

How Can We Deny God And Christ?

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Let's begin by turning to Matthew chapter 10 and verse 32 and see a promise of a blessing from God and from Jesus Christ. We will tie this in to the preparation for Passover as we move forward. Matthew chapter 10 and verse 32, Christ tells us that:

Matthew 10:32. *Whosoever shall confess me [referring to Himself] before men, [He says,] him [or her] will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

And we certainly want that to happen. We want Christ to confess us before the Father. Now the Greek word "confess" is Strong's 3670. In The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Zodhiates, the word confess means *to profess or acknowledge*. So if we profess or acknowledge Christ before men, then Christ will profess or acknowledge us to the Father. And that's something we all want very badly. Webster says, *Confess is to confess one's allegiance to*. So if we profess or confess our allegiance to Christ, then Christ is going to do the same for us in front of the Father.

As I said, we all want that. We desire that. But notice the next verse, Matthew 10 and verse 33. This is the scary one! It says:

33) But whosoever shall deny me before men, ... (KJV)

Now let's understand this is publicly. This is in the presence of other people. This isn't in your private prayers at night. This is in front of human beings out in the world.

33) But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)

The Greek word for deny is Strong's 720. And it's translated twenty-nine times in the New Testament as deny and twice as refuse. And it means, obviously, *to deny*. It also means *not to accept or to reject or to refuse something that's been offered*—in this case, salvation; in this case, a calling.

So Christ is telling us that if we refuse Him or we deny Him or we refuse His gifts or we reject Him before men, then He's going to reject us before the Father.

Now we won't turn there but in John 10 and verse 30, Christ also says:

John 10:30. *I and my Father are one. (KJV)*

So we put these scriptures together. It's very plain that if we reject Christ, we also reject God. If we reject God, we also reject Christ. And if we do that before men, then the two of them will reject us. So with Passover coming and as we examine ourselves, it's time

to look back over the year and ask the question: Have I denied Christ? Have I rejected God the Father during this year? Now obviously we don't intend to do that. We don't set out to do that. But have we done it, even unknowingly or unwittingly or in a moment of weakness?

So the title of the sermon is:

How Can We Deny God and Christ?

And I think we might be a little surprised in ways that we can do that and don't intend to.

Point Number One: We deny them by denying the existence of the Father and/or the Son.

We deny that they exist. Now we might say in the Church, "Well, I know they exist." Well, let's hold that thought and let's keep going here. Let's go to 1 John chapter 2 and we're going to read verses 22 and 23. Notice what the apostle John says. John writes in very short sentences, very straightforward and very clear. And this couldn't be any more clear.

1 John 2:22. *Who is a liar but he that [denies] that Jesus is the Christ?... (KJV)*

He said, "If you deny that, you're a liar." He goes on to say:

22b) ...He is antichrist [if you deny Christ], [he] that [denies] the Father and the Son. (KJV)

And as I said, you deny one, you deny them both.

23) Whosoever [denies] the Son, the same [has] not the Father: (but) he that [acknowledges] the Son [has] the Father also. (KJV)

They are tied together because they are the two God beings who have eternally existed. You deny one, you deny both.

Now the apostle Peter denied Christ. He denied Him on the night that Christ was betrayed. Let's go to Luke chapter 22 and we'll read verses 54 through 57. Now understand Pentecost had not come. God's spirit was with Peter but not in Peter. In that sense, Peter was not converted at that time. And Peter was a human being, like all of us, and we're going to see that Peter was put under a great deal of stress. We have to ask ourselves: Even after conversion, if I was put in this stress, how would I react?"

Luke 22:54. *Then [they took] him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house [referring to Jesus Christ]. And Peter followed afar off. (KJV)*

Well, there's a hint right there. Peter was not muscling his way up forward and saying, "I'm part of Him. I want to be part of Him. I want to be there with Him." He was lagging behind and putting distance between himself and Jesus Christ.

55) And when they had kindled a fire in the [middle] of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. (KJV)

Trying to get a little warmth! I'm sure puzzled and very upset. Verse 56:

56) But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked [on] him, ... (KJV)

She was checking him out because she remembered him.

56b) ...and [she] said, This man [referring to Peter] was also with him [referring to Jesus Christ]. (KJV)

Now, Peter is now at a crossroads. "Do I deny Christ or do I accept Jesus Christ? Do I profess Jesus Christ? Do I profess that I know Him?"

57) And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. (KJV)

We understand that Peter wept bitterly after that, but here a man—who had traveled with Christ, saw Christ, saw the miracles—denied Him in front of men and women. The Jews did it also. The Jews denied Jesus Christ. Let's go to Acts chapter 3 and we'll read verses 11 through 15. In Jerusalem in that whole area, the Jews had an opportunity to accept Jesus Christ, but they refused Him.

Acts 3:11. *And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, ... (KJV)*

And if you had been lame from birth and somebody healed you, you would want to grab onto them and hold onto them. And that's exactly what this man did. It says:

11b) ... all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. (KJV)

Well, of course! A man who has been lame rises up and walks! All of us would greatly wonder.

12) And when Peter saw it, he [said] unto the people, ... (KJV)

Now this is a different Peter. This is a man with God's holy spirit. But notice his attitude. He says:

12b) ... [You] men of Israel, why [do you] marvel at this? [He says,] or why look so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? (KJV)

He could have taken the credit. He could have said, "Look at us! Look at me!" But he says: "Why are you so amazed as though we had some kind of power—men, human beings had some kind of power?" Then in verse 13, he relates it in terms that they would understand. He said:

13) The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, [has] glorified his Son Jesus;... (KJV)

Notice what he says:

13b) ... whom [you] delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, ... (KJV)

Remember Pilate said, "There's this criminal here. He's committed murder. And you want me to release him? This man Jesus has done nothing wrong. I can find nothing wrong." And they were screaming and demanding that the murderer be set free and they were denying that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of God and did so in the presence of Pilate. Going on:

*13 continued) ... when he was determined to let him go. [Yes!]
14) But [you] denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; (KJV)*

They were screaming in their denial of Jesus Christ!

15) And killed the Prince ... (KJV)

And the Greek word for "prince" means *author*.

15) [Killed the Author] of life, whom God [has] raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. (KJV)

The whole nation of Judah denied Jesus Christ. And it's going to happen and is happening in our day. Let's go to 2 Peter 2 and verse 1. People today—people that have God's holy spirit—are being led astray to deny Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 2 and verse 1, this is a prophecy from Peter. He says:

2 Peter 2:1. But there were false prophets also among the people, ... (KJV)

Yes! The nation of Israel was filled with false prophets, decade after decade, millennia after millennia. Notice what he says though.

1b) ... even as there shall be false teachers among you, ...(KJV)

He is referring to every generation since that day. And it applies even more so in this last generation. And guess what they're going to do?

1 continued) ... [They will privately] bring in damnable heresies,... (KJV)

But notice this!

1 continued) ... even denying the Lord that bought them,... (KJV)

They will deny Jesus Christ! And as a result:

1 continued) ... bring upon themselves swift destruction. (KJV)

There are people who deny that Jesus Christ eternally existed. They say, "Christ was created." Now if that isn't denying Jesus Christ, I don't know what is! But they are diminishing Jesus Christ. And that is a damnable heresy. And those who say so are false teachers.

Back then denying Christ or denying God, that Christ (God) came in the flesh and died for our sins was a heresy that occurred back then. Let's go to 1 John chapter 4 and look at the first three verses. There was a heresy making the rounds then. This is a good admonition for all of us. John tells us:

1 John 4:1. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, ...(KJV)*

Just because somebody says something, you don't jump on it and believe it. He says:

1b) ... but try the spirits whether they are of God: ...(KJV)

Look into the Bible. Look at the fruits.

1 continued) ... because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (KJV)

And many with the internet and with modern communication, false prophets can spread their doctrines around the earth.

2) Hereby know [you] the Spirit of God: Every spirit that [confesses] that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (KJV)

That God died. God came down to earth as a man and He died. And if the Father had not resurrected Him, He would have remained so. That is the truth! But there were those who preached a wrong doctrine, a false doctrine.

Verse 3:

3) And every spirit that [confesses] not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist [meaning against Christ], whereof [you] have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (KJV)

It is in the world today. Let me give you a personal example. Dorothy grew up as a Methodist in their home with her three other sisters. Her mom and dad were very devout Methodists and when their time comes to be resurrected, as Christ said, they are not far from the Kingdom of God. They lived a moral life, an ethical life, and have taught their four daughters those same rules and those same understandings. And yet Dorothy's oldest sister—Dorothy is the second one in the pecking order—but Dorothy's older sister and her husband, we were visiting with them and talking with them. And her husband came up to me and he knows that I'm a minister and we were having a religious discussion.

They grew up Methodists. They were married in the Methodist Church. He is a retired professor at Western Washington University in Bellingham. And they attend a congregational church now that's "a little far out" we would say. And he mentioned to me that he does not believe that Christ is the Son of God. He believed Christ was a man who had a good philosophy. And he goes to church every Sunday and yet believes in just the sayings of a man who had a good day.

Now if that isn't denying Christ, I don't know what is. And there are many, many Christian churches today who view Christ as just a man. "He was a nice man. He had nice sayings. And it would be good, if we could, to kind of live by those sayings, if we get around to it, but He was not God in the flesh. He was not God who divested Himself of His eternal life and came in the flesh to pay the penalty for our sins."

And if we deny the existence of God and Christ, we do so by not believing in them, by not believing what they say in the Bible. And we deny God and Christ when we think that God doesn't see us naked, that God doesn't hear every word that we say, know every thought that we have, every deed that we commit. We deny God and Christ if we don't believe that—believe what He says in His word.

So the first way we can deny God and Christ is by not believing in their existence. And that takes on many forms and we should be careful about that. But that is not something that is primary to God's people today.

Point Number Two: We deny God and Christ if we don't love them with all our heart.

We were in Matthew chapter 10 earlier. We read verse 32 and verse 33. Now look at the very next scripture in Matthew 10 and verse 34. It follows right after Christ's comment about denying Him.

Matthew 10:34. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: ... (KJV)

The subject is denying Christ.

34b) ...I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35) For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. (KJV)

Why? Because you have an opportunity of accepting Christ or refusing Christ.

36) And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (KJV)

It applies to women too. And we've experienced that as God's people. Why is He saying this?

37) He that [loves] father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: ... (KJV)

If we don't put God and Christ first, if we don't love them with all our heart, if we love human beings, if we love physical possessions, then shame on us! We're denying God and Christ if we do so.

37b) ... and he that [loves] son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38) And he that [takes] not his cross, (KJV)

That means *his burden* because we know that Christ had to carry His cross to the place where He was crucified. That was a burden that He had to carry. He says, "If you don't take up your cross and you don't follow after Me, you're not worthy of Me."

39) He that [finds] his life shall lose it:... (KJV)

If we put our life before God and Jesus Christ, if we love ourselves more than God and Jesus Christ, we deny them. And at this time prior to Passover we need to examine ourselves to see if we put anything before God and Christ including our own life.

39b) ... he that [loses] his life for my sake shall find it. (KJV)

That's a promise!

40) He that [receives] you [receives] me, and he that [receives] me [receives] him that sent me. (KJV)

Again tying God and the Son together! We deny the Father, we deny the Son, if we do not love them more than anything including ourselves. If we do not love the Father first of all, we deny His supremacy. And if we do not love them more than all, we deny their love for us. Because you remember Christ died before we were ever born. Christ loved us more than His own life before we were ever born! And He tells us—this is a sermon subject in and of itself—but He says, "I love you with this tremendous godly, perfect *agape* love. I want you to love others in the same manner." And if we don't do that, if we

don't love God with all our heart and love our neighbor as ourselves, we deny them and we deny the love that they had for us in the very beginning.

So let's understand the second point. We deny God and Christ by not loving them with all of our heart. And we need to make sure at this time of year we indeed do that.

Point Number Three: We deny God and Christ by denying their power and their authority.

This gets more close to home. This is an area where all of us have fallen behind, have been guilty of. If we do not recognize and accept their power and their authority we deny them. Let's go to 2 Timothy chapter 3 and we're going to read verse 1, the beginning of verse 2, and then verse 5. Timothy is talking about the perilous days that are going to come at the last time. We're going to focus in on one particular verse.

*2 Timothy 3:1. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
2) For men shall ... (KJV)*

And then he goes on to tell what is going to happen. We want to focus on verse 5. He says:

5) Having [men shall have] a form of godliness; ..., ... (KJV)

All the appearance of being in God's church, being very religious and righteous, but notice:

5b) ...but denying the power thereof: (KJV)

Oh, they can have a form of godliness, but if they deny the power of God, he says, "You better turn away from them. You better not have fellowship with them. You better not listen to them if they deny the power of God."

Now how does that happen? How can we in God's church deny the power of God? Well, for one thing we can take credit for what God does. We take the power to ourselves and don't give God the credit. And I've heard and seen various groups, churches today in the greater Church of God, but various corporations or administrations say, "Look what we have done! Look what our group has done! Look what our church has done!" In other words, they're not saying, "Look what God has done," but "Look what we, as a collection of human beings, have done!" Taking credit for things that God does!

Also it is quite common these days to give man the credit for what God does. "Look at what Mr. So-and-so is doing. Look at what Mr. So-and-so is accomplishing." Rather than saying what people should say which is "Look at what God is doing through So-and-so!" The man is nothing. God says, "I can raise up stones to do what you're doing."

Man is nothing and yet people will give a man the credit and not give God the credit! That's denying the power and the authority of God and Jesus Christ.

Also in the area of healing I've seen people give a drug the credit. I've known people who have been anointed. They've been prayed for. Brethren have prayed for them. They take a drug. They feel better and then they give the drug the credit as though the drug did it. Maybe the drug helped. Maybe it didn't. But overall they made an appeal to God. They did what they could do. But God should get the credit! Look what God has done—and not some drug or some procedure or some operation.

Another way we can deny the power and the authority of God and Jesus Christ is to give ourselves the credit as human beings. And I've done it in the past. I'm sure you have too when you say, "I've really changed," as though I did it by my power or authority or "I've really overcome!" And we can look back, particularly at the Passover time, and say, "Well, yeah, I don't have this problem anymore," as though somehow we have to be very careful that we don't take the credit for it. By whose power have we changed? By whose power have we overcome? Only one power and that's through the power of the holy spirit which is the power of Almighty God. And we have to be very, very careful that we, as an individual or as a group, do not take the credit for what God is doing. We cannot do that. That is denying the power and the authority of God.

Now the scribes and the Pharisees did this and Christ got all over them for that. Look at Mark chapter 3 and we're going to read verses 22 through 30. They denied the power of God. And Christ performed multiple miracles in front of the scribes and the Pharisees. And He healed many, but notice their reaction of Mark 3 at verse 22:

Mark 3:22. *And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He [has] Beelzebub, (KJV)*

Meaning: He's doing these things through the power of Beelzebub.

Now the word "Beelzebub" is of Hebrew origin. It's a combination of two Hebrew words, Baal and zebub. And that literally means *lord of flies* or it can mean *the fly god*. And that goes way back to ancient Egypt because remember one of the plagues against Egypt was the plague of flies. And God was destroying the Egyptian god of flies. But it was a term used by the Jews of Christ's day to refer to Satan. They were referring to Satan by calling Satan Beelzebub and now they're telling the people that this man Jesus Christ heals by the power of Satan. Going on:

22) He [has] Beelzebub, [and] by the prince of the devils [again referring to Satan, he casts] out devils. (KJV)

This logic doesn't hold and Christ jumped on that right away in verse 23.

23) And he called [the people] unto him, and [He] said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24) And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom [can't] stand. (KJV)

Abraham Lincoln referred to that talking about the division in the United States in the Civil War.

25) And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26) And if Satan rise up against [Satan], ... (KJV)

If Satan casts out a demon that's in somebody that's of Satan, Satan is casting out Satan. He says:

26) If Satan [rises] up against himself and [he's] divided, he cannot stand, but [has] an end.

27) No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. (KJV)

Satan says he's binding himself. That doesn't make any sense.

28) Truly I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: (KJV)

But notice verse 29.

29) But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy [Spirit], [which is the power of God and Christ will] never [have] forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30) [He said that] Because they said, He [has] an unclean spirit. (KJV)

Christ is saying that "I cast out demons; I heal the sick by the power of God." And if you deny the power of God and you deny the power of Christ, if you deny the power of the holy spirit and you take credit yourself or give that credit to a man, you are in danger of eternal damnation. That's how serious it is. And we have to be very, very careful about that. They were denying the power of God to heal, denying the power of Christ to heal by attributing those miracles to Satan.

Look at Christ's attitude. Did Christ take the credit of the miracles that He did? He could say, "Well, look at me! I'm the Son of God." But He didn't do that! Look at John chapter 14 and verse 10. He focused everyone's attention on the Father. He even said in Matthew chapter 6, "You need to pray to the Father; pray to Him." But in John 14 verse 10 shortly before he was taken captive, He wanted to assure that His disciples understood this. He says:

John 14:10. *[Believe you] not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?... (KJV)*

He says, "Don't you understand that God is in Me and I am in Him? We are one." He says:

10b) ... the words that I speak unto you I [don't] of myself: but the Father that [dwells] in me, he [speaks the words]. (KJV)

Christ did not take credit. He gave all aggrandizement to the Father. And He said, "It's God's power. And I am the Word. I am the mouthpiece. I am the spokesman introducing the Father to you." All the credit goes to God in the end. We cannot, cannot forget that. Now Ancient Israel denied the authority of God too. Let's break into an account of Stephen shortly before he was martyred in Acts chapter 7 and we're going to read verses 30 through 35. Ancient Israel denied the authority of God. We cannot allow ourselves to fall into that trap. Acts chapter 7 verse 30, Stephen is recounting Israel coming out of Egypt, which we do at this time of year. And we go back and look at that. He says:

Acts 7:30. *And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount [Sinai] an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. (KJV)*

Referring to Moses' account of walking up to this flaming bush. Verse 31:

*31) When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, [a] voice came unto him,
32) Saying, I am the God of [your] fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, (KJV).*

And he just dared not even look at that flaming bush. Verse 33:

33) Then said the Lord to him, [He says,] Put [your] shoes from [off your] feet: for the place where [you stand] is holy ground. (KJV)

Just like this is the Sabbath, this is holy time. We have to reverence that. Just as much as Moses revered that ground because it was near where God was. Verse 34:

34) I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which [are] in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and [I] am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send [you] into Egypt. (KJV)

Now Stephen has recounted this. Stephen is bringing up the account into the present day when he was speaking to the Jews and preaching this sermon to them that they wound up killing him for. Stephen says in verse 35:

35) This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who [has] made [you] a ruler and a judge? ... (KJV)

Remember Dathan and Abiram and Korah all said, "You take too much upon yourselves. You're doing this. Who gave you the authority?" Well, we just read that God gave him the authority. And they, by opposing Moses, were opposing God and Jesus Christ. And guess what happened? Guess what happened? The ground opened up and swallowed them all!

35b) ...[They said] Who made [you] a ruler and a judge? The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. (KJV)

And what Stephen was trying to get across was: This nation has rejected leaders that God has sent, prophets that God has sent down through the ages. And now you're rejecting Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Now look at the attitude today, prophesied for today at the end of the age. Let's go back to very familiar scripture Revelation 3 and verse 17, Christ's letter to the Church of Laodicea. Notice their attitude regarding the power and the authority of God and Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:17. *[You say, Laodicea], I am rich, and increased with goods, and [I] have need of nothing; (KJV)*

Does that include not needing the power of God and Jesus Christ? Does it include us being self-sufficient on our own in this Laodicean era? We say, "We have everything. You know we sit in this seat over here. We belong to this group. We attend the Feast with this group. And, therefore, we have need of nothing! Thank you! We're fine. We're okay." And they don't realize that the very air they breathe is a blessing from God. The very food and drink they have is a blessing from God, the health that they have, the peace and safety they have is all a blessing from God. And we need to give God and Christ the credit.

Proverbs 21 and verse 2 tells us that:

Proverbs 21:2. *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord [ponders] the hearts. (KJV)*

God looks at the heart. But we're right in our own eyes. Laodicea says, "Hey, I'm okay. I have need of nothing."

But notice what Christ said in Luke chapter 22 and verse 42 shortly before He was taken captive. He knew what He was about to face. I cannot imagine knowing that you're going to be scourged within an inch of your life and just have that hang over your head year after year, day after day, week after week. And He knew that He was within a short period of time of having that happen and ultimately dying and being nailed to the cross. And He said:

Luke 22:42. *Father, if [You] be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but [Yours], be done. (KJV)*

And so Christ is saying that "I am under Your authority. I am under Your power and I will do what You want Me to do even though My flesh is screaming out that I don't want to do this!" And we cannot deny the power and the authority of Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Point Number Four: We deny God and Jesus Christ if we claim to follow Christ and then we set and unchristian example.

This is probably one of the major ones for God's people today. We claim to follow Christ, but then if we do something totally different, we're denying God and we're denying Christ. We say we follow them. We say that we will do whatever they want. We will obey their commandments. That's what we say, but then we go out and we behave in a way that is very unchristian.

Matthew 10 and verse 33, remember? We were there earlier. He says:

Matthew 10:33. *[Whoso] shall deny me before men, ... (KJV)*

This is out in the open. This is around church members. It's around people out in the world. If we deny Him publicly in church or out of church. Look at Titus 1 and we'll read verses 15 and 16. Paul is telling Titus that "Hey, we can make some very, very bad mistakes, if we're not careful."

Titus 1:15. *Unto the pure all things are pure: ... (KJV)*

God wants us to have a pure mind and a pure heart, not be cynical and be suspicious. He says:

15b) ... but unto [those] that are defiled and unbelieving nothing [is] pure; ... (KJV)

We have to be careful about that.

15 continued) but even their mind and conscience is defiled. (KJV)

Notice how this happens, verse 16:

16) They profess that they know God; ... (KJV)

Oh, they're in the church. They tithe. They go to the Feast. They show up every Sabbath. But notice:

16b) ...but in works they deny [God], ... (KJV)

By their works, by what they do! Christ is more interested in what we do. Not what we say we're going to do. He says:

16 continued) ... in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. (KJV)

Now that word “reprobate” you don't often hear. But it's interesting to look into it. It's Strong's #96. And Zodhiates says, *It is a mind to be abhorred by God*. They profess righteousness. “They profess to follow God,” he says, “but they have a mind that God abhors because they're hypocrites.” They do one thing out in public or out in the world or on the job and another thing in church.

I had a man tell me once, “I have one set of rules for church, and I have another set of rules in my business.” And I just—my head went tilt. You know a pinball machine will go tilt sometimes. And I thought, “Wait a minute here! This is not right because God's way should permeate everything we do or say.” It should permeate every aspect of our lives.

Let's turn to Jude 4. Notice this is a prophecy. He says:

Jude 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, ... (KJV)*

Talking about *clouds without water*—certain men crept in unawares. Meaning: They came in and it was not noticeable. And they just kind of slipped in, as we would say today, stealthily. Like a stealth bomber can fly overhead and it doesn't show up on the radar. They were off the screen so to speak.

4b) ... who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, ... (KJV)

Lasciviousness means *unbridled lust*, unbridled lust turning God's grace, His forgiveness, His mercy into an excuse for sinning. I mean, “It's okay. Once saved, always saved. You can just go out and live any way you want.” But notice:

4 continued) ... and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)

They deny God by their lustful deeds. They deny God by their selfish deeds. So it's not enough to say, “O God, we believe in you,” or to show up and to keep the holy days and the Feasts or to tithe. We deny God when we do not follow God in what we do and what we say.

Now the scribes and the Pharisees denied God by their fruits, by what they did. Let's go to Matthew chapter 23. This whole chapter is a diatribe by Christ against the scribes and Pharisees because of their hypocrisy. They claimed to be religious, but they were not. We're going to read verses 5 and 6 and then 11 and 12. Verse 5 is talking about the scribes and Pharisees, Christ says:

Matthew 23:5. *But all their works they do to be seen of men: ... (KJV)*

In other words, their motivation is to be in the spotlight. their motivation is to receive aggrandizement of men. Their motivation is to have a promotion or have a title. He says:

5b) ... they make broad their phylacteries, ... (KJV)

And a phylactery was a piece of parchment containing sentences of the law. And oh, the bigger pieces of parchment they could have, the more aggrandizement they had from the common person walking around the streets. And He says:

5 continued) ... and [they go on and they] enlarge the borders of their garments,

To be seen, to be recognized, to be called Rabbi.

6) And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, (KJV)

Christ said you shouldn't do that. He told us we need to take the lowest seat. We need to go to the lowest room. Verse 11:

*11) But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant [He says].
12) And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. (KJV)*

And yet, the scribes and the Pharisees set a horrible hypocritical example. And He's saying this to us today so that we don't follow in their footsteps.

In Luke 11 verse 42, Christ is talking about the weightier matters of the law and He adds an additional weightier matter of the law. He says:

Luke 11:42. *But woe unto you, Pharisees! [He says,] for [you] tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, ... (KJV)*

Which they did! They'd get down to ten leaves and they'd set one leaf aside. And then keep nine leaves for themselves. They would go into that great of detail. He says:

42b) ... [But you] pass over judgment ... (KJV)

The Greek word means *justice or equity*.

42 continued) ... [He says,] and [you pass over] the love of God: ... (KJV)

"You pass over it. It doesn't even enter into your mind."

42 continued) ... [He says,] these ought [you] to have done [be very careful in our tithing, but] not to leave the other undone. (KJV)

He says, "You pass over love. You pass over faith. You pass over mercy. You have passed over judgment," if you put all the scriptures together. And they didn't have a clue. They were too busy with their minds exalting themselves. And so we can deny Christ by setting an unchristian example as they have done.

I remember—oh this has been ten or fifteen years ago now—one of the ladies in the church (her husband is not in the church) was telling me an incident. And they had a disagreement. They got into an argument and she lost it. She just started yelling and screaming and accusing. And she said, "My husband, who is not in the church, not converted," just quietly sat there looking at her while she went on this rant. And it lasted a few minutes and veins were standing out and spittle was coming out and all of that. And finally after she quit and he wasn't reacting, he just leveled her with one sentence. And he said, "And you call yourself a Christian?" after saying what she said. And she rolled the airplane over and nose-dived into the ground because that said it all. And she said, "I was wrong. I sinned. I was not acting like a Christian woman."

Now today, what happens today? That is common, can happen in the church today. We profess to be Christian even in front of our unconverted mates and we set an example that is anything but. Let's go to 2 Timothy chapter 3. We were there earlier. Verse 1:

2 Timothy 3:1. *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
2) For men shall be ...(KJV)*

Let's look at verse 4 to see how men will be in the last days.

4) Traitors, heady, highminded, ...(KJV)

But notice this last part which fits into the condemnation of the Laodicean church:

4b) ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (KJV)

If we compromise with God's law, we're saying, "I love myself more than I love God." If we seek a pleasure that is in violation of God's law, we're saying, "I love the pleasure more than I love God." And we deny God and Christ every time we compromise with God's law. Every time we set an unchristian example, we deny God and Christ and that needs to be repented of.

We're told to do the opposite. We're told never to bring discredit upon ourselves as Christians or upon God and Christ as we claim to be Christians. We're to do the opposite. Christ said so. The very first words out of His mouth in His very first sermon in Matthew 5. Were that we should be just the opposite and not ever deny Him by bringing discredit on God and Christ. In Matthew 5 verse 14, Christ makes it very plain. He says:

Matthew 5:14. *[You] are the light of the world. ... (KJV)*

Then He draws an analogy.

14b) ... A city that is set on [a] hill cannot be hid. (KJV)

Back when I was going to college at Texas A & M which is in the eastern side of the state and we had a break, I tried to get home to El Paso, which is on the western side of the state about 650-700 miles away. Long distance, same state! I'd leave college after the last class and drive all night and roll in about 4 in the morning, maybe 5 in the morning. And El Paso's built around a mountain. And you come over a rise and about seventy miles away; you see the lights of the city way off in the distance and you see the mountain. And at Christmas time they would put a gigantic star on the mountain. It was huge. It was several football fields high and wide. And you could see that star on this mountain way off.

And so when Christ said, "A city set on a hill can't be hid," that comes to mind. Because there's no way you can hide that! You can't put a blanket over the mountain and over the city. So He's drawing an analogy. He says, "In the same way":

15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a [basket], [He says,] but [they put it] on a candlestick; [so] it [gives] light [to all around]. (KJV)

Just like the city on the hill gives light to all around and you can see it from a long distance away. He said in a similar way verse 16:

16) [You should] Let your light so shine before men, (KJV)

Remember Christ was talking about Matthew 10 denying Himself before men, denying God and Christ before men.

16) [Your light should so shine before men] that they [might] see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (KJV)

That's part of the role that we have to play. That's part of our commission, so to speak, as a member of the body of Jesus Christ as we should let our light shine. Therefore, if we do that, we do not deny God and Jesus Christ by committing sin in the front of men or women.

Let's look at an example in 1 Timothy 5 and verse 8. This is just an example. This is how we can go astray. And it's a very pregnant example in that sense because it's so obvious. 1 Timothy 5 and verse 8, we claim to be Christian, but Christ says, "You better obey all the law, all of My commandments." And in 1 Timothy 5 and verse 8, Paul is saying to this young minister:

1 Timothy 5:8. *But if any provide not for his own [if a man doesn't provide for his household], and [especially] those of his own house, he [has—what?] denied the faith [denied God, denied Jesus Christ], and is worse than an infidel. (KJV)*

Christ could have said, "He is an infidel." An infidel doesn't believe in God and Christ. But if you're worse than an infidel, that's pretty bad when you are worse than somebody who doesn't even believe in God and Jesus Christ. And if we don't provide for our own house, we are worse than that. And therefore, we deny God and Jesus Christ, deny their power, deny their authority, deny the fact that we are Christians when we behave in an unchristian manner.

You see people should say about each one of us, "Hey, she is different. He is not like the rest of us. They don't curse. They don't argue. They don't fight. And yet they stand up for what they believe."

If our light doesn't shine, we deny God and we deny Jesus Christ. And so as we approach the Passover and as we go through the Days of Unleavened Bread where we should be putting sin out of our life, let's evaluate ourselves, examine ourselves and see if our light hasn't shined maybe as brightly as it should. Let's understand that.

Point Number Five: We deny God and Jesus Christ if we do not do the work that God and Christ want us to do.

If we do something on our own, rather than what God and Christ want us to do. And I'm referring to the Pacific Church of God. I'm referring to those of us who fellowship together. We need to be doing what God wants us to do.

Now the traditional teaching is that "the work" is defined as in Matthew 24 and verse 14. Very familiar scripture, let's go back there. Mr. Armstrong defined this work during his day. And I can remember very clearly when Mr. Armstrong was within, oh, a couple of weeks—maybe three weeks—of his death. He knew that he was going to die. He asked God to heal him and to allow him to live longer, but he knew the possibility that God would allow him to die. And he wrote a letter to the ministry. And he said, "You fellows understand that the commission that God gave me is now completed at my death" [or will be completed at my death]. And he said, "I want you to go out and do the following. . ."

Notice what that following—well, Matthew 24 and verse 14, He said:

Matthew 24:14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (KJV)*

And this scripture is true. And Mr. Armstrong did that. But he told the ministry, he said, "My job is finished. My job is complete. What I want you to do is to go out and to prepare the bride for the coming of Jesus Christ."

Now if you compare Matthew 24 verse 14, this one scripture, to John 21 verses 15 through 17 and let's look at the weight of these scriptures if you compare one with the

other. And I'm not saying that Matthew 24 verse 14 is not true. And I'm not saying that the gospel shouldn't be preached. But I am saying that John 21 has a very, very clear instruction to the ministry, to the apostles in that day, and to us today that our job is something maybe a little bit different from that Matthew 24:14.

John 21:15. *So when they had dined, [Christ said] to Simon Peter, Simon, [the] son of Jonas, [do you love] me more than these? ... (KJV)*

And Peter was the most outspoken of the group. You knew exactly what Peter was thinking because he was letting everybody know about it. And he was the more forceful of the group. And so Christ, in part, picked out Peter for this reason, but also, as we know, Peter denied Him three times.

15b) ... He [said] unto him, [Yes], Lord [Peter's talking to Christ]; [You know] that I love [you]. [And then Christ said] unto him, Feed my lambs. (KJV)

Now He used the word lambs because they are young. He said, "Feed the young ones. Feed the new ones. Feed the vulnerable ones." So that would have been enough and under normal circumstances the conversation would have shifted gears into some other subject. But Christ didn't do that. He said in verse 16:

16) He [said] to him [a] second time, Simon, son of Jonas, [Do you love] me? ... (KJV)

Now Peter, if you were Peter, you would begin to wonder "What's going on here? Does Christ not believe me?"

16b) ... [And] He [said] unto him, [Yes], Lord; [You know] that I love thee. [And so Christ said now,] He [said], Feed my sheep. (KJV)

These are the mature sheep, the older sheep. So He's drawing a distinction here and saying "I want you to feed the entire flock. Not the old ones exclusively. Not the young ones exclusively. But feed everybody in the flock." But Christ didn't drop it there.

17) He [said a] third time [unto him], Simon, son of Jonas, [Do you love] me? ... (KJV)

And if we were in Peter's shoes, we would be grieved as it says here.

17b) ... Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, [Do you love] me ... (KJV)

It's like Christ is saying to him, "I don't believe you." We'd think the same thing—think exactly the same thing.

17 continued) ... And [Peter] said, Lord, [You know] all things; [You know my heart. You know what inside me and You know] that I love [You]. [And so Christ simply said], Feed my sheep. (KJV)

And I believe this is the most important of missions for certainly the Pacific Church of God in this day and in this time because the only thing God has given us are the people, the brethren. We don't have buildings. We don't have printing presses. We don't have television studios. We don't have a staff that writes. We have a few ministers and a few hundred brethren that God has given us.

And John 21 says, "You better careful if you don't feed My sheep." He said it three times. He said it to Peter, but all the apostles were there. And to me that is a commission for us today. We don't have the resources to go out and do all the things that other groups are doing right now. God has not provided that.

But God has provided brethren. And shame on us if we don't take care of the brethren. Shame on us if we don't look after the widow and the fatherless and the homeless. Shame on us if we don't take what small resources we have and help somebody who's out of a job or somebody who doesn't have food on the table or somebody whose husband or wife has died and they need some comfort and consolation. Shame on us if we don't do that.

And we can deny God and Jesus Christ if we don't do what they want us to do. And it's obvious given what God has given us so far—a few hundred people—that that's what God wants us to do. And we are going to do that. We are going to focus on feeding the sheep to the point that they are healthy and walking down the path to the Kingdom of God and are healthy spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically that they can become the Bride of Jesus Christ.

Look what God has given us in under one year. We started off with two local churches in the State of Washington. And we have five congregations now. And three of them are outside the State of Washington. And God has given us scattered brethren—somewhere to two hundred to two hundred fifty—in less than a year. And, as of last week, all the people that we deal with are around two hundred twenty-five—two hundred fifty. And shame on us if we don't take care of them. It's a very small flock. Compared to other groups, we're just a little fly speck. We're a speck on the wall. We don't come up on anybody's radar screen.

But all I know is that a year ago today, a year ago at this time, we didn't expect anything. We had no idea that in less than a year this was going to happen—several hundred people, congregations, CDs, DVD', Passover services, holy day services, not only in the United States but in Canada, and around the world. And so we don't know where God is leading us, but, as I said, if God gives somebody a gift—if God gives you a home or a car as a blessing—and you don't take care of it, you don't dress it and keep it and take care of it, then He's going to take that blessing away. And the only thing God has given us are brethren. And we are dedicated to taking care of the brethren.

Let's go to 1 John 3 and verse 16. This says it all. Under this last point, if we don't do the work that God wants us to do, we deny Him. We say in our arrogance, "No, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to go out and do this." Well what if God doesn't want us to do that? God's made it very clear that we have the brethren, so we better take care of the brethren.

1 John 3:16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us [referring to Jesus Christ]: we ought to lay down our lives for [What?] the brethren. (KJV)*

To take care of the brethren. And we don't know where God is leading us. We're less than a year old. And I personally feel like a little kid that is kind of stumbling along, barely can walk. And you stick your hand up and God reaches down and grabs you by the hand and takes you through this mine field we call the world and life in the Laodicean era. And we just pray that, "God, You lead us where you want us to go." And we don't set our will to do anything. We don't have an agenda. We just want to do what God wants us to do.

And what He wants us to do right now is very apparent. He's given us brethren. He's given us a family. We're going to make it a family and we're going to take care of each other as a family. And then, as we say in West Texas, you hide and watch. You keep your head down and try to stay out of trouble and see where God wants to take us. We have no idea, but we have to be open-minded and to be as little kids and just tag along with Daddy and see where Daddy wants us to go.

We need to lay down our lives for the brethren. And to lay down our lives for the brethren, they don't have to be local. They can be on another continent. They can be two thousand, three thousand miles away. We can still lay down our lives for the brethren by loving them and serving them and doing everything we can to provide for them.

So, let's summarize. We've been talking about how we can deny God and Jesus Christ in this last Laodicean era.

And we've seen that we can deny them if we deny that they exist, if we follow a false god, a false Christ.

We can deny them if we don't love them with all our heart. If we put something else in front of them, if we love something more than them, especially ourselves.

We deny God and Jesus Christ if we deny their power and their authority by giving credit to something other than God and Christ.

And we deny them by setting an unchristian example while claiming to be Christians. If we act like the world or we act like those that don't have God's holy spirit, we deny God and Jesus Christ in doing so.

And then, we deny God and Christ, if we, in our arrogance, go off and do something as a work that they don't want us to do. We have to be humble and submissive and do what they want us to do. And I don't think anybody claims to have the brilliance to know what they want us to do. We just take it a day at a time and a step at a time and look to God and Christ. And if they lead us in a certain direction, that's the way we're going to go.

So one final scripture, let's go to 2 Timothy 2 and verse 12. This is a double-edged sword, this scripture. And we want to be on the side of the first part of the scripture and not the last part of the scripture. Again Paul is talking to Timothy trying to aid and help him and he says,

2 Timothy 2:12. If we suffer, ... (KJV)

And there are many scriptures that tell us that we are going to suffer. He says:

12b) ... we shall reign with him:... (KJV)

We shall reign with Christ. We shall reign with the Father. But notice.

12 continued) ... if we deny him, he also will deny us: (KJV)

Remember in Matthew 25 the sheep and the goats? The sheep are on the right hand and He says, "Enter into the Kingdom of God." And the goats said, "Well, why aren't we going there?" He says, "Why? Because you didn't clothe Me. You didn't feed Me. You didn't visit Me. You didn't take care of Me." And so we see that the goats were being denied. And He said, "I never knew you!" We don't want to be in that category.

And so, yes, we're going to suffer. But, yes, we're going to reign with Him if we do not deny Him and if we profess God and Jesus Christ before men and women.

Let's make sure that we do not deny God and Jesus Christ. And then, He will say about us, as we read in the very first scripture Matthew 10 and verse 32, "Whosoever shall confess Me or profess Me or acknowledge Me before men, him will I profess and acknowledge before the Father, which is in heaven." Let's make sure that that is said about each and every one of us.