



March 20, 2022

“Stay the Course II”

SS at 9:30. Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

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JOHN 1:29-34 ~

Last week we talked about your _____. How do you build your _____, what is it built upon, how do you know what God wants and what is your _____ for determining all of that?

We concluded that when you lose contact, you must simply stay the _____ you knew to be correct before you lost contact.

For that to work, you must have the proper _____ for your course to be accurate.

Christians _____ with each other (and with themselves) over even the most basic beliefs. It seems like an interpretation problem, when in reality, it is a _____ problem.

How can we know what _____ to use? If God wanted us to do something _____ than that which comes naturally to us, then He’d need to make that clear and obvious.

The question isn’t _____ did the universe come to be, the question is really, Who brought it to be?

An eternal Being is a timeless Being.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The Being capable of creating the universe has absolutely no _____ to do so, unless...

If God is so keen to share Himself with His creatures it must mean that all of us will eventually spend eternity in His glorious presence. Well, if you were God and you wanted to love a thinking, feeling, person, would you give them no _____ in the matter?

God Himself did unilaterally intervene in the affairs of mankind and He plainly demonstrated His selfless, self-sacrificial love that provided us a _____. We make it more confusing because we don't actually like the _____ He has set before us.

We in America have manufactured a Christianity that is so far from what Jesus instituted that it would be unrecognizable to Him and His Apostles.

Your duty is to _____ and then it is to your spouse and then it is to your immediate family and then it is to your church family and then it is to the Christian community beyond these walls and then it is to the lost. Your duty is to the lost before it is to your _____. That is building the Kingdom of Heaven before building America.

We play at Christianity, don't we? Christianity is transformation. Revelation 3:15&16

Jesus said that "It is easier for a _____ to go through the eye of a needle than for a _____ man to enter the kingdom of God." While "All things are possible with God," that does not mean that He will do all things.

Being distracted by all the _____ around us is to give in to the ploy of the enemy. Satan is a bully.

We can focus on allowing Him to build His _____ through us with the resources that He's entrusted to us, or...
(Hebrews 11:13-16, I John 2:15-17).

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____



Alêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ
 ΘΕΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΥ ΤΟΣ ΗΝ ΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΤΙΡΟΣ
 ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΧΩΡΙΣ



Last week we talked about your foundation. We never used those words, but that's what last week was about.

How do you build your faith, what is it built upon, how do you know what God wants and what is your basis for determining all of that? We concluded that when you lose contact – lose the confirmations that you're properly on course – you must simply stay the course you knew to be correct before you lost contact.



What I mean by that is there are many times when a Christian feels like they are flying blind – when they are torn about what they are supposed to do – when they are not sure if they are in the Will of God. It's like flying in zero visibility. Staying calm, staying steady, staying the course, which are just ways to say, keeping the faith, as you continue moving forward with what you already know, will result in you being on centerline – right where you're supposed to be when you break out.

For that to work, you must be flying on the correct instruments and in addition, you must be correctly interpreting what those instruments are showing you. In

other words, you must have the proper basis for your course to be accurate – the proper foundation of belief.

I think that's precisely why, most Christians panic when they lose contact. They never spent the time developing a deep trust in their instruments and proficiency at interpreting those instruments. They don't know the basis of their faith well enough to continue without God holding their hand.



Well, because you can never grow if you remain a child being led by the hand, eventually, God will let go and will pull away from you in order to get you to grow. The question is will you be ready when He does? That's

only possible if you use your time of relative peace to prepare for war. You must know your instruments – you must know God.



People who claim to be Christians disagree with each other over even the most basic core beliefs. It seems like an interpretation problem when in reality it is a foundation problem. It's ineptitude when it comes to instrument flying – to the basis of faith. All bad doctrine is the result of taking the Bible out of context, not misunderstanding what it actually says. In other words, it's a refusal to accept what it plainly says.

Some people pray to Mary and other prominent but long dead Christians. Some punish themselves for their sins through literal self-flagellation, or fasting, or avoiding comfort, or berating themselves. Some go to extremes of what they deem morality, condemning the use of technology, or entertainment, or tobacco, or certain clothing. Others act like God is an ATM machine, some like He's a disaffected uncle uninterested in their affairs, some like He's a senile old grandpa unaware of their activities, and on and on we could go. But none of those things are due to misinterpretation, they are due to having the wrong foundation.



Having a weak and ever fluctuating basis results in most Christians holding varying beliefs even within themselves, beliefs that are inconsistent and even contradictory depending on their circumstances.

There's a thing called situational ethics – well, unfortunately there's also situational Christianity. We can have that only because we haven't first built a strong house on a firm foundation, but instead have built a flimsy shack on shifting sands. How can we know what foundation to use?

If God wanted to interact with us – if He wanted us to do something different than that which comes naturally to us, then He'd need to make that clear and obvious.



Prayer is the means by which
men communicate with God.
Revelation is the means by which
God communicates with men.

He'd need to communicate to us in such a way that His wishes would be understandable and concrete. If I suddenly left the country for a month-long vacation, but left no instructions behind, I'd be a fool to think that everyone would intuitively know what I wanted them to do in my absence. If I left detailed instructions but buried them under a rock, it would be the same effect. If I left those instructions with the appropriate people but wrote it in a language that only I could read... Again, the same effect.

If God wanted us to live a life other than the life we would selfishly choose, He would have to make His

wishes clear and specific on the matter. He would need to give us a revelation.

Some people don't even bother to look for a Revelation from God assuming that He either does not care or will be so forgiving of those ignoring His will, that everyone will eventually be welcomed into Heaven anyway. Well, is that true? Does God care what we do?



When you consider the universe, you can come to only one logical conclusion. Something eternal exists outside of the temporal. Any explanation for the natural, physical, material, reality, other than supernatural, metaphysical, immaterial, Being, end in what is called

an infinite regress. Matter, the stuff that is physical, cannot spontaneously come to be. Energy, the power for change, cannot spontaneously come to be either. Without matter or energy, nothing can come to be.

The question isn't how did the universe come to be, the question really, truly, is Who brought it to be? The only possible explanation for how you and I are here is that an infinitely powerful, infinitely intelligent, infinitely existent Being outside of both space and time created from His own eternal and inexhaustible supply.

Once you grasp that concept, there are a whole slew of others that fall into place, not least among them is that such an all-powerful, omnipotent, God would have no reason to create the universe in the first place.



An eternal Being is a timeless Being, meaning that He is not bound by time. By very definition of the entire exercise, He would be without beginning and without end and therefore without middle. He would be the Alpha and the Omega and because of that He would be unchanging and unchangeable, immutable. The same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Well, if this perfect eternal Being cannot change, that means that He is already fully actualized, needing absolutely nothing to complete Him. More importantly, if God were to get anything that He needs, He would

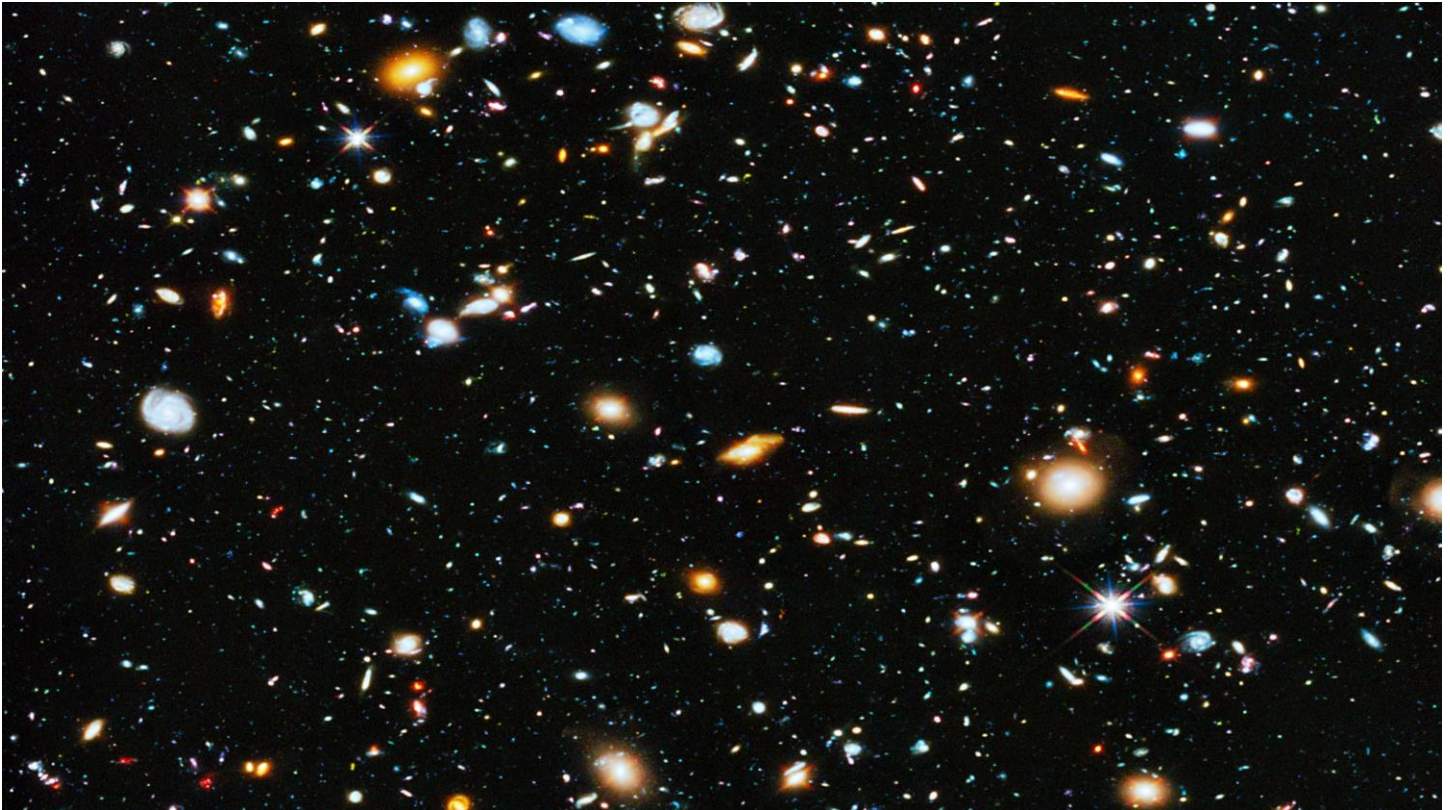
be different after He got it than He was before He got it, which is a logical impossibility.

What does all of that mean? Well, in simple terms, it means that the Being capable of creating the universe has absolutely no reason to do so. It's a puzzlement. Why then create? There's again only one reason.



If this eternal immutable Being has a character of selfless, self-sacrificial love, He would create in order to share His goodness with others. Not for His benefit, but for the benefit of those whom He created. Our benefit, you, and me, not His benefit, ours. God is Agapê – the epitome of selfless, self-sacrificial love.

Again, that fact brings more realities. Chief among them is that God does want some kind of interaction with us.



The one objection to that idea might be that the universe is so vast that God's focus is on some other creatures. That we are merely a side effect of God's true purpose. It's reasonable considering the infinitesimally small speck of dust earth represents in our solar system, let alone in the vastness of outer space. The problem is the universe is far too big to exist only in support of our tiny planet. The thinking

then is that there must be an endless number of alien races of which we are just one.

With a bit of a perspective change we look at it from another angle. If God created the universe to support earth, it's outrageously oversized, but if God created the universe to show His glory to us, then it's about the right size.



The next thought that comes to mind is that if God was so keen to share Himself with His creatures it must mean that all of us will eventually spend eternity in His glorious presence. Well, if you were God and you wanted to love a sentient creature, a living, breathing,

thinking, feeling, person, would you give them no choice in the matter? Would you create people to be naturally inclined to bask in your love and reciprocate it without any concept of doing otherwise, without any notion that there could be another way? Would you create a computer program full of characters that could only do what you preprogrammed them to do – could only worship and love you with no other possibilities?

To be able to actually love, God has to create in a way that enables free acceptance of that love, which simultaneously enables free rejection also.

Why does it require faith? Why is there sin and death and pain and suffering? Why is it all so difficult? Why doesn't God intervene and make it plain and provide a path? Oh, He's already done that.



God Himself did unilaterally intervene in the affairs of mankind and He made it as plain as possible and that selfless, self-sacrificial love demonstrated on a bloody hill outside the city walls of ancient Jerusalem provided a path. We make it more confusing, more vague, more crooked than it is, because we don't actually like the path set before us.



Let me say it again, it isn't that the path isn't obvious and specific, it's that our arrogant, selfish fearful self-love, hates the path of humble, grateful, selfless, self-sacrificial love, because the God who became flesh and died for others, requires that we be like Him. To serve, rather than be served.

That's a bridge too far for us and so we make Christianity about everything other than what Christianity actually is. God, please forgive us. I place myself squarely in the same boat with you.



We in America have manufactured a Christianity that is so far from what Jesus instituted that it would be unrecognizable to Him and His Apostles. Our insatiable desire to be part of something big, something cool, something relevant, so we can brag and feel superior. It's manifested in the popularity of mega churches and our attraction to superstar preachers, teachers, prophets, and healers, who are nothing more than ego-stroking entertainers. In our love affair with televangelists, bestselling authors, conspiracy theorists and other false prophets proclaiming one erroneous prediction after another – yet we gobble up the latest

nonsense they spout with authority, completely dismissing all the times they got it wrong before.

Our Americanization of Christianity is seen in our unholy alliance with the Republican Party. I know, that will anger many of you, but I'm far more concerned about your immortal soul than I am about your opinion of me. I will answer to the Lord Jesus Christ for how I led you. I fear Him, not you.

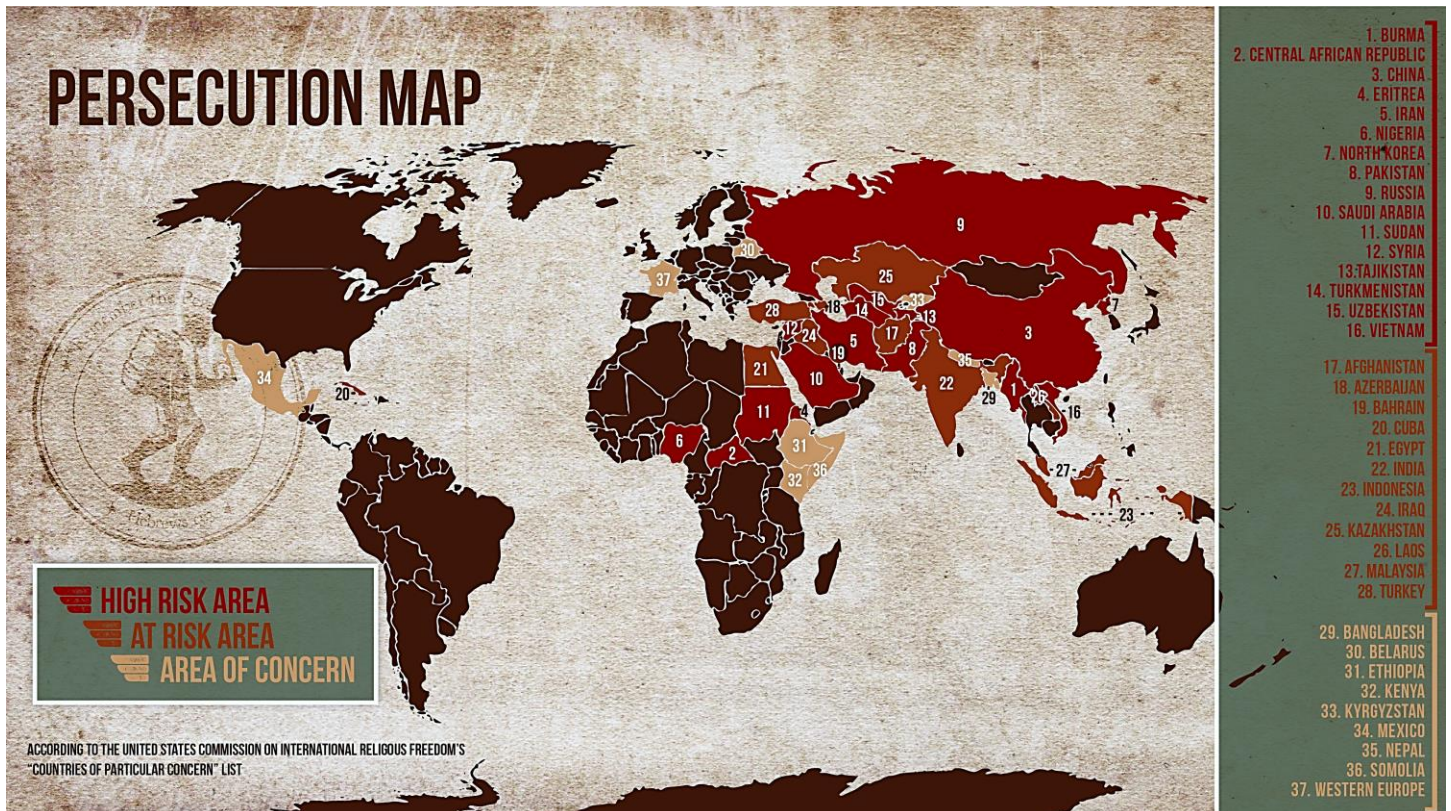
More than that though, I genuinely, through the power of the Holy Spirit, care about you. Donald Trump is not your savior. If you are a Christian, your duty is to Christ first and foremost. Your political opinions and your allegiance to our flag must be far down the list if you are to properly honor and follow Jesus Christ.

I've said it so many times, in so many ways and I fear it just doesn't get through. Your duty is to Him and then it is to your spouse and then it is to your immediate family and then it is to your church family and then it is to the Christian community beyond these walls and then it is to the lost. Please get that, your duty is to the lost before it is to your country. That is building the Kingdom of Heaven before building America.

If your political opinions and your devotion to the way things used to be and your allegiance to the nation where you happened to be born, or happened to end up, causes a lost one to reject the Christ you offer... At minimum, you have your priorities out of order.

I wonder, if we Christians had spent as much time, energy, and resources on ministering to the lost, as we did on politics, if our country would be more Godly today?

Of further concern is this tendency where we go to church, we give some of our money, we talk about God with other Christians during the week, we pray when we need something or if we think about it, we vote Republican and we avoid outrageously sinful behavior in public, most of the time anyway, and we think that Jesus is pleased. We think we've done our bit.



We play at Christianity, don't we? Today, as we sit here comfortable in these soft chairs and in this warm pleasant room, between 8 and 13 Christians will be murdered for no other reason than they profess Jesus as their Savior. Being a Christian will cost that many people today and every day, day after day their lives in brutal execution. We fear that Christianity will cost us money or prestige or pride. We get fiercely angry over policy, over changes we don't like, over people failing to live up to our expectations of them.



Again, it goes back to foundation. How can you fly on instruments if you've got the wrong instruments or don't know how to interpret the correct instruments? How do we know what to be, how to live? I said last week that the Bible is far and away the best candidate for being that communication from the Creator to His creatures.

There are hundreds of reasons why that is true. Some people appeal to church tradition, some to the theology of the Church Fathers, some to the doctrine of their denomination, some to a burning in the bosom, some to coincidence, rationalizations, and how it resonates with them. Years ago, a lady in our church introduced

me to her friends saying, “This is Scott, he’s one of my spiritual advisors.” People appeal to all manner of insanity, but the Bible, the Holy Bible in its entirety is the best option to base your belief upon by far, by far... Believe me, by far.

That means we take it as it is, for what it is, without, as our church doctrinal statement declares, “Without man adding or deleting, emphasizing or de-emphasizing, smoothing or distorting.”

Now, what I’m on about is the fact that we keep coming to church, we keep learning about God, but I’m not sure we’re getting it and I need to try to make it plain – again, not just to you, but to me as well. Christianity isn’t a lifestyle, it isn’t a comforting tradition that we add to our weekly routine, it isn’t something good for the kids, or what you do to appease your wife, or some olive branch to keep God off your back... Christianity is transformation. It is either true that Jesus is your Lord and Savior causing a fundamental alteration in your entire being, or that is not true.



Jesus Himself plainly proclaimed in Revelation 3:15&16, 15‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.’ Quite literally, Jesus will vomit you out of His mouth. He will regurgitate and spew out of His mouth the rotten taste of those who dabble – those who play it safe – those who try to straddle the fence. Who in the world do you think that Jesus was talking to when He said in Matthew 7:21–23, 21“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22“Many will

say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’ Practice lawlessness – I don’t practice lawlessness! Really? What is lawlessness in this context? Jesus said it is “Every tree that does not bear good fruit.”

What is good fruit? It is allowing God to build His kingdom, not your kingdom, not the American kingdom, His Holy and Perfect Kingdom here on earth through you.



We can continue to immerse ourselves in the media circus, focus on all the doom and gloom, buy into the latest conspiracy, be so highly opinionated that we are contentious, argumentative, and judgmental towards other Christians, thereby destroying church unity. Be so highly opinionated that we are contentious, argumentative, and judgmental towards the lost, thereby losing any opportunity to share Christ.



When the church really takes on the
humble characteristics of Christ,
that's going to lead to revival.

Francis Chan

If I was sure that it would be okay – that the Grace of God through Jesus would cover all of that, I wouldn't bother you with it today. I'm just not sure that the Christianity that passes for Christianity in America today is the same as the Christianity of the Bible.

Jackie Chan's brother Francis remarked. "I quickly found that the American church is a difficult place to fit in if you want to live out New Testament Christianity. The goals of American Christianity are often a nice marriage, children who don't swear, and good church attendance. Taking the words of Christ literally, and seriously, is rarely considered. That's for the 'radicals' who are 'unbalanced' and who go 'overboard.' Most of us want a balanced life we can control, that is safe, and that does not involve suffering." "I'm not sure that I can be an American and a Christian." Jesus said that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Everyone in in this room, practically everyone in America has more, especially in terms of security, than the richest people had back then. I want you to think and to reevaluate and hopefully recommit. "All things are possible with God," but that does not mean that He will do all things.



My dear friends, the God of the Bible is interested in you walking the path that He has provided. It is a path of freedom, and salvation, and mercy, and love. There is no path that comes close to the wonder and majesty and benefit, but it is not an easy path. It's not supposed to be an easy path.

We in America don't really get that. Those who do realize that the Christian path will require sacrifice usually think in terms of giving up some free time to church activities, giving up some money to charity, giving up partying, or promiscuity, or profanity. In some extreme cases we may even have to endure some

ridicule for being religious. The actual Biblical cost of Christian Discipleship is giving up yourself.

It is turning your life over to Jesus. It is to live for Him. It is to be used as a vessel through whom He ministers to others. It is to accept that you have voluntarily died and along with your death is the death of your hopes and dreams and aspirations. It is the end of you. You have been “Born again,” as Jesus called it. Reborn of the Holy Spirit in Christ to walk in the newness of life. Well, what does that mean? It isn’t then to pick up where you left off with a baptism certificate in a drawer at home. The newness of life is to live by the Holy Spirit. To honor the Father, to build the Kingdom of Christ, to do the Will of the Spirit. It is to take your daily dose of the Bread of Life and from that accept full forgiveness as a likewise forgiving person and to walk in the Light delivered from all evil.



Being distracted by all the craziness around us is to give in to the ploy of the enemy. Satan is a bully. What all bullies have in common, is their desire to keep you scared. As long as you are scared, you are ineffective, off-balance, distracted from what's real and more easily manipulated.

That is precisely what Putin is doing to the world. As Christians we can pray that the bully be defeated, we can open our hearts, our wallets, and our homes to refugees. We can fight, should no other choice be afforded to us. But we must understand that this fallen and depraved world is chalk full of bullies all the way

from the supernatural realm to the Kremlin, and from our own Capitol to our own personal relationships. We will never get rid of bullies before Jesus returns. That means we resist, but we don't allow our fear to keep us from our true mission.

That mission is first and foremost to love God enough to obey Him by following Christ. That mission is secondly to love one another enough to put aside our issues and be unified. That mission is thirdly to love the lost enough to share Christ with them in a way that doesn't immediately alienate them. Then we can get to the rest of the stuff.

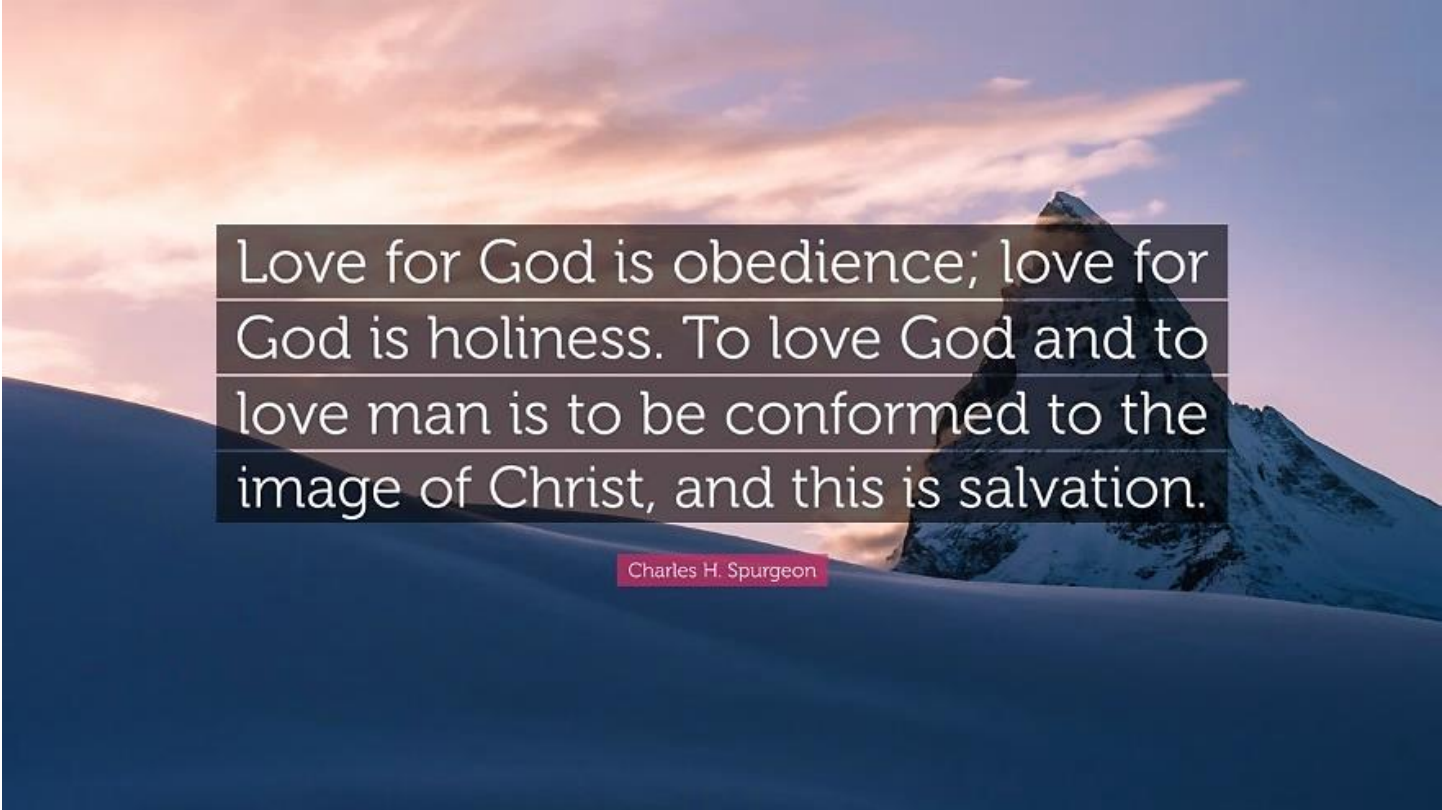
We are in a position, as some of the wealthiest people on planet earth, who basically want for nothing, who possess a degree of personal freedom unimaginable to most humans throughout history. Enjoying a level of safety and security beyond compare. Privileged with an incredible education and an endless opportunity for more learning. We have so much spare time, we have to invent new ways to keep ourselves entertained and along with all of that we have the most extensive Biblical resources ever known to mankind... We are in a position to make a huge impact in the world for God –

not for us, or our ideology, or our children, or our grandchildren, or our political party, or our cultural bent, or our societal proclivities, or our nation, but a huge impact in the world for Almighty God.

We can focus on allowing Him to build His Kingdom, here and now, through us and the resources that He's entrusted to us. We've got to get serious about who we are, which is to say to we've got to get serious about to Whom we belong.

You are either yours to will and desire, to serve and adore, or we are His and I think time is running out on getting that right.

It's about focus. You can focus on your health and all the myriad of doctors and therapists and treatments, not to mention diet and exercise; creams and ointments; books and courses, or you can focus on Jesus and then when time and money allow, also take care of your health. Now, I could go down a long list of things making the same basic point. I hope you can see what I'm trying to convey.



Love for God is obedience; love for God is holiness. To love God and to love man is to be conformed to the image of Christ, and this is salvation.

Charles H. Spurgeon

If everything is first and foremost about Jesus and then about being conformed to Him and if we understand through the Bible that He was all about selfless self-sacrificing love, then it's easy to see that our focus should not be on the things of this world.

My friends, if you are a Christian, this world is not your home. Hebrews chapter 11 starts with what is called the "Heroes of Faith." After listing the great Believers of the Old Testament, it says starting in verse 13, Hebrews 11:13–16, 13All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them

from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”

We recently looked at I John 2:15–17, 15Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

Do you want to live forever?