

Making Sin Abhorrent

Understanding the Reason for God's Fury against Sin

By Jay Wegter

The 'big picture' vantage point from which we view the disaster of human sin points ineffably toward an all-consuming question: "what is fallen man's relationship to the Word of God?" Jesus tells us that it is a relationship of flight from truth, love of darkness, fear of exposure, and hatred of the light (Jn. 3:19-21). Christ is explaining to us that "this is the judgment" against man—he rejects God's testimony (God's light). Man's depravity is seen in his preference for the lie. But this is not an error in judgment; it is rebellious pride and unbelief. God almighty has linked the honor and glory of His reputation to the immutability of His Word.

Only the Bible-believing Christian truly understands the purpose of human history—that at its consummation, it will prove to be the public record of the honoring and the dishonoring of God and His Word, and the revelation of what happens to each person as a result. Do we really understand that God has determined to publicly destroy human wisdom by means of the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:21)? The consummation of human history will be a mighty revelation of God's holy perfections. It will prove to be a "Grand Demonstration" which shows unequivocally that God is absolutely wise, righteous, holy, and loving; that He is as good as His threats and His promises. The rational holy universe* will rejoice at God's final dealings as He ties up every loose end and confines and punishes all evil forever (*by 'rational holy universe' we mean the innumerable holy angels).

Why is God so furious against human sin? To answer this question adequately we must begin by considering why God made man in the first place. Man was made to be God's representative, clothed with authority to rule over the works of God's hands as a visible head and monarch of the world (Ps. 8). The purpose of human beings is bound up in our creational identity; we are "the image and likeness of God" (Gen. 1:26-28). And in what does this image of God consist? Not in the erect form or features of man or in his intellect, for the devil and his angels are, in this respect, far superior; but rather especially in the moral dispositions of his soul, commonly called *original righteousness*. Mankind and angels constitute the 'moral portion' of God's creation.

Upon completing creation, God saw everything that He had made answering the plan which His eternal wisdom had conceived and He pronounced a comprehensive benediction upon His creation, "Behold it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).¹ However, sin radically distorted the image of God in man. Only God knows how far innocent Adam fell; only God knows the magnitude of the disaster. The entrance of sin darkened mankind's understanding of God, blinding him to the awe of His holiness. The true nature of sin can only be grasped if we know the God who defines it. In order to truly abhor it, we must see sin as God sees sin.

Mankind was created to represent God, to reflect God, to serve God, and to know God. God created the universe as a theater for His moral majesty (His holiness). Mankind as the image of God was designed to reflect God's character in all of life's activities. Therefore, when sin entered, man became like a

¹ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Ge 1:26–28). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

broken mirror—the reflection was no longer true but distorted and fractured. Every sin we commit tells a lie about God. Because we are God’s representatives (and His image), our transgressions *profane* His great Name. Our Creator is truthful and good, but our lies and our coveting say that He is not truthful or good. Our iniquities are against God because they besmirch His great Name. Man’s glory is his knowledge of the God of glory. **Jeremiah 9:23-24** “Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the LORD.”

When man ‘puts God out to pasture’ (replacing his Creator with created things), there is a radical loss of human glory. Mankind’s loss of the glory of God is a function of having exchanged the glory of our Creator for the ‘glory’ of lower life forms (Ps. 106:20), “birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures” (Rom. 1:23). Our glory is closely tied to knowing the God of glory. The entrance of sin produced a forfeiting of the glory of God. Now every sinner ‘falls short of the glory of God,’ and by reason of sin has forfeited the ability to comprehend, reflect, know, and love His glory.

In terms of fallen man’s relation to God’s glory, there is no *relative righteousness*—all have fallen short of it. Not only do all sin, but also all **fall short**. This single Greek verb is in the present tense, stressing continuing action. The simple fact is that not a single human being by his own efforts is able to measure up to **the glory of God**. God’s glory is His splendor, the outward manifestation of His attributes. God desires that humans share that splendor, that they become like Him, that is, Christ-like (cf. “glory” in Rom 5:2; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 1:27; 2 Thess 2:14). Yet sin keeps them from sharing in Christ-likeness.²

When man attempts to be the focal point of his own life, he will find that he cannot bear the weight of being his own meaning, value, dignity, purpose, unity, identity, and integration. When man attempts to be his own god, ‘all hell breaks loose’ because man-at-the-center is a radical departure from our created purpose. Mankind is upheld by the power of God at every moment. We are utterly dependent upon God. Our life-breath and ways are in His hands. By Him all things exist and are upheld (Heb 1:1-3). We are created to live upon God, who is the constant ground of our being. The dependent creature is upheld every moment by the self-existent Creator. Therefore man’s arrogant claim to be autonomous is an immeasurable affront to God and His character. Sin is self-worship, for it tells man that God is dependent on him (Ez 28:2). Therefore man’s arrogant claim to be autonomous is an immeasurable affront to God and His character.

Because sin goes against the holiness of God, there are consequences that follow it. “For the wages of sin is death...” (Rom 6:23); “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ez 18:20a); “and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment...” (Heb 9:27). Physical death is one of the natural results of sin, but there is an “after this” which represents the penalty to follow—an eternal “sting” (1 Cor 15:55-57). We do not doubt that the natural consequences of sin are part of the penalty. God’s justice must be met which is why Christ’s death is so precious in the sight of his people.

On the Day of the Lord, when sinful arrogance meets burning holiness, there will be a conflagration that will never be quenched (2 Thess 1:6-10; Is 66:24; Rev 14:9-11). Billions of little self-

² Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (Ro 3:23). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

worshippers will suddenly be confronted with their own frail creaturehood and God's immutable justice. The sight of God will be unbearable—reprobates will consider annihilation to be a mercy. They will ask for the rocks and mountains to crush them out of existence (Rev 6:12-17). But as the image of God, man cannot be annihilated. Even in eternal hell, the lost will still be image bearers, for the divine image cannot be shed. This is truly what makes hell a place of unspeakable torment (Matt 13:40-42; 49-50). When the sinless One meets sinners in judgment, it will be a holocaust of unbelievable proportions. God's eternal wrath, like seething white hot lava, flows from His throne as 'a river of fire' (Dan 7:10).

Man's faculties (sight, hearing, thought, speech, etc.) were planted by God for His glory (Ps 94:9). But a lifetime of sin has prioritized these God-given faculties to serve sin, Satan, and self—man has sold himself to do evil (1 Ki 21:20, 25). Spiritually, he has played the harlot (Num 15:39-41). The members of his body have been utilized as instruments of unrighteousness (Rom 6:13, 21). Is it any wonder then that in fury God will 'reclaim' the faculties of man He created and 'loaned' to man? He will reclaim them and turn them back into dust (Ps 90:3), yet the lost will have a corporeal form in hell.

Such severity is a foreign concept to us because we fail to think clearly about the divinely ordained principle of sowing and reaping. Galatians 6:7-8 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 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." **"God is not mocked"**—The Greek verb is, literally, *to sneer with the nostrils drawn up in contempt*. God does not suffer Himself to be imposed on by empty words. He will judge according to works, which are seeds of joy or woe sown for eternity. Excuses for refusing to serve God's cause with one's time, talent, and resources (Gal 6:6) seem valid before men, but are not so before God (Ps 50:21).

Sin shows itself in man's determination to use his intellectual faculties to forge weapons against the knowledge of God. Today's humanistic, man-centered, secular culture is dead set on obscuring the sacred canopy that 'hangs' over all men. By *sacred canopy* we mean every *transcendental* element of reality, whether truth, beauty, justice, love, holiness, morality, order, or unity. This canopy exists because our all-wise almighty God has placed it there in our existence and in our universe. He gives the universe and our lives meaning and coherence; He is the prime reality upon which all human experience rests. All truth is His truth and the totality of truth is backed up by His authority. Sexual immorality and lust conceals man's mind from seeing the reality of God's moral governance, preventing him from seeing the transcendental aspects of love, beauty, and morality.

The more that *sacred canopy* is concealed by secular culture, the more *relativized* people will become in their approach to truth and morality. Relativism denies that God is moral Governor of the universe who requires moral perfection from us, His creatures. As a consequence, relativism suggests that truth (including moral truth) is a totally subjective thing issuing merely from a person's opinions, tastes and preferences. Therefore (suggests the relativist), each person is 'free' to determine right and wrong for themselves, and thus each person is a world unto themselves. This has made its way into sexual politics where people are told pornography is free speech and sexual relations are whatever you want them to be. Holy Scripture describes this attitude as hostile, defiant, arrogant, and even 'bestly' (Ps 49; 50), calling for God's judgment and wrath (Rom 1:18-21; 2:1-12; Is 5:20-25; Jer 23:36).

When sin and lust have our attention and God's holiness is not central, we may find ourselves using religion to bribe our consciences so that we can pursue a self-directed life. In that spiritual state, we are but religious consumers posing as true worshippers. We practice a manageable compartmentalized form of Christianity that never devastates us with the great things of God. Our cultural Christianity is symptomatic of the *gospel gap* in our churches and in our lives. Consequently, the fear of God is at an all-time low in our land and in our churches. We have *defanged* the Holy One—domesticated our God so that there is nothing about Him that could disturb us or make us uneasy. Secular culture's *empiricist* approach to reality assumes that anything that causes pain must be bad.³ Therefore we have falsely assumed that devastating views of God's holiness are not in our best interest. We have erroneously concluded that God will adapt Himself to our own marketing approach to 'seeker-ism' Christianity. We have dared to assume that God is so dependent on what people think of Him that He has abandoned His threats to demonstrate His wrath against sin by disasters, plagues, famines, wars, heresies, deprivation, destruction, death, and damnation. One hundred years of psychology in the West have placed self firmly at the center. God has been reduced to a cosmic bellhop to serve us.

We have fashioned a god who exists to meet our own perceived needs and so we hold the reputation of His holy Name hostage by our self-centered ideas of divine goodness. We have flattered ourselves into thinking that we are so important and valuable to Him, and that He is somehow dependent upon our sensuous bombastic praise-worship, that we think our organized religious expressions please Him enough to obligate Him and move Him to surely take us to heaven. Can this god we have conceived of be the God of Scripture?

With stern conviction, we must answer with a resounding "No!" In the evangelical culture, we have for the most part neglected God's transcendence, holiness, wrath, and justice. Evangelicalism has often stripped God of the great things about Him that are designed to make us tremble (Is 66:1-2). Therefore many in our churches today do not think about the fact that the sight of God will be unbearable for the reprobate who would gladly prefer annihilation to exposure. When the Day of the Lord begins, the whole creation will be a tool in God's hands to *evict* the impenitent sinner. Every plague, disaster, war, pestilence, and judgment in the book of Revelation will collectively serve as a kind of *eviction notice*—God is withdrawing the 'welcome mat'—and sinners are going to lose their earthly home forever. The 'hospitality' of planet earth, born of common grace, will be violently removed during the Tribulation period.

Part and parcel with diminishing God's holiness, wrath, and justice brings the establishment of a lesser god or gods. We create a softened god, one whom we can worship without mortifying our sin. Outside of the 'Christian bubble,' people worship their own gods of fame, sensuality, power, or wealth. But those who remove any of the attributes of God have really created a different god in like manner as those of the world. ***And God hates all forms of idolatry. He hates idolatry because of what it does to His Name and what it does to us, His image bearers.*** The first four iterations of the Ten Commandments are designed to guard against idolatry. Man was created for the love and adoration of God his Creator. At the heart of idolatry is self-love and self-worship (2 Tim 3:1-5). By contrast, the godly man loves God instead of worshipping and serving the creature and the creation (Rom 1:18-23). Idolaters usurp the role of God by living as if their minds project reality onto the screen of life (again we see the theme of men placing their words above God's Word). Sexual idolaters turn to creation instead of the Creator to find fulfillment.

³ Nancy Pearcey, *Saving Leonardo*, Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010, p. 2.

Idolaters are fugitives under God's moral government (Gal 3:22). They trample God's law and challenge His absolute right to rule over them. They live with their backs to God—living as enemies of God in their minds (Col 1:21). As Bible believing Christians, we must understand that idolatry tells a multitude of lies about God. For example, when one sows to lust he is telling himself the lie that God is withholding something good from him. It is an attempt to bring integration to our beings around something finite, something created. Idolatry in religion lies about a relationship with the divine—that it can be built around *will worship* (man choosing how he will practice religion)—that man can *obligate* God by what he can do religiously and morally. Paul clearly refutes this erroneous notion in Acts 17:24-25 (“God is not served by human hands”). God refuses to be approached by idolaters (Ez 14:3-11).

God hates religious idolatry because it equates God with something in His creation. God hates the idolatry of immoral behavior because it is lawlessness and the love of sin (1 Jn. 3:4; Col. 3:5). Idolatry degrades a man; enslaves a man; damages the image of God in man; exchanges the glory of the Godhead for something within the creation itself (Rom 1:23-25). Idolatry promises freedom and fulfillment but can only deliver disappointment, degradation and servitude (2 Pet 2:18-19).

The idolater makes his own needs sovereign, trying to fulfill those needs by sinning. He incurs more and more guilt by doing so. What sinners fail to understand is that in God's universe, sin is its own punishment. In other words, since this universe exists as a stage for God's moral majesty, the moral laws which are part of creation are just as real as gravity or any other physical law. Therefore, our holy sovereign God energizes the laws of moral cause and effect, which are crime and punishment. Sinners break themselves in their breaking of God's laws. Sin ultimately produces a harvest of thorns—of disintegration instead of integration.

An idol is a false integration point. It promises to make us whole and more alive, but it delivers the opposite: death and fragmentation. One of the most recent ads for a new Las Vegas hotel says, “Just the right amount of wrong.” And an ad for Las Vegas which has been running for several years reads, “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” This ad shows a bit of demonic marketing genius, for business increased significantly as a result of this worldly false promise. But there is an immense problem; in God's universe, there is no such thing as a moral holiday. Sin pays the guaranteed wages of death, separation, torment, and wrath.

God does not have to think up punishments for sin. Creatures made in the image of a holy God have the moral mark of God upon them. That moral mark is called the conscience. On the last day, the conscience will be fully activated by God's wrath in eternal perdition. On judgment day the possibility of overriding the conscience will be forever gone. On that day, a man's conscience, God's law, and God's verdict will be united in perfect agreement. And then (as God's wrath ignites it) the lost man's conscience will rise up to its full stature and take its eternal revenge against its ungrateful host.

To understand what sin is in this moral universe is to begin to comprehend that sin carries with it a curse. This is why sin is spiritual insanity. It is symbolic suicide. To keep sowing thorns in this moral universe governed by an absolutely holy God means that a day of harvest is coming. And when that day comes, each person will harvest more and will harvest longer than they could have possibly imagined. To sow thorns is to ultimately lie down in thorns and be pierced by them forever. To refuse to repent is to be fashioning chains that will hold the person in a claustrophobic, suffocating grip of radical crushing solitary

confinement. Romans 2:8-9 describes the torment awaiting the impenitent: "...to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [they will receive] wrath and indignation. *There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.*" (The word 'distress' here means crushing, suffocating torment.)

The impenitent will experience anguish, torturing confinement, and crushing suffering. Sin not repented of will fill the conscience with the activities of a busy voracious unstoppable toothed creature (a gnawing worm) which will continually consume (without destroying) the soul (Mk 9:48). J. I. Packer captures the horrific action of eternal divine wrath in the following words, "A bad conscience is the most universal experience—and the most wretched. No outward change relieves it; you carry it with you all your waking hours. The more conscientious you are, the more your knowledge of having failed others, and God too, will haunt you. Without forgiveness you will have no peace. A bad conscience delivering at full strength, tearing you to bits in the name of God, is hell indeed, both here and hereafter."⁴

The wrath of God unleashed in the conscience as a consuming force fragmenting the soul into pieces is a terrifying image. We evangelicals are often embarrassed to own a God whose holiness energizes these eternal judgments. We tend to make excuses for God because He does not apologize for the cruel destruction which awaits impenitent sinners. Our understanding of the pernicious nature of sin is deficient. This is the case because we do not grasp what it means to be created in God's image. To be an image-bearer of the God of the universe is to be vested with an immense responsibility. This is why selling one's self to serve sin is so wicked.

Sin is parasitic—it seeks a willing host who will embrace its agenda and offer the faculties and members of the body and soul for its purposes. Sin has a goal—it acts like some shrewd predator bent on obliterating its host and is not content until it has practically wiped out the image of God in the second death. And even then it is still not content. *In everlasting perdition, sin is cumulative.* Over the millennia, lost sinners in agony will lose every speck of meaningful connection and remembered well-being and, as the soul continues to come apart, the fragmentation will issue forth in a gnashing stream of madness (W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 3, pp. 492-503).

Societies which reject God carry the seeds of their own inevitable implosion. Man cannot bear the incredible weight of being his own meaning, value, and significance. Our value is inseparable from being image-bearers of the God almighty. Man's creational identity is inseparable from the reality that God requires moral perfection from us, His creatures. Our glory and honor is tied very closely to our cultural calling to know, worship, and serve God and reflect and seek His glory in all we do.

We must cultivate a deep humility before God, regularly bringing ourselves low. God holds in His hands our life-breath, our ways, our faithfulness, our spiritual illumination, our sustenance, and our destiny. He holds even our own devotion and consecration to Him. Thus the Psalmist may accurately pray to God to keep from straying (Ps. 51:10-13). In our Western societies, approximately one hundred years of psychology has left a destructive legacy: the *culture of self*. Sinners already live as if they are autonomous or independent of their Creator, but psychology has added an additional dimension: personal emotional needs are now considered sovereign, even sacred. The *sacred self* is the new 'Holy of Holies.' Nothing must be allowed to *violate* the comfort and composure of the *sacred self*—not even the God of the universe! The love of self refuses to bow to any other sovereign (2 Tim 3:1-4ff.). In this expression of sin, the flesh sets the

⁴ J. I. Packer, *I want to be a Christian*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Publishing, 1977, pp. 90-91.

standard for a person's behavior. The natural man refuses to bow to Christ, our Great High Priest and *man in glory* (Heb 2:9; Phil 2:9-11). The unregenerate person is holding out for independence; he will not be ruled by God's truth, holiness, and love. (Ps 2:1-6).

Not long ago I saw a bumper sticker which said, "There are no rules; just follow your heart."

Now this slogan is disturbing because it resonates with so many young persons in the rising generation. They read it and assume it is a fair representation of 'life as it is' and a good definition of personal freedom. Yet, this saying is just as much open rebellion against God as demonic sorcery. Mankind must be ruled—we are created to serve (Rom 6:12-23). We are *bounded creatures*, fenced in by God's good and wise laws. There is no such thing as master-less freedom. Satan tried it, and the lake of fire has been prepared for him and his angels and for all who follow him. Those who are determined to live without God in this life shall have their wish in the afterlife as well. But then their only 'companion' will be their own accusing self, separated from God who is the only source of life, love, belonging, light, and blessedness.

This is a moral universe because the Creator and Ruler of the cosmos is righteous and holy. The secularists have filled mass culture with the false idea that the church is restricting freedoms by imposing an arbitrary standard of morality upon society. They claim freedom is found in sin. Such secular lies fall away when one understands that human dignity and freedom are inseparably joined to God's moral laws. God's commandments are good and wise and loving—these laws protect our humanness and guard our freedoms. We are bounded creatures, wisely kept by God's moral boundaries (Prov 19:23). God's moral commandments comprise a transcendent moral order which permeates creation (Ps. 19:7-14). God is omnipresent and so are His moral laws. The laws of God are His character in code. As such, they apply to all persons in all places at all times. This truth is the foundation for the fear of God. Furthermore, sin produces guilt because this is a moral universe. All crime is ultimately against heaven. God allows further crime to issue forth as punishment because God is a God of retribution and justice. He would be unrighteous if He left sin unpunished. All these truths are foundational, yet they have been lost in our post-Christian apostate culture.

Another foundational truth is the church as the body and bride of Christ. It is HIS church. However, the church of today is riddled with errors about ownership, and the most pervasive concerns the church members themselves. We have forgotten that the church is God's property; it is His blood-bought flock (Acts 20:28; Titus 2:14). He has the right to tell us (as stewards) how to organize, tend, feed, lead, and care for 'His flock' (see all of Ez 34). We have forgotten that everything is on loan. We are tenants on the planet and tenants in, and of, our bodies. Judgment day is about our stewardship and we will have to give an account of our tenancy. Everything has been on loan and it must be turned in to its rightful Owner immediately followed by an accounting (1 Chron 29:14-18; Ps 22:29; 39:4; 90:3-12; Job 34:12-15; Rom 2:16; 14:9-12; 2 Cor 5:9-10; Rev 20:11-15).

We have not had the myth of ownership adequately exposed and therefore we do not understand what it means to give an account to God. We assume that grace cancels out our highly charged comprehensive stewardship and accounting (Rom 14:7-12; 1 Cor 3:10-15). This is symptomatic of a low view of Scripture and a high view of self. What a grave warning this is because Satan's own rebellion was characterized by the same misplaced priorities—he distorted the knowledge of God to fit his own lusts and he willingly forgot that he existed and was created for God.

Our needed vigilance in opposing sin is based upon the blessed news that through Christ the ‘reign of grace’ will ultimately replace ‘the reign of sin’ (Rom 5:16-21). The deliverance from wrath that justification brings is through Christ. The wrath which we deserved as sinners before a holy God now is resolved through the death of Christ. Paul says in Romans 5:9, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” It is clear that justification, or being counted righteous in God’s holy court of law, is a present possession since the event already has taken place at the moment of salvation. He says, “...having now been justified by His blood...” But it also is clear that for the believer this event, which has been completed, also brings results which are still forthcoming. “...We shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Only through the miracle of the new birth does a massive moral transformation take place which restores man’s ability to live out his creational identity as the moral image of God. In fact, upon entering salvation Christians are renewed after the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness (Col 3:10; Eph 4:24).

The question of the believing sinner’s eternal destiny has been forever settled in Christ. The believer does not have to wait for the judgment seat of Christ or for the great white throne to find out if God’s wrath yet awaits him. He need never fear that at someday in the future he will face the wrath of God. In the justification which Christ obtained, which He paid for with His own blood, God forever assures us of the fact that “...we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom 5:10).

There is no life direction change until the cross of Christ is applied to the individual; in essence slaying the sinner’s imagined sovereignty. The cross subdues our will to Christ. The cross severs us from the world—crucifies us to the world and the world to us (Gal 6:14). Salvation is the most radical kingdom transfer one may conceive (Col 1:12-14). Our entire perspective on *source* is changed—we find our all in the Lord (2 Pet 1:1-4).

The cross of Christ produces a saving knowledge of the Holy One (Jn 17:3). This saving knowledge cannot fail to issue forth in ongoing repentance, worship, mortification of sin, service, and overflowing gratitude. To truly know God is light years apart from a mere profession of faith. In the saving knowledge of God there is a vital relationship given. In it the Holy Spirit builds in the believer a sensitivity to the Father (2 Cor 7:1). We learn what invokes His anger and how unbelief and self-will offend Him. We know what pleases Him and what brings His approval. This is a real relationship which has a language of love. The true believer is highly sensitive to this language of love. As a result he refuses to objectify his Christianity. He will not settle into a manageable, outward form of religion. Saving grace is relational from top to bottom. We live out our sonship by loyalty to the Father (2 Cor 6:14-18; 7:1).

The man of God dares to draw near because he is clothed in the righteousness of Christ. His boldness to enter the presence of God is grounded solely in the free and confident access purchased by Christ (Eph 2:18). He walks with God as with the One who has eyes as a flame of fire (Rev 1:14-18). He knows that God’s relationship with him is one of *invasive holiness* (Heb 4:12). He walks and communes with Christ Himself—the One who passes among the lamp stands of the churches—examining their works and ways and walk with Him. The true believer makes all these connections. This is anything but an abstract, theoretical Christianity. To walk with God is to be ever aware that we are thinking, speaking, desiring, moving, and deciding under the penetrating gaze of His holiness (1 Jn 1:7). The man of God is therefore willing to be *searched by God* (Ps 139:23-24; Heb 4:12). He welcomes the Lord’s rearranging work in his

life. He wants to live by faith. He rejects the arrogant empiricism of the day which attempts to cope with life by bare sense, sight, and unaided reason (unaided by submission to the Holy Scriptures).

The man who walks with his God continually meditates on the great truths of God in Christ. This spiritual man knows that nothing in the Christian life is to be held in a theoretical fashion. Therefore he makes it his habit to hold fast and to further develop a vision of Christ, a vision of the glory to come, and a vision of the holiness of God. The man of God frequently checks himself to see what it is in the Word of God that he has not been believing. He makes countless course corrections. He grows spiritually in an aggressive manner (taking heaven by storm). As the Lord's steward, he is a man of principle who builds with Christ. He longs to assume the privilege of edifying the members of the body and fulfilling his role in the kingdom. He is a faithful man, and he knows that this faithfulness only comes by taking up his cross daily. And from Colossians 2:6-7, he counts it all joy when God lets him help even one saint to stay vertically aligned, established in the faith, and walking in fellowship with the Lord.