

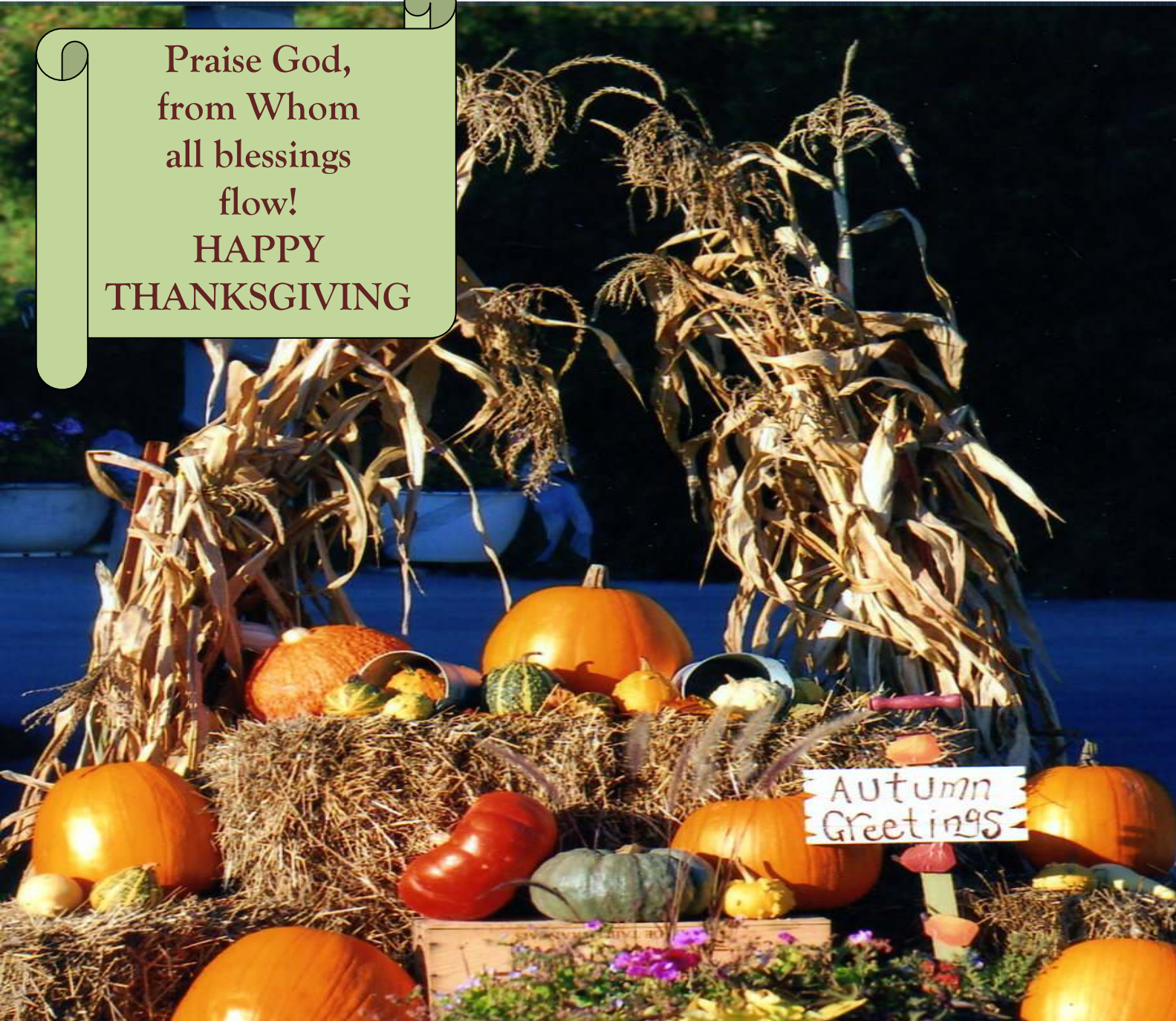
TRUTH TALK

A PUBLICATION OF THE WORD FOR LIFE

Helping you live a God-centered, truth-driven life

November, 2009

Praise God,
from Whom
all blessings
flow!
HAPPY
THANKSGIVING



Autumn
Greetings

Light for Life's Path
Lot - Conception of Conflict
TWFL Station Log

Truth Talk

Truth Talk

Psalm 119 – The Word for Life!

Light for Life's Path

Stanza 14 – Verses 105-112

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments.

I am afflicted very much; revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.

Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Your judgments.

My life is continually in my hand, yet I do not forget Your law.

The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.

Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end.

Cover Photo: Bountiful Harvest – Dick Melzer, Photographer

Light for Life's Path

Peter, writing to New Testament pilgrims, exhorted his readers to give careful attention and obedience to the Word of God because of its function as a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19). The term Peter used for darkness indicated more than the mere absence of light. Peter was reminding his readers of their call to live for Christ in a difficult and dangerous context. What would guide them safely through this “dark way” was the Word of God. Peter knew whereof he spoke from personal experience. However, he could point to an earlier pilgrim who also affirmed the wonderful way God’s Word provides light to guide believers safely and securely on their pilgrimage to the Father’s House.

For many stanzas we have followed the psalmist’s journey on the way of the Word. Throughout the ups and downs of the journey, he has remained firmly resolved to continue on his chosen path. At this point, our pilgrim has

completed more than half the journey – or at least it appears this way in the testimony he left us in this psalm. He has experienced much along the way and, through it all, God’s Word provided guidance, protection, assurance, and comfort. This is, in part, why he has come to value God’s Word above all earthly treasure.

However, much of the path remains yet to be walked, and the rest of the psalm reveals that the way ahead will not be any easier than was the path already walked. In fact, from this point forward, the psalmist will face fierce and constant opposition on every hand. He will continue to make forward progress, but every step will be hard won.

In a very real way, his experience is our own. The longer we walk the way of God’s Word, the more difficult the path becomes. The more determined we become to remain true to God’s expectations, the stronger the opposition we

face on every hand. The psalmist reveals that all of the Christian life, from start to end, is a spiritual battle every believer must fight in order to progress on the path he has chosen. However, there is something the psalmist has discovered that helped him, and that can be our help as well. He discovered that God had given an important resource to guard him from danger and guide him safely through the dangerous terrain ahead. This resource is God's Word.

I. His Recognition (v. 105) – Light for the Path

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

One commentator astutely observed, “The excellencies of the Word he loved in the previous stanza that keep his foot from the evil path will also guide his feet on the true path!” (Zemek).

In the opening verse of the stanza, the psalmist gives personal testimony to the invaluable resource that provided him guidance and security – “Your word has provided light to my feet and to my

path.” In other words, the psalmist is not just observing a theological reality about God's Word from the comfort and security of his study. He is giving a powerful and personal affirmation of the value this light has provided in his own personal life. It has given light to his own feet as he personally walked on the path.

The Identity and Source of this Light

Immediately the psalmist identifies the Word of God as the light. What gives the Word this indispensable function is its source. It is light because it comes down from One who is the Light and in Whom is no darkness at all! The Word can provide illumination and reliable guidance for the path because it comes from One who knows all (omniscience) and is everywhere on that path (omnipresence). God's nature gives His Word the ability to guide, direct, and protect His people on the path He has marked out for them to travel in that same Word.

The Nature of this Light

The psalmist describes God's Word in two particular ways – as a lamp unto his feet and a light for his path. The images are perhaps lost on modern readers who live in a world bathed in light. The image of a lamp for his feet is that of a small oil lamp that would be held by the pilgrim and that would shed focused light to illuminate the next little part of the path where his feet were about to step. The closest image in our modern day would be the beam of a small flashlight illuminating its immediate surroundings. God's Word is like this. It provides focused light to guide our immediate decisions and direction. What are we to do in a particular situation? What is the appropriate response God desires of us? What direction must we take? The daily steps of a godly man are indeed guided by light from God's Word.

However, the psalmist also describes God's Word as a light for his path. This second image is that of a larger source of illumination – perhaps a large burning torch or even a bright moon that

would shed light on larger distances of the path ahead. God's Word has a similar effect. It provides the guidance we need for the next step we need to take on the path. It also illuminates the entire path so we can see the whole journey and its ultimate destination.

One of the ways God's Word illuminates the whole path is through the examples it contains of men and women who have walked the path ahead of us. As we read their experiences, we are instructed in our own journey. For example, we learn from Joseph's experience at Potiphar's house that sometimes faithfulness is rewarded with evil. We also learn that God, be He silent to our ears, is attentively watching over His child and is working all things for the good of His servant. Having this light allows us to walk securely when we enter our own version of Potiphar's house.

God's Word also alerts us to the real danger that lurks just off the path. As we read the horrific things that happened to David when he strayed from the path, we

are reminded that similar dangers await us should we follow his steps away from the pathway.

God's Word provides specific instruction for every step of the journey. We are told how to manage our marriages. We are given specific instruction as to the raising of our children. We are told what to avoid and what to embrace in the surrounding pagan culture. We are given guidance in how to use our resources, what to do when we need provision for life, how to handle grief and death, and a host of other situations we will surely encounter along the way.

God's Word also reveals the entirety of the journey. We are told of a city that God is building that awaits every pilgrim at the end of the path. We are alerted in God's Word as to what to expect at every stage of our earthly journey. As dark as the path may appear at times, there is a brilliant day coming, and when it dawns, there will be no more night! All of this en-

courages us as we walk on the way that our pilgrim walked ahead of us. What he found is what we can expect to find – and what he found was that God's Word provides reliable illumination for the path!

The Value of this Light

Some years ago I had the opportunity to travel to Panama with several men from our church to take the gospel to a group of na-

tive Panamanian Indians living on a large Comarca reservation in the mountainous regions of the country. One of the men and I took a foot journey to attend a service held at a remote village in the

heart of the mountains. We climbed up and down several mountain ranges and waded through several river crossings to get there. Our comfort as we endured the journey was the promise that the return journey would be on horseback. However, after the evening service we discovered, to our dismay, that no horses were

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available and we would have to make the return journey by foot in the dark. We started out, and our guide had one small flashlight to provide light on the journey. More than once we were spared serious injury as the light revealed some dangerous spot ahead and also the well-walked path that would take us through safely. I can't imagine how we would have managed the journey without that flashlight. More than once on that dark trek I thought about what would happen were our flashlight to fail. At that point, it was truly the most valuable thing in our possession!

That is the testimony of our pilgrim. The Word of God is not just a convenient source for theologically correct ideas (as important as such thinking is for believers). It is indispensable guidance for right moral living in a spiritually dark and depraved world. Zemek observed, "This heavenly light for earth's path is the most positive commodity a disciple possesses, and it comes graciously from God through His Word." Amen!

II. His Response (v 106) -- I have sworn, I will fulfill

I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments.

How did the psalmist respond to God's gracious gift of His Word? He immediately articulated a grateful commitment to follow the path illuminated by God's Word. Imagine the folly of carelessly or intentionally failing to follow the pathway illuminated by the light. What folly to intentionally stray from the safety of the path to wander heedlessly into the danger that lurks in the darkness. Yet we fall into this folly and expose ourselves to this danger when we fail to read or refuse to heed the gracious instruction given in God's Word.

Our psalmist is careful to avoid such heedless living. Instead, he vows to keep God's righteous judgments. What God identifies as the "righteous" way is the way the psalmist determines to go. He has not just vowed with his lips to follow that path; his feet have confirmed his vow. He's obeyed thus far on his pilgrimage and is

determined to continue to walk obediently before the Lord in the light of His Word.

His oath is his bond, and his life has been a determined effort to stay on the “way of the Word.” He has bound himself to this way, and he is determined to continue on that way for the rest of his earthly journey. However, his determination does not eliminate the danger ahead.

III. His Reality (vv. 107a, 109, 110a)

I am afflicted very much . . . My life is continually in my hand . . . The wicked have laid a snare for me . . .

It is one thing to make good vows to God. Keeping them is quite another matter altogether. The psalmist has bound himself by solemn oath to obey God’s Word. Now he is confronted with the reality of obeying in a context fraught with difficulty and danger.

This is not the first time we have witnessed the psalmist in the midst of affliction at the hands of his enemies. However, this is the

first time he has described the severity of his affliction. He is sorely tried and greatly afflicted.

Nor is his description exaggerated. In the 109th verse he reveals that his situation contains a real and present danger to his life. As he walks by the light of God’s Word, each step of the journey is one that he fully understands may cost him his life. To take one’s life in one’s hands was to continue in an action or in a direction with full understanding that the likely outcome would be death.

Powerful and crafty enemies have plotted against our pilgrim, and they prepared snares to trap him and by which to occasion his death. He has received light for the path and is bound and determined to walk by that light. However, his enemies are equally bound and determined to lure him from the security of the path into the darkness of disobedience. The psalmist doesn’t just have a little light for the immediate path, he has a floodlight which sheds light all around the path ahead. That light penetrates the darkness where these men are lurking and

exposes their traps to the watchful eye of the traveler, who can thus pass by in safety, as long as he remains on the path.

If our psalmist is Daniel, one immediately thinks of the many plots formed against him and his three Hebrew friends by those who hated his God and despised Daniel for the favor God granted him in the sight of the king. On more than one occasion, Daniel's life was in grave danger, and he escaped by following the steps revealed in God's faithful Word!

How should pilgrims pray when they find themselves in danger while walking on the safe path that has been illuminated by God's Word?

IV. His Requests (vv. 107b - 108)

Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word. Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Your judgments.

What a person prays for in the face of such danger and in the midst of such affliction says much

about his inner character and true commitment to God. Our pilgrim reveals his true character and his genuine heart for God by praying for three things in the midst of a dark and dangerous spot on the path.

Enliven my Heart (v. 107b)

Our pilgrim lifts his voice and cries out to God for strength and life. This is not a new request. He has consistently asked God for strength in the face of hardship and for life in the presence of danger. He fully recognizes that, although he can see where the safe path lies, he does not have strength on his own to make his foot walk where the path leads. And so he asks the One who illuminated the path to give him strength for walking. That must be our prayer as well.

Additionally, he asks God to assure his heart as he walks in the presence of his enemies. It is one thing to see the path and to hear that others have safely passed that way ahead of you. However, there comes the moment when you personally must walk that dif-

difficult stretch of road. For that moment, your feet need strength and your heart needs courage. The psalmist asks for both when he beseeches God to enliven, or to revive his inner man.

Accept my Worship (v. 108a)

In the midst of danger and difficulty, the psalmist does not forget to praise God heartily. No matter his circumstance, he desires that God accept his worship. This provides an amazing insight into his heart. More important to him than safety or even survival is the acceptability of his worship!

No matter his circumstances, he desires that God accept his worship.

He asks God to accept the freewill offering of his mouth. His praise is not forced. It is not coming out of rote performance or ritual. It is heartfelt and genuine. It is his natural and instinctive response in crisis – “Lord, help me to praise You properly in the midst of this situation.”

His sacrifice comes from his lips, so it must be praise he utters

to God rather than some physical sacrifice or gift he brings to the Lord. In the midst of his difficult circumstance, he wants to please God with his words! What a lesson for us. We are most tempted to sin with our mouths in the midst of painful and difficult circumstances. We are most apt to displease God with our words when we endure prolonged affliction and He appears to be silent. Our pilgrim sets a powerful example in his prayer that God

would enable him to speak words of praise to God in the midst of pain. However, such praise does not spring naturally to our fallen lips – we must be instructed in such praise,

and for this instruction the psalmist now prays.

Enlighten my Mind (v 108b)

The righteous judgments of God have illuminated the way thus far on the journey. However, the psalmist recognizes his need for continued illumination and instruction from those righteous judgments, and he petitions God

to continue to teach him from His Word.

He has asked God to enliven him (v. 107) and now he asks God to enlighten him (v. 108). We must not miss the important connection the psalmist makes between enlivenment and enlightenment. The former springs from the latter. It is enlightenment from God's Word that enlivens our hearts! We are strengthened by God's Word. We are delivered from danger by God's Word. We are secured on the path by means of God's Word. Enlivenment on the path comes from enlightenment in the Word.

Many believers pray diligently for help or deliverance from some difficulty or danger in life. However, their prayers often appear to go unanswered. Sometimes believers despair and grow angry at God for failing to help. Sadly, they fail to realize God has given them a wonderful provision by which the deliverance they so desperately want and need is effected – His Word!

They pray desperately for deliverance, but never think to ask God

to help them gain a deeper and fuller understanding of His Word. Usually the deliverance they need is found in some instruction God has already given in His Word. It is entirely appropriate to ask God to deliver us from danger on the path. However, it is equally important to ask God to enlighten us in His Word as we seek His protection and deliverance. Often the protection we need and the deliverance we desire is found in His Word.

V. His Resolve (vv 109-110)

My life is continually in my hand, yet I do not forget Your law. The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.

Our pilgrim not only prays when confronted with danger on the path, he resolves to remain on the path. Resolving to remain on the path consists of two important spiritual components.

I won't turn back – I do not forget Your Law

In the face of life-threatening danger, our pilgrim resolves not to

let fear turn him back from God's Law. The term "forget" does not refer to mentally forgetting what God has said. Rather, it refers to intentionally turning back from obeying what God has said. Forgetting in the Bible is, in essence, rejecting. The psalmist has resolved that nothing will cause him to reject God's commandments.

I won't turn aside/away – I have not strayed from Your Precepts

Pilgrims are faced with the temptation to turn back from obeying God's commandments when faced with danger. They are also faced with the temptation to turn aside when they are distracted by the temptations of wicked men. Our pilgrim faced such temptation on his journey. He speaks of the snares or traps laid for him by wicked men. Their intention in laying those traps was to entice the pilgrim from the safety of the path.

Perhaps when they realized they could not get him to renounce the path he had chosen, they attempted to deviate him from the path. But the light of God's Word

exposed their nefarious intention to the psalmist, and he strengthened his resolve to remain on the path marked out by God's eternal wise decrees.

How easily we are turned aside from the path if we fail to value God's Word properly. If we fail to desire instruction in that Word, we will soon find ourselves wandering from the safety of the path set forth for our feet to travel. Before we know it, we will find ourselves ensnared in the very trap we determined to avoid!

What will help keep us from stumbling? What will anchor our feet so firmly to the path illuminated by God's Word that they will never slip? Such safety comes by cultivating a deep and abiding love for God's Word. When we truly love God's Word more than anything, it will be the supreme source of true joy and lasting treasure in this life!

VI. His Rejoicing (vv. 111-112)
Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform

Your statutes forever, to the very end.

The psalmist proclaimed God's testimonies were the source of supreme joy in his life. What made them so? Especially when earlier in the psalm he struggled with this very thing? So great was the propensity of his eyes to find joy in "worthless things" that he begged God to drag his eyes away from such worthlessness. Now, God has obviously answered his prayer, and now our pilgrim has what he prayed for earlier – the testimonies of God are his delight!

The Reason for His Rejoicing – They are my Heritage

God's Word has become precious because it has become his sole inheritance. Every true Jew held his physical inheritance in the land of Promise as a treasure of immeasurable worth. No matter what tragedy overtook a man or how deeply indebted he might be, his inheritance would remain. In fact, God put stipulations in His Law to protect a man's inheritance by assuring it would eventually return to him (or his family)

if, for some reason, the land had been seized as surety for an unmet debt.

No matter how attractive the offer, no true Jew would sell his inheritance. Ahab found this out when he tried to buy Naboth's vineyard. In fact, to get that vineyard, Ahab had to steal Naboth's life.

If our pilgrim is Daniel, he has lost his land. He and his people have been forcefully deported from the land of Promise and exiled to a foreign land far from Jerusalem. However, Daniel had something even more valuable than his land inheritance. He had the testimonies of God, and he would never give them up! Even in a faraway place, they were his own and provided safety and security.

How convicting this is to us. We claim to treasure God's Word, but most of us would not value it over our pleasure or our security, much less our lives. How quickly we turn aside from its instruction or turn back in the face of its demands. We treasure earthly

pleasure and temporal treasure far more than we treasure the eternal wealth of God's Word.

The Result of his Rejoicing – I have Inclined my Heart

His everlasting possession brought him immense present joy. This joy resulted in his "bending" his heart toward God's statutes rather than away from them. The source of our earthly joy will shape and orient the direction of our earthly lives.

Hearts can turn to the Lord or they can turn away from Him. Solomon is a powerful reminder of this truth. He started out with a heart bent toward God and the wisdom that comes from Him. And it pleased God immensely and, consequently, Solomon received untold riches and much more from God's hand. However, just a few years later, Solomon's heart was bent away from God. And it displeased God immensely. Although Solomon may have kept his earthly toys, he lost all that was of eternal value in the process (1 Kings 11:9 ff).

Conclusion

What does such resolve look like in the life of a pilgrim? How would you spot it in your own life? Our pilgrim stated it well – "I will perform Your statutes fully (completely) and I will do them to the end (consistently and constantly)."

Someone described the faithful Christian life as a long walk in the right direction. That is what the psalmist means when he promises to observe God's Word completely, consistently, and constantly. He intends to obey fully and completely. And he intends to do so in all of his ways and for all of his days.

This is what a mature Christian life is like. It comes as a result of suffering and affliction in the path. It comes as a result of learning to prize God's Word more than life or anything life has to offer. It comes as a result of recognizing God's Word as the real treasure, and all else that earth offers is merely tinsel and plastic trinkets.

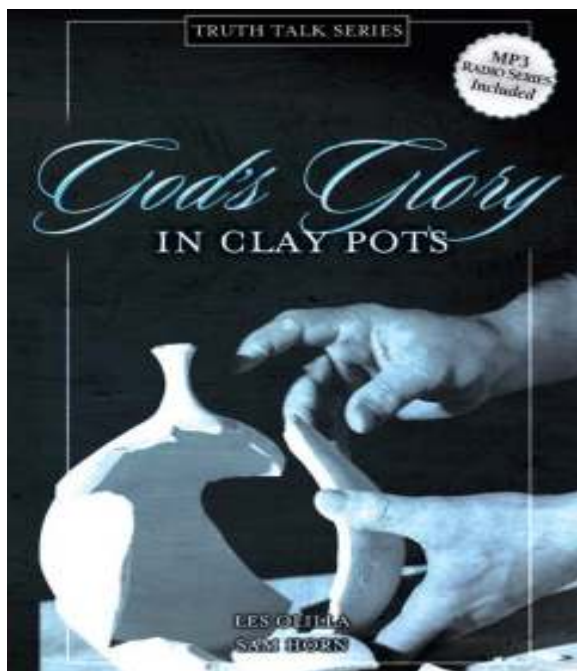
A long walk in the right direction
. . . a long walk. In a direction.
Make sure it is the right direction.

And that direction is illuminated
by the light of Scripture. So let's
start walking!



Dr. Sam Horn is the featured teacher and Host of The Word For Life, Senior Pastor of Brookside Baptist Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin, and Vice President of Ministerial Training at Northland International University in Dunbar, Wisconsin.

NEW BOOK RELEASE!



Why do we sometimes suffer? One of the most irresistible and unforgettable ways that this truth is presented in Scripture is via the metaphor of clay pots. Join Drs. Les Ollila and Sam Horn as they unpack this metaphor and, in the process, help us gain new insight into the reason we are here and why we may sometimes suffer.

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LOT—CONCEPTION OF CONFLICT

Life is a Vapor – Part 6

Join Pastor Sam Horn (SH) and Dr. Les Ollila (LO) for a discussion that originally aired on THE WORD FOR LIFE.

SH: Well, good morning, Doc. Glad to have you back on the show this morning as we continue our discussion on the life of Lot. We have been talking now for some weeks about the value of our life and, actually, what is our life. James 4 speaks about our life being a vapor — it appears for a short time and vanishes away. Last time we were together, you were talking to us about Lot's opportunities. I've been reflecting on that — the incredible opportunities that this man had, and yet he blew his chance. I know that many of our listeners, including myself, are looking at the goodness of God in our lives and looking at the opportunities that God has given us. There was a path that Lot took, and that path led to what you're going to talk about today, the concept of conflict. So,

I wonder if you could elaborate a little bit on how that undid Lot.

LO: We were discussing Lot and how he ended up in a cave with his two daughters pregnant. We pointed out in the last broadcast the opportunities that he had. Now we'll look at the conflict. We see the conflict first of all was a result of God's blessing. They had plenty. They had so much that they no longer had enough room to dwell together. We see in Genesis 13:7 that there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. Abraham appealed in verse 8, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee." So then we think, maybe it was conflict... maybe Lot got in a conflict. And maybe it was the conflict that turned him in the wrong direction.

SH: You know, a lot of us do think that, don't we? I can begin to think the things that are going on in my life are often times the result of someone else's fault.

LO: Conflicts don't make us what we are...they reveal what we are. That's a concept...same thing with circumstances. And God normally brings people into our lives to show us that we are lacking love. Conflicts are not negative things, unless we let them become so. You cannot go through life without having conflicts along the way, because relationships are constantly made. People always have to be in relationship with someone else. That's why relationships are so important.

SH: Can you tell us a little bit more about the conflict between Abraham and Lot? It just seems that conflict would have been a natural thing to happen with both of these men being wealthy. Also, as you said, they had plenty and there were limited resources. Maybe you could tell us a little bit more about that conflict. Where I'm going with that question is,

how does this show up in our lives...how does it relate? I don't have a lot of sheep, I don't have herdsmen, but I have conflict. And so, what kind of conflicts show up patterned after this one?

LO: It could be anything. People-to-people conflicts, for example.

SH: Abraham said, "Between thee and me."

LO: But you'll also learn that the key to the solution of the conflict is in the pocket of the one first willing to humble himself. The big picture here is that you cannot go through life without conflict, but you can go through life without bitterness and anger. How you respond to a conflict determines whether you'll end up with God's mind or your own mind in the matter. At this particular time, it was the result of God's blessing. They had plenty. But it was also a revealer of character, and Abraham's character was revealed. Abraham humbled himself and went to Lot and said, "We don't want conflict and strife. You take whatever you want, and I will take what's left." Keep in mind,

though, Abraham was the one who made what Lot had possible. He was the one who went ahead and made all the arrangements for Lot to have what he had. Even in that culture, Lot should have been the one to have humbled himself and said, “Uncle Abraham, you are older. You’ve allowed me to have what I have. Why don’t you take what you want and let me have what’s left.” But that didn’t happen. This same thing is true when you have conflicts within the family. Husband-wife conflicts. The key is, who is first willing to humble himself and say, “Okay, I was wrong.”

SH: And that’s so hard when I think I’m right!

LO: And you know what? In many cases the person who has to humble himself is the person who is right but has allowed himself to become strained by this conflict and say, “I am so right that I refuse to communicate with this person who is wrong.” This really causes a lot of damage.

SH: You made an interesting comment a minute ago when you

were talking about the reasons for this conflict...how the conflict arose. One of the things you said was that this came about as a result of God’s blessing. Some of our listeners, myself included, would not think that God’s blessing would lead into conflict.

LO: Well, it was the plenty. In other words, God granted them to have this stuff, as we call it, and all of the things they had in life. So they were not hurting, and they would both have to acknowledge that God gave everything they had by His grace. This is a God provision.

SH: Right. I was thinking in my own life...I wish I could say that we’ve never had conflicts in our marriage. But I would say that one of God’s greatest blessings to me is my wife. And yet, in the midst of that blessing has come the potential for conflict. Doc, think about the ministry that God has given you at Northland International University, or the ministry that God has given to many of our listeners in their local churches. What a wonderful blessing of God to be able to be in

a good local church somewhere or to have a spiritual ministry, but that blessing of God, by virtue of what it brings, also brings the potential of conflict.

LO: The sad thing, Dr. Horn, is that you see Satan's target is relationships. Satan is not going to target the mission statement of a church, because that's too obvious. So, mission happens based on relationships. Relationships are built on trust. Trust brings mutual appreciation, mutual respect. So, if there is a loss of mutual appreciation because there's a loss of mutual respect, it's traced back to mistrust. I don't trust that person anymore.

This breaks the relationship, and mission is hindered. How much could be done if God's people would be willing to humble themselves and say, "I was wrong, will you forgive me?" Our churches today are the result of God's blessing. And yet, we find people in bitter conflict who wouldn't talk to each other if they saw each

other on the street. Or, if they did, it would be in hypocritical fashion, but not a transparent fashion. But it just shows what conflict can do. So if Satan is going to hinder something, he is going to target relationships first, and then mission statement is affected, and doctrine is affected. People are driven to imbalance in areas because they justify it by reacting to someone else, in another way.

**Relationships
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Trust brings
mutual appreciation,
mutual respect.**

SH: You talked about the idea that not only were these conflicts coming because of the result of God's blessing, but (and I think this is the most important thing I heard) that conflicts reveal our character. Talk about that.

LO: Actions don't prove what I am. Reactions do. Any of us can have a bad action at any given time. It's not the action that proves my character. And you might wonder how that can be. Take David. If you made a list of David's sins... he lied, deceived, murdered, committed adultery.

Then you go over to Saul. Everything that Saul had in his life, I have in my life. Pride, impatience, stepping ahead of things. The average Christian could look at Saul's sin and say, "If I'm honest, I think I get proud. If I'm honest, I think I get impatient." So, if you had a list side by side, who would look like he had the better character? It would be Saul. Now, move over one column to the reaction list. The prophet Samuel comes to Saul, and Saul says, "I've obeyed the voice of the Lord." But then Samuel says, "What do I hear?" "Oh, oh, yes! The sheep. Oh, the people. The people. Oh, and plus I'm so dedicated, I want to save the best to sacrifice."

SH: That was all pious talk.

LO: It was all pious talk, and his true heart was revealed. Saul was removed. Now go to reaction on David's side. Nathan comes up and confronts David. And instantly, David's reaction is what caused him to be restored back to position. It's a great encouragement to anyone. Actions don't prove character. Reactions do.

Any of us can have a bad action at any given time with any situation presented to us. But reactions prove. When the Holy Spirit convicts, where do I land? That's the proof. And by the way, there may be scars for wrong actions. I'm not saying you can do any action you want. There are going to be scars for that. And there will be consequences.

SH: What do you think Lot's reactions showed about him in this passage?

LO: Selfishness. He was out for himself.

SH: You know, what's real interesting is that in the text in Genesis 13, the writer, Moses, tells us that at the very end, "The men who dwelt in Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." The implication is that Lot knew this, and he still chose it. So, you're saying that his selfishness was so dominant in his life that it overrode him making a spiritual choice. He made a choice to go somewhere that would be beneficial in his mind

for his family. But at the end he lost it all.

LO: And you don't know, as you find out the condition of Lot's life, how his wife might have influenced him in Sodom. There could have been a lot of influences there. Again, the only indication that Lot was God's child was in the New Testament statement... "God delivered just Lot."

SH: Some of what you're saying is making little light bulbs go off in my thinking...but when the angels came to destroy Sodom, they came to Lot's house, and Lot reacted there, too. He offered his two daughters! You know, you think about...

LO: They had never been touched before.

SH: No wonder they turned on their father in the cave and got him inebriated and had children by their own father. I've often wondered what would make two girls do this. But it's that whole selfish lifestyle. And that's why I think what you are saying is so crucial here for us and for our

listeners, that the Lord reveals, by our reactions, what we are. Because Lot could have changed in Genesis 13. He could have changed.

LO: Right. And this thing with their dad was no shock to them, because that's what surrounded them in their lifestyle. This was very normal lifestyle. They must have seen it over and over and over, no doubt.

SH: How many times have we talked, you and I, to dads who are making choices about where they live and what they do, and the fact that they're putting their families in a horrible spiritual environment. But, because it's respectable or because of an income level, this is what we want, this is where we're going to go. And we often have very spiritual reasons for justifying that, don't we?

LO: He had the chance, and there was the conflict. But Abraham gave him the option. And so, Abraham did his part to solve the conflict that came in...the strife that was there. The strife was solved, but Lot's problem wasn't.

SH: You ended on a tremendous thought here, that Abraham gave Lot the option. God so often times gives us the option, which

means then that we have to make a choice, which will be the topic of our next program.



Dr. Sam Horn, Host of The Word For Life, and the Senior Pastor of Brookside Baptist Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin.



Dr. Les Ollila, Co-host of The Word For Life, and the Chancellor of Northland International University in Dunbar, Wisconsin.



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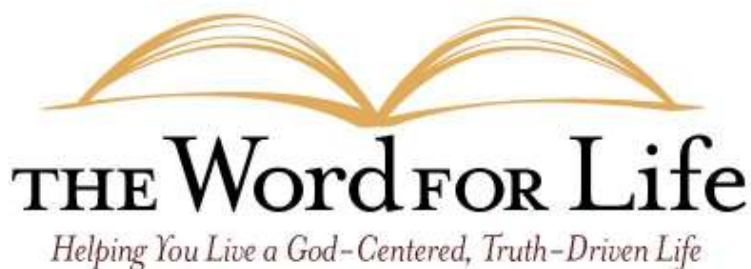
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Keep the good work up gentlemen, and be encouraged by the exposition of Isaiah 40:8 which says, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for EVER." -- John



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4470 Pilgrim Rd.
Brookfield, WI 53005
866-551-TWFL
info@thewordforlife.org
www.thewordforlife.org