

PRESENTING EVERY MAN PERFECT

*Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even **the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints**: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; **that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**: Whereunto **I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.***

Colossians 1:25-29

Well, tonight I want to talk about something that may be relevant in our lives today. The subject is overcoming sin. There is so much confusion regarding this issue, even among those who have left the religious system. The apostle Paul talked about a mystery in the book of Colossians that was hidden from the saints until after the resurrection of Jesus. The mystery is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*”. The purpose of this mystery, the end result of this mystery, is that every believer would be presented “*perfect*” in Christ Jesus”.

Of course, those *inside* the Religious System don’t believe we can be presented perfect in Christ because they have been taught their whole life that as long as we are human, we must sin. They have been taught it’s not possible to be presented perfect in Christ Jesus, even though Paul clearly said this is the purpose of the mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory.

My concern however, is not for those *inside* the system who are being taught wrong doctrine regarding the issue of overcoming sin. In my view, there’s nothing you can do for these kinds of people. As long as they sit under *ministers* who teach them they must continue to sin as long as they are human, nothing will reach them. They will have to get out of that kind of atmosphere. They will have to stop sitting under the spiritual authority of those kinds of ministers.

My concern tonight is for those who have come out of that system, who have come to see that the Scripture *does* teach going on to perfection, but who have placed themselves under the influence of preachers and Bible teachers *out here* who are no different than preachers and Bible teachers inside the system who say—either explicitly or implicitly—that as long as we are human, or until the resurrection, we *must* sin.

It’s very sad because *the reason* God calls people out of the Religious System is so they will live and walk in *the reality* that perfection is the goal of the Christian life, and that perfection can be attained while we are alive in the flesh. God didn’t call us out of that system so we would form little groups and cliques that preach the same message of *defeat* regarding sin that’s being preached *inside* the system!

Yet, that’s exactly what’s happening. I’ve seen it time and time again over the years. As a matter of fact, it’s happening right now to some of *you* who are in this room tonight, and some of you who listen to the audio’s from the web site. You are sitting under the teaching of a Bible teacher (and it ain’t me) who denies that we can reach perfection in this life.

Just recently, that same Bible teacher declared in no uncertain terms it's not possible to reach sinless perfection in this life. Listen people, when you stand up and declare that it's not possible to reach a state of sinlessness until the Lord returns and we get a new body, that's *the same* as saying we must continue to sin from now until that day. There is no difference—**NO DIFFERENCE**—between telling your congregation they cannot possibly attain a sinless walk in this life, and telling them they must continue to sin in this life. If anyone can see a difference between these two ideas or statements, please speak up right now and explain the difference to me.

One of this minister's followers responded to his declaration of defeat by saying: "...*can't find "sinless perfection" in the word...only Jesus Christ who knew no sin, became sin for us*". Well, I've got news for that brother, and for that Bible teacher, and for anyone else who walks in that kind of unbelief and defeat—you are *ignorant* of God's Word; you don't know what you are talking about; and you might as well go back into that Religious System because you've already nullified the very purpose for which God called you out!

The Scripture teaches beyond a shadow of a doubt that it's possible go on to perfection in this life. And when it uses the term perfection, it's talking about more than "being made complete" or coming to a place of "spiritual maturity". Those definitions of the term are "cop-outs"—invented by people who were afraid to face the truth of what the Scripture was telling them. The term Perfection is talking about *moral perfection*. It's talking about *entire sanctification*. It's talking about being brought to a place of *sinlessness*, to a place where we are no longer sinning.

This is the lesson the history of Old Testament Israel was meant to show New Testament believers. In the book of Hebrews, the writer talks about a "rest" which God's people in every generation must enter into by faith. For the nation of Israel, entering that rest meant taking possession of that which God had prepared for *them*—which was the geographical Land of Promise.

*But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, **To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts,** as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, **They shall not enter into my rest.**)*

What's the writer of Hebrew saying here? He is warning US not to harden *our* hearts if we hear God's voice today, like the children of Israel hardened *their* hearts when they heard His voice back then. And what was the voice saying to the children of Israel at that time? The voice was telling them to go in and possess the Land He had promised to give them. But they would not go in when they heard His voice because they were living in unbelief. They either couldn't or they wouldn't believe that God would enable them to defeat the "giants" that inhabited that land. They looks at the size of the giants and they hardened their hearts to the command to go in and defeat them.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 3:6-19

Again, it is made clear by the writer of Hebrews that the issues in this situation is not “sin” in general—like drinking and smoking and cursing and stealing and gambling, etc. The sin is the sin of UNBELIEF. The writer warns us to take heed, lest there be a “evil heart of unbelief” in us and we “depart” from the living God. Once again, the departing the writer is referring to is not your typical backsliding into the bars and the drug scend and all that. He is not talking about returning to the world. He’s talking about departing from a trust in God to bring them into the Land they were promised. He is talking about letting our FAITH’ in what God can do, depart from us, and turn instead to judging things by the sight of the natural eyes.

All this is about the Israelites not having faith to conquer the Promised Land. When the voice spoke and told them to go in, they departed from the faith God had been trying to build in them through their journey in the wilderness. They hardened their hearts and they said we CANNOT POSSIBLY take the land. God said we can, but we don’t believe Him. Our hearts are full of unbelief. All we can see is the size of the giants and the fortifications of their cities. Then the writer says:

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Hebrews 4:1-2

We have a rest that *we* are to enter into; just as the Israelites had a rest that *they* were to enter into. Us entering that rest means that we appropriate that which God has prepared for *us*. Just as Israel had a promised land to conquer, so we have a promised land to conquer. Israel had to conquer literal nations. We have to conquer sin. Our promised land is nothing less than perfection. Our rest is attaining the fulness of God and the fullness of Christ.

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length,

*and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye **might be filled with all the fulness of God.***

Ephesians 3:16-19

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For **the perfecting of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect man**, unto **the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:***

Ephesians 4:11-13

Tell me, Mr. Preacher; tell me, Mr. Bible teacher; why would Paul pray that God's people be "*filled with all the fulness of God*" if it were not possible to be filled with all the fulness of God? Do you think Paul went around mumbling prayers that were impossible for God to answer? Are you going to stand up and proclaim it's *not possible* to be filled with the fulness of God in this life? If not, will you try to say the person who has come to the place where they are filled with all the *fulness* of God must continue to sin? Doesn't the very term fulness of God imply that this will be a place of freedom from sin?

What about Paul's desire that we all come to "*the stature of the measure of the fulness of Christ*"? Do you think Paul would speak this kind of thing if he knew it wasn't possible in this life? Do you think he would lay such a goal out before the saints if he knew it wasn't possible to reach in this life? Is that the way you see it, Mr. Bible teacher? Do you believe it's impossible to come the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ in this life? If not, will you try to say the person who has come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ must continue to sin? Doesn't the very term *stature of the fulness of Christ* imply that this will be a place of freedom from sin?

The bottom line is this: preachers and Bible teachers who say it's not possible to go on to perfection—and the sheeple who follow them—are too scared to admit the truth because deep down inside, they know they're *not willing* to pay the price that's required to reach that goal. But instead of being *honest* with themselves and with God; instead of admitting they aren't willing to pay the price; they deny the possibility of reaching perfection. This lets them off the hook—it justifies their unbelief. Just like Israel, they have a heart that is filled with unbelief; and just as Israel used the giants as an excuse for their unbelief, so these people use the "we-have-to-sin-as-long-as-we-are-human" line as an excuse for *their* unbelief.

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself **without spot** to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Hebrews 9:14

*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb **without blemish and without spot:***

I. Peter 1:18-19

The Scriptural definition of perfection is different from the one these frightened ministers have come up with. For instance, look at how the word “spot” is used in the New Testament—especially with regards to the kind of life Jesus lived. What do the terms, “without blemish” and “without spot” speak of in the above verses? Are they not references to the *sinless life* of Jesus? Aren’t the writers emphasizing that because Jesus was *sinless*, His blood is able to forgive and cleanse those who place their trust in Him? It’s clear that being *without blemish* and *without spot* is a not simply talking about “spiritual maturity”—which, by the way, can be defined many different ways—but is a reference to *sinlessness*.

*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye **may be found of him** in peace, **without spot**, and blameless.*

II. Peter 3:13-14

*That he might sanctify and cleanse [the Church] it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, **not having spot**, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and **without blemish**.*

Ephesians 5:26-27

If being without spot and without blemish is talking about walking in sinless perfection when it comes to Jesus, why do ministers try to *change the meaning* of these terms when the apostles apply them to us? When Peter tells us to be diligent to be found *without spot* and *blameless* when the Lord returns, on who’s authority do these ministers deny the Scriptural meaning of these terms?

When the apostle Paul says that Jesus died in order to present to Himself a people who will have *no spot or wrinkle*, who will be *without blemish*, who do you think you are, Mr. Bible teacher, to deny what the Scripture plainly says. Who do you think you are calling the apostle a liar. *You* are the liar! On who’s authority do you boast that Jesus will *not* be able to cleanse and purify His Church because it’s not possible to stop sinning as long as we are alive in this flesh?

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Romans 8:28-30

*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

II. Corinthians 3:18

*For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, **even your perfection.***

II. Corinthians 13:9

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to **present you faultless** before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

Jude 1:24

*These are they [the 144,000 who stood on Mt. Zion with the Lamb] which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth **was found no guile**: for they are **without fault** before the throne of God.*

Revelation 14:4-5

The Scripture associates “perfection” with possessing the fulness of God and the fulness of Christ; with being free of spots and wrinkles; with having no blemish or guile; with being faultless; and with bearing the full and complete image of the Lord Jesus Christ. This means SINLESSNESS.

When the Scripture talks about presenting us faultless and perfect it is not referring to *imputed* faultlessness or perfection. When it says God will wash and cleanse the Church, so that it will be free from all guile, blemishes, spots or wrinkles, it is not talking about a legal position. There will be a company of people who will have been purged of *all* sin and *all* rebellion and fully conformed to the image of Christ in the final hours of this present age. They will reach perfection before Jesus returns. They will walk a walk that is *without sin* before the resurrection.

This isn't the word of Dan Mace. Nor is it the word of some cult leader. It's the Word of God—and every minister who denies this truth is a liar and a deceiver. Moreover, those of you who are sitting under the ministry of people who deny this truth, you will never enter your promised land. You will end up with the same evil heart of unbelief they have, and you will die in the wilderness along with them.

Before anyone asks me if I think I've already reached perfection, or if I know anyone who has reached perfection, let me answer these questions up front. The answer to both of them is, No. And the question is totally *irrelevant*. Nobody ever lived a sinless life before Jesus came to earth, yet the Bible said a man would come one day who would do live that kind of life. There was 4000 years of human history testifying of the impossibility of a human being walking a sinless life. But one day it happened.

So it is today, there has been 2000 years of Church history to testify *against* the possibility of God's people attaining perfection. There has been 2000 years of Church history to testify *against* the possibility of God's people being made spotless and blameless. There has been 2000 years of Church history to testify *against* the possibility of God's people being made free from all guile. There has been 2000 years of Church history to testify *against* the possibility of God's people being fully conformed to the image of Christ. There has been 2000 years of Church history to testify *against* the possibility of God's people attaining the fullness of God and the fulness of Christ.

But that history can never annul God's Word. The Scripture says there will be a people who, by the time Jesus returns, will have been completely sanctified, will have been completely purged of all guile, of all spots and wrinkles and blemishes. The Scripture says there will be a people who, by the time Jesus returns, will have been completely transformed into the image of Christ and filled with the fulness of God. And because the Scripture says it, I believe it. Even if I die *before* I ever see it come to pass in my own life, or the lives of those around me, I'll die *believing* it's possible. I'll die believing God's Word.

If you are listening to this message and you can't believe what I have just shared; if you can't believe what the Scripture says about going on to perfection; then you need to get down on your knees right now and beg God to forgive you and ask Him to deliver you from an evil heart of unbelief. Moreover, you need to separate yourself from *everyone* who refuses to accept this truth.

Obviously, in order to reach perfection, we must get the victory over sin. Not just some sin but all sin. Since gaining the victory over sin is such a crucial issue, our understanding of what sin is and *how* you overcome it are very important. I heard a message the other week by a Bible teacher on this subject that was so twisted and warped, I could hardly believe what I was hearing. And yet, I have no doubt that every one of the people who heard that message thought it was great.

The crux of this brother's doctrine on how to overcome sin was that we just have to rest on the promises of God and believe that God will deliver us. He actually said that if we try to exercise our *wills* against the sins we are having a problem with, we are *interfering* with God's power; we are fighting against the grace of God in our lives. Since we don't have the power to overcome sin in our own strength, we shouldn't even try to overcome it. Just believe and rest—then God will be able to move on our behalf and deliver us. Just believe and rest—and somehow, the imputed righteousness that was given to us at salvation will become actual righteousness and we will be delivered from the sin we are having a problem with.

I want to say very clearly that this whole idea is a religious delusion. The fact that we cannot overcome sin in our own strength does not mean that we shouldn't even bother *engaging our own strength* in the battle against sin. That's insanity! All it means is that we cannot win the battle against sin *alone*. We need help.

There is a big difference between having God help us win a battle as we fully engage our own wills and our own determination against a sin, and having God come along and win that battle for us while we sit there and do nothing (except rest and believe). According to this Bible teacher, if we try to do *our part* in fighting the battle against sin, that constitutes leaning on the arm of the flesh. In his mind, the flesh always wants to take some of the glory and the credit for our deliverance or our salvation, and it does this by convincing us that *we* have to do something *other* than simply believe and rest. According to him, if we engage our *wills* against the sin we are having trouble with, if we employ our own determination to overcome it, then we are leaning on the arm of the flesh and frustrating the grace of God. God has to do it all.

If ever there was a recipe for defeat and self-delusion, that's it. All we have to do is rest and believe that God will change us from the image of Adam to the image of Christ, and it will automatically happen, sooner or later, by faith, because we are believing it will happen? All we have to do is rest and believe that we will be delivered from a sin we are having a problem with, and it will automatically happen, sooner or later, by faith, because we believe it will happen? I find it hard to believe that people actually sit and listen to this kind of stuff and think it's sound Scriptural teaching. But they do.

I'm going to give you the real key to overcoming sin tonight—and it has nothing to do with the *passivity* this Bible teacher is propagating. The key to overcoming a sin that we are having a problem with lies in getting free from *the desire* for that sin. Once the desire for that thing is put to death, that sin will no longer be a problem.

This is what the process of sanctification is all about. We have a sin nature; and that sin nature is entwined in our personalities and our desires. The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring the issues of that sin nature to our attention by bringing them to the surface, one by one, where we have to face them. The purpose of all this is so we can deal with these issues and get free from them.

The reason we go around the same mountain, over and over again, year in and year out, regarding certain sins, is simply because we are not ready to let those sins go. We like them—we *desire* them. Until we get to the place where we no longer like them, where we no longer desire them, where we in fact *hate* them, we won't ever get free from them. Getting to the root, which is the desire for these things, which comes from the sin nature, is the *key* to getting deliverance from them—and you will never get free from that desire by simply “believing” you will get free from it. You will never get free from it by resting in the hope that God will one day deliver from that desire.

There is only one way to get free from a desire (ie: a sin) that has you bound—and that is to get desperate before the Lord about it. I'm not talking about getting on your knees and saying a little prayer. I'm talking about coming to God in absolute *desperation*—the kind of desperation you would be manifesting if a murderer had a knife at your child's throat and was ready to kill him. I'm talking about the kind of desperation you would be manifesting if your husband or your wife were lying on the floor, dying of a heart attack, and you were praying that God would keep them alive till they got to the hospital. I'm talking about real, genuine desperation. With that kind of desperation, you have to go to God and beg Him to take that desire away. With that kind of desperation, you have to go to God and beg Him to give you a hatred for that thing because you know it displeases Him and it's hurting you spiritually.

And you don't just do this once, and then get up and walk away, full of faith, henceforth expecting till your enemies are made your footstool. You must do it again and again and again, until something snaps; until something *changes* in your life. And while you are walking in that kind of desperation before God, whether it takes weeks or month, you must exercise you will 100% the battle against that sin. Whenever it raises it's head, cry out to God for help. Tell Him you can't fight it on your own; it's too strong. Ask Him to strengthen your will and your determination to get the victory over it. Eventually you *will* get the victory. It may take some time; and it will certainly take all the will power and determination you have.

The passivity this Bible teacher is propagating will never stand the test of Scripture. It will certainly never stand the test of the life of Jesus. Do you know what the Bible says regarding how Jesus overcame the temptation to sin?

*For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. **Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.***

Hebrews 12:3-4

Hey Mr. Bible teacher: how's *that* for "resting and believing"? Don't you just love how the writer of Hebrews says Jesus "rested and believed against sin"? How about those nasty little words, "resisted" and "striving"? How do they fit into your theology of passivity?

*Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.***

Matthew 26:36-45

How's *that* for Resting and believing? Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of Man, had to pray three times to get His will in line with the will of the Father. He had to pray three times to overcome the temptation to sin. In another account of this scene, it said Jesus sweat as it were drops of blood.

*Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, **strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.***

Luke 22:42-44

Jesus's will was fully engaged in this battle, my friends! There isn't a hint of *passivity* in this whole scene. He was resisting the temptation to sin with all His human strength. That's why an angel had to come and "strengthen" Him. That's why he sweat great drops of blood. And yes I do believe He sweat drops of blood because the writer of Hebrews confirmed what Luke reported. Jesus' whole mind; His whole will; His whole heart; every part of Him was *totally engaged* in that battle. He was fighting against sin at that moment with every bit of human strength He had—and you can be sure *that's* the reason He won that battle. If Jesus would have done what this deluded Bible teacher is telling his sheeple to do, we would all be on our way to Hell right now because He would have *lost* that battle.

If *Jesus* had to go through that kind of struggle to overcome sin, what in the world makes people think they won't have to do the same thing, and more? It's the epitome of *pride* to read how *Jesus* strived against sin like that, and then turn around and tell people all *they* have to do to overcome sin is "rest" and "believe"—just believe God will do it all for you and He will eventually do it all for you.

I say again, it's hard for me to believe Christians are so gullible and so Biblically illiterate that they will fall for this kind of garbage; but they fall for it all the time. And apparently, leaving the religious system doesn't make them any smarter because this kind of trash is being taught *out here*.

Getting back to this issue of desire, desire has always been closely associated with the heart. In fact, there is a lot of confusion regarding the heart and I want to take a few minutes right now and at least set one error straight. Many people who teach on the sin nature, end up equating the heart with the sin nature. Ministers do this both explicitly and by implication.

As a matter of fact, the Bible teacher I have been referring to teaches it implicitly—though he may deny it if you were to ask him about it. Preachers teach that the heart is the sin nature implicitly all the time. They do it when they repeatedly quote Jeremiah 17:9 to their congregations, which says: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?*". When you tell people that their hearts remain wicked, even many years after they have been faithfully serving the Lord, what you are in fact saying is that the sin nature is the heart, or that it resides in the heart. For you see, just as the sin nature is never cleansed and made pure, so the heart is viewed the same way. Regardless of what kind of Christian you may be or how faithfully you have served the Lord, most preachers will still look at you and confidently say that your heart is *still* wicked. That's the same as saying the sin nature resides there.

That the heart is *not* the sin nature can be seen by what the Scripture says about the heart. Even under the Old Covenant, the Scripture talks about the need for God's people to have a clean or a pure heart. Moses said the Lord would "circumcise" the heart of Israel so they would be able to love God (*Deut. 30:6*). King David asked God to create a "clean" heart in him after he sinned (*Ps. 51:10*). He also said God is good to those who are "of a clean heart" (*Ps. 73:1*). Again, in Psalm 24:3, he asked who may ascend the hill of God? The answer was, he that hath clean hands and a "pure" heart.

If our hearts remain wicked and unknowable, even when we are serving God with all our might, then many verses in the New Testament would never have been written because they would be untrue, and it would be impossible to *obey* them. Consider the following examples:

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

Matthew 12:35

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Matthew 22:37

*And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on **the good ground** are they, which **in an honest and good heart**, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*

Luke 8:14-15

*Now the end of the commandment is charity **out of a pure heart**, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:*

I. Timothy 1:5

*Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord **out of a pure heart**.*

II. Timothy 2:22

*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another **with a pure heart** fervently:*

I. Peter 1:22

*For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, **if our heart condemn us not**, then have we confidence toward God.*

I John 3:20-21

The view that most of us have of ourselves, as a result of constantly hearing that our hearts are desperately wicked—regardless of how long or how faithfully we have served the Lord—makes it impossible for us to ever *believe* we could actually obey the Scripture when it tells us to do things like: follow righteousness out of a *pure* heart; or love one another with a *pure* heart; or walk in charity towards one another out of a *pure* heart. How could we ever do these things with a pure heart if our hearts remain desperately wicked, even *after* we have become a new creation in Christ?

If all you ever hear is how deceitful and wicked your heart is, you will never *believe* that you can obey Jesus' command to love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart. After all, how can a desperately wicked heart love God at all, let alone fully love Him? If all you ever hear is that your heart is desperately wicked, you will never believe what Jesus said about the good man bringing forth good things out of the "good treasure" of his heart. I mean, how can anything good come from a desperately wicked heart?

If we continually hear how our hearts are desperately wicked, it will be impossible for us to ever imagine a situation like the apostle John describes, where our heart does *not* condemn us. I mean, how can a persistently wicked heart *not* condemn us? Having a circumcised heart; having a clean heart; having a pure heart; having an honest and a good heart; having a heart that does not condemn us; none of this is even possible if the heart is our flesh nature because the flesh nature will never be clean or pure.

Maybe one reason so many people are confused in this regard is because they don't know how to rightly divide the Scripture. They read what Jesus said about all the evil which proceeds from the heart, and they apply His words to everyone, regardless of their spiritual condition.

*"Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but **what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.**" Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." And Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain the parable to us." And He said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? "But the things that proceed out of the mouth **come from the heart**, and those defile the man. "For **out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.** "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."*

Matthew 15:11-20 NAS

When you read this passage by itself, it seems like the heart is being equated with the sin nature. Jesus did say all these things which are attributed to the flesh nature in other parts of the Scripture, come out of the heart, didn't He. Well, yes He did. But it's also clear that he wasn't talking about everyone. He was talking about the Pharisees. Look at the context of His statements:

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." And He answered and said to them, "And **why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?** "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' "But you say, 'Whoever shall say to {his} father or mother, "Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given {to God,} he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And {thus} **you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.** "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, "**This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me.** 'But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'" And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand. "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."

Matthew 15:1-11 NAS

There is a *context* to be considered when interpreting the words of Jesus about all those things coming out of a person's heart. That context has to do with the *kind of people* He was talking about. He was talking about the hearts of people who transgressed the commandments of God; who invalidated the Word of God; and who were hypocrites. He was talking about the hearts of people who honored God with their lips, but whose *hearts* were far from Him. He was talking about the hearts of people who worshiped God in vain because they followed the traditions of men instead of the doctrine of God.

This is also the case regarding what Jeremiah said about the heart being deceitful and wicked above all things. He wasn't talking about the heart of everyone, regardless of their spiritual condition. He was talking about the hearts of a certain kind of person:

The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; with a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, As they remember their children, so they {remember} their altars and their Asherim by green trees on the high hills. O mountain of Mine in the countryside, I will give over your wealth and all your treasures for booty, your high places for sin throughout your borders. And you will, even of yourself, let go of your inheritance that I gave you; and I will make you serve your enemies in the land which you do not know; for you have kindled a fire in My anger which will burn forever. Thus says the LORD, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD. "For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD. "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit. "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.

Jeremiah 17:1-10 NAS

When God spoke those words about the heart being wicked through Jeremiah, He was talking about a certain kind of person. He was talking about people who's sin was so deep and strong, it was engraved upon their hearts. He was talking about people who think about (ie: remember) their pagan altars and idols as much as they think about their own children. He was talking about people who put their trust in other man and the arm of the flesh, instead God. He was talking about people who's *hearts* were turned away from the Lord! That's the kind of people who's hearts are wicked continually.

To ascribe what Jesus said about the heart of the Pharisees, and what God said through Jeremiah about the hearts of the people of Judah, to faithful believers is ludicrous. Yet every Sunday morning, multitudes of ministers stand behind their pulpits and tell God's people that their hearts are, "...*deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...*".

Even people who have come out of the Religious System, and who have their own ministries out here, do the same thing. When you constantly tell people *their hearts* are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, it makes them feel like there's no way they could ever reach perfection. It makes them feel like regardless of how obedient or committed they are to the Lord, *they* are still wicked and they will *always* remain that way. I was part of a Bible Study for over a year where the minister said this to the people all the time—and every time he quoted that verse in Jeremiah, I wanted to say: "*Stop it! Don't you realize you're binding the people to their sin*"? *Constantly telling them their hearts are wicked will never help them come forth in the image of Christ.*

Even regarding the people Jesus and Jeremiah *were* talking about, whose hearts *were* evil, it's still true, their hearts are not the sin nature. The heart of the wicked *can* be cleansed and made pure—the flesh nature of the wicked *cannot* be cleansed and made pure. So let's reject once and for all this whole idea that the *heart* of man is the sin nature; or the heart of man is where the sin nature resides.

*For I delight in the law of God after the **inward man**: But I see another **law in my members**, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to **the law of sin which is in my members**.*

Romans 7:22-23

It's very interesting when you read how Paul describes his own personal battle within himself. He describes the difference between that part of him which is in agreement with God and which desires to serve and obey God; and that part of him which remains in disagreement with God and which refuses to obey Him. His "inward man" and his "mind" are the parts of him that are in agreement with God. But the "law of sin", which is the sin nature (or the flesh), which resides in his "members", wars against his inward man and his mind—and that sin nature wins.

The Greek term that is translated "members" in this passage is melos (*mel'-os*); and the word means: "a limb or part of the body". This is where I believe the sin nature resides—in our physical bodies. To be more specific, I believe the sin nature resides in our blood.

*"Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must **drain out the blood** and cover it with earth, because **the life of every creature is its blood**. That is why I have said to the Israelites, "You must not eat the blood of any creature, because **the life of every creature is its blood**; anyone who eats it must be cut off."*

Leviticus 17:13-14 NIV

*"Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. "But you shall not eat flesh **with its life**, that is, **its blood**."*

Genesis 9:3-4 NKJ

God said the “life” is in the blood. I believe that statement means *more* than just the fact that we need our blood to continue living because it provides air and nutrients and other vital things to our internal organs. I think God was stating more than a simple biological fact that when you drain the blood from a man or beast it ceases to live. I think He was also talking about *the kind of life* that’s in the blood. *Adamic life* is in the blood of mankind; *corrupted life* is in the blood of mankind. Sin resides in our DNA.

This is why we will never be free of the sin nature until we get a new body. However, having a sin nature does mean we have to live under it’s power. We can completely *overcome* that sin nature, even though we can’t get completely free from it until the resurrection.

That’s why John said that if we say we “have no sin” we do lie (*1. Jn. 1:8*). He wasn’t saying it’s impossible to overcome sin. He wasn’t saying that if anyone ever says they are no longer sinning, we can be sure they are lying because we will all continue to sin until we die. He was saying, those who say they have never sinned; and those who say they have no more sin nature; that somehow God has eradicated that nature from their lives; they are *lying* because this is not possible. Until we get our new bodies, we will have to deal with the sin nature.

But again, *having* a sin nature and *living under the power* of a sin nature are two very different things. It’s true, we are stuck with our sin nature until the resurrection. But it’s not true that we have to live under the power of that nature until the resurrection. By God’s grace, and through His power, if we will do our part; if we will strive against sin unto blood, God will do His part. He will do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

It’s the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon in this fight to overcome sin, folks. We can’t do it by ourselves or in our own strength. We need the Lord’s sword. But God *will not* do it all for us. He demands that we pick up our sword and use it with all our might.

Don’t listen to anyone who tells you God wants to do it all *for* you. Don’t listen to anyone who tells you, you need to live in a *passive state* of resting and believing or else you are relying on your own flesh. That’s the Devil’s lie. Passivity opens the door to demons quicker than you can blink an eye. You listen to that kind of trash and you’ll end up following religious spirits instead of Jesus Christ.