

Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character

Only A Few Will Find It!

October 30, 2013

Introduction

“The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty...”

(Isaiah 2:12).

Recently we were traveling, and along the way were able to spend several hours in Washington, D.C. What a deceit-filled city encompassed by the oppression of racism and self-interest! We could really sense in our spirit that the Federal Government is incapable of saving this nation from collapse, whether financial, social or moral. **Repentance and humbly crying out to our Father for deliverance** is the ONLY way a national holocaust may possibly be averted.

To their own detriment self-identified Christians throughout this nation lack the humility to repent and plead with our Father to deliver us. Their misplaced confidence in the Federal Government is only contributing to the forthcoming disaster.

Throughout our time away we felt as if our Lord was giving us the opportunity to survey the spiritual condition of this nation. Although we met some wonderful people who love our Lord Jesus dearly and serve Him out of that love, the overall condition we encountered was a *mental prison of self-satisfaction, even total resistance to serving Him wholeheartedly.*

A prevalent indicator of those who call themselves “Christian” but have such little regard or will to wholly serve our Lord is that spiritual concerns seem *foreign* to them. Any time discussion which focused on serving our Lord was brought up, few even engaged us or asked questions about personal application. The majority just changed the subject. It was disheartening.

Christians are being seduced regularly by religious systems. People who claim to belong to Jesus have no intention of following Him by self-sacrificially picking up their cross daily and fervently serving Him in loving, obedient trust. Christianity in this nation is filled with too much *know* and not enough authentic *show*. And grievously, hell is filled with those who “knew” their Bible but failed to do the Father’s will (Matthew 7:21).

Our Lord Jesus earnestly warns each of us, *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are the ones going in through it. But small is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and few are the ones finding it”* (Matthew 7:13,14). It’s important that you grasp that the gate is just as narrow as He says, and that by His grace only a few find it. The Greek word used for *find* indicates that a person has *searched for it intentionally with purpose*. The search is neither casual nor haphazard.

Reflect on these questions and discuss each with someone close to you in the faith.

- **Are you really sure that you’re on the narrow road heading for the narrow gate? Take the time to explain to someone why you’re sure you’re on that pathway.**
- **Look inside yourself: Does it really, really matter to you that you’re one of those who will enter the narrow gate? Is it a priority for your life? Do you even think about it?**
- **When you think of your family and others you care about, how compelling a burden is it for you that they are on the narrow road and will enter the narrow gate? In what ways have you come alongside to help them?**

Pursuit of the things of this world is in direct opposition to our Lord's goals and purposes for you. Take seriously His command about this conflict between His ways and the world's objectives: *"Store up for yourself treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:20,21).

In our travels we barely had a conversation in which people had their hearts set on the treasures they were storing up for themselves in heaven. All too often even among Christians the pursuit of spiritual treasure is irrelevant because they're unabashedly pursuing **materialism** and **worldly values**. Heaping up the "stuff" the world values and dashing to attain the admiration, recognition, and "security" they esteem are sin nature-dominated motives. Those who are ruled by the world place greater emphasis on what they have and on their own personal comfort than on becoming more like our Lord Jesus and wholeheartedly doing our Father's will (Romans 12:2).

If you're ensnared, be warned by Jesus Himself: *"No one can serve [lit., as a slave] two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money"* (Matthew 6:24). If you're engaged in religious activities but doggedly pursuing the world's values, you're in sorry company: *"These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me"* (Matthew 15:8).

Reflect on these questions and discuss each with someone close to you in the faith.

- **How do you gauge yourself: materialistic and worldly, or someone others can testify that they see the character of Jesus and His purposes growing in you?**

- **Do your conversations with other Christians contain anything that reveals your desire to store up treasures in heaven? If not, have you considered *why* your discussions are void of this crucial eternal goal?**
- **When you're around people who are mature in the Lord and serve Him wholeheartedly, do you ask them questions about their heart motives? Are you at all interested in their pilgrimage and how the Spirit has been sanctifying them as they've replaced unholy ways with those that mirror Jesus? If you have no inner zeal to ask questions, what does it say about you and your own desire to become more Christ-like and do your part in His Kingdom?**
- **Here's a challenge for you: Prayerfully read through Matthew chapter 10. In essence it encapsulates:**
 - (1) *Our Lord's recruitment* of everyday people to do tremendous things in His Name.
 - (2) *The rejection* you'll experience by unbelieving relatives, and possible persecution by religious and government officials.
 - (3) *The depth of trust* you need in Jesus so you don't give way to worry or be concerned for your own welfare.

If you find yourself embarrassed or unwilling to live by His standards of being His disciple, does that possibly indicate you really don't belong to Him? Please don't let this question go unanswered!

Can you even imagine the sorrow of our heavenly Father as He sees Christendom in this nation and knows that that the lives of so many who think they are His children are fruitless and bring Him no glory? We can only reiterate our Lord's warning: **Truly the gate and road are narrow. He has made clear that only the few who know and love and follow Him as Lord are going to find it!**

You've seen the news about this nation and how its condition is becoming more and more dire. The growing hopelessness that anything will improve is the curse we brought upon ourselves. We've forsaken our Lord and His Word in so many areas of life that this judgment is richly deserved. How senseless we've been! His warning is true for us today:

"If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor My Name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor Me" (Malachi 2:2).

We've spoken and written to so many Christians of their need to repent. Yet most just become defensive, or give excuses for why their lives fall so short of our Lord's call them. How His Name is brought down by those who think they have been set apart in Christ yet whose very lives ridicule Him.

"To whom can we speak and give warning? Who will listen to us? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the LORD is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it" (Jeremiah 6:10).

It's so easy for those within Christendom to take up a judgmental attitude as the various facets of the Federal Government act like warring insects. But the political impasse is only revealing on a mass scale the tensions which are going on in households throughout this nation—Christian families included.

Few Christians know how to biblically resolve the situations that hurt each other, whether in their family or faith community. As a result, the love of our Lord Jesus doesn't grow in their hearts, nor do they

know how to cooperate together to love Him by extending His Kingdom.

Soulsh Dominion:

The Oblivion Blinding Your Mind, Will and Emotions Through Strongholds and/or Your Sin Nature

In Lifebyte 68. *What God's People Must Do To Regain Spiritual Power*, we wrote extensively about soulsh dominion. Those who have given way to it respond only to the rule of their soul—their mind/will/emotions—silencing the truth and love of Jesus that His Spirit would have them believe. Deceived by the voice of inner lies, they ignore the truth. It's the prison so many Christians in this nation have chosen, thereby negating for themselves the freedom our Lord Jesus offers. As a result of this soulsh bondage, we've met only a few whose hearts are motivated to reach out and authentically love others *as* He would love them.

Have you recognized that the majority of Christians in this land are *emotionally wounded* and either don't perceive it, or refuse to be free?

Christendom is filled with emotionally wounded people who are oblivious to the hurt they cause others because they are blinded by their own emotional scars. The Christianity that so predominates in this land could best be described as a "*conglomeration of the walking wounded*."

Because so few are willing to have their own unChrist-like toxic motives confronted, they're unable to expose the toxicity in others in the faith—an outworking of love which would help free the captive. And when people refuse to have their unChrist-like darkness exposed, they and those around them remain trapped in the emotional prison

of the walking wounded. Within this prison they become addicts. We're not referring mainly to people who are controlled by substance addiction, but rather to those beset by **behavioral addiction**.

Even though both types of addiction flow out of wounded emotions, behavioral addiction is far more difficult to correct than substance abuse. Behavioral addiction is the basis to the satanically-inspired dependence on *serotonin* and *dopamine* release within the brain that's ruining so many marriages and trapping children. Behavioral addiction has become an *intergenerational curse*. [We discuss this further on pages 5 & 6.]

A behavioral addiction refers to whatever absorbs you so intensely that you fail to fulfill your responsibility for the safety and/or dignity of others. You can recognize a behavioral addiction because it makes you feel good when you're doing it and you go through withdrawal when you can't do it. When a behavioral addiction is pointed out by another person, the addict has a hard time accepting what's wrong with what they're doing because to them it seems like a "positive thing."

The most noticeable effect of behavioral addiction within Christianity is widespread oblivion to actively meeting the God-given needs of others. The two needs which are most often unmet are *dignity* and the ability to provide the *intimate love and companionship* which the Spirit of Christ would give through each of His own.

Christians today do more to rob each other of dignity than they do to uphold it. And that those who profess to be Christian lead this nation in divorce is a bleak testimony to the lack of intimate love and companionship in relationships. The overwhelming number of

emotionally wounded who've given way to behavioral addiction is a result of several factors. Here are two:

- being raised in homes that lacked the love of Jesus and the foundations of His Word.
- being outsourced to humanist educational structures and/or to religious systems for spiritual training.

If you go to our website and put the word *outsource* or a derivative like *outsourcing* into our Search box, you'll see how often we warn about relying on others to educate and spiritually train your children. In fact, most of you reading this teaching have been outsourced! How did this come about?

The concept of Sunday school began in England in the 1800s to spiritually train impoverished and orphaned children. Over time it's become the means for complacent parents to outsource their children to receive spiritual training by others. Studies abound that reveal how ineffective contemporary Sunday school programs and youth work have been to instill trust-based faith in Jesus.

Generations ago children were raised with a *continuity of relationships*, people who both cared for them and knew each other. Before government-sponsored education came into being, a teacher was hired by a community and became a relational part of it by interacting with the parents and family on a social level. Government-sponsored education not only severed this relational connectedness but also introduced Humanist, anti-God curricula taught by those imbued with it through their college training. This kind of educational outsourcing not only removes any relational continuity; it also creates in the child attitudes of **independence** and **rebellion**. For several generations parents have inadvertently emotionally scarred their children through intentional outsourcing.

For further insight, see at our website:

Soulish Dominion: Lifebyte 68. “*What God’s People Must Do To Regain Spiritual Power*”

Freedom From Captivity: Lifebyte 58. “*Do You Dare Ask Yourself?*”

The Need for Sanctification: Teaching E-mail 60. “*Have You Gone To The High Places At Least Once?*”

Addictive Behavior: Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character #22. “*Do You Use Your Spiritual Freedom To Indulge Your Sin Nature?*”

Outsourcing: Hebraic Article, “*Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations*”

Following Jesus As Your Lord Means Not Only What You Do But Also What You Won’t Do

Addiction to the stimulation of serotonin and dopamine even among Christians is producing *decreased interpersonal responsibility*—and that negatively effects the quality of marriage and family relationships. These neurotransmitters in the brain play a major role in both substance and behavioral addiction. Serotonin and dopamine are the reward pathways which prompt overtly sinful behaviors: heroin addiction, food addiction, sex addiction, gambling addiction, peer-approval addiction, and two you’ve probably never even considered—**cell phone and texting addiction**. Staying addicted means that your sin nature has control over you, and your slavery to sin can also mean you don’t belong to Jesus:

*“Those who live according to the sinful nature **have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, should not be controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ**” (Romans 8:5,8,9).*

Uncontrolled cell phone use and text messaging comprise a behavioral addiction that is relationally destructive.

Recent research indicates that both **materialism** and **impulsiveness** drive the obsession with cell phone use and text messaging. It’s a behavioral addiction that’s fed by people’s sin nature impulsively seeking *instant gratification*. Continual cell phone use and texting (as well as the compulsion to spend hours a day on social media) also cause people to become relationally oblivious. For instance, their facial muscles become weakened and they fail to show others appropriate, affectionate affirmation through facial expression. A particular negative effect of this addiction has been found especially among cell phoning/texting mothers regarding their children. The kids learn to give blank faces just like their techno-addicted moms do.

So widespread is this addiction that it’s even been given a label:

Nomophobia is the fear of being out of mobile phone contact. The term is an abbreviation for “*no-mobile-phone phobia*.” This anxiety can become such an invasive influence that sufferers will go as far as experiencing an anxiety attack if they don’t have access to their phones.

Fixation on cell phoning and texting has grown into a “**digital security blanket**” for the emotionally wounded, behaviorally addicted. The addict’s awareness of others physically around them is severely diminished. That is, they become oblivious to both their responsibility for **interpersonal interaction** and for the **affectionate support** which others

who have right to it should be receiving from them. Think about it from the perspective of the person who has been pushed aside and robbed of dignity while the cell phone/texting addict feeds his or her serotonin and dopamine dependence under the guise of “having to communicate.” Today even many among the older generation have succumbed to this behavioral addiction!

Cell phone/texting addiction is no different than gambling or substance abuse addiction. The addict is striving to activate the pleasure centers in the brain. The cell phone/texting user associates the feeling of pleasure or a sense of security through the self-induced release of serotonin and dopamine—the same response any addict seeks.

To what lengths do cell phone/texting people go to get that brain chemical rush? A recent study reported by MSNBC stated that users check their cell phones as often as *50 times per day*. And a survey revealed that 75% of people polled admitted they use their phones in the bathroom!

There’s no doubt the addiction is genuine. Society is quickly becoming dependent on cell phoning/texting for more than just communication. Actively using a cell phone, or just simply having it nearby, is creating an externally-induced sense of pleasure or security which produces a very real serotonin/dopamine addiction in the brain.

National Cell Phone and Driving Statistics

- About **660,000 drivers** use cell phones at any given time during daylight hours in the United States.
- Texting while driving makes a driver **23x more likely** to crash.
- Drivers talking on a cell phone are **4x more likely** to have a car accident. Hands-free calling is no safer; the *mind* is still distracted.

- More than **3/4 of drivers** said they would likely answer calls while driving, and *rarely consider traffic situations* when deciding to use their phone.
- Answering a text **takes away your attention** for about **five seconds**. That’s enough time to travel the length of a football field.
- Studies have found that texting while driving causes a **400% increase** in time spent with eyes off the road.

Do you think our Lord Jesus would jeopardize others to feed a sin nature-dominated addiction? Would He negate the dignity of a child who is in His presence so that He could talk on a cell phone or text? Does He consider it a sin for you to use a cell phone or text so that you put others at risk or rob them of dignity and love (1John 3:6,9)? If you willingly jeopardize the lives of other people who are made in the image of God and for whom Jesus died, aren’t you on the broad path to destruction giving way to the world’s self-absorbed values and goals?

If you’re addicted to your cell phone or texting, you really need to answer the above questions for yourself.

