

# COLOSSIANS BIBLE STUDY

Colossians 3:1-11 (c)

Lesson #14

## Introduction

If you remember, last week we discussed verses three through five. But, as often happens, I just don't feel that we've said all that needs to be said on some of these, so before we move on to verses six and seven, I'd like to discuss verses three through five just a little more, until we're comfortable that we've captured as much as we're capable of absorbing. So again, let me read the verses in context. Colossians chapter 3, verses one through 11:

### The Life of the New Man

**1 So if you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what is above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God. 4 When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**

**5 Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient, 7 and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. 8 But now you must also put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his practices 10 and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of his Creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.**

Col 3:1-11 (HCSB)

Now, continuing our study at verse three I'd like to read that verse specifically, and discuss its implications.

### Verse 3:

**3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God.**

When we read a verse that says we've died we know immediately that we're talking in a language that isn't quite the same as what we normally use. Obviously, if we were dead in the manner that we normally think, then we couldn't possibly read the verse in the first place. So then, in just what sense are we supposed to take this verse, and how literally are we expected to interpret it? To answer this question we first have to determine in what sense it might be speaking, if it isn't about our flesh and blood bodies. If that's the case then it has to be speaking about a part of being that isn't tangible flesh and blood, but something invisible and spiritual. And it's only in this sense that we can make sense of such a statement.

Now, accepting the fact that we're discussing that part our being that's spiritual and invisible, we can begin to ask ourselves in just what sense have we died? What is there inside of us that makes up part of our spiritual being that's died? As intangible as this statement might appear, in every true Christian there's the confirmation of the truth of this statement as regarding our desires and our affections. Through no work of our own, we find that our affections and desires for the sinful things we used to love has died, and our hearts desire is for the righteousness of Christ. Even though we find that we can't attain it in our practices, nevertheless our old desires have indeed died, and a new life has been born within us. A life that hungers and thirsts for righteousness and obedience to God. That old heart's desire and burning love for the things of sin has actually died, and our human spirit has been born again with a whole new inherent nature.

We discussed in detail last week, in verses one and two, that this new desire creates a conflict. Because that which we now desire, we still can't do to perfection, and this too is part of the plan of God. But, let's make it very clear, every real Christian, who has been born again by the Spirit of God, has this desire within them for righteousness and obedience. Last week we used the example of a sponge, but this week I'd like to take it farther. If the sponge is our tangible body, then that sponge now has two separate contents. Like a sponge that has both water and oil in it. These two ingredients can't mix together because they're not compatible, but they both have their residence in the same sponge. Anything that affects one, by necessity also affects the other, because they both share the same container.

Such is the condition of every born again believer. We now share a tangible body that's flesh and blood and has a fallen nature that hasn't been redeemed. So our new life is still housed, or trapped in a fallen container that has the ability to affect our actions, and even worse our desires. Our new spirit wants to obey God, but this fallen body has another resident living in it with us that still wants to be satisfied just as strongly as our spirit does. Both of these forces are alive, and both want to prevail, so internal conflict is determined by design. (Expound on this somewhat)

And it's this new life, which is described in the second half of this verse as being hidden with Christ in God. On the one hand it is hidden, because no one can see life. But just like fleshly life, spiritual life demonstrates itself through visible actions that authenticate its existence. Jesus said that every good tree bears good fruit. By that He meant that every person who had been born again to new life would in fact, demonstrate that new life by appropriate actions.

So, while the life itself might be hidden, nevertheless the actions that it produces will be like a light set on a hill for all to see. The actions will be a testimony, but the actual life itself remains invisible. It's literally hidden with Christ in God. But though it may be hidden for the present time, we can be absolutely certain that it's real, and true, and absolutely certain, protected by the power of God, through faith, and ready to be revealed in the last time. (1Pet 1:5) And now, this moves us into verse four, which says:

#### **Verse 4:**

#### ***4 When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.***

Now we start to see the reason for rejoicing. Because, this invisible life that we have within us will one day be revealed to all living creatures, as we take our place by the side of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. Just as Christ's life here on this earth, was hidden from the view of all but a very few, likewise are the lives of His chosen children hidden while we're here on this earth in these tangible bodies. This natural realm, this day and age, is not the one which has been chosen by God to be the eternal. Everything we see and hear now will pass away, and all things will be made new. It is then, in that new creation, where the glory of Christ and his elect will be demonstrated eternally.

Now Christ also spoke of a future time period where He will in fact reign as King on this earth for 1000 years. Then, when this period has served its purpose, comes the new heaven and the new earth where only righteousness dwells. It's by God's specific design that all of this takes place through a precise and preplanned sequence of events that can't be changed, thwarted, accelerated, or delayed by so much as a millisecond by anything done by men or angels. All of this will come about in its appointed time. Everything that happens in the meantime is part of God's plan to bring it to fruition. Do you remember how many times Jesus said, while He was here on this earth, that His time had not yet come. He was speaking of the time of his crucifixion. He knew that nothing could possibly happen to Him that would prevent that event from happening exactly when planned. It wasn't going to happen sooner, and it wasn't going to happen later, that event had been set by God the Father in the creation plan from the very beginning of creation.

And likewise the return of Christ, to take his place as King of king's and Lord of lords, has a precise preplanned time. And it'll happen exactly on schedule. It isn't something that's variable, because it depends on the actions of man, but quite the contrary, it's precise and absolute, because it's based on the omnipotent sovereignty of God.

As exciting and rewarding as it'll be to see our Savior exalted above all creation, and hear every tongue confess that He is Lord, it is to our amazement that He has chosen to have us standing right there at His side, both beholding and sharing in His glory and His power when this happens. It is this glorious revealing of the groom, and unveiling of His bride, which is hidden in Christ, waiting to be revealed at His coming. And when we grasp this understanding, and the reality of it sinks in, we can easily see why the previous verses have told us to seek, and to set our minds on what's above, not on what's on the earth. As the apostle Paul said in second Corinthians chapter 4:

***18 So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.***  
2 Cor 4:18 (HCSB)

So now, to try to summarize this, the words seeking, and setting, and focusing, are referring to our conscious decisions as to what we will decide to ponder over in our minds, and therefore cherish in our hearts. None of us has much control over what actually happens in the world and in our lives, but we do control how we respond to those things and what we choose to think about, and focus our attentions on.

We're constantly being reminded and exhorted by the Scriptures, to choose to set our minds, that is to focus our attention, on the things that are hidden for the present time, but will surely be revealed in God's own time and manner. We're directed by scriptures to believe the things that He's told us with all our hearts, and place our faith and trust in the invisible but certain promises of God. And our lives, our words, and our actions will either confirm or refute the condition of our hearts, both in the sight of men and in the sight of God. (Heb 4:12-13) Now, having reached these conclusions through careful examination, I think we're ready to move on to verse five which says:

**Verse 5:**

***5 Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.***

We see that verse five starts with the word "therefore," which means verse five is based on what's just been said previously in verses one through four. Which is to say that a proper understanding of the first four verses logically results in the actual implementation of these things which are described in verse five. And what is that, it's to put to death whatever in us is worldly. Again we're faced with this term "put to death." The things described in this verse aren't living creatures, so in what sense can it say to put to them to death? How do you put to death something that isn't alive in the first place? And even more interesting, can you simply kill them and have them go away forever? Oh they were that easy.

Just as verse three declared that we have died, when our flesh and blood bodies are still alive, in like manner verse five tells us to put to death those things **in us** that are worldly and of the flesh. This verse is speaking of something that's in us; it's not talking about changing the world. In the same way that we have died to sin in our spirit, we are commanded to put to death the workings of sin in these mortal bodies. Clearly the putting to death in this verse is the ongoing and continual process of resisting the temptations of sin and obeying the commandments of God. This isn't a one time event whereby we're purged forever of the temptations of sin, but rather an ongoing day to day process, which is part of the design plan of God for the preparation of his children to take their place in His eternal kingdom. Make no mistake, it will have its perfect completion, and we will be purged forever of sin and the temptation to sin, but this completion has been intentionally reserved for the coming of Christ for its final perfecting. (Phil 1:6; 3:21)

If you were to be asked to give a general category that summed up the vast majority of both the temptations, and failures of mankind, what category description would you choose? I think it's safe to say that we would choose the same category as the apostle Paul did, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, when he chose this list in verse five of worldly deeds to be put to death. Now, as we've said before, this isn't intended to be an exhaustive list, because he goes on in subsequent verses to add more items, but these are the ones that come to the forefront in the life of man.

Sexual immorality, impurity, and lust seem to be at the forefront of the things that tempt mankind. The debates about homosexual rights, same sex marriages, and the abortion of babies produced by promiscuous sex, are the hot topics of today. The position that the holy Scriptures hold on these issues is not in question, they aren't debatable issues, they aren't simply personal preferences, they aren't gray or unclear, they are described in vivid detail by the word of God and the consequences of them are absolutely certain. (1Co 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-21; Rev 21:8) **(What's unclear here?)**

But nevertheless these very same issues remain the things that are most passionately on people's minds, and are continuously tempting us to disobey the Commandments of God. Even when those who are doing these things fully know and understand the final and ultimate consequences of their actions, they go right on doing them anyway, and furthermore they even eagerly encourage others to join them in their folly. (Rom 1:32)

However, those who have died to such things; those whose lives are hidden with Christ in God, are commanded to put these things to death in our daily life and practice. All forms of sexual immorality, be it premarital fornication, adultery, homosexuality, pornography, or any of the whole host of deviant sexual practices, are forbidden by God for all mankind, and are certainly not to be found as common practice among those who are chosen of God. The world loves these things, they'll fight with all their might, and with whatever means they can muster, to maintain their right to practice these things as they see fit, and will not tolerate for very long, those who suggest that these are sinful and shameful practices in the sight of God and man, and they shouldn't be accepted or condoned in any righteous society.

But, in addition to the sexual sins, there's others as well. This verse also mentions evil desire, and greed, which it also distinguishes as idolatry. Now there's almost no end to the list of things that might fall under the term evil desire. Evil desire is anything that's contrary to the will of God. That's what makes it evil. Any desires that violate the laws and commands of God are by definition evil desires. There are no good desires, or actions, or motives that violate scriptures. There is no such thing as justifiable disobedience to the commands of God.

How many times have we heard a professing brother or sister practice and support actions they confidently claim are good, when they know full well they're condemned by scriptures? The churches I've attended do this every day. Usually they make a lame attempt to redefine the meaning of the scriptures. But let's make it very clear that good and evil aren't defined by our emotions or our opinions, good and evil are defined by the word of God. His word trumps our feelings and opinions. If it violates Scripture then it's evil, regardless of our feelings or opinions. We can argue all we want, but in the end, every attempt to justify disobedience is futile. Every desire that violates scripture is an evil desire. Every act that violates scriptures is an evil act, regardless of our attempts to redefine it. (Isa 5:20-21)

Now, Greed has its roots in selfishness and covetousness. It speaks of a desire for things that don't rightly belong to us, and acquiring them by means that are unscrupulous. It's a form of selfishness that often grows to the proportions of a god to us, in our minds and hearts, and dominates our life and affections to the point where we forsake all else in subservience to this self made deity. Greed is indeed a root from which grows many painful and troubling sprigs.

Now let's make it clear that the temptations of all of these things reside in the fleshly fallen minds of man, and as such, these same temptations act upon the hearts and minds of the believers. But the difference is we've died to such things, we're no longer slaves to these things, we have a new life that's both desiring and capable of resisting, and we're commanded to use that new life for this purpose. To put these things to death in our lives as a testimony to the righteousness of Christ and the power of His resurrection, both within Himself, and in those who believe in Him for forgiveness of sin and repentance in life and practice.

Even if there were no other exhortations in the Scriptures, which of course there are many, this verse alone makes it clear that Christians aren't allowed to live like unbelievers. The popular saying that Christians are no different than others in our lives and actions, but rather we're just forgiven, is utter nonsense when held to the plain words of Scripture. Right here we are told to put these things to death. To stop doing them, to abstain completely from whatever in us is worldly.

This is no idle suggestion, this is the commandment of God to all of His believers. Of course, the world will never put these to death, in fact they'll legalize them, idolized them, and justify them, because these are the things that they love. These are their gods, and they'll continue to worship them until the true God returns and forces them to stop. They'll defend them as vigorously as the true believers will defend the true God, in fact often even more so. Which leads us nicely now into the next verse in our study:

### **Verse 6:**

#### ***6 Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient,***

So, just to be clear, what are the "these" that are being referred to here? They're none other than the sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed which were just described in the previous verse. Again let's make it clear that this isn't intended to be an exhaustive list but a representative one. Everything that falls under these categories, and all categories that are contrary to the Commandments of God, fall into the category of the "these" that's mentioned here. But here's where it gets sticky, the scriptures have the audacity to say that the practice of these things will be met by the wrath of Almighty God. Now that's a pretty bold statement, it doesn't say that He'll be upset, or even that He'll sternly rebuke; it says they will be met by the wrath of God.

Now we get into an interesting subject don't we? What exactly does it mean by the wrath of God? Will this loving and forgiving God that we all think we know, actually do something physically wrathful? Something genuinely harmful? Isn't this mostly just an idle threat, meant to act as a restraint on the actions of humanity? Kind of like a mom who threatens to spank her little child, when they both know full well she won't really do it. Well, yes it is intended to be a restraint on mankind, but no, it's by no means an idle threat. Unlike our mom, He really will do it. The wrath of God, as described in the Scriptures, is the most terrifying exhibition of wrath imaginable to man.

The writer of Hebrews said it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Mankind has devised many terrifying torturers and punishments, but none of these, regardless of how brutal, can last forever. But the wrath of God is an eternal wrath. It's described as a lake that burns with fire, and continues forever and ever and ever, with no hope of ever ending. As one once declared "abandon all hope, you who enter here" would be the sign over the gates to the lake of fire. A place with no hope of redemption, no hope of reprieve, an everlasting sentence of burning condemnation. It's an eternal life sentence of ultimate and inconceivable misery, with no hope of parole, nor any possibility of escape.

And perhaps that part which makes it the most terrifying is that it cannot be brought to an end, it is eternal, and will not diminish, nor become tolerable throughout the countless eons of eternity. There are no second chances there, only consequences. There were countless second chances while they were still on earth, but those days are past, and along with them all the second chances, all the possibilities of redemption and forgiveness are forever ended. And what makes it so agonizing is that they who are there know they were offered forgiveness, but they chose, of their own free will, to ignore it, so that they could indulge their desires for sin. Everyone who's there will know that they deserve it, and they'll have no excuse, no one to blame but themselves for the horrible fix that they're in, because of their wanton disobedience to the Commandments of God.

Make no mistake about it, the wrath of God is for real, and it's based on willful disobedience to His Commandments. Those who think the Scriptures are just an idle threat will have an eternity to weep, and beg, and plead for a second chance, but all of that will fall on deaf ears, as God will choose not to hear them as the Scriptures plainly declare. His comments to them, according to the very words of Jesus will be "depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." It's hard to understand how anyone can take such a threat so lightly. It would seem like every human being would be so shaken by the possibility of this outcome that they would make it their first priority to determine whether or not it was true.

But instead, most just choose to casually ignore it like it didn't even exist. The only possible way to understand this attitude is to realize that those who take this course of action don't really believe that it's true. Surely they couldn't really believe there's even any possibility of such a consequence and keep right on ignoring it, or could they? Yes, they not only can but they do, living completely for today and taking no thought for tomorrow. And here is the clear contrast between those who really believe and those who really don't. Obedience is the great authenticator.

***18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.***

Romans 1:18-25 (NASB)

These passages from Romans chapter 1 make it abundantly clear that the problem wasn't ignorance, it was obstinance. The Scriptures declare that God himself has put within man in a knowledge that God exists. But man chooses of his own free will to ignore God, and substitute make-believe deities, so that he may indulge his lustful desires. Make no mistake about it there is no one who really believes in evolution, that human beings just somehow evolved from nothing over millions of years. No one is really that ignorant. But because that imposes a morality on mankind that he isn't willing to accept, he comes up with make believe theories and every kind of nonsense to try and get himself off the hook. And just as these Scriptures declare, the outcome of this folly is born in their own bodies by their shameful behaviors.

There are many who simply state out right that they don't believe that there is any God. For these we understand how they can ignore the warnings, because they don't believe the warnings are true. But there are even more who claim

that they do believe in God, but seem to have no difficulty in living a life of disobedience to His Commandments, and really don't expect to suffer any consequences for doing so. If there's anything of importance that we should learn from this verse it would be that anyone who truly believes in God should be terrified of the consequences of continuing in the practice of sin. Because the ability to do so without remorse, without suffering the pains of conscience, or the chastisement of God, suggests that their faith isn't real, and this should frighten us to death, or should I say to repentance unto life. Which is the subject of the next verse, which says:

**Verse 7:**

***7 and you once walked in these things when you were living in them.***

Now from this verse we get to see something that every real believer knows and freely admits, and every unbeliever loves to point out. That all of us who call ourselves Christians once lived our lives in the same manner that the unbelievers still do. And they love to point this out and call us hypocrites. They love to say oh I remember when you used to do that, and now you're acting all holy, but we know the real you. Who do you think you're fooling? You see there is no escape in this, because as this verse says, yes we did once walk in these things, and they were the desires of our life.

The first half that says you once walked in the things means that these were the things that we regularly did freely and openly. These were commonplace events in our day-to-day life, and we weren't the least bit ashamed of them. Oh yes we might have had to keep them secret, but then amongst our friends we would boast about them. Why weren't we ashamed of them? Because the rest of the verse says we were living in them. Which means they were the things that we lived for. They were the desires of our hearts and the things which brought us pleasure. You take these away from us would be to take away the very meaning of our lives. Because we lived to indulge our lustful desires, and evaluated our lives by how successful we were in these things. The thought of a life without these things seemed to be a life not worth living.

So then, this verse says we walked in the things, which means simply that we did them freely and openly, and we did that because we lived in them, which means our whole life was wrapped up in these very things. And this is the point being made in this verse. That this is the starting point from which every Christian has begun. We are not a group who was born holier than the rest. We were born sinners. We live as sinners. We thought like sinners and we talked like sinners and we behaved like sinners. And it is for this reason that none of us can ever boast of our own righteousness. Because we never had any. To say otherwise is to lie to oneself, and also to others, and even worse to God.

It's from this background that we can understand the words that we have died. It is this mindset, this heart attitude, that has been put to death in our very nature, in our spirit. That inward desire for the sinful things that God prohibits is no longer the passion of our heart. A whole new life has been born within us that actually finds tremendous delight in obedience to God, and is now truly ashamed of its past. The very core desires and passions of our hearts and minds has completely reversed. That which we once considered foolish, we now consider to be a treasure. And that which we once found delightful, we now consider shameful. We can see why this is called being born-again, because it's a complete reversal of the entire heart attitude of the person involved. It's like one person died, and a whole new person was born.

For the one who has experienced this firsthand there isn't a shred of doubt that it's real and true. We are even amazed ourselves at how differently we think, and feel, and even behave. While this isn't something based on experience, nevertheless experience certainly does authenticate the reality of it, both in us ourselves, and to those who know us and see the difference. This new life authenticates itself by a whole new set of words, actions, and desires, that testify to the power of God to completely change the entire inward heart attitude of human beings.

Now just to finish this up, this verse is talking about the deep inner workings of the heart and soul of man. Every human being from time to time says or does something that they regret. Yes, even real Christians still do this. Because perfection still awaits the return of Christ Jesus our Lord. But let's understand that the subject were discussing isn't perfection of works, but transformation of heart and mind. And this transformation, this regeneration, is the very essence of the gift of God. Unless we've been completely changed, transformed, regenerated, at the very depths of our being, then regardless of what we say with our lips, this rebirth hasn't really happened. This new life always demonstrates itself by a radical change in heart attitude as well as a change in words and deeds.

Now I want to say something here. I ordinarily give these teachings to brothers and sisters that I know. Those whom I genuinely believed to be born-again Christians. Those who know and clearly understand the biblical plan and means of salvation. But, because this is posted on our website, and may be heard by any number of people, let me make it very clear that all of these things that we're teaching aren't something that man learns about and then begins to do with the existing inherent capabilities that he or she has at their own disposal.

The message of the Bible is that a man (or woman) must be born-again before they're able to see and understand the things that we're discussing here, let alone begin to put them into practice. And this rebirth spoken of by the Bible is something that happens at the sovereign discretion of God Himself. However, it doesn't happen in opposition to the will of man, but through God's direct influence **upon** the will of man, whereby man becomes willing and able to believe unto salvation. No one ever has, or even could be saved, apart from their own willingness, because it's God's action upon man's will that constitutes salvation by grace through faith. It is the willingness that is the gift. (Example)

Satan himself believes every truth that's required for salvation, but what he lacks is the willingness to submit himself to these truths in obedience to God. And he neither will nor can change that state of mind. Think about it, Satan is never described as being stupid, he's just described as being evil. He knows and understands his eternal fate, and one can only assume that he would change that fate if it were in his power to do so. If all he has to do is change his mind and become willing from the heart to obey God, he's far too smart not to do this. So why doesn't he? The answer is because he can't, nor does he want to. He doesn't have the power, the capability to change his own heart, regardless of what he knows. He is what he is, and apart from a change by the One who created him, he is powerless to change himself. And such is the state of man. We, just like Satan, no matter how much we know, are not capable of changing what we believe and desire in our hearts. Unless God Himself, by His grace, grants us repentance and saving faith, then we are as powerless as Satan to make this change of heart by our own free will. We aren't even able to want to.

I know that this baffles and even enrages multitudes of professing Christians, who are convinced that faith and salvation are a simple choice made by man, and that man has both the power and the capability to equally choose either one of the other. But I think our example of Satan helps bring it home to us that it isn't that simple. Certainly salvation involves a choice. Certainly salvation is a decision. But the playing field isn't equal. We are not just as free in our hearts and minds to choose one as we are to choose the other, or Satan would also choose salvation wouldn't he? What the Scriptures teach, and what we must come to understand and accept, is that the power to make the right choice is the gift of saving faith, which precedes and empowers that right choice. It's precisely for this reason that the Scriptures say that no man may boast, because the entirety of salvation is by the grace of God, and in no part empowered by man himself.

Man has control of his mouth and his vocal cords. Unless there's something wrong with us, we can say anything we want to say, most any time we want to say it. But what we can't do is control what we believe in the depth of our heart. That's something that we can understand and recognize, but we don't really choose by volition. We formulate our actions and responses according to it, but we really don't choose it, we just sort of recognize it. And we believe what we believe regardless of what we say. A man can no more change what his mind believes, by an act of his own will, than he can change his height or his skin color by simply choosing which he prefers. (Belief is not a controlled action nor a volitional choice)

Therefore, the prayer of the sinner who seeks repentance, is for God to grant them the gift of saving faith, which they themselves cannot muster up with their own force of free will. Ask God to grant you repentance, and the faith to believe, because salvation is based solely on His grace in granting this saving faith. It isn't about walking down some isle, or repeating a certain prayer, or signing a decision card, or being baptized, it's about truly believing God's testimony concerning His Son Jesus, and this belief itself is the gift of God. Ephesians chapter 2, verses eight and nine, make this crystal clear, as do countless other verses. I just felt the need to make this clear before we move on, because there's so much needless controversy over this issue, born of a weak and sleepy attitude toward the study of scriptures in our churches of today.

So then, continuing with our study; while it clearly isn't our actions themselves that save us, nevertheless it is our actions that confirm or refute the authenticity of our claims to saving faith. Any claim of faith, or expectation of salvation that's void of repentance and appropriate actions of obedience to God, performed from the heart, will prove to be counterfeit, and disavowed at the final judgment.

Many are those, says the scriptures, who will try to enter the kingdom of God through this broad gate that readily accommodates their casual disobedience and worldly desires, only to find that it doesn't really go there at all. And only a few, says those same scriptures, are those who take the narrow gate, and the restricted path that leads to eternal life, which path is that of sanctification, repentance, and obedience to God. (Mat 7:13-14, 24-27) The daily putting to death of those things still in us that are worldly.

As verse 6 so clearly and precisely says, God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. It is disobedience, which is lawlessness, which is the scriptural definition of sin, that brings the wrath of God to bear. Disobedient to what exactly? Disobedient to all those things that He's told us in the entirety of His holy Scriptures. The intentional promotion and practice of those things which are forbidden in the Scriptures is a disobedience that will inevitably, and inescapably be met by the terrifying wrath of Almighty God. Let me close now with this passage of scripture, also from the pen of Paul and the Spirit of God:

***7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.***

Gal 6:7-10 (NASB)

Now to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Narrow Gate Baptist Church  
Robert W. Andrews, Pastor  
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