

Soteriology
Lesson 8
Temptation Part Two

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First, you must acknowledge sin in your life. You are not going to be victorious if you try to run away from that fact.

Years ago, we had, through some conferences called Keswick, (they still have Bible conferences in the east and also in Canada and England), what we called: “The Deeper Life Conferences.” They dealt with the ministry of the Holy Spirit, with the crucified life, Christ in you, etc...all good stuff! But during this teaching, what arose was what we call eradicationism. What it meant was that through a person’s yieldedness and surrender, you could eradicate the sin nature. So that in fact your victory over sin is complete in this life. That was really held by a lot of people. It still is today and that’s why it burdens me.

A fellow I talked to just not too long ago was a part of that. And he’s always had the aura or the atmosphere of a spiritual man. I mean if you met him, his talk, his demeanor, always was spiritual. But there was something about him, I can’t describe it, but it wasn’t real to me. But I kept it to myself. You know I’m certainly no judge of motives. God tells us not to. So I thought, “Ah it’s just me.” But he made me uncomfortable. I don’t know why, he just did. I thought, “Well, it’s because he was more spiritual than I am.” Then I thought, “No, no, that’s false doctrine!” So, it’s like how to handle this. You know what I mean? It’s really not easy.

And then one day he talked to me. What had happened is he fell into sin through a desire to be “spiritual.” And I saw what could happen to somebody who believed that sin was no longer a problem. Verses like “Sin shall not have reign over you” (Romans 6:12). He didn’t read everything. There were just certain things he saw and he heard a lot of good messages in this area, and so he thought he didn’t have any sin problem.

So can you imagine the disillusionment that would happen to a Christian like that when they fell into sin? The depression! The discouragement! He felt he wasn’t saved. He didn’t know the Lord. He just was going through a terrible, terrible time. Well, I’m summarizing looking back on it, because it turned out real good. But I’m telling you that it was hard at the time for me to

discern what was the root of it. You see the root of it was that he had been taught so clearly in this area that he thought sin was gone. It was gone. He didn't have a problem. He said, "I am *dead* to sin" (cf. Romans 6:11).

Well sin isn't dead. That isn't the point of that. We count ourselves, which is an issue of faith, to be dead unto sin; that is, sin's power to control us. "We have to walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). And it doesn't say, "Sin is dead." But you see, that's how easily you can just kind of cross a line. And it kind of makes you feel good. You know, "I've really conquered sin in my life. No problem, man. I'm victorious." Watch out!

If you want to deal with sin and temptation in a biblical manner and really get a handle on this, please understand you must acknowledge sin in your life. Remember I told you at the beginning of our discussion that a lot on the doctrine of salvation, people, they have a tendency to skip over some essential parts. One of the greatest reasons why I need a Savior is because I understand my sin. Christ died for our? Sins! The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all? Sin! You know, I have got to understand that. But some people say, "Well if He did, He did and now I no longer have a sin problem." No, no, no.

When we talk about recognizing sin in your life, there are three things you really recognize. One is the nature of sin itself. The devil's desire to trick you is to get you to accept some standard of sin besides the Bible's. If you need to write that out to yourself, write it out. Because that is a fundamental strategy of the enemy, to get you to bring another definition of sin, another idea about what sin is, than what is actually mentioned in the Bible.

There was a time in Christianity in my early years where bright colors were considered sinful. If someone wore a red dress, a red shirt or some bright color, they were definitely worldly and sinning against the Lord. And good Christian people believed that.

If you want to have victory in your life in this area, then you've got to acknowledge what the nature of sin is according to the Bible. "It is by the law that we get the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). And "sin is the transgression of God's law," (1 John 3:4). So it is very helpful to

ask, "What verse am I violating? What law of God have I sinned against? Then you've go to acknowledge the presence of sin within you. If you think that there is no sin nature in you anymore, first of all, 1 John 1:10 clearly says that you're a liar and the Word is not in you and you even make God a liar if you say that! We will not be rid of the presence of sin until the Second Coming of Christ. "The heart is deceitful" (Jeremiah 17:9). "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "In sin did my mother conceive me," (Psalm 51:5). There is so much on this. I just gave you a few verses. But there is tons of stuff in the Bible to let us know we have a problem with the presence of sin and *will* until we are transformed into His likeness.

But you have to also acknowledge the results of it. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). That's true. But did you ever think about James 1:15's analogy of the birth of a baby and likening it to sin? "When lust has conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished [or coming to the completion of the term of pregnancy, what goes out of the womb] is death." In other words, all during your life there're some serious things going on. If you don't handle it, it's death to everything. Sin that is harbored in your heart, sin that is entertained, sin that is not confessed, sin that is not repented of, what it does is it brings consequences. Not simply the fact that we all have physical death as a consequence. And the promise of physical life and living forever with the Lord means you've got to solve your spiritual death problem in order to experience physical life in the future. But a lot of us don't see the results.

Do you understand that sinning leads to death...death to your plans, to your dreams, to your relationships, to everything! That's the product. The illustration is a baby growing in the womb. When you let that baby of sin grow in your womb it conceived by your lust, and if you let it develop and you entertain it and you keep it going, you get in a habit, what's going to come out is death, deterioration, destruction, hurt, pain, sorrow, terrible problems.

A girl I knew in high school was a Christian and she got involved, and had a baby, had to leave high school. Never did graduate, but used to try to justify all of this. You know, it was a

terrible thing. I saw her about four or five years ago. I almost burst out crying just looking at her. I've never saw such a tragedy in all my life. She was a beautiful girl in high school. You could see the scares and effects of a sinful lifestyle. And as she told me how through a radio broadcast she had heard, God really convicted her heart. And she told me about the tragedies of her family and multiple marriages and hurts and pains. And now she was all alone. And she said, "As long as you have breath to preach, please tell people that sin brings terrible consequences." Sin is a hard taskmaster. You know that? It's going to ruin your life, and it's tragic to me what happens.

And yet I know we all have to face it. We have to face it. You don't get to first base and get in victory by trying to ignore sin and its consequences. You won't do it! That's why I think a lot of us don't preach on sin and its consequences because it offends people. Makes them feel terrible. Everybody wants to feel good right now. Hey, I'm for bringing out grace, don't misunderstand. Thank God for grace and mercy and forgiveness! But if you won't deal with sin, you haven't got any point behind the grace and mercy and forgiveness. And I think a lot of us are suffering because we haven't heard enough about what the sin nature is all about, and its consequences in our life and why we need to flee to the cross. We don't understand it! We think we can get away with something and we won't pay the price of it. And that's the devil's deception. That's a part of the temptation.

A kid said to me not more than ten years ago, he was only in his 20s, he was messing around with a lot of women in his arrogant attitude. Today he's dying of sexual disease. What a fool! My heart goes out to him. Thank God for His forgiveness!

But do you understand? You aren't going to get victory over this if you don't understand how the devil's deceiving you. He doesn't want you to look at some of these things God says that you think are so hard and cruel and keeping us from having fun or something else. No, they're not. They're intended to give you the greatest amount of joy and delight and blessing the rest of your life. Be careful! The devil will want to deceive you to water down the enormity of the sin problem within you and the consequences that will come.

When God says, “If we confess our sins...” (1 John 1:9), some people act like it’s a simple thing. Just name it at night before you go to bed and everything’s okay. Well, there’s a lot more than that within that root word of confession, as we will soon learn in our course, it is also forsaking and repentance. There’s a lot to be said there. No wonder Proverbs 28:13 says that “if we confess and forsake our sin we will find compassion.” It’s a lot more than just calling it out—again the subtleties of doctrines on salvation.

If you want victory there’s no substitution for this and it grieves me that we are currently bringing a lot of substitutions into the evangelical church. You must accept the death of Jesus Christ as your only payment for sin and the gift of forgiveness. Class, I say this over and over again and like a lot of preachers, I think I am deluded into thinking that everybody accepted it. But they don’t.

I argued with a guy who is really committed now to twelve steps of recovery in his particular issue. And he was going at me for criticizing it. “You shouldn’t be tearing it down.”

I said, “I’m not against biblical counseling. I never have been. I’m not against accountability groups. I think they’re wonderful. But I’ll tell you one thing I’m against, what you said that some how these twelve steps are going to clean your life up of your sin. It will not do it. Only the death of Jesus Christ did that.”

Now watch out, people because all over the Christian world now, we have all these recovery-type movements. These things are affecting us and it’s getting more and more difficult. People think, “Oh yeah, I know Jesus died for us, but we’re talking about getting rid of my...” You see, they don’t want to go back to the cross. Did you know that you and I, as believers, go back to the cross as surely as what the cross did for us when we received the Lord?

You see, there’s something here we’ve missed. We are not only delivered from the penalty of sin, we are also delivered from the power of the sin. And that’s what Romans 6 is all about. We’re delivered from the power of sin to control us by the cross. “Our old man, our old sin

nature has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative that henceforth we shall no longer be slaves to sin.” (cf. Romans 6:6).

Let me walk through this—just three simple things to make sure we’re clear—and by the way, we’ll be discussing these when we come to the death of Christ. Number one, when He died, according to the teaching of the Bible, it was satisfactory as to the righteous demands of the law. There was complete satisfaction. God is appeased. By the way, if you want to write out to the side, that is the doctrine of propitiation. P-R-O-P-I-T-I-A-T-I-O-N. We will be discussing that later. Propitiation means to appease God, to satisfy His wrath against sin. According to the Bible when Jesus died all the wrath of God was laid on Him, all the righteous demands of the law. It says “The soul that sins, it must die” (Ezekiel 18:20). They were all satisfied by the Lord Jesus when He died. Aren’t you glad of that? Man, praise the Lord for that. The law condemns.

It was sufficient as to His ability and the amount of sin to be paid for. Here’s where a lot of people get fuzzy, especially in Catholic doctrine where we have the difference between mortal and venial sin. There is no such catalog. Now how did they come up with mortal and venial sin? Well, because they thought the sin unto death, from 1 John 5:16, was a serious mortal sin. But it’s not a particular sin in that it’s just sin in general. There is sin that leads to death, of course. A pattern of sinning that leads to death is taught throughout Scripture, but there’s no particular sin in mind. Sin is sin.

And you say, “Well all I was doing was just telling a little white lie.” What? There are two things wrong with that answer. And they’re both adjectives. You said little and you said white. No it was sin. “Well it wasn’t like, you know, a biggie.” You did it again. Do you understand how confession of sin gets a little troublesome? We don’t say what God says. We try to make ourselves out to be better than what we are. Or to water down what actually was said or not said.

Was His death on the cross sufficient? By way of His own ability to pay for all sin, whether it’s past, present, or future or every last person who has ever lived? You see, the solution

to solve the sin problem has never changed. But many people believe it's like a Catholic doctrine carried over into Protestant Christianity that when you accept Christ that takes care of all the past sins and that sort of thing. But now you have to buy our thirty-step program because that's what will do it for you. No it won't. What will do it for you is the cross and it has never changed. There is no other solution to cleaning up my sin than the blood of Jesus Christ. There isn't. And class, I cannot say that enough to you. If you went through this whole course and never got a blooming thing out of it except one thing—that there's only one remedy and cure for sin and that's the blood of Jesus Christ, then we would have accomplished the purpose we need.

But you're going to find all over evangelical Christianity—oh they'll say, "I believe that, but here's what we're also going to do." And what it does is it leads people away from the cross to human effort. "If you'll go through these steps, if you'll do these following things that's what will bring the cleansing." No it won't! Or the other favorite one, "You know if you don't talk to somebody, you know, you're not going to get this problem resolved."

A guy said that to me on the phone. He said, "I got to counsel with you now."

I said, "Well, I'll pray with you on the phone but you really don't need my counsel."

"You're the only guy that can help me."

I said, "No I'm not. Really I'm not. If I were dead, you'd have to choose somebody else." People don't want to hear that. I said, "I'll be glad to talk to you, just tell me what your problem is. I can probably say everything I'm going to say, right now on the phone."

You think our Christian world wants to hear that? They don't want to hear that, not at all. They are actually willing to pay big-time money and go for counseling over long periods of time to solve a sin problem that is already been paid for by Jesus Christ. Now isn't that an oddity?

You see, let's clear it up, class. Talk therapy has never cleaned anybody up, ever. The Bible says, "In much talk is much foolishness" (cf. Proverbs 10:19). We need to get back to the truth of the Bible. It's the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin.

But we need to also be clear that it's substitutionary. That is it takes our place only for those who believe it. Now I want you to think about this. Christ died for all your sins. You've put your faith in Him, you've trusted Him. Now you walk by faith not by sight. All of a sudden, you are tempted and you've got some sin problems in your life. You know you need to confess. You need to get right with the Lord. It's easy to forget that it substitutes for those who believe it. See, it's already true whether you believe it or not, but it's no good for you unless you do.

Is it true that the cross has paid for all your sins? Yes or no? Yes! But if you don't believe it, it has no effect on you. You must believe it. That's why in Romans 6:11 it says, "Reckon [or count] yourself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." That's the word of faith. It's an accountant term, meaning to calculate. On the debit side are all my sins. On the credit side is the cross of Jesus Christ. On the basis of that, I count myself, in Christ, to be dead to sin's ability to control my life. I do not have to be a slave to sin. If I don't believe that, I will continue to be a slave to sin.

Sometimes I think, "Why couldn't it be something we write down or something we stick in and fix, or...faith, imagine that?" God set the whole thing up by faith. In other words, you're saved by faith, but in order to be victorious in your life, you've got to walk by faith. You've got to believe that what He said is true. And some people think that if they believe it, it makes it true. No. It already is true. But it doesn't work for you unless you believe it. That's the way God set it up. You'll never outgrow your need of trusting the Lord. Did you know that? Never!

If you're going to handle the problem of temptation and sin in your life, then you must avoid the temptation to ignore, justify, or hide your sin. These are the three ways we handle it. Ignore it. It's no big deal. Don't think about it. Or justify it. "Well, you know, if you could have seen the pressure I was under you'd know. Hey, have you seen this lately? That's a tremendous temptation!" All kinds of things...or hide it. It's a terrible thing to fear exposure. You're guilty of something, you hope nobody every finds out. Boy, what a terrible way to live. Be a lot better to

confess and forsake it—be a lot better. You’ve got to avoid the temptation to ignore, justify, or hide your sin.

I bring you just three simple principles. One, you do realize you can’t hide from God? What if God was a real person? Oh, that’s right. He is. What if He was visible and He was looking right at you while you’re trying to sin?

“What are you doing there, David? Trying to sin?”

You think you won?

“I’m the Lord, God. What are you doing?”

“Sinning.”

Isn’t it interesting though, because you don’t see Him, because He’s the invisible God, we, tempted by the enemy, believe we can hide. We’ve done it with others, so maybe we can hide from God. “You know He’s awfully busy. I hear He’s over in China. Of course, they’ve got that big summit over there in Egypt, He might be there.” The Lord is omnipresent, every where at once. And He knows everything you’re thinking and saying and doing; even when you think nobody else knows, God does!

Why don’t people get victory? Because they act like God isn’t around. The very One who loves you has to sit with His arms around you and watch you every day. He can’t take His eyes off you. He loves you so much. But can you imagine that? Watching you sin? Did you know that He’s with you when you do sin? He’s with you. Can you imagine being God, knowing what you’re doing, knowing it’s going to hurt you? What does He do go, “Oh no, not again!” I mean, what does He do? He’s not surprised by any of it. He’s not burdened by any of it. He loves you, but He’s there!

Why don’t Christians see that?—because the devil blinds our minds. He doesn’t want you to think that God is there. He wants you to think He’s up there or out there, or over somewhere else working today. Or He’s got too many other people on His agenda today to care about you. And the devil deceives us into thinking that somehow God isn’t right there with me while I’m

sinning. He said, "I'll never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). "The eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27). He said, "I bore you on eagle's wings...I carried you all day long" (cf. Exodus 19:4). The Lord's been there the whole time!

I don't believe that you really come to what we like to call "real victory in the Lord" by ignoring the Lord. I almost feel stupid saying that. Of course not! But that's exactly what the devil gets us to do. You see the root of every problem in my life is a misunderstanding or misapplication of who God is or what God can do. And if I forget who He is and I don't focus on who He is, hey I'm wide open to deception.

I'm talking to a man, just committed adultery and he told me, "I was baptized by the Holy Spirit, anointed by God."

I said, "Well, you're not now."

"I'm filled with the Holy Spirit. You know these things just happen."

"No you're not. You're grieving the Holy Spirit. You're quenching Him. But you sure aren't filled with Him."

Isn't it interesting how people argue? They have the idea that somehow we can still know the blessing of God. "Well listen, God does bless in spite of us and not because of us." But it isn't you! He can put you on the shelf, use somebody else. He can use His Word in spite of you. All that's true, but a lot of us have the idea that somehow God has sort of overlooked this sin. No He won't. He's being grieved all the time by our sin. He's not going to overlook it either. Not going to sweep it under the rug. He's waiting for you to confess it and forsake it. He loves you.

You know, I'm like that as a dad. I mean, I'm such an inadequate example of my heavenly Father. But I'm like that as a dad. Like you'd know what your kid did and you know he's wrong, but you'd just like to hear him say "I'm sorry." It's kind of an odd thing. You know until he does, there's just a strain all the time, just a strain in the relationship. But I'll tell you, as

soon as he says, “I’m sorry,” it’s amazing! And I think often of how God must be because I’m in His image and after His likeness, though inadequate and imperfect.

My kids come up and they say, “You know dad, I’m really sorry.”

“Come here.” Grab ‘em. Slobber all over them...

Isn’t it funny that we can see that and not see our Lord? He wants to bless you more than you want to be blessed. He loves you. He’s waiting for you to confess your sin. Why?—because He needs to be informed about it? No. He already knows all you’re doing. Just come and tell Him. You need it!

Refuse to hide or cover up your sin. Just don’t do it! The Bible says “whoever covers his sin will not prosper” (Proverbs 28:13). Now that doesn’t mean that every time you give a testimony... “I want to describe the dirty details of how I sinned against God.” No! Don’t do that. What it talks about in covering up sin it’s talking about not only you acknowledging it before God, but also acknowledging it before the person you sinned against, if that was true.

There are some sins that are private. Nobody else is involved. You handle that between you and the Lord and don’t buy the devil’s deception that it will help you to talk about it to somebody. The Bible says it’s a shame to speak of those things done in secret (cf. Ephesians 5:12). Once again, we violate God’s Word sometimes in the name of counseling. If you’re not talking to the person who sinned against that you need to confess and ask forgiveness, if there’s something private between you and the Lord, then leave it there and don’t go around dumping your garbage on somebody else’s ears. Don’t do it. The Bible says “Fornication, uncleanness all of it, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints” (Ephesians 5:3). God doesn’t want you doing that! Refuse to hide. Refuse to cover up.

You must apply the principles of God’s word in order to have freedom from guilt and deliverance from sinful practices. You say, “Wait a minute. If I’m forgiven by the Lord, and I am through Christ, why do I need to do this?”

Psalm 119:9 says, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” The answer: “by taking heed thereto according to Thy word.” Obeying the Word! In verse 11, “Thy word have I hid [or treasured] in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.”

Class, I don't want to make a simple issue hard. But would you please understand that victory in your life over sinful habits and desires though in a moment you can restore the relationship, so to speak, by confession and forsaking it; yet please understand that there's a matter of practical obedience to the Word of God that sustains that victory. If you at that point think that just because you said this now you're going to walk away completely victorious and you never have to look at the word again, you're wrong! Treasure, meditate on the Word, in your life. It's a preventative against sin. And what happens you wind up hearing that trite statement that's so true, but it's trite. And that is that “sin keeps you from the word or the word keeps you from sin.” It's like you start ignoring the Word for yourself. It's just in the class. Watch out!

Not only that but in Galatians 5:16 when he said, “Walk by the Spirit and you'll not carry out the lusts of the flesh.” That's a wonderful promise, isn't it? It doesn't say you'll get rid of it. But it says you would not carry it out. You're not going to do what your sinful thoughts created for you to do. You're not going to carry it out. There'll be a tremendous struggle, the Spirit warring against the flesh. These are contrary one to another. Evidence also, that you're a believer, by the way. Unbelievers don't have the struggle. You have the struggle between the Holy Spirit pounding (reminding) your brain whether you ought not to and your flesh saying, “But it'll be okay.” And you're warring against yourself!

When you walk by means of the Spirit, you hear all kinds of definitions of that. In that same passage, in Galatians 5, it tells us at the end of the chapter that “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). But he changed the word for walking so that we would understand what it means to walk in the Spirit. In the first case, walking in the Spirit, *peripateō*, is the idea of a lifestyle. God wants you to have a lifestyle, a daily dependence walking with the Lord. When he came later in the chapter to say if we live in the Spirit let's also walk. He

changes the word and it's actually referring to a step-by-step process. Learn a lesson with every step you take, you need to trust the Lord; you need to depend on the Lord.

See, one of the devil's traps is to get you and me to think because of a great victory we just had, that therefore I'm cool for a while.

Here's another devil's deception. Go to a great meeting, get under conviction, pour out your heart to God, get right with the Lord, live victoriously for three months, go to another great meeting, get right with the Lord, live victoriously for three months, go to another great meeting, hear great speaker, get emotionally involved, make decision, go another three months, go to another speaker. And so what happens is there's a pattern developing. And what you've done is you've missed that day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment trust in the Lord.

You don't ride on the crest of anything that happened yesterday. Today is a new day. We need to apply what God says. What has God said to you already today from His word? What did you read this morning before you started out that helped you to deal with today? It's very important, class. That's the word. The other one is prayer.

Jesus said in Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation." Prayer is helpful. Now, I don't know about you, in the midst of temptation and sinning I don't usually pray. I don't want to pray. It embarrasses me to pray because I'm trying to sin. Isn't it interesting? It's like a little war goes on. Jesus said, "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation." Prayer is a powerful tool. Because what are you doing in praying? You're calling on the God who is there, who knows all about the situation, knows about you, knows about your weaknesses, everything. You're calling upon Him. You understand your flesh is helpless. It's weak. It can't do anything in and of itself. And your spirit might be willing, but you're having a struggle. Man, you're so weak. Jesus said, "Just talk to Me, don't think you can handle this by yourself. I never wanted you to think that. I like being with you in this. Come on. We can do it. Ask Me."

The Lord, Who could correct it without you asking, gets joy and delight out of you asking. And one day it hit me, "God really wants me to depend on Him!" See, you first look at

that in kind of a Christian immaturity as, "I got to." But somehow in you're growth you all of a sudden realize; the Lord loves me so much! He really likes me dependent on Him. He likes it! He even sets up situations that make me understand that. He wants me to depend on Him every day of my life. What a Savior we have! Amen?

Let's pray.

Father You know how many of us here are struggling, going through some problems, perhaps some temptations, some enticements that have just seemed overwhelming. You also know how many of us are deceived by our own pride and arrogance, by our failure to trust You, by thinking that we could somehow handle something in our own strength. And Lord, You told us to "Humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. He will exalt us in due time" (James 4:10). Teach us, Lord, to walk in dependency upon You. We know, Lord, that the snare and trap of the devil that led to his own condemnation was his own pride. And how he would deceive us into thinking we could handle it, that we don't somehow need the Lord on this one. God we confess our waywardness, our self-confidence, our pride, our arrogance. We confess our need, Lord, being cleansed by You. Comforted and encouraged and strengthened by You. And I pray, Lord, if there are any situations right here right now that are wrong, and you'd give us the courage to confess it to You alone, if it's private. But if it's involving somebody else, give us the courage to go to them and apologize and seek their forgiveness. And Lord, if we're harboring something that we don't think hurts anybody because they don't know about it, we know Father, it hurts You and it hurts our own life ultimately. I just pray, God, You'd give us the courage right now to confess it to You. Thank You, Lord, that You're a loving and forgiving and gracious and good God. And it's "Your goodness that leads us to repentance" (Romans 2:4). You want to bless us more than we want to receive it. You want to

use us more than we want to be used. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.