

60_790420 HLH Hearers & Doers BS

I was discussing a matter this afternoon with someone and we touched upon a theme that might be helpful since this is immediately after the Days of Unleavened Bread.

And in those weeks, of course, which followed the story of the children of Israel out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, there were trials and problems and it brings up a question that may help some of us understand better.

Why is it that some people who have been among us for a long or a short time no longer stay? Why is it that some who have known for a long time of the Church and of this work after years come to themselves and in a time when others leave, they become converted? But how do you explain why it is that sometimes the man or the woman you marry is not the same afterward you fought on the basis of everything that they were converted, part of the Church, and now the state of affairs in the home is quite different? I think we need to look at this question and ask ourselves just what it means to be converted and what it means to remain converted.

And how do you perceive other people in terms of marriage, in terms of marriage for your children? I had the interesting experience this morning of talking to a man who has two children.

I've known each of them for the children for many years.

The one had been baptized, was always interested in the work of the Church, seemed to have a part in it, had problems, marriage, has finally been involved in divorce, has married someone else who is not a member, doesn't think this is the only Church, doesn't attend anymore, started out seemingly converted.

Another in contrast is a sad situation turned good, thank you, for years not baptized, then becomes baptized and in a crisis such as this work has gone through has no doubt that this is God's Church.

Same family, you try to figure that out, and yet you know it's all laid out and I'm going to pick a few books, I probably could take any set of books of the Bible and approach it to analyze this question, but I thought we should take three letters, that is three writers, James and Peter and John, and take a look at how they have explained this problem.

First of all, it is very common for us when we go through books of the Bible to try to explain the author in a way that of course we never have our letters explained, somebody reads our letters and hopefully we understand them, but somehow when people read James, they don't or Peter or John, they don't tend to read them in terms of clearly understanding what the author is telling us, we begin to ponder why the author uses one word instead of another, and we don't normally read letters from friends in the same manner, so I would propose this evening that we are not analyzing the book of James, the books of Peter or the books of John, but we are looking to see just briefly what each one of these men has to tell us about the problem, why we have some congregations that are absolutely firm and solid and loyal, and I should like to at this point bring greetings since I was in the last holy day at Tulare, from the Bakersfield Church, from the Fresno Church and the Visalia Church, happily there were individuals who had become rankled who had come back and I hope what I said there enabled them to have at least an understanding of what they were upset over, and we have congregations that have all but disappeared because of leadership and because the people themselves have some responsibility, shepherds are necessary, but it doesn't mean that because one

sheep goes astray the other 99 have to, the foolishness of one sheep is not an excuse for somebody else to go through the same hole in the fence. James is addressing the question of faith initially because he speaks of the testing of your faith and I happen to have the common Bible, which is the RSV done in England with the general imprimatur of the Catholic Church as well as the varied Protestant bodies that participated in its general analysis when I read material, as we might this evening, I like to choose a variant version, sometimes it might be the New English Bible, sometimes this and sometimes the King James, all depends on what is most effective in terms of oral reading. In this case, the question is the testing of your faith. Now, it does seem that at certain periods of time, there were earlier periods, it was the same way, but let's say in 1973, 74, and now in 1978, 79, we have problems in which people become upset, make decisions that somehow they seemingly wouldn't have made at other times. Now, in this question of the testing of faith, James says in verse 4, let your steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Now, that is the ultimate statement of what man is to become in terms of character, which is made possible through the testing or the challenging, if you please, of one's faith, that you may be perfect and complete and lacking in nothing. Therefore, we may presume immediately from this that when people are lacking something fundamental in their stability, they really need to examine just how steadfast they are. Are they easily moved by external pressures, by embarrassments of the conduct of others or what they hear others say of third parties? Now, look at verse 12. See, we're not looking at the book of James, we're looking at the material in this and other books to answer our question this evening as to why some people remain, why some do not, and why some people that were among us are not in terms of the family, in terms of responsibility in the church, and some who stayed out for a long time, didn't know whether they wanted to commit themselves, often come into the church in our baptized in a time of crisis, as well as the time of peace. Look at verse 12. Blessed is the man who endures trials. Now, we are going through a period of trial, and there are people who have left, and I will illustrate without implicating anyone, that's not the purpose here, but just to pick out illustrations of characters. We have individuals in the church who, when a trial comes, suddenly disappear because they don't want the strain of a trial. We've had individuals who've had this problem that they only want to have faith in quietness and peace and have no testing of their faith. Now, there are some with that problem. We're going to find any number of problems, but this is the way James approaches it. If you come among us, you have to be willing to endure with us whether you like the legal department or not. People want to use excuses, so let me now diverge for a moment. I had the pleasure yesterday evening of being an early dinner guest, and then my wife was with me, then to attend a lecture on our excavations at Terca, presented by the doctor and Mrs. Bucciolatti. In introducing the presentation of the evening before the assembled group, who are representative of individuals of various professions in and out of education, in and out of businessmen and women, young and old, interested in archaeology.

Dr. Giorgio Bucciolatti acknowledged, as it's appropriate, that the foundation that we know of as the Ambassador Foundation in Pasadena was responsible for the financial success of this year's expedition, as well as previously jointly with other institutions. We wholly underwrote it this last year. There were some, shall we call it, Oz in the audience, gasps, because they had undoubtedly read a number of local newspapers, heard the radio, but I'm saying this for a reason.

A man of professional standing is not embarrassed to acknowledge where the money came from. It's not tainted money.

He didn't have to apologize as some people in God's church do.

He has heard everything as he said. He has watched the developments and he is as convinced as he is from his own experience that human jealousy plays a major role in the way people behave toward each other.

And he is the kind of person who would be willing to write to any institution or any person in defense of the good judgment that has been used in the way we have handled money with respect to international matters. Now, if a person who is not of our fellowship, a person who was a friend before we were involved with money, lest some of you now misunderstand, because you know, money is supposed to be what influences people, he was a friend for nearly a decade. I've known him for a decade before we were ever involved financially, where we never even thought of the Ambassador Foundation, who always appreciated what we stood for, because we also appreciated the quality of the character of the work that he and his wife are doing.

But here you have an individual who can stand up before a group of people whom he knows not in every case, and is not at all embarrassed. And yet I think we should consider this in terms of ourselves, that when we endure trials, it might even involve connections with individuals among ourselves, that sometimes people want to be embarrassed over. Just want you to think about what James is saying here, because there are people who don't endure a trial, who don't want to be associated with others who do.

Now James points out that sometimes we can make mistakes, and he will tell you here how you deal with problems, how you stay in the church with the right attitude. Let us look briefly then at verse 22. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Perhaps more than any other verse, here's the starting point now, that determines why some endure and why some do not, why some are steadfast, why some are not.

We have young people who hear the word and are baptized, and finally they may be in the college, in times past, they may be in the local church, some are older, some are younger.

They are hearers of the word that is written and spoken, but they are not necessarily doers, and anyone who hears but isn't a doer is deceiving himself.

We find this fundamentally in our marital problems, that is, the reason for some of the divorces in the church is not because of porneia, not because of transgression of one of the Ten Commandments overtly, it's because you discovered that when you married a person who was a hearer of the word, you did not discover that in private the person is not a doer of the word, who defraud you in marriage, and the bulk of the problems I deal with involve fraud in, not transgression outside of, and it brings up the question as one woman said, well, when I married this man, I didn't marry him, like the scripture says, because I didn't know what the scripture says, that you were to submit to your husband as to the Lord.

Well, I said, now that you have been baptized and are a hearer, are you also a doer? That is, are you willing to do now what is asked of you? And the answer was very plainly, no.

You want to know why some marriages crack up? Divorce is not the cause, divorce is the effect, and it is time we learn that. We have too many who are focusing in on the result and are not getting it the cause of problems as to why people behave toward each other, why people behave this way toward the church, or to put it a little more intimately toward Christ himself. If anyone is a hearer of the word, talks about what the scripture says, but does not do it, he is not a doer, that man or that woman is like one who observes his natural face in the mirror, and he goes away and forgets what he

was like. But the other mate doesn't forget because they, that is, the man or the woman, have to live with this problem.

And I think we need to face up to this fact that we have a significant number of people.

The root problem is that they have heard they were not reared in some other religious confusion, as some of you were, they have no prejudices against the truth, but they are not doers. It's quite a different manner for somebody who hears and who has arguments and doubts, and has to wrestle with those arguments and doubts before he makes a commitment. Roderick Merritt has mentioned years ago when people were blowing out the church in 73 and 74 on the basis of questions they had never heard before, after being in the church for 20 years, he said, and I would say the same thing, we had to face those questions before we were ever baptized. And there are people who don't face those questions until years later. This is especially true of individuals who hear when they are young, the broadcast, want to come to the college, come here, their parents either supported them, encouraged them, or didn't say anything or teach them otherwise about religion.

They were hearers.

But are they doers? We have baptized a large number of hearers.

I will let the rest of the thought be unspoken and you decide whether you want to become a doer, if you think you are only the hearer. Repentance is not merely to open your ears to hear.

Repentance requires that you must do what you have learned.

Verse 25, he who looks into the perfect law, this law of liberty, which he later defines in chapter 2, especially in verse 11, summarizes it in verse 8, is the Ten Commandments. That is, all the basic principles laid out in the law there given at Sinai, he who looks into this perfect law, not the law only as it is worded in Exodus 20.

This is the law that we see when we examine the Ten Commandments with all the rest of the Bible.

When we look in Matthew chapter 5, the commandment which said, you shall not kill, did not mean to exclude, you shall not hate.

This perfect law is the full intent and purpose for which the Ten Commandments were only simple words in Hebrew that did not convey all the possible thoughts that Jesus had to expound in brief upon in Matthew 5. And if he perseveres, being no hearer that forgets, but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing. That's the end of verse 25.

We have many, many individuals, the bulk of problems that I face in dealing with individuals between parents and children. And I'm going to say something very plainly here, because I think it's time we define some of these problems. The question of interracial dating and marriage has arisen. I am persuaded that in no small number of cases the problem is not with the young people, but the attitude of the parents toward the children which drives young people in the direction that they sometimes go. I have yet to discover a real grasp of proper motherhood and fatherhood when we have problems like this that arise or with drugs or alcoholism.

Most of the problems, I didn't say all, most of the problems of young people stem from parental failure. And when I bring the children and the parents together, I generally discover the source of the problem was not the boy or the girl. It was the attitude of either a mother or a father toward the children, toward each other, or the problem of both toward the children and toward the world or toward the church. I think we need to examine the clauses. We have too long been dealing with the

facts. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain. It is very important that if we think we belong to the church of God, if we think we are religious, we need to examine what it is that we are saying, whether it is in the family, in private, or in public. I had many, many people over the last year, maybe two years, who think they thought they were religious, who told me all sorts of things, and usually I am at the end of the gossip line, which I am very grateful. Most people don't bother with me. Sometimes, finally, people will come. I asked often the simple question, how do you know this is true? Where is the source? If you heard that this happened in Paris or did you hear this happened in Tokyo or this happened in Jerusalem, you know, the way things are said, or this happened on the fourth floor at the Hall of Administration, who was there who saw it? This is what I asked, who was there? Where is the source of your information? I challenged, in one case, one of the men who no longer is here.

There was never any evidence that was forthcoming, only claims. No one ever showed me evidence, only heard words.

If we do think we are religious, we have need to bridle our tongue, and anybody is deceiving himself, who spreads rumors and gossip, and that man's religion is vain, or woman's religion. Religion that is pure and undefiled doesn't involve talking about other people's mistakes or what you heard about other people's mistakes or not, but concerns visiting orphans and widows in their affliction to keep oneself unstained from the world, which is much broader than most people think.

It's easy, perhaps, for some of us to visit orphans and widows. They're nearby, they're in the church, we have at least a Sabbath to do it, but to keep unstained from the world is a very good expression and covers a very wide range, because we don't realize how many media we allow to come into our home. Let me drop down to verse 14 of chapter 2.

What does it profit my brethren if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? Here again we go back to the issue.

Your faith, your confidence, is it supported? Faith in knowing that what you hear is right.

Is it supported by works that you're going to do? That is the question. Let me read another verse here.

Some of you will say you have faith and I have works. Show me your faith, apart from your works, and I, by my works, will show you my faith. You believe that God is one, you do well, that I acknowledge even the demons believe and shudder. That was said with tongue in cheek at the beginning of verse 19. Do you want to be shown, you shallow man, that faith, apart from works, is barren? What we learn here is that people too often who do not carry out what they hear, carry out what they believe, they best be defined as people of shallow mind. That corresponds with the seed that was on the rock that didn't have any soil in which to take root. We have shallow people whose spiritual depth is extremely limited because they are hearers, but not actually doers.

Now, just as James discussed back here at the end of chapter one, one who thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tone, James dwells on this subject again. Now, remember one of the big problems that disturbs people is what other people say. Haven't you heard the bulk of the people who have been under stress, who called us to talk over, wondering why they're still among us, should they remain? These are people who have been affected, not by facts, which they have been able to examine and to know. We'll get to the question even if there are facts, what do you do? But people who have only heard what other people have said.

No human being can tame the tongue by himself, that's in verse eight, it's a restless evil full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father and with it we curse men made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing.

My brethren, this ought not to be so.

James is most concerned if we are going to endure the test of faith that we don't spread with our tongue all sorts of poison. What kind of poison can one spread? Verse 13, who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom to know how to conduct oneself, which is the opposite of the kind of pride that we associate with vanity.

If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth and claim that you are what you're not. Here we discover that some of the problems that the tongue expresses are bitter jealousy and selfish ambition.

Now for most people, and I want to point this up, for most people this is not the problem, for most people the problem is talking about it.

See there are two kinds of problems. There is the man or the woman who may be bitterly jealous and have ambition, and then there is the man or the woman who talks about it.

Have you heard that so himself? Whether or not it is true is not the issue.

The point is we have to learn to govern the tongue and to quit spreading poison, whether the poison is a reality or otherwise.

In our midst, without any question, there are those who spread rumors because there is jealousy over salary, over position. There are people who have come and gone because of selfish ambition.

Wisdom is not such as comes, this kind of wisdom is not such as comes down from above.

There are people who think in the way they seek ambition that they're wise. It's earthly and unspiritual and devilish. Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. Now the wisdom from above is first pure. It's then peaceable.

It is gentle. It is open to reason. It is full of mercy and good fruits without uncertainty or insincerity. Now we take just a brief look at this. We could go into this in great detail, but we want to take a general view this evening and you can contemplate more deeply the time you have to read over it later. Wisdom that comes from God that enables you to cope with the trial of faith is first pure. Now that word probably is far more meaningful than most of us have really thought. It involves clearly the absence of sin, now which is impure. Then it involves the attitude of peaceableness and gentleness and the ability to be open to reason, to understand cause and effect other people's problems. It must be full of mercy and good fruits.

That is, so let's just take a look. You can be merciful and it doesn't always bring good fruits because you can be tolerant of sin when sin needs to be disciplined. The kind of wisdom from God demands good fruits as a result and mercy as a fundamental approach, but not softheadedness.

Now we have many individuals who, in using their tongues, didn't create peace.

We're not really open to reason.

Somebody else's salary need not be a problem. I can reason and understand why some salaries are what they are and some of your salaries are what they are. I'm using that because some people may make issues of that as on the 60 minutes. There's a reason why we compensate some people in some ways and a reason we compensate others in other ways. There's a reason the man earns the wife to do all the things at home. We understand that a woman has a right to share equally in her husband's income and we try to work these things out in our understanding, but society around us from the very beginning has understood that a man provides or brings the media of exchange and a woman reaps the reward but is not one who reaps the salary from her husband or her children because she works for them and with them. The man shares with his family, his wife and children what he earns from the outside and so it is that in any institution we have individuals, both in terms of time and service and training, where there are differences and so we must learn to be open to reason, not to be prejudiced. Let me go on to some other things that are mentioned here. In chapter five, verse nine, do not grumble, brethren, one against another.

Do not grumble one against another. This is the characteristic of the children of Israel and the wilderness. I think we need to be very aware of how easy it is to do so today. This again reflects attitudes. Husbands and wives often grumble against each other, parents quite often against children because they would like to be doing something else and not burdened with them.

The child appreciates having been wanted.

No child can truly appreciate being born in the family and being unwanted or barely escaping being aborted. It affects in the world, hopefully not among ourselves, a very large number of young people today. So James has indeed addressed a significant area in looking at our problem.

But let us go on to Peter's comments.

In verse 13, we're dealing not with understanding James and Peter and John in terms of why they wrote the letter and everything in it, but following through some themes here. Verse 13, chapter one, first letter of Peter, gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now what we have here is what Mr. Armstrong mentioned years ago and having a goal. Every successful person converted or otherwise has to have a goal as a primary orientation. To gird up your minds means to put it in motion. When you stood with the old garments, they were loose. You couldn't round or go very fast. To gird them up means to put them in a position where they are tied close against you so you can do things. Gird up your minds means to put your minds in motion and to be sober, to know what it is that you're doing, to have full command of your thoughts, and to set your hope fully upon the grace coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ when he appears from heaven. That means to focus your hope, your aspirations on what is promised in the Bible as distinct from all sorts of distractions in the world. We unfortunately had people in 1975 who were not at all of permissive mindedness, who had set their minds in some cases on jobs and money, and who used change as an excuse to leave, instead of setting their minds upon the coming of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

Now, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

We have too many who do not look upon their past as ignorance, but as he who called you as holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct. We have individuals who are very sure that other people are not holy in their conduct, but don't know that when they spread abroad, all sorts of rumors, true or false, that their conduct is not holy either.

Now, let us look at what our attitude ought to be toward one another, verse 22, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth. So, there is a matter of being obedient of doing, submitting to what is revealed in Scripture. You do this for a sincere love of the brethren, having purified your hearts by your obedience to the truth, for a sincere love of the brethren. That is a fundamental approach to express sincerity and love and concern for others, whether you agree with them or not. There may be areas where we differ.

Paul recognizes this, and the Church Government has established to help bridge those gaps.

Love one another earnestly from the heart.

Now, if we really love one another earnestly from the heart, we won't be saying or doing many of the things that afflict us.

Because most of our problems originated from among ourselves, the world has little more than to quote us.

We have individuals, if you want to know why some people have become what they are, why some wives and husbands have become what they are. They have lost that love for each other that should earnestly come from what is here called one's heart or one's inner thinking and concerns.

It is when we lose this sincere love of others, whether you agree with them or not.

That is very fundamental. What God asks you to do, whether someone in the brotherhood is strict or someone seems to be permissive, we are not always permissive in all areas, we are not always strict in all areas. But we need to learn to appreciate one another.

And I think here is where there is this great failing. If we all set ourselves as the goal, the hope which Christ makes available to us, we would be helping rather than hindering.

Now, in all probability, this is the way it usually works out, the bulk of you who are here could have understood all this yourself, whether you heard what I am saying or not.

The majority who needed to hear who have failed in these things would not be here anyway, and that is the problem. But of course, that is exactly why they have the problem, is that they have failed to play a role with one another.

I hope that we do have this approach to each other.

Put away, in chapter 2 verse 1, all malice and all guile, and insincerity and envy and all slander.

Some of you really have to shovel a lot out if you are going to get rid of all this.

Some can really blow it away and it is all gone, and others are going to have to be dealing with the problem like a pyramid. To put away all malice, that has to do with your intent, evil intent, to try to harm somebody or to get at somebody, and all guile.

Jesus said of one of the disciples that he was without guile.

That is a very important factor. There are some people who say nice words on social occasions with him. There are others who have been. The others are not here.

I am. Just think about that, because that is very fundamental.

Dropping down a little further, chapter 2 verse 12, maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds.

Now, unfortunately, we have individuals who have come and gone who have not maintained such good conduct.

I like to hear when somebody who does not exhibit the state of conversion says in wanting to terminate her or his relationship, in this case it was a woman with her husband, I have nothing to accuse my husband up. He is too good for me.

Now, please ladies, do not ask me who the gentleman is.

You see, this is so much nicer than to discover that the pots were flying from one to the other in the kitchen.

I think too often we really need to reconsider the conduct of ourselves.

If we are really converted, we should not have to have this kind of problem.

He starts out, Peter does, servants be submissive to your masters with all respect.

In verse 18, we have an employee-employer relationship. Of that day, we could say employees in the work be submissive to your bosses with all respect, not only to the kind and gentle, but also to the overbearing. And sometimes we have both, you know that, because they're human beings.

Mostly, this is not the case. But I think it is important. Now, if you are properly disciplined for something that you did wrong and you take it patiently, what reward do you have is what he brings up in verse 20. But if you do right and suffer, then of course you have God's approval. Now, what he's saying here should illustrate something important because many, not by any means, not by any means the largest percentage, but many who attend the Bible study, many who attend each of the three congregations, whether students or married people, are involved in working for each other. And we have to learn by this how to conduct ourselves. It's easy to be overbearing and we do know that some employers within the work, some managers, have this problem.

And some do not. It's nice to know that when people leave your area that they speak well of you, just as when you have others leave your area, you can speak well of them.

Now, if we adopt that kind of submissiveness to each other, we will resolve many of the hard feelings that can arise. Now, after discussing this relationship, Peter says in chapter 3, verse 1, likewise you wives, be submissive to your husband. So there is a relationship between the servant and the master, the employee, the employer, that Peter immediately takes up with respect to women. And here we have a growing problem that afflicts the church where there is a tendency to adopt a policy that the family must not take precedence over one individual desires and goals in life. That is, women want their own goals, men may want their own goals apart from the family, and the family ceases to be a higher institution than the function of either man or woman, which family should be able to achieve what the individual alone might not.

So one of the problems we discover, many of those who have come and gone, or where there are still problems within families, is that women have yet to learn what it means to be submissive. Now, Paul, at another point, speaks of wives to be submissive to their husbands, husbands to love their wives, and later he said, to submit to one another.

That is, to be concerned for and to try to fill the needs and wishes of the other.

But the most critical matter is that women do have to learn to be submissive to their husbands.

This probably has not been the major message in marital relations for a number of years.

And there is a reason why we have a number of problems.

Whereas one young lady in her teens said in my presence that Dad's idea was what would have made the problem work out, but Mother had another idea. And I have seen quite often that there are major problems with children when wives seek to counter what the husband wishes to have done. If you don't agree as wives with what your husbands have decided, you should try to reason and to understand why the decision was made and talk with them in private rather than to counter in public before the children.

It is unfortunate when a man believes that when he's away from home and wishes to have something done, it will not be done because the wife cannot be relied upon to do it.

Peter says that wives should be submissive even though the husband doesn't obey the word.

Well, that's quite a statement. It doesn't say, likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands only if they obey the word.

It's talking about this kind of submissiveness even to the unconverted mate.

And then comes the story of the kind of attitude in verse 4 of a meek and quiet spirit, not a spirit that is constantly seeking to be asserted. Now, I know that some women have more personality than others. We're not talking here about women who are unable to communicate.

We are talking about their state of mind as to whether their spirit is quiet or agitated.

I hope that clarifies or gives you a picture.

Likewise you husbands, now let's look at what is often overlooked, live considerably with your wives. That's very nicely worded. If we had more men who lived considerably with their wives, we would not have the family stress.

And you will discover quite often that when men are inconsiderate, when women are not submissive, they're either suffering the consequences as individuals or this can affect their relationship to the church. When I find men who are not considerate, when I find women who are not submissive, I'm touching upon the causes that ultimately lead to individuals failing to fulfill their respective roles in marriage and defrauding one another.

These are the first steps. It is probable that when it says to wives to be submissive that the biggest problem women have is not being submissive.

It is equally probable therefore, doesn't mean that you all fit equally in this characteristic, but this is a statement of a generality, that men's biggest problem is the lack of consideration for their wives. The man who comes home sits in front of the TV, you know the story, you have the picture, or you do it yourself. Have your beer, you wait for the meal, and then you go back and look at TV or the newspaper. You give no consideration to what the woman needs who may have been working all day also. No attention. To live considerably is a very important responsibility. To bestow honor on the woman as the weaker vessel.

Now this is an attitude Mr. Herbert Armstrong has always sought to bestow honor on his wife.

I think that was an example that he both spoke about and did, and I think that men need to adopt this more often and to examine how they conduct themselves, because what we are discovering here is that Christians who have been baptized, who have received the Spirit of God, can fall short in these areas. The degree that you consistently fall short is the degree to which you gradually separate

between yourself and God. Or as one person said to me not so long ago, there came a time when the person that I knew and married was not the same person that I was now living with. The attitude of consideration or of submission was changed.

There was no attitude of conversion when I talked to that particular mate.

It was no different than someone who had never been converted, except now there was just simply no interest in truth. No interest in the work of the church. Finally, all of you have unity of spirit.

I didn't say unity of belief. Sometimes we read things in that are not there. We really have to wait until the resurrection before that will be possible, because the things we believe, the things we believe, are affected by so many sources that are divergent, that there is no way for us all to believe everything alike. Some are much older in the faith than others. Some have a rich experience in one area and not another. Some have more to unlearn in one area than another.

What we are asked to have is unity of spirit. It is nice to have someone who is a brother or a sister in the church that you can talk to and even disagree with and share the same spirit in approaching the problem over which you may not agree. Or to put it another way, there are sometimes ministers in the church or educators in the church or laypeople in the church that I do not discuss things with because there is no unity of spirit.

It's sometimes, even if I agree or they agree, there is no real feeling of comfort and compatibility.

Now, the overwhelming majority of this spirit is there. But I think every single person, and I know no small number of ministers would say what I am saying, that it is possible, in some cases, to talk to people about things you do not agree with and you find that after two minutes you can't talk any further because the problem is not the subject, the problem is the spirit and the attitude. I have a friend who is not of this fellowship every Sabbath.

I mentioned him the last time I was in a study here. We can agree to disagree, but there is a unity of spirit. He is not an elder in this fellowship, but he is a man who keeps the commandments.

He would lay down his life for me and for every one of you, if he needed to, because that's the kind of person he is. I may not agree with certain of the things that we have talked about, drinking alcoholic beverages or L&G white.

He was accepted as a significant speaker, a particular fellowship in which he is.

But I have met a man there who reflects what I think we have often overlooked, the need for having the unity of the spirit and sharing the spirit of God as it is reflected in our attitude. He put it this way that all my friends are his friends.

We have too many who don't have that.

We are asked finally, verse 8, chapter 2, finally, all of you. Here is where all the problems could be eradicated if we have the unity of spirit and sympathy and love of the brethren. Remember, we already had that. That was explained before in verse 22, chapter 1.

A tender heart and a humble mind.

We have individuals that we can't discuss things with even in our own fellowship, because there is no humble mind. There is no tender heart.

I don't know of a single marital problem that couldn't be solved.

If this verse were put into practice, if we have sympathy for the differences, I have to have sympathy. Let's put it plainly so there is no misunderstanding, since one of the big problems with a very large number of people, I don't know about the percentage.

I'm glad I wasn't trained in the legal profession.

I have sympathy for somebody who was, because not everything in that profession is 100% in accordance with the Bible.

I have sympathy for people who were educated in the education of this world, because not everything in that is 100% in accordance with the Bible.

Or to put it plainly, I have to have sympathy for everybody, because your education and your experience 100% wasn't in accordance with the Bible, and you are affected by it, whether you know it or not. You may want to have your mind swept clean, but there is no mind that doesn't somewhere have some crumbs of level in a corner that still have to be swept out.

And if we learn to have sympathy for those where these differences are, where limitations are, but the key starts in not having sympathy for error, for lies, propaganda for false ideas, but first of all the unity of the Spirit, where you share the same basic attitudes that reflect the character of God, then these other things come to play.

We're told to love our enemies, we also love our brethren.

Loving our enemies doesn't mean we share the unity of the Spirit with them.

Once we have that, then we have the capacity properly to handle sympathy, to be able to overlook somebody else's mistakes, or to recognize that there may be legitimate differences in the way we do things.

I do not know of any two parents who always do things the same way.

Mr. Armstrong probably wouldn't 100% do everything in handling legal matters, as our skilled legal staff is, but he has had to commission them too, because he's not either trained or able to take time from other duties.

I wouldn't rear my children exactly as you would rear yours.

Your children are probably grateful, so are mine.

I have sympathy for them.

Presumably you will have sympathy for mine, you see.

These are attitudes.

Don't return evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, which is why we discover many intimate personal problems occur.

But on the contrary, bless for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing, and if you do, you ought to give one.

He who would love life and see good days, should keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile. We read this, we sing this, let him turn away from evil and do right.

Let him seek peace and pursue it, not division, not trying to extract facts from the computer that would give a picture that the whole story would not convey.

One of those unfortunate things, that we don't follow some of these very simple instructions.

Dr. Meredith has been required by Mr. Armstrong, and himself would view it in the same way, that we deal with the problems that have risen in the church, on the basis of the attitudes, not fundamentally on the basis of whether there may be differences here.

We work with the differences. You cannot work with a different spirit.

And of that command has come down from Christ through Mr. Armstrong, through the administration of the church. We should carry it out in the church, not merely in the ministry, and in our own family relationships, and in our employer relationships.

It is the attitude that determines these basic differences.

Which will reflect on whether or not the individual stays in a converted frame of mind, or ultimately disappears from the faith.

Now, let us look briefly at one other verse in chapter 4.

In verse 7, the end of all things is at hand.

Peter was viewing it prematurely.

Jesus told him that he would when he said it wasn't given to you to know the times and the seasons.

He thought the Roman sword was bad enough. He hadn't heard of the atomic bomb.

He judged things on the basis of the experience. And of course, for them, the end of all things was at hand because now they're all dead. As far as you're concerned, the end of all things for you when you're dead. Because you have finished this course, then comes the resurrection. So for some, it may be much nearer than the actual return of Christ whenever that may be. We have some who die from month to month, year to year. We should live, at least in terms of, that the end of all things for each one of us, personally, could be at hand.

Verse 8, after mentioning matters here of prayers that are not in a good translation, I don't like the rest of the verse. Let me look at verse 8.

Above all, hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins.

Now, if we hold unfailing our love for one another, those who have claimed to love the institution, those who have claimed to love those who are responsible at high levels in the institution, would have been able to cover what they might have conceived as a multitude of sins.

I didn't say they were a multitude. I say what they might have conceived.

So let us now put it another way. To hold unfailing your love for one another, since love discovers and reveals a multitude of sins is not what the Scripture says.

We therefore say that if someone uncovers what he conceives to be a multitude of sins, which is the opposite of what this verse says, then he is not holding unfailing his love for another.

Now, let us note that this does not mean that you should not go to the person who has sin.

It does say that you don't go to third parties, as I told one person who is no longer among them.

I said, if I had that kind of evidence that you claim to have seen and know, I would already have done one of two things. I would have gone to the party involved and or taken another witness.

And if I had to go to the highest level in the church, I would have gone there as the next intimate part of this step.

But I yet find no one, whoever has heard or circulated the story, who has ever taken evidence, which he didn't have, and gone to the party about which it was spoken, because if they had done that, the problems if they existed would have been solved, and if there were no such problems, of course, he would have had no justification for going.

We must learn to distinguish also what we conceive to be fins from merely differences in administration, differences in handling matters, to recognize what is our responsibility and where our responsibility properly ends.

If I know that somebody else is given a responsibility, I will back up that responsibility. It does not mean that I will copy every pattern of life of the person who is responsible.

I think it is time we followed this procedure.

Jesus said it plainly, remember, when he said to the people in general, the scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves on Moses' seat, whatever they command you, that do.

Because they were people who got back to the letter of the law, so the letter of the law was not the issue with them, but don't do after their works because they say and do not.

Now, Jesus, who was God in the flesh, allowed the scribes and the Pharisees still to sit on Moses' seat, would you think that, therefore, Christ could not be the Messiah because he let them stay in the church? It was the church he had called out from Egypt.

Would you have said, but look, if the scribes and Pharisees do that, how could you possibly leave them in these offices in your church? All Jesus did was to say certain things, then to take time on one occasion or twice, as it was, to cast out the money changers, and he told the people to be responsible because, you see, he wasn't here called to make those changes.

The Father gave him a commission as to what he would say and what he would do, and the Father had not yet decided that the scribes and Pharisees had to be displaced.

But there are people in the church who think if someone who is in a position of authority, of a position of authority, is not doing it as they would wish that he must be immediately displaced, and the Herbert Armstrong, who won't do what they want to, ought to be also.

This is their attitude.

The most people have never really looked at all these scriptures.

God has his reasons for leaving some people where they are, and maybe they're there for the good of the word, and not the evil.

And maybe we need to realize that sometimes we haven't seen everything yet.

So before we decide that we must take action, we should first note whether God always took such hasty action. Or to look at the story through the Bible, the remarkable thing is how long God was patient with human beings and positions of responsibility. But when he decides to act, it happens suddenly, when there has to be a change.

When there is no need of a change, God also can act very suddenly.

And within sometimes two days or less, people who have thought to usurp responsibility that wasn't theirs, making decisions that God has not himself made, have come and gone.

You might also read sections at the very end of 2 Peter 3. Let me finish now with one phrase here.

You therefore, verse 17, beloved, knowing this beforehand, which is explained in the letters about those who twist and alter scripture, beware lest you be carried away. So here is a converted mind that can be carried away with the error of lawlessness, with the error of lawless men, and lose your own stability. We need to be careful. We have here in Southern California, a new congregation that has been formed by people who have followed the error of lawless men.

And this only in the last few days. The people who have lost their stability.

It can happen. So what we learn is that there are people who all the way alone start out as hearers and not doers. Some who start out as doers and then get into wrong habits and entertain wrong thoughts. And in the end, you have individuals who no longer have the stability they once had.

They are carried away with the error of men who are not subject to the law of God.

John describes the state of mind, and we won't take more time here in his letters. He tells us about many who started out among us, but were never really of us. Then Paul also describes those who were of us and who have made shipwreck. Now if you want to know where you stand, you heard about sin during the festival of unleavened bread, and now what you should take note of.

Now that you had sin defined is the attitude with which you deal with the law of God, and with which you deal with brethren. Whether you become accusative of others' faults, imagine others' faults, become offended because of others' fault, true or imagined.

And you go through the rest of James and Peter and John and Jude, which are very fundamental books on this subject, because it describes the state of the church which follows the book of Acts, because in the original New Testament, these books followed Acts, and they reflect the last part of the history of the first. And these books show us clearly the state of mind and the attitude of those who stay with it, and the attitude and state of mind of those who have come and gone.

I appreciate your attention, and I hope that all of you who have any doubts as to where you stand will give some serious thought to this, because there is no doubt that not all of you who will live the next year will be here in our midst at the same time and place.