



A Heart for Eternity

by Frank Serritella

**BLESSED ARE THE
PURE
IN HEART,
FOR THEY SHALL SEE
GOD.**

THE WORDS OF JESUS

MAT 5:8

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1 Timothy 1:5 NASB....But the goal of our instruction is LOVE from a PURE HEART and a good conscience and a sincere (footnote= un-hypocritical) faith.

In our title page, we see the words of JESUS telling us in **Matthew 5:8**—“**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**” In this beautiful verse of scripture from the Word of God, we see that Jesus Himself tells us, that it will be the people with pure hearts that will see God. This means **ALL people with IMPURE HEARTS, WILL NOT see God! ALL people with impure hearts will see Eternal Damnation.**

The phrase “**Pure Heart**” is so important, the Word of God repeats this phrase, 6 different times! (Ps.24:4; 73:1; Mat.5:8; 1Tim 1:5; 2Tim 2:22; 1Pe 1:22) Is it possible that God in His love and mercy is trying to get our attention with this??

Today in churches and religious settings all over, you will hear people use phrases and statements such as: “I gave my heart to Jesus;” “Jesus lives in my heart.” I love Jesus with all my heart;” “Invite Jesus into your heart.” Etc. etc. etc. Multitudes of people are preaching, teaching and telling people to give Jesus their hearts, or believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and be “saved.” While multitudes of people are reciting prayers, and asking Jesus into their hearts, and claiming they gave Jesus their hearts. If you were to ask people what they gave Jesus and what their heart really is, few, if any could give you a specific or even a general answer. **Do you know what your heart is that God is talking about?**

Consider this my precious reader: One day you will stand all alone before God and give an account of your life. Once you stand before God, there is **NOWHERE TO RUN OR HIDE**, there are **NO** second chances, and His verdict is final!!!

As the Word of God states:

SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO RIGHT? (Gen18:25)

With all of this being said, don’t you think you need to know what exactly your heart is, how it works and most importantly what is in it?

You need to understand and know, that the heart Jesus is talking about is **NOT** the physical organ in your body that pumps blood through your veins. Absolutely not!

The heart Jesus is talking about is something much deeper, and so much more intangible, and so much more wicked and deceitful!

The God who sits in the heavens, who sits on His throne of righteousness, Who sees and knows the thoughts and inner motives of every person, is talking about the inner person, the core person. In other words.....**THE REAL YOU!!!!** Your thoughts, your motives, your speech, your attitudes and actions, who and what you are identified with. **WHO AND WHAT YOU REALLY ARE!!!**

Stop and ask yourself this:....

WHO is it that controls your life? Do you control your life?.....or.....

Is it your spouse and/or family, that controls your life?.....or.....

Is it your boss and/or co-workers, who control your life?.....or....

Is it friends and/or people you are trying to make happy and get their approval that controls your life?.....or.....

Is it Jesus, the Word of God, that controls your life???

Now ask yourself this.....

WHAT is it that controls your life?

Is it your job, ambitions, goals and dreams?....or....

Is it your image and what you are identified with?.....or....

Is it a habit, addiction or hobby you cannot or don't want to give up?.....or....

Is it pursuing a spouse, companion or relationship?....Or.....

Is it your pride and ego that controls your decisions?...or.....

Is it your vanity and/or lusts that control you???.....or.....

Is it Jesus the Word of God that controls your life?

These are questions people are seldom asked or are confronted with. Let's be very honest, few people, if any, want to, or enjoy, looking into the mirror of self and seeing who and what, they really are! It is **NEVER EASY** or **COMFORTABLE** to look at yourself and see and admit, that pride, lust, manipulation and all sorts of ungodliness **IS WHAT** controls your life and thoughts.

The Word of God states in Isaiah 5:13-14...that with much joy people descend into hell. The Lord says in Hosea 4:6 that people are destroyed for their lack of knowledge. Is it possible multitudes of people are descending with much joy into Eternal Damnation, because they have little or no knowledge of what a Holy God requires of them, and have no knowledge of what their heart truly is and what's in it??

The Word of God states twice: All the ways of a man are pure and right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the motives and hearts. (Proverbs 16:2; 21:2 NASB) So we see that the Word of God says people think their ways are right in their own eyes, however it does not say their ways are right in the eyes of God.

The word of God states in Hebrews 4:13 **and there is NO creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.** The Word of God is crystal clear, **we must all give account to God for everything!** This means all your hidden motives and wicked thoughts in your heart about, or against people, will be exposed, if you have not repented and overcome your wickedness! **Knowing all this, we need to see the depths of our hearts and how we can purify our hearts by faith in Jesus, becoming a bride without spot or wrinkle!**

AN EXAMINATION OF THE HEART

- A) WHAT IS YOUR HEART?12 COMPONENTS OF THE HEART !**
- B) WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART.....THE HEART OF FALLEN MAN!**
- C) YOUR WICKED DECEIVING HEART.....SELF-DECEPTION!**
- D) PURIFYING OUR HEARTS BY SELF-DENIAL.....WE DIE DAILY!**

SECTION A.....WHAT IS YOUR HEART?

PROVERBS 27:19.....As in water face reveals face, so a man's HEART reveals the man.

MATTHEW 6:21....“For where your treasure is, there your HEART will be also.

LUKE 6:45b & Mat 12:34b...For out of the abundance of the HEART, the mouth, speaks

PROVERBS 23:7a....For as he thinks in his HEART, so is he.

A close look at these few verses from the Word of God and we see how the heart is exposed and revealed in a person. Let's look at 12 characteristic of the heart. These are the components that tell people who and what you are on the outside and reveal what is in the inside!!

The 12 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HEART

DEFINITIONS BY .MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM)

- 1) **ACTIONS**....behavior, conduct, initiative; an act of will
- 2) **ATTITUDE**...The way you think and feel about someone or something.
- 3) **COUNTANANCE**....the appearance of a person's expression
- 4) **DAILY ACTIVITIES**routine activities that people tend to do every day without needing assistance
- 5) **DRESS**...To put on or wear a particular type or style of clothes
- 6) **EMOTIONS**...A strong feeling such as love, anger, joy, hate or fear
- 7) **HABITS**....Something a person does often in a regular and repeated way.
- 8) **LIFESTYLE**....The way a person lives
- 9) **MOTIVES**.....A reason for doing something
- 10) **REACTIONS**...The way someone acts or feels in response to something that happens, is said, etc.
- 11) **SPEECH**....An exchange of spoken words
- 12) **THOUGHTS**....An idea, opinion, picture, etc., that is formed in your mind

These are the components of the heart that will identify and reveal who you are, who and/or what you love and are passionate about. These are the components of the heart that people use to identify who and what you are. To further illustrate this let's look at a few examples.

When it is said; "A person wears their heart on their sleeve" They are saying, that person shows on the outside what they are feeling on the inside. (the emotions, thoughts and feelings of the inner person.)

Another example would be: When it is said a person has a "broken heart." It is referring to something or someone that was once, either in or part of a person's life, but no longer is.

When it's said a person has a lot of heart, it is referring to the passion and/or drive a person has. A zeal for something.

A tender hearted person is a person who is very sensitive.

We have established that the heart of a person is not just a physical organ that pumps blood, but all things that reveal and identify who a person is! It is these components that when we give Jesus our hearts, Jesus wants to possess and control. This so people can see, hear, and feel the love of Jesus in us!

SECTION B.....WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART

Now that we have looked what makes up a person's heart, let's now look at the impurities inside a person's heart according to the Word of God.

(The impurities of the Heart of Fallen man.)

MARK 7:20-23....And He (Jesus) said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, **OUT OF THE HEART OF MEN**, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. **ALL THESE EVIL THINGS** (the nature of Satan) **COME FROM WITHIN** and defile a man.

GALATIANS 5:19-21....Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, **that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

COLOSSIANS 3:5-10....Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: **fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.** Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you also once walked when you lived in them. But now you must also put off all these: **anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.** Do not lie to one another, since you have **put off the old man with his deeds**, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10.....Do you not know **that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the Kingdom of God.**

In the gospel of Mark, we have Jesus explain to us in detail the qualities of an **IMPURE HEART**. The beloved apostle Paul then goes on in his epistles to expound on those impurities even further. Not only does Paul expound on them further, Paul warns **the New Testament church** these impurities of heart, (the sins of the flesh) will send people to hell if they are not overcome and truly repented of.

These are the characteristics and qualities of the fallen nature of man in a person's heart **BEFORE** salvation that are leading people to hell. **These Impurities are what Jesus has come to save us from!** Without Jesus there is no way we cannot save ourselves or cleanse ourselves from the nature of Satan in our hearts.

SECTION C.....YOUR WICKED DECEIVING HEART

So far we have looked at the components that make up the heart of man, along with the impurities of the heart that keeps man from eternal life. Now we need to look at an area of the heart that, for the most part, either goes ignored, unnoticed or is just a way of life for some. The area of the heart of which I speak, is that of self-deception.

Oxforddictionaries.com gives the definition of self-deception as this...**The action or practice of allowing oneself to believe that a FALSE or UNVALIDATED FEELING, IDEA, or SITUATION IS TRUE.**

The heart of Self-Deception is a temptation of the heart that is always available, easy to access, and is also very dangerous. This is a temptation of the heart that can very subtly creep into a person's heart, go unrecognized and then become a way of life, and a person does not realize it. If not recognized and repented of in its infancy, it can and will lead a person to do, act or say one or **MANY** ungodly things. **The foundational characteristics of human nature that lead to self-deception, are PRIDE, LUST and IDOLATRY.** These are the corner stones that lead people down the broad road to Eternal Damnation if not repented of and overcome. There are many examples of men of God who gave into the temptation of self-deception in their hearts. Some repented, others did not. Some of those men were:

Aaron, the brother of Moses.....Exodus.....Ch 24 & 32
 Dathan, Abiram, and Korah.....Numbers...Ch.16
 Balaam.....Numbers...Ch.22-25
 Sampson.....Judges.....Ch.13-16
 Saul.....1Sam.....Ch 15
 David.....2 Sam.....Ch 11-12
 Solomon.....Nehemiah...Ch13:23-27 1 Kings Ch 11
 Gehazi.....2 Kings.....Ch5:20-27
 Peter.....Mat.26:31-35, 69-75; Mark14:27-31,66-72;
 Luke 22:31-34, 54- 62; John 13:36-38; 18:15-18, 25-27.

Remember one very important thing...

ALL THOSE MEN LISTED ABOVE, KNEW THE LORD! All of those men were in leadership and/or kings! The lesson is clear! **NO ONE is immune to this heart temptation!** What makes this temptation so dangerous is, that the higher in leadership you go, the easier it is to let your guard down, relax and fall into the trap. The temptations of Pride and Lust are always lurking, waiting for the right situation or circumstances to move in and deceive a person. In this section we will look at 3 men; Saul, David and Peter, and how their heart deceived all of them. After that, we will then look at one of, if not, the most dangerous deceptions of all, **RELIGIOUS DELUSION!** In each one of these examples you will see the four verses of the Word of God at work in each of these men's lives.

Jeremiah 17:9-10...The **HEART IS DECEITFUL** above all things, and **DESPERATELY WICKED**; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I (The LORD) test the *mind, (*footnote=most secret parts) Even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing.

Proverbs 28:26....He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25 ...There is a way that seems **right to a man, (Rotherham emphasized Bible =entices a man) but its end is the way of death.

Psalms 64:6b-8a...**BOTH THE INWARD THOUGHT and THE HEART OF MAN IS DEEP.** But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; Suddenly shall they be wounded. So He will make them stumble over their own tongue;

Psalms 90:8...You have set our iniquities before You, **OUR SECRET SINS** in the light of Your countenance.

SAUL...THE ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL...1 SAMUEL Ch. 10-14, 15:10-26

THE SELF DECEPTION OF THE FEAR OF MAN

Jn.12:43...FOR THEY LOVED THE PRAISES OF MEN MORE THEN THE PRAISES OF GOD.

1 Sam 15:10-26...Now the Word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, “I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned his back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, **he set up a monument for himself**; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.”

Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! **I have performed the commandment of the LORD.**” But Samuel said, “what then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” And Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” Then Samuel said to Saul, “Be Quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night.” And he said to him, “Speak on.” So Samuel said, “When you were little in your own eyes, were you not the head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? “Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ “Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD?” Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?” And Saul said to Samuel, **BUT I HAVE OBEYED THE VOICE OF THE LORD**, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. “But the people took of the plunder, sheep, and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.” Then Samuel said..... “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed, than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.” Then Saul Said to Samuel, “**I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.**”

Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me that I may worship the LORD.” But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, **for you have rejected the word of the LORD**, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

THE HEART OF SELF-DECEPTION OF THE FEAR OF MAN IN SAUL

The problems start for Saul shortly after he is anointed and proclaimed king of Israel. (1Sam.10:1-27) In verse 27 we see men paid no respect to King Saul, and Saul held his peace. We see a king who allowed men to disrespect the authority God had placed him in. This then sets a precedent in his kingdom. We see in chapter 13 verses 8-14 when the people start to scatter from Saul, he becomes compelled to offer a sacrifice, being disobedient to the commandment of the LORD.

In chapter 15 the self-deceiving heart of Saul is exposed. Saul is rebellious, arrogant and unfaithful to the LORD. In 15:3 the LORD gives Saul an order to **UTTERLY** destroy **EVERYTHING** thing the Amalekites have and to spare **NO ONE**. Saul is disobedient to the command of the LORD and spares the king and is unwilling to destroy the best of the spoils and yet, takes the time to set up a monument to himself! When Saul sees Samuel, Saul is so self-deceived he proclaims, “Blessed are you of the LORD! **I have performed the commandment of the LORD.**” To which Samuel corrects Saul and tells him the error of his ways. Yet, Saul still is self-deceived and defiantly proclaims he did do the commandment of the LORD, justifying his defiance and rebellion to the command of the Lord. (verses 14-23) Finally in verse 24 Saul confesses to Samuel and says: “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, **because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.**”

So we see how pride, the fear of the people, and lust and idolatry, blinded Saul in his decision making, and caused him to be disobedient to the command of the Lord. Saul was more interested getting the approval of people rather than the approval of God. Saul’s constant awareness of what people were saying or doing would influence his decision making, and obedience to the commandments of the LORD. (See 1Sam13:8-13; 15:10-24; 18:7-9)

DAVID.....A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART... Samuel 11:1-27; 12:1-15

THE SELF-DECEPTION OF LUST

JAMES 1:14.....BUT EACH ONE IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS CARRIED AWAY AND ENTICED BY HIS OWN LUST.

2 Samuel 11:1-27.... It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. **And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman *was* very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”**

Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, “I *am* with child.” Then David sent to Joab, *saying*, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.”

And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift *of food* from the king followed him. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. So when they told David, saying, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?” And Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? *As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.*” Then David said to Uriah, “Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him; and he made him drunk. And at evening he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die.” So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there *were* valiant men. Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And *some* of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also. Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war, and charged the messenger, saying, “When you have finished telling the matters of the war to the king, if it happens that the king’s wrath rises, and he says to you: ‘Why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?’—then you shall say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.’” So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent by him. And the messenger said to David, “Surely the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the field; then we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate. The archers shot from the wall at your servants; and *some* of the king’s servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.” Then David said to the messenger, “Thus you shall say to Joab: ‘Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it.’ So encourage him.” When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. **But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord**

2 Samuel 12:1-15 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David, and he came to him, and said to him; “There were two men in one city, one rich the other poor. “The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. “But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of its own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. “And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.

Then David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "you are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! **"Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight?** You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; You have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, **because you have despised Me**, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. "Thus says the LORD: behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives from before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 'For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'" Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die." Then Nathan departed to his house.

THE HEART OF LUST IN THE SELF DECEPTION OF DAVID

Before we get started on the deceitfulness of king David's heart, let's look at a very important word and its definition. The word we are going to look at, is **LUST**.

Wikipedia gives the following definition:

Lust is a feeling or emotion of intense desire in the body. Lust is a psychological force producing intense wanting for an object, or circumstances fulfilling the emotion.

In the story of David, Uriah, and Bathsheba, we see at a time when kings go out to battle, king David stays in Jerusalem. One evening he is out on the roof top and sees a beautiful woman. At this point remember king David is **married to multiple wives**. David sent and inquired who the woman was.

David allows curiosity lust to control his decision making. See how his lust for a woman blinds his thinking and becomes self-deceived. He invites her to the palace and sleeps with her. What is he thinking? Is this going to be a one-night stand? Is he going to get involved in a love triangle? David's lust self-deceived him into making a very wrong and very bad decision. After Uriah's wife sends word she is with child, the self-deception gets worse. David tries different ways to get Uriah to be with his wife. Notice how David continues to try and solve a bad problem. The manipulation, and all other sins involved, until finally murder. Self-deception has justified his actions. It is not until David is confronted by the Prophet Nathan with a word from the Lord does David realize the error of his ways, and becomes broken hearted over his sin! (Psalm 51)

How did a man after God's own heart, spiral out of control and become so self-deceived? How can a man who had so many great victories for the Lord, turn so corrupt? How does a man whose only dependence was on the Lord while in the wilderness, become so blind to the Word of God? The answer is found in **Deut.17:14-17....“The Principles Governing Kings” Let's look at verse 17.....**
”Neither shall he (the king) multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.”

David had a deep seated lust he never dealt with!!! David's ignoring of the Word of God, allowed self-deception to blind him, and justify his actions, as right in his own eyes, not in the eyes of God!!! David fed his lust, David did not starve his lust!!!

The Lust in David's heart deceived him!

The lust in the heart of David so deceived him, that David **No Longer** had any boundaries on the woman he wanted. The Lust in David Now controlled him. David was now out of control! It was one thing to have multiple wives, and concubines, but now David is going after a married woman!

Before David's affair with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, David had multiple wives! David had at least 7 wives **before** he arrived in Jerusalem. **Then when David arrived in Jerusalem, the Word of God states David took more wives and concubines.** (2 Samuel 5:13.) David was blatantly breaking the law of God, yet it didn't bother David. David continued to accumulate wives, and concubines until his lust almost destroyed him.

PETER.....THE FISHER OF MEN.....LUKE 22:31-34, 51-62

THE SELF DECEPTION OF PRIDE

Proverbs 16:18... Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

The story of Peter is so important, that it is repeated in all four gospels. In this story we will see the heart of a man who, in front of Jesus and others, boastfully exalts himself above everyone saying he is willing to go to prison and even die for Jesus.

When the time of testing comes, Peter fails miserably! Let's look at the story.

(Mat.26:31-35, 69-75; Mark14:27-31,66-72; Luke 22:31-34, 54-62; John 13:36-38; 18:15-18, 25-27)

LUKE 22:31-34...And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you, both to prison and death." Then He said, I tell you Peter, the rooster will not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

LUKE 22:54-62... Then, having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house, and Peter followed at a distance. Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him." But he denied Him, saying, "**woman, I do not know Him.**" And after a little while another saw him and said, "you also are of them." But Peter said "**Man I am not!**" Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "**Man, I do not know what you are saying!**" And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He said to him, "**Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.**" Then Peter went out and wept bitterly.

THE HEART OF PRIDE IN THE SELF DECEPTION OF PETER

In this section we are going to look at the disciple Peter. No other disciple in all the gospels is talked about more.

Peter is the first disciple called by Jesus (Mat 4:18).

Peter along with James and John go up the mountain with Jesus to talk with Moses and Elijah. (Mat. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36).

Peter was granted the revelation of Jesus being the Son of God.
(Mat 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; 9:18-20).

Peter asks how often we are to forgive (Mat.18:21-35)

Jesus told Peter, that Peter would deny Him.
(Mat 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38)

Peter was also in the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus, Peter saw Jesus in agony and Peter also fell asleep in the garden. (Mat.26:36-46 Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46;)

Peter defended Jesus by cutting off the ear of a soldier.
(Mat. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-50; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:1-14)

Peter denied knowing who Jesus was.
(Mat.26:69-75; Mark:14:66-72; Luke 22:54-63; John 18:15-18,25-27)

So we see, there is much to learn about Peter all through the gospels. For now, we are just going to look at Peter's boasting and Peter's denial.

In the Luke 22:31-34 we see Jesus tell Peter that Satan has asked to sift him as wheat, and Jesus tells Peter that He prayed for Peter and that after Peter returns to strengthen the brethren. Notice Peter did not ask what Jesus is talking about, or explain Himself. Peter immediately tells Jesus he will go to prison and die for him. We see that Jesus knew what was in Peter's heart and was warning Peter about future events, yet Peter would not believe he would deny his Lord. Peter was so arrogant and proud; he was going to prove Jesus wrong. Peter went so far as to cut a soldier's ear off in the garden. Notice he did this with many people around. But when Peter was put to the test with people who were not disciples, Peter lost his boldness. **Yes, our heart can be very deceiving to make us think we are something, only to find out, we are not what we thought!**

Deuteronomy chapter 8:2-5 And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, **to humble you and test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.** So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, **that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.** Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. **You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.**

2 Chronicles 32:31...However, *regarding* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, **God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.**

The Lord tells us, He led His people through the wilderness for two reasons. One reason is to humble them; **the other reason is to test them to know what is in their hearts, to see if they would be obedient.** The Lord knows what is in our hearts, He wants us to know what is in our hearts!!! How can we be transformed into the image of Jesus, if we have no idea who we really are and what is deep in our hearts??? The Lord needs to put us in circumstances and situations to expose to us what He sees in our hearts! How can you repent with no regrets if you never see the pride or lust in your heart? How can you see how unthankful and selfish you are if you are not made aware of those characteristics?

Psalms 64:6b-8a...**both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep. But God will shoot at them (The inward thought and the heart) with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So He (God) will make them stumble over their own tongue.....** This is exactly what happened to Peter!!! The Lord knew what was deep in the heart of Peter, only Peter didn't know what was deep in Peter's heart! Peter was deceived into thinking he was something that he wasn't!

Maybe it was the fact that Peter was the first disciple called by Jesus, or maybe because he was granted the revelation that Jesus is the Son of God, or maybe it was that Peter was called to the top of the mountain with Jesus, Moses and Elijah. No matter what the reason or why, Peter had much Pride and the Lord needed to expose it, so Peter could repent of it with no regret.

Notice in Luke chapter 22:60-62 after Peter denies knowing Jesus the third time, Jesus turned and looked at Peter. You can be rest assured, when Jesus turned to look at Peter, it was not, an “I told you so look.” With the love that Jesus had in His heart for Peter, when Jesus turned and looked at Peter, it was a look of heartbreak. So when Peter saw the look on the face of Jesus, then remembering the words of Jesus, the pain of guilt and humiliation Peter experienced caused to him to weep bitterly and no longer fellowship with the other disciples. This is why when Jesus was resurrected, the young man in the long white robe at the tomb told Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome to go tell the disciples **AND** Peter. (Mark 16:1-8) Peter was being brought back to the disciples.

The pride in Peter’s heart deceived him to the point that he confidently boasted to everyone present, that he was willing to not only go to prison for Jesus but die for Jesus. The heart of self-deception in Pride, will make a person think, believe and say things that they think and/or believe they will do but, will deceive them and make them look foolish! The heart of self-deception is usually used to protect a person’s true feelings and self. It is a way to look good and appear confident in front of people, when on the inside a person is fearful, falling apart or is going through a bad situation. Yes, Pride in the heart of a person will always disguise the truth of the heart!

RELIGIOUS SELF DECEPTION AND/OR RELIGIOUS DELUSION

JOHN. 16:2 (JESUS SPEAKING) “They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.”

RELIGION: (Merriam-webster.com) An organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, and rules used to worship a god or gods.

SELF-DECEPTION (Oxforddictionaries.com) ...The action or practice of allowing oneself to believe that a **FALSE** or **UNVALIDATED FEELING, IDEA, or SITUATION** is **TRUE**.

DELUSION: (Dictionary.com) **A false belief held despite strong evidence against it; Self-deception**

We are reviewing these definitions because of all the self-deceptions and/or delusions that can occur in a person's life, religious delusion is without question the most agonizing heart break to a **GOD OF ABUNDANT LOVE!!**

******THINK ABOUT THIS:****** The God of Divine Love, creates man. Man is disobedient to a Holy Loving God and is cast out of the presence of a Holy Loving God. God chooses Moses to give mankind His commandments, laws, statutes, ordinances, and judgments to bring man back into God's Holy Presence, so mankind can spend eternity with a Holy Loving God. When God's people go off track and stray and are rebellious and/or defiant to the Word of God, God in His **ABUNDANT** love sends His servants the Prophets rising early to put them back on course so God's people could spend Eternity with Him!

(2 Chron.36:15-16; Jer.5:4-7; 7:21-26; 26:1-6;) God has the very best interest in His heart for His People! God then sends His Only Son, Jesus to complete the plan of redemption. The **VERY PEOPLE** Jesus came to save and show the error of their ways, are the same people who sent Jesus to be crucified! (John 1:11)

Some questions to meditate on:

Why would the religious leaders, i.e. Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, knowing Jesus was from God, (John 3:1-2) try and discredit Jesus?

Why would the religious leaders, i.e. Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, after seeing the miracles that Jesus did, not follow Jesus?

Why would the religious leaders, i.e. Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, being teachers of the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Word of God, not search the scriptures to see where they were wrong and repent from their error?

Why would the religious leaders, i.e. Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, be upset at the teaching of Jesus if Jesus was teaching the truth of what God required?

The religious leaders, could not deny the miracles that Jesus did, or wisdom which He spoke or the spirit which He spoke it. Yet, these religious leaders did not embrace Jesus, NO, these religious leaders were out to stop Jesus. WHY????

God's very own people, His special treasure, who God loved so very much, was rejecting the gift God Himself had sent to them.

AGAIN, THE QUESTION..... WHY???

THE ANSWER IS.....RELIGIOUS DELUSION!!!!

What is Religious Delusion?

Religious Delusion is when a person or group of people (large or small) believe that the religious traditions, teachings and/or doctrines they follow are acceptable and/or are pleasing to God, even when they are breaking the Commandments of God and/or are disobeying, or are changing the Word of God.

Religious Delusion has TWO main characteristics: PRIDE and IDOLATRY!!!

Characteristic Number 1.....RELIGIOUS PRIDE

A person with religious pride is usually unteachable and thinks they know most everything, and is not open to any new light or revelation from or about The Word of God. For the most part they will only follow God according to the teachings and beliefs, they were taught in their religious tradition, denomination or religious structure

People with religious pride for the most part, are usually more worried about protecting and promoting their religious tradition, denomination and/or, reputation then the truth of the Word of God. We see many times in the gospels the religious leaders try and trap Jesus or test Jesus.

(Mat 12:22-30; 21:23-27; 22:15-18 26:57-68 and many others)

If the religious leaders had been humble or were truly looking for the Messiah, they would have sincerely asked Jesus questions to know the truth and they would have searched the scriptures diligently to see if what Jesus was teaching and preaching was from God. The religious leaders were comfortable in the religious positions of authority that they held, and were not interested in giving up their ways and/or traditions. The religious leaders did not have a love for God in their hearts or they would have been open to what Jesus said. **This is exactly why Jesus says in Jn.5:42 “but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.”** Notice Jesus tells the religious leaders they have NO LOVE of God in them. The Complete Jewish Bible translates verse 42....“you have No love FOR God in you!

Characteristic Number 2.....RELIGIOUS IDOLATRY!

What is RELIGIOUS IDOLATRY? Religious Idolatry is when a person or group of people (large or small) will LOVE their religious tradition, status, doctrine, denomination, beliefs and/or activities more than the Word of God and /or being obedient to the Word of God. This would also include loyalties and allegiances to any religious people, places or things other than the Word of God.

When a person or people DO NOT love Jesus with their WHOLE heart, it means there are other people, places or things in their heart they love more than Jesus! (This is called having an idol, otherwise known as idolatry!) Why else would a person defend or protect something? **(important note: whatever or whoever a person defends is what they love!)** These people have become comfortable in what they have and know, and do not want to give it up. This is exactly what is happened to the Pharisees and the other religious leaders. They loved the praise of men rather than God (Jn.12:43), along with many other things.

Let's look at Matthew chapter 23, along with other chapters in other gospels, for a good look into what had gripped the hearts of the Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees. As we look at these examples, we will also see many similarities that are evident today!.....**We will see building a name, building a reputation, loving the praise of people, and keeping religious traditions were more important to the religious leaders, than being obedient to the Word of God.** We will see how those qualities can and will feed the pride of man to the point where they conspire to call Jesus a liar and send Jesus to the cross! (we will only highlight some verses,)

Mathew Chapter 23

verse 3.....The scribes and Pharisees.....say one thing and do another

verse 4.....They bind heavy burdens on men's shoulders, yet will not move a finger.

verse 5***They do all their works to be seen by men

verse 6.....They love the best places at feasts and best seats in synagogues

verse 7.....They love greetings in market places, and to be called Rabbi, Rabbi.

verse 14***They devour widows houses and for pretense make long prayers

verse 23.....They neglect the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy and faith

verse 25***They cleanse the outside of the cup and dish but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

verse 28***They outwardly appear righteous, but inside they are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Mark Chapter 7

verse 6***They honor the Lord with their lips, but their heart is far away.

verse 7*** They worship the Lord in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

verse 8***They lay aside the commandment of God, and hold the tradition of man.

verse 9***They reject the commandment of God that they may keep their tradition.

verse 13***They make the Word of God of no effect through their tradition which they handed down.

Luke Chapter 16:14 **The Pharisees were lovers of Money

(*** denotes EXTREMELY relevant for today)

Look at all these religious activities that are being done in and for the name of God and realize this...These religious leaders believed what they were doing was right in Gods eyes. Their eyes became blinded, their ears became deaf and their hearts became dull by their religious pride and religious idolatry!

The prophesy of Isaiah had come to pass!!! Isaiah 6:9-10...And He (the Lord) said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed."

(Cf. Mt.15:1-14; Mk.7:1-1-23; 2Tim 3:1-9)

Their dedication to their religious traditions, doctrines and teachings and reputations was more important to them than the Truth of the Word of God.

The religious leaders, The Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, did many things in the name of God, But DID NOT OBEY GOD.

The religious leaders, The Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, LOVED the religious by-products and benefits of service to God, but did not love God Himself!!!

The religious leaders, Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, were lovers of money.

In all of this rebellion and disobedience to the Word of God, God was still willing to take them back if they would just repent and turn from their ways. What the religious leaders were doing was not only wrong but was hypocritical! Yet, God, in His wonderful love was trying to show them the error of their ways to stop them from going to eternal damnation.

It was all the religious activities, titles, reputations and importance, that gripped the religious leaders' hearts. And yet God in His abundant love tried to show them the errors of their ways, yet the religious leaders paid NO ATTENTION to Jesus! At the end of Matthew chapter 23, Jesus laments saying **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks but YOU WERE NOT WILLING! SEE! Your house is left to you desolate;”**

And again the prophesy by Zechariah Ch.13:6 **“and someone will say to Him, what are these wounds in your hands?” Then He will answer, ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.’**

These are verses which describe much of the life style, teachings and doctrines of the Religious leaders of Jesus day. So now let's briefly look at how this applies today. We will look at this subject in greater depth in chapter 7.

Eternal Life is received when we LOVE the Lord with ALL our heart, soul, mind and strength and LOVE our neighbor as ourselves. Luke10:25-28

This has never, and will never change! To accomplish this love, a person must be willing to give up everyone and everything, including their own life for Jesus.

Anything less means they are holding on to, people, places or things they love more than Jesus!

If a person is not willing to give up everything for Jesus, they are not worthy of Jesus!
(Mat.10:34-39 Luke 9:23-27)

Today for the most part, people are either born into a particular denomination or religious system and seldom if ever question why they believe what they believe. As long as they like the religious leader behind the pulpit and are comfortable in what they hear and the activities they participate in, they feel safe and secure. In many cases people are drawn to the culture of the religious atmosphere and the entertainment in the structure. Because the person behind the pulpit has the name, reputation and credentials, people trust what they are teaching, unaware that the message could be misleading, deceiving or a flat out lie!

When people in this religious system are confronted with the Truth of the Word of God, just like the leaders in Jesus day, the people do today, they resist and reject the Truth! The people would rather believe a lie and live in comfort then give Jesus their whole heart! As it says in the prophet Isaiah, with much joy they descend into the pit... Isaiah 5:13-14(Again refer to chapter 7 for more on this.)

Religious Delusion is Rejecting the Word of God to keep traditions, doctrines and/or teachings that, do not agree with, or are in rebellion to, or are not in the Word of God!

When a person or people are confronted with the Truth of the Word of God and are not willing to forsake all for Jesus, the alternative usually is to get more involved and do more things in the church system or to find a religious denomination or institution or to feel comfortable with, to ease a guilty conscience.

AN EXAMPLE OF RELIGIOUS DELUSION.....

STEPHEN, THE SYNAGOGUE OF FREEDMEN AND THE CONVERSION SAUL

ACTS CHAPTERS 6, 7, 8:1-3; 9:1-1-9

We will just highlight the important verses in this story. It is encouraged to take the time to read all the chapters to see how Stephen breaks down the history of God's people starting with Abraham. Notice God in His love is still trying to turn the high priest and the religious people from the errors of their ways.

ACTS 6:8-15; 7:1-2,51-60; 8:1-3; 9:1-2.... And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. **Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council. They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.”** And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.**7:1-2** Then the high priest said, “Are these things so?” And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran.....

51-60 “*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it*.” When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”..... Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. **And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.** And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

8:1-3...Now Saul was consenting to his (Stephens) death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison

9:1-2...Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

THE REVIEW OF STEPHEN, THE SYNAGOGUE OF FREEDMEN, SAUL, AND RELIGIOUS DELUSION

Stephen

Was a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

Stephen was full of faith and power, and did great wonders and signs among the people.

Stephens had the face of an angel

The Synagogue of Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia)

They disputed with Stephen.

They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

They secretly induced men to say, “we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.

They stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes.

They brought Stephen to the council.

They also set up false witnesses who lied about what Stephen preached.

Saul/Paul

Witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of Saul

Saul/Paul consented to the death of Stephen

Saul/Paul was making havoc of the Church

Saul/Paul entered every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison

Saul/Paul was breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord

Saul/Paul asked the high priest for letters of permission to bring those of The Way to be bound to Jerusalem

Saul/Paul was circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Here we have the Synagogue of Freedmen, opposing the Disciple Stephen. They were not able resist the wisdom and Spirit which Stephen spoke. The Question Begs to be asked.....WHY?????? If a person or a group of people claim to love God, why would there be ANY RESISTANCE to Stephen? This group of Priests and religious people are supposed to be representing God and yet they are lying and calculating how to trap Stephen. WHY?

The answer is they loved their religious status and traditions rather than the truth of the Word of God! Stephen was systematically showing the Synagogue of Freedmen, starting from Abraham all the way through history, the error of their ways and they wanted no part of what Stephan was saying! The Lord God in His love was using Stephan to show them their error and put them on the right path, yet wanted no part of it.

Saul in his religious zeal had to protect the Religious traditions he was brought up with. A zeal so strong and dedicated to, that murder was not out of the question. It wasn't until Saul met Jesus, The Word of Truth that he turned from the error of his ways! Saul was a religious zealot until his encounter with Jesus the King of Kings!

Here is the difference between the Synagogue of Freedmen, and Saul.

The synagogue of Freedmen when hearing the wisdom of Stephan and the Spirit in which he spoke, then seeing his face as an angel, then hearing his full discourse from Abraham through to Solomon, could have stopped Stephan at any time, and admitted their error and repented.

THEY DID NOT REPENT, THEY MURDERED AN INNOCENT MAN!!!!

The words of Jesus came to pass in John 16:2..“whoever kills you will think they are offering service to God.” **The synagogue of Freedmen loved their traditions and doctrines more than the Word of God!!!**

Saul on the other hand, when confronted with Jesus face to face, responded: “Lord what do you want me to do?” Saul was humble where as those from the synagogue of Freedmen were arrogant. **The Lord always will work with the HUMBLE in heart.**

A REVIEW OF YOUR DECEIVING HEART AND RELIGIOUS DELUSION

In this section on our teaching of the heart we learned that the heart of man has **THREE** very distinct characteristics that will deceive a person.

Those characteristics are:

- 1) Pride
- 2) Lust
- 3) Idolatry

We learned the higher you go in leadership, the easier it is to become deceived, and that **NO-ONE** is exempt from self-deception.

What we have learned from King Saul’s Deceiving Heart.

PRIDE AND THE FEAR OF MAN DECEIVED KING SAUL’S HEART!

We learned that King Saul became deceived because he loved the approval of man rather than the approval of God. King Saul was given orders and was disobedient to the commands of the Lord because he allowed people to manipulate him. King Saul tried to justify his actions to Samuel, by giving excuses and not being humble. King Saul became so arrogant he built a statue of himself. King Saul turned into a religious Pharisee and then tried to murder David because of his envy of David.
(1Sam.18:8-16,21; 19:1-20; 20:30-33; 22:14-19)

What we have learned from King David's Deceiving Heart.

PRIDE AND LUST DECEIVED KING DAVID'S HEART

We have learned, although David was a man after God's heart, he was not without flaws. David had many wives which was in total disobedience to the law of God. (Dt.17:14-17) Because David fed his lust for women, instead of starving his lust for women, David allowed his lust for women to blind his judgment and cause him to make very bad decisions.

The difference between King David and King Saul was the Humility in David. When confronted by the prophet Samuel, King Saul lied and made Excuses. When confronted by the prophet Nathan King David immediately was broken and sorry for his sins.

King Saul lost his Kingdom and his relationship with God

King David retained his relationship with God, and His Kingdom but with heavy consequences.

What we have learned from the Apostle Peter's Deceiving Heart.

PRIDE DECEIVED THE APOSTLE PETER'S HEART

We have learned from the Apostle Peter, that although Peter received revelation of who Jesus is, and went up the mountain with Jesus and is talked about more than any other apostle, Peter was a very proud man! The Lord needed to expose to Peter what was in Peter's heart. **The Apostle Peter is a perfect example of every person!** Everyday both men and women are put in situations that they may or may not be comfortable in. Inevitably they will boast about how they will react or handle a certain situation, only to find out they will fail miserably. The root cause of this is the **PRIDE of HEART**. Of all the examples in the Word of God, the Apostle Peter's denial of Jesus hits home and resonates more than other examples. That is because we have all done something similar at one time or another. Pride always allows us to think more highly of ourselves than what and/or who we are. It is only until we experience humiliation that we begin to change our ways.

It is in Peter's example we are to learn not to think more highly of ourselves.

A brief recap of Religious Delusion

We have learned that, Religious Delusion is when a person or group of people (large or small) believe that the religious traditions, teachings and/or doctrines they follow are acceptable and/or are pleasing to God, even when they are breaking the Commandments of God and/or are disobeying, or are changing the Word of God.

We have found that Religious Self-Delusion has two main characteristics.

Characteristic Number 1 is Religious PRIDE

Characteristic Number 2 is Religious Idolatry

The two of these work together.

A person or people with Religious pride are usually unteachable and are usually know it all's.

A person or people with Religious Pride will usually boast in their accomplishments and what they have done for God, and/or with God.

A person or people with Religious Pride are always more interested in promoting their ministry, their church or denomination or religious merchandise, than the Word of God.

A person or people with Religious Pride will defend their religious denomination, teaching, doctrine or leadership that is in disobedience to the Word of God.

Religious Idolatry on the other hand is when a person or group of people (large or small) will LOVE their religious tradition, status, doctrine, denomination, beliefs and/or activities more than the Word of God and /or being obedient to the Word of God. This would also include loyalties and allegiances to any religious people, places or things other than the Word of God.

Religious Pride along with Religious Idolatry is a toxic combination that will lead any and all people into Eternal Damnation. They complement each other perfectly, into convincing a person or people what they believe is right, no matter what the Word of God says or what the messenger brings. (Important See Jeremiah Ch.7& Ch.42-44)

Today more than any time in the history of man, Religious Pride along with Religious Idolatry brings Great Pain and Heart Break to a Holy God whose Heart is so filled with Love for mankind! Both characteristics in and of themselves break the heart of God, but when put together, the Heart Ache and Heart Break of a Loving Holy God, kindles His Anger and Jealousy!

Reasons God feels Great Heart Break, and feels such Grief and Agony!

LOVING JESUS IS NOT A PART TIME OBLIGATION!

- 1) One reason God is heartbroken over His people is because, many of God's people have **left their first Love OF Jesus** (Rev.2:4) and replaced love for Jesus with many religious activities and ministries which have turned into idols.....

Ezekiel 6:9b....“because I (the Lord) was crushed by their adulterous heart, which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols;.....
Micah 6:2b-3.....For the Lord has a complaint against His people, And He will contend with Israel. “O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me. (cf. Isa.1:18; 3:13-14; Hos.4:1 Jer. 2:5)

Here we see the LORD God is heartbroken and pleading with His people because they have an adulterous heart (being unfaithful to the Lord) and have wandering eyes that yearn after their idols. God's people **ARE CHOOSING** to replace intimacy with Jesus with other people, places and things. Many people would rather spend time away from Jesus, then being with Jesus! God created man with the specific reason to have fellowship with God. Yet man feels the need to create, build, and do things for God, in the name of God, When God has not given such orders!

Many people have substituted intimacy with Jesus, for ministry, entertainment, and ambition for Jesus.

Many people would rather spend 3 hours **doing things for God**, or **talking about God**, then spend 3 hours **TALKING WITH GOD ALONE**. Many people are substituting intimacy with God for entertainment in God's name! There is an attitude of misconception, as long as a person has their daily devotions with God, that they have fulfilled their obligation to God and that God is satisfied.

How is it possible for a person to Truly know God and know How God feels, if a person does not spend intimate time with God?

How can a person have their heart changed into the image of Jesus if they are not spending intimate time with Jesus?

Should not the Heart cry of a person professing to be a Christian be what the apostle Paul cried out in Philippians 3:10? **“That I may know Him and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death?”** Do you see how the apostle Paul is crying out to **KNOW JESUS, NOT to know ABOUT Jesus?** Jesus was **NOT** a historical person to Paul! Paul was only interested in reflecting the love and humility of Jesus and speaking the whole Word of God! Paul was only interested in knowing the heart, mind and soul of the beloved Son of God who saved Paul from his sins.

John 17:3 Jesus speaking... **“And this is eternal life, that they MAY KNOW YOU, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”**

We see here that Jesus Himself tells us that eternal life is **KNOWING** God and Jesus. Eternal life is **NOT** knowing about God or Jesus. There is the difference!! One is knowing Jesus in a Deep intimate way, longing to live, move and have your being in Jesus! The other is having a historical perspective and knowledge of Jesus.

Paul along with all the disciples and reflected **TRUE CHRISTIANITY!**

Christianity is **NOT** belonging to a church.

Christianity is **NOT** following religious traditions or teachings.

Christianity is **NOT** joining a church or denomination.

Christianity is **NOT** being involved in a ministry.

Christianity is **NOT** inviting people to church or religious meetings.

Christianity is **NOT** being proud, arrogant or self-centered.

Christianity is **NOT** having daily devotions.

Christianity according to the Word of God is to love, live and reflect the Heart of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God here on earth!

Walking in Pure Love and Humility just like Jesus did!

It is when a person spends deep intimate time with Jesus, loving, worshipping and seeking the face of God, is when God can expose the depths of sin in the heart of a person. It is then where a person cries out “Oh woe is me I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips!” God can break the person and cleanse the person who is intimate with Him. Without a deep true intimate relationship with God, all a person has is shallow, superficial religious commitment to God.

There is NO WHERE in the Word of God from Genesis to the Book of the Revelation that states we are to have daily devotions!!!!

God has always Commanded to Love the Lord our God with ALL our HEART, SOUL, MIND and STRENGTH and our neighbor as our self.

2) The second reason God is heartbroken; is the Pride, Idolatry and blatant rebellion and disobedience to the Word of God by God’s people.

Isaiah 59:1-3.... Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.

Jeremiah 2:5...Thus says the Lord: “What injustice have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me, have followed idols and become idolaters?”

Jeremiah 4:22... “For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are *silly (footnote = foolish) children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”

Never in the history of all mankind has God in His abundant love given so much revelation, information, knowledge, and wisdom to mankind.

Today we have the complete Word of God!

And not only do we have the Complete Word of God, we have many study tools available to us. We have the Hebrew, the Greek, and we have the internet and many Maps and Much History we can learn from.

And Yet in all the Vast knowledge and information we have gained from the Word of God, we have **MORE** sin and hypocrisy than ever and we are missing the **TWO** most important Qualities of **TRUE Christianity! LOVE AND HUMILITY!!!!**

God is Heart Broken because multitudes of God's People have LEFT THEIR FIRST Love OF JESUS and God's people are not walking in humble obedience to the Word of God! Without Love and obedience, people are traveling down the broad road to Eternal Damnation and do not realize it!

With the Word of God so available how is it possible that today, God's people can be walking with Pride and Idols in their hearts? (destroyed for lack of knowledge?)

With the Word of God so available how is it possible that today, God's people ignore the examples of the children of Israel? (destroyed for lack of knowledge?)

With the Word of God so available how is it possible today, God's people chose to ignore the Laws and commandments of God? (destroyed for lack of knowledge?)

With the Word of God so available how is it possible that today, God's people chose not to turn their back on the world? (destroyed for lack of knowledge?)

With the Word of God so available how is it possible that today, God's people do not Love God with a whole heart or walk humbly with the Lord? (destroyed for lack of knowledge?)

The answer to these and other questions is found in our last section called:

RETURNING TO OUR FIRST LOVE BY PURIFYING OUR HEARTS BY SELF DENIAL! WE DO NOT LOVE OUR LIFE EVEN UNTO DEATH!

So far we have looked at what our heart is, and the components that make up a person's heart. We have also looked at the sin that is in the hearts of man. We have also looked at how a person's heart with Idols can deceive a person and how Religious Idolatry can deceive a person into believing a religious denomination or beliefs are right, even when disobedient or conflicting to the Word of God. After looking at all of this we need to see our hope and how we can purify our hearts of all our idols by faith in Jesus! As we have learned in the Word of God, to Receive Eternal life we are to Love the Lord with ALL our Heart, ALL our Soul, ALL our Strength, and ALL our Mind and Love our Neighbor as our self. (Luke 10:25-28) **Anything** we love more than Jesus is an Idol in our Hearts. So now that we know what our Hearts consist of and the sins that are in our hearts, we must see how we can overcome the sins and wicked behavior that are deep in our hearts!

Luke 9:23-25.... “Then He (Jesus) said to them all, “if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My (Jesus) sake will save it. “For what *advantage (footnote= profit) is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and himself destroyed or lost?

As stated, this verse is repeated 6 times in three of the gospels.

(See Mat. 10:38-39, 16:24-26, Mark 8:34-36, 10:21, Luke 9:23-25, 14:27-33, 17:33)

This verse is repeated six times because it is one of the most important cornerstones, if not the most important cornerstones of the gospel.

In these verses Jesus lays out the foundational blueprint for His disciples.

(remember Christians are disciples of Jesus.) They are:

- 1) Disciples (i.e. Christians) deny themselves.
- 2) Disciples (i.e. Christians) Take up their cross daily.
- 3) Disciples (i.e. Christians) Lose their life for Jesus.

Let’s break theses down, because in these are the keys to cleaning our hearts.

1) Disciples deny themselves!

What do disciples deny themselves of? Disciples deny themselves of **The Lust of the flesh, the Lust of the eyes, and the pride of Life.** (1John 2:15-17) also. **Gal 5:19-21** Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Those disciples, who belong to Christ Jesus have Crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, (Gal 5:24) and those disciples will live by the Spirit and will put to Death to deeds of the Flesh. (Rom 8:13)!

So how is this all accomplished?

Let’s look at a few verses from the Word of God for some insight.

(Mat. 11:28-30 NASB; 1 Cor.2:16; 1Peter 4:1 cf. Phil 2:5-11)

In Matthew 11:29 Jesus tells us “...learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Then in 1 Cor.2:16 the Apostle Paul tells us “...we have the mind of Christ.”

Then the Apostle Peter tells us in 1 Peter 4:1 “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, **arm yourselves also with the same mind**, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

The Apostle Paul tells us also in Philippians 2:5-11 **Let this mind** be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but *made (footnote=**emptied Himself of His privileges**) Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of a man. And being found in appearance as a man, **He Humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross....**

As we have discussed, according to the Word of God, Christians are to be disciples of Jesus. As disciples of Jesus we are to LOVE as Jesus LOVES, and WALK as Jesus walked. This also means we are to be Humble as Jesus was Humble. To inherit Eternal Life, we must possess both, Love and Humility. We cannot have one, without the other, they work together.

Jesus tells us to learn from Him, that means we must learn to be Gentle and Humble **IN heart!** In 1 Cor. 2:16 Paul, tells us we have the mind of Christ. Then the beloved Apostle Paul tells us in the epistle to the Philippians that we are to have the same *mind (NASB = **HAVE THE SAME ATTITUDE**) that was in Jesus.

Jesus Emptied Himself of HIS PRIVILEGES and made NO REPUTATION and Humbled Himself by becoming OBEDIENT to death on the cross. (Phil 2:5-11)

So we see Jesus denied Himself of His Privileges and emptied Himself and was obedient to the sufferings not only on the cross, but also the sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane (praying in agony having sweat as great drops of blood. Luke 22:40-44) and the pre-crucifixion. (the beating and mocking before crucifixion Luke 22:63-65) Jesus was as a Lamb led to slaughter.

Jesus emptied Himself of All His desires to only please the Father. Jesus is our example of how to love! Jesus set all selfishness aside to do **ONLY** those things that would glorify and please God. As Jesus denied Himself of the Lust of the Flesh, The Lust of the eyes and the Pride of Life, We must do the same!!!

We are to empty ourselves of ALL Pride, Lust, Ambition, Reputation, and everything else that is not like Jesus!!!

Let's now look at some chapters and verses in the Word of God to see the example Jesus has set for us and how we are to suffer in the flesh and to die daily!

Isaiah 50:4-9 “The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak A word in season to *him who is* weary.
He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.
The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.
I gave My back to those who struck Me,
And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard;
I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. “For the Lord God will help Me;
Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed. He *is* near who justifies Me; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand together. Who *is* My adversary?
Let him come near Me. Surely the Lord God will help Me;
Who *is* he *who* will condemn Me? Indeed, they will all grow old like a garment;
The moth will eat them up.

Isaiah 53:1-12 Who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him, *There is* no beauty that we should desire Him.
He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.
But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. **He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,**
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.
Yet it pleased the Lord to *bruise (footnote= crush) Him; He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall
prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
He shall see the *travail (footnote=distress) of His soul, *and* be satisfied.
By His Knowledge My Righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.

THE PSALM OF THE CROSS

PSALM 22:1- 21 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?
O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;
And in the night season, and am not silent. But You *are* holy,
Enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You;
They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered;
They trusted in You, and were not ashamed. But I *am* a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me;
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*; “He trusted in the Lord,
let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!
But You *are* He who took Me out of the womb;
You made Me trust *while* on My mother’s breasts. I was cast upon You from birth.
From My mother’s womb You *have been* My God. Be not far from Me,
For trouble *is* near; For *there is* none to help. Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me *with* their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion. **I am poured out like water,**
And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones.

They look *and* stare at Me. They divide My garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots. But You O Lord, do not be far from Me;
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!
Deliver Me from the sword, My precious *life* from the power of the dog.
Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen!
You have answered Me.

Psalm 116:15....Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

HEBREWS 2:9-18 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me." Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Hebrews 5:1-9 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron *was*. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."

As *He* also *says* in another *place*: “You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek;” who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, **though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,**

Romans 8:9-18 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

1 Corinthians 2:16.....For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” **But we have the mind of Christ.**

1 Corinthians 11:1.....Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:31..I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily.**

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,** who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

PETER 4:1-6,12-16 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, **arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**, that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we *have spent* enough of **our past lifetime** in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason, the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit...

4:12-16 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent **that you partake of Christ's sufferings**, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. **Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.**

1 PETER 5:5-10 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and **be clothed with humility**, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. **But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.**

Revelation 12:10-11 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, **and they did not love their lives to the death.**

In these chapters and verses we have not only looked at the obedience Jesus had to the Father, but also the sufferings of self-denial that Jesus went through in His obedience. He did only those things that PLEASED the Father.

We have looked at Psalm 22 and the sufferings of the cross and the abandonment Jesus felt in dying on the cross. (see also Mat.27:45-46; Mark 15:33-34)

In Isaiah chapters 50 & 53 we see how Jesus was obedient to the Father and gave his cheeks to those who not only struck Him but, plucked out the beard and spit on Him. (50:5-6) We also seen how Jesus was a man rejected and despised of people. We have seen How the Father afflicted Jesus, how He was bruised and smitten, yet did not open His mouth. We also looked at How it pleased the Father to crush Jesus and see the travail of His soul. (53:3-7, 10-11)

We see in Hebrews that it was through suffering that Jesus was made perfect, and that through death, he would destroy Satan who had the power of death. (Heb.2:10,14)

We also see we are exhorted by both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter to have the same MIND of JESUS. It is having a mind of Humility and self-denial. This brings us to numbers 2&3

2 & 3) Disciples take up their cross daily 1 Corinthians 15:31 Disciple lose their life for Jesus (Rev.12:11)

How can people see, hear, and feel the love and compassion of Jesus **IN** us, if we are living and acting like our old pre converted self? (living in our sinful ways)

How can people see, hear, and feel the love and compassion of Jesus **IN** us, if we do not DIE to our old selfish, self-centered, **WORLDLY WAYS**?

How can people see, hear, and feel the love and compassion of Jesus **IN** us, if we are living like the world and are interested in the things of the world and are not bearing witness to the Word of God and having the testimony of Jesus? (Rev.1:2, 9)

Ask yourself the following Questions:

- 1) Does your family, friends and people you come in contact with, feel the Love, and compassion of Jesus in you, or do they still see and hear your old pre-converted person?

- 2) Does your family, friends and people you come in contact with, see and hear the humility of Jesus in you, or do they still see and hear you old pre-converted person?
- 3) Can your family, friends and people you come in contact with, see, feel and hear the love, compassion and humility of Jesus in you, or do you compromise the Word of God so you don't feel uncomfortable or make them feel uncomfortable?
- 4) Finally, do family, friends and people you come in contact with, see you one way and does God see you in another way? Is God dealing with you about secret sins or hidden idols and hypocrisies no one knows about but you and the Lord?

The only way for all people to see, hear, and feel the Love, compassion and humility of the Lord Jesus Christ in all of our hearts, is to live a life of self-denial of our old selfish, self-pleasing, self-gratifying ways.

This is called taking up our cross and dying daily!

It is only when we chose to love Jesus more than any and all ungodly thoughts, speech, attitudes, desires, habits, reactions or anything ungodly will we overcome the sin, ungodliness and worldliness in our hearts!

James 1:12-16....Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who Love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. **But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own *desires (*footnote NASB=LUST) and enticed.** Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

1 Corinthians 10:13-14...No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, **but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.**

Galatians 5:24....And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The Word of God is clear, a person tempted and drawn away from Jesus, the Word of God by their own lusts! This happens because we give into the flesh nature, and are not walking in the Spirit of God. When we are walking in the Spirit of God we are putting to death the flesh with its passions and lusts. (Cf. Gal 5:16 & Rom.8:12-17)

This is denying ourselves of the selfish, self-centered, self-gratifying Demonic fleshly nature, and laying down our lives on a cross and suffering in the flesh, as Jesus suffered in the flesh and died on a cross!

This is having the same mind and attitude as Jesus had when He humbled Himself to death on the cross. As we deny ourselves of pride and lust or anger or whatever sins torment us, we will endure the sufferings of the cross and cling to Jesus, the Word of God in giving those sins up.

John 15:13-14....Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

This is the walk of a disciple of Jesus!

When we do not act, behave, respond or talk like the people of the world, people can, and will see and hear a difference in us. In our time of temptation, we lay down our life and deny our self of our selfishness and cry out to Jesus and ask for grace and mercy, so we can receive strength not to give in to our weakness. We will suffer when we give up our old self, (this is called dying daily on the cross) but Jesus will be glorified as we overcome our old man and walk as Jesus walked in newness of life.

Walking in the newness of life simply put is, not giving into all your old ungodly habits, and desires by suffering in the flesh and not giving into temptation. This is how people will hear, see, and feel the love and compassion of Jesus in you.

Written by my own hand

A disciple of the Lord

Jesus Christ.

Frank Serritella

EMAIL ADDRESS: FRANK_SERRITELLA@YAHOO.COM