

One-Eighty and On Course

Yesterday, I had the privilege of having lunch with my dear friend and “older” brother, Don Hunter. I say older in jest as he isn’t that far ahead of me. Our conversation is always spirited discussing world events and scripture. He is one of the role models and catalysts in my life that influenced who I am today. This week’s lesson was sparked by that conversation with the phrase, “one eighty.” I know we all have had incidents of driving and missed a turn or an off ramp. We have had to make a course correction and do a “one eighty” and turn completely in the other direction. In our journey to God’s Kingdom, He will give us necessary course corrections along the way.

This week I used Collins Dictionary for the definition of “one eighty” to mean: a turn or revolution of 180° or a sharp change in attitude or opinion; about face. Other meanings include “U-turn,” or complete reverse of direction. Anyone who has ever used a compass knows about 180 degrees in changing course.

The exact content surrounding this phrase had various aspects of use but one in particular stood out. We were talking about the Disciples who walked with Christ during His earthly ministry. They had already repented and turned away from sin. They had done that when they were followed Christ for His three and a half year ministry. When they witnessed His arrest, horrific crucifixion, and His death on the cross for sharing God's Truth they scattered and fled in fear. What would it take for them to do a "one eighty" and lose all fear of stepping out for God?

It is plainly obvious. While they witnessed the miracles and healings and even raising some from the dead, nothing had the impact on them as seeing the Resurrected Son of God after witnessing His crucifixion. They no longer feared those who put Jesus to death and were compelled to preach the Gospel Message.

Matthew 10:26-28- "Therefore, do not fear them because there is nothing covered that shall not be uncovered, and *nothing* hidden that shall not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but do not have power to destroy the life; rather, fear Him Who has the power to destroy both life and body in Gehenna."

After walking with the Resurrected Jesus Christ for forty days, they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Their eyes and ears were truly opened and all they had seen and learned became clear. We share in this precious gift of clarity in receiving God's Holy Spirit at baptism. Many of the things we may not have understood become clear. However, it is a growing process that will take us the rest of our lives. One thing I have found that holds true, the more you seek God *in and through His Word*, the more of His Spirit He imparts to you and the more understanding of His Word unfolds. It takes our heartfelt efforts. He doesn't hand it out sitting on a bench.

A fitting example of the loss of fear and increased faith are seen in Paul and Silas in Acts 16.

Acts 16:19-24- “And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold of Paul and Silas and **dragged** them into the marketplace before the magistrates. And they brought them to the captains, saying, “These men, who are Jews, are greatly troubling our city, And are preaching customs that are not lawful for us, as Romans, to receive or to practice.” Then a multitude rose up against them, and the captains **tore off their garments, and commanded that they be beaten with rods. And after laying many stripes on them, they cast them into**

prison, commanding the jailer to keep them safely. After receiving this command, he **threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet with stocks.**”

But Paul and Silas were not deterred from their faith even after being beaten. They stayed the course.

Acts 16:25-28- “But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so great that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed. When the jailer awoke from his sleep and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew a sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped, But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself; for we are all here.”

It was at that moment that the jailer had his “one eighty” moment in what he witnessed. He changed course.

Acts 16:29-31- “And after asking for lights, he rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And when he had brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what

must I do, that I may be saved?” Then they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household.”

Paul himself had his “one eighty” moment on the way to Damascus in **Acts 9:3-8-**

“But it came to pass while he was journeying, as he drew near to Damascus, that suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And after falling to the ground, he heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And the Lord said, “I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.” Then, trembling, and astonished, he said, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” And the Lord said to him, “Get up and go into the city, and you shall be told what you must do.” Now the men who were traveling with him stood speechless; for they indeed heard the voice, but they saw no one. Then Saul arose from the ground; but when he opened his eyes, he saw no one. And they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus.”

For those of us who have been baptized, have we lost the fear of sharing God’s Word? I’m not talking about handing out tracts or pamphlets, I mean when someone asks you Biblical questions, do you know enough scripture to answer

them? Do you send them to God's Word for the answer? Do you know where to look?

I used to go to depositions with defense attorneys on arrests I made. One attorney in particular (who has since passed away) became an acquaintance and we'd go off topic and he would actually coach me on giving depositions. In one of our conversations, he said people think lawyers *know* all the laws. He said, "we don't, but we know where to look." Funny how that comment stuck in my mind and is applicable to Bible Study. However, with repeated study of God's Word, we write His words in our hearts. Having God's Word in our hearts makes the recall instantaneous when needed without YouTube or phone a friend because of God's Holy Spirit in us will give us the words.

Luke 12:11-12- "But when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how or what you should reply in defense, or what you should say; For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that same hour what needs to be said."

We have been given a tremendous gift. One that we must not ever overlook or discount and become idle.

2 Timothy 1:6-8- “For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound mindedness. Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with me for the sake of the gospel, according to the power of God,”

This scripture reminds us that God has not given us the spirit of fear. We are no longer to be afraid of the world or its influences. We have been called out and set apart from it.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18- “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: “I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,” says the Lord, “and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,” says *the* Lord Almighty.”

We have discussed this in the past; how can we do a “one eighty” from being in the world? We change course and avoid their ways. How serious is this warning of “come out from the midst of them” to be taken? What are some effects of it? Certainly, we all *live on the earth*. We do not have access to any rockets leaving just yet, the Artemis mission to establish a moon base is years away, so we, like Adam and Eve we are stuck here. Outside of family members, are we to avoid human contact? Are we to live like hermits in a cave? Absolutely not! However, the instructions in God’s Word are quite clear. He does not want us to be so spiritually minded we are no earthly good. He warns us not to be unevenly tied to unbelievers. We have been sanctified, set apart, by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We were bought with a price.

Hebrews 10:10- “By Whose will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

There is an abundance of scripture that contain God’s warnings against becoming too friendly with the world and its ways. As usual, this lesson may contain a scriptural overload as we have just spent several months in self-reflection and removing the “leaven: from our lives. Why doesn’t God want us involved with those “in the world?”

1 Corinthians 5:6-8- “Your glorying *is* not good. Don’t you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, so that you may become a new lump, *even* as you are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us. For this reason, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness, but with *the* unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.”

Another topic discussed during yesterday’s lunch was the source of our scriptural information. Seeking scriptural advice from a pastor who does not keep God’s Commandments as He instructed is likened to getting your transmission fixed by a heart surgeon. Why would you seek God’s answers from someone who doesn’t love Him enough to do what He says?

The more we know God’s Word, and we truly grow in our relationship with Him, the discernment from and through His Holy Spirit will increase. How many times have we said this? When we open the door to someone other than a true worshipper of God, we open the door to the world and its influence. I know this will seem difficult but hold on, God makes it clear we are to have nothing to do with the world, especially regarding Biblical truth. Even though we have God’s Holy Spirit within us through repentance and baptism, we put ourselves in harm’s

way if we choose to conform to worldly principles of conduct and activities. We saw numerous accounts how the Nation of Israel in the Old Testament fell under judgment for failing to heed God's warning. Look at how Solomon ended up!

Deuteronomy 6:14-15- "You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people who are all around you, For the LORD your God is a jealous God among you, lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you and destroy you from off the face of the earth."

Revelation 18:4-5- "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, My people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues, For her sins have reached as far as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

Proverbs 13:20-21- "He who walks with wise *men* shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Evil pursues sinners, but to the righteous good shall be repaid."

Romans 12:1-6- "I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and well pleasing to God, which is your

spiritual service. **Do not conform yourselves to this world** but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what is well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God. For I say through the grace that was given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think with sound-mindedness, as God has divided to each one a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function; Likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another. But each one has different gifts according to the grace that is given to us—whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the measure of faith;”

It is far too easy to do a “one eighty” and be pulled back into the world and our former ways to which we walked away from by associations in spiritual concerns. It is no mystery that protestant ministers can present the “warm and fuzzy” sermons we often speak of. It is also of no surprise that they may even possess an interesting viewpoint on scripture. I am sure that Satan too had a wonderful story that convinced Eve to take a bite of the apple.

Genesis 3:4-5- “And the serpent said to the woman, “In dying, **you shall not surely die!** For God knows that on the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil.”

Sound familiar? Once he had Adam and Eve hooked, the rest of humanity was a snap, and they both actually walked with God in the Garden of Eden.

1 Corinthians 15:33-34- “Do not be deceived; **evil companionship corrupts good behavior. Awake to righteousness, and do not sin, for some of you do not have the knowledge of God. I say *this* to your shame.**”

Paul delivered a gut punch with that statement. He was speaking to the Church at Corinth. A body of believers who thought they were walking in God’s ways. Paul was admonishing them for **tolerating** an adulterer in their congregation. Just because someone is nice or not disruptive, God’s standards are strict and none of us have been granted any authority to make any changes in anyone’s favor who is not walking accordingly. God is NO RESPECTER of persons (**Job 37:24, Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11, Ephesians 6:9, Colossians 3:25**).

Turning a blind eye to sin is just that, blind! It is this tolerance that can lead us back to the mire we were rescued from. “Well, they’re not that bad, they’re just

misinformed.” I should not have to remind anyone present that tolerance has put us where we are as a nation with respect to all of the perversions that are presently being shoved down our throats. Now that we have realized that it is at an epidemic and ridiculous level, it may be too late to rectify.

The song and dance of “I’ll go along “ and “to each his own” has now become, “accept this behavior or else.” The persecutions against anyone remotely standing up for righteousness or any moral position against such behavior are widespread. Violence is the new norm of protest. The Bible lists numerous persons facing aggressive reactions when they took a stand for righteousness and worldly corruption and immorality.

Psalms 31:14-18- “But I trusted in You, O LORD; I said, “You are my God.” My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me. Make Your face shine upon Your servant; save me in Your lovingkindness. Let me not be ashamed, O LORD, for I have called upon You; let the wicked be ashamed. Let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence— the lips which speak arrogantly against the righteous with pride and contempt.”

Matthew 24:9-11- “Then shall they deliver you up to affliction and shall kill you; and you shall be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then shall many be led into sin, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another; And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many;”

Just look at what they did to our Savior Jesus Christ! Stephen was stoned! **All** of the disciples were put to death, save John. We are now reaping the crop of compromise and tolerance. If the church would have been strong in God’s truth, we may not be in this situation...just yet. This is what happened when the church played both sides of the fence, forgetting God’s Word and His Sovereignty, reducing His commandments to “suggestions.” We cannot allow this to happen within His true church.

James 4:1-8- “*What is the cause of quarrels and fighting among you? Is it not mainly from your own lusts that are warring within your members? You lust and have not; you kill, and are jealous, and are not able to obtain; you fight and quarrel, but still, you do not have, because you do not ask. Then you ask, and you do not receive, because you ask with evil motives, that you may consume it on your own lusts. You adulterers and adulteresses, don’t you know that the friendship of the*

world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the scripture says in vain, “The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy”? **But He gives greater grace.** This is *the* reason it says, “**God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble.**” Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist *the* devil, and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners, and **purify *your* hearts, you double-minded!**”

The modern train of thought is that man needs no godly source of morality. The belief is that we humans all possess a natural sense of right and wrong. This is certainly doubtful these days as some do not know which bathroom to use. God opposes these thoughts in His word.

Proverbs 14:12- “There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death.”

Proverbs 16:25-30- “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death. The appetite of a laboring man works for him, for his hunger urges him on. An ungodly man digs up evil, and his lips *are* like a burning fire. A perverse man causes strife, and a whisperer separates chief friends. A violent man

lures his neighbor and leads him into a way *that is* not good. He shuts his eyes to devise perverse things; and moving his lips, he brings evil to pass.”

We just mentioned how Solomon fell at the end of his life. We can all read of how he fell from grace by reuniting with the world when God so clearly warned us all in the Old Testament. The thousand or so wives and concubines definitely had some influence.

Leviticus 18:1-4- “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘I *am* the LORD your God. As they do in the land of Egypt where you dwelt, you shall not do. And you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Neither shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall do My judgments and keep My ordinances and walk in them. I *am* the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 7:1-4- “When the LORD your God shall bring you into the land where you go to possess it and has cast out many nations before you—the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you— And the LORD your God shall deliver them up to you, you shall crush them, and utterly

destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to his son, nor shall you take his daughter to your son, For they will turn away your sons from following Me so that they may serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and will destroy you suddenly.”

Deuteronomy 12:29-32- “When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, Take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?’ You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it.”

Jeremiah 10:1-3- “Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the LORD, “**Do not learn the way of the heathen**, and do not be terrified at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are terrified at them. For the

customs of the people *are* vain; for one cuts a tree out of the forest with the axe, the work of the hands of the workman.

All of these scriptures occurred after the great flood. God was so disgusted with mankind; He was grieved He created us. God wanted to do a “one eighty” and wipe us all out. We should all be grateful Noah found favor with God or none of us would be here.

Genesis 6:5-8- “And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. **And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth,** and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, “**I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth,** both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.” But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

The fact that God had to repeatedly remind His people to stay out of the world says something of the mentality of those who profess to be His.

Proverbs 12:1-2- “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid. The good *man* receives grace from the LORD, but He will condemn a man of wicked devices.”

Proverbs 12:15- “The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes, but he who listens to advice *is* wise.”

Some people will never fully understand that God is more than serious when He tells us to do something. We had better do it and do it just the way He said in His word. It is so vitally important to God that we do not return to our earthly ways when we have been called out from the midst of them. Doing a “one eighty” after baptism is a death sentence.

Galatians 4:8-9- “Now on the one hand, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to those who are not gods by nature. But on the other hand, after having known God—rather, after having been known by God—how *is it that* you are turning again to the weak and impotent elements, to which you again desire to be in bondage?”

Proverbs 26:10-12- “The great *God* who formed all *things* both rewards the fool and rewards transgressors. As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool returns to his own folly. Do you see a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”

2 Peter 2:20-22- “For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them, and are overcome, the final end is worse than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. But the *pronouncement found* in the true proverb has happened to them: The dog has returned to eat his own vomit; and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing place in the filthy mire.”

So many reminders throughout scripture warning us not to return to our former ways. Association with our worldly beliefs is contrary to our new life in Christ Jesus. We are to put off the old man and bear good fruit.

Matthew 7:17-20- “In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a

corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits.”

This requires work, spiritual effort to grow in God’s will and the likeness of Jesus Christ. It requires a change in us from our old ways. A course correction to God’s path.

Romans 8:6-8- “For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace, Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God.”

The people that are still “in the world,” such as co-workers, family members, or even the Protestant ministers that may have a “good message” **are not those who can in anyway enlighten us to God’s word.** They may present an interesting point or share wisdom from everyday life but not keeping God’s commandments puts them at a loss for Biblical truth.

Ephesians 4:17-24- “So then, I declare and testify this in *the* Lord that you are no longer to walk even as the rest *of the* Gentiles are walking, in *the* vanity of their minds, Having *their* understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts. They have cast off all feelings, *and* have given themselves up to licentiousness, to work every uncleanness with insatiable desire. But you have not so learned Christ; If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the* truth in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

They just do not understand nor is it they ever will unless God the Father calls them (**John 6:44, John 6:65**).

Psalms 14:2-5- “The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not *even* one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, those who devour My

people as men eat bread and do not call upon the LORD? There they are in great fear, for God is with the generation of the righteous.”

Mark 7:18-23- “And He said to them, “Are you likewise without understanding? Don’t you perceive that anything that enters into a man from outside is not able to defile him? For it does not enter into his heart, but into the belly, and *then* passes out into the sewer, purging all food.” And He said, “That which springs forth from *within* a man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness’s, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; All these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man.”

Again, **we must guard our hearts and minds against what is allowed to enter them.** We have a clever adversary, and he is well aware of our weaknesses. When we are weak and complacent we can leave the door open ever so slightly and he has his foot in the door before you realize it. Our lives need to be measured against God’s standards He lists in His word. **The enemy will use *any tactic* to distract, deceive, or lead you astray from coming to the full knowledge of God through Jeus Christ.**

Psalm 16:1-4- “Preserve me, O God, for in You do I take refuge. I have said to the LORD, “You are my LORD; I have no goodness apart from You.” As for the saints in the earth, “They are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight.” Their sorrows shall be multiplied who run after another god. I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood; and I will not take their names upon my lips.”

By falling back into worldly things, we can become distracted and lose focus on our walk towards the Kingdom. Again, distraction is another open door where the adversary can gain a foothold. Acceptance and tolerance of something that “does not seem so bad” is all the leaven the enemy needs to deposit. It will grow from there and impede any spiritual growth. Hitting a brick wall in your walk with God? Check your compass. God is trying to tell you something.

2 Samuel 22:31-33- “As *for* God, **His way is perfect**. The word of the LORD *is* tried. He is a shield to all those who seek refuge in Him, For Who *is* God, except the LORD? And Who *is* a rock except our God? God is my strength *and* power, and He makes my way perfect.”

Philippians 4:13- “I can do all things through Christ, Who empowers me.”

Spiritual guidance and truth can only come from **One Source**. **Seeking spiritual guidance from a corrupted source, while it may not be overtly poison, we have been warned against it. The source may have a Ph.D. and “thirty years in the word” but no closer to knowing God than we are to Mars.**

Matthew 15:7-9- “Hypocrites! Isaiah has prophesied well concerning you, saying, ‘These people have drawn near to Me with their mouths, and with their lips they honor Me; but their hearts are far away from Me. For they worship Me in vain, teaching *for* doctrine *the* commandments of men.’ ”

Ephesians 5:6-11- “Do not let anyone deceive you with vain words; for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be joint partakers with them. For you were once darkness; but now *you are* light in *the* Lord. Walk as children of light, (Because the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth;) Proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*;**”

If these worldly preachers genuinely loved God, they would know and love His truth. **They would willfully submit themselves to His will and His word.** They do

not submit. Truth is not popular in Protestant churches; they should change their name to Burger King as they “have it their way.” They may love God but want to worship Him their own way. They will be judged much harsher than those they lead astray.

Jeremiah 23:1-2- “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture,” says the LORD. Therefore, thus says the LORD, God of Israel, against the shepherds who feed My people, “You have scattered My flock, and have driven them away, and have not taken care of them. Behold, I will bring upon you the evil of your doings,” says the LORD.”

That word “woe” means “deep or inconsolable grief or misery,” that will be the judgment from God. How anyone professing to be a pastor, teacher, or preacher thinks they can do things “their way” are in for a rude awakening.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12- “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the* lie, So that all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but who took pleasure in unrighteousness.”

They have never surrendered to God completely nor have done a “one eighty” from doing things “their way.” They have been off course most of their lives.

Romans 10:2-3- “For I testify of them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of the righteousness *that* comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

As we mentioned earlier, **do you think it might offend God that anyone would seek the advice from such sources as these rather than seek Him Who gave us His only Son? Again,** pursuing godly wisdom from a source who does not know Him may not be the best course of action. This disobedience is noted and reflects on our devotion to the One Who called us out of darkness. When God said to come out from the midst of them and be separate, I do not believe He said to seek their wisdom concerning Me.

Romans 1:28-31- “And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them to a reprobate mind, to practice *those* things that are immoral; Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil

dispositions; whisperers, Slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things *and practices*; disobedient to parents, Void of understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful;”

When we fully take a stand against the morally unhealthy things we left behind, it serves to further separate us from a fallen world and we grow in our relationship with our Creator.

1 Timothy 6:11-12- “But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, *and* meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith! Take hold of eternal life to which you were also called and did profess a good profession in the presence of many witnesses.”

If you seek to increase your faith and know God even more than you do at present, we must live by every word that proceeds from His mouth! There can be no compromise. Disciplining our minds and hearts on the Word of God and our walk and relationship with Him will develop our faith and increase our spiritual awareness of the world around us. Rejoice in Him and His truth. I can testify I do

not miss anything I thought I was giving up. God has replaced my old ways with His ways which are full of peace beyond understanding.

Philippians 4:4-9- “Rejoice in *the* Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice! Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord *is* near. **Do not be anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,** let your requests be made known to God in everything; **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.**

Finally, brethren, whatever *things* are true, whatever *things* are honorable, whatever *things* are just, whatever *things* are pure, whatever *things* are lovely, whatever *things* are of good report; if *there be* any virtue and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. Whatever things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, you do also; and the God of peace shall be with you.”

We must never forget from whence we came and the price that was paid for our liberation from sin and death. **We must love God first,** trust Him in all things, and obey His Commandments. It really is that simple.

2 Peter 1:5-9- “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, self-control;

and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love *of God*. For *if* these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause *you to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the one in whom these things are not present is *spiritually* blind—so shortsighted *that* he has forgotten that he was purified from his old sins.”

God has provided more than just one scripture telling us to “come out from the midst of them.” We have listed numerous ones to ponder but there are still more in His instruction manual, the Bible. How many more can you find?

1 Timothy 6:3-5- “If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to godliness, ***He is proud and knows nothing***. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, Vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the truth—*men* who believe that gain is godliness. From such withdraw yourself.”

One of the best scriptures in 1 John, reminds us that the world is passing away and if we love the world, God's love is not in us.

1 John 2:15-18- “Do not love the world, nor the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him because everything that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

And the world and its lust is passing away, **but the one who does the will of God abides forever.** Little children, it is *the* last time; and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have risen up, by which we know that it is *the* last time.”

We no longer live “in” the world but have been called out of it. This does not make us an elitist, nor does it make anyone still “in the world” necessarily evil. It does not automatically make anything we have contact with in the world a sin. It is a word of caution and concern for our spiritual vulnerability. We are governed by the Highest set of standards, and we must strive to live up to them. How many times has God given course corrections and advised you to check your compass? We can be certain of the direction we are headed by our relationship with God the Father,

His Son Jesus Christ, and our knowledge of His Word. We never know when Jesus Christ will return, but if we stay on course we will be ready.

Proverbs 9:6- “Forsake the foolish and live; and go in the way of understanding.”

Amen.

BL-04/18/26