

The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation

Lesson 14. Being Born Again Requires Your Forceful Conviction And Steadfast Determination (De-Hellenizing Mental Muck)

*Please prayerfully take your time going through each section of this lesson and consider **both** the information and the questions. Your heartfelt responsiveness and determination matter to our Lord, so don't try to complete an entire lesson at once. Also, you'll reap greater benefit if you go through each lesson with others close to you.*

Section 1

Conviction And Determination Are Heartfelt And Persistent

Those are some pretty intense words in this title, so let's look at how we're using them.

Your **conviction** is your tenacious commitment to *be your Father's child* in response to the love He has shown you in Jesus.

Your **determination** is your *steadfast perseverance through His Spirit* to complete your pilgrimage on earth as your Father's trusting child.

As we've noted previously, wholeheartedly pursuing life in Christ through spiritual rebirth means you're *actively responsive* to His indwelling Spirit. This isn't just passive agreement—far from it! See how Jesus Himself describes the eager tenacity of those who've heard the Spirit's call and rushed to enter the Kingdom:

*"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the **kingdom of God** is being preached, and everyone is **pressing himself in with energy** [literal]"*
(Luke 16:16).

The forceful conviction and determination our Lord Jesus is calling for means you've counted the cost and chosen to press on no matter what. In a very real sense you're confronting *demonic fortresses of darkness* which are intent on forcing you back into sin and the world's *self-idolizing ways* (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Around a military fortification such as the walls of Jerusalem, "*killing zones*" are established to concentrate weapon fire for maximum killing effectiveness. Those who attack the walls must first courageously battle their way through the killing zone. Because it's very likely they may be killed in the attack, these soldiers have to "be dead" to everything else *beforehand*—"pressing forward with energy" in order to achieve their objective.



Unshakable resolve to press on in His Spirit was the *standard* set before those who embraced our Father's Covenant in Christ. That was the point of so many of the kingdom parables Jesus recounted. For the prize of being born again in His Spirit these early followers of Jesus were prepared to forfeit everything (Acts 4:31-37). Here again our Lord describes the *intense conviction and determination* which lead to a joyful *and* costly personal response:

*"The **kingdom of heaven** is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then **in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field**. Again, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and **sold everything he had and bought it**"* (Matthew 13:44-46).

We stated in Lesson 11 on repentance that it requires *single-minded conviction* to forsake your sin nature and your **power**

of self-will in order to become your Father's child in Christ. And it's a lifelong *pilgrimage of determination* to willingly yield to His power and grace to reach your salvation. That ongoing yieldedness to live according to our Father's will and purpose for you means daily dying to self, a *crucifixion of self* so that Christ might fully live in you:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by trust in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Press into the *unfailing love* of our Lord Jesus! Your heart determination to walk consistently in response to the Holy Spirit doesn't mean that you won't be tempted to give way to sin and self-will. There *will* be times when you find yourself deliberately or even unintentionally sliding off our Lord's path. You may be mentally and emotionally whipping yourself for your sin, or even curling up in a heap of despair that you gave in.

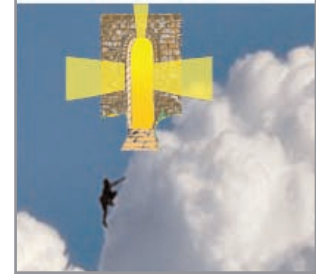
But what you did was no surprise to the Lord Who created us and is well aware of our weaknesses! Confess to Him with a humble heart, and repent so that in the fullness of His forgiveness and cleansing you can cling to the Spirit and return pressing on along His narrow way.

- How deep and *forceful* is your conviction and determination to follow in Christ's steps?
Passive Resolute
- In the parable of the hidden treasure the man forfeited everything he had to gain it. If you consider yourself born again, what did you let go of from your old life to become new in Christ?
- Would those who know you well say that your being born again has transformed you? Or, would they say you're pretty much the same?

"Lord, are there few who are saved? And [Jesus] said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able'" (Luke 13:23-24).

The word *strive* used here doesn't do the meaning justice. From the original Greek word we get *agonize* — to "strain every nerve to the uttermost toward the goal," as one translator puts it. That

You Strive to Steadfastly Persevere Until You Get Through The Gate.



means your life journey will take all the determination in you to persevere by His grace until you reach heaven's threshold! When our Lord tells you to "strive," He's charging you to ***"be intense and resolute in your determination to enter heaven."***

Keep in mind that Jesus says *many* will seek to enter and not be able. Doesn't that warning apply today to the many who think that *looking* toward heaven is the same as getting there?

Many, many within self-centered Christendom placate themselves by attending religious services each week. And many deceive themselves that ***"with all these people around me, I must be acceptable to our Lord."*** NOT SO!

Jesus adds this caveat to the narrow gate discourse: *"When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,'"* He will respond, ***"I don't know you or where you come from"*** (13:25). Does that sound like the ear-tickling message of "all 'good people' go to heaven" that's falsely preached in so many congregations, fulfilling Paul's words in 2Timothy 4:3?

The broad and easy road to destruction relies on human *self-will* that tries to conform Lord Jesus to how they *want* Him to be. But that's not the narrow way; that's the message of the false prophets, the thornbushes and bad fruit that are cut down and thrown into the fire (Matthew 7:15-20). Our Lord warns that even those who prophesied, drove out demons, and did miracles in His Name—but were *outside the Father's will*—practiced lawlessness. They will find the door closed to them.



*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of My Father** who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).*

*“**For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother**” (Matthew 12:50).*

*“The world and its desires pass away, but the man who **does the will of God lives forever**” (1John 2:17).*

Jesus was restating your deeply personal responsibility and privilege to authentically live as your Father's child, **doing HIS will!** Remember, being born again opens the door for you through the sacrificial life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But through His grace it's your determined pressing onward in loving Him and doing His will that assures your passage through the narrow gate. As your Lord's "brother" or "sister" you've been given the power to lovingly fulfill particular works and purposes that require your conviction and determination (see Ephesians 2:10).

- In your own words what do you think our Lord means when He commands you to *“strive to enter the narrow gate”*?

- Indicate how convicted and determined you are:
 Uncertain Convicted
 Hesitant Determined
- Where would you place yourself regarding doing our Father's will?
 Passive Active
- If our Father spoke to you right now, would He commend you for doing His will? If not, why not?
- Do those who know you well see you as *living* as a child of your heavenly Father? If so, what distinguishing characteristics of you as His child would they cite?

Section 2

Have You Really Counted The Cost?

Becoming your Father's child and pressing on with the Spirit in the conviction and determination you need to complete your earthly pilgrimage is *costly*. The goal of eternity with Jesus is so much higher than the goals and values you have before you follow Him. That's why He forewarns each potential disciple to make sure they've counted the cost to their *whole way of life* beforehand:

*“And **anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple**. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not **first sit down and estimate the cost** to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is **not able to finish it**, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’*

*Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not **first sit down and consider whether he is able** with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is **still a long way off** and will ask for*

terms of peace. ***In the same way, any of you who does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple***” (Luke 14:27-33).

Jesus voices a threefold warning here to being His disciple: *weighing the cost* in all dimensions of your life, *carrying your cross* (your willingness to put to death what your fleshly self desires), and *forsaking all you have*. “All you have” isn’t confined to your stuff. It encompasses all your values, goals, activities, and even companions that don’t align with His will. That means in place of those old ways, you’re *yielding willingly* to our Lord’s values, goals, activities, and relationships.



Counting the cost begins the moment you’re born again and are convicted to stop indulging your sin nature. In its place you’re determining to *maintain a clear conscience* toward your Father. Is it any wonder He calls for *baptism*—dying to yourself through immersion and rising up by trust to new life in Christ, as Paul says in Colossians 2:12—as an indicator of your conviction and determination?

“Whoever ***trusts and is baptized*** will be saved, but whoever does not trust will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

“We were therefore ***buried with Him through baptism into death*** in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may ***live a new life***” (Romans 6:4).

“***Baptism...the pledge of a good conscience toward God...***” (1Peter 3:21).

“So I ***strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man***” (Acts 24:16).

Before you responded to our Father’s call to become His child in Christ and live with

Jesus as LORD of your life, did you make really sure you *counted the cost*?

- How did your relationship with unbelieving family and friends change after you were born again?
 - Were you baptized as a follower of Jesus after you were born again? If not, why not?
 - Where would you place yourself when it comes to having a clear conscience?
- Tolerate Sin ••••• Repentant

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live united with Him. Remain deeply rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in your trust as you were taught, and overflow with thanksgiving”
(Colossians 2:6,7).

Because your Father in heaven purposes that your character and nature be increasingly conformed to that of His Son, what level of love-compelled conviction and determination do you need to have about Jesus? All of Scripture declares that He must be *LORD* of all of your life. As the axiom trumpets, “If Jesus isn’t *Lord of all* in your life, then He isn’t *Lord at all* in your life.” While all who love and serve Jesus revel in being called His friend and His family, there’s another relational aspect you need to weigh.

You can’t belong to Jesus or be counted among His family if you’re not determined to willingly and lovingly yield to Him *as* your Lord! His LORDSHIP in your life is evidenced by daily and intentionally yielding to HIS will and plans rather than your own. This means that Jesus has *all* power and authority to *rule* your life. Jesus frequently interchanges two words in relation to His disciples following His commands: *doulos* (slave) and *diakonos* (servant.) Let’s look closely at the Master/

beloved slave relationship.

If He is LORD of your life, then He's *your Master*—a relationship which repels modern ears but represents what transpired at the Cross. Paul puts it this way: *“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life”* (Romans 6:22). You are Christ's *beloved slave* (Greek *doulos* =slave) purchased by His blood to do His Father's will (see Revelation 5:9).

People who *know* Jesus intimately as their LORD always seek His will before they act, as is fitting for those who belong to Him. He's our all-worthy Master, and the only proper response to Him as the Lord we love and serve is the humility to do as He told His disciples: *“So likewise you, when you do all those things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable douloi/slaves. What we ought to do, we have done’”* (Luke 17:10).

If you live with Jesus as LORD of your life, it will cost you *everything* of who and what you used to be—because now you *belong* to Him. He *purchased* you as His own treasured possession (see Ephesians 1:14), and He has the right to tell you what to do, where to go, and what to say. He loves you so much that He won't rest as you continue to acquire His character and motives in your life journey, and by His grace are fulfilling the purposes of your heavenly Father just as He did.

If you're disturbed by the idea of living as a *slave* of Lord Jesus, remember that He Himself took the form of a *slave* (*doulos*) according to His Father's will, even to the point of sacrificial, obedient death (Philippians 2:7)! So if out of responsive love and trust you're determined to obey Him, then there's no room for you to be concerned with the outcome of what you do on His behalf (see John 15:20,21). The world sys-

tem always makes decisions and selects actions looking for a *positive outcome*. But in the Kingdom, you obey the King as His own regardless of the outcome.

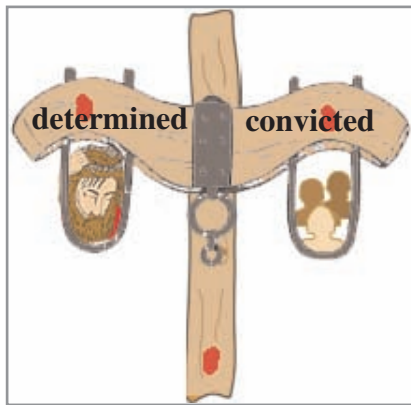
Determining to focus each day on Jesus as LORD of your life comes from the (agape) *love-based motivations* of your heart. *What* you do is not as important as *why* you do it. If *LOVE for Jesus as Lord of your life* is truly your heart motive, then you'll yearn to find out from His Word and from prayer *how* to live so that you please Him. Both your heart motives *and* the fruit of Christ-like actions and attitudes these motives produce in your daily life will be the authentic measure of your love and obedience to Jesus as LORD of your life.

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

If you are trusting Jesus as your Lord, He's pointing you to yet another dramatic change that will require your conviction and determination to alter your former motives, attitudes, and actions. In essence your Lord is telling you to *set aside* the staggering weariness, vexing anxiety, and frantic pursuit which mark the world's goals and values. His word to you? Take on *His yoke*, secured to Him whose heart is humble and gentle toward you.

From a Hebraic understanding, a “yoke” was total commitment to obedient trust. Wearing the “yoke” of the Kingdom of heaven means you're accepting God's sovereignty and therefore the right of Jesus as your King to direct your life. If you're yoked together with Jesus, you are totally committed to live a godly life through the power of His indwelling Spirit. Our Lord's yoke is easy and His bur-

den is light because *His will* is to do the *Father's will*, which must be *your will*.



Our Lord's yoke is an invitation to you to unite with Him bearing the heart burden He carried when He went to the cross for all of mankind. If you experienced true sorrow when you recognized your sins and repented, then your heart will be so full of love for Him that you'll want others to know the Jesus Who paid such a price for them. It's this love which has tasted sorrow that compels you to bear the yoke with your Lord, for He carries the weight of it. And in full appreciation of such love for you, your soul truly can be at rest.

You'll find that the worldly values and goals that unbelievers chase after to try to find happiness will become more and more trivial to you in your life journey with Christ—especially when you compare these things to a life that's determined to help as many people as possible spend eternity with our Lord. The goal of Jesus' life becomes *your* life goal:

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work."

"I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do" (John 4:34; 17:4; see also John 9:4).

"For whoever wants to save his life will lose

it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:35).

Your determination to abide in the One Who loves you so much will inspire you to harness your heart with His burden for the lost. Fully available for Him to *work through you*, you experience the love and compassion of your heavenly Father and long to extend that to others:

"Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1Timothy 2:4).

"And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us" (2Corinthians 5:20).

Keep in mind this too. When you purpose by grace to live to serve our Lord, you'll experience our Father's grief and sorrow over how His Son has been rejected. And you'll grieve as you realize how few in Christendom are determined to tell unbelievers what Jesus did on their behalf. When you realize how your heavenly Father grieves over such complacent spiritual sloth, your heart will break out of love for Him and will undergird your own determination to reach the lost.

This depth of determination to love and serve our Lord Jesus will also attract some unwelcome attention.

The moment you put yourself wholly in service to your Lord, watch out! All hell will come against you to test you to see if you're really convicted and determined to do your Father's work. (See 1Peter 5:8.)

- If Jesus *is* your Lord, He is able to command you as *His own beloved possession*. You are His precious servant, at His disposal to *do His will*. Can you see yourself yoked together with Him in this way? If not, how do you view your loving service to Jesus?
- Would those who know you well describe you

as someone who's deeply rooted in the Lord and overflowing with gratefulness? If they don't see you this way, how do they see you?

- Is your heart stirred by our Lord's burden for the lost so that you live as His ambassador to them? If you don't, what are you missing in your conviction and determination? If you do, what have you been doing to serve that way?

With conviction and determination to carry your cross, you receive Divine help.

"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death... I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength" (Philippians 3:10,4:13).



Section 3

Sanctification: The Steadfast Determination To Become More Like Jesus

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

The world's systems and ways have had a stranglehold on you your whole life, and you were likely oblivious to it! When you are born of the Spirit, though, your whole perspective is opened to rewiring by Him, especially your mind. So much has previously cluttered your thought life, your emotions, and the actions your will has directed you to take. So the process of ongoing *renewal of your mind* requires unwavering resolve on your part to identify the areas of dramatic change that are needed to learn what God wants to do in your new life.

The first area of renewal your mind must undergo is your identity as an independent, self-ruled adult. Being *your Father's child* is a whole new ballgame for you even if you've attended services all your life and have held leadership positions. The part of your mind in need of renewing is what it means to be a child of your Father from a kingdom perspective. That's because being a child means that your heart is *determined to trust Him* no matter what's going on in your life. Being yoked with our Lord Jesus equates with trusting in the *sovereignty of your Father* over you and over all the universe!

You may want to ruminate on our Lord's warning that you indeed need to change—to *turn and adopt a different path*—to even enter His kingdom:

"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3,4).

Throughout Matthew chapter 6 our Lord repeatedly used the intimate relational phrase "your Father" as He instructed His disciples. And when they asked Him to teach them how to pray He told them (and us) how to begin: "**Our Father in heaven**" (Matthew 6:9). The loving Fatherhood of God is more than a spiritual concept; it's a relational term calling for your *committed trust* in Him.

A little child is totally dependent on his or her parents for their well-being and care. So it's no small thing that Jesus reinforces such *loving dependence* as He praises His Father for choosing the very ones the world (and religious) systems hold in little regard:

"At that time Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because

You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure” (Matthew 11:25).

- In your innermost being do you see yourself as *a little child* of your heavenly Father? When you say the words, “*Our Father*” in the Lord’s prayer, what enters your heart other than just repeating a familiar invocation?
- In your own faith walk do you process what’s going on through the eyes of an adult, or with the heart of a humble, trusting child? If you don’t have a childlike understanding of yourself when it comes to your heavenly Father, what’s hindering you?
- Can you articulate several distinct ways in which *your mind* has been renewed during the course of your faith journey?

In Scripture the idea of being *sanctified* means **being set apart**, growing in holiness as you yield to the Spirit of Christ at work within you. Holiness in your thoughts, your attitudes, and your actions deepens as you *leave behind* the world’s sin-based values and increasingly take on the character qualities and love-based motivation of your Lord Jesus.

Being *set apart* means that you’re *separated away from* the goals, ways, and values which drive people who aren’t Christ’s own. Choosing to *put into practice* God’s good and righteous ways, commands, and instructions through the power of His Spirit strengthens your resolve to cast off and replace the old unChristlike ways you used to live by.

Often that’s hard to do, since the old ways had such a strong grip on your life. It’s in light of the pull of your old sinful life that you’re warned:

“Do not (agape) love the world or anything in the world. If anyone (agape) loves the

world, the (agape) love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever” (1John 2:15-17; see also James 4:4).

During your lifelong process of sanctification, your love for our Father and your desire to see Him glorified in your life intensify. As you read His Word from the perspective of a *love letter to you* from Him, you can readily discern His commands and instructions for your life and apply them even as you’re being changed by His grace into our Lord’s likeness!

Underlying every command of our Father is an *expression of love*, whether toward Him in our obedience or to one another by that same obedience to Him.

“This is how we know that we (agape) love the children of God: by (agape) loving God and carrying out His commands. This is (agape) love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome” (1John 5:2; see also 2John 1:6).

How could John confidently assure us that God’s commands are *not burdensome*? To answer this we need to go back to the Older Testament and take a closer look at *why* He gave the Israelites His righteous commands and instructions:

“Observe [My commands] carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deuteronomy 4:6).

Loving God and keeping His commands call for a heart of determination that’s fully yielded to the Spirit to work in you both the will and the desire to please

your Father (Philippians 2:12,13). This is patterned after His wonderful grace to the Israelites in weaving together *loving Him* and *keeping His commands* (Deuteronomy 6:5,6). Through their loving obedience God's chosen people would be **set apart** from the pagan ways of the peoples around them. And at the same time they would be *God's ambassadors* by revealing both Him and the wisdom of His commands to the nations.

That's precisely what our Lord Jesus wants to do with His own sheep. By grace He has **set us apart** from all other religions and from the control of our flesh and the devil as we keep His commands *out of love* for Him and for each other (1John 5:2).

It's love for your Father and love for His children that removes all sense of burden in obeying His commands. You want others to know Him and the wisdom of His commands!

You'll discover with delight that as you apply His commands to your life, He opens your eyes to *see His wisdom* in your way of life. Conveying your Father's wisdom—HIS perspective—is the underlying determination behind the commission our Lord gave His followers for all time:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore going [through life] disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

It's your SELF-denying *agape* love for our Lord and for the unbelievers you encounter that motivates you to show them Jesus and teach them His ways.

- Do you view your Father's commands as burdensome, constraining how you'd *really* live if it weren't for Him?
- Do you see yourself being *set apart from the world's ways* as you become more like Jesus? Indicate the nature of your current values.
Worldly Christ-like
- In the Newer Testament alone are 1,050 commands and instructions of how your Lord would have you live as His ambassador. What percentage of His commands do you think you've put into practice in your life out of loving responsiveness to Him?
0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
- Do those who know you well see the *wisdom of God's Word* guiding your life?
- Would other followers of Jesus who know you well describe you as “predisposed and primed” to make Him and His Word known to unbelievers?

Dire Consequences Await If You Don't Remain Convicted And Determined

Earlier we recounted how our Lord Jesus told you to *count the cost* of your journey to your salvation, pressing onward with conviction and determination by His Spirit and in His grace (Luke 14:27-33). He then follows those illustrations with this warning:

*“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is **fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile**; it is **thrown out**. He who has ears to hear, let him hear”* (Luke 14:34,35).

If the “salt” of your conviction and determination loses its flavor, it can't be re-seasoned. And if the “salt” of your initial conviction to follow Jesus as His disciple loses its flavor—its presence to make Him known—and your determination to press on wanes and ceases altogether,

your life regarding His kingdom isn't even fit for the dung heap. And that's not all. If "flavorless salt" is put into the ground, it will destroy the nutrients and keep plants from growing. Similarly, your "flavorless" words and indecisive life will discourage unbelievers you know from seeking the authentic Jesus: **"If you're a Christian, I'm not interested!"**—a "Christian" who defames the name of our Lord.

Your lack of conviction and determination is most obvious in your **fear** and **anxiety**. In Matthew 6:25-34 our Lord Jesus admonishes you time and again, *"Do not worry."* Worry fans mistrust in your Father, the only One to Whom you can entrust your life no matter what happens:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

John clearly urges followers of Jesus to love as our Lord does, and *overcome* fear:

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (1John 4:18).

Fear and anxiety aren't just sins; rather they reveal your *lack of love for and trust in* your Father, and therefore your lack of conviction and determination to strive by grace to enter through the narrow gate. That fear and distrust will have awful consequences at the Judgment Throne:



"But the cowardly fearful, the untrusting, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Our Lord warned, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven."* What blocks their entry?

- > **The opposite of conviction is doubt and uncertainty.**
- > **The opposite of determination is hesitation and indecision.**
- > **The absence of conviction and determination to keep loving and trusting your Father and your Lord Jesus results in fear and anxiety.**

When you're even *tempted* to give way to fear and anxiety, your Father is warning you to repent. If you let fear and anxiety remain and grow, you're sabotaging your pilgrimage to your salvation:

"If [you] have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, [you] are worse off at the end than [you] were at the beginning. It would have been better for [you] not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn [your] back on the sacred command that was passed on to [you]" (2Peter 2:20-21; also Hebrews 6:4-6).

- Are you plagued by habitual fear and/or anxiety? If yes, why? What brings it on?
- How "salty" as Christ's own are you? Unsalty ••••• Diluted Salt ••••• Salty
- Has your saltiness changed since you've been born again? If yes, how has it changed?
- Are there indicators in your life that may be showing you you're not headed for the narrow gate? If yes, what are they?

