

# A New Living Way

Jack Elder

Recorded on October 7, 2020

I would like to begin this morning by constructing a title right out of scripture. Usually that's the way we do it. We will find something in scripture—maybe a certain word or a phrase and we will adopt that or we'll find something and say "That will be a good topic, I'll speak on that."

Please turn to Romans 12:1-2; a very familiar scripture to all of us.

**Romans 12:1** [Paul says] *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

2) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* (NKJV)

Now one more scripture over in Romans 6, this is from the Literal Translation. Romans 6:1-4.

**Romans 6:1** *What, then, shall we say? Shall we continue in the sin that the grace may abound?*

2) *let it not be! we who died to the sin -- how shall we still live in it?*

3) *are ye ignorant that we, as many as were baptized to Christ Jesus, to his death were baptized?*

4) *we were buried together, then, with him through the baptism to the death, that even as Christ was raised up out of the dead through the glory of the Father, so also, we in newness of life might walk.* (YLT)

I took a compound of some of the words in those verses and my title is:

## A New Living Way

As we know there's a lot embedded in those words by Paul. He talks about being a living sacrifice which seems to be a contradiction in terms. We normally say when something is sacrificed, we kill it and it's dead. If we don't look at it any further, this would be like saying you have to die in order to live differently. He is speaking metaphorically of course. The implication of that metaphor is that when something is living and is sacrificed, its demise is permanent. That is what we should be; that is what we learn in the lesson of baptism. We come out up out of that watery grave and the old man stays in it and we are supposed to be a new person.

Then Paul talks about a complete change in thinking. We read that In Romans 12, in the New Living Translation in verses 1 and 2. As you know the New Living uses the term brothers and sisters a lot; I'm going to use "brethren" if that's okay and take the Protestantism out of it.

**Romans 12:1** *And so, dear brethren, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

2) *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. [and I might add the way we act and behave as a result of thinking differently] Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)*

As we all know, you can live out your life in any manner you want to and God will let you. You can do that in a way that is not pleasing to Him or acceptable to Him; it's a choice, the same as was talked about yesterday in the sermon. It just means it's a lifelong process—a lifelong learning process. It is strictly voluntary as that scripture says. We offer our bodies, ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. That process is a lifelong journey that is initiated at baptism. We come up out of that watery grave and we live differently, we conduct our lives differently. That continues through our life span. We actually live a new way—a new living way. That applies in whatever stage we are at as human beings. What do I mean by stages?

I remember years ago reading a book by Gail Sheehy called Passages. It dealt with stages that one travels through in this life. I looked it up on Amazon because it has been a long time and I don't know if I still have it in my library. I used to collect my books once in a while because there was too many of them, and take them to the library. I looked it up on Amazon and I see that she has updated that twenty-year-old book. The new title is Passage: Predictable Crises of Adult Life. Here is an excerpt from the introduction of that book:

*At least this is your story. You'll recognize yourself, your friends and your loves. You'll see how to use each life crisis ...*

[It's interesting she terms everything as we navigate our way through life as a crisis and many times it is. You might even say we go from crisis to crisis.]

*as an opportunity for creative change. It's an opportunity to grow to your full potential.*

[It's kind of scriptural when you think about that. We grow from our trials and our tests.]

*Gail Sheehy's road map of adult life shows the inevitable personality and sexual changes we go through ...*

[A little Freudian influence there]

*our 20's, 30's, 40's and beyond*

[She has a few bullets briefly describing the contents of her book.]

- *The Trying 20's. The safety of homes left behind; we begin trying on life's uniforms in search of the perfect fit. [I guess in the 20's, unless you are a college graduate living in your parent's basement.]*
- *The Catch 30's, where illusions [and we all have them] are shaken as time to make, break or deepen life's commitments. [That's basically when we start doing that.]*
- *The Forlorn 40's. These are dangerous years when the dreams of youth demand reassessment. Men and women switch characteristics, sexual panic is common but the greatest opportunity for self-discovery awaits. [That's in the next section she is talking about, and that's the Refreshed (or Resigned) 50's.*
- *Best of life for those that let go of old roles and find a renewed purpose.*

That's the end of the quote from that introduction. I'm not endorsing the book but pointing out the author recognizes in a generic way these phases of life or stages that we all go through. There are plenty of crises and trials along the way as we all know. Even in this Christian life, this Christian walk that we are in. Those of us who are now called and have responded, we have embarked on this spiritual journey—a new living way, if you will. We now have God's Holy Spirit to help us along the way which we know makes all the difference in the world.

Speaking of stages, a little more on that—I'll touch on that later—but it has long been recognized that the human life cycle is actually in phases or stages. Generally, it's broken down, depending on who does the study or research, into five, twelve or seven stages of a human life cycle. We will go with the seven; I have an article entitled that way. [The Stages of Human Life.](#)

*The growth and development of the human being is divided into seven stages [as I have already said].*

*The first stage is prenatal when we're in the womb. [Then of course we are born and enter childhood.] After leaving the womb, the human being begins with a second stage of life, the stage of childhood. These are the first years of the human being in the outer world and although he sleeps most of the time, his mind captures absolutely everything from the surrounding environment. [That's*

true, we are like sponges when we are a little child.] *During this stage, you learn to walk, manipulate objects with your hands, make sounds and talk. This stage culminates at about the age of six.*

*Then in the second phase and the third stage, the human being begins to interact in a social way. It begins with kindergarten, passing through the school period, primary education. At this stage the child begins to reason, develops cognitive abilities and new skills that will help it become a citizen wherever it may live. This stage culminates at about the age of twelve.*

*Then we move into adolescence, the fourth stage. It's this stage where the human being begins to discover himself. The attraction of the opposite sex takes an important part in this stage via the development of the hormones, the sexual glands. This stage is around twenty years of age.*

Gender has a lot to do with these stages too; women will mature much faster than men. They actually have their own stage. I think all the guys can relate to that; we know that women grow up a lot faster than we men do. That's a sad fact, but it's true. Some men never mature—they just don't. What's the saying? Growing old is mandatory, growing up is optional.

*The fifth stage, the human being has his values more defined and begins to project towards the future. It becomes independent of the parents, becomes emotionally stable, economically stable [those things begin to happen]. At this stage, the human being leaves behind the fantasies of previous years and begins to interact more with reality [hopefully]. At this stage we begin to take on responsibilities and commitments that will then harden into the next stage, which is adulthood. [At this stage, if we think about it, it's about this stage that God is able to start working with an individual. Then it goes onto adulthood.]*

*The sixth stage runs between the ages of twenty-five and sixty. Again, as in the stages of adolescents and youth, social, economic, etc. factors influence each individual. [Everybody is a little different, these are generic stages.] At this stage the human being reaches a level of enough maturity to have complete control of the decisions that will be made and the emotional aspects of his life. His own values are now the pillars that characterize him as an independent individual. [We all strive for that, don't we?] Family, home, work and friends are now your world. It is the environment you want to protect from now on. This new world is the product of the decisions and actions you are taking now with much more security than before.*

[Let me get to the seventh and final stage, old age. This is the one most of us in here can relate to. It's reached about the age of sixty and it's the stage that will accompany us the rest of our lives, the end of days.]

*The main characteristic of this stage is the physical deterioration suffered by the organism produced over the years as well as intellectual and sensorial capacity [we all relate to that one]. It's worth clarifying that the extent to which the health of the individual is affected will depend on his actions in the past. [That's very true; being a diabetic, I am always interested in nutrition and diets. A nutritionist said that you cannot outrun the effects of a bad diet. That's very true. That's how everything in our past catches up with us at some point.] Material things are no longer part of their priorities; they've lost all interest in them. [Not completely, mostly]. They have a tendency to live in the present as it is and no longer project to the future because their life is already done [pretty much over, not much left. An old golfer would say "We're on the back nine.". There are only eighteen holes, nine in the front and nine in the back. Sometimes I feel like I'm at the seventeenth hole, maybe teeing off at the eighteenth; not much left.] His priorities now go to enjoyment with loved ones who accompanied him in the years' past. This final stage, the past is what is most missed. [Don't we reminisce about the things we used to be able to do. The final statement is kind of important in this article.] Noted, each of these stages is unique and unrepeatable. [You don't get a "do over", you don't get a "second go around", this is it for us.]*

This last stage is the one I can most relate to. Every year at the Feast, it seems my age meter roles over one more year. This year it's eighty—so I'm eighty years old. Eight decades, that's 960 months, 29,200 days; I don't want to go into minutes and seconds, it's too depressing. A while back I ran across an exercise that is beneficial to most of us seasoned folks out there. It's very simple, everything you need you can get at the grocery store. What you do is get 2 potato bags, one in each hand and hold them out as best you can—this is a four-week exercise program. The first week you do it with a five-pound potato bag; it's going to be hard at first but after the end of the week you should be able to hold your arms there for several minutes. Then the second week you go to ten-pound potato bag; again, it's going to be hard but you'll be stronger at the end of the week. At the third week, you're going to do this with a fifty-pound potato bag and it's going to really develop your upper body, you're going to get a lot stronger. Then the fourth week, you put a potato in the bag.

Where am I going with this new living way? When we talk about a new living way, we have to look at the other side of that coin. That is easy enough to find in scripture; turn to Galatians 5:16-26.

**Galatians 5:16** *I say then: Walk [we know that means to live] in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (NKJV)*

That always means everything we do to satiate our human appetites—lust of the flesh.

17) *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*  
18) *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (NKJV)*

We are familiar with the next section that begins to talk about the works of the flesh. I know we've all read this many, many times. When I read this next section, I think of the example of a person wanting to start a business. When you go to a financial institution, providing you need finances for operating and starting up a business, you have to have a business plan. It can be two years, five years or whatever it is, they won't give you a loan without some kind of a plan. They want to ensure, as best they can, that they will get a return on their investment. Which means you are going to pay them a lot of interest. They won't give you a loan without a solid plan. What follows, I think, describes the business plan for the entertainment industry. Not all of it, but a good part of it.

19) *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,*  
20) *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, [a lot of violence in entertainment; people like that—sex and violence] selfish ambitions, [I would put in there, self-serving politicians] dissensions, heresies ... (NKJV)*

Lies, such as were mentioned in the sermonette. Is there any truth out there? It's all lies, everything is lies; you have to sort it out. Makes you not want to watch the news half the time, but you need to keep somewhat informed. There is abundant evidence of all these in the entertainment world and the nightly news and on and on.

21) *envy, murders, [we could put rioting in there] drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (NKJV)*

It's evident here when we look at the context and the story of the account of Galatians. Paul is addressing an audience with a strong indication that they are having a relapse; they are going backwards and reverting to those carnal ways. I know it's been mentioned at least once or twice in sermons, in the conferences, someone mentioned 2 Corinthians 10:4 which says the weapons of our warfare (and it is warfare) are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strong hulls. What are those strong hulls? The works of the flesh, the human nature that we struggle against all the time. Satan exploits those—every one of them. Paul just says the tension between human nature and God's Spirit, that influence is very real. It's a genuine struggle. Go over to Romans 7 where Paul talks about that struggle. I know this was touched on yesterday and it's still relevant.

**Romans 7:1** *Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? (NKJV)*

He's talking about God's laws that we should employ to govern our lives. Then he gives an example.

2) *For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.*

3) *So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.*

4) *Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. (NKJV)*

It seems to me, Paul is saying that whenever we embark on this new living way that God has called us to, we are essentially divorced from that old carnal way.

5) *For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. (NKJV)*

Again, the cause and effect—the former way we conduct our lives is shown by its effects.

6) *But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. (NKJV)*

That includes a new way of living based on God's laws and principles.

7) *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." [The Ten Commandments]*

8) *But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. (NKJV)*

Paul began to see the struggle—that tension—that I mentioned between his carnal nature and God's Holy Spirit.

9) *I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. (NKJV)*

He began to truly understand God's law, although Paul was very well educated as we know. He knew that—he knew God's law.

10) *And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.*

11) *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.*

12) *Therefore, the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*

13) *Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. (NKJV)*

That's the purpose of the law--to teach us and show us what sin is. When you think about it, it's the same process that's going to happen in the millennium. What are people going to be taught? Of course, they are going to be taught God's laws and principles.

14) *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. (NKJV)*

You might say that we are enslaved by our own carnality, which we are.

15) *For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. (NKJV)*

We find ourselves in that situation a lot of times as we go through this life.

16) *If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.*

17) *But now, it is no longer I who does it, but sin that dwells in me.*

18) *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. (NKJV)*

It just doesn't come naturally; it takes God's Holy Spirit.

19) *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. (NKJV)*

That's the pull of human nature; it's always a struggle. Each and every day of our lives we recognize that.

20) *Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*

21) *I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.*

22) *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*

23) *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

24) *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (NKJV)*

That's kind of like the example I mentioned from the nutritionist, you can't outrun the effects of a bad diet—you can't outrun your human nature, it's not possible, you can't do that on your own, it just won't happen. Paul goes on to point out the answers to all of this.

25) *I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. (NKJV)*

I know we talked about the works of the flesh and our struggle against those things, but let's go back to Galatians 5 and talk about the fruit of the spirit.



**Galatians 5:22** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control [all those things that Will mentioned the other day]. Against such there is no law.*  
24) *And those who are Christ s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*  
25) *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*  
26) *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*  
(NKJV)

That last verse has to do with the context of Galatians and we don't have time to go through that but it may seem out of place. Paul isn't done with his thoughts so let's go to Galatians 6 and I'll revert to the New Living Version. The New Living is okay but you have to watch it because they will take a Trinitarian bent in some places, so you have to be careful. As long as it doesn't lose the intent of the scripture.

**Galatians 6:1** *Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.*  
(NLT)

That is very plainly saying that your own carnalities do not go away; they are always there.

2) *Share each other s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.* (NLT)

As Paul addressed those three things—conceit, provoking one another, envying one another—conceit is just another word for ego. It always leads to provoking and envying other people and all that. I remember years ago—we left Worldwide in about 1992, which doesn't mean anything, we just woke up and couldn't stay there any longer—but there was a movement afoot a year or two after that as all the different groups formed around the country. Somebody had the idea that the name of the movement was Building Bridges. The idea—we thought it was a grand idea—all these different groups were going to get together and do a work and whatever else we needed to do. We thought that was a great idea. The only thing we didn't take into account was that all those groups were led by men and we finally realized we couldn't get all those eagles in the same room. Maybe that was a little mean, but it's true, that's what happened. That's why there are still hundreds of groups.

3) *If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.* (NLT)

When we esteem others better than ourselves, we are not that important. It's all in the head if we think we are.

4) *Pay careful attention to your own work [there's a good bit of advice], for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else.*

5) *For we are each responsible for our own conduct. (NLT)*

No one is going to stand with us before the judgment seat of the Father. We see this new living way that I'm trying to get across has everything to do with our relationship with God—with the Father and the Son--and with each other; it has everything to do with it. Obedience to God's laws is absolutely essential to that relationship, to even embark on that new living way. There has to be obedience; it's the determining factor. We have to learn that. That's what people are going to learn in the millennium—obedience. I won't go there, someone else will.

Just a few quick references, these are references only, you can jot them down.  
Romans 7:22—this has to do with obedience.

**Romans 7:22** *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*

25) *I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. (NKJV)*

**Romans 8:7** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (NKJV)*

It just doesn't work. Put another way, there is no relationship with God if we are conducting our lives outside of God's laws and principles. There is no relationship; we are fooling ourselves if we think there is.

Let's go to John 14—we read this around Passover. We're not on our own whenever we make that commitment to live God's way of life. Christ points this out very clearly.

**John 14:15** *If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

16) *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— [talking about the Holy Spirit]*

17) *the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

18) *I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.*

19) *A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. (NKJV)*

They didn't quite get that at that point, that would come later.

20) *At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*

21) *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." (NKJV)*

Clearly our love for God is expressed by keeping and obeying His law—obedience is the factor. That is expressed by the way we live our lives. We don't live our lives the old carnal way, but the new living way God gives us along with using God's Holy Spirit that He gives us. We don't quench that, we don't aggrive that in any way, we use that. It's a process of conversion, of changing the carnal thought patterns that we have naturally—that are engrained in us as human beings. We can't escape it; if you're a human being, you have human nature and it will never go away, it's wired in. The only way we have to combat it, as many scriptures point out, is with God's Holy Spirit. This is a process all human beings have to go. God never changes and neither will this process. Why would God come up with a different process? It's still going to be human beings. Psalm 19 from Young's Literal Translation.

**Psalm 19:7** *The law of Yehovah [is] perfect, refreshing the soul, the testimonies of Yehovah [are] steadfast, Making wise the simple,*  
8) *The precepts of Yehovah [are] upright, Rejoicing the heart, the command of Yehovah [is] pure, enlightening the eyes,*  
9) *The fear of Yehovah [is] clean, standing to the age, the judgments of Yehovah [are] true, they have been righteous -- together.*  
10) *They are more desirable than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; and sweeter than honey, Even liquid honey of the comb.*  
11) *Also -- Thy servant is warned by them, `In keeping them [is] a great reward.'*  
(YLT)

James reinforces the same process the New Testament. James 1 and again in the New Living Translation.

**James 1:2** *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. (NLT)*

No matter where we are at in those life stages that we talked about.

3) *For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. (NLT)*

It matters how we finish our trials, which come with life, as we saw in those stages that we mentioned earlier.

4) *So, let it grow ... (NLT)*

We don't want to grow when you think about it; we would rather God repair all those trials and make them go away. Like I mentioned earlier in another sermon, we have to live our lives, and we have to play our ball where we find it.

4 continued) *... for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*

5) *If you need wisdom [that means how we live our lives; what kind of wisdom do we need to make our way through this crisis, not wisdom to invest in the stock market], ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (NLT)*

Then it goes on to say about divided loyalty—we can't do that—we can't live carnally and God's way of life at the same time even though there is a mix there that we struggle with all the time. We cannot serve two masters, as Christ taught us. Go down to verse 17.

17) *Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. (NLT)*

That should be one of the most comforting scriptures of all for us, that God never changes; He was the same yesterday, today and forever. The Father and Christ never change. Down in verse 20.

20) *Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. (NLT)*

All that anger and discontent that we see in the world; that is not of God at all. I heard a saying once that 'Satan lurks at the tree line of civilization'. He doesn't lurk anymore; he is fully in civilization and very active right now.

21) *So, get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. (NLT)*

Not to mention change our lives. It's a process.

22) *But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. (NLT)*

I think we have done that aplenty. Living God's way and to please Him is not a complicated formula. Go to Micah 6. Different speakers have talked about how things are going to be in the millennium and it's a different picture from what we have been taught and how we have viewed it in the past.

**Micah 6:6** *With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old?  
7) Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?  
8) He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (NKJV)*

That's a way of life and it's not complicated. How about in the millennium?

**Isaiah 2:1** *This is a vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:*

2) *In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house will be the highest of all—the most important place on earth. It will be raised above the other hills, and people from all over the world will stream there to worship.*

3) *People from many nations will come and say "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of Jacob's God. There he will teach us his ways, and we will walk [we will learn to live a new living way] in his paths." For the Lord's teaching will go out from Zion; his word will go out from Jerusalem.*

4) *The Lord will mediate between nations and will settle international disputes. They will hammer their swords into plowshare, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer fight against nation, nor train for war anymore. (NLT)*

Just this one verse alone—*nations won't learn war anymore*—just as was said the other day pointing out the fact that the millennium will not be a utopia; people are going to have to learn how not to kill each other. It's going to be a process. We have to unlearn all the things we have done. I think about that when I think about this Covid virus. To me it's interesting that God puts us in our place once in a while. We have one of the most lethal arsenals in the U.S. military on the face of the earth and what good is it against a virus—a microorganism? Absolutely none. I supposed we could nuke the virus but that would be like committing suicide.

I know people that just don't seem to be satisfied living God's simple way of life. They have to know everything, they have to know every bit of scripture and understand it perfectly, they have to know precisely when Christ will return. Knowing things is not inherently bad of course, but people become obsessed—they are led astray with all kinds of things on the internet and all kinds of ideas—I've heard just about every notion that could come along. It's these things that peek people's interests instead of learning how to live. Those are the things they are obsessed with. I know people who are still obsessed with having a passport so they can flee to the place of safety. That is still out there. Does that really have anything to do with the way we live? All that stuff? I'm not saying it's not good to learn what we can, of course that is what we want to do. We can have all knowledge, we can know everything, have all kinds of understanding but still miss the point—1 Corinthians 13—because the point is love and that's God's way of life, that's what we're learning.

When you talk about trying to sort out every scripture in the Bible—and we want to do everything we can when we are studying different things—but as an example there are nine justices on the Supreme Court and the whole function of the SCOUS (the Supreme Court of the United States) is to interpret the constitution, as it comes up in jurisprudence (*the science or philosophy of law*). When you think about that for a second, the Constitution is comprised of 4400-4600 words, twenty-seven amendments and those eight to ten people (justices on the Supreme Court) don't agree on what those words mean. We're looking at 4600 at most—they can't agree on that. We know that politics is involved and everybody wants to stack it in their favor. The point I'm

trying to make is that the scripture actually tells us what we need to know to conduct our lives—it's not that complicated.

Sometimes for academic verses, we will delve into the nuances of all the languages in the Bible—the Hebrew, the Greek, the Aramaic (and by the way, the Aramaic has something like thirty different dialects and it was a common language in Christ's day).

I've been doing some of the cooking at home, much to my wife's delight and I have a wind-up timer. I was looking on Amazon and I saw the digital timers and thought I would buy one of those. It comes in a blister pack with a card on the back and you pull the staple and pull a card out and it has the directions on how to run it and it's all in Chinese. It's very intuitive, even for a dummy like me so I can figure out how to run it—you push a couple buttons and it comes on.

When you think about all the different languages the Bible has been translated into, I looked it up and it's something like 3000 plus languages. Not quite that many of the complete Bible but portions of it. You think about the King James Version of the Bible. You ever look that up for words? 788,000 words, 31,102 verses, 1189 chapters—all translated from those three languages. I add to that a time span of 3000-4000 years and then we're going to try to decipher about a million nuances. I'm not sure nuances is a correct word but just the way the languages have been used in the past. Even in doing this sermon I looked up a word and discovered it's used 1,025 times in the Bible. You know how many different ways that can be used depending on the context? I stopped counting at seventy—one word. That was from The Old Testament Word Study by Baker and Carpenter.

Back to what we've been called to do, to embark on a new living way. Not whether we have it all right or not, or if we understand everything perfectly, that's not what our life is based on. I would like to turn to Exodus 20; what are we going to be doing in the millennium—what are people going to be taught. There was a major argument—someone took me to task for the Ten Commandments—they said Christ gave those Ten Commandments. He was a Spokesman, He had to give them. I said, read the context, it doesn't say that. It was the Father who gave those and he got pretty upset with me.

**Exodus 20:1** *And God spoke all these words, saying:*

*2) I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

*3) You shall have no other gods before Me. (NKJV)*

First commandment; think about this for a second. That can be understood in any language, there is only one true God—any language. We have Zephaniah 3:9 where it talks about people being given a new pure language—look at the context of that in Zephaniah and see when that is actually going to occur, at one point in the millennium. See if you can tell me, because I can't figure it out. But it will be at some point. From the Young's Literal Translation again.

4) *Thou dost not make to thyself a graven image, or any likeness which [is] in the heavens above, or which [is] in the earth beneath, or which [is] in the waters under the earth.*

5) *Thou dost not bow thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, Yehovah thy God, [am] a zealous God, charging iniquity of fathers on sons, on the third [generation], and on the fourth, of those hating Me ... (YLT)*

No idolatry; that can be understood in any language. Third commandment:

7) *Thou dost not take up the name of Yehovah thy God for a vain. (YLT)*

Again, that can be understood in any language. The rest of God's commandments, the short version: Sabbath day, honor your father and mother, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, lie or covet—understood in any language. There is no question, this is a code of conduct, a way to live and it has to do with a verse in Psalms that talks about the integrity of the individual. People have integrity but not too many have Godly integrity. God holds out that new living way to all mankind. He holds it out to us now and calls us into it and we are learning that now and being trained for that now. God is going to make that same offer again, isn't He? Same process, it continues all the way through, God never changes. He is consistent. At one point we have the example of Israel but it's going to apply to all people in their time—it just is. In Jeremiah 7, there is an interesting section of scripture. God is very angry with Judah in this section. He's going on in the context about the things that are happening in the cities of Jerusalem.

**Jeremiah 7:22** *For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.*

23) *But this is what I commanded them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.*

24) *Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, [we have that history, we learn from those things] but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, [they rejected God, carnally worshipping dumb idols most of the time, breaking all of God's law] and went backward and not forward. (NKJV)*

The point is, God offered them a way of life that would produce the blessings that they wanted but they rejected it. Deuteronomy 30 - I like this one from the New Living Bible, starting in verse 11.

**Deuteronomy 30:11** *This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, and it is not beyond your reach. (NLT)*

As opposed to living that carnal existence that they did. The new living way that God offers is not complicated and God never changes. It's not going to be too complicated for people in the future to understand.

12) *It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey? (NLT)*

Who is going to bring it to us? Remember back in Exodus, they didn't want God to bring it to them, they wanted Moses.

13) *It is not kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey? (NLT)*

There is a question in there for us. Can we, as God's people, sit around and wring our hands and be confused as to the way that God wants us to live? We can't.

14) *No, the message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it. (NLT)*

This is Deuteronomy, this is the second giving of the law, they knew this; they had heard it all before, those that were left alive. It is a repetition of what they already knew, that's why God is so emphatic here.

15) *Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. (NLT)*

A choice in the way we live; we have that same choice. Verse 20.

20) *You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. [We were supposed to do that at baptism.] This is the key to your life. And if you love and obey the Lord, you will live long in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (NLT)*

They would reap a physical benefit then, how much more for us spiritually? We are called to a new living way. It's the same new living way that God is going to offer to all of mankind and yes, it's a struggle every day—an internal fight, a war. As Paul describes it, God's way is the exact opposite of the way the world wants us to live. Whether we like it or not, we are products of this world that we live in—we just are. Maybe in some ways it's an even harder struggle for us these days. I think Revelation 3 speaks to that; we won't go there. In the end it will be worth it and hopefully we can see that. A few quick references, no one can say it any better than these scriptures. 2 John 1 from the New Living Bible.

**2 John 1:6** *Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to love one another, just as you heard from the beginning. (NLT)*

It's always been there.



8) *Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. (NLT)*

One final scripture, Revelation 22:11, again from the New Living.

**Revelation 22:11** *Let the one who is doing harm continue to do harm; let the one who is vile continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to live righteously; let the one who is holy continue to be holy.”*

12) *Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. (NLT)*

According to the way they have lived; carnally or the new living way God has given us. The choice for us as to how to live is clear from these scriptures we have touched on.