

We live in an age of exceeding great selfishness. That's one thing I marvel at God showing us more and more within the Church as well, helping us to understand this spirit we have, this mind that we have as human beings. We are exceedingly selfish and yet the world doesn't grasp that about themselves. They don't understand that so many of their problems, so many of the wrong choices they make have to do with a selfish spirit that we have, "a lust of the flesh, a lust of the eyes, and a pride of life" that human beings simply have. That's the way we are created and for a great purpose. God has made us this way for a great purpose. There is so much we have to learn about our own nature and to make the ultimate choice. It's either God's way or another way. There are thousands and thousands and millions of different ways out there that people can follow, different ideas that mankind has come up with through time.

But we're blessed to understand this about selfishness and understanding how evil it really is. Selfness is evil. It's not God's way of life. God's way of life, I think about Mr. Armstrong and what he taught. He taught about the way of give, that God's spirit is an outward going spirit and giving as far as a love and a concern for other people or others. Human nature is not that way. It's about self first and everything that we do as a whole in life is based on that. That's our motivation. But it's hard for people even, obviously when God begins to show those things to us, that that's the way we are. That's our mind and that's our battle. That's what we have to fight against.

So we, again, live in an age of exceedingly great selfishness, and the more we see that in ourselves, the more we see that in mankind, the more understanding and truth that God gives to us, the more we see it in the world and it becomes more difficult to take even.

I had some different conversations here beforehand and one in particular we were talking about that very thing, about selfishness and what we can see as human beings in others. My thought of that whenever I think about that is consider God. He's looked upon us for 6,000 years, human beings, totally motivated by selfishness, and understands fully why we make the kinds of choices we do, shows us His way of life and man still rejects it unless they're being specifically called and worked with.

So I think of the incredible patience and mercy and grace because of a greater purpose that He has of why He created us in the first place. The more you really come to understand and see that the more thankful you become, the more understanding you become of God. That has a great deal to do with this particular sermon series we're getting ready to go into now.

Literally, the greater the technology that man has been given the greater that selfishness becomes. It's just the way we are. We live in a world where people live as though the world revolves around them. The greater the technology the more that becomes a reality. I made comment about that last Sabbath.

Increasingly people act in a manner that reflects great self-centeredness. That's why I talked about these little selfie sticks. Now, it's not wrong to take a picture of self. It's not wrong to have a stick like that on your cell phone. But some people, it becomes quite obvious, they're so in love with themselves and don't get in their way! When they're taking selfies don't get in their way because it's about them. It's about them and who are you to bother them? So they want a clear path of some scene in the background or whatever and they expect everything to stop because their world is important to them. Incredible, the way people think.

So, in this environment that we live in, as far as self-centeredness and as far as selfishness is concerned, people can easily tend to become more expectant of others. In other words, our expectations of others, our demands of others and how they should act toward us becomes greater and greater. So with all this technology and everything that's going on and we're so immersed in such a spirit it's different than it was 200 years ago. It truly is much different. Mankind was still selfish, but with all that we've been given, with all that we have as far as technology and ease of life the more self-centered we become because we're so selfish we just want more and more and more. Mankind isn't satisfied; he just never becomes satisfied in the way of get because that way doesn't satisfy. On the contrary, it's like a cancer. That's why people live in such ways that they do, because it's never satiated, it's never fulfilled. So there's always this desire for more. What a sick, sick world we live in!

So people begin to be more demanding of others, they begin to feel that their owed more by others, in other words, living selfishness and ingratitude more and more and more toward others. People become less grateful for things they receive, for what people do for them in actuality and they never consider those things, as a whole.

It has been stated that one of the greatest of sins is that of ingratitude, where people do not tend to be thankful in life. That's what selfishness tends to stir up more and more and more in mankind, that kind of spirit of ingratitude. Such thinking in attitudes tends to actually make people unhappy. Isn't that amazing? People want to be happy. They want to be fulfilled. There is this hunger and thirst for that and yet, again, it doesn't fulfill. It's like a black hole because it's the opposite of God's way of life, of what really gives happiness. So people don't understand that, that living your own way leads to greater unhappiness not to happiness. So they're trying to receive something in a wrong way and they'll never receive it. It's incredible! Thank God that He lets us understand this and know this, of where true happiness and fulfillment and joy of life come from. It comes from living His way, but mankind doesn't experience that in the same way.

That doesn't mean people can't be happy about certain things and experience certain type of happiness, but if they continue in that in time it becomes unfulfilling. It becomes unfulfilling, even in relationships, even in marriages in this world. That's what we see in this world because of people the way they are, the way they think. So such thinking and attitudes, again, tend to actually make people unhappy, and such a mindset tends to rob people of true happiness. What a sad, pathetic state.

Today we're going to focus on a new series on this very subject matter and it's entitled *A Mind of Thankfulness*.

There are a few notable quotes on this subject that will be mentioned in this particular series and of course a lot said in scripture about this in different terms, in different ways, and we're going to look at a lot of those, but we're going to begin with one of those particular quotes right now.

“It has been stated that the sin of ingratitude is more serious than the sin of revenge. With revenge one returns evil for evil, but with ingratitude, one returns evil for good” (W. Eugene Hansen).

Now, there's a lot really said in that. There truly is. There's a lot said in that, this attitude of unthankfulness that “it returns evil for good” because not to recognize or to have a mind that is thankful and grateful, it is evil. It's returning evil for that which is good that has been given to them.

So we're going to begin by looking at a Psalm, Psalm 136 today. Though there are so many we could turn to and there is so much said in the Psalms about some of this we're beginning here because it can begin to teach us more fully, more deeply about how evil ingratitude really is.

Psalm 136:1. Now, sometimes it's good, actually, when one begins to ask, “Why is this written this way? Why was this inspired by God's spirit to be given to us to repeat and focus on certain things in a particular manner here?” A Psalm is almost, well, a song, a Psalm; it has to do really with a deeper understanding of what Psalms are about really, because it has to do with this gratitude, in many ways this joy that's expressed toward God, an ability to see certain things because that's where it leads to. It leads to deeper understanding of God's way of life and how He wants us to live and our understanding of some of that. So we've had many, obviously, Psalms when we talk about the songs. Those who have been around for a long time, who were once a part of Worldwide understand that deeply.

Right now as I think about the terms, “O, give thanks and praise the Eternal,” you know, a Psalm can come to your mind. It's probably there right now for those of you who were around for a long, long time through the years. You can't help it, the song, the melody, it just comes right back in your mind, in your thinking. At the Feast of Tabernacles is the only time really that we sing, as it were. We used to sing every Sabbath, but because of the size we are and so forth that's been altered. But still at the Feast of Tabernacles we strive to still do that, to rejoice before God, to give God thanks. It doesn't just have to be in a song; it can be in a Psalm like this. Those Psalms make their way easy for being composed with music, put together with music in a melody and so forth and it's ideal because it's the same spirit. It's this attitude. It's this mind that comes out of our inner being, of something that we're able to see and respond to God about in a way that brings out joy in the thinking, in the mind.

O give thanks unto the Eternal; for He is good. Now, this is something that's repeated throughout the Psalms and it's repeated in the Psalms, this Psalm, and there are times when it just continues to repeat and repeat and repeat and it's a focus, it's a way of thinking that God wants us to consider, why it's being said this way, what is being communicated to us, why is this so important. **O give thanks unto the Eternal; for He is good.** That's the way of God. That's the mind of God toward all of His creation. It's always been good, never evil. God has always, and He always gives to us good. He's given mankind everything that's good but man doesn't recognize that and doesn't even honor God, doesn't respond to God in gratitude of any kind, as a whole. Instead, as it talks about in the book of Romans, they'd rather worship something made out of stone or carved on a piece of wood.

You think of the different gods and so forth that people bow down to and worship and fat Buddha's and all the crazy things throughout history, and animals that people would rather worship and say that this is their God.

I think of when God took the Israelites out of Egypt. What did they make as soon as they got out? Well, they made a golden calf, "This is our God that took us out of Egypt." You think, "No, it isn't!" How stupid, how sick can you be to make something like this to represent the Great God Almighty who led you out of Egypt? Well, I don't want to get ahead of the game here. This is part of what we're going to go through and read anyway because they didn't recognize the good that came from God; they didn't recognize Him for being good.

That's why Jesus Christ said, "There is none good but one, God Almighty." Mankind isn't good because we're selfish and if we really understand selfishness we understand that what comes out of that kind of a heart is evil. Selfishness is evil! "Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life" is the exact opposite of God's way of life. It isn't giving at all.

So mankind will give, but he does it selfishly, for how it benefits self, something in return, something you get out of it. God's love isn't like that, not at all. So we're called into God's Church and we begin to experience, we begin to learn that is the way we're to be, and we have to fight against that carnal mind, the selfish mind, and work to see the difference, strive to see the difference.

...for His mercy is forever, and if you understand that, "Give thanks to the Eternal for He is good; and His mercy is forever," with mankind. Look how long, think about that 6,000 years and the mercy that God has shown mankind - exceedingly merciful because God has a greater plan in His time when people will be drawn to be able to understand and see God, if they'll receive it, but even then we understand there are going to be many who won't. Just as in the angelic realm, a third finally ended up rejecting God, one in particular who led the other third away from God - Lucifer, who became known as Satan, the devil.

So this Psalm begins with an instruction, again, to give thanks to the Eternal, and it adds this important truth that the Eternal is good and we're to think about that. When things are given in

scripture like this we're to think about it. There are things here in the Psalms at times that use the word "Selah" that means to, in essence, "think about this; consider this." Stop and think about what is being said. Don't just say it. Don't just repeat it, think about it. What does it mean? What does it mean to you? What does it mean to God?

So again, we're to focus on that, to think about it. It's a focus of the Psalms and it gives, goes on to reveal this, again, evil of ingratitude that exists in human thinking. That's what is a part of what is going to be shown here in this Psalm.

Psalm 136. I want to read this again here, what it says in this particular quote that I gave here a moment ago. "It has been stated that the sin of ingratitude is more serious than the sin of revenge. With revenge one returns evil for evil," but think about selfishness and think about what we do as human beings, we return evil for good. To not be thankful, to forget to give thanks to God is evil. It truly is. To forget God is evil. It truly is. Look what mankind has done - pushed God away from him, forget about God because we tend to focus on other things. That's what this Psalm is going through and teaching.

Verse 2—O give thanks unto the God of gods, of Elohim because it's about Elohim. He is the first. He is the only. Well, there's another now, we understand that. God has brought another into that family. That's been God's purpose. His purpose for creating human beings is to create a family, to create one, and it takes time. It's going to take 7,100 years to fully create what God's purpose is in bringing mankind through a process and those who can receive it, those who will receive it, those who embrace it that will be able to become a part of His family, the God Family, Elohim. That's why when people read things in the Old Testament they don't grasp what God is saying when He talks about this thing of Elohim. It's about a family. It's a word that is a family word. That's why so many people don't understand it. There's a plurality there that they don't grasp. That's why they quote it here as gods, because the word is like the word family. It means there can be many in a family and that's the point of it all. That's the point of Elohim; that that's what God is creating.

So scripture makes it very clear that Jesus Christ has entered into that family. He's the first to enter into that family from among human beings, resurrected from the dead, and that many are to come. Many more are to follow as we went through in the last series and discussed somewhat.

So going on here again it says, **O give thanks unto the God of gods; for His mercy is forever**. He is above all Elohim, above all that mankind tries to make as being gods that are no gods in the first place out there. **O give thanks unto the Lord of Lords: for His mercy endures forever**. The Lord of all Lords - in other words, God is over all. Of all who become Elohim, God will be over all. Of all that's referred to as being lords, God is the Lord of all. He's over all.

To Him who alone does great wonders: for His mercy is forever. God does great wonders. Now, mankind thinks he does great wonders. Well, let's pick one that he built early on that mankind still is grappling with and trying to understand how it was fully constructed - the pyramids and

those that are in a row like they are. They don't fully grasp how they were able to do that without the kind of technology we have today. A lot of things that mankind has done at different stages of mankind, of humanity, have been lost and there are some things that they don't fully grasp and comprehend so they try to engineer or understand through engineering, primitive engineering, how that could have taken place, how it could be so perfect in that regard, and they have a hard time.

To Him who by wisdom made the heavens. So we make great things. I think of Dubai. Now, awesome buildings! I've watched some of that on the Discovery Channel, how they built islands, how they took ships and took up small rock and brought it back and piled it and made hundreds, and if I'm not mistaken, even thousands of miles of shoreline that didn't exist before. I don't know how many of you've seen the huge pictures that even can be seen from space, of course, anything can be seen from space anymore. But huge areas out there of palms and then the huge circle that goes around it. All the things that that it did in creating shifts of currents of water and all the things they've had to deal with. Then some of the buildings they've built. Some of the technology, one in particular, that was being constructed that they had to engineer it as they went along because nothing like that had ever been done in a circular pattern with some of the steel and what they were doing with it. They had to engineer that as they went along. Awesome!

So man becomes filled with haughtiness and pride about what he can build and what he can do and so someone builds a skyscraper somewhere and someone else wants to come along and build a bigger one, because ours has to be the biggest. So they even talk about in the southern hemisphere, which skyscraper is the biggest, the tallest. Who has made the grandest of them all? Ever who does that, they're obviously better. They're obviously better people and we're a better nation because of what we can build and etcetera, etcetera. But does any of the credit and honor go to God for what He's given us the ability to do in this time of life for human beings? No! We take it to ourselves. We look at what our hands have created, what our hands have built and made and haven't given God the credit to give us the kind of minds that have been able to come to this stage of life, the kinds of minds that can work with technology the way we do today.

That's why I marvel about technology itself. 5,800 years mankind was kind of slow in that regard, didn't understand a lot like we do today, and doesn't give God the credit that He has given us the technology we have. He's given us the minds that through time have worked with things of mathematics and science and understanding of certain things to get to a point in time now where we can understand things in a way that people couldn't 200 years ago and before.

5,800 years, things that mankind has never been able to see that we can see and have been growing in that in the past 200, things of nuclear power, incredible power that's being unleashed. So much more that they understand can come yet if they can unlock, and they're working on those things. But did God receive any credit? Does anyone recognize that it was God who gave us the ability to do these things because we live in a particular time that now is the time after nearly 5,800 years that we had to come to the end of an age where mankind could destroy

himself? Because given the power and the might God knew what man would do with the technology so He withheld it from mankind.

For 5,800 years there was technology that mankind had, and then He began to work with different individuals to put it into their minds, people who weren't that good in school, like Einstein. He wasn't that good. Then all of a sudden he has a mind that is able to do things and its like, "Where did that come from?" Does anybody give God the credit, the honor, the glory that such thinking and such a mind didn't come from human beings? They didn't come up with it all themselves. We didn't devise all this stuff all of a sudden at the end of time all by ourselves. God gave it to us.

But people don't give honor to God. They say, "Oh, you're just loonier than loony can be. No, we've evolved to that greatness and we're getting ready to evolve into greater greatness because we are great! Who is God? Where did He come from? Explain that to me." So people try to use human reason for things that they can't grasp and comprehend in the first place, that God doesn't even give the ability, but we'd still rather think we crawled out of slime and have evolved into what we are now. I don't want to get off on evolution but I'll tell you what, that is one of the dumbest, dumbest, dumbest ideas that human beings have ever come up with. Yet great, supposedly great intellectuals believe in evolution.

You think, "How can you be so dumb? It defies all laws of science, what you have concocted. There is no science in that!" A big bang? Well, where did all that stuff come from? By what laws? Where did it all come to even have a big bang? By what laws could there be a bang and how could this just keep going? So it started here and it's just still going out there into the universe. That's their proof.

There is nothing about God starting in a place and everything moving in the way God designed it to move so perfectly in such order. Mathematics itself ought to show people that it didn't just happen. Because true mathematics and everything that goes with it is awesome and it always comes out, it always works out. You can follow certain things and you'll always get the same answer because there is such order in the universe.

"But it just happened because it was this bang. It just came into such awesome order, these things that took a million years to evolve, these different creatures out here, these different animals." I said I didn't want to get off on evolution, but I can't help it. You think, look at any creature out there and what, indeed, came first, the chicken or the egg? Well, if the chicken came first, where did it come from? It evolved from something else, but it took millions of years. How did it develop the ability to have more chickens or to even lay an egg? How did these things happen?

But people would rather believe in such stupidity than a Great God Almighty designed and created everything that exists.

To Him who alone does great wonders. Everything that is great, it comes from God first because our abilities, our minds, our ability to think and reason is something that God placed in us. There is a spirit essence in the mind that God revealed to Mr. Armstrong to deeply understand out of scripture and other places as well, to come to understand something that's so awesome, that there is this spirit essence, not an immortal soul that people believe in, but an essence that gives us the ability to think and reason. Then all the things that are out here that God's created.

We saw a goose today on the side of a building out here at the mall walking along the top and the edge. It's like he's surveying the area, keeping guard, and he's just walking right along the edge of the two stories, you know, two story building. You think, "What an awesome creation!" But everything that goose did or does is because of what we call it instinct. It's been programmed. It doesn't act like a cow. It doesn't act like a cat. It acts like a goose, like a goose was created to act.

So it is with different things in creation in animals and so forth, they act a certain way. Then human beings are given a mind above and beyond that. Incredible!

To Him who alone who does great wonders; for His mercy is forever. To Him who by wisdom made the heavens; for His mercy is forever. You talk to people about that one. They can't grasp it. What do you mean? He made the heavens whether you talk about the heavens around the earth or the heavens that we see with all the stars, that we see so much more than man ever grasped that was out there. Like when it talks about King David, when he says he looks in the sky and considers the stars and who he is, and what he was able to see, if he could count, if he could actually plot it out, because it keeps moving. The earth keeps moving and that's changing, so how do you plot out the 2,000 and some stars he might be able to actually count by visible naked eye?

And look where we are today? The ability to look 13.5 billion light years into space because of technology that they never understood, that people for thousands of years could never grasp and comprehend how much was really out there. The farther we go the more we discover. Oh, there's actually more beyond the 13.5 billion light years away! Where does it end?

It reminds me of when man started going around the earth—"Where do we fall off? Where does it end?"—because they didn't understand. "We're going to fall off the edge of the earth!"

So God put it out there. I think of how awesome it is that we understand why. I think of how awesome it is that the first thing God created was a spirit realm in which the angelic realm could live in. Those beings, the first of beings that He created were angels and they lived in a spirit realm. There was no physical universe. It didn't exist. Now, I can't comprehend that. Your mind can't comprehend that. You think, "Oh, it had to always be out there." It just goes to show even that much more how great, how Almighty God is, how puny we are. What an awesome thing His plan is, is to bring us into His family. Yet He created a physical universe and when He began that process it says the angels shouted for joy. All of a sudden, you know, God began to create and He brought the angelic realm into being a part of that creation to work with Him in the things that

were made out there. We don't know exactly how or what, but they worked and they worked together. We don't know how long. Billions? Billions, trillions of years? We have no idea, if you want to talk about earth years.

We have no concept of time like that, but it just shows how puny we really are and then how haughty we are as human beings because we think we're so great. It's God that's great if we could really see it.

So, "To Him by wisdom made the heavens." That's why I think of the conversation God had with Job, "Where were you, Job, when I set the boundaries," in essence, "of the oceans. Where were you? Where were you, Job?" Job thought he was great. And he was, he was a very blessed man on the earth. He was very wealthy and he had great possessions. God had given him great possessions, great ability, and he took it to himself, thought he was a very righteous man. He was self-righteous until God brought Him to repentance. Finally he went through a process of repentance where toward the end of the book it finally talked about and says, "Now my eye sees you. I'm beginning to understand." It's how small we are and how Great God is. We're nothing. God made everything that's here and if we really grasp it, not only this earth that we're blessed to have, but life day by day that we're able to have while we have it, whatever that length of time is.

Just like this country. He gave it to Manasseh, one of the tribes of Israel, for a purpose, for the end-time. He said it'd be the wealthiest nation the earth has ever known, the greatest of nations the earth has ever known. It would have the gates, the sea gates and the different kind of gates, in essence, that gave power and might to it more than any nation had ever been given, and slowly but surely we've been losing some of those around the world because it's part of prophecy and God's purpose, to let man have something like this, to show what man will do when he's given this much. We are exceeding selfish and we take it to self and it comes to a point in time then where God intervenes to correct it, to show that we can't govern ourselves.

Supposedly we're the greatest nation the world has even known and we can't govern ourselves no more than every government, any government that's ever existed of mankind. Every one has disappeared. Every one has gone by the wayside and power and money and the things that corrupt the human mind in time bring destruction. Just like what's taking place now and the eating of each other and the hatred that exists out there, the reality that man can't effectively govern. Only God can govern and God's way of life can govern because everything else is selfish, everything else wants its own power.

Today things are out of control. Who has power over certain parts of government? Well, there are certain individuals that think that they do and they're not answerable to even the government that's supposed to be over them because it's so deeply embedded in their minds and they've had it for so long.

I marvel that God's bringing these things to the surface so that people will be able to come to see it more clearly when their minds are opened up and to say, "I'm beginning to get it now. We can't govern ourselves." The League of Nations didn't save us in the world. The United Nations, what is that? It's really united isn't it? Special interests, special little deals that people make and who really gets along and what's really being accomplished? Then you learn in time all the corruption that's taken place. There's been a lot of corruption within the system of the United Nations because governments have corruption because it's based on human beings and human beings that are selfish.

Only God's government is righteous. Only God's government is just, only God's. Thank God He's bringing it to this earth with Jesus Christ as King of kings. That's why God has to take control. Because in this age, whether it happen a year from now, less than a year from now—obviously it has to begin to happen less than that when it begins—but to think what mankind can do to himself with nuclear weapons? That's what God says. In essence, we would annihilate ourselves. We would destroy ourselves if He didn't intervene. Now we have the ability to do it.

Mr. Armstrong understood that early on - not long after the first two bombs were dropped on Japan - that there is power here now whereby man, if it grows and becomes greater and greater, we will be able to destroy ourselves. So I remember coming into the Church in 1969 and learning how many thousands of nuclear weapons the United States has, how many thousands of nuclear weapons Russia has and realizing just those two countries alone, they don't need thousands to destroy all life off the face of the earth. They don't need thousands of nuclear weapons to destroy every living thing on the earth.

So man has been living under that kind of thought, that kind of understanding of such potential for a long time now. Now we're getting closer and closer. It's just that we happen to live in that age when it's going to become a reality. Thank God He's going to intervene and just stop it; and He says He's going to destroy those who are destroying the earth—thank God—and then usher in His Kingdom, usher in His government to rule over mankind.

So, To Him who by wisdom made the heavens; for His mercy is forever. To Him (verse 6) who stretched out the earth above the waters: for His mercy is forever, all for a purpose for human life and other life to live that we can enjoy and take in; and not just that but with beauty, the color, everything that exists, the variety. Do we as human beings tend to think on those things and to thank God for such things? I mean, we should on a day by day basis. We see things, we are able to drink them in, but after a while it just becomes our norm and we can tend to become more selfish and more inward and not appreciate, not be thankful.

To Him who made great lights: for His mercy is forever. The sun to rule by day... It's amazing what God has made, the ability for seasons, the ability for life to disappear in vegetation and trees and then we're living right now at a time where it's coming back. Sometimes that could be good and that could be bad depending on your body, your system and the allergies you can get. Just like today out there, I had pressure in my head, because I could feel it because I have

sensitivities in some of those things, certain things that are pollens that are out there. Some people have them really bad. So we have different abilities, because of the breakdown of life, the way we are as human beings, just to tolerate those and others can't.

To Him who made great lights; for His mercy is forever. The sun to rule by day; for His mercy is forever; the moon and the stars to rule by night: for His mercy is forever. So do we ever think about things like that and just thank God for it, what He gave to us to enjoy, because it gives enjoyment of life? It gives us the ability to enjoy something like a changing season. The leaves come, they fall, you see something, you live through something. If you enjoy the cold more power to you. The older you get the less I enjoy it. But I used to enjoy it when I was here in Erie. We could go skiing out here at Peek'N Peak over in New York, and learned how to ski, basically, there. So if you have that you can enjoy it. If you're here and you don't enjoy it, well, you better move south, I don't know.

But people like different seasons. I like the variety. I think how it'd be kind of bland, or it wouldn't be bland, but it wouldn't be as fulfilling as it is by being able to experience different things. It even helps you to appreciate things of life in a different way. The migration of life, the change in life; what an awesome thing that God has given us to experience. I like the differences. That's the way it should be. He's given us these things to drink in and to enjoy. But who thanks God for it?

...the moon and the stars to rule by night; for His mercy is forever.

Verse 10. Now, see, this is written much, much later, but it's looking back to a particular time that there is so much that can be learned. You know, when God first began to reveal things, just like Passover - there was no understanding of Passover before the Israelites were taken out of Egypt. That was the beginning of God revealing through a progressive revelation in time. Noah didn't know about it. Abel sure didn't know about it, but later on Noah didn't know about it. Abraham didn't know about Passover. On and on it goes. Finally it was God's time to reveal things about a Passover to mankind and something to be observed year by year that people were to do to focus more on a Passover. Then it wasn't until Jesus Christ came that God began to reveal what that meaning was. They didn't understand what that was before that! They didn't understand year by year, "Why are we keeping the Passover?" "What does this mean?" "Who is it about?" That thought didn't come into their mind, "Who is it about," because God didn't reveal it yet.

So even as Christ talked to the disciples before he died, they didn't grasp these things until later, until afterward. Then they began to understand he was our Passover. He had to spill his blood to the earth for the forgiveness of sins. Awesome!

So God has things He progressively reveals through time, just as we understand deeply so in the Church today because He's revealed more just before the return of Jesus Christ for great purpose - because that's the time we're in.

To Him who struck down Egypt in their firstborn. It was when the blood was put on the doorposts God began to teach something here. He's teaching something here in these Psalms, and showing here, reminding everyone here, reminding Israel, those that were able to receive this first, and Judah, that in this particular case here that God was the one who struck down Egypt in their firstborn because they didn't have the blood on the doorposts and the Israelites were spared. All the animals of the Israelites were spared but in Egypt it wasn't so. Everything that was firstborn died that night. That was the thing that finally brought Pharaoh to a point, when his own son died, his own firstborn died that he said to Moses, in essence, he sent message to Moses, "Get out and take your people with you! Take all this stuff with you that you've been telling me about. Get out!"

Then after a little while beginning to realize how that was going to change Egypt by several hundreds of thousands, perhaps a few million, as it's been speculated between two and six million people actually left Egypt at that time, what that was going to do to their economy and to their lifestyle. Because basically that was their "garage door opener," everything that gave ease of life, because of the slaves, because of the Israelite slaves. So the things that gave them ease of life that they were going to get rid of. I say "garage door," because we have such ease of life, microwaves, everything else, you know, that we have today. Well, for them, for Egypt, everything that made their lives easier came from the Israelites. They did the work. They did all the work.

To Him who struck down Egypt in their firstborn; for His mercy is forever: and brought out Israel from among them: for His mercy is forever: with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, in other words, with great power. That's what this expression is about, **with a strong hand, and a stretched out arm.** God reached down, that's the example that's being given here, and did this to bring out so many people out of slavery to teach more lessons. That you can give mankind and work with a nation of people and they still reject you.

So it didn't matter who it was that God was going to work with, their example is one that isn't good. Basically, that mankind even when given the opportunity and having God's intervention in their life over and over and over again will still reject Him. Awesome, the human mind, because it's so selfish and so filled with deep ingratitude. It only becomes expectant and wanting more. "Why didn't God do this? Why did God do that? Why? Why? Why?" Sometimes people in God's Church can be that way. "Why, after all these years, after all I've done, after all I've given to God's Church, to God, why is this happening?" I think, "Well, shame on you. Shame on you for thinking that way." That's a selfish mind. It's the mind of get. You want more from God and you don't understand what you've received and to give God thanks for that? You just simply were obeying what you were supposed to obey anyway. That's what we do. It's a matter of obedience.

Who are we? You think we can give God anything that God needs? No, it's God that gives. It's God that gives and gives and gives. All His giving is good and ours is, can be if it's in unity with that. The reason I mention some of those things is because I've seen this ever since I've been in God's Church, where that mentality has existed even within the Church.

I'll make a comment: Sometimes in times past, not so much today because the Church has grown so much, but it can still exist and we have to be on guard against it. I think of this area. I think of individuals who were given automobiles by God's church in order, because of their family situation, so they could drive back and forth from work, so they could help to begin to provide for their family because they didn't have any other means of having some kind of assistance to get them past a certain point. God generously helped them through this process, what we had in third tithe. As time went along more and more government things began to come along where people could get the kind of assistance that third tithe was all about because it was a government thing in the sense of what the government should do, and if it wasn't doing it then at that time God gave the Church the means to do that for those in the Church.

Today it isn't that way and we don't have that system anymore as Mr. Armstrong addressed it. Because it wasn't a matter of the church, it wasn't a matter of our going to the Feast of Tabernacles, it wasn't a matter of providing for the ministry and the work of God's Church, it was a separate thing. Now because so many governments began to do what they should have been doing all long, well, the church blessed them. But the point of talking about that is I'm hard pressed to think of anyone, to have something come to mind where people had gratitude. So often they became more selfish and more demanding and more expectant. I think, "Don't you understand the mercy and the grace of God?"

Then I think of when we were transferred to Toledo, and even after the Apostasy, and help that individuals were given, different ones, and how they turned against God's Church and how they turned against the truth and how they turned against God's ministry. I'm not talking about a few; I'm talking about a lot. I think, "How can a human mind do that especially in this day and age, in this time, in those times that we've been through in times past?" The support and the help that different ones received when they had emergency or whatever it might be in their life, a need, and they didn't have a means of receiving it. Sad. It just shows the human mind and what we're like and what we have to be on guard against.

To Him who struck down Egypt. To Him that brought out Israel from among them; for His mercy is forever. And with a strong hand and stretched out arm... And to Him who divided the Red Sea into parts: Awesome! So He's reminding a long time later here what happened so far back because this was written long afterwards and so it was reminding the Israelites of a history that they were familiar with, about coming out of Egypt, and God's reminding them here now, "Look," "Look about your God, your God who is good." O give thanks unto the God of gods for His mercy is forever. That's the thrust of Psalm 136. It is about giving thanks to God and remembering to thank God for He is good. That's what this is all about. That's why these verses are here. It's to learn from that and to understand why God is showing these things about Israel because they didn't remember. They didn't acknowledge that God was good, not at all. They forgot those things.

They didn't give thanks to God for what He gave them. He parted the Red Sea. Let's go on and read some more here because God's just driving home a point here to the Israelites. **To Him who divided the Red Sea into parts; for His mercy is forever: and made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for His mercy is forever.** I think of when it talks about God taking them by the way of the Red Sea. It's like the word "highway" today for us. We take a certain highway, I90, whatever it is, 71, 75. It's like taking a certain highway to go somewhere and so it's using that expression that God took them by the way of the Red Sea.

Well, there was no way of the Red Sea. It didn't exist. There wasn't a place that people knew of in Egypt that you could go through the Red Sea to get to the other side. On the contrary, there was the way of the Philistines that was well known, way above, and a certain travel route that people could follow. So that was the way or highway that people would follow, but not the way of the Red Sea. God made the way possible. Something that was impossible, God made possible. He dried the ground immediately as soon as the waters were passed and they were able to travel through.

It was not so good with the rest of them because it goes on to make this point here: **He made Israel to pass through the midst of it.** He dried up the earth so they could pass through.

Verse 15...but overthrew... the word means in the Hebrew here "to shake off," to shake them off finally, to shake off the Egyptian rule, to shake off that power and move forward and become a different and a separate people, a separate nation. **But God,** in essence here, **then overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,** not like the show *The Ten Commandments* where Pharaoh is on one side and still living after all this happens and he sees his army destroyed. No, no, no, no, no, no. He was in there with the rest of them and it talks about their chariots getting bogged down in the mud all of a sudden and they couldn't get through. Then God slammed the waters on them and destroyed them all, shook them off. That's the expression that God uses here: "For He shook them off." **He overthrew, shook off Pharaoh and His host in the Red sea; for His mercy is forever.**

To Him who led His people through the wilderness: for His mercy is forever. You talk about mercy. Forty years was God grieved with them, had patience with them for a greater purpose. So much of it was for teaching later on, things that could be learned later on. Forty. Forty years. The number forty, the importance in that alone and what God uses, different things that we grasp and understand. Incredible!

So again here, Israel failed to hold on to God's goodness. God gave them goodness over and over again, things that He provided for them. They complained because they didn't have food. They didn't like the manna. "Oh, this manna. We're so sick of manna!" They had their own cookbooks, *101 Ways to Cook Manna*, and it was like "Give us something else. We remember the flesh pots. We remember the other things we had in Egypt and if we just had that again, how nice it was back in Egypt."

You can shake your head at that right now, but many more people who have been in God's Church have done the exact same thing on a much worse plane because they've gone right back to what God called them out of. They came to a point in time where they lost all sense of gratitude and thankfulness for everything God had given to them, for the truth and the mind that God gave to the ability to comprehend and understand. Look at how many people used to be in this region, this area alone in Worldwide. What did we have on the holy days with the two areas combined? 325? 345? Yeah, if my memory serves me right somewhere in that area. Incredible! Where are they? What happened to them?

Well, the Apostasy came and they gave it all up because they lost sight of what God had given to them. They didn't hold on. They didn't grasp. They didn't comprehend. They didn't appreciate what God had given to them and they didn't try to hold on to even some of the other organizations who at least kept the Sabbath and the holy days as a whole. They didn't strive to do those things, even the most basic of things you would think that someone might do on a physical plane. At least a third of the church tried to have some semblance of the past, but a third went right back into traditional Christianity.

You think, how can you go back to Easter and Christmas when God let you know where it came from? How can you ignore Passover? How can you ignore holy days and their meaning? How can you ignore the seventh day Sabbath and what it teaches and what God gave? But it happens. It can happen to the human mind. It goes back so much to this, of not remembering the good from God, because people forget the calling that God gave to them and how much He gave to them, when you start losing gratitude and thankfulness for the most basic and the beginnings of everything, let alone everything that's taken place since your calling? Because that's what happens, people forget.

Israel forgot how they came to be a nation. Israel forgot how they came into the promised land. Israel, it left their minds in time and so God reminded them: Who brought you out of Egypt? Who shook off Pharaoh? Who worked with you for forty years in the wilderness? Who took care of you and provided for you for those forty years in the wilderness? The Great, the Almighty God. Then He brought you through with more miracles when He destroyed Jericho and they marched around the city for seven days and God brought the walls down. You didn't have to do a thing in bringing those walls down, the barriers. Then your forces could go in and finish off what was existing, what was remaining. God Almighty did it.

So each one of us has a story. Each one of us has something that's happened to us whether we grew up in the church or whether God called us out of the world. If we grew up and had the opportunity of learning a lot of things as we were there, experiences of things that once then God offered us the calling to be able to continue on with that, how awesome is that? For that's been given to so very few through time. And if God called us out of the world and opened up our minds to understand various things?

How awesome is it to see the seventh day Sabbath? Something that's so clear to you. But you can't go out here and show others about it because they have other days and they just, without God's help, they can't see it. They can't help it that they can't recognize what Easter and Christmas are. They can't help it that they can't go back in history and just on a physical plane come to understand that the trinity is a bunch of bull, because it didn't even exist until 325 A.D., and then all of a sudden an emperor in Rome brought people together who had different ideas anyway about Christianity because they'd gone away and they weren't a part of the true Church, but they took various things to themselves about Christ and about some of the disciples, the apostles, and they took the names of some of them, like Peter, that happened in history, and so they took those things to themselves and made a religion out of it. It became the state religion and they made changes and they said anyone who keeps the seventh day Sabbath is worthy of death. No one is to ever keep the Passover again, for if you do that's what will happen. Instead, Easter became the way of the Roman church, of the Roman Catholic Church.

So in 325 they started this teaching, this trinity type of teaching - God the Father and then Jesus Christ who eternally existed, and then this holy ghost thing; some other mysterious kind of being called the holy ghost, it was out there. Then there are these three beings and somehow they're really just one being, but they're three and it's a mystery. So they tell the world, "It's a mystery. You can't understand it. It's beyond our ability to understand it."

I'm sorry, but some of this stuff really gets me. How can anyone go back to that? But a third of God's Church that was scattered went back to that, lapping it up. Oh, they love the trinity, they turn to the trinity. How can you believe something like that when your mind has seen the truth? But it can happen. How can your mind go back to doing something so foreign to the truth? Well, because individuals, people lost thankfulness for what God had given to them and they weren't in awe of it any longer.

You can come to a point in time where you're not in awe of what the holy Days are and what they teach. When I go through them every year, because God commands it, I am in awe of them. They're dumbfounding. Things about the Passover, the days of Unleavened Bread, which we have spoken on during this past season now, and we're approaching Pentecost and the things that God teaches about the wave sheaf. We should be in awe of what we see and what it means in His plan. Today we understand far more than what they understood even in the time of Christ about all these things. They didn't fully grasp these things. They understood in part and in a great way, but not near as much as what God began to reveal to Mr. Armstrong. During that period they didn't understand those, because it was approaching the end of an age.

How grateful are we that we're able to still be here, that we understand what took place in the Church? It isn't a hard thing with God's spirit. Now, it is without it and if we begin to neglect it and we begin to quench it, and if we begin to live in sin and we can begin to lose those things, but what an incredible thing to understand that it's easy to grasp what happened to the temple. Mr. Armstrong taught before he died, several years in a row there, of something that most of the

ministry in God's Church began to lose - that the temple is the Church. The temple God was constructing and that's spoken of in scripture is about the Church. It's the people of God.

When God said, in essence when Jesus Christ talked about it, that there wouldn't be one stone left upon another, and look what happened to us in the temple; it was about this age and this time. Things that happened to Laodicea, they should be so clear in your mind. Do we thank God for what we understand, what lethargy can lead to, what being lukewarm leads to? That we can't be on the fence about something? We're either going backward or we become stagnant and lukewarm, or we're moving forward and we're pressing forward and we want this way of life and we thank God that we're able to hold on to it, thank God that we're able to do what we can do wherever we can, to be a part of supporting whatever His work is. To be a part of it, that's what God has given us the ability to do, to be a part of it, part in fellowship, a part in relationships that we have within God's Church as small as we are and as scattered as we are. How blessed are we?

It's like last night, had the opportunity to go out with individuals that have been in this area, were part of Worldwide, had a meal with them. I thought, how awesome is this? They're still there pressing forward, getting older. And that's showing. I'm just going to tell you, it's showing. See, I look in the mirror and I know what's happening because I've been experiencing it and I'm only here because God gave me an opportunity to continue on. Otherwise I wouldn't be here. My cardiologist pretty much made that clear this last week when I had a meeting with him. Something that basically wasn't going to be possible was possible. Well, I know why it was possible - because God made it possible - that they were able to open up something and something kept going that really wasn't fully expected to necessarily work, period, exclamation mark.

So we recognize what God gives us. So do we thank God for what we have and what we're able to do and what we're able to continue to do together and be together as God's people? Because God makes it all possible. It's God that does it. We don't. So I thought about those.

I am so thankful that from area to area there are those individuals who are blessed by God to keep pressing forward. Has it been easy? No. Has it gotten harder? As we get older, yeah, it gets harder. It gets more difficult. A lot of you have never experienced that. You don't understand that at all, I'll just tell you. When you start to experience it you can have it by knowledge, but you know, when you're there, you're there, and you don't have to have that experience, you know what it is.

So, so much of this is about remembering God and don't forget. I hurt when I think of people who have just forgotten their calling. To forget the day that you began to see something you could never see? I don't know how a person can forget that, but I know we can if we don't stay close to God, if we don't keep crying out to God to deliver us, to help us. When the mind was opened and all of a sudden we saw the Sabbath day, when the mind was opened without any proof whatsoever because it was just there by hearing it, of the migrations of the children of Israel and where they

were today. To hear the story of Great Britain and how she's prophesied, Ephraim, to be in the end-time, to be a great nation and a company of other nations. You think, the British, just the word alone, brit-ish, comes from Hebrew, "the covenant people." That's what it means in Hebrew. "Ish," "man, mankind." "Brit," the covenant people. Who are they?

Going all the way back in the Old Testament and God brought them out of Egypt, gave them the truth, gave them His way of life, gave them commandments to live, to know how to live life. But all of a sudden the first time you saw that and you believed it, you didn't have to open anything up and read it. You maybe heard it, maybe heard something on a radio, whatever it was, some who were going back to the time of Worldwide. You just hear it on the radio, Mr. Armstrong speaking and talking about the Sabbath. It's like, "That's amazing! I never saw that before!" All of a sudden certain scriptures are there in your mind and you think, "How is that possible?" All of a sudden you see it.

You're so excited, like I was. I went and tried to share it with my relatives and had a bunch of them together in a home together one weekend. At first they were kind of dumbfounded because they knew me and what I was like before and he's talking about God and so they listened. But it didn't take long and it was like, "I don't want it. Get away from me. I don't want to hear anymore of this," you know, and they weren't excited like I was about Israel. They weren't excited about who this nation really is as a whole and what God gave to it and what's going to take place in the end-time, and that we're in the end-times, and about the Sabbath and the holy days and Christmas and Easter aren't real. People are always excited to hear that one.

But you know, I'll never forget it. You have to learn lessons and it takes a while sometimes. So we go through this process to realize you can't give this to anyone. God has to do it. It's God's work. God has to open up the mind. So if your mind is open, how often have you thanked God for that in the last year? How often have you made mention, "Father, thank you for calling me. Thank you for opening my mind. Thank you for giving me the truth. Not only that, but thank you for sustaining it in my mind, because I know of so many that lost it in time, it hasn't been sustained." Thank God. Whatever His purpose is, whatever His reason, it's not because we're great. We learn that as time goes along. Oh, on the contrary, it's to take something like this to show what God can do in life and the changes that God can make so that one day He's going to confound that which thinks it's wise and thinks it's great. To me that's a marvel, what God can do in us, what He's doing in us.

So Israel forgot. They just forgot these things. God had to remind them. He's showing them you forgot, you wouldn't remember Me, you didn't thank Me. That's what happens then. So it's because they were filled with the selfish spirit of ingratitude and that's what human nature does. It becomes more demanding even of God. "Why didn't you do 'this'? If you're God, why didn't you do this for me? Why didn't you help me in this? Why didn't you help me in that? If you're God, why aren't things easier? Why is it difficult like this?" Well, we in God's Church come to understand why it's difficult. It's because you're battling this thing here because this thing is

selfish. This thing causes a lot of problems and we do things that are just wrong and we have this battle we've got to fight. The longer you're in God's Church the more you get to see how selfish this really is up here. That's not a pretty thing. You get to the point where you think, "I've had my fill. I'm ready." I don't necessarily want to die right now, but you know, if it happens, life goes on. I know what's coming and that's going to be so much better...so much better.

I understand things Paul said. I was thinking about that this morning when he said, in essence, he's ready to go, he's ready to depart, but for your sake, no. I understand that in ways that I couldn't have understood that a long time ago, or just maybe a few years ago. I don't know when it was but you know, the longer we go on the more I comprehend that and understand. We need each other. We're blessed to have each other. The way God works, I understand that, so I'm thankful for that portion. But be real honest with you, I'm fully ready. I know it causes sorrow in people's lives, but as far as God's concerned I know what's coming. As soon as Jesus Christ returns that's where I plan on being, see?

So we have goals ahead of us. Maybe we don't know what that is so we look forward to living on into the Millennium. How blessed are we if we have the opportunity of living at the end of an age? Of all people, and so few, and be a part of God's Church, of the remnant of what was left over after something that was prophesied to happen nearly 2,000 years later when Paul was finally inspired to give what he gave in 2nd Thessalonians. It was like, "Don't be soon bothered by someone telling you that Jesus Christ is coming right now, that he's ready to return right now, because certain things have to happen." Now, he didn't know that before because he thought Jesus Christ was coming in his lifetime, and so did all the disciples. They were looking forward to Christ's coming, see. Then finally God had to make it clear to the Church, no, that's not going to happen until something else happens. But keep your eyes peeled, keep sharp, keep alert because if you don't think that way you're not going to be able to survive. So to the time of your death you have to have that kind of focus.

For nearly 2,000 years people in God's Church have had to have that kind of a focus, that he could return in their time, but what has to come first is a great apostasy, a great falling away as it's translated in King James; an apostasy, a falling away from the truth. Well, you have to have the truth before you can fall away from it, see.

A spirit of thankfulness, a mind of gratitude, it's a unique mind. We in God's Church, this is a time for us that God is revealing to us even more so, sharpen that, think about it, look upon it because we need it more. We can grow in it more. It's a power. There's a strength in that, there truly is, to help you remain focused. The more thankful you are for what you have, the more thankful you are for understanding and seeing things in God's plan, the more it stirs you inside, the more it helps you inside, the more it helps you to think in a way that God wants us to think in the first place.

Let's turn over to Ephesians 5. It's easy to see the Israelites and see what they did and think, "How could you be that ungrateful? How could you be of that kind of a mindset even on a physical

plane?” Well, in God’s Church these things have happened in a worse way because we’ve been blessed to have God’s spirit. They didn’t have God’s spirit. They were just carnal, selfish human beings and basically they were going to do that no matter what. God knew that. It’s all written for us. It’s all written for His Church, for His people, those whom He did call.

Ephesians 5:8—For you were once in darkness. Don’t ever forget it! Always thank God. You know, I don’t mean every morning and every day and it gets to be a type of repetitious prayer like the Lord’s Prayer or something that people have to repeat. You’re to build up that. That’s kind of an outline, you know, and that’s how we sometimes start and learn how to pray, but it’s an outline of prayer and we add to that. “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” Well, build upon that, what that means, and think about the words and what’s being said and then build upon what is truly there. But we don’t get to a point where we’re just repetitious.

That’s why sometimes when we’ve talked about it and we’ve gone through that exercise as God’s Church, that at meals as a whole we don’t set down and give the same, same, same, “Oh, bless this food we’re about to eat,” and say the same words three times a day. What does it mean to repeat the same thing over and over again? What does it mean? So we learn through a process of time not to repeat things otherwise we become like those who have these great big wheels up there high in the mountains and they go up there and they spin them. They have people going around spinning them on a constant basis because you can’t stop these prayers that are going up before God that are on this wheel. You’ve got to keep it spinning because somehow with the spinning it’s getting to God. “I don’t understand that, but keep it spinning,” and so they go around there spinning these things because somehow that gets them closer to God.

You think it’s like the repetition of prayer that people have and people that go to church on Sundays and the things they repeat every Sunday over and over. They all have to repeat this creed, and guess what it’s about? The trinity. Keep people steeped in the trinity. So they repeat the same words week after week after week and they don’t have an idea what it even means and what it’s about. They just repeat the same old thing because it sounds religious and if it’s being done in Latin, that’s great too, because then I don’t know what’s being said anyway and it’s even more mysterious and more wonderful. I’m sorry. Mankind is so sick; truly is.

For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. How awesome is that, to understand that? That the light we have, the ability of those things we see, and it’s because we’re in God, in Christ, and they’re in us. That’s the only way to see what we grasp. It’s a spiritual thing. We have to be impregnated with God’s spirit. We receive of His holy spirit and then we can live this, we can have this on a regular basis in our life. It’s a part of life then.

So we were once in darkness. The world can’t help it. I’m not making fun of people out here when I’m talking about some of these things and different churches. They can’t help it. We were there once if we went there, if we were a part of that, whatever degree we were a part of it. We couldn’t help it. We were just in darkness. It’s a captivity. That’s why it’s referred to like being in spiritual Egypt, because it’s a captivity. They’re captive to that and they can’t leave that until

God gives them the means. We're almost there where God is about to give the means to help people come to see that everything they've ever relied upon, ever trusted in, is coming down to an end in 6,000 years here. It's going to begin to be destroyed. It's going to begin to fall apart. Then for those who will listen the hearing can be sharpened immensely in a powerful way.

That's why some continue to ask about advertising, and I appreciate that. That's good to know where we are as far as advertising is concerned and the different languages that are going out there with the book right now. We're getting statistics back of different countries and different ones and how they're responding and it's kind of interesting to see different parts of the world where they're responding more because they're going through more and harder times, and so the percentage of responses seems to be greater in some areas because of what they see and what they know and what they're experiencing amongst themselves on the world scene. Like South Africa and even Germany and Switzerland and some of these nations, of things that are rattling them. So there's an unease that's growing, but it's nothing compared to what's about to happen.

So the point being in this is we're not putting a lot into it, we're just testing the waters and getting a feel for things and getting it ready so that when it is time then we'll throw things into it, but we're not doing it yet because there is no point. There is absolutely no point until God begins to make it plain it's coming quickly, because only when people can have things happening around them to where their hearing can be sharpened does it have purpose and meaning in it. So we're going to wait until God makes that clear when that is, and then we're going to hit it hard. But we have to be ready. That's why I mention that by Pentecost most of this is going to be fully ready. There are going to be one or two things left to do as far as putting certain languages up there, but they're getting close.

To me that's awesome, to see what's taking place out here and to see how God has led us to decide and to do what we're doing. Just like printing books. We're not printing them. We're not printing them and going through the expense of printing books and mailing them. The cost is more often times than the book itself to mail out because of the age of technology has so changed that the greater ability to reach people is strictly by what they see. If they go with a cell phone or whatever it is, their computer, whatever means electronically they have and download it themselves, be moved and motivated to do that, that has far more power to reach far more people. That's how God's led us. I marvel at that, that He's brought us to that point in time and how much things have changed in such a short time as far as the habits of people in the world. I'm talking about around the world, a lot of countries that use these things now. That's where they get their information; it's just by what you hold in your hand. They don't even worry about the computers anymore, it's just the phone you can have in your hand. You can get one, you have a screen, you've got it, you're in touch. Now, sadly, so much of it's not used in a right way, obviously, but it's out there. It's a powerful, powerful tool.

For you were once in darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. What a beautiful thing to say. We should walk then as children. If we're in the light then we

better walk that way. We'd better make sure that we're not living a lie. We'd better make sure that we're striving to do what is right on the job, in the sense of what other people see around us, how we speak, how we talk, that our conversation isn't like other people's, other people around us, that we treat people in a way that they're not accustomed to, and if we do something wrong or whatever that we're quick to say, "Hey, I'm sorry. I should have done this differently." They don't know how to respond to that because most people are just confrontational and wanting to hold feelings against others and spread things about others. You won't even participate in those kinds of stories or things that come around. Because this happens in companies a lot where, "Did you hear about 'so and so?' Well they did 'this' and 'this' and 'this,'" and then people go off and spread it around and, "Isn't that disgusting, you know?" People like to talk about each other. You think, we don't participate in such things. I'd like to say the word. We don't participate in such stuff, okay? Because it stinks. Feces stinks, and so we don't participate in that. I just used a nice little word to say something that we know what it is, you know. It's floating around out here in these great big round things that get spun around and it stinks. That's the way it is, sewage and waste goes out there. We're not like that. We're to be different as God's people.

So we're to walk as children of life, to live God's way of life in this world, **for the fruit of the spirit is in...** You know, sometimes it's good to stress certain words, **is in all goodness**; where does it come from? From God. God. God's spirit. The fruit of the spirit, it comes from God. It's in God and He lets us have it. He shares that with us. He gives of Himself to us if we're able to receive it and if we will receive it He wants to give us more. That's why I love things that talk about the holy spirit, when Jesus Christ was talking to them about receiving the holy spirit and things he said about it. Awesome things that he revealed there in John 15 and 14, that helper, the comforter that would be given to us, to mankind. Awesome! We have the blessing of that life to live in us and we in it on a spiritual plane. It's beyond that which is physical, it's spiritual. It's in the thinking.

That's why sometimes you can't communicate certain things to people. They say, "Well, how do you know this is true? How do you prove that in here?" Well, you can try to sit down with someone and show them, well, the seventh day is all through here, the disciples, they kept the seventh day. It's so clear in here. They kept the holy days. 1 Corinthians 5 it's very clear that Paul was still keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread and he was telling them, "Therefore, let us keep the Feast." It wasn't a mild suggestion. It's that's what we're going to do. Then in chapter 10, 11, in through there when he talks about keeping a Passover, they were still doing these things. They were practicing and living these things.

You can't show that to people in the world. I've tried. We've all tried probably. They can't receive it. Why? Because it's spiritual, because God has to communicate that to the mind, and that brings us back always to the thing we know. You, I, we cannot see the things we see unless God gives it to us. Then if He begins to give us of something that we can see we have to realize God Almighty is the one communicating it to the mind. He's the one that gives it here. Otherwise

you can't see it. We could put every bit of money we have right now right into advertising. What good would it do if God's not in it? What good would it do if He's not starting to draw people and if it's not His time to begin opening up minds to see what's going to happen to this world and why, and the reasons why? It would mean nothing.

That's why all the different groups that are scattered out here are a good witness of that. You can continue to do what you think Mr. Armstrong didn't complete (because that's what they think). They can have a telecast and they can put millions (which they do) into television stations and into radio stations and into magazines like Mr. Armstrong did, but what God did through Mr. Armstrong was unique to a purpose in time. God fulfilled a work in him. But, see, the scattered groups think that that has to continue on so they think they have to continue to do what they believe that God didn't fulfill in him as God's apostle. What good is it doing? Who has been called that's received God's spirit? Who has been called that's able to understand God's plan in the fullness of it? Not one person.

Now, they think in some cases people have come to join with them and so forth that that's not true, but they don't know where they are. They don't see themselves as spiritually asleep. They don't understand. They can't help it either until God awakens them from sleep just like He did me and just like he did some who are listening who are a part who fell asleep just before the Apostasy.

For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. That's God - all righteousness, all truth; everything that is just and right comes from God. The only way we can see what is truly just in choices and decisions that are made, the only way we can really understand something that's true is if God is in it, if God gives it, if God helps us to see it

...proving what is acceptable unto the Lord, beautiful verse too. What do you mean proving it? How do you prove it? There was a time in Worldwide where people thought they had to go to scriptures and prove it. No, no, no, no, no, no, that doesn't prove it. Is it a good thing to know where scriptures are, to be able to understand certain things about the Sabbath and holy days, to understand where Leviticus 23 is and all the holy days that are listed there and what is said? Yeah, those are good and great things to know and to understand, but that doesn't prove a thing! What proves it is your living it. What proves it is God's spirit in your life that makes, as an example, fellowship come alive. What proves it is your faithfulness to what God tells us even in things like tithing or holy day offerings, and we learn from that and we grow from that. Yet sometimes it's still resisted by people because that should be one of the most basic things we receive the day we're called or the time we're called, and it would be so foreign to our mind not to obey that. One of three truths that God still had with Sardis, that hadn't died out when Sardis came along. It's awesome to understand how God works and why these things are important to understanding and in the mind and how we think.

It's about how we think toward God. It has to do with whether we're really thankful to God that He's given us this earth to live on, that we have the means and ability to work, and to understand

then that we're commanded to work and to yield to that and to rejoice in that and the ability God gives us as human beings to be productive, and on and on it goes, and to thank God for it because these are the joys. These are the things that give true joy of life, when you do things the way God says to do it, when that's the motivation and the purpose, when it's not just for selfishness and so forth. There are things we have to do, we understand that, but when God's in the picture it means so much more.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It means don't live the way of the world. Don't follow the ways of the world. Don't get sucked into some of those things. ...**but rather reprove...** That word means "to expose; be convicted; to convict" **them**. So in other words, things that are wrong in the world in our life, we should work to expose those things, to be more deeply convicted of the wrong.

You know there are things that are wrong in life, but you know that you have weaknesses, and so you recognize that you have to fight against those things. So some of the prayers should be to ask God for help to become more deeply convicted that you want to be in agreement with Him, that you're convicted of how wrong something is so that you'll want to be that much more away from it and not to be participating in it. Because that's the way we are as human beings, we participate too often in things of this world. We get sucked into gossip. We get sucked into talking about others. We get sucked into tearing someone down. We get sucked into various things that we shouldn't allow to happen because they're wrong.

You know, people get sucked into pornography, people get sucked into things that are on the internet. I know these things happen, okay? These things happen because we're human beings. You have to become deeply convicted of the evil that's in those things. Convicted, in other words, in agreement with God. That should be people's prayer. If you want help to conquer and overcome things become convicted of how wrong and how filthy, how dirty they are.

Just like cigarettes! I mean, that's a very physical thing. But you have to be convicted of what it does, of what it does to others. I don't want you to be around me and puffing that stuff in the air. People go outside now-a-days to smoke because they can't do it inside because of certain laws and whatever (if they obey them). So they go outside, and what do they do? They stand by the door and blow it on you as soon as you go by. "I can't do it in there but I'm going to do it to you as soon as you go by." It doesn't matter; they can stand ten feet away and it's still going to blow over on you. I hate the smell! The more you're away from it the cleaner your life is. I'm using a simple example of something very physical.

I saw my own father die a horrible death after ten years of struggling with breathing, to where he had 10% capacity in his lungs because of emphysema, because of smoking when he was younger. He quit in his forties, but it still killed him by the time he was seventy. But the ten years before that were horrible, bedridden, couldn't move, couldn't get around. And how many people? They have examples of the throat cancer, and they have this hole in here and they get the cigarette.

How sick that human beings can be like that, that they are so tied to something that so destroys life. It destroys the quality of life.

Now, that's something very physical, but what about things that have to do with people's relationships and how people think about each other and whether or not they're tearing down others in order to in some perverse way feel better about self, because that's what people do, to somehow feel better about themselves sometimes and to find fault. It's not hard to find weaknesses in people. It's not hard to find things, but that shouldn't be the way we think, as a whole, first and foremost about one another.

God tells us how to think about one another. What should be the first thing? Look for the good. Look for the good that's come from God that they're receiving from God and the changes that are being made in that part of their life and go from there. Start and build upon those things. Don't focus on the negative because we all have negative. That'll just hurt. It tears down. It hurts. Those are the things that lead to drama, drama, drama, drama, drama, drama of life. People thrive on drama sometimes and drama sucks and sucks the life right out of you. Some people even in the environs of God's Church, sadly, get sucked into drama. Drama of physical things going on around them and it consumes a lot of their life - and I mean consumes in the sense of a very negative thing, in the sense of eating them up inside and distorting the thinking of the mind.

The more we can get rid of those things and become convicted, to expose them in our life, to be able to be exposed if God can show us certain things and become more convicted of how wrong and how hurtful these things are the better off we are. See, because you see, the clearer it becomes in your mind how wrong, how evil something is the easier it is to flee from it, the easier it is to get away from it, the easier it is to walk in unity and oneness with God and that takes constant work, constant focus in your life spiritually every day, every week because there are all kinds of pulls in life out here trying to pull you away. So here is a matter of proving what is acceptable unto the Lord, desiring to live what is right and asking God for help to expose the things that are wrong, as it says here, **but rather expose the unfruitful works of darkness**, become more deeply convicted of how wrong they are. In other words, be in greater unity and oneness and oneness with God's mind and God's thinking about why they're harmful because you don't want to hurt people let alone yourself. Why hurt others?

There's enough hurt in this world. There is enough suffering in this world. You don't have to go very far and see all kinds of suffering. We do it to ourselves as human beings and we do it to others.

There is so much prejudice. I'm so sick of the evil of mankind and all the prejudices that exist, male to female, races, education, whatever it is that people feel better about themselves of certain things. I don't know, it's just the human mind is sick and it needs to be healed and that's what God offers us in the Church.

For it's a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. There's not much done in secret anymore in this world anymore, and that's what's sad, but the things that are or should be we should strive to flee.

But all things that are reprov'd, in other words, are exposed, made clear that they're wrong, that they're not right, **are made manifest by the light.** Because the closer you get to God, come to God the greater the light is cast upon the things that are wrong and the more then, the easier it should be then to get away from them, to not want them because you realize how bad the darkness is and why it's darkness. ...**for whatsoever does make manifest,** basically the word should be here is "made visible" **by light,** so **what is made visible** (manifest) that we can see, especially on a spiritual plane is made manifest by the light that God gives to us. Again, the thanks goes to God, "Thank you, holy God, thank you holy Father through Jesus Christ, through that power that we're able to experience in our life, that we can see the things that are wrong, that we can come to understand the things that hurt life, that take away from the real joy and happiness of life."

Verse 14—Therefore he says, Awake you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. So I think of the period of time the Church went through and the sleep that took place on a spiritual plane. But if anyone begins to drift or begins to take it easy, begins to coast, and I call it coasting spiritually, there is no such thing. If you begin to coast in God's Church and let up and don't keep at the battle, if you're not fighting, it's not that hard to go by the wayside.

This group here used to be larger just a few years ago. Every group, every place I've gone to, every place I've gone to this year, every area is much smaller than it used to be because that's been the thing that's continued in God's Church since it began in 31 A.D.; many have been called, many more than those whom God has been able to work with and continue to work with through time. "Many are called and few are chosen," because so many just go by the wayside. They forget God, that they don't have a spirit of gratitude and thankfulness. That's something you have to nurture and build in your life.

When's the last time you thought about all the blessings that you have? When's the last time you've thought about the different things you have because of God's Church, because of the calling that God has given to you that you otherwise wouldn't have? See it should be a really long list.

I remember doing a list one time in our third tithe year. It was in the second cycle at one point in time there. Anyway, there was a period of time we went through because we went seven year cycles back then, for those of you who know what I'm talking about and I don't have time to explain all that right now. But anyway, there was a rotation of seven years on that third time year and that was back before Mr. Armstrong said no, the government is supplying that need like they should have been in the first place when God told Israel to do what they should have been doing and the church no longer carried that burden and the hardship of it. Because it's hard in this age with the kind of taxation that people have.

Anyway, I think of the list of all the things that God did in that particular year. I still think about that from time to time because that was early on in our marriage and things that otherwise you couldn't put on paper and they would have worked out. So there are things to do sometimes. You don't have to write them down, but even that can be good. Start jotting them down either on paper or up here. What is it that you have to be thankful to God for? What is it that God has given to you that you otherwise would not have? What is it that you have? And we should be able to see every day of our life, especially what it means on a spiritual plane that God has given us a pearl of great price. We are the wealthiest people on earth because real happiness, real fullness in life happens in the mind. It's not by how much you have. That isn't what makes life full.

There are struggles that people have in life and it doesn't matter what state of life one is in. It's about how we deal with it in the mind. I think of three fun years I had, see. I was exceedingly blessed...exceedingly blessed, and I knew it. See, it has to do with the mind and what you see and what you know and what you have. Incredible!

So it's how you think. It's how you think that gives you fullness in life and joy of life. The more we're in unity and oneness with God and His mind, and especially with the mind of gratitude and thankfulness, that means we see more clearly, we're thinking about more often the things that God has given to us. When that is there there's a contentment, a peace that you can't have any other way, a peace of mind. How precious is that in a world of confusion like we have today?

We have a kind of peace that people in the world don't have just when it comes to death...just when it comes to death. We don't have to worry about "Is he going to hell?" "Is he going someplace?" "Is she going someplace to be tortured?" Or do they somehow make it to this place kind of halfway in between, this limbo, whatever it is, or do they make it all the way up and are they staring on the face of God now out there on some cloud drifting around for eternity? That's fun. They don't even think things through. "Old Joe is up there fishing. He always loved fishing. Now he gets to do it for eternity."

Well, I've been fishing. I like fishing. I wouldn't mind it once in a while. I haven't been able to do it in years, talking about that last night. I don't have time. I could probably make the time in certain things, but I have other things I would do first. But as much as I loved it I wouldn't want to do it for eternity.

I love deer hunting. I can't do that anymore. I don't want to explain all that. They won't let me. I might be able to use a bow and arrow. But anyway, I wouldn't want to do that for all eternity. I mean, what do you do once you have a dozen 12-pointers, you go to the 14. Then what do you do after you have a dozen of those on the wall? Do they have 16? 16! Gotta go for that. Doing this for all eternity? You think, come on, God wants you to look on His face for all eternity and somehow this is a state of bliss or something.

God is not perverted! It's about relationships. That's why we're to experience fellowship. It's about interaction. It's about sharing of life and experiences. It's not about setting up on some

cloud drifting around and having it easy and you don't have aches and pains anymore and you just feel hunky dory inside and there's this euphoria that you experience like you're on some kind of LSD or something all your life. What has man done to God and a relationship with God? It's not like that. It's all in the mind; it's how you think toward one another, how you think toward God. We need to think about gratitude and thankfulness, that everything that's good has come from God. Everything we're able to experience that's encouraging and right and just and beautiful, and the hope we have, it comes from God and we live by that. What an awesome thing. This world doesn't have it.

We know that when someone is dead they're just asleep. There's nothing in that body anymore. There is no spirit that went off somewhere. There's no eternal life in human beings and there's no immortal soul. You know, when Jesus Christ was dead he was dead all over for three days and three nights. Traditional Christianity thinks his spirit had to go someplace and speak to demons. You know the scripture over in Peter, that's where they think he went for a period of time. No, he didn't. He was dead. He was just dead, dead, dead, dead, dead and God Almighty resurrected him, made him alive again, gave him life eternal from that point forward, the first of the first fruits, the first to be in Elohim, the Family of God. Awesome to understand that and the peace of mind that gives, to understand that every human being in time God will resurrect. They have a time - some to live a second human life. What an awesome thing to understand, to know that for some the last period of time, the last hundred years for human life after the Millennium, that people who have lived through times past that are still dead they're going to be resurrected to a human life again. What an awesome thing to know that now they're going to be able to learn about one God and one Christ. They're going to be able to learn one truth and one way of life. They're going to be able to see what one government, God's government, has done for a thousand years on the earth, things we can't even begin to comprehend right now.

Because you want to talk about technology now? You've seen nothing compared to what's coming in the next thousand years and what God's going to do with human life when people live under one government, God's way of life, one Church, not the kind of confusion we have today. Just in the world of traditional Christianity there's incredible confusion. One group believes one thing, and another group believes another. That's why there are so many groups, because they all believe something a little different. It's like God's torn up in all these different beliefs and ideas in the way He is. No, He's just one way and it's in His truth.

Therefore he says, Awake out of sleep and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. See that you walk circumspectly... This word, I love it. It means "determined, with precision, exactness." It means there's a way of life before you and you want to use the time you have with determination as it were and exactness as far as God's way of life is, **not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.** In other words, making the most of the time we have, whatever time that is. You know, I think of times past in the Church. I came in in 1969 and it means whatever time you have, make the most of it as far as God's way of life is

concerned and how you live toward one another within the Church and the battle your fighting and wanting to draw closer to God in understanding.

It says, **redeeming the time because the days are evil**. You want to talk about an evil world; this is a sick, evil world. If you can get outside the United States as far as news is concerned and you see what is happening in different parts of the world and the way people are, how human beings are treated and the poverty? I think of Venezuela right now. I think I read yesterday, just in the short period of time here, their inflation has been 8,000%. You think, what about the poor people living under that and that kind of government that exists there.

You go to different cities in the world; you think of children. I think of Rio and some of those places that when you get out just a little ways from where the nice buildings are and away from the tourist areas and you don't have to go very far and all of a sudden you have children who are trying to survive. They don't have family. They don't have parents. I'm talking about thousands and thousands and thousands, and some places where they go, in different parts of the world, into garbage piles and try to get something, plastics or something they can take to have and just to get a little bit of something they can turn in, some piece of metal that they can go turn in for some money or something.

Look at this world. I think right here in this country here, San Francisco. I talked about it a few months ago after we were there and how appalled I was to see the kind of homelessness. We shouldn't have that in this kind of a country. I think a lot of them are vets! We glorify war and fighting and send people off to different places and they come back and they're forgotten, they're chucked away. "You did your part." They're not remembered. That's why I think, great, at least they're doing a little bit with VA, but not that much, not as much as should be done. And to let someone like that go homeless after they've given of their bodies for something... What was it? Peace somewhere? Sick world.

But to forget people? To let that happen? To let such things exist in the cities? I hurt inside because of that. I really, really hurt. You see stuff like that and if you don't hurt for human beings and see what they're going through and think in this kind of a nation such a thing is such a shame. It should never happen. Why are we putting money in different places when we can't even take care of this yet? We can't even handle this properly.

We allow drugs to come into this country unfettered knowing and not only that sometimes we've helped it come in. I don't even want to go there! Some of the things that's happened with the CIA and different ones of different things that have taken place knowing full well they're helping the movement of drugs. Then cartels, different ones become established.

I'm sorry. If you don't hurt inside for what you see taking place in this world - and you don't have to look very far if you have the eyes to see just in this country alone, something as wealthy as we are, things that should never, never, never be. To our shame! Sad! Sick! Sick, sick, sick! Let alone what others are suffering in this world. But we are remiss from that. We don't grasp it.

I remember taking the Y.O.U. from this area here down into Juarez and they got to go across. We did get to go on the other side there and to experience something. They'd never seen anything like that, how people live differently. They didn't realize how much we had here. Sometimes in God's Church, if we're not careful, we can begin to forget how much we really have. We are exceedingly blessed, things that we can begin to take for granted and if we do that then we lose the spirit of gratitude and thankfulness toward God Almighty.

Be wise, don't be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit. In other words, it gives an example here. You can become filled, drunk, or intoxicated with too much alcohol, but you can't become too full of God's holy spirit. That's what it's showing here, a desire we should have to want more, the desire to be closer to God, a desire to be filled with more of His spirit. That's the analogy that's being used here.

...speaking yourself, as it should be here, **in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.** In other words, it's this thing here of just going through the Psalms as we did there and just being reminded of the good, the great things of God and how merciful He's been to us, how much He's poured out upon us, what we have to be thankful for. **...and making melody in your heart to the Lord.** See, that's what it's about. It's about what comes out of here, what's in the mind in your thinking toward God. How much do we see God? How grateful are we to Him for everything we have? He's given us everything and so much more.

Verse 20—all in the context of this: **giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**