

This is the fifth day of Unleavened Bread and tomorrow is the day that would have been—going back in the Old Testament counting and so forth—would have been the Wave Sheaf offering.

This series fits so well into what we are addressing during this Holy Day season. Today is *Part 6* of the series entitled *Glorify God*.

So, it's understanding the whole process of what we go through, and there are times that people haven't applied the most basic and the most needful on a regular basis, on a steady basis, and because of that, it's easy to become very weak then. That's why we're going through some of these things because it affects everything else in our life spiritually.

As it was stated last Sabbath, we glorify God by asking and receiving of His spirit so that we can produce much fruit spiritually in our lives. That's a process. But this is where it begins. It begins with asking God. It isn't just a matter that because we're baptized, and we have the impregnation of God's spirit, that we're given that on a steady basis. It's something you have to cry out for.

Which includes the most important part of what we've observed during the beginning of this season if you will, Passover, Passover night especially. It is a matter of always having the blessing of being able to be forgiven of sin, of being able to have that put behind us, of being able to come out of sin then, which Unleavened Bread pictures, the Days of Unleavened Bread.

But it's always a matter of going before God in prayer, asking for forgiveness of our sins and then to ask for the help we need in the various things we might be addressing in our own lives, like I've mentioned in times past, one, two, or three, or whatever the things are we're working on, that we're focused on, or other things that might pop up in our life.

Let's turn over to 1<sup>st</sup> John 3. So again, producing fruit, the more we produce in our life, the more we grow and yield to God's spirit transforming our minds. Because that's what it's about. That's the kind of fruit we're talking about, the changes that are made in our thinking, the changes that are made that affect how we live our lives day by day and living God's way of life more fully.

So, the more we produce, the more we're able to glorify God. It's a beautiful thing. We can have incredible spiritual boldness in this as we grow, as we mature, strong confidence in our relationship with God and His Son, Joshua the Christ.

**1 John 3:18—My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue.** It's easy to talk about. It's easy to think we're of a certain way. It's easy to go through certain motions and so forth and think that because we're able to talk about something or we understand certain things as far as God's way of life is

concerned, the truth, the word to a point, whatever that might be, that that's what it's all about. It's more than that.

That's why it goes on to say **but in deed**. In what we're doing, how we do it, in other words, **and in truth**. It's not something we can rely upon as far as ourselves. Whether it be the matter of living this way of life, we're not going to be able to see the things to truly live them properly and be in agreement with God unless we have God's help, unless we have God's spirit in us leading, guiding, and directing us.

The same thing is a matter of truth here where it says, "in deed and in truth." So, to be in the truth, again, requires God's spirit because you can't do it on your own. None of us can. We can't rely on ourselves, our own ability, or what we think our own understanding is. We have to rely on God. We have to understand our weaknesses, our frailties, and the fact that we cannot produce any fruit whatsoever without God's spirit.

That's why we've gone through some of those verses before this particular sermon here. We have to have God's spirit coming into our lives, which means God the Father and Joshua the Christ living and dwelling in us on a continual basis. The thing that interrupts that is primarily sin but also not following up and doing some of the things we should be doing, like we're going to get into here in a moment about prayer, asking. If that's not a regular routine because we don't grasp how much we need God and we're not doing it like we should, we're not crying out like we should, we're just asking to become weaker.

**My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Even hereby we know that we are of the truth.** So, there are those things that we can have confidence in, which I mentioned a moment ago, and boldness in as far as God's way of life, when we're doing it the way He says to do it.

**Even hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him.** So, there are those things that we can have confidence in, boldness in, when we know we're doing it right because it's coupled with God's spirit. God will bless us and help us to understand that relationship and the strength of it, and where we're not doing what we should be doing, well, it's addressed here too. **For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things.** So, what does that mean? Well, the reality is you don't know your own heart fully, one hundred percent. You can't. And when we were called we didn't know our own heart, meaning our own human nature, our own thinking, our own minds, and we just live by carnal nature, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Then God begins revealing those things to us in our thinking, of those things that we're to repent of.

That's where the process begins then. That's where we can grow in a relationship, in a boldness of a relationship with God because we know that we're working on those things that He's revealed to us. God will show you where you falter, where you fall short, and especially if you ask for help, "Help me to see those things more clearly in my own thinking that I can't see."

We had a call this morning that I didn't want to go into, but in talking to someone about a situation within the Church, it was about a matter where there is an individual who doesn't really see themselves. They've been in the Church for a long, long, long time but there are certain things they still don't see in themselves.

That's an ongoing process in your life. You need to understand that none of us see everything. It's a growing matter. It's a growing matter of a relationship with God and asking God for help to see the things we need to work upon, to see the things we need to change. But sometimes because of our nature, those are almost blind to us at times until God reveals them to us. We may have to go through certain hardships and trials to learn it. We may have to have a spiritual shaking, in a sense, by God to be able to see it and hopefully then to repent of what we're not doing right or how we're not properly addressing something.

So, we can't just automatically think that because we've been in the Church five, ten, twenty, thirty, how many years it's been, that we're on top of these things. That isn't true. We're only on top of it if we're living in spirit and in truth and following this thing, as it talks about, "in deed and in truth," this relationship with God and Christ. It's something you have to do on a continuing basis.

**Even hereby we know we are of the truth and will assure our hearts before Him.** You know, as God reveals certain things to us. **For if our heart condemn us God is greater than our heart.** So, in other words, God loves us, He wants to reveal to us the things that we can't see. Because we just can't see things in our own heart and our mind totally without God's spirit. So, with God's spirit, we can begin to grasp them and understand them, and see what has to change. Because we're talking about spiritual things here. We're talking about the mind and the desire to have this mind transformed from something that is by nature selfish to that which is unselfish. That's what it's about.

**Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, then we have confidence toward God.** There's only one way that can happen, and it's we're responding to the things when God shows us, we're repenting on a regular basis of the things that we are able to see. But if we don't do that on a regular basis we just become weaker and weaker and weaker, and in time it'll be paid for but in a bad way.

**Verse 22—Even whatever we ask we receive of Him.** I love it that we're going through this and really digging into it a little more deeply now because this has been a thing within the Church through times past especially where people felt like this is a matter of pretty much everything in your life, of what you're striving to live, of what you want to live and so forth. Then adding on top of that other things we'd like to work out in our lives our way.

God doesn't always work that way. We can't have everything our way. We can't go before God and ask for various physical things in life and they be given to us, or whatever it might be. There are some things that aren't good for us, whether it be even on the job, whatever. So many things we can pray about.

God's primary concern, He wants us to understand, is our relationship with Him and how that's made stronger. It's about a relationship and understanding our need for God's spirit day by day by day to mold and fashion us, to help us to change because we can't think different and have that constantly in our minds unless God's spirit is there.

So again, the more we become at one with God, the more we're responding to the things that God reveals to us about our heart and our mind. But if we ignore them? How many times have we ever heard things about our prayer life? It's a part of something that's happened ever since we've been in God's Church. We hear about prayer life, our prayers, our relationship with God. And yet how well have we lived that? Everybody has to ask themselves that. How well have we really lived that day by day by day?

"If our heart does not condemn us, then we have confidence toward God." That means you're working on the issue; you're working on things that God reveals. You're repenting regularly, continually of things that you come to see and understand, in ways that maybe you think about individuals or speak about individuals or to individuals, or whatever it might be. Because this is all part of it, of cleaning up this mind.

**Even whatever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments.** Now, it's very easy to look at this and just get bogged down with the Ten Commandments. It's more than that. The Ten Commandments are an outline of how we're to live but everything else is broken down as a matter that is spiritual within those commandments. Even the commandments are all summed up in love, God's love. So, you break those down even more and more to where we can see them and understand them more clearly.

**So, whatever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His instruction.** It's about instruction. It's not just the Ten Commandments. It's much greater than that because this is spiritual. The world, or people in the world, can go back and read Exodus 20 and talk about the commandments – then the one great organization skips... Anyway. You think how in the world did that ever happen? But again, that's on a very physical plane because that's all they have.

But in the Church, it's different, much different. God give us, especially within the Church, Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day, God gives us guidance, instruction, correction, all these things that make up obeying Him, following Him, wanting Him, desiring Him in our life. Which means we have to change. We need that guidance and instruction. Everything we go through Sabbath by Sabbath are things we need in our life. God knows what we need when we need it.

That's why I'm always a little dumbfounded by, and not dumbfounded because I've experienced it so many times, but it's a beautiful thing to see how God plans things ahead. Just in sermons alone, don't know what's coming unless it's shown to me. Then I'm really excited when it's a series because I know where I'm going, and I know what I have to dig into and pray about and so forth. But the timing of things?

Just like this series right now and things we've already experienced during Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread already that should be a very sobering thing for the Church and yet a process or a part of being able to learn some great lessons, and a desire on our part to respond in a better way, in a stronger way before God. Because we're ever growing.

That's what producing fruit is about. God gives us the opportunity as a Body, as a Church, the Body of Christ, the Church of God, to continue to grow. No one can afford to be dragging behind, lagging behind, falling asleep spiritually, letting down because then that just hurts the Body. Well, we're going to be reading it shortly again. If we're not producing fruit something has to be done.

**Even whatever we ask we receive from Him because we keep His instruction.** Again, we pray about these things. **...and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.** The greatest thing we do that is pleasing in His sight is to repent because we want to do what's right. We want to glorify, we want to live His way of life and be a light and an example for what we can learn through and grow in, but to others around us who perhaps are in the Church, or even in the world because their time is going to come.

**And this is His commandment.** So again, more instruction here, very clear, that thing that John is focusing on in context here then, **that we should believe in the name of His Son Joshua the Christ.** So, it doesn't stop there but it shows we should believe and understand. What is it we're to believe? We can change. It starts with our Passover. Always at the forefront, it's this matter of repenting of sin. Because that's why he died, so we could be forgiven of sin and then grow because He and His Father dwell in us.

**...and love one another.** This is what it's about. It's about family. It's about understanding what it means to love others, to love God's way with that which involves sacrifice as far as human nature and selfishness is concerned. We have to sacrifice what we want, the way we want it, "the way I see it," "the way I think it should be." All those things are telltale signs that, well, wait a minute, is that really what God wants? Is that really the right thing to do? Is that the right judgment?

So, you have to have a greater confidence that you're right with God. We have to be very careful in these things. The way these things come out is here. So, it starts with repenting and seeing things about our lives. It always comes down to primarily relationships. This is how we apply God's love. It's a relationship with God, the first four commandments, and the last six relationships with others in the world around us. That's what God's law is about.

And so, this gets down to the nitty gritty on a spiritual plane that this is what we're supposed to live, to love one another. Then God tells us how to do it. Incredible instruction! Tons of instruction about how to love one another.

**...as He gave us commandment,** or again, **that instruction.** Told us what kind. We even read it on Passover. It's the kind of Christ's love. He says, "As I have loved you." Sacrificial love. Gave his life. Awesome!

“As He gave us instruction.” You have to be careful because you can lose all this quickly. You can lose things so quickly it’d make your head spin. Sometimes people think that they can go off and (like one not too long ago) and do their own kind of studying, whatever that routine was going to be. Didn’t need fellowship with the Church. Didn’t need instruction from the Church. Forgetting how God works and leads and guides and directs His people. There is only one way. He doesn’t tell us we can go off and do our own little thing out here somehow and we’re going to grow. You can’t get cut off from the Body. You won’t grow.

But these kinds of things come into the mind and after people have lived that way for a time they begin to believe it more and more and leave the Body behind. One can quit on Passover night and go to work the next day. That should just sober the tar out of every one of us to realize how fast something like that can happen. It happened this year. Passover night. Wouldn’t take it because they were being eaten up inside about something or some things, whatever, and the truth over a period of time was gone.

When you get to a point you don’t even know what you believe anymore? If any of you don’t know what you believe just go out and live what you want to live because it isn’t here for you. Your heart is condemning you. You live a miserable life, so it’s better not to beat yourself up over things you can no longer live. Because if you cut yourself off from God’s spirit, what do you have? Nothing. Then you can go to work on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. Mind-boggling.

Do you think any of you could do that? Think that could happen to any of you out there listening today? That’s why the examples are out there of things you can do. When you get cut off from God’s spirit, when you begin to go off and do things on your own, thinking differently, disagreeing, disagreeing with instruction that God gives primarily through the ministry. That’s how God works. And thinking something different.

That’s why we were able to go through a period about Covid. There are a lot of people who learned a lot of lessons about themselves, about their thinking that they didn’t see before. And to me, it’s an awesome thing and a wonderful thing that took place. Because when you can come to the point where you can see something in yourself that’s so deeply hidden that something like that comes along to reveal it, and then you respond... You didn’t know it.

Again, God has to reveal things to us that are deeply hidden within us. We think we’re okay and we’re right with everything that’s being given and then all of a sudden something comes along, and we realize, no, we’re not, “I have to examine this more closely. What am I missing?” Usually, it’s government, it’s about how God works, it’s about how God teaches, molds, and fashions us is what we miss. We begin to judge and have judgment toward it.

Just like toward the ministry. People will look at certain things, whatever they might be, and it doesn’t even have to be where they are. They can see something happening somewhere else and begin to judge and not agree with how God is doing it and think that, well, this is whatever in the mind, favoritism,

family. That comes out a lot, something that's hidden inside people. They don't see God! And that's the problem.

If we don't see God and understand that there is a way that God works, and that God leads and guides and directs us, and that He has a purpose in it, we're going to miss the mark. We're not going to be able to continue on. There's going to come a time of reckoning. Those things are happening.

So, **they who keeps His commandments** (instructions) **dwells in Him, and He in them.** That's the goal. That's the desire. That's the prayer. That you want God to dwell in you, Joshua to dwell in you so that you can dwell in them in this way of life. That's what it means to dwell in them. To dwell in, to live in the way of life they've revealed to us, to do it at one with God, of the same mind, the same thinking which has everything to do with what we speak, what we think about others and so forth, whether we're in unity and harmony with the Church, and where we're not to be thankful when we can see those things, to repent of them so we can get things right. God's desire is that we succeed, that we come through all this.

I was just thinking about some of these things this morning; I want to interject some things here, some things that might be rather long. I wasn't planning on giving this but because of things that have happened and things that continue to happen, because God is cleansing the Body, He's cleansing the Church. He's giving us opportunity to work more at cleansing ourselves, which we have to do, and then within the Body. It's both. Both are needed so that we can grow more. It's an opportunity to grow in fruit that we produce in our life because it's a spiritual thing. It's a beautiful thing.

So again, instruction that God gives to us, things that we can begin to learn. Again, I've mentioned about the ministry. Where we can first begin to learn about loving others. When it talks about this need, that we love one another, one of the main areas of life that it begins for us to really begin to grasp this more fully is truly within the ministry that God has given to His Church. Because if we have any problems with anyone that's ever been in God's ministry, that is in God's ministry (and there's a lot in there), then if we aren't able to love them and judge things properly in our own thinking and mind, it can be an incredible deficit.

Because the point being is if we can't learn to love those whom God places within the service of the ministry what about our love toward the rest of the Body? Because if we can't do it when God should be in the picture? Because that's the thing that's too often missing. When we miss the reality that God should be in the picture within the Body, the entire Body, but if we can't grasp that we better we should be able to at least start to grasp it within the ministry! Does that make sense?

Because we should be able to see the ministry from God, a relationship with God, how we respond to it, how we think toward it. Are we doing the things we should do? Do we go and ask for anointing when we are sick? There are some I believe, one not too long ago that is out of the Church this past year, that I don't think they ever, ever asked in their whole life for an anointing. They were sick at different times.

I think, how can you be in the environment of God's Church, and when you're sick and incapacitated—can't come to Sabbath services, as an example, or work or whatever it might be—and you don't ask, you don't obey God and go to His ministry and ask for anointing? What's going on in the mind? Well, there's a big problem there. Because it's about a relationship with God. And if we can't live it right toward the structure and the things that God gives us within fellowship?

That's why it should scare the you-know-what out of us when we're thinking wrong toward others in the Body, when we are judgmental toward someone else in the Body, when we are harsh to others in the Body, when we're thinking bad things about others in the Body. It doesn't mean that you can't know of things that someone has done wrong. But you have to be careful of how you judge then because none of us live things perfectly. We all are growing within the Body.

And sometimes, as we talked about, I think it was last Sabbath as well, there are some things that God has allowed within the Body, within the Church, some to honor and some to dishonor. He's let us experience all kinds of things within the Church because it's a matter of learning how to judge and how to work with people and be with people and how to see people and give people the benefit of the doubt until God brings it to the surface.

If there is something wrong let God bring it to the surface, let God reveal it! Because you don't know to what degree or how someone is being worked with. You don't know where they are perhaps in what they have been given – one talent, two, five, ten. You don't know, so you have to be very careful how you judge others and trying to put everybody on the same peg or where you are in your thinking or where you think you are.

These things are very dangerous, so we have to be very careful in how we think toward others. But you know what should be paramount in all this is within the Body, what should we see? God and Joshua the Christ. If we're blessed to be a part of the Body, what an awesome thing. But it's Christ's Body. It's the Church of God. It belongs to God. That should send chills up and down people's spine to think that they would mistreat, misjudge, not love properly others within the Body.

This has been a problem within the Church since it began, 31 AD. But we're being blessed to be able to see some of these things in a clearer way now than ever before, of how we're to live, given opportunity to do it. So much of that comes down to judgment and what we're being trained and taught in, in that regard.

So, I want to read my notes here that I put down. I think I mentioned most of it, but I want to take the time to make sure I get all this.

So again, in this area of judging. When women began to be ordained in the Church there was an incredible shift in thinking, and a matter of becoming convicted as to whether or not God is truly



revealing this. Then sometimes that can put people to the test as to “Do you know how you are learning what is true?” It should be a simple thing, but it really isn’t.

To be convicted of all the truths that have been revealed up to that point in time, to know that unity and oneness, and this has to come from God to have that ability to see and know those things so clearly. Like the things in 2005 about God and about Joshua, that he had a beginning in birth and life, and he hadn’t lived forever in that respect as Yahweh Elohim has, the Eternal Ever Existing God. That Joshua wasn’t like that; Joshua had a beginning. Awesome! Beautiful things that God has revealed to us in the Church to have and understand more fully, more completely.

And so, if we can’t understand those things, that those things have been revealed in a specific way, that God had to be in it, that God gave it, things that are so simple and so clear now. On and on it goes. I don’t care what area you look at in the truths.

Then you get to the one about women. “Yes, but” as someone said here recently, not in the Church, “but Paul said women are not to speak in the Church.” You think, well, that is true for almost two thousand years. But sometimes people can take things like that and say that’s like changing the Ten Commandments. If you come along, if someone comes along, some man comes along, says they’re an apostle, and says this is of God, that women are to serve in that regard, in that way, then it puts (sometimes) people to the test. It has within the Church. And because of how people have thought for so long even within the environment of the Church sometimes it’s just hard to make certain changes.

I think of simple ones sometimes, how we decided at one time we’d no longer have hymns in the Church. “Ahh!!” There are some that just had a conniption. They were gone because of it. “Can’t have hymns in the church.” It’s like, “This is sacrilegious!”

Prayers, opening and closing prayers. “How can you do that?! Who has that right?” That’s the question. And what’s the answer? It’s not changing the laws of God, and if God molds and fashions something and something that an apostle at one time said was right for the Church and then comes along and says different. It’s no different than Herbert Armstrong addressing certain things about make-up. Something simple as make-up. Yes. No. Yes. Whatever. People having a conniption over that. Tons of people tested at that time that couldn’t take it and they’re gone because they didn’t grasp, he’s God’s apostle and this is not a Ten Commandment.

There are administrative things that are changed. Women being able to be ordained within the Church or to speak within the Church has been an administrative thing from God Almighty. Either we believe that, or we don’t.

But sometimes, because of our human nature, if we’re not careful, we still have problems with that because of learning this thing that God is revealing to us about men and women and family and how it should be and how it needs to be and how it’s going to be taught and lived more fully in the Millennium,

and to understand why God is showing us these things the way it should have been from the very beginning with Adam and Eve. But things went awry, and God allowed that for nearly six thousand years then until He's correcting it now within the Church.

These are awesome things to know and to understand. They're also things that can take people out of God's Church if they don't understand and agree with yes, this is of God.

I think of something so basic and so simple we should be able to see God's hand in what He does, what He plans. I was thinking about this today, about what an incredible thing we ended up in Cincinnati, the largest congregation. I didn't know it was going to become the largest congregation, but it became the largest congregation. That's where it should be at in that respect as far as videos and so forth going out and a little bit more centralized (and this is working with the U.S. and so forth).

But I marvel at that. Because we had thought about toward the end there of making that decision to go to the Dallas area. We were definitely going out of the Toledo area and look what has happened. Toledo and Detroit, people who were with us in the beginning, not much left that were original in the sense of all the people. I think of when we came together on Holy Days all the people. And where are they after the Apostasy?

So, my question is, do you think it was by coincidence that we just ended up in Cincinnati or by God's design? See, I know it was by God's design, but I didn't know that at the beginning. But after a while, you can see, huh, there's a reason it turned out this way. There are things that happened within the Church, within the ministry, that these things have been by God's design. We learn from it. Sometimes people are ordained, and it hasn't done them good, they've used it in the wrong way. There are others who didn't need to go through it because God's training and molding and fashioning certain things within all of us.

I do have to say this, we have someone sitting here today who has handled this the best of all in the ministry I've ever seen in the sense of handling it well. It's just a matter of something that's changed within the Church, within the ministry, and supports it one hundred percent. Not bothered by it, not hurt by it in that respect in the sense of things that are said and spoken. Does that make sense? Sometimes there are battles with things like that, sometimes there aren't. Anyway, I had to say that as a thankfulness and a gratitude as well.

But anyway, it's great when we respond really well to God. Let's put it that way. So, I have announced here in the announcements something I want to mention now in the sermon because it goes along with some of this about a change in the Spokane area. Actually, Washington up into this part of Canada that's up to the north because we go halfway across and count that part over here, on down through Oregon and Washington, that Amanda is going to be over that, working with that.

Such changes as some of these are taking place a matter of a training and things that she is going to be learning because, see, I know that God's hand is in it. I know that there are certain things that I know that God gives at different times for a transition that we all are able to be trained in something over a period of time and then something else happens and we just move to wherever God is working with us, ever how God is working with us and respond accordingly, knowing the Church is in God's hands, in Christ's hands, and supporting that whatever we can.

Whenever it was said that women were to be ordained, it was up to the Church to support that one hundred percent, to be behind that one hundred percent, and to try to learn from that what God was doing. But that wasn't the case one hundred percent at all, and it still exists to a certain point, that some are having some difficulties with part of that. Only you between you and God can answer those things and deal with those things.

So, it's amazing how some things like that sometimes bring out certain things of judgment in people. I've used the example before of someone because they weren't ordained higher and someone else was within the Church when we were doing some of that for a period of time. But all as a part of a process of something God is doing to bring things to the surface so that individuals can see it. And if they don't see it and don't repent, they're gone.

That's what happened. Someone became so jealous because they thought they deserved that ordination. They traveled around all over the country to be where we might be. That's not wrong to do if you want to be some place where we are. But to do it all the time and then to think that because of that that you earned something above someone else? As soon as that happened – those two individuals had been close friends – and after that, they weren't because one person let it eat them up inside.

God allows a lot of different things to happen sometimes within the Body to teach us lessons. A lot of it has been in the different cycles we've gone through within the ministry. We've had all kinds of things happen; all kinds of changes that have never been done. I hope we can grasp and understand it's about being molded and fashioned by God, that we have unique experiences within this remnant group that are unique to us, of things that have never been done in the environment of God's Church. They can all be learned from.

So, I think of what God is doing because I always strive to look at what's taking place and why. I understand a part of it here because even for myself I have to plan ahead and think ahead because I understand that I don't have a whole lot of time in me. Now, either the end in the sense of Christ returning and the things that are going to happen in this world soon, but I've seen some things go a lot longer than what we thought they might.

Just because the world is talking about the use of nuclear weapons and what's going on in Ukraine and what's going on in the Middle East, and what's going on with Iran and what could happen there as far as Israel is concerned, these are incredible things, China and so forth. We see these things all over the

news. Well, not as much in the States. You've got to dig a little bit. But it's out there now in a way that it hasn't been out there two years ago profoundly so.

So again, 2016, I was out, and it's already 2024. It doesn't seem like that long. Time flies by. And 2019, had to have another one, quadruple bypass. And so far, feeling really good. But I said that one other time and the next week I was in the hospital. So, you never know when things are going to happen in your life. But for the sake of the Church and thinking ahead, just so we are prepared if something were to happen to me or to both my wife and me, there are others that are to fill in and there is an order of things.

There should be no question if something happens to me who God is working with towards the Church. She doesn't have to get up and give sermons though she did speak when I was on my three-year sabbatical. Right there in the back of the room. Obvious. And if something happens to her and happens to me, who is next? Ordination alone tells us who is next. "Well, yeah, and that's your child..." You know, people can get eaten up inside and begin to find fault with that.

I know that exists to a certain degree right now in God's Church. So, we have to be very careful to make sure that we are looking to see God in the picture of things. Because He is. This is God's Church. And if something like that were to happen, we should all know in our minds what's coming next. And because of that there are certain ones who know each other very well, and have for a long, long time, even since the Apostasy, though some were very young as teenagers and who now aren't, but they know each other so well and are able to communicate certain things with each other, and others that God has brought along that there is a uniqueness and a bond there that God has allowed to develop for a purpose and a reason.

Whether it be in the Millennium or in Elohim or whatever, there is always a reason to why God is doing what He's doing in molding and fashioning us. God is always in the picture. And if we don't look for that and don't understand that then something is wrong in the mind.

So, does all this make sense so far? We should see the potential of what God could be doing in the sense of looking ahead. If it's nothing else then just for the fact of our learning so that we do see God and realize there is a particular structure and a reason for that. I made some comments about Europe last week, and there shouldn't be any problems there. There shouldn't be anyone who doesn't respect every person who is ordained. The job is to be respected because God is in it. If God has set someone apart to serve in that capacity, they're to be respected because of God being respected and honored, to glorify God.

Yet so often within the Church that doesn't happen. Instead, human nature gets in the way and people judge and think that they should be there or someone else should be there or it's only being done because of friendship, because you have a certain friendship, or because of relatives or whatever. Nothing is farther from the truth. But people, if they think carnally, they're going to come up with those kinds of ideas.

I know that there are some who are listening today or will be listening next Sabbath who are thinking that way. You've got to get your mind right. You've got to see yourself for what you are, for what you're doing in your thinking. When you begin to let God be taken out of the picture and you're using your own carnal human reasoning that is one of the most dangerous things a person can do.

Again, God plans ahead for whatever it is always, always, always. He's planning ahead for all of us that are yielding to Him and wanting His way of life whether it be, again, for being in Elohim as a part of the 144,000 or being in the Millennium in the Church that continues on. There are plans that God already has well set out for how that's going to happen that Christ is implementing and doing. He's the one who's been given charge to see to it all. Beautiful to understand what's taking place.

And so, we're always thinking ahead or should be in the sense of looking to see what God might be doing and being on top of it, but always making sure that God's in the picture. I hope that these things have meaning to us, to understand there are ways that God molds and fashions us that we can't comprehend.

I'm going to take a little bit of time to go into something in the very beginning. I think about a time when I was at Ambassador College, my wife was at Ambassador College, we were written up in the college newspaper of going out to the ministry, that we were going to be married. We had our pictures in the newspaper. And so, they had all these students that were already determined that they were going to be going out in the ministry and they already knew different ones who were going to be married to each other or already engaged, and so forth, and so those things were written up about them.

And I think of that – and these things always generally happened even within the ministry around the country and around the world – around May. Here is a time that there are graduates coming out and they're going to be sent out to assist, to learn, to be trained in the ministry, and there are going to be things where some are going to be transferred, different ministers are going to be transferred. It generally always happened around the same time of year.

So, just giving you a little bit of history here of some things that happened, of how God did something different in the sense of the Church and how we were being worked with. Just before graduation, right at half of us were told you're not going out. I was one of them. "Okay." So, they were going to start a new program. They were realizing and understanding that it wasn't always necessarily the best thing that individuals would go out at 21, 20, 22 years old into the ministry as assistants even, and that's because there was more training they had to go through because there was a lack of experience there.

You know, when you're of age, it's a great age, but we're just starting an adult life and there are a lot of things to be learned yet. It reminds me of so many times of individuals who would get up in the ministry. Even at the Fast of Tabernacles, I would mention this before, of an individual who had two children who were very passive. Never gave their parents any trouble whatsoever. This guy got up and gave a sermon about childrearing, and you realize something is missing here. It was the experience of having extremely active children compared to an extremely passive child. There's a difference there.

There's a difference, people even within their own family sometimes obviously have to work with their children in different ways. One thing might work with one child that doesn't work with another. How do you get that? Well, you can't just get it by sitting down in a classroom or reading it in a book. You can't get the experience that way. You might get certain knowledge of how to work with things, but it doesn't mean you grasp and comprehend certain changes or certain things that might happen.

The same thing in marriage. Someone can come out from college who's not married and give a sermon on marriage, and it really shows then because if you don't have the experience you're limited in what you can share with others.

So anyway, going back with this story about what was happening, the desire was to try or to test out having some go out and work in the area of wherever they lived, go back to their jobs, and serve in the Church there, and learn what they can learn. And if they're picked up later on, great, and if not then to understand there are things that God does. But it gives more leeway and more ability to be trained, to learn things, to put things into experience so that the Church can be served in a greater way.

Anyway, it was seven years when we came to a point then that we'd served in the Houston area there. It was a church of about five hundred, six hundred people. I was ordained after six years as an elder and then the seventh year I was working out in California at the time on a particular job from Houston and calling on an engineering company out there, and I went and talked to Leroy Neff because he was the minister of the area there in Houston where we were before.

I've mentioned this before how he was brought to headquarters by Herbert Armstrong because he was going to put him over the treasury because there wasn't anyone he felt he could trust that was an evangelist. Now, to me, that's an awesome thing to understand. Even back then there were problems in the church and so Herbert Armstrong felt that he could trust one person who was a pastor in a region, but no one that was at headquarters. He often said ever who was in charge of the money (the funds) is in charge of the church, and too many would try to take control of certain things. That's human nature and it happened within God's Church as well. And so, he was very careful about that because he realized the power that's there when people think, if God's not in the picture. So, Leroy Neff was one who was totally loyal, totally faithful, and he could be entrusted.

Anyway, so I went to talk to him when I was out there because he was our pastor in Houston, and talked to him about what I was doing and what I was even doing within the Church back there since he was gone. He was maybe a year or two he was away. Anyway, he said, "Wait a minute." He said, "Do you have some time?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, I want to send you upstairs to talk to Joe Tkach, and just tell him what you've told me." So, okay. So, he called up Mr. Tkach because he was over church administration at that time. So, I went upstairs and talked with him and left.

Six months later got a phone call there in Houston, "Would you like to come full-time in the ministry?" So, the point being was when we were sent out that after seven years of experiencing what we'd

experienced, I began to learn something that I hadn't seen before. That was that people in the Church area and other people were commenting on, had commented on, how they really appreciated that someone was a trainee being trained within the ministry who knew what it was like to hold down a full-time job and not to come out immediately. Does that make sense?

This was the intended goal of the Church in the first place, although it didn't pan out. But the point being is that during that six and a half, seven years, before I was given a call, those things, my desire was, sure, if that's where I was wanted, so be it. That's the way everyone should think. Whatever God does and places you for or in you, do. You respond to that. But sometimes we miss out on understanding what God might be doing with us over a long period of time.

The kind of jobs that I had and the things that I was doing, I began to understand that God molds and fashions us wherever we are and whatever kind of situation we are in – in our companies, in our jobs, and how we respond, how we live them, how we think. Too often people don't think about the importance of such things. God molds and fashions us wherever we are.

I learned that there were things that I would be using later on, candidly, as an apostle that I was learning and taught way back then during those seven years. I think about that sometimes and it's very moving to me because you realize there are things that God molds and fashions us in sometimes that we don't even grasp what's taking place. He does it until finally you live something and then it dawns on you, "Yeah, I learned that. I was learning that then." Awesome!

And so it is in God's Church continually, that there are things that sometimes we might not understand. You keep seeking to put God first and God works with us, He molds and fashions us wherever we are because He's planning ahead. It's always a matter of keeping God in the picture and not relying on ourselves.

So, if something is a matter of God's purpose, we all are, every one of us, and you don't necessarily know what He's doing and how He's doing it until later on. There'll be things in the God Family later on that we're going to have the "Ah-ha" moments. "Ah, I know what You were doing, what You were helping me to see." Every time you have those they're beautiful. Whenever you have an "ah-ha" moment, and you realize that something maybe happened a long time ago to prepare you for where you are now.

So, the point of all this was God is always to be in the picture. We're not to rely on ourselves. Things aren't always done the same way; things are done differently. We have to be careful how we judge and not look down upon and not try to deal with things in a carnal way that we think toward someone else but to try to see what God is doing in our lives, in one another's lives. It's really seeing God in one another.

That's something that I'm thankful for in the last couple of years that God has helped me to see more and more within the Church, this level of God being in people. Those are the things that inspire me,

when we see that, when I understand that. That's what we should strive to see anyway, to see how God is working in people's lives. To be thankful for that. Do we do it perfectly, does everyone do it perfectly? No. But we are together, and we are a Family.

What a horrible thing if within the Family we have jealousy or envy or feeling that something isn't judged right or done right, and we begin to judge in an improper way. These are the kinds of things that take people out of God's Church or where people just give up and don't keep trying and keep fighting. Sad.

There was a lot more I was going to say but I'll stop there.

John 15:1. God wants us to learn experiences. He lets us experience all kinds of things. Wherever we are, whatever situation we're in in life in the environment of God's Church, He's working with us and there are things He's doing if we're responding to Him in our minds that we don't grasp. And so much of it we won't until later on, but it's a matter of understanding that and yielding ourselves to the process, wanting whatever He does, whatever His will is. He knows what's best for us. He knows where we're going to be in the Body. That's because He's working on us to be within the framework.

Even in the Millennium, there is a framework that God is already working on. It's the beginning of that. There is that which is getting toward the end as far as the 144,000 is concerned, almost finished, but there is also that which is being worked with to go on into the Millennium, and it's a part of a structure. Those who will have part in that it's beyond your comprehension, of how awesome that is and will be and the kind of lives you're going to be able to live in the Church in a new age.

You don't even begin to grasp how others are going to look up to you and look to you. If we could only understand that. Because you were a part of this. Because you were a part of something that was small that God was working with to help prepare things for His Son's coming to this earth and we began to live them, we began to do them. We have gone through some horrifying, excruciating, painful things. That's a part of the process. But it makes us stronger. You keep your eyes on God and it's a beautiful thing then.

So again, that's why I've commented so often that's why we have to be refined and God is not going to allow anything into His Church in a new age that hasn't grown and is prepared for what's awaiting them because it's so easy sometimes to be raised up, to be lifted up in thinking about our own importance. That would be so hurtful and bad, especially you think about the beginning of the Millennium and if some responded in a way that they saw themselves as being important and great. That's not what it's about. It's about God's plan. It's about opportunities to serve, to teach, to be a light, to be an example. Those are exciting things.

So, we can't comprehend what it's going to be like when people are going to be looking up to you. "You're one of those?" "You're one of those!" and you think that doesn't spread fast? "You were one of them?!" Because they're not going to have others, especially those who have been changed to spirit. But



to be able to live around, to be in an area around, to be in a congregation with, awesomely moving to those who see it. Wow is the world going to change!

Again, **John 15:1—I am the true vine; my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away.** We're in that stage in a very powerful way within God's Church right now. It's sobering, sobering, sobering, and sometimes really painful. But you can't give this to anyone. The bottom line is all who choose and hold fast, that's your Family. That's your Family and be thankful for them. And that which drags and hurts, that's what's better. Theirs will be another time but not now.

**Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.** So, even within this series I've been giving and saying some of the things I have, there are going to be some who have a little bit of pain with some of that because it's a part of a pruning process, it's a part of an ability to come to question, "Am I guilty of doing that? Do I have wrong thinking toward some who have been ordained?" Women especially. If you're a man, even more so.

But sometimes even women toward women, they can have these feelings of men toward men as far as "Why are you there?" That's not what it's about. Sometimes we think that's what it's about, that that's what we have to have, that's the way it has to be, and that's not. It's a part of a process of teaching, of molding, and fashioning, of experience so we can grow in all kinds of experiences within the Church.

That seven years that we went out, they were some of the most incredible for molding and fashioning certain things within us, within me. I can speak personally. (You want to get up here and speak about it?) Of anything I could have gone through, I'm so thankful. I'm truly so thankful I didn't go right out and that I had that opportunity to be molded and fashioned through some different experiences. Awesome!

**Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bring forth more fruit.** To glorify God, bearing more fruit. **You are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.** The instruction, the guidance, the direction that God gives, and we respond to it, that's how we're clean, able to be forgiven, able to continue to grow.

Again, it was stated last Sabbath, "Where or not and to what degree we utilize, employ, put into service God's spirit in our lives is totally up to each of us." No one else can do it for us. It's up to us. "This determines the fruit or lack of it in our lives. This determines the level or even ability to which we can glorify God in our lives." That's really profound to understand such things, to see them on a spiritual plane.

So, let's turn over to Matthew 6. We are to grasp the necessity of Christ and God dwelling in us, of giving us of the holy spirit on a daily basis. It's a daily thing! "Give us this day our daily food." He didn't say, "Give us this month," and you can just be stored up for the whole month. It's something we have to do

on a daily basis. It's a relationship with God. Awesome! That's what produces fruit as we yield ourselves to God.

So, here an outline of prayer because prayer is this process or part, if you will, of asking God, and understanding the focus point of this is His power, His spirit, His life, and that of His Son to be able to dwell in us because there is no other way we can change.

**Matthew 6:10—Your Kingdom come.** Well, we have that one pretty strong in our lives because of the timing we live in and our desire for God's government. But it has to be because it's mixed with that which we see in the world, that we have somewhat of a kinship to Lot as he looked at where he lived and it said, "He vexed his righteous soul day by day," and seeing how humanity was changing.

That should affect us and how we think about young people and what environment they're in, what they're growing up in, what they see on TV or whatever it might be in YouTube or Tick tock, tick tock. Okay, Tic Toc. Things that are so horrible in what they have access to that are molding and fashioning the way they think. And to see what's coming out of all this, to see what's happening with government.

I think of all the stuff that comes across the border, the fentanyl. You know, that could be stopped so quickly, so powerfully to where it wouldn't be anything what it is today. We have the ability and the power to do it, but nobody is doing it. You think, why not?

You know, instead we're on the opposite side, just let more come in, open them up wider down there, and then don't have any police out here, and where you do have police make sure that you have it within the system, within the courts that they're let right out right quickly so they don't have to have a monetary bond to, you know, to pay; they can just be let free. All the insanity that's taking place!

I don't know about you. This should hurt. To vex your righteous soul day by day to realize what people are doing, a country fifteen years ago, ten years ago that was so much different than what it is today. It's being destroyed fast within. It's insanity. And if you don't think there are some demonic powers that have supercharged strength right now? Because it's a matter of humanity yielding themselves to such things and these things are getting worse and worse.

I was thinking this morning about how I said a few years back that God had taken His favor and help away from this country, and He did. You think about how fast these things are going and it hurts to see what's happening. I hate to see the minds of people getting so messed up. Don't know if I should talk about any of it. I think about in some schools where they recognize— and you don't have to look it up —"furries." If you don't know what it is, you're blessed. But it's out there.

People in a hospital giving birth. Well, one is giving birth. One is a man; one is a woman. Can I say that? Can I be kicked off of YouTube for that? Yeah, probably. Anyway, and here they're dressed like animals and the hospital has to allow it. We have two people who work in the hospital back there in Cincinnati and they're talking about this story. I can't remember how they were dressed. Seemed like one might

have been dressed as a fox or something and one is a dog and crawling around on the floor. The wife is up there giving birth.

What is wrong that it's even allowed? But people are afraid. They could be sued if they don't give in to certain things like this and allow certain things like this to exist. Schools that might have a sandbox for "furries," because they're animals, acting like animals. So, they can't go to the toilets in the restroom like others, they have to have a sandbox. I mean, what kind of a world do we live in?

So, are we aware of certain things that hurt us inside? That we hate to see young people grow up in this world. I think of what the next generation would be like if they became into the government and power, corporations, and so forth. Then I think, well, I don't want to be around that. If time were to go on, what country do I want to go to? Then it's like, you're trapped. "Hurry up, Elon Musk, and get those things that'll go to Mars!" Just kidding. It'd be there too.

**Your Kingdom come.** It should be something we're able to pray more fervently.

**Your will be done in earth as in heaven.** Now, that one there, you know, just this outline of prayer, to think about some of the things we pray about. This is an outline of prayer that Christ gave, and you think these are important things. Is our heart in it, we want God's government because we see what this world is like? That's been for the last two thousand years. Everyone in God's Church was to be of his mindset, "Your Kingdom come," to realize this world doesn't have the answers; mankind cannot govern himself.

"Your will be done in earth as it is in heaven." That's really to us. So much so that we're looking at ourselves. Are we doing God's will? Are we seeking to live what God has given us opportunity for? Are we fighting against everything in our own carnal nature and seeking help to overcome?

It's God's will, not ours. That's the point. So often we just live our own will, what we want, how we think things should be. Not just for ourselves but for others primarily because that's how we judge so often.

**Give us this day our daily bread.** We're to pray to God like that. "I need help daily." It should register up here, daily bread. That's why the example of fasting should teach us so much because we realize that if you fast without food and water and you don't have daily food how fast you get weak. And if you don't learn it for the first day, go ahead and try it for a second day. You're going to learn it sooner or later, the analogy then of what it means to be without God, without God's spirit, daily food, daily bread, that life living within us.

But how often and how many have lived that? I'm guilty of it. Things have happened in my life where I've had to address them more fully, with your relationship with God and understanding what's more important and understanding you better not be relying on yourself. Because if you're not praying on a regular basis, you're going to get weaker. If you're not seeking God in your life and seeking to change things in life and your thinking and so forth, if you're not working on those things actively day by day, just thinking about them and praying to God about whatever it might be.

So again here, we grasp this isn't about this kind of prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," it isn't something that's just physical because that's kind of what the world does. It's like it's a physical thing. That's why there is an importance of learning balance there, of what is sound and what is balanced. It's not just something to do and thinking that well, we give a blessing or whatever people want to call it over a meal three times a day if that's the case.

And is that what God wants for people when they go to a restaurant, to make sure that they're praying and bowing their heads and making a show of what they believe, and somehow this is pleasing to God, by doing the same thing and it gets just repetitive and you say the same thing? What does that mean?

So, even within the Church, we've given certain guidelines to help people to think about some of this in order to have an experience and then to learn from that, well, what is the balance? Because sometimes we have to learn the other side of something. It's kind of like Johnny talking about how we swerve from one ditch to the other, and once in a while, we're in the middle – when we're crossing over to the other side. Anyway, love that example.

That's kind of how our human nature is. And so it is with something like this, we have to go kind of from one extreme to another and then come back to a balance within the Body, even within the Church.

So, it's not a matter of just wanting physical food to sustain our physical lives, it's about learning the lesson from what this is supposed to teach, that we do it spiritually, we look to God day by day to be fed spiritually. Prayers for our spiritual lives.

So again, I thought it'd be good to bring some of this back into balance somewhat when it comes to physical food. I think it's great when there is a group of people together, a larger group. So, it's not something you do at breakfast, and lunch, and dinner and it becomes a repetitive thing. The most important thing you do each day is your own private prayer between you and God that God said to go someplace by yourself, be someplace by yourself, that you do this between you and God.

That is what prayer is about, it's about this relationship with God and looking to God and praying about the things that are important in your thinking toward God and whatever. So, it's not a matter of things that are a matter of repetition all the time, day by day, or whatever, that gets to a point where they don't mean anything.

So, proper and right when there is a large group, like tonight. Just to have everybody together and have a prayer that does thank God for the opportunity of being together, the opportunity to have such an abundance, to have what we have, the food and so forth, and the fellowship. That's good and appropriate.

Also, I hope parents are doing this but sometimes because we haven't gone into this, but to think about, how do you teach children about prayer? Well, we need to. So, to work with children, to think about God, to think about prayer in their life and maybe even sometimes as an example maybe even at a meal

on a Friday night or whatever, might be if that's a special time for you or special occasion as far as a family, for someone to say something. Or to be with them before they go to bed. There are so many ways to teach a child about God and about a relationship with God and about praying to God, about looking to God.

When there is something that happens in their life that hurts, that's painful, might be something in school, to say, "Well, have you prayed to God about that? And would you like me to go with you and we can pray to God about that," and say something that will help them to learn from your example of what you're saying and you're asking for help in the school system or whatever it might be. And that probably happens plenty often or whatever, you know. Or with a neighbor or something, they got into it, and they come home bleeding.

So again, think of different ways you might be able to do some of those kinds of things because, again, it doesn't just happen once you get baptized that you start learning about prayer. It's something that, again, is a parent's responsibility to start working with children then as well. So again, balance. Strive for those things.

**Matthew 6:5—And when you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites who love to pray while standing in the synagogues.** So, how do I put this? It's one of the reasons we don't pray in services anymore. Because sometimes for some, and it only has to be a few, it's something that's taken as a matter of pride and being seen. Those are the wrong reasons to pray. Again, not necessarily obviously a healthy thing spiritually. And so, for us to experience and to learn that we don't have to have that, that it's something we should all do.

The primary thing is that we're doing this before services, we're asking God to feed us, to nurture us, to fill us, to inspire what is given to us, to help us to be inspired by what is given to us, that we be able to drink in what God is going to feed us. Those are the kinds of prayers we need to have ourselves before we ever come to services. Those are far more important than someone who might come up and have a prayer, say a prayer for the whole congregation. Yet there are occasions for some of that.

Balance. Everything doesn't always have to be the same. Things can change. There are things we can learn from it.

Like music. It's amazing sometimes how people put importance on something like that, and it's like if you don't have that in between the sermonette and the sermon or at the first... I don't even remember now if it was before the prayer or after the prayer. Then at the end as well after services are over with. And if we're not all singing and singing to God then we're really messed up.

There are administrative decisions made because, a part of it, because of hotels. They don't want people in religious groups to be singing and people in hallways and other places hearing it. It's just a common thing anymore. I have a harder time sometimes as soon as you tell them it's a church.

Sometimes we don't set a good example, people don't set a good example in some of those kinds of things. They're just, and especially in the way the world thinks, you have to take those things into consideration. That was in the Church from the very beginning. It was one of the reasons that women weren't to speak in the Church because it's understanding the way of the world is. Sometimes you have to adjust to deal with the world so you can be a light and not just be a thorn in their side and make it worse in the sense of how the world is going to respond to you, to be even more out there.

There is balance in certain things and even at certain times.

So, **you're not to be like the hypocrites who love to pray while standing in the synagogue and on the corners of the streets, so that they may be seen of others.** Something I hate, I do not like it (I guess that's pretty close to hate), is if someone has a job to do in God's Church, whatever it might be, if it's a matter of opening and closing prayer, if it's the matter of the song leader, if it's a matter of the piano player, if it's a matter of whatever it might be or whatever job or function it is, if someone is more concerned with how they appear, that others see them, that is sick, that is wrong, it's a wrong spirit, it's a wrong mind, and it has to be repented of.

It's not a matter of about us. Anyone who ever serves in any capacity with whatever that might be, I don't care what it is. It might be pulling up the tape, helping me out after services. If in our mind we're being seen by others, something is wrong! We have to fight against that kind of thing because it's dangerous spiritually. I hope we understand those kinds of things happen with human beings. To be seen of others?

There are times when I've come around in certain situations that all of a sudden someone else will jump in and do something. Whereas on other occasions when I'm not there they don't do it. So, what does that tell me? Something that's not good, that I don't like. I don't like seeing, I don't like hearing about it. Does that make sense? I hope it does.

God doesn't want that from us. He wants us to be of a humble spirit. It's not about show. It's not about us. That's why there have been so many difficulties through time, and especially with all the kinds of changes we may have made within the ministry. There are things to learn. The primary one is humility. We're going to be humble regardless of what we're doing. We're going to serve God the best we can in whatever situation we have and learn from it and grow from it. And if someone else has an opportunity, to be thankful that they're able to grow in that, to be taught and whatever it might be, and to support whatever God is doing at any moment in time. Sometimes because of the changes that tests us. Do we support everything that God is doing at any moment in time within the Church?

So, it says here, **Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.** If that's what someone wants, they hurt themselves spiritually, and the only reward they got out of it was something very carnal and physical. They were seen by others. And how others thought about that, if they're spiritually on target, spiritually

stirred up, they're going to see what I see, "They like to be seen by others. I hope they learn their lesson."

**Verse 6—But you, when you pray, enter into your room,** meaning a room where you can be alone. That's all it is. It's not a closet. Even sometimes with the Church in times past it's been like, clear out a closet or make something like a closet so we can go into the closet and do our praying. It's not even a word for that!

We have closets today, great big ones sometimes because people have all these shoes and all the clothes and everything. You need more room. To have something with just one sliding door on it, it's like, "That's insanity. I can't get everything in there!"

But to build another one, to build one that's just special for you to go into? No, it's just use what you have. Go into another room and shut the door. Maybe it's understood in the family when the door is shut... Sometimes I don't remember to shut a door, or my wife doesn't shut the door. I think most times she shuts the door. But it's like, okay the door is shut, I guess I shouldn't go in.

So, **go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret.** We don't know where God is...and we know where God is. His spirit, His power, we can't comprehend it. He can hear us anywhere, anytime. He knows us. He knows our thoughts all the time. I don't comprehend that might, that power, but that's God Almighty.

"Pray to your Father who is in secret." So, the primary purpose is a private one. That's what Christ was talking to us about. It's a private one. Because there can be more danger when it's a show or in an audience. I hope we understand that. There can be a lot more danger to someone on a spiritual plane if it's done in a larger group.

So, any time that anything ever comes into your mind about being seen by others just fight against it and ask God for help and say, "You know, I really hate that part of my human nature." Because it's just a part of human nature that people have. They have to fight against it, to ask God to cleanse that out, to be of a right mind, to not let such things in, to not be lifted up by anything that's so wacko on a spiritual plane.

**Pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees in secret shall render (give), give back to you openly.** That's what it's saying. Not the word for "reward." We look at it as a reward but it's not a matter of something we earn; it's a matter of something that God sees us doing for the right reasons and it's in secret, it's between us and Him. We're pouring our heart out in how we think toward God Almighty and He hears us.

They don't even have to be words spoken in the air. It can be all in the mind praying to God. Maybe the lips are in, moving inside a little bit because it's hard to communicate this way as human beings and so I catch myself doing that sometimes. So, we're all different.

“And your Father who sees in secret shall give or give back to you openly.” That’s what it’s about. So, we want His holy spirit, we want to live right, we want to change the way we’re acting or speaking, and God will help us then openly in the sense of what we want to do that’s right. He’ll help us to live it through the power of His holy spirit. It’s a beautiful thing.

**But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the gentiles.** So, things that get repetitive we even have to catch ourselves, to see at times if maybe we’re saying the same thing, and we have to work at changing that. Maybe go to some Psalms or whatever it might be, or to go through some of the outline of prayer on occasion just to see that we are covering certain things within an outline of prayer at times.

It doesn’t have to be all these things all the time every time but to make sure we’re addressing some of these things in our life and in our prayers. It’s about measuring self. It’s about looking at our self as we look to God.

**Don’t use vain repetitions as the gentiles. For they think or believe that they will be heard by how long they are speaking – by much speaking –** ever how you want to phrase this. So, that’s not what it’s about. It’s not about how long you do it. You know, not how long we wax eloquently because that’s been in God’s Church as well. It’s like people had to measure their time. I’ve known of ministers who have spoken about those things: “If you pray for ten minutes,” it’s like, “What is wrong with you?!” Half an hour? And if that’s good, what about an hour? Well, does God want to hear you that long?

There are things in our lives that don’t take a long time to pray to God about. They’re important. It’s not a matter of the length of time, it’s what comes out of us. It’s what comes out that’s deep inside of us that we feel that’s important between us and God. Some days there have been times I’ve gone along and it’s like it’s really short because of something perhaps I’ve gone through or whatever it might be. God knows that inside of me as well.

Other times I have it pretty spaced out because my primary time is when I’m out walking. It’s the time I enjoy the most in coming before God. I remember being in Bricket Wood, had beautiful sunken gardens back in the back, one area, a fishpond, a little bridge that went over some water. And especially in the spring with all the azaleas, and then later on the rhododendrons. An incredibly beautiful area. I walked down through there and that’s where I learned it’s okay to pray to God out in the open.

Because we had what we called booths or closets. Huge closet areas in some of the dorms built up where people could go into those closet areas and be alone. There’d be times that some would like to holler out loud so that everyone could hear them, because of their prayers, because their prayers were so good. There were others who’d go in there and after a half an hour, an hour you’d hear some snoring. Because they’d want to be sure they didn’t come out too quickly. Because someone sees you go in, it’s like, “Okay, you were only in there for five minutes. What’s wrong with you.”



This kind of human thinking sometimes that people have in their minds. God wants what's in the mind. It might take two minutes sometimes to express that and be sufficient. Other times it's going to be longer, whatever that is, whatever you're going through in life. And usually, you'll tell God about it in the first place, "This is what I'm going through. And today isn't my best day. I need help!" All kinds of things in life you just cry out to God because He's your Father. He's your Father! He loves you. He wants to hear from you. He wants to help you. His greatest desire is to help you, is to give you help, His spirit to fight the things that help self become better, and not just to be carnal. Because that's what we are automatically. But to have some change take place in the mind.

**But when you pray don't use vain repetitions; they think they'll be heard for their much speaking.**

**Therefore, do not be like them for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask**

**Him.** Sometimes it's just a matter, "Well, God already knows that." Well, yeah, but you're to tell God that, you're to express that to God because it's about a relationship. And just because God already knows, it doesn't mean it's going to happen or He's going to give certain things to you. It's a matter of what do you want? How do you see things? What are you crying out for? God wants to hear from us.

God knows our mind, our thoughts, our desires, as well as our actual needs, obviously, but it's in the knowing of our thoughts, our thinking, that God's concerned what's inside of us because that reflects where we are in our relationship with Him. That's what He wants, is that relationship.

**Verse 9—Therefore, this is the manner in which you are to pray: Our Father who is in heaven, holy (sanctified) will be Your name.** So again, things to go through these.

I'm going to stop there. But there is so much contained in just this short outline that Christ gave of things that we can build upon, that we can have in our life, and sometimes maybe just one of these verses, that we pray about it at a particular time with God and express our thinking toward Him and what we're learning from it, and what things like this mean.

"Our Father who is in heaven, holy (sanctified) will be Your name." Well, how? It already is. It's by what we do. That's what it's about. It's about, do we set the things apart to be holy that are supposed to be set apart? Do we set prayer apart? Because that's holy before God. He talks about that. It's like the offering that goes up in the incense, and when that's offered, when God receives that like incense into the nostrils and you smell that aroma, sweet-smelling, and it's an awesome thing as far as God's concerned toward us when we do those things. It's making stronger our relationship.

So, I'm going to stop there today, continue on next Sabbath.

But again, one of the first things, one of the most powerful tools we have that God has given to us whereby we can glorify Him is through the process of prayer. That's where it starts. It's a matter of implementing those things. That's why I love those words, "to employ," "to put into practice." Because that's up to us. No one can do it for us. And if we really want it, if we really desire it then that's what

we're going to do. That reveals things to God and to the level or to the degree which God can work in us and give us more of His holy spirit. Awesome!