at the amount of people, and ministers as well, who have written in because they have to give monthly reports. And a hint to some of you, if you're not doing that you're not going to remain a minister. Okay? It's a responsibility you have. So, anyway, as a whole everyone is. But I mention that as an aside because I have a job to do, okay? I have a job to do as far as God's Church is concerned and those things that are being given to the Church right now, and I'm going to do it. And that's a part of a process that we must go through, and a lot of that is just being more candid, if you will, about certain things when they need to be addressed, "This is the way, walk you in it!" And if someone doesn't want to walk in it, sayonara, dos vedanya, auf wiedersehen, on and on it goes. Hate to see you go, but you must go. That's the bottom line. We are to become a much stronger Body, and if we've levelled off, which a lot of people acknowledge that now, that they have leveled off and began to coast. You can't coast in God's Church! We're to learn a lesson from that. Now, some who were a part before the Apostasy know very powerfully so what I'm talking about, because we're talking about Laodicea, we're talking about a lukewarm spirit, we're talking about a coasting spirit. You cannot coast in God's Church. That leads to being cut off. That leads to being spewed out of God's mouth. That's the lesson. And so God has let us experience a measure of that - a measure of that - not to the point that it's destructive, but to a point that we see the danger in it, to the *point* we can come to grasp this is not right, this is not good. And if it were to go on for years and years and years of coasting, you know what it leads to? An Apostasy, to falling away, toward false ideas and false things allowed into your life and beliefs that begin to work their way in because you're not strong enough to fight it or fight against it.

And so we're being awesomely blessed to be able to see things in our life in a more powerful way. It's amazing to me - and it's not, because I know how God works - to see a process over time, especially over the past year, how God has led the ministry to talk more and more about some of those things having to do with the mind, having to do with the motives, where they come from, why we do the things we do. And now to a point where we're to be able to see ourselves more so

in a spiritual mirror - where are we in truth and in spirit? Are there things that need to be changed in our life?

I mentioned it last Sabbath, if we fasted and we didn't see at least two major, the two major things in our life - what are the two major things in your life that *you* want to change, that you do not want in your life anymore, that you know that are not good, that are not spiritually healthy. What *are* those two things? Because if we don't know what they are we need to fast again! We really do! Because if we don't know what to zero in on - and that's just a beginning, because there are other things there as well. But there must be at least two or three things that are major in our life that we want to address immediately and get out of our life, because we realize they're not in unity and oneness with God. We should know that. We should know what they are. And there's not *one person* in God's Church that doesn't have that many things to work on, that for *them*, at their place of their growth is a major thing. What are those major things for you, that you can say, "This is one, two, and three," in that order. Maybe they're together with each other, I don't know. But really, they should even be easy to see as far as a priority! That there are things that are worse than others. "One is worse than two. Two is worse than three. But I want to work on one first and two, *and* three, and I'll know what to get rid of them." And then as those are cleaned up, then we can go on to the next. That's what growth is all about. Spiritual growth works that way in our lives. But if we can't see it, what are we working on? Are we blind to what we are? Are we blind to our nature? Are we blind to human nature? Are we blind to the selfishness that's inside of each and every one of us? Because the reality is *every one of us, as long as you're a human being*, there is incredible selfishness. That's our nature. I *hate*, I *loathe* the selfishness I see in my mind. But it's there.

You know, Paul talked a lot about those kinds of things. There is a war, and we need to see it as a... If we don't see it as a war, then we don't know what the battle is! What are we fighting? Are we fighting things in the world around us or are we fighting with this, first and foremost, self? Because that's where the battle... That's where the battle begins. That's where the battle is first and foremost. It's in self. So we have to fight that fight, and recognize what God is revealing.

That's what Isaiah 58 is all about, the ability, a mind that's willing to humble itself and say, "Yes, I want to change! I want the mind of God! I want to be like that! I want to have a desire toward others, a love toward others, of putting others before myself." But we tend to *always*, by human nature, put self first. And if we don't know that we've got a ways to go, truly, because that's one of the major things we have to do in our life, to realize what we're like, that there's a battle, there's a war. We are selfish by nature. What a beautiful thing. Think, "Well, what do you mean, 'That's a beautiful thing?'" It's the only way we can ever come into Elohim. It's the only way we can ever be given an opportunity to make choices.

Because, you see, the process of making choices, and ability to see the ugliness of human nature, that we can say, "I reject that! I don't want that! That causes unhappiness. It causes frustration. It causes everything...." Drama! Drama! Drama! "That's the source. It's selfishness that causes those

things. I don't *want* that in my life. I want the way of God. I want the *mind* of God. 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ...' Those kinds of scriptures should just ring in our mind and say, "That's what I *want*! I want that kind of thinking. I want to be able to see people in that light. I want to see all whom God has called as a family, that we love everyone in that family." And if we don't then something is wrong with us.

And the reality is we have situations happen on a continual basis (I've spoken of those) where people can't get along in God's Church. That shouldn't be. That shouldn't be! We should be able to get along, and sometimes, in very *family* where people don't get along like they should, in the physical family! If we can't do it in the physical family, how on earth can we apply it and live it in a spiritual family? And so God is letting us see things that are awesome. He made us as physical human beings for such a great purpose. And when you can really see that with all of your being, how incredible that is, why He did it out of *necessity*. He couldn't make us any other way. We had to be made *physical* so we'd be subject to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," so that when God's time came to call and open up your mind and say, "Now, look at My way. Look at the way I am. Look at My way of life. Look at My family, what My family is to become. Look at the way of peace and the way of how people can live together in harmony and unity and love and care, so much so they'll sacrifice *their* will to see others blessed and given 'whatever' that's good and right in life." Awesome! Awesome! And then that's a matter of choice and people have to choose then which do they want. And if you don't experience this physical life you can't make that kind of a choice, so God made us this way. Beautiful, but ugly! When your mind is opened up and you "see" what it is, selfish, carnal human nature, it is *exceedingly ugly*. It is *evil*. It is evil. Selfishness is just evil because it leads into all sin, because it's against God's way.

And so He lets us imbibe of His holy spirit. And fasting is a powerful tool to humble ourselves, to say, to be able to come to that point. We not only get to a point where we learn something very physical and spiritual that, "If I go without food, I go without water, then I humble myself before God because I realize that I can't go without spiritual food. Any day of my life I need to be fed spiritually every day of my life. And if I can't learn that lesson by something I do physically, then how can I ever learn it spiritually?" And then it goes beyond that... goes well beyond that. Spiritually we learn we have to, we must humble ourselves before God in truth and in spirit as we acknowledge we cannot change nor successfully fight against our nature, nor truly "see" our own true motives without God's spirit. And that's a matter of humbling ourselves, to acknowledge such a thing. I have to have, I *need* God's spirit! Without it I can't change. I'm a prisoner. I'm in bondage. And God's calling us out of that, isn't He? So it's an awesome process we go through.

Let's go over here now to Isaiah 55, pick up where we left off, cover a few of these verses and then continue on from there. Again, obviously, a fast includes the powerful tool that we have been given whereby we communicate with God, and it's a process there that must have prayer as a part of it. It's not just a matter of humbling ourselves, but it's a matter of prayer in our life. We recognize the two have to be together; they have to work together. So we've been focusing a

little bit on that as well, the need to trust in God, the need to... something that reveals whether we do or not is our communication with God, our prayer life.

**Isaiah 55:1—Listen, everyone who is thirsty...** And so that's an individual thing. We are at different levels in life and it's a blessing, it's an awesome blessing to be thirsty for God's way of life, to want it in the depths of our being. ...**come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy, and eat. Yes, buy wine and milk without money and without price,** because God just gives it. He wants to give that to us. When God calls us He wants to give us more and more of His mind, more and more of His being, more and more of His holy spirit to help us change, to help us become something different, to be able to be transformed. That's His whole purpose into leading us into Elohim, His family. We have to be transformed, our thinking, the way we think about one another, to get rid of all prejudices, all bias in life, all wrong judgments in life whereby we normally judge as human beings, and to learn to do it God's way. See? That's why I love the scriptures that have given people frustration at times when they try to grasp what Christ was saying when he talked about judging; he doesn't judge any man. That's what he says. And then he says, too, "And when I judge my judgment is just," because he judges not according to his will but according to his Father's. And that says everything. We can't judge of and by the way we see things, the way... It has to be because this is the way God says it is. And we strive to be in harmony and unity with that. And that's how we judge everything in life. And within that process that's how we come to see bias that we have, that's how we come to see prejudice that's in our human mind. And those things must be gotten rid of to be right with God. And so He blesses us in that process.

And so we have an opportunity to grow in these things in a profound way more than the Church ever has in its entire history. And that's not because of how great we are, that's because of how great God is and His purpose. That's why He gives more and more truth in the end here, and continues to give more and more because of where we are in time. It's a simple thing! Jesus Christ is returning and the Church is being prepared more and more for that coming, and so that that understanding, that knowledge that is given to that point in time can begin to go over the entire world quickly, brought up to speed quickly through the power of God's holy spirit so that they can "see" and understand things.

That's why I marvel when Mr. Armstrong's book came out, *Mystery of the Ages*. There had *never* been a book written *ever, ever, ever* that so *succinctly* and so *powerfully* brought together an entire plan that someone could read (even on a physical carnal plane), and learn from, let alone the power that's there when God's spirit is involved to open up the mind. But just to be able to see and understand *why* the angelic realm, *why* mankind was made, *what* God's purpose is in a family, and on and on it goes. There had never been... The things are in the Bible, but never put together to where people could see them so clearly, so plainly. Just like the magazine *The Plain Truth*, that really summarizes, in many ways, the work that Mr. Armstrong was given and the way that he was able to teach and to show those things in a very plain way. And that book very

powerfully brought together the Bible, God's Word, God's plan, because it wasn't in here so that people could just pick it up and easily understand it. It's a progressive revelation. And because we're getting closer to the end God began to give people more ability to see things: why the angelic realm. Things that people in the world don't grasp. They don't even believe in an angelic realm, but those who seemingly think they do, don't grasp the purpose of it. They don't grasp what happened.

I think like visiting that Ark, that replica, you know, south of Cincinnati. And think of something so simple. They're *so close*, but so far away, thinking that everything was created 6,000 years ago, the vastness of the universe and this earth, 6,000 years ago, and there were dinosaurs. So when Noah, you know, came along they had to save some and they had to take eggs, they had to take little Tyrannosaurus Rex on the ark! You think, "Give me a break!" Science itself shows that that's not right, that couldn't have happened. But science and anyway... And God has given us the blessing of understanding, no, those things happened a long, long, long time ago and the evidence is buried out here. And science knows full well that it's buried out here, they found it. They see it. They can measure it. They can see things that have happened on the earth. Now, they don't grasp it all and they don't put it together properly. What a blessing that we can, that we understand.

Anyway, I'll never get through this sermon. I was going to start a new series next Sabbath.

So listen, are we thirsty? Do we really crave God's way of life? If you're thirsty, you're not going to have a problem with your prayer life. If you realize how much you need God's holy spirit in your life to change and you *want* to change, you really *want* to change... Or are we kind of satisfied? Because that's what Laodicea does. It gets into a point where they're kind of satisfied with everything and everything kind of coasts along and it drifts and we're not really *fighting*. This way of life is one of fighting! It is a battle! You have to war! You have to enter into that war yourself. You have to *choose* to fight and to recognize you are in a war, as I mentioned in the very beginning here where Paul talks about that. Makes it very clear there is a *battle* that goes on in our mind and our flesh that *wars* in us. It truly does.

So again, God gives it away freely. When He calls us He wants to give us more. We have to learn to grow to take it in, to cry out for it. We have to grow in that. What an incredible thing. We have to fight against our nature to learn how to do this more, because our nature wars against God's spirit. Do we grasp that? That your nature wars against God's spirit? You *want* to be selfish! That's what your body wants! That's what your mind wants! You want to be selfish! It just comes natural because you want your way. You know you're right above other people. You know you're right. We judge things, we look at things as human beings, and people judge things, they decide things, they know they're right. "I have a better way. I know you're wrong because I know... I *know*." That's the way we think. We have our own ideas about things, our own opinions. Oh, do we have opinions! Whew! If only we didn't have so many opinions! But if we know where they come from and how we judge others then because of those opinions, that's not judging according to God's

way because it's right. I'll tell you what, you can be in great peace because you've made a decision because it's in unity and harmony with God then you're at peace. When you *know* that your choice, your decision, what you have decided is in harmony with God's spirit, and that's why you're doing it and that's what you're seeking to do, you're at peace and you can have great boldness of spirit because of that. God will give greater boldness. It's an awesome thing, brethren, it truly is. The more we grow, the closer to God we become.

**Verse 2—Why do you spend money for that *which is* not bread, and your labor for that *which does not satisfy*?** So, that's selfish human nature. It isn't a matter of really striving to seek after God by nature. We tend to pamper self. That's really what's first on our plate, as a whole, so often, and there is a great battle that takes place there. So, "Why do you spend money for that *which is* not bread, and your labor for that *what does not satisfy*?" This is not written to the world! This was not written to Israel! This is written to the Israel of God, the Church of God. Because only we can grasp what is being said. Only God's people, when they have His holy spirit, can grasp what He's saying here. This is for us. This is for you and me and has been for the Church and for anyone God has called through time, whatever point that is whenever they've been able to read something like this.

**...and you labor for that *which does not satisfy*? Listen diligently to Me...** So God says you have to put diligence, you have to work to listen to God. You have to fight against your spirit to really listen to God, to really hear what He's saying! We have to fight against our own carnal human nature. "Father, help me to hear Your words. Help me to hear what's given this coming Sabbath. Help me to 'hear' it. Help me then to put it into practice then in my life. Because if I don't 'hear' it I'm not going to know what to do or how to do it." Do we plead like that with God, cry out to God? Because, you know, God knows where we are, but it's up to us to choose, it's up to us to enter the fight, it's up to us, and then He will respond accordingly to our battle.

**Listen diligently to Me.** So He didn't just say, "Listen to Me." He said, "Listen *diligently*." **...and eat *that which is* good, and let your life delight itself in fatness.** And so instead of thinking carnally and physically about what we have or what we don't have on a physical plane, God says, "Delight yourself in that which is true fatness of life, fullness of life, that which will really satisfy, that which is lasting." And it's like that water and the Samaritan woman going down to the well. She was so excited because she thought she can have this living water and she not going to have to go down and get water every morning. What an awesome thing! And He's talking about something that's spiritual. That's what we're talking about here - same thing.

How much do we *value* everything that God gives to us? Do we thank God regularly for the truth we "see," for the truth we understand? Because we really don't grasp, not as fully as we can, and that's what we must strive for, what God has given to us in this end-time. We can tend to take it for granted. Our nature tends to take it for granted. And the longer we're around the more we'll take it for granted and not realize how awesome it is, how great it is. Because, you see, people in the early times of the Church, they didn't understand what God has given to us now at the end-

time, so many of the truths that God has given us. They didn't understand about what God is doing and what God's going to begin to do when Jesus Christ returns as far as men and women and how people are going to be taught what you're being taught, what you're beginning to practice now in your life and how you're to see and understand things about women that have caused problems for *6,000 years* starting with marriage and how people think that has been so upside down. So *screwed up* and *twisted and distorted that it hurts family life*, it hurts life in public, in society, because things are upside down in that area.

I remember some of the diagrams that some of them used to make and government and how it works and so forth. And people didn't understand. No, that's not God's way. And God's giving us His way now more and more. But how many of us are there compared to 140-some-thousand at least who haven't known these things? There are 140-some-thousand that are going to be resurrected who have *not been taught what you've been blessed to see!* Now, they're going to "see" it immediately when they're resurrected. They're going to be brought right up to date and they'll have the capacity to drink it all in, to know it with all their being because of being spirit. But they weren't taught it. It's going to be news to them - good news, exciting news, *inspiring* in ways that we can't even begin to grasp. We're not there.

**Listen diligent to Me and eat *that which is good*, and let your life delight itself in fatness.** God says you can delight yourself in it. The more you grasp what you've been given, the more... You know, sometime just writing down a list of what we have, how we've been blessed, the blessings we have in our life, and just starting to go down through it and thanking God for it. "Thank you, Father! Thank You that I can see this. Thank you that I'm learning this. Thank you that I can 'see' and understand something that I understand that people during Laodicea never could see, no one in Philadelphia grasped it. And I know that no one through time has been blessed to see what I've been blessed to 'see.' How blessed am I!" Talk about fatness, talk about being able to drink in and eat of things in such a powerful way. What a horrible thing to take any of it for granted.

**Incline your ear, and come unto Me.** "Incline your ear." That's why I get a charge sometimes out of certain individuals - and please, don't do it unless it's just who you are anyway - but some people react differently to certain things than others and they do things different, in a different way, and I get a charge out of individuals that lean forward in their chair and they're focused on listening and they want to listen intently. Almost think they're going to fall out of their chairs sometimes, and then they're shaking their head, "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! I see that!" And they're excited about it. Now, we're all different and we show emotion in, and what we have in different ways. But you understand what I'm saying. That's on a physical plane, but God's saying in your mind, in your being this is what we should be like as far as our attitude and our desire toward God is concerned.

So that's what He's saying here. "Listen diligently to Me, eat *that which is good*, let your life delight itself in fatness. *Incline your ear*, and come unto Me." So that's what it's talking about, incline your ear, be eager to listen, *want* to listen, *desire* to listen to what God has. No one can

give that to you. You either want it, you either have it in your mind, in your being or you don't. And if you do, you're so blessed. You are so blessed! **Hear, and your life shall live.** So it's not a matter of just listening to words. "Hear!" You have to put effort into "hearing" what God gives. It's not talking about sound. I'm talking about the mind. So it's one thing to incline our ear to listen, it's another thing to "hear" what God has given because we want it as a part of our life and we're clinging on to it. That's what He's talking about here. We're clinging on to it. We want it. We're seeking to digest what He gives to us and we're wanting to put it into practice in our life.

**Hear, and your life shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you.** Everlasting. **Even the sure mercies of David.** Things that were prophesied long ago, written about in the Psalms when he talked about in Psalm 8, "When I look at the heavens and think, What is man that You're mindful of him, or the son of man that You visit him." And yet that's spoken of later then in Hebrews, and God reveals, very powerfully so, written about, things written about in the book of Acts and so forth, where it makes it so very powerful, so very clear that which is going to be everlasting, when God will dwell in us for all time. Not as He does now, sporadically so and in different levels in our life because we're carnal and when we sin we cut off the flow of God's spirit.

I can't tell you just one thing, because there are several things, but one of the top ten would be that, you know, as far as our desire toward God and to grasp what God is offering us, having a desire to be part of Elohim, to know what that means for us, and again, this everlasting covenant, to grasp what it means that God can dwell in us for all eternity, for all time. It's an awesome thing, brethren.

**Verse 6**, let's go on, jump down here a little bit—**Seek you the LORD while He may be found...** Well, that's our opportunity now, but how many, how many over the last four years have gone by the wayside? How many? How many have been asked, told, "You're not a part of us if you're not doing what you should be doing." I'm excited when individuals get to that point and they're able to repent because we have some who have repented, and some who are able to get their life back in order again. But sometime, most of the time when it comes to that point in time it's over... it's over. It's over for this age, anyway, as a whole. Most of the time. So, **seek you the LORD while He may be found.** So when you have the opportunity, strive to grasp what you've been offered, what you've been given. Very few have been given what you have. **...call upon Him while He is near.** So we should be moved and motivated to call upon God, to cry out. That's what prayer life is about - "Call upon God while He is near." So, is He near? Well, He called you. He wants to be near to you. He wants to give you His holy spirit. But we get so wrapped up in this carnal world, our jobs we have and our lives and the stresses of life and so forth that after a while, if we're not careful, we begin to lose sight of the power of the blessing that God has given to us, that the Great God of the universe would hear us and converse with us? Because He does. Because what He'll give to us then primarily is on the Sabbath. Primarily. And there are other times, too, through other things that are written, but this is the primary time that God gives us to

where He works with us to tell us, basically, where we are in time, what we need at this time, what we need to focus upon. And so we grab a hold of it with all of our being, if we do. "Call upon Him while He is near." Take advantage of prayer. You are so blessed to be able to go before the Great God, to know that you can kneel on your knees, and if you're not able to get down there, like I can't right now because I can't bend it down that far yet, but I'm getting closer. And I sure don't want to put any weight right there at this point, but I can get down on the one and get the other one part way down for a period of time, not too long before it starts hurting.

But, anyway, that reminds me, please don't quit your prayers for me. I appreciate that. Cause I can tell the difference. It's still giving me some problems. I was in the other day in therapy and telling the guy about these muscles in the back and how much they're hurting, and so forth (and you know, "Woe is me") and he says, "Yeah, they're starting to... That's a good sign. They're starting to wake up." I thought, "Yeah, I'd rather they stay asleep!" But now I know what he means. Anyway, you're starting to get more feeling and you're starting to feel things and they're starting to work again and signals and things going through there. Anyway, I don't know why I got off on that.

But again, "Seek you the LORD while He is near, call upon Him," yes, "call upon God." Prayer. Our prayer life. It's not a matter of a long period of time, it's a matter of the consistency more than anything else, day by day at different times of the day that you can cry out to God, in different places, not to become lax in it. There are times, you know, when you're driving along and you have an opportunity to pray to God, that's great. But there are other times, too, to make sure it's a little more focused, a little more formal, because if you're driving you better have your mind on your driving too. And that's not fully focused on God. You understand what I'm saying. So there are times we can have like that that are good. And some of my best times for prayer are walking in a beautiful area and just being able to be with God, talk to God in an environment that He created. And some of that is some of my most meaningful prayer. And other times as well when you are able to get on your knees you get down there and you have those things that are more heartfelt, you pour out your heart more, you cry out to God more. And so we need a combination of those things, but it needs to be in our life every day. And if it's not... it's not... especially now, where we are and where we're headed...

So it says here, again, **Seek you the Eternal while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way.** Now, *why on earth would it say this, right behind this?* We read over things like this and say, "Yeah! The wicked should forsake their way!" Uh-oh. This is written to us. We're blessed to be able to understand it. Are we wicked? Do we really grasp our human nature is just downright evil, it's sick? It *is* wicked! It *is* nasty! It really is! When selfishness wants its own way it's just sick! I don't know about you, but I hate it. Selfishness is an evil thing because it's only concerned about self. Isn't that sick? That's not a mind of God. God's not that way. He's not hung up on self. But we are. We pamper ourselves. We want! We want! We want!

**Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.** So that's where it starts. That's where it is. It's in your mind. It's in the thinking. That's where the wrong words and the wrong actions and some of the drama that shouldn't be a part of our lives comes from. It doesn't mean you're not going to go through some difficult things, but how you deal with it determines the drama level. It's one thing to deal with things that are in our life, but to live it day in and day out as though almost we're feeding off of it? Because people get into that sometimes. It's like you're just living off of it. It's ruling your life! And it's ruining your life! God wants us to learn to take control of life, starting with self. And you know what, sometimes we're not able to be blessed because we don't do it. Sometimes we can't be blessed because we just don't listen.

**Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return/turn to the Eternal.** That's where the answer is. Turn to God. Look to God. Keep your eyes focused on God. Cry out to God. **And He will have mercy upon him; And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.** Why does He say things like this? Why is this stated like this? Because it's a matter of repenting. God will abundantly pardon. He'll forgive us of our sins. Incredible! But we have to "see" what they are. And it's in the mind, and it's in selfishness. Selfishness is filled with a lot of sin, if that's what motivates certain actions in our life. And it does. Is it wrong to take care of self? Not at all. But if that's our motivation over others then we get in trouble.

**For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts.** Our desire should be to want to think more like God, that our thoughts become more like His thoughts, that our ways become His ways. And the more we do that the closer we draw to God, the more confident, the more bold in this way of life we become. Because when you know and you make a choice or a decision because it's in harmony and unity with God you have peace and you have blessings, and God will pour out more of His spirit upon you, and you know that. But if you sin, you should know the opposite.

**My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways My ways, says the Eternal.** And see, that's the problem. We have to change our ways. We have to *change OUR ways* to be in unity with God's ways. Sounds simple; it's not. It's a war. It's a battle. You have to fight it. You have to struggle with it. That's why you have to cry out to God every day, to fight those things that need to be fought against in your nature.

**For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.** And we can't fully grasp that. But what an awesome thing the way He expresses it here. So far as the heavens are... How's it say it here again? "As the heavens are above the earth; higher than the earth." There's a lot of distance there. And that's what God is showing. We have a lot of growth and we'll never attain to it, but we can continue to grow until we're actually born into that Family then. But we can grow and grow and grow.

**For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and**

**bread to the eater.** So again, using physical things to teach those things which are spiritual in nature, of that which comes from God into our life, if we'll receive it, if we'll cry out for it.

**Verse 11—So shall My word be when it goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void.** So, again, it's just like God's spirit, God's word, when it goes out, it's up to us to receive it and to what degree we do, because there are going to be those who receive it. And if we do then there's going to be growth and there will be that which is produced. And if we don't have growth, in time you know what happens? It's that coasting, lukewarm thing that God can't use and He can't work with. And so it has to be separated. I'm tired of seeing people separated from the Body, yet I know it's a healthy thing for the body and so I do it as a part of my job, to make sure that things are followed through and things are taken care of if individuals don't want this way of life, if they want to continue to live in something without repenting. You know, if people will repent, be truthful, be honest; God works with that, but if they don't and they're doing something else it can't continue on because it hurts the Body. And the best thing is if the Body is healthy. And God is giving us, and will more and more, a strong, spiritual Body. And we can all be blessed. We're blessed to be a part of it if we continue to fight for it. But you have to work and you have to fight for it.

**For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.** That's what it produces, God's spirit, God's mind. There's a joy. There's a fullness in life. There's a peace that can only come from God. Had someone quit the other day because they've been hearing some of the series of sermons and so forth and just go to a point, "Well, I might as well do it first before it happens to me." I don't know what was going on in their mind. It's like, comment was, basically, they're not a part anymore and they have so much peace in their life. Blows my mind! What do you mean? What kind of peace do you have? Do you know what peace is? You don't know what peace is! When you live God's way of life, the true peace comes from God. But if you have peace because you're not battling self anymore and you don't have to listen about that...? I have known of so many people through time, who they... Ringing in my ears from early on in the Church. Individuals very close to, knew for a long, long time, and they just got tired of hearing how bad they were. That's the comment. That's a very common comment that people have made through time. "I'm just tired of hearing how bad I am." Well, that's what we hear in God's Church. Our nature is bad. Face up to it or not. Fight it or not. That's choice. You know, God's offering you something far greater. Do we not grasp what He's offering us and what He gives to us? Is it not worth the fight, the battle? I don't know about you, I wouldn't dream - I don't care what it is - of choosing anything different than exactly the way God offers it to us and gives us what He's offering us. Worth the fight? We better believe it. We better be convicted of that. Because if we're not, you know what? We won't continue fighting when things get harder, or we won't be able to continue *in* the fight because we'll wear out, we'll wear down because we don't have the ability, the stamina of ourselves, of and by ourselves. It requires God's spirit.

So again, **So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return unto Me void, it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* where unto I send it.**

Awesome, what God is saying. If we receive it, if we cry out for it, it produces. It produces fruit. **For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.** And there's a lot said there, but I'm not going to spend time going through all that. But again, it has to do with what God is bringing together in the Millennium and where God is going beyond that into the Great White Throne, and where God is going beyond that into all time.

**Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Eternal for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.** That means a lot to me when I read that, because I think of all the people who have been cut off through time, cut off from the flow of God's spirit, cut off from fellowship in the Body of Christ. And it's far more than what come through, far more. "Many are called, and few are chosen." But the majority of those will have opportunity in a Great White Throne, as a whole. That's the way it has worked through time in the Church.

Let's turn over to Proverbs 8. So much is given in Proverbs. Awesome scriptures about God, about the mind of God, the Word of God. Because when it talks about wisdom it's the same thing. It's talking about the mind, the being of God, that which He shares with us, desires to share with us.

**Proverbs 8:10—Receive My instruction, and not silver.** Hmmm. Human nature tends to think of that which he can put his hands on - it's physical. And that is counted as, oftentimes... No, let's just say as a whole all the time, gold and silver. If I had more... If I had more money, more gold and silver, solve a lot of problems. That's what we tend to think. We could do so much. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, like that's going to solve your problems. No, it isn't. That's not the answer. That's not what it's about. Receive instruction and correction? We don't tend to put the same value on that as human beings. We really don't, as human beings. When it really is put to the test out here in the world... Because, you see, that determines a difference, a huge difference in whether we coast or whether we get lukewarm. It's all in the mind. What do we count to be greater? What is greater in our mind, in our thinking toward God? **Receive My instruction...and knowledge rather than choice gold**. I'm just telling you, we don't tend to be that way as physical human beings. And we might think, "Oh, no, no, no, I value the other more. I value what God offers me more." But you know, the proof is in the pudding. And the proof is in our everyday lives. And you look back over the past five years, six years, whatever long you've been in God's Church - has it been a battle in those things? There better have been.

**For wisdom is better than rubies:** The mind of God, the Word of God, truth, wisdom that comes from God, the mind of God, you want to compare that with rubies? Go out here and find a whole pot full of rubies somewhere? A whole bucket full, a five-gallon bucket of rubies! Wow, wouldn't that be something to talk about! We think about wisdom in that same way being far more

valuable, what God offers us? Because in time those things mean nothing. In time, as we grow more and more, those things mean less and less.

**...and all the things that may be desired...** We can generally think of a lot of things that might be desired. Maybe the lottery? It's up to 200-400-500 million? That would solve a lot, wouldn't it? No, your headaches would just begin and you'd probably be right out of God's Church. I mean that human nature tends to be that way. It'd be a toughie, it really would. Not many would be able to go through it. **For wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.** See, we don't.... That's a way of thinking that if we can really grasp it, there is an incredible contrast that's being made here. Really is. Because we might think, "Well, no, that's the way I am. I want the wisdom." But, again, proof is in the pudding. How do we really think? How do we really live then day by day? Because that reveals where we are.

**I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions/creative things. The fear of the Eternal is to hate evil.** There is so much said in these verses here, things about God and what God wants us to see and what He wants to share with us and an excitement of those things that as the mind changes and becomes more at-one with Him the life that's there. And He'll give us that life that can be lived through time. "The fear of the Eternal is to hate evil." You know, sometimes there just needs to be a greater fear to go against what God says. If we really feared being cut off from God's spirit, you know, we wouldn't do the things that cut us off from God's spirit... if we really *feared* those things. But, again, it goes back to conviction and where we are and what we really value, where our thinking is. And these are the kinds of things that make it manifest.

"...is to hate evil." So it's a great wisdom in that, basically, is what's being said, to hate evil. So do we see what comes out of our minds as human beings? Do we really grasp the kind of nature that's in us and why Paul addresses things in some of the ways he does? He said, "Oh, wretched man that I am," and he believed it with all of his being. "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" Because that's what he saw in himself. And then he went on to say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ..." That's how we're able to do what we do. It begins with ability, because of Jesus Christ, to be able to be forgiven of sin. But we have to be able to "see" it to repent of it, and then there's a process there that's ongoing. It never stops as long as we're in this human body.

**I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge ... Okay. The fear of the Eternal is to hate evil, pride, arrogance...** Pride. Haughtiness. I'll tell you what. That's a matter of coming to see self more and more too as human beings, how arrogant human nature is. It's arrogant against God, it truly is. **...and the evil way.** "The evil way." This is talking to us. We need to be able to "see" the evil way, to "see" what comes out of selfishness, out of human minds, and how it can react to people that... Do we see things that are done wrong in our thinking towards others? Do we hurt when we realize we thought in a wrong way, or worse yet, when we've let it come out of our mouth or out of some action we've had toward someone else? Because I hear things, you know, on a regular basis, of things that people have said and done and I cringe inside. I *cringe*

inside when I hear some of those things and think, "How can we do that?!" But I know we do because we're human beings. But we have to stop! We have to get a hold of it and become stronger in spirit, more at-one with God. Division, not getting along? Is there anyone in the Body of Christ that someone can't get along with, that someone... I hear people fighting over things for the Feast and the Feast isn't even here yet! Mindboggling that we would fight, get in arguments about things having to do with what's coming up at the Feast, where people might be, where they might stay, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And just to get along in some of those things? And attitudes that come out? And people getting upset with each other. Well, why get upset with someone else? Why? Of, over all things, being before God at a Feast of Tabernacles with the desire to go before God, rejoice and have the opportunity to even sing songs praising God, and then the opportunity, the blessing of being able to be fed mightily more than any other time of the year with spiritual food.

And to think that we would think wrong toward someone else? Get upset with someone else because something didn't go our way? Because that's usually what happens, something didn't go somebody's way, so they get upset with another person in the Church because, "You're not doing it the way *I* want to do it because *my way's better!*" That's the way. That's what we do! "My way is better." "Don't you agree with me?" "Shouldn't we do this?" It's good that we can laugh at it, because, really, if we can laugh at our human nature and realize, yeah, that's the way we are a lot of times as human beings, and we want to nip it in the bud. We want to go to the Feast of Tabernacles and have a great Feast. That should be our overriding goal and desire in life, to honor the Great God of this universe. That should be the foremost part of our being, to want to be able to come together and honor, to *please our Father*. Is that something that *fills* your being? That that's your desire, to go to the Feast of Tabernacles and to *honor* your God? Is that in your mind? Is that why you're going? Is that your *desire* in your mind? Do we think that way? "I desire to honor God and Jesus Christ. I want to bring honor and joy before God, that He can rejoice in us," because He sees where we are and He sees our heart and He knows what we want and He knows what we're fighting for and He's pleased with that. "I am well pleased with you." Isn't that what we want God to be able to respond to us and to say? And shouldn't we go there with that desire then? And if we really have that kind of mind and that kind of thinking, then we're not going to get into those things with other people. We're going to give them some time. We may have to talk some things out, talk it through, but talk it through we should and be giving. It's just not giving someone their way either. There is wisdom we have to cry out to God for when we enter into conversation with one another about things when there are differences, and to desire to work things out.

So again, "The fear of the Eternal is to hate evil..." See, that's evil. That's just evil. And it's really, really, really, really, really sick, that before someone ever steps foot at the Feast of Tabernacles two months, three months, four months in advance that there is some quibbling going on about certain things at the Feast. Blows my mind! Truly does! I don't want to be in those shoes. I *don't* want to be in those shoes, especially now with what God is doing in the Church.

So to "hate evil, pride, arrogancy, haughtiness, and the evil way, and the corrupt mouth, do I hate." Those aren't God's ways. None of those are God's ways and He doesn't want it in us. He wants us to fight against it. **Counsel is mine...** So we go before God and if we're honest and truthful with God He'll help us to see what we need to do. If we know something is not right and we're having a difficulty with someone else - I'm talking about in the Church, not just in the world. But we work, first of all, within the Body. Because if we can't do it here you can't do it out there - *you can't do it out there!* If you can't do it in the Body, to those who belong to God. Because, you see, that determines what your motive is. Do we recognize they're God's children? They belong to God. God called them? And how I treat them is how I treat God. I hope that gets through to us in a very powerful way. How I treat them is how I am treating God. That reveals who I am. That reveals what I must repent of, because God looks upon it *exactly* that way. And if we can see that and grasp that we'll fear. We will have a better, healthier fear in our life toward how we go before God if we really "see" what it's like how we treat His children, those whom He's called.

There is a lot said there. I'll tell you what, that's a sermon. That's a series of sermons. And I'm not going to give them, because you can digest that one easier, what was just said. Go back and listen to it again. Go back and read it again, think about it, pray about it, this attitude toward God. And yet sometimes we still don't see that, because we don't believe it yet. We think we can get by with certain things. We think we can get by with certain ways we talk or treat someone else or get in a conflict with someone else. You don't get by with any of that because a conflict with someone else is a *conflict with God*. Okay? We need to *grasp* that in the Body. We need to *see* that in the Body. We need to *believe* that in the Body. And if we fear doing that... I don't know about you, but I would fear treating God that way, talking to God that way. So we should fear that toward one another. Do you see what I'm saying? Would you grasp that? Because we need to and we need to latch on to that ever more so. And the more we see that and grasp that, you know what? Your Feast... You'll be far more blessed at the Feast than you ever have been. If you really "see" that with all of your being and you pray to God about it, you'll have a far greater Feast on a spiritual plane than you have ever had. And you know what? That's *exactly* what God wants to give you this year, the best - truly, not just words, but in truth and in spirit - the best Feast of Tabernacles ever in God's Church. It's what He's offering.

**Counsel is Mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.** That's God. We don't. "Counsel is not mine." "Sound wisdom is not mine." Understanding? Strength? It all comes from God. And if we see that with all our being then we go before God and cry to God, cry out to God, "Father, I desire that. I desire more of that in my mind, in my life, that strength which comes from You." "Be strong and of good courage." You can't work it up, it comes from God. That kind of strength, that kind of power comes from God. It comes from the power of God's holy spirit in your life.

Now, therefore, listen to me, all you children (verse 32); I'm sorry, I jumped on down. Now, therefore, listen to me all you children. Do we see ourselves as children? Do we see each other as God's children? Because we need to. ...for **blessed are they who keep My ways**. That's where blessings come from. They come from obedience to God, from living God's ways, from desiring God's ways and so many of those ways have to do with our relationships, don't they? That's what the 10 Commandments are all about - first four about our relationship with God and the other six about our relationship with one another, how we think towards each other.

**Verse 33—Hear instruction.** Hear it! It's not just a matter of words, but it's a matter of what we're able to hear on a spiritual plane in our life. ...**be wise, and do not refuse it**. Choices. Choices. Choices. Choices. Don't refuse it. Seek it. Desire it. **Blessed is the person who hears Me**. Do want to be blessed? Do you want to draw closer to God? That's what this is talking about. ...**watching daily at My gates**. Oh, those are powerful words. They're spoken of in the New Testament again, aren't they? Several places, things that Christ spoke about. Watching daily at My gates." It's not every other day. It's not once a week. It's a daily thing before God. **Waiting at the posts of My doors**.

So let's go over there. Let's go over and look at one place like this. Mark 13. Because a lot of this that Christ gave, so much of it is even in context with the end-time, but more because it applies to anyone in God's Church at any time, has throughout the past 2,000 years. But let's notice how this is spoken of in **Mark 13:23** where Jesus Christ is giving revelation about the end-time here.

And picking it up here in **verse 32—But of that day and that hour no one knows, not the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father**. Something only of God. And I think of people who say, "See! You can't... No one knows!" No, at that time no one knows, not even the angels. You know the angels don't know anything until it's given to the Church. And you know who gives it to the Church? Jesus Christ. Comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ. Everything that's given to the Church comes from Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church. See, I believe that Jesus Christ knows and he's given it to the Church.

**Take heed, watch, and pray.** And so this is really talking about some other things as well, which I've tried to explain in times past as well. **Take heed, watch, and pray...** "Take heed." Yeah, we better take heed. To what? Ourselves. It's about us. What are we to take heed to? It's about what we're doing, how we're living our lives. Are we in unity and oneness with God? Are we really striving to be at-one with God? Watch and pray, that's what He says, watch, be alert. It's a matter of being spiritually alert and on guard. You can't do it without praying. We can't be alert to self. You can't take heed without doing this. You're not taking heed. We're not doing what we should be doing unless we're watching, which has to do with being alert on a spiritual plane, being on guard. How do you be on guard? Guard against what? Against sin. Against what can cut you off from God's spirit. Of what can cause certain things to happen in your life so that if you're not careful, if you're not fighting the fight you can begin to drift and go by the wayside and the day of Christ

comes in your case whenever that is. And that's happened to thousands and thousands of people in the past 2,000 years. Tens of thousands. Perhaps a lot more.

**Take heed, watch, and pray, for you do not know when the time is. For the son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to everyone their work,** or "to every man his work," as it says here. But it's to everyone. We all have a work to do. When God calls us, when God draws us, we all have work to do. And sometimes even our physical lives, if we don't reflect a strong work ethic, how in the world can we do it on a spiritual plane? I'll tell you what, you can't. They go hand in hand. And so there's been that which has been a message going out to the Church - we better be working. We better be doing well physically and we better be striving to understand what that means on a spiritual plane. Only you can stir yourself up, truly, to strive to do what you can do. You know, there are certain things that happen in life, I understand. But as a whole, you know, we better not be lazy. We better not be lukewarm. We better not be coasting. Because that's just plain lazy, you know! And how does God look upon something like that? If we're not crying out to Him on a daily basis and saying, "Father, I need you. I want your spirit in My life!" What does that say to God? "You're self-sufficient. You don't need Me. You don't love Me. You don't grasp it. You don't grasp what you need and I've given you everything to see what it is you need to change and you need Me, you need My spirit. You can't do it by yourself!"

**...and to every man/every person his work, and commanded the porter to watch.** So every one of us is given a job and a responsibility to be spiritually alert, to be spiritually on guard. Because thousands and thousands have gone by the wayside who have not been on guard. Everything that happened that led up to the Apostasy, it was because we got to a point in time where we were not *on guard* like we should have been. It's like the ten virgins in Matthew 25, the wise and the foolish, five wise and five foolish. And it used to be looked upon in the Church like, "I know who some of the foolish are, but I'm one of the wise." There are people who felt that way, and basically spoke in that context. It's like being a Philadelphian. You're a Philadelphian, but you're never going to be a Laodicean, "Because they're just... I'm a Philadelphian." I think of one individual one time who left the Church because he was being told that we're all Laodicean. He wanted to be a Philadelphian. So he went there. Anyway, another story. Incredible how the human mind works.

So we all have our work. The porter said, you know **...commanded the porter to watch.** We're to be on guard and only each one of us can choose to do that or not. **Therefore, watch,** be alert, be on guard. And you know the greatest thing you have to be on guard to is your own human nature! To *not* coast! To *not* let down! Because that's a tendency on a spiritual plane because of our nature. You've got to fight against that with all of your being and cry out to God for help.

**For you do not know when the master of the house comes – at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning.** *This* is not about the *specific time* of Christ's coming, this is

about anyone who has been called in the past 2,000 years, because "he's like a man who is on a far journey" and there's a job to do.

I think of the Day of Atonement coming up and the example there of Leviticus (I think it's) 16. Anyway, the verses there that talk about, basically, the high priest went in for a time until that work was done that he didn't come back out. It's like Christ returning after 2,000 years of a work that had to be done as our High Priest. And the same sort of thing until everything was brought together as far as his House was concerned. But what's happened during that 2,000 years? There have been tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people who have been called, who have had the opportunity. I have known many who have had the opportunity of their mind being opened up who couldn't come along to a point of baptism, but they were still called. Their minds... I've visited with a lot of people who've had their minds opened up to the truth and wouldn't take the next step, who couldn't take the next step because of family, because of job, because of whatever. So they had that opportunity of a calling, to be drawn to God, but... And then individuals that even came along to the point of baptism into the tens of thousands, even after baptism, came to a point of being baptized and after a time various things came along in their life. That's why certain... parable of the sower. That's a perfect example of what happens, and all that went by the wayside through time. So for them it was the coming of Christ. For them it already happened in their life. You don't know.

You better be watchful because you don't know when it's coming for you. That's what it's talking about. That's what it's talking about, about what happens when people are called and whether or not they continue to respond. And for them, then, it's as good as happened. And I know tonnes of people this has already happened through in time who are not going to have opportunity to be a part of 63,000.

**Verse 36—lest, coming suddenly, he finds you sleeping.** What an incredible thing to realize what God's granting at the end of an age here. And He did for a remnant, gave prophecy about it, that there was going to be a remnant. Now, it could have been a lot more, but even there, look at the numbers that could have been a part of the remnant. And because of choices are not here. It's like we've always held at this point of kind of being like a tithe of the tithe - much, much smaller. "Lest coming suddenly, he finds you sleeping." And so that's happened to a lot of people through time. Because, you see, that's when people go by the wayside - when they're called, even baptized, and after a time begin to drift, become Laodicean in spirit or lethargic in spirit or begin to coast and don't grasp it, and in time don't have the strength to go through whatever it is that comes their way. They can't fight the fight. They don't have the strength that they need in their life and they succumb to it. And for them, the end came and they have to wait until the Great White Throne. Going to be a lot of weeping and gnashing of teeth for a lot of people who had those opportunities, to realize what choice they made and what they gave up. Incredible calling that God offered to them.

So he says, **And what I say unto you, I say unto all: Watch!** Whenever we're called. This is a message that's been for the Church for the last 2,000 years. Watch! Be on guard! Be alert! Cry out to God! Seek to be close to God! Because that's where your strength is. It's not in yourself.

Proverbs 2. I'll back up into Proverbs again, toward the beginning. There is so much in Proverbs. **Proverbs 2:1**, it says, **My son...** or as the word really is here, "My child." It's not really just talking about a son. Sometimes we can read through those things and think, "Well, what about the daughters? What's up?" Well, they're sons of God and we're children and it's not a matter of sex. It's a matter here of a child of God. We belong to God. And most of the times that's the way it's translated anyway. But anyway, basically God's saying, **My child**, whoever we are, **if you will receive My words, and hide My commandments with you.** You know, when you hide something it's this thing about a treasure. You don't want someone else to take it away from you. You hide it. So that's basically the kind of analogy it's giving here, that you *treasure* it, in other words. You treasure it. You recognize it's a treasure, of what you've been given. You don't want anything to steal it away from you. And what steals things away? Well, sometimes a mate. Sometimes other family members, sometimes the job, sometimes people's desires for someone else that they shouldn't have desire to. Many people have been drawn away just because of sex, sex, sex, sex. Stupid things people will do because they're drawn to someone else or attracted to someone else so they'll commit adultery and leave God's Church, leave God's way behind because they value the excitement of that more than the excitement of God. That's happened to tonnes and tonnes and tonnes of people in God's Church, because that's a very powerful thing in life. Face it. It's a reality. Sad. Sad. Sad. Pathetic. Pathetic. Pathetic, what we value.

So in time God tests us and tries us, what we really treasure. Do we treasure His way the most or something else? You are tried in those things. You have to make choices and decisions in those things throughout life, whatever those things are that can draw you away. Some false doctrine, you get lifted up with pride and haughtiness and you begin to think that, "Oh! I see something in here that others don't see! I "see"! God's *showing* me something that others don't grasp!" Now, some of you chuckle a little bit, but I'll tell you what, this happens a lot. It's happened too much in God's Church! I've seen this happen *a lot*, where people get lifted up and they think they have this special revelation, special understanding of something and they don't grasp how God works. And all of a sudden they put so much weight on it that no one's going to tell them something different. They "see" it! God's working with *them*! They're special! Well, none of us are special of and by ourselves unless we're yielded to God. And then we're God's special people, a select people. That's what He says. That's what makes us special, when we're in the Body of Christ and we're filled with *His spirit*.

So, anyway ...**hide My commandment with you (verse 2), so that you incline your ear unto wisdom**, see, again, this inclining your ear to wisdom, to what God has to offer, **and apply your heart to understanding.** So you have to apply your heart. You have to want it. You have to *do* something! There's work involved in this to apply your heart to understanding, to grasp what God

gives. Say, "Father, I don't understand that that was given to me. Please help me to grasp what You've given. Please help me to see it on a spiritual plane." **Yes, if you cry after knowledge.** That's a matter of crying out to God. How do you do that? Through prayer. You cry out to God. You *want* it. You *desire* it. ...**and lift up your voice.** How do you do that? Prayer! That's what it's talking about. It's not a matter you have to be loud for God to hear you. "Cry a little louder," like Elijah told some of those false prophets that time. "Cry a little louder. Maybe he's off taking a leak somewhere." That's what he said. "Maybe he's off, you know, maybe took a vacation or something and he doesn't hear you. You're going to have to cry a little louder so he can hear you." No, it's not... Anyway, it's a matter of lifting up our voice in prayer. We cry out to God. We want it. We desire it. ...**and lift up your voice for understanding.**

**If you seek her as silver,** you know, there's a lot said there, **and search for her as hid treasure.** That's a matter of how we think. No one can give that to you. Do we really pray to God for that? "Father," if you see something lacking in you and you say, "I don't really. There's a lot of things in life I value, but some of this I don't value to the degree I want to, like hidden treasure," like finding something that's like gold, like finding something that is hidden out here that you can get excited all of a sudden... If you were to go out in the back yard and dig up something and all of a sudden you get that shovel down there and you hit this rock and you think, "Man, this rock's out here, coming up again," and you want to get it out of there because you want to bury a plant or something and you lift it up and it's this big ole chunk of gold, I think you'd probably get a little excited! "Whew! Can it be? Can it be a big nugget of gold! 20 lbs! You're kidding me!" I think your heart would start to beat a little faster. Do we do that for God's word? See, we fall short, so we have to cry out to God, "Father, help me to be *excited* about your word Sabbath by Sabbath! Help me to be *inspired* because there's a battle going on in my being and I know that. But I *want*, I have chosen Your way because that's what I want. That's what I treasure and I know that I'm weak. And I want help so that I have more of that kind of a mind, so that I'll fight for it more." You have to ask God for that! You can't work that up because you don't have it! That's why He wants you to come before Him and say, "Father, please help me with this. Help me to have this kind of a mind toward you, that I can get excited about Your word as I would if I were to go back here and find a huge stone in the backyard that I can see through!" Whew! A diamond, you know! We would get excited about it! And we must cry out to God to help us to be excited always, day by day, about His way of life because we're weak as human beings.

**Search for her as hid treasure; then, *then*, then-then-then-then-then shall you understand the fear of the Eternal, and find the knowledge of God.** A lot said there. That's how we grow in these areas. That's how we can become stronger in spirit.

[By the way, I forgot to announce here, which I'm just going to do because it came to my mind - Conrad, you're an elder now, so congratulations. So, two in the area. That's great as far as...]

"Yes, if you cry after knowledge," cry after knowledge. It's a matter of prayer. "And lift up your voice for understanding. If you seek her... then shall you understand the fear of the Eternal and find the knowledge of God." Awesome, beautiful words.

**Verse 6—For the Eternal gives wisdom.** It doesn't come from us! God gives it! He's the one that can give it to you. **Out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.** So that's God's word that He gives to us. **He lays,** in other words, as a building up of something and hiding away as treasure, **He lays up sound wisdom...** "He lays up sound wisdom." God has placed it there. It's there for us. And He's the one that gives it to us. **He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous.** It's there waiting. In other words, He's laid it up for us, it's just waiting the time that we can receive it, and whatever that point is in our life in spiritual growth.

**He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He keeps the paths of judgment,** so all these things as a matter of crying out to God for them. And as it says, **He preserves the way of His saints.** See, it's all written to us, to His people whenever we're called, whenever we're begotten of His spirit, it's written to us and we can be blessed in it then if we do the things He says here. **Then shall you understand righteousness,** what's truly righteous, **and judgment, judgment,** like I mentioned earlier on here, we have opinions about so many things, but so often our opinions, our judgments are just off the wall. They're not right! They're not really right in line in unity with God. But when they are, boy, you can have great confidence and boldness in life because you *know* it agrees with God and it's not against God's way, it's not fighting against God. ...**and preserves the way of His saints. Then shall you understand righteousness and judgment, and equity, and every good path.**

So again here, I want to go back up to this word "sound" wisdom, soundness, soundness of mind. There is so much of that.... Today, in today's world - balance, soundness, it's everything but that out here. It's a nightmare. This world does not get along. God's bringing that to the surface more and more. He's letting us see it in government. "You can't govern yourselves. You don't get along. Your practices are not good. The way you think toward each other, the division that's there, you're divided against yourself." What does God say about things like that? I mean, that's where we are in time and He's bringing those things more and more to the surface. But God calls us to learn balance, to learn soundness of mind.

And there are a couple of things I wanted to interject into a part of that, because I want to give a little balance in a couple things I mentioned here recently. Because I've had different things coming in and a couple I really enjoyed of seeing some of the battles and how people are addressing some things. But one of the things I wanted to make comment about here: There are so many things in life where you can have greater balance and soundness and the more balance and soundness we have in life the healthier we are in every way and as far as our minds are concerned. But, anyway, just one of those things I wanted to mention here in passing was, had to do with work.

We are to work. We are to be productive. Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! We're to strive to do that. We may have battles in this age, in this world, and whatever, because of certain situations that happen, but we need to keep striving to do those things. But there's a balance in that isn't there? I had mentioned here someone made comment about it that they are working to find that balance sometimes in their life - and I think a lot of us do at times. Because you can do too much. I made a comment about someone that I knew that was working 50-60-70 hours. That will do you in! Okay? That will do you in. Other things will suffer in time because of that. Now, you may be single, you may be able to do that for a little while, but you can't keep doing it because I'll guarantee your spiritual life is going to start suffering. And if you have a family and you try to do that, I'll guarantee your family life is going to suffer horribly! We have to have a balance in there. And it's a matter of seeking God's help to have balance in those things in our life. Because family is so awesomely important, the time spent together as family. And if we're not careful we can take away from that in other areas.

So again, we need to have balance in those things, and I hope that's clear. But it's clear to the degree that you have soundness of mind and have balance. But it could be a struggle in family lives, can't it, sometimes? You know, sometimes, especially in the way the world is today, a company, especially, they're laying off people and then they just put more work on you. And then you feel a responsibility because if you want to keep your job then you have to put in more time and more time, and sometimes you may have to for a time, or whatever. But strive for balance in that and strive, ask God for help in that so that it doesn't take you away from family and so forth, or that it starts getting to you. And you'll be in awe of what God will give to you, brethren. God desires to fight those kinds of battles. He truly does. It's a matter of trusting God, crying out to God because He sees what you're striving to do. Why are you striving to do it? Because you value family and you want there to be balance there. You want that to be strong in a relationship with God and what you're doing within your family, whatever that is. It doesn't mean that everybody has to be called and of God in the family. That's not what it's about. Okay?

So, again, I hope you understand that I wasn't saying that people should have 60 and 70 hours. Far, far, *far* from that, but that you should have soundness of mind and balance in things, too. I mean, that's the primary thing in a relationship with God, because so often those things can begin to suffer and then your relationship within your family or with other people can begin to suffer and your health can begin to suffer - blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Drama. Drama. Drama.

One other thing I want to mention: Every Sabbath this summer, as a whole, as it's been hot in different areas, I have tried to give a different kind of balance within the Body when it comes to what it's like outside, even if it might be a little... even if we have good air conditioning. Today, do we have good air conditioning in here? No. Okay. I rest my case. So sometimes some places you don't have good air conditioning, especially when you have a packed room and there are a lot of bodies giving off heat. And the temperature, it rises pretty fast.

So again, there are times when it's so hot and people going to and from services that that can just wear you out and it can add extra stress in your life, that I know we're not going to have that in the Millennium. I don't even have a single, slightest... It doesn't make sense to have something tied around your neck. I mean, really! But we're still going to do it. We're still going to do it as a matter of dress, as a matter of custom, if that's what our custom is in the Western World as a whole. So often we're still going to have ties on because that's just... when it's decent outside. But if you're cooking outside don't feel like you have to because the point is not to come here to where you're just drug out, where you're... because those things have a wear and tear on you. They really do. And it's far better that you be alert during services than something choking off... I mean, just put your... Just after a while, you don't feel so good and you start turning red in the face. Does that make sense? I mean, really, blood flow needs to be good up here. But we're still going to do it because it's so much a custom in this world and dealing with so many people as we are scattered all over the world, the primary thing in all of this is... Do you know what the primary thing in all this is? Honor God. It's honor, respect toward God Almighty. And so we have to learn balance in that and what that means. Because this day, above every day of the week, should be the most important to us. And it is.

And so how we come before God on a physical plane reveals greatly what we think on a spiritual plane in life. And so we should strive to do our best with whatever that is. And that's why I want to try to give more of that balance. As we've been going along I've mentioned this many a time now about what we're striving to do when it's really hot, when it's into the eighties, especially when it gets into the eighties. When it's in the nineties, it's a no-brainer. But when it's in the eighties even and it's just hot outside and you don't feel good when you're coming in and out and getting family together, whatever it might be, driving long distance. So I don't want people to feel that they have to wear that. But you *do* have to strive to do the best you can before God in what you're wearing. Okay?

So, as an example, for men, slacks, pants that might be appropriate, like with a suit or whatever, to strive to have that kind of dress in our life. As a whole, that's what we should strive to do. And it doesn't mean we have to go out and buy something new even, whatever kind of a shirt you might normally wear with a tie you can roll up the sleeves on it, if it's a long sleeved shirt, and wear a nice, still a nice dress shirt and nice slacks. I don't want people to let down in standard when coming before God. That's the point. And so if it's a different kind of shirt, again, we strive to have a quality there that is not just a short-sleeved shirt of some sort, but something that is of good taste and so forth. So we're growing in balance in a lot of this, okay? And that's what I'm talking about. It's about God. That's what it's about. It's about coming before the Great God so we want to maintain a high standard for the Sabbath, but that doesn't mean you have to wear something around your neck that's cutting off the blood flow. But I can tell you, I know how I'm going to be dressed late fall and the winter time, and that's how I've always been dressed; that's with a suit and a tie. Okay? Maybe a little looser, but I'm going to wear a tie.

And so I wanted to get that point across here, again, brethren. Don't let down. Because, you know, I've known some scattered groups out here, I think of back in, what was that, 1997 when we visited some other sites, wasn't it? Because I resigned finally in Pentecost of 1997. We scattered to different Church areas, different Feast sites to see what they were doing. And we visited one that I so regret to this day. Anyway, I don't even want to tell you who it was, it's so bad. But one group that we thought possibly God would be working there - it's the only one I thought that maybe is left out there that God might be working with, and God made it very clear to us, no, He's not. But we went to visit another one, and one thing that really struck me there was that people during the Feast sloppily dressed, just wore anything and everything coming before God. And I thought, well, that tells me a lot right there, not even counting the sermon that I happened to sit through that day. And I felt as bad about sitting through that sermon as I did listening to some of the garbage in Worldwide as soon as things happened and I stayed around for a few weeks just hoping that someone's going to ask why I resigned, why I quit as a minister in Worldwide. And by that time people were so gone that those who were of the same mind, already knew who they were, as a whole, and those who didn't care anymore weren't going to ask a question anyway. They didn't care. They'd already chosen a new way, different way.

So, brethren, that's the thing about our minds. *Is God first?* Because if God's always first in our minds we're going to think in a certain way. In everything we do, first commandment, start with God. Everything else falls into suit then, it'll fall into place. How do we think toward God? How we speak to someone else in the Body reflects, really, how we think about God. And we don't grasp that sometimes on a spiritual plane. That's why I mentioned some of the things I did earlier.

Anyway, let's go on, Proverbs 6. Wow, got a long ways to go. Today was going to be the last of this series. It may not be. **Proverbs 6:6—Go to the ant, you sluggard!** I love this! It's, again, who's it written to? Us. God's people. God's Church. "Go to the ant, you sluggard?" Do we see something in our minds, in our lives that we have to fight against on a spiritual plane? Because that's the way we tend to be on a spiritual plane. We don't "see" things clearly and so it's a matter of something you grow in. Now, we grow in that and we become stronger and stronger through time, but we don't get there overnight. We don't get there in one year, two years, five years, ten years. You keep fighting. You keep fighting twenty, thirty, whatever it is, years until you have arrived, till you're changed.

**Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise...** So God is saying there is something to learn here from going to an ant, something a little creature that God created, that He's saying there's something to be learned from this on a spiritual plane for us, to recognize that there is a tendency of human nature. Do we grasp that's why God said, "Watch!" "Watch!" "Watch! Be on guard!" "Be on guard! Be spiritually alert! Fight the fight! Be in a battle! Be in a war! Recognize you have to put on the whole armor of God!" And these things are said again and again and again. Why? Because this is the way we tend to be on a physical plane as human beings, even

with God's spirit. And so it's something we have to fight against to become stronger and stronger, to realize that this is a danger - to level off, to coast.

I'm going to say it again, because there's a way that God works and certain things weren't appropriate to be given at a certain time, and there's a way that God does that, just as He did through Mr. Armstrong in 1978 to the Church at that time. That if we're without a period of time without that, that there's a tendency (and God let us have that for a period of time so we could learn some lessons), we will start to coast. And I'm just going to tell you that I believe with all my being *everyone* dealt with some coasting. That's our nature. That's the way we are as human beings. To what level? That's going to vary, isn't it? The longer people have been in God's Church the more committed, the more battles they fought the less they did. But still a twinge. I think that probably everyone would acknowledge that. Just as everyone before the Apostasy had to acknowledge something, "I fell asleep. I coasted." That's the way we tend to be as human beings.

Because it's a matter of what God gives to us and when He gives to us. It's not something against anyone or anything as far as a body is concerned. It's just a reality of life so that God could teach us something, just to get a little peak, a little window of Laodicea again. Because a lot of you never experienced it, see? A lot of us who have, we understand that battle. And that degree of any of that that might have happened in our life was far more miniscule, but it happened in a big way across the rest of the Church. And we need to grasp that. You need to be able to acknowledge that.

I've had a lot of ministers write in and acknowledge that. They understood what was happening in their life. They understood, looking back now, what took place and what happened spiritually on a spiritual plane. To what degree, it varied a lot. But I'm here to tell you that there are some who... there are too many who did it so much they're not with us today. I don't know... That's the number one thing I've dealt with since I've been back - suspending or disfellowshipping brethren. Because it takes up more time to do that. And it's not a fun thing to go through. It's not a fun thing to go through. It's hard! And it happened way too much in the Body, what was taking place in people's lives. And some let down so much they're not with us today.

**Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise.** Do we recognise the tendency we have as human beings, that if God doesn't tell us on a regular basis and give us a message on a regular basis, whatever that might be, maybe it's once a year, maybe it's once every six months, maybe it's once every four months. Right now it's been pretty steady for several months. "Cry aloud; show My people their sins." That's what God has been doing. He's been showing us what it is we need to focus upon so we can grow more, so we can go to the best Feast of Tabernacles and have a better Feast than ever before in our lives. That's what He wants to pour out upon us. So, it's a good thing. It's a good thing. God gives us a shaking so we don't continue on in that, because that can't be allowed again. See, He's not going to allow it again. He's not going to allow an Apostasy, or any part of the body in a big way to break away because of someone rising up and teaching something else and a bunch of people following it that we experienced back in the last

seventies, or mid-seventies, or in the eighties, the beginning after a time there things were fairly well on track, and then after Mr. Armstrong died it happening again and again and again in different areas across the country. God's not allowing that again to the body. But where individuals aren't responding, that is being allowed and people are going by the wayside.

I hope we're almost cleaned up. I hope we're almost to a point of being fully cleansed by this Feast of Tabernacles, to where after that it'll be very seldom if it ever happens again. But I am here to tell you it will happen until the end. It's just the way we are as human beings. Some will not watch. Some will not be alert. Some few will not be on guard. Some few will not continue to lift up their voice and cry out to God.

**Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no guide, overseer or ruler, provides it's meat in the summer, *and* gathers it's food in the harvest.** Fully sufficient because God created it that way to do that. Amazing! We're not like that. By nature, we aren't like that. We have to make choices and we have to fight a battle. We have to do something that recognizes what we're like as human beings. We have to recognize our nature and *fight it!* You have to *fight* for this way of life. You have to be able to "see" what your nature is like so that you "see" what it is that you have to fight and fight against. And God shows us those things - some times more powerfully than at others.

**How long will you sleep, O sluggard?** It's something you don't want in your life. But I'm telling you right now there are people still asleep in God's church. There are still people who are sleeping on a spiritual plane in God's church. See? We're not fully cleansed yet. God's giving an opportunity to repent of that. And you can't get by with it now. God's bringing it to the surface. I have never seen a time like this where God is bringing things to the surface in a greater way, in a faster way than ever before. And we're going to be a cleansed body, brethren, what remains, and a more zealous body, and one that's stirred up in spirit more. And if we're coasting along, not going to be good news.

So it says here, **How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep?** You know, when someone starts to go to sleep they don't even know it, as a whole. What's it like when you start drifting off to sleep? What happens in the mind? After a while, you're there. And unless someone comes along, or morning, or whatever it is, or something else, you're going to stay asleep. And when it's spiritual only God can awaken you out of that. That's where we are in time. That's why God has to awaken 63,000, or at least give them the opportunity, something that God has to do by His spirit, because that's a spiritual thing.

**Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep...** Just a little while, just a little bit more, just like starting to drift off to sleep at night. All of a sudden after a while... Think of the process. Think what it's like when you start to drift off. A little slumber. Same sort of thing here. You might be in a chair, same sort of thing, all of a sudden you're getting

a little sleeper and close your eyes and the sound of the TV may still be on, and in a little bit you're out. This is something spiritual, "a little sleep."

**Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep – so shall your poverty come as you who is travelling, and your want like an armed man.** It's giving an example here that when poverty or scarcity follows a robbery, basically, is what it's talking about. Something can happen quickly in one's life, especially back in those times, and someone travelling to another area and someone comes along, a band of bandits and takes everything that they have because they're moving from one area to another, or whatever it might be. That's an example that's given here. Someone comes along that's armed and takes away what you have, whether it be in your household or whoever steals your possessions. So it happens suddenly, quickly, too late. Too late to do anything about it. That's what it's saying here. Don't allow sleep and sluggishness... Tell you what, I'd be afraid right now, and it's a healthy fear, to realize that we can drift off spiritually. See, as a body, as individuals in our lives. Now, I know some who weren't, cause I know already who they are. I mean, in the sense of not individually, but in the sense of those who are going to be a part of the 144,000 yet. It's not going to happen to them. They've already gone through it. They've already been tried and tested.

But not everyone who might think they're part of the 144,000 is a part of the 144,000. And you have to recognize that there are different callings, different things that God gives us in time and to realize the opportunity we still have. What an awesome thing to be able to live on into a Millennium and die, yes, but to be resurrected at the end of a thousand years. Awesome! Awesome, the millions, multiple millions that are going to be resurrected into God's Family at that time to be a part of that? That's an awesome thing!

So, anyway, brethren. Cry out to God for help that you not drift, that you not let down spiritually in your life. Be fearful of that. Be fearful of that. That's a thing to fear because it's a natural human tendency and it's happened a lot in God's Church to God's people. And, candidly, it's happened a lot in PKG. Far more have gone by the wayside than those who remain. Far, far, *far more* have gone by the wayside than have remained in the fight. It is a fight! It is a battle! And it's up to us to keep up at that fight and that battle.

We're going to stop there. May be a *Part 4*, I don't know. But we're going to stop there at this point, maybe even with the series. But we have things we have to do in our life and this is what this is all about. Once God begins to reveal things to us about being responsible for our choices, understanding we can blame nobody else for our thoughts, for our responses, for how we think in life. No one makes us angry. No one makes us sad. *No one* but ourselves. And that's an example of everything else in our life. We are fully responsible for how we think and how we respond to life around us. And if we cry out to God as we should, the taking action, that's where our strength is, brethren. Rely on that strength. Don't rely on self.