



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

October 31, 2021

“In Deed” Part 2

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

New Construction Started

Christmas Party December 10, 6:00 - See Karen Dalton

NEWS

Wednesday Nights at Alêtheia 6:30

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com

New Podcast Host: myaletheia.podbean.com Or go to Spotify, and type in **myaletheia**

Like us on Facebook (aletheiachristianfellowship)

Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com

I JOHN 3:17-24 ~

A person’s behavior is a window into their _____. Two additional concepts...

1) No one always behaves the way they _____.

A little _____ is good. Stand up and own your _____.

2) Everyone can act, so _____ are important.

Being a “Do-gooder” will either result in resentment, or self-serving legalism, or both.

We are in right relationship to the degree that we allow God’s love to _____ through us and impact lives around us.

This goes to the kind of first face-to-face meeting you want to have with _____.

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!

Verses 19-22 are difficult to render in _____.

An interlinear is the _____ text with English below. The further you move down the scale towards a paraphrase, the more the human translator is interpreting the underlying text for you.

In the next 3 verses we have the word “_____” 4 times. Remember, for them, this was not the seat of emotions, but of reason, or conscience.

The Apostle Paul often spoke of behaving in such a way that his conscience was _____.
(Acts 24:16, I Corinthians 4:4, Job 27)

You can only ever stand before God with a clear conscience because He _____ that clear conscience... He does that because He values you.

He wants to spend time with you, and He is listening. If... If our prayers are not _____ by our sin.

If our relationship is in disrepair, it must be fixed _____.

The one thing we are required to do in the Lord's Prayer is to _____.

Prayer is abiding in relationship with God, not trying to alter His _____.

Verse 23 seems like two things, but it is not. It's only ever one thing - it's only ever _____.

How can we do that? Verse 24, tells us, it is by _____ in Him.

Then we are _____ by the Holy Spirit Whom He has given us.

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 _____



I John 3:17-24, 17But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. 23This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.



So last week we got through verse 18 where John plainly said obedience to Christ's command to love one another must be THE actual, tangible, and concrete DOING of love within the Community of God.

It's not talking the talk, but rather walking the walk - and it's not walking the walk elsewhere with people who don't know you - it's walking the walk with the people who have seen your warts. Walk the walk with your immediate family first - then with the remainder of your church family second.

Why? Because that's how a member of God's family - a Christian - should already be, in their head, and in their heart, and so it must be how they are in their hands, and in their feet. The thought life is reflected in the activity life - in how a person behaves.

When you're dealing with anyone you're trying to figure out, completely set aside everything they say and simply focus on what they do. A person will accurately tell you who they are by what they consistently do. Their actions tell you who they are inside. A person's behavior is a window into their character - it is a physical revelation of their soul. Since Holy Spirit driven character matters so much and since behavior reveals character...



Now as I said before there are two additional concepts to be added. 1) No one always behaves the way they want. 2) Everyone can act, so motives are important. Well, let's explore that a bit. 1) The first issue is just because you want to behave in a particular way, doesn't mean that you'll always succeed. That's where earnest desire coupled with intentional abiding comes in... Making tiny choices today, like doing what your God-informed conscience tells you to do, and like praying, and like reading your Bible, and like being involved in church.

These small choices can set you up for a better chance at doing who you are in the future. My friends, today's small choices can have a massive effect in your future, good or bad. Choose wisely now.

Then when we fail, we need to regret that... A little guilt is good. You can call it conviction if it makes you feel better, but that pain, embarrassment, disappointment with yourself, is absolutely essential. Never run from that feeling. "Embrace it!" Because that's the feeling that helps you do better next time. Absent the horror of recognizing you failed, you'll never truly grow.

Our culture has everything so mixed up and backwards it's - well I'd say that it's unbelievable, but really, if you believe in God, you have to believe in the Devil and what would that Devil do? Precisely what he's done and continues to do... Make everything backwards. I often say Christianity is counter intuitive. It's because we're backwards, not because God's backwards.

Satan and his team have assaulted us through our underlying cultural philosophy. We tell people, even Christian people, never feel guilty - guilt is of the Devil! Then when we talk about conscience, we say well, the

Holy Spirit might convict us gently, but He'd never make us feel guilty.

Friends, that's so dumb. It's the same foolish thinking that treats a misbehaving toddler with kid gloves because you're afraid of hurting their feelings. All you do when you don't enforce strict parameters for a child is ruin them. Human beings are self-serving and monstrous enough without reinforcing that behavior!

Each of us will avoid future behavior to the precise degree to which that behavior's outcome is painful to us personally. People numb themselves with booze and drugs because the pain of that, is less to them, than the pain without that.

When we've acted selfishly - pain is good. "Take the pain and let it do its work." Recognize the damage your unthinking, self-serving, behavior causes God, His church, those closest to you, whom you're supposed to love most dearly... The pain of guilt is good - you should feel terrible over your sin.

You say, "I do feel dreadful about it" - good! You should - pain is how we know something is bad. Guilt is good

in this way. In the way that it drives you to do something quickly and dramatically. What do you do with your guilt? Immediately run to Jesus.

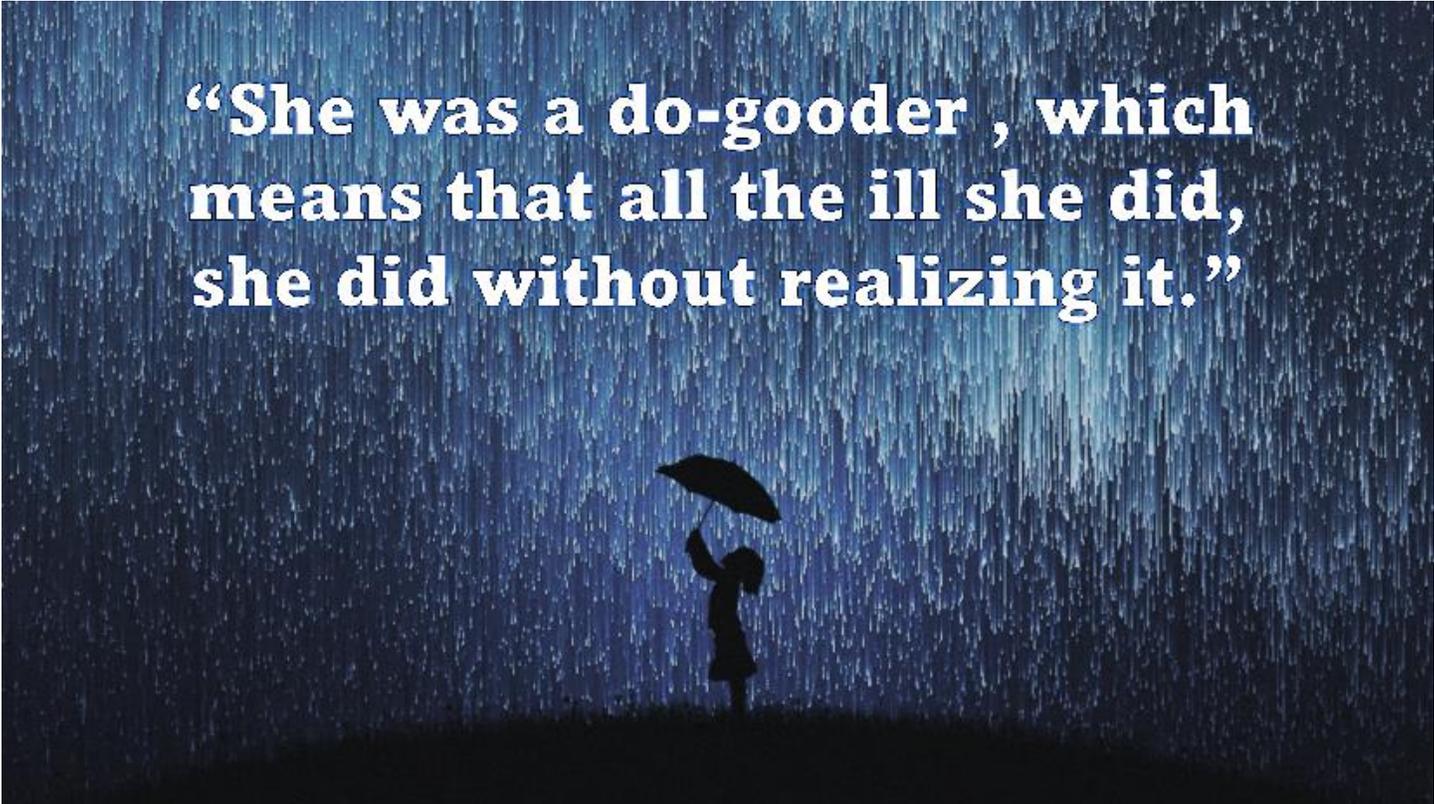
The part you should never do, is wallow in your guilt - you've got to proactively fix it. Why? Wallowing in guilt is self-indulgent and perhaps more evil than the sin causing it. That's the type of guilt we must avoid.

Stand up and own your failure. Realize that everyone fails, that's life. Failure and the accompanying guilt are fantastic for one thing and that is learning how not to behave.

Confess to the world that you're imperfect because bringing your sin into the light of day robs it of its power over you. Run to Jesus, confess honestly and transparently with your God-given integrity. Repent. "Lord, I feel horrible about what I did, I'm so sorry, I never want to do that again, I know that it hurt You and those I love, please forgive me, please help me properly confess to those I love and to move forward and to behave more like a Child of God should behave." Then what do you do? You fully accept His

forgiveness and move forward with purpose to set things right, or at least as right as you are able.

Never let guilt or conviction or whatever you want to call it have a moment of your attention after you've accepted Christ's forgiveness on the matter. The past is only ever good for informing the conduct of the present with the hope of less mistakes in the future.



“She was a do-gooder , which means that all the ill she did, she did without realizing it.”

2) The second related concept is that we humans are often quite adept at acting. We can be agreeable people and can serve others in a seemingly selfless fashion for a very long time. We can be “Do-gooders”

and it will either result in resentment, or self-serving legalism, or both, and we'll be none the wiser.

Instead of rehashing the negative aspects, let me simply say that our self-sacrificing service to others must be motivated by the Love of God within us, extended to others through us. It is best thought of as being a conduit through whom God pours His love out to another person.

He allows us to participate in His loving of other people. The greatest gift God gives to us is the Truth. It is the Truth that sets us free. Jesus is the Truth personified. I have the mind-blowing privilege of often being allowed to participate in God's ministry of love to you. God speaks Truth to you through me.

Can you see what a blessing that is? Whenever you share the Truth with another person you have a choice of allowing God to speak through you, or sharing your own thoughts on the matter. If it is God speaking through you the other person is hearing from God - they are being loved by God through you. If you are sharing your understanding with someone, it can be

nice. One person caring about another enough to share their most important ideas.

Generally, the other person will at least be hesitant if not downright disagreeable. In such a case they are not accepting what you think and by extension in our ridiculous culture that means that they are not accepting you.

You press the argument and therein lies the problem. We now have two human beings arguing about God instead of two human beings being blessed by God.

The Truth is not yours - it's His - and when we keep that straight we never get defensive about someone rejecting it - we can get sad, but never defensive. Therefore, no argument necessary, we can simply walk away - shake the dust from our feet and prayerfully look for the next opportunity.

If we act from His love in what we do, whether sharing Truth, or serving in any other capacity, we will never be resentful regardless of the other person's reaction and we will never make it about us in a legalistic self-serving earning something for my efforts, kind of way.



To recap, we are going to do everything we can to love actually with behavior corresponding to our Holy Spirit driven conscience and we are going to embrace guilt when we fail for the purpose of propelling us to the altar and pushing us to be better. And, we are going to be motivated by His love and simply allow His love, in whatever particular form it takes, to flow through us out to the other person.

This demonstrates that we are abiding in Him, which means that we are in right relationship with God, with ourselves, with our fellow Christian and with the lost. To what degree is it true? To the degree that we allow

God's love to flow through us and impact lives around us. Loving Christian behavior is not proof that we're Saved - it is proof that God's precious Salvation is effective in us.



Remember this goes to the kind of first face-to-face meeting you want to have with Jesus. How do you want that day to go? Beyond that, what kind of person wants to be a Christian in name only? The answer is the kind that is not motivated by God's Love and to carry that thought to its logical conclusion, a Christian not motivated by God's Love is completely ignorant of reality.

They are intellectually lazy, psychologically stunted, emotionally infantile, spiritually immature at best - at best. To call yourself a Christ follower and not follow Christ can't happen to anyone who has any sense at all, who has any psychological stability at all, who has any emotional development at all, who has any spiritual maturity at all. It is to be self-deceived beyond belief.

Things get complicated from here. All of that was the easy bit. Starting in verse 19 we have one of the most seemingly convoluted sections in Scripture. From here through verse 22 it is very difficult to concisely render in English. Because the translators of the NASB tried to stay as faithful as possible to a word-for-word translation, their work in this spot is nearly impossible to understand. Without putting some real thought into it, we typically ignore places like this and just keep trudging along until we get to something easier.

I often talk about the challenges in translating the Bible - let's look a little closer. Greek adds nuance by changing the construction of each word internally, whereas English does that by adding extra helping words. The two languages work differently at a fundamental level - they each communicate thoughts

differently. To render Greek in a word-for-word translation in English, results in gibberish.

ὅτι	ἐάν	καταγινώσκη	ἡμῶν	ἡ	καρδία	ὅτι	μείζων	ἐστίν
ὅτι	ἐάν	καταγινώσκω	ἐγώ	ὁ	καρδία	ὅτι	μέγας	εἰμί
CAZ	CAC	VPAS3S	RP1GP	DNSF	NNSF	CAZ	JNSMC	VPAI3S
that	if	condemns	us	our	heart	that	greater	is
ὁ	θεός	τῆς	καρδίας	ἡμῶν	καί	γινώσκει	πάντα	
ὁ	θεός	ὁ	καρδία	ἐγώ	καί	γινώσκω	πᾶς	
DNSM	NNSM	DGSF	NGSF	RP1GP	CLN	VPAI3S	JAPN	
—	God	—	heart	our	and	knows	all	

The closest to that is an interlinear which is, in this case, the Greek text with English underneath. Even it is not exactly word-for-word, and it's unreadable unless you've spent hundreds of hours studying Greek. The top white line is the Greek text, under that in orange is the lexical form of the words - we could say the base form. The third line in blue is a code reminding you what the internal word change did grammatically. While the fourth line is a possible English definition.

As an example, the 4th word in the top block is ἡμῶν (hā-mōn), “us,” the first person, genitive, plural, of ἐγώ (ě-gō), from which we get our word ego, the personal pronoun “I.” Let’s do one more while we’re here. The second word from the end still in the top block is “greater” as in greater than something else comparatively. It is formed as μείζων (mā-dzōn), the J in blue means that it’s an adjective form of the noun. Then we have it as nominative, singular, masculine comparative. That’s the construction from μέγας (mě-gās) from which we get our word mega, meaning big.

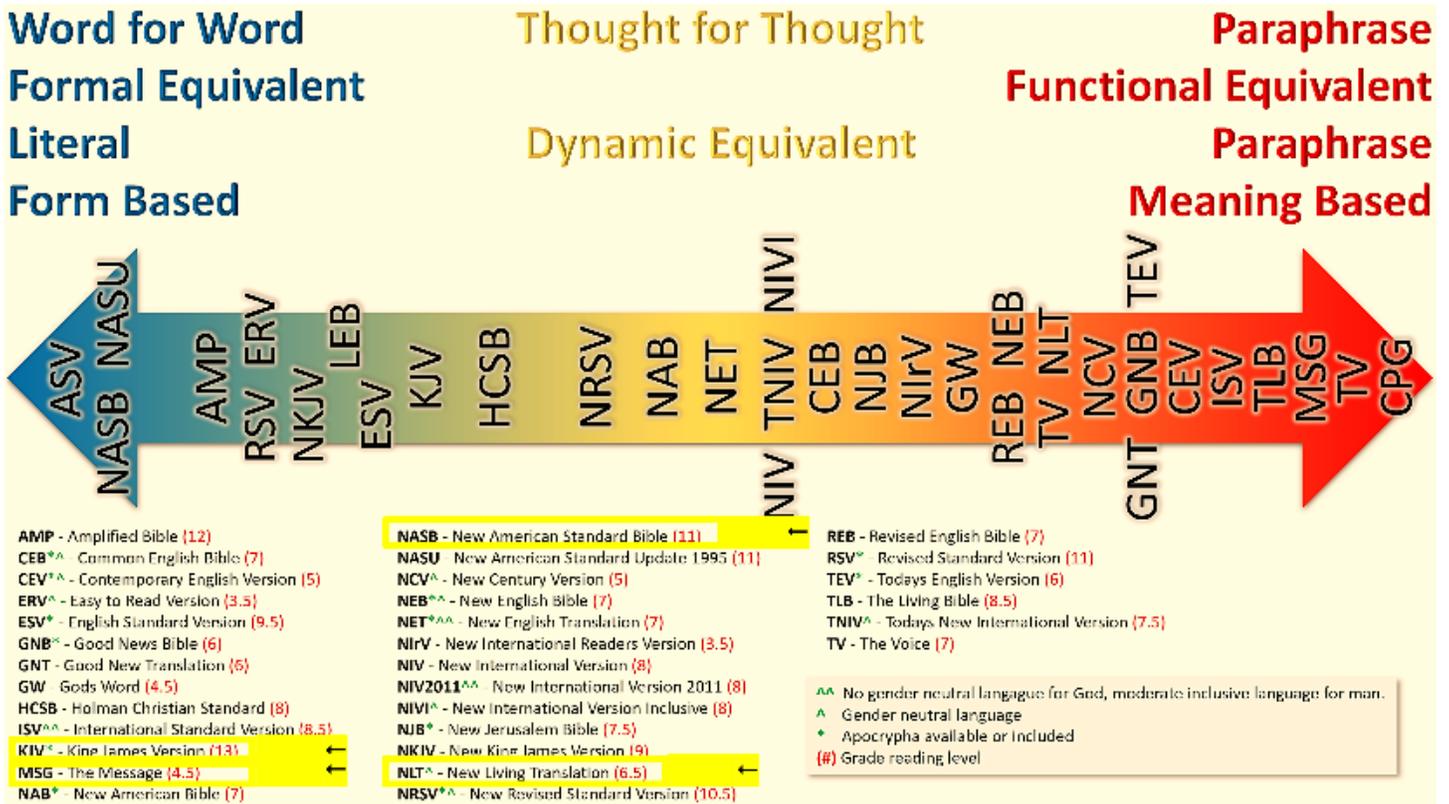
These two lines are verse 20 from the interlinear, the English reads, “That if condemns us our heart that greater than is God heart our and knows all.”

Interlinear: “That if condemns us our heart that greater than is God heart our and knows all.”

NASB: “In whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.”

MSG: “It’s also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.”

To add the least number of extra words reasonable, results in the NASB, which is sometimes, like now, still difficult. Verse 20 there is, “In whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.” On the opposite end of that translation spectrum, we have the Message Bible which is technically a paraphrase. Verses 20 there, “It’s also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.”



This gives some idea of the choices translators make in bringing God's Word to life in a way that 21st century Americans can understand. The NASB is not only very strict in limiting extra words, it's written at an 11th grade reading level. The MSG on the other end is about a 4th grade level. The NIV is in the middle. Do we try to translate as literally as possible, or try to put what a Greek speaker would understand into English that a modern American would understand? There's no easy answer and that's why I recommend consulting several versions. I have a handout for anyone wanting one - I'll leave them here...

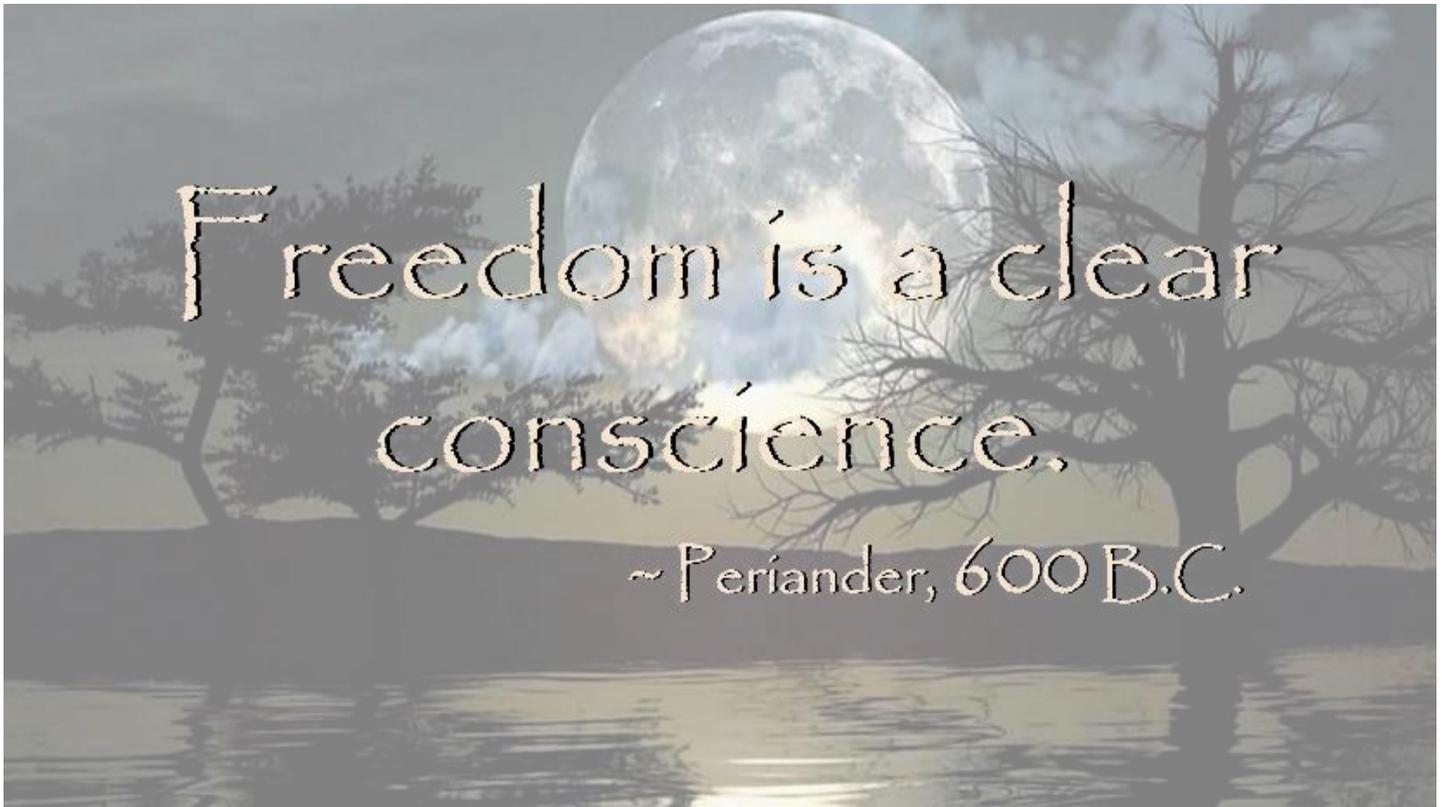
Just realize that the further you move down the scale towards a paraphrase the more the human translator is interpreting the underlying text for you. In other words, the more easily readable, the more the original has to be interpreted to make it so.



In the next 3 verses we have the word “heart” 4 times and each time it is καρδία, as in cardiac. Remember, for them, the heart was not the seat of emotions, but of reason, or we could say, more accurately in this context, the seat of one’s conscience. This is where you reason with yourself and wrestle with your conscience. As I said last week, we tend to think of this as our head, rather than our heart. But to be more

precise, it is not thinking as much as it is working through things - this is where ethics live. What is right and what is wrong. The devil and the angel trying to gain the upper hand in influencing your ethical reasoning and so your conscience. It is actually that process in the human that God through the prophet Jeremiah declares is “Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9).

Verse 19 begins simply enough with the idea that we can recognize that we are abiding in Christ and allowing God’s love to flow through us as a Child of His should, when we act in self-sacrificing love towards our fellow Believer. Our conscience is clear. The Apostle Paul often spoke of behaving in such a way that his conscience was clear before God. Acts 24:16 NIV records Paul’s words, “So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.”



In I Corinthians 4:4 Paul basically said that he was not perfect and that he had made mistakes, but that his conscience was clear. I cannot begin to tell you how wonderful it is to have a clear conscience. We have that when we do our best to do what's right, confess "When we fail," accept forgiveness, and try again. In that way we know we are living in - abiding in - The Truth and our conscience is clear in the presence of a perfect God. Job said that his "Heart would not reproach him" because He refused to be unrighteous, unjust, or without integrity. In that chapter, Job 27, we see the meaning of "heart" confirmed as reason, or conscience, and the meaning of "righteous" confirmed

as a just integrity. Job also confirmed of the value of a clear conscience long before King Periander concluded the same thing.

Is it always the case that our conscience is clear? No. I already said, "When we fail." Please recognize the vital importance of what needs to come instantly after a failure... Run to your Heavenly Father... Run. Don't be like your many times great grandparents and hide... Run out to meet Him and freely confess all for the sake of your conscience because He knew all the details of your failure before you failed.

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God



He knows and He loves you and He will forgive you and He will restore you. God will clear your conscience and set you back on your feet to try again. Verse 21 means that when you, like the Apostle Paul, stand before God with a clear conscience because He helped you do right, or because He restored you after your failure - either way - you must realize that your status with Him is because of Him, not you. That's the key to avoiding Jeremiah's prediction - trust God, not yourself.

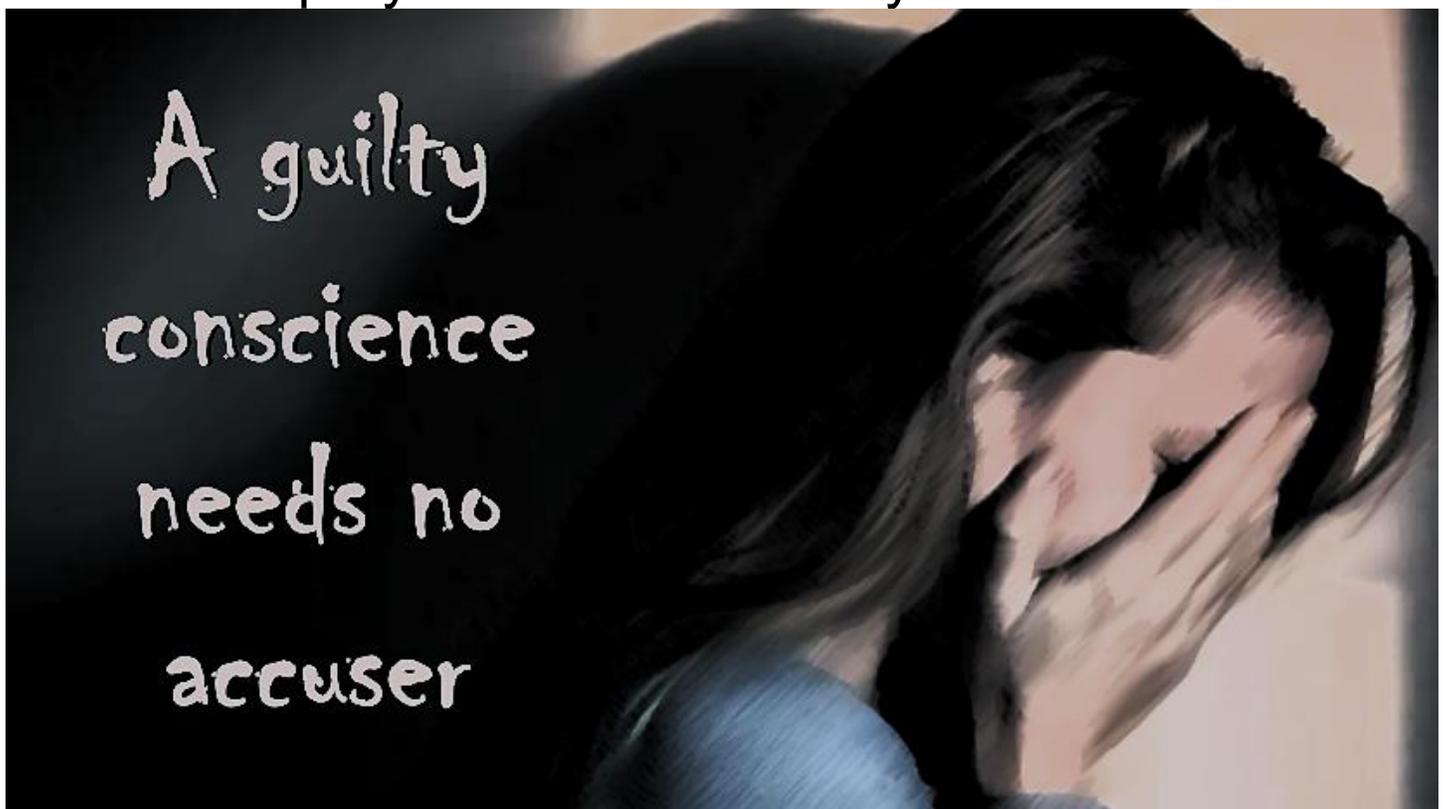
This is an essential point. You can only ever stand before God with a clear conscience because He enabled that clear conscience... The old saying, "A clear conscience is merely the sign of a faulty memory," is true when it comes to us humans - but with God comes full restoration. The next rational, logical step forward from there... Is that He did that because He values you.

God does that for you because, regardless of what you think of yourself, He loves you and wants you to be comfortable, safe, and secure, in His Holy presence. He wants to spend time with you. That's why He disciplines us - not even God wants to spend time around a selfish, disobedient, undisciplined child.

When we know that He has cleared our conscience we have confidence in His company.

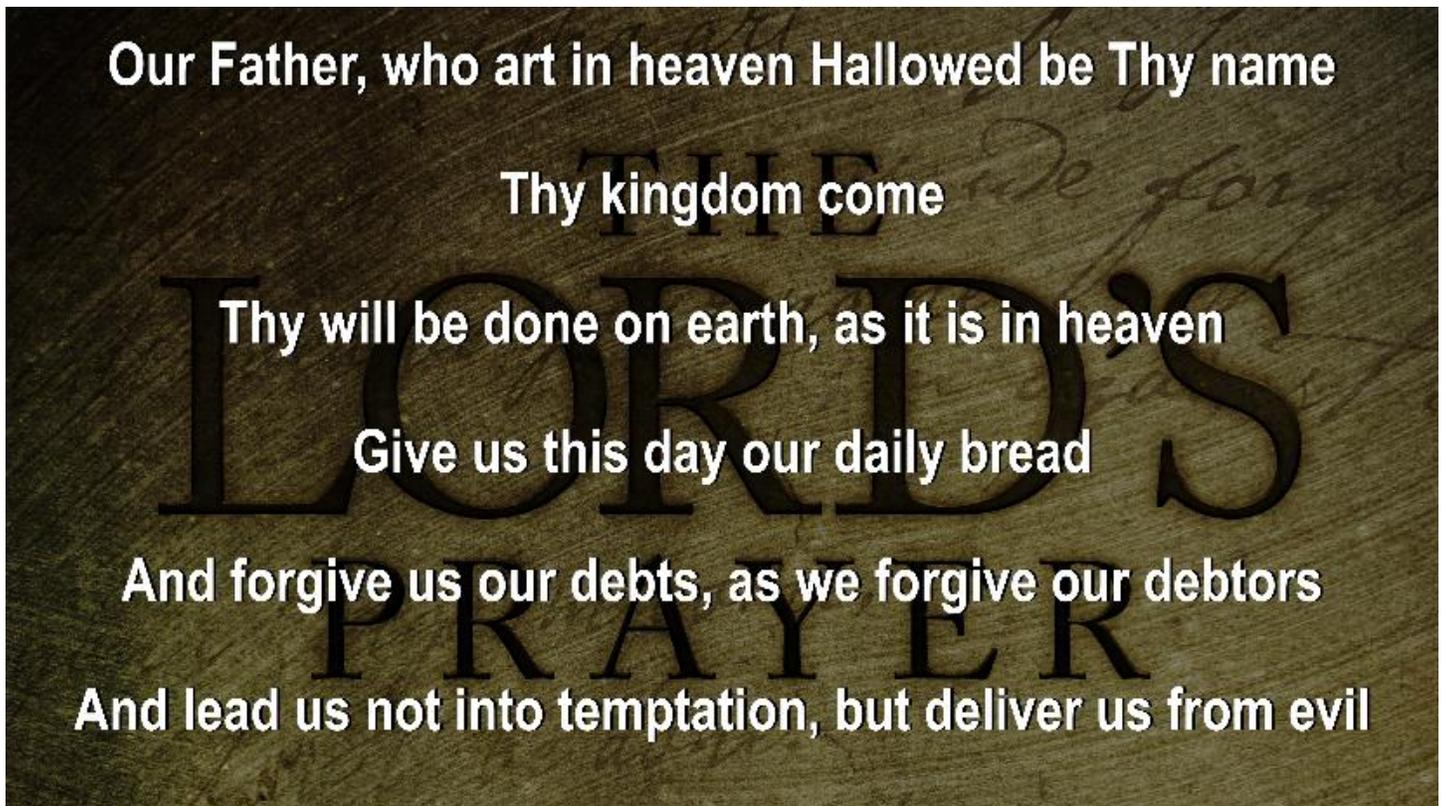
When is that happening? In this life, when we are praying. You are in His Throne-room, and you belong there, so share your cares and concerns, your hopes and dreams, with Him. He is listening.

Almighty God is listening to you... If. If. Oh, boy, there's an "If"? Yes, throughout the Bible God repeatedly tells us that our prayers are hindered by our sin.



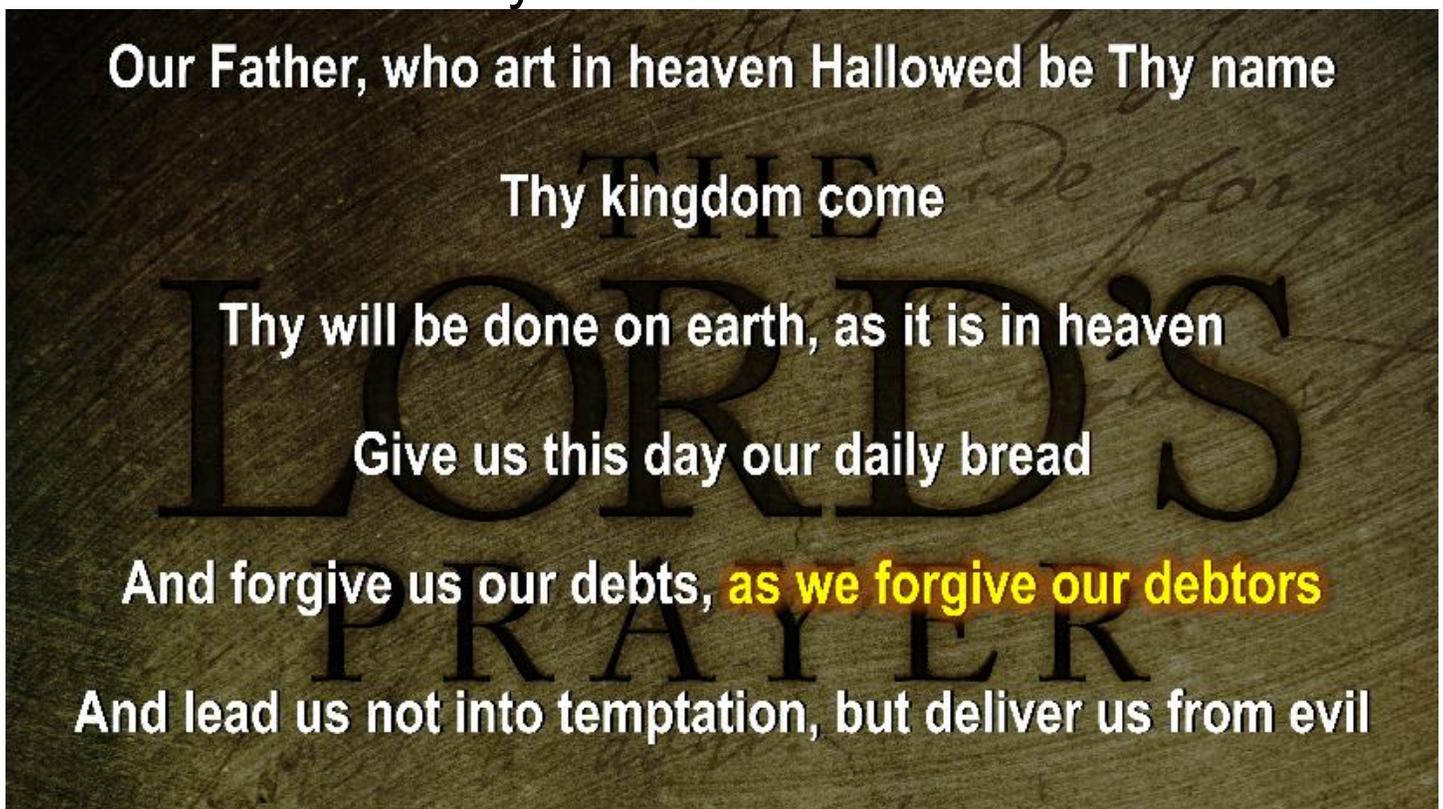
The mechanism has more to do with our guilt, whether we're consciously aware of it or not. Like Adam and

Eve immediately covering themselves and hiding from God. It has to do with spoiled relationship due to a failure to obey and that is true even when we consciously believe that we're doing okay. Our heart condemns us, the Holy Spirit convicts us, and we know deep down that something is off, but we can't put our finger on it. Our relationship is in disrepair and must be fixed first.



That's why the Lord's Prayer is laid out the way it is - it's a perfectly ordered framework for all prayer. I've gone over it a couple of times, suffice it to say that we must approach God in reverence for Who He is and with a rational understanding of who we are in

comparison, which should result in tremendous humility and extraordinary gratitude. That attitude enables our praise of Him, our desire for His Reign perfected and for His purposes fulfilled. We then turn our attention to our complete dependance, begging for His help, for His presence, for His pardon, for His protection. That's what the Lord's Prayer is.



Notice the one thing WE are required to do in all of that for Him to bless us? We must forgive those who have offended us in the same way and to the same degree that He has forgiven us.

If you can do that - you are very likely right with God. If in praying, you hit a snag at that point - you are not fully right with God. Please get this, my friends... The reason we are reluctant to forgive others is we undervalue the forgiveness we've received.

Undervaluing the forgiveness that cost Jesus His life, is not recognizing, and appropriately confessing our sin. It stands in the way of right relationship - it blocks prayer.

God withholds His presence from us, or we block it from ourselves however you want to see it, but it is by His design in order to bring us back to Him relationally. There are no formulas to get God to act - that's witchcraft. There is right relationship resulting in righter relationship.

Again, prayers in Christianity are not recipes as in paganism and witchcraft, where doing the right thing in the correct sequence with the particular words forces the divine or demonic to act. Prayer in Christianity is not a method for you to get what you want, unless, of course, what you want, is a closer, truer, more abiding relationship with God - because that's the purpose of prayer.

Witchcraft is a way to get my will done in heaven, Christian prayer is a way to get God's Will done on earth... Take that a step further. Witchcraft is about getting the supernatural to conform to my way of thinking in order to accomplish my agenda. Christian prayer is about getting myself conformed to God's way of thinking in order to build His Kingdom.

God's withholding of His presence when we have unresolved sin is itself a blessing and as I said it's a blessing that He gives to us through our own consciences, whether consciously or subconsciously we know that our relationship isn't right. Whether we can admit it or not, deep down, we know it. We pull back from God. We clothe ourselves in fig leaves and hide even when we pray.

The Bible tells us in many places and in many ways that unanswered prayer, which is a distance between God and us is due to sin... My point is it isn't because God refuses to speak - He doesn't have to refuse to speak because our guilt caused relational dissonance keeps us from hearing Him anyway.



Okay, people who have confidence in His presence now when they pray are the exact same people who will confidently stand before Jesus when He arrives for His face-to-face.

Why? Because such people abide enough to actually obey Him and what does He command? Verse 23, “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

That seems like two things, but it is not. The one and only command from God to be Saved is to accept

Jesus - believe in Him - it is always all about Jesus and if that is what you've done then as a Saved person informed by the Holy Spirit you will love one another, just as Jesus commanded.

How can we do that? Verse 24, by abiding in Him. By making the constant decision to intentionally be in Christ. If we are, we act like it, and prove that He then abides in us, because that's the only way we can behave this way without either becoming resentful, or legalistically self-serving, or both.

We are motivated by the Holy Spirit Whom He has given us.