

# Stability in Midst of Trouble #1

Fred R. Coulter—July 4, 2009

Stability, *spiritually*, in the midst of troubrous times—how do we achieve that? How do we keep our minds focused on that?

Just recently I saw a report of Fox News, I think it was Glenn Beck's, where there was this young man—I think he was about eighteen or nineteen, somewhere around there, maybe twenty—and he got this flesh-eating disease. Virtually no one recovers from it. He was in the hospital a long time. That is so absolutely disastrous that there is no antibiotic that will stop it. So he was in the hospital about eight weeks and they finally stopped it by amputating his legs just below his hips. Now you talk about a devastating blow to your life and how you could just sort of curl up and think everything is lost. He didn't do it. He said, 'I'm blessed and this is a challenge.' He said, 'I've got the rest of me left, and so I'm going to do the best that I can with it.' So he was accepted to college and guess what sport that he does? No, he can't do track, because his legs were cut off. He couldn't have artificial legs. *The rowing team!*

So if they anchor him down in there good, he can do the rowing. I never saw a young man with such a positive attitude in the face of gloom, doom, discouragement; his life gone to hell in a hand basket, etc., as people would look at it, and yet, he did not give in. Glenn Beck said that there was a fund, not only for him, but for others like him, that he's heading up a fund to help take care of people like that. I tell you this, in America, that is a phenomenal thing, because American's think that way more than any other people in the world.

So what you can say is: you look at that and you say:

- What is my life?
- What has happened to me?
- What have I done with what I have?
- What are the circumstances and handicaps that I have that could make me discouraged?

*Well, really nothing compared to that.* And he was at the brink of death for two months, right there in the hospital. The doctor said, 'Nobody recovers from this.' So how can you have stability in the midst of troubrous times? And I think that was a great and a perfect example for it.

Let's come to Psalm 100 (pg 749). So let's see how we can use the Scriptures, how God wants us to use them, so that we can have a spiritually strong and positive attitude, and never be taken down by any of the circumstances. Now the Psalms

have a lot of good inspiration for us, and a lot of good inspiration for when there are troubles and difficulties that we're faced with. Notice this one, it's a short five-verse Psalm. Psalm 100:1: "Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.... [You know what he answered when the reporter said, 'Well, what do you do when you're discouraged?' *He says, 'I pray.'* Now let's understand something: anyone that prays to God sincerely, God will hear and answer. It's not just restricted to those in the Church. It doesn't necessarily mean they're called to salvation, but God will hear.] ...Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God. He has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture" (vs 1-3)—because we are the sheep of God.

Now as I read these next verses, let's understand something very important. We have the privilege of direct access to God the Father and Jesus Christ in heaven above, right at the throne of God. Keep that in mind when I read v 4: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise; give thanks unto Him and bless His name." So that's how you probably need to start some of your prayers, instead of starting: 'Oh, God, oh, what's happening?' So take this Psalm, get on your knees, open up the Bible, and you read this and made these words yours, and ask God to help you have the same kind of attitude.

"For the LORD is good; His steadfast love is everlasting; and His Truth endures to all generations" (v 5). So we'll talk a little bit about the love of God and the Truth of God, but the thing is this: **You know the Truth.** And how many people out there don't know the Truth? Here's this poor young man who had his legs cut off right up near his hips, in order to save the rest of his life, and he's rejoicing that he has the rest of his body in order to live a life of some kind of productive thing; quite an inspiration to a lot of people. And you know Glenn Beck, he cries real easy, so there were tears in his eyes when he was talking to this young man about it. So that's quite a thing!

Let's also understand this. Let's come to John 3:16 And this is something that when we talk about the commandments of God, and so forth, many times we forget about the love of God, the grace of God, and we forget about that God has called us to eternal life. And that sort of infects our bodies, kind of like a spiritual-eating infection, compared to the physical-eating infection that this young man had in his body

John 3:15 (pg 1,056): “So that everyone who believes in Him may not perish... [Now you notice the *may*, because **it depends on our coming to God.**] ...but may have everlasting life.” That’s what God has called us to, so this is why we are not to be discouraged in anything, though there are times when difficult problems come and you think, ‘Oh, God, how am I going to get through this?’ Well, *you'll get through it.* Remember, if that young man could get through it and come out with the attitude he had—you know, I think God does this deliberately to show us how weak and silly that we really are in a lot of things that we think and do, when we ought to be thinking on these things, rather than having a pity-party for the self.

Verse 16 [transcriber's correction]: “For God so loved the world... [And we know through God’s plan, and we have the knowledge of God’s plan—don’t we? How God is going to solve the problem. How He’s going to save the world; save most of the people that He did not call till the second resurrection. And remember this: **Your calling is an invitation to help Christ finish this.** That’s something!] ...so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” And think about what Christ gave up and think about how many times we’ve gone through that, to become a human being, to die.

And I was thinking, they’ve got this huge funeral plan for Michael Jackson. And we’re going to live through another week of Michael Jackson on television. Everyone’s trying to get there. They say that they may have as many as 750-thousand people. So they’re going to have to come by bus, they’re going to have passes that they have to even get to stand in the parking lot. They’re going to have the formal services, which will probably have all kinds of singers and dancers, and show a lot of clips of Michael Jackson’s concerts and everything, and everyone worshiped him. It shows how some people did when they saw Michael Jackson do certain things. It’s really kind of obscene. He’s always making sexual gestures and grabbing his crotch, and all of this, and everyone just ogles, and goes after him. And all of the music and lights and everything, and people are just hypnotized and they are committing idolatry by doing so.

Then I thought about Christ. He came, everyone hated Him, everyone despised Him. And even some of His disciples didn’t believe that He was resurrected after He was resurrected.

- He was beaten
- He was scourged
- He was falsely judged
- He was crucified
- He died

But He said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they’re doing.’ And He was buried, a lonely death in a tomb right close to where the crucifixion site was. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Him in the linen, and what they did, they took the wide strips of linen, probably of about 6-9 inches, and they would wrap it a little bit and put in some of the myrrh and aloes. They wrapped His legs and feet, all the way up the body. They wrapped His whole body and His arms, and there’s a special towel that they would put on the face, ‘handkerchief’ is what they said. Then they lifted His body and put it in Nicodemus’ tomb, rolled the stone across it, and no one was there. I thought ***the world is insane.*** They don’t understand what God did for them in the person of Christ. They reject God and so they’re blinded and don’t know; and the world goes after some corrupt, degenerate of Michael Jackson.

As I mentioned, he started out well, his family, when he was young. But later he ended up despising the fact that he was black and had to try and make himself white; and all of the addictions that he had, and the mental state that he was in, and died at fifty-years-old. I thought what a contrast. Now if you could actually have a film of what happened with the burial of Jesus, His death and burial, and then compare that with the actual film of what Michael Jackson went through in taking all these drugs and the doctors administering it to him and then dying with cardiac arrest, and everybody going crazy because this wonderful idol had died. Yet the One Who was put into the grave—ignored, rejected and despised and hated—is willing to forgive Michael Jackson. Will that take place in the second resurrection? You want to know, make sure that you’re there in the first resurrection. But what a contrast! So that’s why we should not be depressed about anything, regardless if the circumstances are so bad.

Think about Elijah, one of the greatest prophets. And what did God do with Him? *He sent him over to Sidon to a widow to hide away there for three years.* When he came there, she said, ‘Man of God, what are you coming here for?’ Well, *I need some food.* ‘All I have is a little flour and a little oil.’ He said, *Give me some, the Lord will take care of you.* And her son, who died in the process, Elijah brought back to life through prayer to God. But they lived on that cruse of olive oil and flour, because God kept replenishing it every day, for three years. *So never forget that God will supply your needs, regardless of the circumstances.* We’re going to face some tough times, tougher than you’ve ever seen. But this is the anchor for us to understand that God loves us: “...that He gave His only begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him... [This means a constant, continuous, ongoing belief,

because, we have to be faithful to the end—absolutely, without a doubt. But remember that ***our baptism is a pledge that we will be faithful to the end.*** And the finishing of the covenant on our part, with God's calling, is when we die and are put in the grave.] ...may not perish... [Even though you die in Adam once.] ...but may have everlasting life" (v 16). So keep these verses in mind, because that's powerfully important as to what we need to keep in mind,

- to keep our senses
- to keep our sanity
- to keep our focus
- and where we are going

Now let's come to Deuteronomy 6 (pg 299)—quite an important chapter. Now here God is giving them some instructions, just before they go into the promised land. Here's what we need to realize and to understand. Deuteronomy 6:1: "Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it... [Most people have the attitude: God is out there, mean and hateful, and He's against me and I'm going to be kind of squashed, like a little fly under the hand of God. No, we're going to see that's not true, because God has given all these things for our good.] ...That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged" (vs 1-2). Not cut off, but *prolonged*.

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you... [God is interested in your well being, in spite of the circumstances and difficulties that we have to go through.] ...and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey.... [That's our land. As a matter of fact, up in Minnesota they say it's a land of milk and honey, along with all the lakes and mosquitoes.] ...Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD...." (vs 3-4). He is always there—Christ and God the Father—and this is telling us that the one Elohim has two Jehovah's in it. One became the Father; one became the Son.

This is the proper translation, and it is the only Bible in the world that has it this way. You will see there's a little line below v 5, See Appendix W about *The Two Jehovahs of the Pentateuch and Psalms*. And also I might mention, that this is the only Bible dedicated to the Truth of God, rejecting all human traditions and humanly-devised doctrines. That's why the Bible is put together the way it is, with the commentaries and appendixes. That's why

it's important that you read them so you know why this Bible is important for you.

Now notice v 5: here's what God wants. He says, 'I love you.' So what does He want in return? *He wants your love back to Him.* "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Now that's a fair deal—isn't it? Isn't that something? Can we give ourselves eternal life? *No!* How long are we going to live? They interviewed a man recently, the last World War I veteran, at 107 or 108, and he still had a good mind. But you know he's going to die. He can't give himself any life. He can't extend it on himself, and God says even in the flesh, 'I want you to live.' But He says also, 'I created you to receive eternal life.' Isn't that a fair bargain? Isn't that a fair thing that God is asking us to do? *Yes!*

Now notice, and here's what He wants. This is also New Testament doctrine. "And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart" (v 6). Then He says 'you'll teach your children, talk about them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, when you rise up, bind them as a sign upon your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.' Now God wants it in your mind, in your heart, so that you can live by God's way, live by God's Word.

Deuteronomy 7:6—God tells us some more things here. "For you *are* a Holy people to the LORD your God.... [Now think about that spiritually in the New Testament. What are we called in the New Testament? *Saints, which means sanctified with the Holy Spirit of God.* So we're a Holy people to the Lord your God.] ...The LORD your God has chosen you... [And how many times do we have that in the New Testament? Jesus told the apostles, 'You did not choose Me, but I personally have chosen you.' Same way for all us (Eph. 1), He has personally Himself chosen us, and each one in particularly, you see] ...to be a special people to Himself... [Israel has all down through the history of the world.] ...above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all people" (vs 6-7). Now think of that with the Church. You think about how few we are, and how scattered we are, and yet God knows us and loves us, and cares for us and all of that. So never be discouraged with a small number. Never be discouraged that maybe the only thing you have is fellowship between you and God alone on the Sabbath, because there's nobody else around.

- God knows you
- God loves you
- God has called you

- He is preparing you to rule with Christ

Verse 8: "But because the LORD loved you and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers... [That's Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And of course, we're the result of the promise that God gave to Abraham, that his seed would be as the stars of heaven.] ...the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant... [And we're in the covenant of eternal life with Him.] ...and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations'" (vs 8-9). That means on to perpetuity. So that's something!

Now let's come back to the book of Psalms. We're going to be reading in there quite a little bit, because there are a lot of things in the Psalms which help us

- with our relationship with God
- with our attitude
- how to use God's Spirit
- how God deals with us—etc.

Now here's part of how we are to conduct ourselves in light of the fact that God loves us and we're to love Him in return. Psalm 101:1 (pg 749): "I will sing of mercy and judgment; to You, O LORD, I will sing praise, I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.... [*Oh, that we may all learn that.*] ...O when will You come unto Me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before my eyes. I have hated the work of those who turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know no evil thing.... [So this is overcoming human nature; overcoming the way that we think—that's how you do it.] ...Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, I will cut him off... [Don't listen to gossip.] ...he who has a haughty look and a proud heart, I will not allow.... [Because that always causes problems and difficulties.] ...My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land... [Now think of this as God doing this.] ...so that they may dwell with me; he who walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me" (vs 1-6). So that's quite a Psalm!

Now notice v 7: "He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; he who tells lies shall not remain in my sight." So none of them are going to be allowed to be in the Kingdom of God. So this gives us impetus, doesn't it, to overcome the deceitfulness of human nature and to quit giving ourselves fudge-factors, and allowance for doing things we should not do.

Let's come to Psalm 92 (pg 747). Now you will be surprised how much this is going to help

your attitude when you take this in mind. Regardless of what the problem is, regardless of how long standing it has been, regardless of how you have felt about it in the past, take a new view of it with this. Psalm 92:1: "It is good to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praises unto Your name, O Most High. To show forth Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness every night upon the instrument of ten strings, and upon the harp, with melody of music upon the lyre; for You, LORD, have made me glad with Your work..." (vs 1-4). Now we've had a misconstrued view of *work* in the past, that *work* was only what the ministers did, or the one who did broadcasting or television did. But the *work* that God is really doing is ***His work in us***—that's His work.

"...I will triumph in the works of Your hands.... [So God is the one Who is doing these things, who is making it possible, who is helping us to perform these things.] ...O LORD, how great are Your works; Your thoughts are very deep" (vs 4-5). And think how God has given us a witness—everything that's created in the world. You walk out and you see the flowers. Dolores has some rose trees. She made trees out of rose bushes by trimming and having them trimmed and everything like that. And we have two rose trees that absolutely produce so many roses and boy, do they smell good—are they wonderful, it's terrific! Trim off the ones as they start losing their petals, and it blooms right back. You think what a fantastic thing, and that's only one little teeny thing of God's creation. The power of God's creation and the miracles of it are magnified over in everything that He has created. He even said that the lily of the field God has made more glorious than Solomon in all of his glory, yet it shrivels up and dies.

I'm still amazed at this: men still do not know how a seed grows. They can observe it that it's growing, they can even specially plant the seed. I don't know if you've done this: You plant the seed in a vase, but half the vase has clear glass all the way down the depth of the vase and you can see the seed. You can see it sprout, the root going down, the plant growing up. You can look at it and observe it, but how does it work? We can describe what happens, but that doesn't tell us how it works. You put it in the same ground, and I think of this every time, because right in the front of our house we have two lemon trees; one on one side and one on the other side. We couldn't afford cherubim, so we settled for lemon trees. But close to that are flowers, the same ground, the same water, but something entirely different.

In the back yard, we've got two orange trees. Same ground, same water; different fruit. We have two apple trees; we have two apricot trees, and one

of the apricot trees was one that Jonathan took a seed and put it in a five-gallon bucket and it grew into a tree. We left it in the five-gallon bucket, and in the five-gallon bucket it didn't grow very big. So he said, 'We'll take it out and put it in the ground.' Now it's a big tall apricot tree. We get apricots off it every year. And we have a plum tree, and we have a grapefruit tree. You stop and think of all the fruits, all the vegetables, you put it in the ground, you put water on the seed, and it grows and produces something different and unique just from that.

Now think of all the trees that are in the forest, what God has done with that. Everything that there is in the world, all the animals, all the birds, all the whales. I saw a special on a sperm whale, the biggest whale in the world. One day it came up on the beach in China; it died. So they wanted to know why did it die. After all the investigation of what happened, they moved it in hot weather and they didn't move it quick enough and it started belching out the blood out of the blow hole. It has all that fat and blubber to keep it warm in the water. When you get it out in the hot temperature in the summer, it starts swelling up, and then it finally exploded. Then they analyzed what happened to it. It had a broken spine. They tried to figure out how did it have a broken spine? They finally analyzed what it was, because they took pictures of the whale all the way around when they first discovered it, and so forth. On the front of freight ships they now have, down right below the water line, they have a wave breaker that is like a big hard rocket down there shaped in a bullet fashion. That keeps the ship stable, so in waves it's not rocking up and down, back and forth. What happened—and they never saw this behavior before—in trapping the sperm whale, and they know that they go down and stay down for twenty minutes to a half hour, sometimes forty minutes, and go clear down to the depths of the ocean, thousands of feet below the surface of the water. Then when they come up, they didn't realize this, when they come up, they sleep from all the exertion of going down. It showed a whole pod of sperm whales sleeping. Now when they're sleeping, they're hearing in their sonar that they have, is not working very well.

So with some of these big oil ships with this big bow that they have below the water that protrudes out like a big bullet, it's probably fifteen or twenty feet long and huge big around, and with these tankers, the engines are in the back. So the whale laying there sleeping can't hear it. So they deduced out of the whole thing that the way that whale—because there's nothing that could attack, nothing could kill it, nothing could make it die, but they knew that there was some kind of wound. The only thing that could do it was that below-the-surface protrusion of the bow hit that sperm whale

when it was sleeping. But you think: God made that huge whale! and yet it's got to breathe, but it lives in the water. So ***all these things are a glory to God*** in His power, in what's He's created, and everything.

So he goes on to say here (v 5): "...Your thoughts are very deep." Because He's made and created all these things.

Now come down here to v 12—as compared to the wicked, he says: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age..." (vs 12-14). Now getting close to 75—I'll be 75 in four days—I take solace in this. And many others are older than me, many others are coming up to the age that I am. Now notice, and this is my prayer for myself, and I claim this promise, not just for the tree, but for me and for all in the Church.

"They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be *full of* energy and sturdy... [And I think that's really a good description of what we want—right? Yes!] ...to show that the LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him" (vs 14-15). So that's quite a Psalm—isn't it?

Let's look at how we are to flourish and why we can be at this level, 'bring forth fruit in old age and be full of energy.' Let's come back to Psalms, the first chapter. So here's how that works. Yes, we all have to take care of ourselves. Yes, we all have to do the best we can, but let's see if we can produce more in our old age than we did when we were younger—now maybe not more, necessarily, but a higher quality. Now they know this: A grapevine as it gets older, its trunk gets bigger and bigger and bigger, but they prune off the vines every year. The older it gets it doesn't produce quite as much fruit, but the fruit is better and the wine is of a higher quality. So we have that analogy that we can do, too, so that we produce a vintage crop with vintage wine, and so forth.

Now Psalm 1:1: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners... [That is stand with them in the way that they are going.] ...nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law does he meditate day and night" (vs 1-2). Because he has the laws and commandments of God in his mind:

- that's what he thinks with
- that's how he lives his life
- that's how he judges the circumstances in which he is in

Then you add to it:

- the love of God

- the mercy of God
- the faith of God

—all that comes with it. Now notice v 3: “He shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither, and all that he does shall prosper.... [That doesn’t mean you’re going to be a billionaire, you can prosper in many different levels, but the greatest prosperity is the prosperity of spirit, and mind, and emotion, and body.] ...The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous... [Because He set the course for them.] ...but the way of the wicked shall perish” (vs 3-6). So that’s interesting, these two Psalms concerning trees.

(go to track #2)

Let’s come to Psalm 18. Now in these Psalms if I don’t go through every verse, I want you to read through every verse and see how God does things, how He deals with us, and how we need to respond to Him, too. Notice how David responds back to God with loving Him, because he knows that God loves him also.

Psalm 18:1: “I love You, O LORD, my strength.... [That’s where we get the strength. That’s why even in old age we want to be full of energy and sturdy and bringing forth fruit.] ...The LORD is my Rock... [And I think that if you go through and read all the Psalms, and later when we get all of this on computer, and we can get it digitized, and you can put it on your computer, you can do a search of Rock, just in the book of Psalms. I think you will be surprised how many times that God is referred to as a Rock.] ...The LORD is my Rock, and my fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Rock... [So he says it twice.] ...in Whom I take refuge; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower” (vs 1-2). ***In other words, God is everything in your life.***

“I will call on the LORD, Who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.... [Regardless of who they are, and also the enemies of your own wicked works.] ...The cords of death hemmed me in, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The cords of the grave surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me.... [You can’t be in any more trouble than this.] ...In my distress I called on the LORD... [So if you have trouble come your way, don’t run from God, ***run to God***, because He will help you.] ...and I cried to my God; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him into His ears.... [Then notice how God responded. I haven’t had any prayers answered this way, but, hey, this is a pretty good way to have prayers answered—right?] ...Then the earth shook

and trembled; and the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because He was angry” (vs 3-7). In other words, ***fighting for me.***

All right, let’s come down here to v 21. Notice his resolve after God rescued him. And, of course, when you understand the spiritual enemies of Satan and the world and things like that that we have to fight all the time; let’s keep that in mind. God will fight the battles for us. Now if we give in and we yield to sin, and those things, we can repent. God is there, because I want to cover a little later, that we are all under the grace of God all the time, so that these blessings come upon us. Notice v 21: “For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.” Keep that in mind.

I got an interesting call the other day. A man called and said, ‘I’m like the prodigal son, please put me on your mailing list; I’m coming back to God.’ So you see, always remember this: ***as long as there’s life, there’s hope.*** I said, ‘Be happy to do so and we’ll send you some things.’

“For all His ordinances were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also blameless before Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity” (vs 22-23). Now that doesn’t mean you’re not going to be tempted.

Come to James 1, because this is something that we need to realize. What do you do when you have an evil thought come through your mind, because you will, won’t you—right? What do you do with it? ***You cast it down; you get rid of it.*** Remember Jesus was ‘tempted in every way such as we are, yet did not sin.’ Why? ***Because to be tempted, or have an evil thought come through your mind, is not full-fledged sin.*** Now we’ll see.

James 1:12 (pg 1,126): “Blessed is the man who endures trials because, after he has been proved... [And this is what God is doing. Trials will come along to prove us, to test us, to try us. How are we going to do? I thought William Tyndale wrote this very well. He said, ‘If God is going to send you on a journey to go over the sea, ***He’ll send a tempest upon you to see if you will trust in Him or not,*** whether you will have faith in Him or not. Because how’s He going to know you’re going to have faith in Him, if everything were just a smooth trip?’ So that’s why we go through the things that we do, and the difficulties that we do, to prove us.] ...after he has been proved, he shall receive a crown of life... [Always looking toward the ultimate outcome.] ...which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God’ because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one with evil’ (vs 12-13).

A lot of people don't understand that. How do you understand it? This way: ***God has set before all of us life and death, and good and evil, and it's choices that we make.*** So he brings out the choice-factor and the thought-factor that goes into this. Let's read it. God doesn't tempt us with evil, but we are going to be confronted with evil so that we will see what we will choose. And evil is out there in the world.

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away... [So here is the succession of things that happen. That's why David said, 'I have not wickedly departed from Your ways.' He didn't say he didn't have temptation. Remember, his great sin was Bathsheba and killing Uriah the Hittite. Was he tempted and drawn away? Yes!] ...but each one is (#1) tempted when he is (#2) drawn away and is (#3) enticed by his own (#4) lust.... [Because we all have lust within us.] ...After lust has (#5) conceived... [Step number six, I think that's interesting, isn't it?] ...it gives (#6) birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, (#7) brings forth death" (vs 14-15).

So now at any one of these seven points, you can turn from it. It's better to turn from it when the thought comes, and 'bring every thought into captivity to Christ,' and you can wipe it away—you have not sinned. The temptation has come. So if you have an evil thought pass through your mind, especially in this generation because we're assaulted with so many things that can induce evil thoughts, such as on television, magazines, newspapers, billboards, whatever but for those thoughts to pass through our mind is not sin until we get that thought and grab hold of it and bring it in close to our bosom, and we accept the temptation. Then we let lust get involved. See, at any point you can stop. But after you have sinned, if you don't stop it at any point there, then you've got to repent to God. Then a lot of people say, 'Well, have I committed the unpardonable sin?'

Let's come to 1-John 5:13 (pg 1,140) and follow along with what John is writing. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God... [So these are converted people—right?] ...in order that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.... [Continuous faith.] ...And this is the confidence that we have toward Him... [And this is the faith and confidence we need to have every day in our prayers.] ...that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.... [If we ask according to our lust and the sin within us, the one who answers that prayer—you get involved in sin—is not God, but Satan.] ...And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the

requests that we have asked of Him.... [So this is the confidence. Now how does that fit in with sin and how does that give us an indication of sin that is repentable, and sin that is not?] ...If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is not unto death...*" (vs 13-16). Meaning *it is a sin that can be repented of.* You can find in the Hebrews Series: *The Unpardonable Sin.* You go on line, draw that down, hear about it, but the unpardonable sin puts a person in this kind of mental condition:

- they *don't care* that they have sinned
- they have *no conscience* or *remorse* toward that sin
- they have *no desire* to go God's way

—*that's a sin unto death.*

"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is not unto death*, he shall ask... [You can pray for someone. This is why when you see someone do something in the Church that's not exactly right, don't get all huffy and judgmental about it, go pray for that individual. Sometimes you're confronted with people that you just really have a hard time handling. Well, go pray about it. God can change the person. He can do it.] ...he shall ask, and He [God] will give him life for those who do not sin unto death.... [And giving life means *forgiveness.*] ...There is a sin unto death; concerning *that* sin, I do not say that he should make *any supplication to God.* All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death?" (vs 16-17).

Now here's the key, and this is where conscience comes in, where like David he could say, 'I have not wickedly departed from my God.' Here it is v 18: "We know that **anyone who is begotten by God does not practice sin...** [It doesn't say you can't sin, because if you sin a sin that's not unto death, it can be repented of. But you don't *practice* sin, that is live in sin.] ...for the one who has been begotten by God keeps himself *by the power of God*, and the wicked one does not touch him." Now, he may tempt you, just like it was with Job. He really went through it, but he learned from the whole experience—right? Yes.

So how do you handle it then, 'not wickedly departing from God'? Let's come to 1-John 1:6 and we'll see it right here. "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves and we are not practicing the Truth.... [So there's the contrast right here.] (Now then it defines it even more): ...However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin" (vs 6-7). That's how forgiveness comes, but we know from other Scriptures that you have to confess your sins to God. We also know

from Matt. 6 that every day we are to ask God to forgive us for our sins. Now's here's the problem with the world, v 8: "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us." 'Oh, well, I'm a good person.'

Now I saw on CNBC here recently some of the specials concerning marijuana, because in California, believe it or not, they are considering legalizing marijuana to get the tax money to help with the budget deficit. Even our wonderful Governor 'Heir' Schwarzenegger has even entertained the idea. So they were showing the history of marijuana in California. And there was a man who set up a whole empire and business of importing illegal marijuana (marijuana is all illegal) from Columbia. How did he import it and get away with it and not get caught to the very end. The Feds would have never caught him until I tell you how they caught him. But what he did, he had a company survey give him some indicators of what would happen in his book that he was supposedly writing about smuggling. He found that most of the smuggling of marijuana came in from the northern border and into Washington and Oregon, and there they had most of their agents, and they were pretty well able to track it down. Likewise on the southern border, but San Francisco Bay was wide open, as well as Moss Landing out close to us here. So he made the contacts in Columbia, hired fishermen, paid them out of the marijuana, and he was raking in millions every day.

The fishermen would go down, they would get the pot from the Pacific side of where Columbia is. They wouldn't have to go through the Panama Canal [transcriber's correction] to get there. They would come back like they were coming back from a fishing run. Then they would off-load on a dock and they could off-load and have the fishing boat out of there for a return trip to get another one. They could fill a whole truck, off-load millions of dollars worth of marijuana, put it in trucks and take it out to their distributors, and sell it. The one who was in charge of it was making nearly a million dollars a day; and because he had many 'fishermen,' of course they made more money than fishing. So here's all the lust. You'll understand my point when I get to it here about a sin not repented of.

He was spending 500-thousand dollars a week in buying homes and buying things for all of the ones that worked with him, and the excess money he had lawyers carry it in briefcases and satchels and take it down to the Cayman Islands and deposit it in the banks down there. Now this goes clear back to the seventies. He was quite a businessman, so he kept a log on everything. And the Feds could not figure out where the marijuana was coming from. They couldn't figure out why there was so marijuana everywhere, and they

couldn't track anyone down. So what happened was: one day someone called, from Northern California, the FBI and said, 'I have a notebook that you'll be most interested in.' The man who was running it left it in Denny's Restaurant, his whole operation, with everybody listed, and how much money went here and there and everywhere. So they arrested him, they shut down the operation, and he got nine years in prison.

So here's the reporter talking to him and he's standing in the area with the wind blowing in his hair, and the Golden Gate Bridge off to the left side, and she is saying, 'Now that it's all over and done, would you do the same thing again?' He said, *Absolutely. No repentance; no remorse!*

Now whether that is ultimately a sin unto death, we don't know, but it struck me this: How many people are out there that say, 'Well, I had no sin in this. I was just making money. And look at all these poor fishermen that I was supporting with all of this money. They couldn't get it through fishing. All of these people wanted it anyway and I was just supplying what they needed.'

"If we say we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (vs 8-10).

So now you see the contrast between *sinning a sin unto death, a sin not unto death, and not wickedly departing from the Word of God.*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 100:1-5
- 2) John 3:15-16
- 3) Deuteronomy 6:1-6
- 4) Deuteronomy 7:6-9
- 5) Psalm 101:1-7
- 6) Psalm 92:1-5, 12-15
- 7) Psalm 1:1-6
- 8) Psalm 18:1-7, 21-23
- 9) James 1:12-15
- 10) 1-John 5:13-18
- 11) 1-John 1:6-10

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 1
- Matthew 6

Also referenced: Sermon: Hebrews Series: *The Unpardonable Sin*

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