

The Markers of a Converted Mind

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Well, greetings again everyone! And we want to welcome all of those who will be watching or listening to DVD's and CD's of these services. Our greetings go to you. And I know particularly to the scattered Brethren all around the world, we wish you could be here with and wish you had local services, but we understand and hopefully these CD's and DVD's will brighten your Sabbath a little bit.

With all the recent happenings in the Church of God over the past few years particularly, it's important to understand that all of us are being tested to see if we have a converted mind or not, to see how we react to trials and tests and whether we react in a converted way or an unconverted way.

Now with that thought in mind, let's turn to James chapter 3 and we're going to begin in verse 8 and read through verse 18. James begins to talk about the tongue, but what we want to investigate is the attitude behind the tongue because that is what prompts the words that come out of people's mouths. James 3 verse 8, he says:

James 3:8. But the tongue can no man tame; (KJV)

That's right. Humans can't. God can.

James 3:8b. *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (KJV)

Verse 9, notice this. He says:

James 3:9. Therewith [meaning through our tongue, through our mouth] bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God [or in God's image]. (KJV)

So what he's saying—now remember he's speaking to converted people. He's speaking to the Church of God. This is isn't just an open letter to society. It is to the Church. And he's telling us that converted Brethren on the one hand can pray to God and bless God and praise God and out of that same mouth later that same day they can curse one another, curse other people.

Verse 10, he says:

James 3:10. Out of the same mouth [proceeds] blessing and cursing. (KJV)

And he says:

James 3:10b. My brethren [He's talking to the Church, remember.], these things ought not to be. (KJV)

It shouldn't be that way.

Verse 11, now, he draws an analogy. He says:

James 3:11. [Does] a fountain send forth at the same place [both] sweet *water* and bitter [water]? (KJV)

Is that possible?

James 3:12. Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? (KJV)

Obvious answer! These are rhetorical questions. The obvious answer is "No." He says:

James 3 12b: [Can] a vine [bear] figs? (KJV)

No. He says:

James 3:12 continued. so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. (KJV)

It's impossible. Verse 13:

James 3:13. Who *is* a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? (KJV)

He asks that question. He's saying, "If you're wise and if you have godly knowledge," he says:

James 3:13.b. let him [show] out of [the] good [conduct of] his works with meekness of wisdom. (KJV)

To show what's in your mind by your conduct and by your works. Verse 14:

James 3:14. But if [you] have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, [He says, "You can't] glory [over that], and [he says] lie not against the truth. (KJV)

Because that should not be done! Verse 15:

James 3:15. This wisdom (KJV)

Worldly wisdom that result in bitter envying and strife.

James 3:15. This wisdom [descends] not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual [meaning carnal], devilish [meaning from Satan and from demons]. (KJV)

So if there is bitter envying and strife, it doesn't come from God. It comes from the wrong side of the spirit world. Verse 16:

James 3:16. For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion (KJV)

And the Greek word for confusion means *tumult* or *un-quietness*, meaning a lack of peace. So where envying and strife is, he says, "There is un-quietness. There is tumult. There is confusion. And he goes on to say:

James 3:16. and every evil work [comes out of that]. 17) But the wisdom that is from above is pure, peaceable, (KJV)

That's one reason we named the Church "The Pacific Church of God."

James 3:17b. peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be [entreated], full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, (KJV)

Now that word can mean either *a respect of persons* or it can also mean *wrangling, wrestling, fighting*.

And he says:

James 3:17 continued. and [also] without hypocrisy. (KJV)

Again being one thing to one person and being something else to another person.

Verse 18, notice this:

James: 3:18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. (KJV)

Now what that tells us is: "*It says the fruit of righteousness,*" the fruit comes at the end of the harvest. The fruit comes at the end of the growing season. So he's saying, "The end of our efforts is righteousness if we sow in peace and those who do the sowing are peacemakers." It's very, very important that our actions should result in peace and our attitude should be peacemakers. Christ said, "Blessed *are* the peacemakers." So James chapter 3 here in these ten verses show that there are two ways. There is an unconverted way, a carnal way, a human way, a satanic way. And there is a converted way.

And Christ told us when He walked this earth that He expected something from us. Let's go to Matthew 18 and look at verse 3. Matthew 18 and verse 3, Christ expected us to do something, to do something with the calling, to do something with the knowledge that we have. Matthew 18 and verse 3:

Matthew 18:3. And [Christ] said, [Truly] I say unto you, (KJV)

This is the important thing.

Matthew 18:3b. Except [you] be converted, and become as little children [in attitude], [you] shall not enter into the kingdom of [God]. (KJV)

If a conversion doesn't take place, that person is not going to enter the Kingdom of God. It's just a rule that God has that we have to change from the old person to the new person, from the unconverted person to the converted person.

Now the Greek word for *converted* is Strong's 4762 and it's the Greek word *strepheo* (*stref'-o*). And it has two essential meanings. Number one it means to turn around. We would say today, "Make a u-turn," to go in the opposite direction. In a metaphorical sense, the second meaning means to turn oneself from one's course of conduct. Whatever we were doing in the past, we turn around from that. We change that. And it means to change one's mind, to have a different mind metaphorically. Not that we're going to have a brain transplant. That's something physical. We're talking about changing the heart, the mind.

Now we understand the principles of conversion because Paul told us in the New Testament that we can understand spiritual things by physical things. And we can understand the principle of conversion by looking at water. We see water as a liquid, but if we apply certain forces to it, if we apply heat to it as an example, it changes. It converts from water to steam. On the other hand, if we apply cold to water, it converts from a liquid to a solid. And so, just by looking at water, you can see conversion from liquid to gas or from liquid to solid by applying a force.

Now conversion is the same thing. We can change from the old person to the new person by the force of God's holy spirit. That is the force that will do the changing. Not anything we can conjure up, but what God provides—this power through the holy spirit.

Look at Acts 3 and verse 19. Peter had spoken to the assembled people there and he had told them of their sins as recounting the sins of Israel over the centuries. And the people were pricked in their heart and they didn't know what to do. And they said, "What shall we do?" And Peter answered in Acts 3 verse 19 and he said:

Acts 3:19. Repent [you] therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the [Eternal]; (KJV)

So he says: We have to repent of our old way, reject our old way, and be converted into a new person.

This is all by way of introduction because in the last two years, in my personal observation for the very first time in our time in the Church—Dorothy's time and my time in the Church—we've experienced actual hatred from God's people. These are people that have been baptized, people who have been converted, people who were associates, friends. And we've experienced actual hatred.

As Paul said, "Out of the same mouth can come blessing and cursing." And in people who have allowed themselves to hate, what does that say about the conversion process going on in their lives? You know God has to judge that. But, when we see the kind of behavior that we've seen, then it begins to bring questions in the mind of this whole conversion process. And so, if you want to put a title on the sermon, it's called:

The Markers of a Converted Mind

How can we judge if our mind is converted? How can we judge as to whether or not we are involved in that process that must take place before Christ returns if we're going to in the Kingdom of God?

Now the list that I'm going to give today is by no means comprehensive, but the list is addressing those traits that involve our relationships with one another. I'm not talking about conversion to keeping the Sabbath, or tithing, or the Holy Days. But we're talking about a conversion to those traits that involve our relationships with other people. So we're kind of narrowing down the Markers of Conversion into this area of human relations.

The First Marker of Conversion is that:

The converted mind sees itself.

The converted mind has the ability to look at itself and analyze itself. In other words, it isn't blind to how it behaves, how it thinks. There is no blindness there.

Now we know that David was a man after God's own heart. So we might learn from David's behavior when he sinned. Let's go to 2 Samuel chapter 24. And we're breaking into the context of where David was provoked to number Israel. Even Joab told him, "Don't do that! Don't number Israel! It's not a good thing to do." And yet, David went ahead and he went against God's commandments and the counsel—as Bob was talking about in the sermonette—the counsel that he received, he went against that also.

So 2 Samuel chapter 24, look at verse 10. Once God brought the plague on Israel because of this numbering:

2 Samuel 24:10. . . . David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people. (KJV)

Notice what David said to God:

2 Samuel 24:10b. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: (KJV)

So he admitted his own faults and his own sins. He took responsibility for his own actions. He says:

2 Samuel 24:10 continued. and now, I beseech thee, O [Eternal], take away the iniquity of [your] servant; for I have done very foolishly. (KJV)

"I have really done something stupid here!"

Verse 17:

2 Samuel 24:17. And David [spoke] unto the [Eternal] when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, (KJV)

He's appealing to God. He says:

2 Samuel 24:17b. what have they done? let [your] hand, I pray, be against me, and against my father's house. (KJV)

So we see here very clearly that David saw his sin. He saw the error in his thinking. And he asked God to punish him because he was taking now responsibility for his actions.

And it is something that is a marker of a converted mind when you see yourself and you take responsibility for what you have done, for what you've done wrong. Now, we know the example of Job and the Book of Job goes on and on and on about his friends trying to get him to see his sins, his friends trying to get him to see his faults. And Job would have none of that. And then, finally at the end, Job came to himself and saw himself.

Look at chapter 42 and verse 1. Remember in chapter 41, Christ, the God of the Old Testament, began to tell Job of: "Where were you when I did this? Were you around when I did this? And do you understand what I'm doing here. And, of course, Job couldn't answer. Job 42 verse 1:

Job 42:1. Then Job answered the [Eternal], and said, 2) I know that [you can] do every thing, and that no thought can be [withheld] from [you]. (KJV)

So he finally recognized ultimately who God was. Now jump to verse 5.

Job 42:5. I have heard of [you] by the hearing of [my] ear: but [he says] now [my] eye [sees you]. (KJV)

Now we know that Job physically didn't see God. But what he's saying, "I finally understand. I see who You are relative to who I am."

And in verse 6, he draws the obvious conclusion:

Job 42:6. Wherefore [because I see you clearly and I see myself clearly,] I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes. (KJV)

So the converted mind sees itself and acknowledges and takes responsibility for one's actions.

Let's jump to Matthew 7 and look at the first five verses. This talks about the very famous parable about not judging and not condemning. We need to evaluate this and look at this from the standpoint of a converted mind versus an unconverted mind. Matthew 7 verse 1, Christ says:

Matthew 7:1. Do not judge (NIV)

Now the Greek word for *judge* here means to condemn, to look down on others, and condemn them relative to oneself.

Matthew 7:1. Do not [condemn] or you too will be [condemned]. 2) For [with] the same way you [condemn] others, you will be [condemned], and with the measure [that] you use [strict, harsh, or merciful and forgiving, whatever measure you use], it will be measured to you. (NIV)

God's going to condemn us to the degree and the way we condemn others. If we show mercy to others and forgiveness to others, God will do the same for us.

Verse 3:

Matthew 7:3. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank [that's] in your own eye? (NIV)

And that Greek word for *plank* literally referred to a rafter in a ceiling—big giant beam! And I'm sure Basil Wolverton would go bananas if he were still alive to make a cartoon drawing of somebody with a big rafter sticking out of their eye!

Verse 4:

Matthew 7:4: How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? (NIV)

So he gets to the point in verse 5.

Matthew 7:5. You hypocrite (NIV)

Remember in James chapter 3 that we just read, hypocrisy was one of the characteristics that he mentioned as far as converted versus unconverted.

He says:

Matthew 7:5. You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye [this rafter], and then you [can] see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (NIV)

But the unconverted mind, you see, doesn't see itself. And that's why in counseling with people who are in trouble or that have continual problems in the

sense of disobeying God's Law, you pray and hope that as the prodigal son did—it's mentioned in the Scripture; that he came to himself; mind finally opened up and he said, "Oh, I see! I see what I've done. I see myself and I repent."

So the First Marker of a Converted Mind is that:

We can see ourselves as we are.
And we can see God—who He is as He is.
And we can really see ourselves as God sees us.
We view ourselves through God's eyes—not human eyes.

That's the First Marker of a Converted Mind is the converted mind sees itself.

The Second One is that:

The converted mind is able to admit when it's wrong.

A converted mind can admit that "I have sinned. I have messed up." We just read that about David in numbering Israel. And a truly converted mind knows who God is and looks at himself or herself and is able to say—publicly or privately—"I sinned." Yet some people have a very, very difficult time doing that—of admitting they've done anything wrong.

Look at 1 John chapter 1. I love the writings of John because they are so plain and so simple and he gets right to the point! And John says in these two verses, we're going to read verse 8 and then jump to verse 10 of 1 John 1. It is so simple and it is so clear! 1 John 1 verse 8, you can't argue with this Scripture!

1 John 1:8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (KJV)

Now how more clear can you put this? If we say we don't have any sin, we are deceiving ourselves. We are blind. And we don't understand the truth?

Verse 10:

1 John 1:10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him [It should be a capital H—God and Christ] a liar, and his word is not in us. (KJV)

If we say we have not sinned! Mr. Armstrong said for years, the most difficult thing for a human to do is to admit they are wrong. That is the most difficult thing. Now David went for a year refusing to admit he was wrong in the affair with Bathsheba. Let's go to 2 Samuel chapter 12 and look at verse 13. And remember Nathan came to court. And he told him the parable about the little sheep and the poor family versus the rich family. And David said at the end of that parable, "That man ought to die!" Then Nathan responded here in 2 Samuel 12, part of that, he said, "You are the man!" But notice David's reaction here in verse 13.

2 Samuel 12:13. And David said unto Nathan, (KJV)

Now this is in front of the whole court. This is in front of all of the people who attended court with him. He says:

2 Samuel 12:13b. I have sinned against the [Eternal]. (KJV)

Not only were Uriah and Bathsheba's child were on the receiving end of the scars of that sin, but David acknowledged that he sinned against God.

2 Samuel 12:13 continued. Nathan said unto David, The [Eternal] also [has] put away [your] sin; [you shall] not die. (KJV)

But the fact is that David finally after that parable admitted not only to God, but admitted publicly in front of all the people that he had sinned, that he was wrong. And he acknowledged it. In fact, in Psalm 51 and verse 3—I think we know that—we don't have to turn there. David said, "I acknowledge my transgressions." And what did he say? "My sin is ever before me." And David said, "I did acknowledge my transgressions. That sin I can't get rid of it! It's in front of my mind. I think about it all the time—how evil it was!"

And yet in counseling people over the years about sins or problems in their life, all too often I hear, somebody will say, "Well, yeah. I have problems, but . . ." And then that's the acknowledgement of their problems. And then they launch into a fifteen minute monologue about everybody else's problems. And human nature finds it very difficult to focus on our own sins and our own faults and to admit them and then to do something about it.

I think sometimes it's a point of insecurity or it's a point of vanity because I'm remembering back now quite some time ago. I was talking to an individual and this individual had a problem with Man A, Man B, Man C, Man D, and Man E—five different people! And I was sitting down with this individual trying to discuss the fact that he's had a problem with all of these individuals. And I said, "It's interesting because you've had a problem with all of these people." And then he launched into a discussion of why each one of them was wrong. And then I said, "Yeah, but Person A doesn't have a problem with Person B. Or Person C doesn't have a problem with Person B, but they all have a problem with you! Now what's the common denominator in this discussion? You've got six people—you and five others. And you have a problem with all five. And all five have a problem with you. So, what is the common denominator?" He kind of got this blank look. And I said, "It's you! You're the common denominator! You have a problem with them. They have a problem with you, but none of the five have a problem with each other. So, obviously, there's a lesson here somewhere." And try as I may, the individual never acknowledged that he might be partly, even partly to blame as a source of the problem!

And so this is a blindness that human nature has. A blindness that we all can have. A blindness that I've had in the past. That just because of insecurity or vanity you cannot admit that you are wrong and it's almost like a sign of weakness. But in God's eyes it's a sign of strength when you can go on your

knees and admit to God you're wrong. And then you go to your brother or sister that you've wronged and say, "I am sorry."

Now there was a problem with the Church in Philippi. And let's go to Philippians chapter 4. Paul is kind of closing down now this letter. But there was a problem and he wanted to deal with it. And, obviously, these two people had not come to themselves and had not been able to resolve the problem. We're talking about admitting that you're wrong. Philippians 4 and we're going to read the first three verses. He's saying to the Brethren there in this letter, he's saying:

Philippians 4:1. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, (KJV)

He wanted to be there. He wanted to visit them. He says:

Philippians 4:1b. my joy and crown, (KJV)

And he said in other verses that converted Brethren are "his joy and his crown." He says:

Philippians 4:1 continued. so stand fast in the [Eternal], *my* dearly beloved. (KJV)

He's encouraging them to stay close to God. And he says:

Philippians 4:2. I beseech [you] Euodias, and beseech [you] Syntyche, (KJV)

Now these, as we will find, are two women in the Church. He said, "I beseech you:"

Philippians 4:2b. that they be of the same mind in the Lord. (KJV)

Now the Greek word for *in the same mind* means to live in harmony. The fact that he's saying to Euodias and Syntyche that they are not in the same mind and they haven't been living in harmony. He says:

Philippians 4:3. And I entreat [you] also, true yokefellow, (KJV)

Now who is he referring to there? It is probably Silas because Silas was there with him in Philippi. We read about that in Acts chapter 16 and verse 19. So he's probably saying to Silas, "I entreat you also, in addition to these two women, to:"

Philippians 4:3b. help those women which labored with me in the gospel, (KJV)

So these two ladies were helpers of Paul when he was there. And they aided him and ministered to him and helped him. And yet they were part of his team,

so to speak, and now they're fighting each other! They're against each other. He says:

Philippians 4:3b. help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellow-laborers, whose names *are* in the book of life. (KJV)

Now let me just read what Clarke's Commentary says about this verse. And this is just one. All the commentaries generally agree, but Clarke says:

These were two pious women, as it is generally supposed, who were deaconesses in the Church in Philippi, and who in some points of doctrine or discipline had disagreed to the point that they were not walking together. He exhorts them to be of the same mind: that is to compose their differences and if they could not perfectly agree to think and let think [meaning to have these differences] and get along and to avoid all public opposition as their dissension would strengthen the hands of the common enemy [meaning Satan] and stumble those who were weak.

And so we see here Paul is exhorting these two deaconesses in Philippi and exhorting Silas to step in and help them to reconcile because they were at odds with each other and it was causing division. It was causing problems in the Church. And for whatever reason they were unable to admit that they had a problem, that they were wrong.

Now a converted mind would say, when confronted with something like this, a converted mind would say, "I am so sorry. I see what I've done. I am sorry. I was in a wrong attitude. I said something I deeply regret. What can I do to make it right?" That's a converted mind. To admit that we have a problem, to admit that what we did was wrong, and to make an effort to make it right.

The unconverted mind or the Laodicean mind says, "I don't have to repent because I haven't done anything wrong." Remember Revelation 3—"I have need of nothing"? I have need of nothing, because I've done nothing wrong. I'm perfect. They have the problem!" That's the difference between a converted mind and an unconverted mind because in any kind of conflict, I have yet to see where one person is 100% wrong and the other person is 100% right. It just doesn't happen. When you have conflicts, there is wrong on both sides. Now it might be 90-10. It might be 60-40. It might be 50-50. But the fact is that there's always—since we're human—in a conflict there is always wrong on both sides.

But in this case in Philippi they were at loggerheads. They had a standoff and nobody was budging. And Paul was saying, "Please! Please, Silas and all the rest of you, come and help these two ladies because they worked with me and I love them both. And we need to break this logjam and we need to have a reconciliation and we need to have a healing." But apparently, at least at the time of the writing of this letter, that hadn't happened yet.

So the converted mind has the ability to admit when it's wrong. And that is a huge growth factor in conversion. And yet so much of the time people refuse to

admit that they have a problem. That leads us to the Third. We're talking about Markers of Conversion that affect how we relate to other people. The Third is that:

The converted mind admits its way is not the way.

And I can't tell you the number of times you run into a situation where you deal with a person and their way is the only way—whatever it is! It may be from how you set up the tables and chairs in the hall to the songs you sing or to the way that people do certain things. Some people get it in their mind that there's only one way to do it. "That's my way. And everybody else's way is wrong." And when you have that attitude, you're looking for trouble. You're looking for confrontation and a problem.

Now we're not talking about the Sabbath and whether or not it's to be kept or the Holy Days. We're talking about how things are done. And some people get in their minds that "My way is the only acceptable way. And it's got to be done this way. And if it's not done this way, it's wrong or it's a sin." And we're talking—like I said, we're not talking about the Sabbath. We're talking about certain aspects of how a Feast is run or a Sabbath is run or how certain things are administered.

And God says our way is not the way. It's just not. Let's go to Jeremiah 10 and look at verse 23. This is why we should seek God's will and not our own will. And the Marker of a Converted Mind always seeks God's will not my personal will. And I've learned over the years that when I thought I was so right, I was absolutely wrong. And I was so certain that this was the proper way to do it and it turned out it either wasn't proper or it didn't make any difference. You could do it a dozen different ways and everything would be fine. Jeremiah 10 verse 23, he says:

Jeremiah 10:23. O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man [meaning humankind] that [walks] to direct his steps. (KJV)

Apart from God, we will fail. Apart from God, we don't know the way. Apart from God, we cannot put one foot in front of another and have it work out okay. We have to seek God's will. That's exactly what Christ did when He came to this earth. He didn't seek His own will. He sought God's will.

That was Jeremiah 10 verse 23, let's now jump to Matthew chapter 6 and we're going to read verses 9 and 10. This is the outline of the prayer given in the Sermon on the Mount. This is something we should pray for every day or when we come in conflict, we should pray the way we are instructed to pray here. Matthew 6 verse 9:

Matthew 6:9. After this manner therefore pray [you]: (KJV)

The introduction:

Matthew 6:9b. Our Father which [is] in heaven, Hallowed be [your] name. (KJV)

Not my name but Your name.

Jumping to verse 10:

Matthew 6:10. [Your] kingdom come. (KJV)

But notice this!

Matthew 6:10b. [Your] will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. (KJV)

Meaning: "Your will today—this day that I'm making this prayer—be done in my life. Not my will. Not what I want, but Your will." And if we are truly dedicated to seeing God's will done, then we won't be quite so insistent on having it our way because, as we have seen in the first two points, we can see that we can be wrong—that we can be wrong-headed. We can be viewing things in a wrong way.

Now let's jump to chapter 26. And we jump into the context where Christ shortly before He was taken captive and in full realization about what was going to happen to Him over the next few hours, He wanted humanly to have a different way, a different outcome. Matthew 26 verse 42:

Matthew 26:42. He went away again the second time, (KJV)

The disciples were asleep. He went to pray a second time.

Matthew 26:42b. and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, [Your] will be done. (KJV)

No matter how difficult, no matter how painful, He knew exactly what was going to happen. He knew He was going to be scourged. He knew He was going to be crucified. He knew more than any human what He faced in the next few hours, but He said, "I want to do your will, even though I don't want to personally. I don't want to suffer, but your will must be done."

I learned that very early in my years in the Church. There was a minister in Boston. He was the pastor of the Boston Church. His name was Fred Kellers. And he's a regional pastor, I think, now in United. And he was telling me once of a certain situation where I think he was—I can't remember. It wasn't in that area, but it was somewhere else previous to Boston, but he was being considered as a regional pastor—he and another man in this area. And the question was: "Well, which one was going to get to regional pastor-ship?"

And so he was being interviewed by the higher ups. I don't remember how many. And they asked him, "Well, who do you think should be the pastor—the regional pastor?" And he said, "Well, why don't you make the other guy the pastor?" And he rattled off the other guy's qualifications. And he said to me, "You know you'd like the prestige. You'd like the title and all of that." He felt that it was the right thing to do was to recommend this other man and that's what he

did. And the other man got the job because the other man recommended himself and Fred recommended him too. So he got the job. Probably shouldn't have been that way, but that's the way it happened.

But the fact is the context of the discussion was our way versus God's way. And what we want isn't always the best thing for us. As I recall, he said, "Later there were some problems that came in the area." And he was so thankful he wasn't the regional pastor because he didn't have to handle those problems! And so sometimes what we want can backfire on us if we don't seek God's way.

Now look at Isaiah chapter 66. This is what God wants. This is the attitude that God wants. He wants somebody who is willing to humble himself or herself and come under God's guidance and leadership. Isaiah 66, we'll read the first two verses—very familiar Scripture.

Isaiah 66:1. Thus [says] the [Eternal], (KJV)

Now God is setting the stage, the context, for this discussion. He says:

Isaiah 66:1b. The heaven *is my* throne, (KJV)

And the implication is: "Human being is it your throne? Do you have a throne? And if so, is your throne in heaven?" Well, the answer is "No."

Isaiah 66:1 continued. and the earth *is my* footstool: (KJV)

So can any of us say that we're big enough and grand enough that the earth is our footstool?"

Isaiah 66:1 continued. where *is* the house that [you're going to] build me? (KJV)

Can we even hope to build a house that will contain God in His glory?

Isaiah 66:1 continued. and where *is* the place of my rest? (KJV)

"Are you going to make a— I'm using a metaphor now, an analogy—are you going make a bed for me? Can you do that?"

Verse 2:

Isaiah 66:2. For all those *things* [has My] hand made, (KJV)

The heavens, His throne, His footstool!

Isaiah 66:2b. and all those *things* have been, (KJV)

Meaning: Before you man, before you were ever created, all those things existed. So God is drawing the contrast between a human and Himself.

Isaiah 66:2 continued. [He says]: but to this *man* will I look, (KJV)

Now, this is an honor when God says, "I will look to you." And how many of us would like that said of us—saying, "God wants to look at me?" And He says, "Well, I'll look at you, if"

Isaiah 66:2 continued. to *him that is poor* and of a contrite spirit, and [trembles] at my word. (KJV)

He says, "I will look to you. I will consider you. I will hear you. I will motivate you and inspire you. I will protect you and take care of you if you have a poor and a contrite spirit as David did when he admitted his sins."

And so we see here that the converted mind has to come to the point where the converted mind admits that its way is not the way. And we have to consider other people and their viewpoints.

And one of the things we try to do in the Pacific Church of God is to come to decisions by consensus, by listening to everybody's point of view and not having respect of persons. And so in major decisions we want to sit around the table and talk about it because we all have to admit—and I especially have to admit—that my way—I've learned over the years, my way is not the way. I've learned it very painfully over the years. We want to seek God's way.

Now that leads to the Fourth Point:

The converted mind is clean and pure and positive.

Now, the mind of the world today is anything but. Dorothy and I were on a ferry and a woman was talking on a cell phone. And she was cursing like a sailor for the whole world to see around her. I mean there were fifty people within earshot and she was cursing over a cell phone. That's not clean. That's not pure.

But notice, Christ says in Matthew 5 and verse 8, one of the very first recorded words out of His mouth, the very first sermon that He gave. Matthew 5 and verse 8, what did He say?

Matthew 5:8. Blessed are (KJV)

What?

Matthew 5:8. the pure in heart: (KJV)

And He said that their reward is that:

Matthew 5:8b. they [will] see God. (KJV)

So if we want to be in the Kingdom, if we want to have a converted mind, we have to develop a pure mind—a pure mind, one that does not think evil of others; one that does not suspect evil in others; one that is not polluted by the world.

Notice 1 Timothy 1 and verse 5. Paul is trying to orient Timothy's mind as to the purpose of the commandments, the end result of the commandments. 1 Timothy 1 and verse 5, through his experience and his being taught by Christ, he understood things that he wanted Timothy to understand. 1 Timothy 1 verse 5, he says:

1 Timothy 1:5. Now the end

Now that word for *end* is the Greek word *telos*. And it means the end to which all things relate, the end to which all things relate, the aim, or the purpose. So he's saying:

1 Timothy 1:5. the end of the commandment (KJV)

Everything that relates to the commandment.

1 Timothy 1:5b. The [aim, the purpose] of the commandment is [to love] (KJV)

But to love in a certain way.

1 Timothy 1:5 continued. out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith [that is not fake]: (KJV)

So we're being told here that the end of the commandments is, yes, to love, but it's got to be done out of a pure heart. In other words, you can't show love to people with the idea of getting something in return. "I'll go visit this widow. But what I really want is for people to know so that I will receive the praise of men. Or that the pastor will know and he'll make me an elder or a deacon." That's love maybe—but not from a pure heart. And it's not *agape* love, but it's a different kind of love. It's a selfish kind of love.

So we're told here that it has to be love out of a pure heart.

Now to show the opposite end of that extreme, let's look at King Saul because King Saul was this handsome man. We're told he stood head and shoulders above everybody else. And he was Israel's first king. And he was, in the eyes of humans, what you would think a king would be—big, strong, handsome, masculine and all that. He was a warrior and a fighter. And he was made the first king as you know.

Let's go to 1 Samuel chapter 18. But we know he ran into some problems because he tried to exalt himself and he didn't listen to God. He didn't listen to God's prophet on the earth at that time. He rejected what Samuel told him and thereby rejected God. And so in 1 Samuel 18, we'll begin the narrative in verse 5. David is now part of Saul's entourage. And David killed Goliath. And Saul made David in charge of his army. And David went out and fought battles. And notice what had happened.

1 Samuel 18:5. And David went out [wherever] Saul sent him, *and* [he] behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. (KJV)

He was doing exactly what Saul wanted him to do. And the people loved it.

Verse 6:

1 Samuel 18:6. And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of [music]. (KJV)

A big celebration over their victory!

1 Samuel 18:7. And the women answered *one another* (KJV)

They would sing back and forth, probably from one side of the road to the other as this procession was going through.

1 Samuel 18:7. And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. (KJV)

Oops! What's going on here?

Now if you put a man in charge of your war machine and he slays ten thousands, he's doing exactly what you asked him to do. Go out and defeat the enemy. You should be happy. But notice Saul's attitude.

1 Samuel 18:8. And Saul was very [angry], and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom? (KJV)

Now Saul is making an impure assumption. He's saying, "Because David has been so successful and they're heaping all this praise on him, then the only thing he can think of is how he can get rid of me and take over the kingdom!" And that was not true. David did not have one thought along those lines. But Saul out of an impure heart assumed that David was thinking that way. Why? Because, if Saul was in that position, he would think that way!

Verse 9:

1 Samuel 18:9. And Saul eyed David from that day forward. (KJV)

That means Saul suspected him. Saul was reading his mind and knew his motives. And you've had that happen to you. I've certainly had that happen to me where people second- or third-hand hear something and all of a sudden they

can read your mind and knew why you allegedly did something that you never did based on rumor. And Saul was reading David's mind in his own mind and his own thoughts and coming to wrong conclusions.

Now notice the result of this impure thinking. Verse 10:

1 Samuel 18:10. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied [or spoke] in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand [to calm him down, which had worked previously], as at other times: and *there was* a javelin [besides] Saul's hand. 11) And Saul cast the javelin; [because he thought in his mind], I will smite David [I'll nail him] to the wall *with* [this javelin]. (KJV)

Now where did that thought come from? It didn't come from God. It didn't come from God's spirit. But it came from an impure heart worked on by spiritual forces.

1 Samuel 18:11b. David [thankfully] avoided [the] presence [of this javelin flying through the air] twice. 12) And Saul was afraid of David, because the [Eternal] was with him, and was departed from Saul. (KJV)

So we see here that an impure heart, an unclean heart, a negative heart can lead to murder or the attempt of murder.

Dorothy's mother, when she was alive—she died just a little over a year ago now; she was a 101—she made a statement that was very true and very wise. She said, "Holding a grudge is like taking poison and hoping the other person dies." Because having a grudge, having that bitterness inside you is like a poison. And you direct at this other person, but internally it will eat you apart.

And Saul had a grudge against David. Saul was jealous of David. Saul refused to admit that, refused to acknowledge his sin, and it ate him up. And it was aided, of course, by an evil spirit.

Now notice in Psalm 51 and verse 10, David—after his acknowledgement that we read about in verse 3 earlier—asked God to do something. And we need to ask God to do the same thing with us in our lives. Psalm 51 and verse 10, after David acknowledging his sin, crying and pleading with God, lost his son, he said in verse 10:

Psalm 51:10. Create in me a clean heart, [he says,] O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (KJV)

A clean, a pure, a positive spirit because the spirit he had when he committed the sins—not just of Bathsheba, but of numbering Israel—it wasn't a pure heart. It wasn't a pure mind. It was loaded with sin and all kinds of wrong emotions.

And we're told that we can't have that kind of emotion, those kind of thoughts in our mind if we're going to be Christians because it leads to trouble. It leads to fighting. It leads to warfare. It leads to suspicion. It leads to gossip. It leads to

rumor. And we can't allow that to happen, especially if we want peace and harmony and unity.

So that is why in Philippians—let's go back there; we were there earlier. That is why Paul after this flap between these two ladies gives the following admonishment. Philippians 4 and verse 8, he says:

Philippians 4:8. Finally, brethren, (KJV)

He's wrapping things up. Now we need to take this to heart.

Philippians 4:8b. whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, (KJV)

That means fair.

Philippians 4:8 continued. whatsoever things *are* pure, (KJV)

Not polluted with evil.

Philippians 4:8 continued. whatsoever things *are* lovely, (KJV)

Now the Greek word for *lovely* means acceptable or pleasing—pleasing to God, acceptable to God.

Philippians 4:8 continued. whatsoever things are of [a] good report; (KJV)

Not negative! Not evil!

Philippians 4:8 continued. [He says,] if [*there's*] any virtue, and if [*there's*] any praise, (KJV)

Now that's in the King James. The word *praise* is translated *excellent*. If there's any *excellence* or anything that is praiseworthy, he said:

Philippians 4:8 continued. think on these things. (KJV)

And we've seen Brethren who set a wonderful example in this way. One of the ones that I mentioned in her funeral was Linda Stalder. In all the years that I've known Linda, in all the suffering that she went through, I have never heard her say a negative word about anybody. Dorothy's mother was the same way. That's why when she is resurrected, she will be not far from the Kingdom of God. But Linda in going through all that she went through for twenty-five years never said a negative word about another person. She never did. And what an example! I mean that is a clean and a pure heart! And God wants us to be positive not negative. He wants us to be clean not polluted. And He wants our heart to be pure in our love for Him and in our love for one another.

So the Fourth Point of a Converted Mind is:

To have a positive, clean, and a pure heart.

The Fifth and the Last Point is that:

The converted mind forgives and loves its enemies.

Probably next to admitting you're wrong, this is the hardest thing to do is to forgive your enemies and to love your enemies.

And Christ told us when He talked, when He gave sermons, He said, "I'm going to ask something more of you." He said, "I'm going to something ask more than just the physical obedience to the Law. I'm going to ask something more than not fighting. I'm going to ask you to love those who hate you. I'm going to ask you to do good to those who want to use you."

And make no mistake that we do have enemies. I mean even among God's people. Some of us are classified, categorized as enemies because we didn't do this or we didn't do that or we're not sitting here or we're not sitting there. Those in the Pacific Church of God have been called "lemmings running off of a cliff to destruction." And it shouldn't be, but we have people that are against us. And, as I said, that should not be.

Let's go to Mark chapter 11 and we're told the attitude that we should have toward those who might be our enemies. And Christ is teaching a lesson here by two people—a religious leader and a publican or a tax collector. Mark 11 verse 25, He says:

Mark 11:25. And when [you] stand praying, forgive, if [you] have [anything] against [anybody]: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your [sins or your] trespasses. 26) But if [you] do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. (KJV)

So it's very clear that if we have, it says, "anything against anybody." Now that covers the whole spectrum. There's no exceptions here. He says if we don't forgive, then God's not going to forgive us. And as Gunhilde Tucker said, "If you hold a grudge, it's going to come to bite you. It's going to come to poison you." You can't do that.

And remember what Christ said—we won't turn there—but in the various gospels (Luke 23 is one of them) when they were parting His garments and casting lots and spitting on Him and taking the crown of thorns and jamming it down on His head, what did He say? "Forgive them." Why? "Because they don't know what they're doing." And if somebody is doing evil toward us or talking evil about us, we have to say in truth, "They don't know what they're doing." They don't know the truth. They don't have all the facts. They're making wrong assumptions. Maybe even out of an impure heart. We don't know that. Only God knows the heart. "But forgive them, God, because they don't know what they are doing."

And then Christ said in Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount—let's go to verse 44. This is the hard part! This is the difficult part! This is where the rubber meets the road as they say. Matthew 5 and verse 44, Christ says:

Matthew 5:44. But I say unto you, [contrary to what seeking vengeance requires] Love your enemies, (KJV)

I mean, that's a mouthful!

Matthew 5:44b. [to] Love your enemies, [to] bless [those] that curse you, (KJV)

Because when somebody curses us, we want to fight back. We want to curse back. And He says, "Don't. Bless them."

Matthew 5:44 continued. [and] do good to them that hate you, (KJV)

To do good to them! To actually do something! If somebody hates us, what we want to do is either fight back or run away. But it says, "Don't do that. Don't do either one of those. Go do good to them. Do something good to them."

Matthew 5:44 continued. and pray for them [that spitefully] use you, and persecute you; (KJV)

So we're told every day to pray for our enemies, to pray for those who might be saying something against us, who might be plotting against us, who do not want the best for us. We need to do good to them. We need to love them. We need to pray for them.

And so the two big things that are most hard for us to do in achieving a converted mind is Number One:

To admit when we're wrong, as Mr. Armstrong said.

And Number Two:

To love those who don't have very good feelings toward us, who actually hate us.

So we ask the question: Do we pray daily for those who hate? Do we? Do we really do that? Do we pray daily for those who might hate us or are against us somehow? And do we forgive those and love those who hate us and want the best for them? Because most of the time if somebody is after us or against us or is gossiping about us, we want the wrath of God to come down on their head! We want lightening out of heaven to just fry them to a crisp! And yet when we sin, we don't want God to do that to us. I've looked back and marveled that God hasn't sent a lightening bolt out of the sky to blast me into cinders. And so who are we then to want that to happen to other people when we don't want God to do that to us? So we need to love and to forgive our enemies.

So let's understand—wrapping this up and concluding the main points—it boils down to a humility that goes beyond human humility. It boils down to seeing ourselves relative to God, understanding who we are relative to God.

Let's go to 2 Samuel chapter 7 and let's look at verse 18. David toward the end of his days was still humble to the point that God still looked at him as a man after His own heart. David had kingdoms. He'd won battles. He had wealth. He had amassed a kingdom that a human being could strut around and be proud about, but notice what he said in 2 Samuel 7 and verse 18.

2 Samuel 7:18. [When] king David [went] in and sat before the [Eternal], he said [to God,] Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house [my family], that [You] brought me [this point]? (KJV)

He said, "I don't deserve this. I haven't done anything to earn this. I was the youngest of all the siblings. And I was nothing special to look at." Remember Samuel the first one paraded before him—I don't remember his name—said, "Surely, this is the guy—big strong guy!" And God says, "No. I look on the heart. I don't look on the appearance." But David said, "Who am I? I'm nobody."

If David could say that, what about us? If we're nobody's, then we can admit we're wrong. If we're nobody's, we can love those who hate us because we realize they, like us, half the time don't know what they're doing! We were off in a wrong direction.

And that's why we are told to do a certain thing. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5 for a final Scripture. We're told to do a certain thing. And we need to take heed to this. 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5, we need to examine ourselves in light of these Markers of Conversion. 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5, we are told:

2 Corinthians 13:5. Examine yourselves, whether [you] be in the faith; (KJV)

Now the faith, the belief that we have, covers all the Scriptures that we've read today. Meaning: seeing yourself, acknowledging you're wrong, acknowledging the fact that your way may not be the right way, and acknowledging the fact that we've got to love those who hate us and those who want to destroy us.

He says:

2 Corinthians 13:5. Examine yourselves, whether [you] be in the faith; prove your own selves. (KJV)

Put yourselves to the test. So the next time somebody says something evil about you, put yourselves to the test. Examine yourselves and see what you think. What goes through your mind? And if it's not the right thing, we need to repent of it and see whether we're in the faith. Do we do good to those who hate us? Do we admit that we're wrong? Do we see ourselves as God sees us?

He says:

2 Corinthians 13:5b. Know [you] not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except [you] be reprobates [cast out]? (KJV)

In other words, God's spirit, the mind of Christ have to be in us or we have no hope. We will not make it because Christ is not going to marry somebody who is totally different, has totally different values, totally different character, totally different mind than Him. What He wants us to do over time is to develop His mind—we're told in Philippians 2 and verse 5—so that we can be His Bride because you hope a husband and wife by the time they get married are like-minded or grow to become like-minded. If they don't, they end in a divorce. And so Christ is not going to marry somebody that has a different mind than He has. That's why we have to examine ourselves to see whether we have the mind of Christ, to see whether we are converted or whether we're just playing church, or just playing a game.

Now you look at a calendar and we're only four months away from Passover. Just four months! So let's use this time to examine ourselves to see whether we have a converted mind or not. Let's examine ourselves very carefully. Let's fast between now and the Passover. Let's fast often to ask God to open our minds to see our depth of conversion, to see ourselves the way He sees us. And then, once we do that, we can make changes in our lives to be more like Jesus Christ.

So let's understand the Markers of True Conversion.