

Monthly Study

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[0 : 00] Come with me, if you would please, to James chapter 3. Epistle of James chapter 3. We're going to be talking about the critical importance of diagnosis and what to do about it when it has been made.

Diagnosis. Powerful word and very important subject. I was talking with my cardiologist one time after my bypasses.

And he was reciting one thing after another. And I said to him, just kind of offhand, I said, I kind of get the impression from your medicos that about 90% of medicine is just diagnosis.

And he said, no, you're wrong. I said, it's about 98% is diagnosis. Because what you cannot diagnose, you cannot treat. And that makes diagnosis very, very important.

And it's a very simple word, too. It's a compound word, and even in the English language. And the first three letters are D-I-A. Diah. And that's the same three letters that make up the word diameter.

[1 : 14] And the diameter is the distance through the circle. From one edge to the other. That's the diameter. And a diagnosis means through.

And the word gnosis from the Greek is the word for knowledge. And it simply means, diagnosis means through knowledge.

And that has to do with gaining the information that will give you the knowledge to reach a conclusion about a diagnosis. And we've got other words that tie in with it, and I'm sure you're familiar with it.

There's the word prognosis. P-R-O-G-N-O-S-I-S. And it simply means, knowledge before. And when someone has an illness, everybody is concerned about what is their prognosis.

If it is bad, very bad, it may mean their prognosis is terminal. They are not going to survive the illness. That's their prognosis.

[2 : 16] And then there is the word agnostic. It's spelled a little different because of the words, the way the words are arranged.

But agnostic is someone who is opposed to knowledge or does not know. And that means anti-knowledge. An agnostic is someone that says, you don't know whether there is a God. I don't know whether there is a God because it can't be known. Nobody can know. That's an agnostic. That is someone who is opposed to or against knowledge.

So, there's your little word study for the morning. You're all dismissed now. That would be a cheap teacher, wouldn't it? Okay. Critical importance of diagnosis.

What is the problem among humans? And I know from a Christian community, the answer in chorus is going to be sin. And that's what the problem is.

[3 : 16] And I would certainly agree with that. And the expression for that is found in James chapter 3. And the way this thing called sin surfaces in a great many instances is described by James.

And I'm going to begin reading with verse 1 of chapter 3. Where actually he is addressing those who are teachers or preachers. And then he moves from that class specifically into a general kind of situation where everyone belongs.

Not just preachers and teachers because he's dealing with the tongue. So, I've got my 26th translation New Testament here. And I'll give you a couple of other renditions as well because they do help a little bit.

Chapter 3 of James, verse 1. My brethren, be not many masters. And one renders this teachers. Not talking about slave-master relationships.

It's talking about teachers. Or those of you who are in positions of teachers. Moffat translates it. My brothers, do not crowd in to be teachers. My brothers, another renders it.

[4 : 31] Another renders it. Not many of you should become teachers. Now, that's kind of a negative inducement. I guess it's another way of saying you better think twice about this thing if you want to become a teacher.

And the reason, of course, is you're going to have some under your charge for whom, to a certain degree, you are going to be responsible. Because a lot of people are going to believe what you say. And those of you who've been at Grace for the last 45 or 50 years, you will recall me having said this more than once. And I will say it till the day I die.

Every creature has two great fears. One is that people will not believe what he says. And the other is that people will believe what he says.

And those are both legitimate fears. Because it is so easy to give out wrong information. And even to do it with great sincerity.

[5 : 42] And this is one of the key points that is made in the series that we have developed with Christianity Clarified that is called Faulty Assumptions.

Almost all doctrinal error that exists in Christendom, doctrinal error is derived from people having made false assumptions of certain passages of Scripture, assuming that it says or means thus and so, and it doesn't mean that at all.

But it is sincere and it is taken in good faith. And then it is taught in good faith. And it is believed in good faith. And it can be flat out wrong.

And we are not protected from that. Because the Scriptures are given by inspiration of God and the Bible is infallible, that does not mean we have infallible interpreters of the Bible.

Because we don't. Now some, and they are primarily among our Roman Catholic friends, who believe that an infallible Bible calls for an infallible interpreter.

[6 : 57] Where are you going to find that? You're going to find that in what they call His Holiness, the Pope, and the councils, and the Korea, and so on.

And the decisions that they reach are infallible decisions. And therefore, the church cannot be wrong. The church is always right. Because God's always right. And they are one and the same. And you get it from... You see what I mean? This is their basis for authority. And there are a whole lot of churches, Protestant churches, in addition to Roman Catholic churches, that have in their statements of faith, issues and items that simply are not biblical.

But they were offered in good faith, believed in good faith, and they find their way into their doctrinal statements. And this is what divides churches. And you've heard me say before that 500 years ago, not very long ago at all, maybe long compared to your age and mine, but not very long in human history, 500 years ago there were no Methodists.

Didn't exist. No Presbyterians, no Church of God, no Brethren, no Episcopal. None of them. They didn't exist. They didn't exist. And they all came into existence primarily out of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation and the breakaway from Rome and then the breakaway from the Protestant Reformation.

[8 : 22] And we've got several of those that are still in existence today. And the thing that divides them, their doctrines, their beliefs.

And every one of them holds their beliefs and their practices very sincerely and in good faith. But that is no guarantee that they are true.

And the positions that we hold here at Grace Bible Church. We teach and believe and hold very sincerely. But that's no guarantee that they are true.

And as I've often said, the only thing that all of these different groups have in common, the only thing they have in common is that each one believes they're right and the other folks are wrong. Isn't that something? And so this is what we do here at Grace. We spend our time searching the word, looking for error. Because when we find it, we want to correct it.

[9 : 19] We want to back off from it. And we are as subject, we here at Grace Bible Church are just as subject to faulty assumptions and wrong conclusions as anybody else.

And that's what we have to safeguard against. So, James is giving his audience and preacher would-be's a warning. Don't strive for that position, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

Moffat renders it, we shall be judged with special strictness. And the 20th century New Testament says we will be judged by a more severe standard.

Why would that be? Why would teachers be judged with a more severe standard than those who are not teachers? Well, the first thing that comes to my mind is that teachers are those who spend more time investigating and studying the word of God than what the average person would. They are taking in more and they should have more truth. And the principle is, unto whom much is given, shall much be required. So, the more exposed we are to the word of God, whether on the teaching end or on the receiving end, the more exposed to it we are, the more accountable and responsible we become.

[10 : 44] And this is why you should really think twice about being a teacher. I wasn't told this before I went into the ministry. It might have been different. And then he goes on to say, for in many things, in many things, not just a few things, not just some things, in many things we offend all or we all offend.

We all sin. We all stumble. Basic English renders it, for we all go wrong in a number of things. That's just part of our humanness. None of us has this thing called life and truth altogether 100%. None of us do. And one of my favorite expressions is, when we get to heaven, we're all going to get straightened out. And some of us need more straightening than others. But everybody's going to get straightened out.

So, we all make many a slip. Moffat renders it. 20th century New Testament says, we often make mistakes. Every one of us.

We are not immune to that. And that is, that just goes with the territory.

[11 : 54] The more opportunity one has for public speaking, the more opportunity you have to misspeak. Or to say something you shouldn't.

Or to communicate something that you didn't mean to. And that just goes with the territory. It is a challenge for the speaker to speak in such a way that what the listener interprets and understands is the same thing that the speaker is talking about.

And when that happens, when that happens, we say communication has occurred. And when it doesn't happen, then it's miscommunication. And there's a lot of that that goes on.

Because people say things and people interpret things from that that is not what they meant at all. And yet, that's the way they take it. So, the Apostle Paul said, one of his comments was, and I really like it.

He said, we use great plainness of speech. That ought to be the mantra of Arabic preacher. To use great plainness of speech.

[13 : 11] Have you ever sat through a message? Maybe a half an hour or a 45 minute message. And you walk out and you get out to the parking lot and you say, I wonder what he was talking about anyway.

What was he trying to say? Boy, it makes me shudder to think that anybody here at Grace could think that. But I know I'm as human as anybody else. And I'm sure I leave some people dangling and wondering, what in the world was Marv getting at this morning?

I didn't get it. But that's a problem with communication. And we don't communicate until the thing that is said registers in the mind of the hearer with the same resonance.

Then you've communicated and then you get it. And when he says, in many things we all offend, and if any man offend not inward, and this is a hypothetical.

Yeah. If anyone sins not inward, or whoever avoids slips of speech, anyone who does not make mistakes when speaking, the same is a perfect man. Well, we don't have any of those.

[14 : 18] And frankly, the word perfect ought to be translated complete or mature, or a man who is filled out, able also to bridle the whole body.

Reims renders it the same as a mature man. And Goodspeed says he has a character that is fully developed and is able to control the whole body as well. And then he launches into an area with which we can all identify, not just teachers, but everybody.

Behold, we put bits in the horse's mounds that they may obey us. And we turn about their whole body.

Isn't that something? Here is this magnificent animal weighing in the neighborhood of 1,000 to 1,200 pounds. And you put, this is assuming the horse has been broken, and you put this little thing called a bit in the horse's mouth that is metal and has reins attached to it.

And you can pull on the rein. And that directs the position and the direction that the horse is going to go in. Just that little strap, just pulling on that.

[15 : 31] And here is this big animal that's six times, eight times bigger and heavier than you are. And yet you can control that massive animal just by pulling on that rein just a little bit.

Isn't that amazing? How little energy it takes to control all of that power. And he uses that as an illustration. It's one I'm sure that they could identify with. And we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm.

Now this is all talking about the idea of proportion. How something so tiny can have such a massive impact.

You know what he's getting at, don't you? You know your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is not connected at both ends.

[16 : 35] I guess that's why we call it a loose tongue, you know. It's not connected at both ends. It's only connected at one end. So he talks about the ships and the winds that drive them. And a very small helm.

Wheresoever the governor lists, that is the helmsman. And even so, in verse 5, the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles. You see, he wants you to get the point about the importance of your speech.

What we say. Now he's talking about a fire. All of these things have such a tiny, tiny beginning. A match.

Just a single match. With a little tiny head on it. It's got some sulfur and other stuff in it. And it is harmless until you strike it. And create a little flame.

[17 : 39] And with that tiny little flame that is smaller than the end digit of your finger. You can decimate and burn down a whole force.

That is amazing proportion, isn't it? That's the point that it's making here. How much good and how much damage can be done.

How great a matter of little fire kindles. And the tongue is a fire. A world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members. That it defiles the whole body.

And sets on fire the course of nature. And is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beast. And of birds. And of serpents. And of things in the sea. Is tamed.

And has been tamed of mankind. But. The tongue. Ha ha. Can no man tame. It is an unruly evil.

[18 : 40] Full of deadly poison. With that tongue. We may bless God. Even the Father. And with that same tongue. Cursed we men.

Which are made after the similitude of God. And the likeness and image of God. Well how about that? It ought not to work that way. But that's the way it does.

And you know. When we bless people. And edify people. And the word edify means to build up. Word from which we get the word edifice. Or structure.

We build up people. And we encourage one another. And we can use. Our tongue. To issue words. Of blessing. And benefit.

And care. And compassion. And sympathy. And all kinds of things. And yet that same tongue. Is capable. Of so much nastiness.

[19 : 39] In fact. As we pointed out. In the series of Marriage on the Rock. This is. Probably the root cause. Of conflict.

Conflict between individuals. And conflict. And conflict between nations. Because. This involves. The offense.

And the tongue. Can encourage. And bless. And the tongue. Can offend. And when we offend. One another. We hurt one another.

We cause emotional pain. To one another. And this. And this. Is the source. In my estimation. And I haven't found another. This is the source. Of all conflict.

Think about that. Because. Offenses. Are boiled down. To just two areas. And I can't think.

[20 : 36] Of any others. And the first area. Has to do. With the things we say. That's the tongue. Verbal. The things we.

Tell one another. The things we say. To one another. Can hurt. You remember. The old adage.

When you were. A kid in grade school. And kids would say things.

That hurt you. And you'd go home. And tell mom about it. And mom would say. Something like this. Well. Just remember this. Sticks and stones. May break your bones. But words will never hurt you.

You tell them that.

The next time. They call you this. Or that. Or something else. You know what. Mama. Wasn't telling the truth. It doesn't work that way. Words.

Can hurt. Very. Very. Deeply. They can penetrate. Right into the very. Core of our being. They can embed themselves. In our human spirit.

[21 : 33] In such a way. That we cannot. Root them out. And there are things. That we would probably. Like to dismiss. From our mind. That people have told us.

Over the years. That hurt us. And offended us. And as much as we would like. To forget them. You don't have the power. To do that. You don't have the power.

To forget. What you would like. To forget. And one of the reasons. We can't. Is because. It hurt us so much. And it made such an impression. On us. That we just cannot.

Dismiss it. So. We offend one another. By things we say. And we offend one another. By things. We do. Our words.

And our actions. And someone says. You mean those are the only. Two ways. That we can offend one another. Well. They're the only ways. I can think of. But if you can think of. The third one. I would appreciate. The enlightenment.

[22 : 26] And I'm serious about that. Because I've been working. With this for quite some time. So the things we say. And the things we do. Are the two ways. That we have. Of hurting each other.

And. We have found them. To be adequate. Aren't they? That's all we need. And when we hurt one another.

It doesn't matter what the relationship is. It could be a next door neighbor. It could be a sibling. It could be a parent. It could be a husband or wife. It could be a school teacher.

It could be anybody. When we hurt somebody. There is an automatic response. That kicks into action. And that response is. Emotional.

Distancing. We want to. Put ourselves. Further away. From that source. Of hurt. And.

[23 : 23] It works that way. Automatically. Because. Nobody is into pain. Nobody wants to hurt. Nobody wants to be offended. Nobody wants to feel bad about anything.

And when somebody. Whether. You know. It can be true. Or it can be false. And in either case. It can really hurt. It can be true. It can be true. And we want to protect ourselves.

From more hurt. So we begin to distance. And I can't think of any situation. In which this is so dramatically fulfilled. As in a marriage. And. You know.

I've. I've done. Marriage counseling. For. For about 50 years. And I have never yet. I have never yet. And I've had people come to me with. All kinds of situations.

In their marriage. I mean. It's just absolutely. Absolutely. Inimaginable. And. And. And I. Get to the place sometimes. Where I think. I've heard it all. But no.

[24 : 19] You haven't. There's somebody else. Comes along. And they've got a situation. That you've never heard of before. And. And I've never yet. Found a case. Where there is. Conflict.

In a marriage. But what. An offense. Or offense says. We're not. At the base of it. Now that's. Quite a statement. To be able to make.

And I've been doing this. For a long time. But I've never found. An exception. Never had anybody. Explain their problem. And then I can say. Well. One thing is for sure. We can forget about.

Offenses being the problem. Because that's. That's not their problem. No. It's always a problem. It's always in. Something that is said. Or something that is done. And it hurts.

But. It doesn't have to keep hurting. The hurt can come to an end. You cannot dismiss it. So that you will not.

[25 : 15] Remember it anymore. But the pain of it. Can be put behind you. If the right things. Are put in place. And this is.

Something that is. So age old. And so simple. And so basic. And yet. We are so prone. Not to do it. And do you know why?

Because we don't want to. Because we don't want to. And the biggest reason. We don't want to. Is because. If I do what is necessary.

To repair the hurt. That I have caused them. It's going to hurt. Me. Ooh. What is it about that.

That's going to hurt. Me. My. Ego. This. Is what. Paul.

[26 : 12] And the New Testament. Calls. The flesh. This is the flesh. It is the old. Adam. That protects itself.

At all costs. And when we. Hurt somebody. And there is a need there. To apologize. For what we said.

Or what we did. We are reluctant. To apologize. Because. That hurts me. That makes me feel like. I'm in the wrong.

And I don't want to be in that position. So I just. Deny it. And forget it. And there is no apology. And the hurt goes on.

And the result is. The emotional distancing. Begins. And as offenses grow. Over the years. Through things said.

[27 : 09] And through things done. Then. The distancing. Gets further. And further. And further. Apart. And pretty soon. We find ourselves saying.

I don't know why. I'm even putting up with this. This is no way to live. Isn't there some way. Better than this.

Does God expect me to. Go through this. Day after day. You know. This is emotional distancing. That takes place. And it all comes. As a result.

Of the flesh. And every one of us. Without exception. Every one of us. Is prone to this. Like James said. Only he was talking to the teachers. And many things. We offend all. We all offend.

You know. You just. Sometimes you just. You just. Stupidly. Blurt out something. Maybe out of anger. Or retaliation. Or what. And you know. The tendency.

[28 : 04] When somebody says something. To hurt you. The tendency. Is to hurt him back. Retaliate. And that's called self-defense. You know. I don't have to take this. Well.

You're not so. You're thus and so. You know. And that's just natural. And what that is. Is the flesh. Meets the flesh. And sparks fly. And anger.

Rises. And more. Distancing. Occurs. This. This. What we are.

Talking about now. This. Is. The world's. Number. One. Problem. I know. We call it sin. And sin. Is what it is. But it is. The offense. Stop. And ask yourself. What conflict. What conflict.

[28 : 58] Do you know of. Between people. Or between nations. What conflict. Can you think of. That didn't begin.

With an offense. I can't think of any. I can't think of any. Granted.

There may be. Unintended. Offenses. Someone. Can say something. Or do something. That they did not. Intend. To hurt. A party.

But. That doesn't. That doesn't. Remove. The possibility. Of the hurt. Because. We can hurt each other. Unintentionally. And that's not our goal. At all. And yet.

When we do. The pain. Is just as real. Is it not? Even though. It wasn't intended. Even though. It wasn't intentional. It still hurts. And the best example. That I use.

[29 : 54] That's. So obvious. To everybody. When the Japanese. Bombed Pearl Harbor. In 1941. We were offended. Weren't we? We sure were.

And we. Retaliated. Didn't we? And the war. Was on. And you got.

Similar kind of situation. In Europe. With. The Nazis. And Hitler. This. Is the world problem. But you know. I don't hold. Without any hope. Of the politics.

In Washington. Standing up. In the Senate chambers. And saying. Folks. Our real problem is. Sin. And offenses. That we commit. One to another. They probably be. Booped off the stage.

And. Well. They just don't recognize. And by the way. If you can't. Diagnose the problem. You can't treat it. Washington.

[30 : 50] Has never. Diagnosed the problem. And this is why. They're not successful. In treating it. And never will be. Because you won't. Recognize the problem. Pogo.

That little comic strip character. You know. That Pogo. That lived back in the swamps. A little. What was he? A little. Muskrat. Or. Whatever he was. Quoted those famous words.

We have met the enemy. And they is us. Yeah. They is us. So. So. What's the remedy? And the remedy.

Is drawing upon. The provision that God has made. And by the way. As far as I'm concerned. There is no real remedy. For the unregenerate. They're just locked into this. There isn't anything they can do.

They that are in the flesh. Cannot please God. And they just go through life. Bumbling around. And bumping into one another. And offending one another. And there's no redress. And there's no salvation there.

[31 : 46] For them. In that. They're just locked into that. That's all they can do. That's all the flesh can do. But for those of us. Who are believers. God has provided for us.

What I call. Spiritual operating assets. And when we apply them. They produce wonderful results. They can actually. Take the offense. And turn it around. But this is the only dynamic. That can do that. And it is that.

Which God has provided. For every single believer. Single. Married. Divorced. Or whatever. It is the. Asset. That. God has provided.

That enables the believer. To live. Above. Those circumstances. That are. A virtual curse. For the rest of the world.

[32 : 44] And those dynamics. Are referred to. By Paul. In the last session. We looked at. Walking. Walking. In the spirit. As opposed to walking. In the flesh.

And let's come back. If we may. To Galatians chapter 5. Which is probably. The most. Principal passage. On this subject. And it ties in. With. With. Romans chapter 6.

As well. And it's. Related to the filling. Of the spirit. Walking in the flesh. As opposed to walking. In the spirit. And in Galatians chapter 5.

And verse. Well. Let's just start with verse. 12. If we. We've got to jump in somewhere. For time's sake. By the way. I want to stop right now.

Any comments. Or questions. Anybody has. Any clarification. Needed about anything. Feel free. Anyone. Okay. Galatians chapter 5.

[33 : 41] And verse 12. I would. That they. Were even cut off. Which trouble you. He's talking about. The legalizers. And he says. For brethren. You have been called. Unto liberty.

And when he talks. About brethren. He's talking about. Fellow believers. In Christ. You have been called. Unto liberty. Only. Use not your liberty. Or your freedom. For an occasion.

To the flesh. Now you have liberty. That doesn't mean. You have liberty. To do anything you want. Do not use your liberty. For an occasion. To the flesh.

But by love. Serve one another. And this flesh here. Is that old. Adamic ego. That we're talking about. That is so prone. To self-satisfaction.

And this is a really important concept. To lock into. Because. It is the most. Dynamic. Consequential result. Of the fall. And that is.

[34 : 37] Our self-centeredness. We are all. Beset. With a penchant. For self-centeredness. We all want. Our own way. About whatever.

That's just systemic. To human nature. And. You needn't. You needn't be particularly. Upset about it. Because it just proves. That you're a human being. We all have this affliction.

This self-centeredness. And use not your liberty. For an occasion. To the flesh. But by love. Serve one another. And love here. is always. Always.

Always. An act of the will. It is not a feeling. The feelings. Are romance.

We're not talking about romance. We're talking about something. Much deeper than. Listen.

Hollywood knows all about romance. They don't know anything about love.

[35 : 34] They just know about romance. They just know about the feel good stuff. And I will love you. As long as. I love you. Which may be. Till the day after tomorrow. You know.

That's. That's the Hollywood love. And the scriptures know nothing. Biblical love means. When you. When you say. And do the things. That are in the best interest.

Of the object. Of your love. That's agape love. That's biblical love. When you say. And do things. That are in the best interest.

Of the object. Of your love. By love. Serve. One another. For all the law. Is fulfilled.

In one word. Even in this. Thou shalt love thy neighbor. As thyself. And as I pointed out. Only the believer in Christ. Has the ability. The capacity. To do that. And even for him.

[36 : 29] Not automatic. We. As Christians. Do not. Automatically. Love our neighbor. As ourself. You don't do that. Automatically. Automatically. You do the flesh thing.

That's what's automatic. But this. Is not natural. This is supernatural. And this is what we're called to. Because God.

Has redeemed us. And called us unto himself. He has given us. A capacity. And ability. That the world knows. Nothing about. And it. Contains that element.

Of. Supernatural love. Love. Where the world. Would not expect it. And not anticipate it. This is a dynamic. This is the kind.

This is the love of God. Shed abroad. In our hearts. Wherewith. We are able to love one another. With the love that God loves us with. Which is incredible.

[37 : 22] So this is why the world knows nothing about it. But. Contrast. If you bite and devour one another. That's kind of like. A vicious animal.

You know. If you tear into one another. Take heed that you be not consumed. In other words. What he's saying is. Hey. You can destroy a fellow believer.

With your words. I mean. You can neutralize them. Spiritually. Emotionally. You can tear them down. You can eat them up. You can lay them out.

With your words. That. Is possible. For a Christian. To do. That's a pretty sobering thing.

To think about. Just because you are a Christian. Doesn't mean you're removed. From this potential. Listen. Christians can get down. And ugly.

[38 : 20] And still. Really. Know the Lord. And we all know. That sometimes. Some. Someone has said. Hey.

Don't ever expect. A fair shake. From the world. And sometimes. Those who name. The name of Christ. Can give you the shaft. More than the world.

Boy. That's a pretty sobering thing. To think about. It's kind of depressing. Isn't it? But I'm saying. We have that potential. And that's why Paul. Is talking about here.

Walking in the spirit. And. And allowing God. Someone has said. In this article. That I wrote.

Recently. Someone has said that. It isn't difficult.

To live the Christian life. It's impossible. And Christ. Has to live that life. Through you. But you have to give him.

[39 : 18] Permission to do that. Now that doesn't sound right. Does it? I remember making that point. In a recently. Written article. Since when. Does God need your permission.

To do anything. Since he gave you. A volition. Since he gave you. A will. Since he gave you. The ability.

To say yes. Or no. He. Will provide. His power. For you. Living your life. But he will not.

Provide his power. Against. Your will. Think of that. This involves. That intense. Thing. Called. Divine. Human. Partnering. Where God. Condescends. I can't think of another word. Maybe.

Stoops. Where God.

[40 : 12] Stoops. To align himself. With you. As a human being. And he wants to. Couple. With you. For the doing. Of his will.

And he is looking. To you. For your. Cooperation. And your. Willingness. To release. His power. In place of the power. You. Don't have.

That's what this. Galatians passage. Is all about. If you bite. And devour. One another. Take heed.

That you be not. This is. You can just. Ruin people. You can isolate people.

Do you know. Do you know. Folks. Who haven't. Had anything. To do with each other. For years. And years. Sometimes. Sibley. Sometimes.

People stand. At a casket. Cry. Over. Offenses. That were committed. 20. 30 years ago. Not speaking.

[41 : 08] For decades. And then. All of the guilt. All of the guilt. Settles in. And all of the depression. And everything. This is how. This is what we can do.

To one another. It's amazing. That we have this kind of ability. But. Sad to say. We do. So. The remedy is. The remedy. Is.

To walk. In the spirit. The. The. And. You will not. Fulfill. The lust. Of the flesh. And the proposition is. This is a neither or. You don't walk in the spirit.

And the flesh. You walk in one. Or the other. We are operating. In a godly fashion. Or in an ungodly fashion. And if we walk in the spirit.

We will not fulfill. The lust of the flesh. And what's the obvious. To that. Well. If you don't walk in the spirit. The flesh is one thing is left. See. The Christian.

[42 : 03] Has an option. The unbeliever. Doesn't even have an option. He's locked in. To the flesh. That's all he can do. And even if he does. Good things.

And unsaved people. Can do good things. Unsaved people. Can do nice things. Sometimes.

Sometimes. Unsaved people. Can show up. Those who claim to be Christians.

Sometimes. A man who. Never sets foot. Inside a church. Can live. A more acceptable life.

Outwardly. In his community. Than what someone does. Who's in church. Every Sunday. Shouldn't

be that way.

But it is. And this is exactly. What he's talking about here. Christians. Have this thing. Called. Divine. Operating assets. Automatically. Made available to them. Because they are in Christ. And they don't utilize them. And some. Don't utilize them. Because. They don't even know. They exist. And folks. This is why I'm telling you this right now.

[43 : 02] So you'll know that they exist. This dynamic. This power. This potential. Is available. To us all. And.

As I've often said. I don't think. I don't think there is. A greater asset. That God has. On the face of the earth. Than a believer. In Jesus Christ.

Who is walking. In the spirit. And there's probably. No greater liability. That God has. Than a believer. In Christ.

Who is walking. In the flesh. And the world. You know what the world. Calls him. Don't you? Hypocrite. Hypocrite. And it's a bad advertisement.

For the gospel. The flesh. Lusts. Against. The spirit. Strives. Against. The spirit. That means.

[43 : 57] The flesh. Is vying. For ascendancy. The flesh. Is saying. Let me drive. Let me drive.

I want to commandeer this thing. That's. That's. That's just. Part and parcel. Of our humanity. And the spirit.

Against the flesh. And these. Are contrary. The one to the other. Hey. Don't ever expect. The truth. Between. The flesh.

And the spirit. Will never say. Hey. Let's just shake hands. And be friends. Okay. How about this? How about. You rule today. And I'll rule tomorrow.

Okay. And then. We'll flip a coin. To see who gets Sunday. Nope. No deals made. Just doesn't work that way. We walk in one way.

[44 : 52] Or the other. And by the way. Let me ask you this. Is it possible. Is it possible. To walk in the flesh. Today. And walk in the spirit.

Tomorrow. You better believe it. You better believe it. We can cycle forth. Between good and bad. And let me give you. A little key here. Because this is really. Really important. The more time you log. Walking in the spirit. Which is simply. Pleasing the Lord.

Living biblically. Living by the book. The more time you log. In that position. The more dramatic. And consistent. Will be. Your spiritual growth.

And maturity. You will be. You will be. On a. A rapid. Program. For. Being conformed.

[45 : 47] To Jesus Christ. And that's what this is all about. That we may be conformed. To his image. And the more you. As a believer. Walk. In the flesh.

The more. You retard. Your spiritual growth. And are consigned. To spiritual. Infancy.

And we all know people. Who have been saved. For 30 or 40 years. And they have no more. Handle on spiritual truth. Or understanding. Than the man in the moon.

And at times. It makes you wonder. Whether they're even saved. So what's the result. Of this cycling. Back and forth. Let me put it this way. We walk in the flesh.

Because we want to. We want to. We want to. We want to rule the roost. We want to. Call our own shots. We want to do our own thing. We don't want anybody. Telling us what to do. That's walking in the flesh. But when we are submissive.

[46 : 43] One to another. That simply means. Paul said. We are to be submissive. One. How do you do that? You put others. Ahead of yourself. And I want to close with this.

Because. Because this is. This is. This is incredible. The way this works. Absolutely incredible. When you do this. When you walk in the spirit.

As opposed to walking in the flesh. You are living a life. That is pleasing to the Lord. And the end result of that is. This.

Is in your best interest. Nobody will benefit from that. Perhaps. More than you will. But this is a hard sell.

Because we think that. For me to benefit. Means. I get my way. About whatever. No. For you to get the maximum benefit.

[47 : 39] Christ. For you to get the maximum benefit. Christ needs to get his way. And that. Is in your best interest. Even if you don't believe it. It will work for your best interest.

By putting him first. And when we serve one another. Like Paul says. In love. Serve one another. How do we serve? By preferring others. Better than yourself.

And not like the guy who said. I wouldn't have any problem. Preferring others. Better than myself. If I could just find somebody. Who was. There's that problem.

We're talking about. This ego. That's the flesh. Crawling all over. And you know. The flesh wants to come to the ascendancy. The flesh wants to rule the roots. The flesh wants to. I myself. Me and mine.

And that is. Part and parcel. Of our fallen nature. And Paul is saying. You don't have to feed that. And you don't have to go that way. God has designed a better way.

[48 : 40] And. I don't know why I brought my notes. Don't need them anyway.

And. What would you like to add? Or questions you may have. And if you're in a hurry. Feel free to get up and leave. If you've got to be someplace. No one will think you're rude.

Just go. Maria. Maybe you can get real quick. On. You're willing to forgive. And then. I'm sorry. I said. Maybe you can get real quick. What if you're willing to forgive.

But the other person isn't. Well. You're talking about. One in the. One in the flesh. And one. One in the spirit.

One in the spirit. How can I do this. In a real short way. Okay.

[49 : 44] Let me just put it this way. There is a huge. Huge difference. That needs to be.

Understood. And appreciated. Between forgiving someone. And.

Being willing to forgive someone. And. I don't want to. I don't want to. Split hairs here.

But this is very. Very important. And I. I have heard people. And I've heard. Reputable Bible teachers. Say this too. That. Even though. Someone.

Does not. Apologize. And doesn't ask for your forgiveness. And doesn't seek your forgiveness. You should forgive them anyway. And my contention is. And this is just a wise opinion.

And that makes it suspect. Automatically. But my position is. You cannot. You cannot. Forgive someone.

[50 : 37] With a forgiveness that counts. If the person you are forgiving. Is not apologetic. Does not seek your forgiveness. Does not agree. They need your forgiveness. Does not even want your forgiveness.

You cannot extend forgiveness. Toward them. And what I base that on. Is the fact that. The offense. The offense. Is always.

A two person project. There is always. The offender. And the offended. That makes it. A kind of contract.

Between those two. That is a two party thing. And the only resolution. Is that. Two parties. Be involved. In the reconciliation. And if one.

Is unwilling. Then the reconciliation. Cannot take effect. And here is an important difference. That I make. A believer in Christ. Absolutely.

[51 : 35] Ought. To have. An attitude. Of forgiveness. And a desire. To forgive. And a willingness. To forgive. They need to want. To forgive. Be eager.

To forgive. But you can't do it. If the other party. Involved says. Not interested. I haven't done.

Anything wrong. I haven't said. Anything wrong. I'm innocent in this. I'm not going to ask. Your forgiveness.

For anything. Well. The whole thing. Comes to a screeching halt. And the forgiveness.

The transaction. Cannot be completed. Because. The transaction. That created. The offense. Was two way. And the forgiveness. Has to be two way. In order to be effective.

And I know. There are a lot of. Reputable Bible teachers. That don't agree with that. But I make a big distinction. Between. Yes. You should have a forgiving attitude. You should be willing to forgive.

[52 : 30] You should want to forgive. But if the other party. Will have none of it. Your forgiveness. Doesn't have any place to go. See what I'm saying. And this is an important point.

Melissa. What if the person is dead. And you don't realize the offenses. And so. Well. That's a very good question. If the person is deceased. And you're not able to settle.

Situations with them. That you would like to. The only thing that I can suggest. And I do this. Just out of. Having nowhere else to go. The only thing that I can suggest.

Is that. You sit down. You take pen and paper. And you write. Everything. That you would like to say. To that person. If they were here.

And of course. No reason to believe. They can hear it. Or they can absorb it. But this is you making. A good faith effort. To. Rid. Your spirit.

[53 : 32] Of. Whatever bitterness. Or offense on your part. That may be there. And you just write out. As fully. And as completely. As you can. And then. Leave it. And come back to it.

A couple of days later. See if you want to add to it. Or change it. And then. When you've done that. Burn it. And forget it. That's as close as you can come.

To a face to face. Kind of confrontation. I wish I had a better answer. For that. Than what I do. But when one party. Is completely out of the picture. You're limited. As to what you can do. Marvis. If the. If the person. You know. A relationship. A couple. Or whatever. One wants to forgive. And the other one says. I don't want to do it. You. I didn't do anything wrong. Set it up. Would not. What you said about. Someone who was deceased. Would that not help. The person who wants to forgive. So that they can.

[54 : 33] Pick up and go on. Versus. I have. They have to forgive me. I have to have this. Face to face. When it would. Maybe end up in another. Confrontation. Back and forth.

Yeah. Well you don't. You just don't have any control. Over the will. Over the volition. Of another person. And all you can do. Is exercise good faith. On your part. And make a sincere effort. Make a sincere overture.

To write the thing. And to. To have a. Preferably a face to face. Which is. Preferable. To the telephone. Or the internet. Or whatever. Because. The parties.

If at all possible. The parties need to look at each other. Face to face. And this is what. Usually provides for. A real. Breakthrough.

That is powerful. And cleansing. And forgiving. And what is the goal here? The goal is. Always. It's not for anyone to be right.

[55 : 28] And anyone to be wrong. The goal. Is for reconciliation. The goal. Is for. Kiss. And make up. That's the goal.

The goal. Is for the salvation. Of the relationship. That's the goal. That's always the goal. But. One person. Can't make it happen.

One person. Can contribute. To it happening. But one person. Can't make it happen. It takes the offended. And the offender. And this is an age old principle.

But. I'm amazed. At how it is just overlooked. And you know. This is. This is. It is ignoring these things. It's ignoring the apology. It's ignoring the forgiveness. It's ignoring.

Requesting forgiveness. That causes. Injured relationships. To just go on. Hurting. And hurting. And hurting. And hurting. And never being resolved. And people die that way.

[56 : 26] Die that way. To me. Life is too short. To live it like that. We need to be. At one. With each other. We need to be able to.

Embrace one another. In good faith. We need to be able to. Genuinely love each other. To genuinely forgive each other. To genuinely apologize. When we've committed wrong. Own up to it. Take responsibility. These are. Priceless treasures. Assets that God has provided. For the believer. That the world. Cannot plug into. To. The tragedy is.

Christians can. And so many refuse to. Because of the flesh. And the ego. So this is the end of the sayings of Mark.

Thank you for being here today. Thank you. Awesome. Thank you. Cool. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate you. Thank you.

[57 : 23] Thank you.