

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 21

Exhortation to Maturity, Part II

By

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Let's turn to [Galatians 5:16](#). This is part two of "Exhortation to Maturity."

Now, may I once again reiterate by explaining to you that I am not here with a motive to belittle you, to exploit you, to take advantage of you or to beat you up with the Word of God. That is not my intent. The intent of this pastor's heart is for the body of Christ to rise up, to wake up. And so, I shared with you part one last week from [Romans 8](#) and this is part two of the series. And we are in [Galatians 5](#) this week.

Those who walk in the flesh, conduct themselves in the flesh and their carnal mind does not subject itself to God. The mind of the fleshly person, or the carnal mind, does not have any respect for the things of God and there is enmity between the mind of the flesh and God. They cannot communicate because the flesh overpowers them.

There was a man who kept a pair of fighting dogs and people would bet on which dog would win the fight between these dogs. There was a brown dog and there was a white dog and the owner of the dogs would always bet and he would always win. They looked the same—the dogs both looked ferocious. The owner would always say, "The odds are for you, man." People would ask the owner, "How do you know which dog is going to win?" He would answer, "I will tell you a secret, it is the one that I feed the most. That one is stronger."

And so, this is the way it is with our spiritual entity and our physical entity. When we feed the flesh, we read from [Romans 8](#), we sow seeds to the flesh and the harvest is going to be fleshy and therefore it brings forth death. Here we see this clash again in [Galatians 5:16](#).

Paul says,

16 Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the 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.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, [this does not mean hygienically, it means morally filthy] lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, [which is witchcraft or drugs] hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, 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.

There is the key—those who practice these things. It is not referring to those times on occasion when you and I as Christians slip and call it "getting all fleshed-out." Have you ever heard that term? "I just fleshed-out for just fifteen seconds." That is a different kind

of desire that we sometimes have. “Oh, Lord, can I just have one minute to flesh-out because they are cussing at me and I just want to let them know that I can do the same thing. Let me flesh-out.” It is called a flesh flash!

But as Christians, we do not practice these things regularly. You see, when you practice something it means that you are practicing to get better at the craft. These carnal people are habitual, chronic, always engaging in the deeds of the flesh. Now the apostle Paul is not talking about non-believers that are governed by ignorance and blindness and Satan. Paul is speaking to Christians and he calls them “carnal Christians.” We read from 1 Corinthians where Paul says, “I wish I could speak to you as mature people, but you cannot handle that. You are still babies. You are carnal. Where there are divisions, jealousies, envy, and where there is arguing, you are acting like mere non-Christian people” (cf. [1 Corinthians 3:1-4](#)). Paul said, “You are carnal Christians.”

Now the carnal Christian and the character of the carnal Christian is that he is born again. He is regenerated and he has received the new nature and the Spirit of God has been quickened in his newness of life. He has been endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit; but somewhere along the line this Christian begins to dabble into the things of the world again. Carnal Christians begin to trust more in the arm of the flesh. They begin to “put their trust in horses and chariots and also Egypt” (cf. [Jeremiah 17:5-6](#)). Egypt is symbolic of the former life and there is a tendency to operate in that mode as they did before they became a Christian. And they begin to trust in their own endeavors and trust in their own experience. They put their trust in their own age or tenor or devices or their own calculations, and they begin to live their life accordingly. Now God is no longer their Master. God is no longer Lord; He is not leading or guiding them. They are now prompted, guided, and governed by the flesh.

And the Bible teaches us when we walk by the flesh and conduct ourselves in the flesh, it brings forth death—separation from God. Therefore it brings a conclusion of chaos, sadness, and grief. And it brings a bankruptcy to our spiritual state because we want to do our own thing. Paul says that the dynamics and the mechanics of the spirit and the flesh are diametrically opposed. And when they make contact they cannot handle it, they are contrary to one another. And the Bible says in [Galatians 5:17](#) that “You do not do the things that you wish.”

How much control the flesh has over people who say, “I have no control, man. I want to do it; but I cannot, I am dominated by it. I am forced by this compulsion that I have inside of me to do what is wrong, even though I know that it is wrong. Even though I intellectually and morally know that it is wrong, I still do it.” They sing the song, “Me and Mrs. Jones, we got a thing going on. I know it’s wrong—we both know it’s wrong.” You see even Mrs. Jones messed up. The song says that they both know it is wrong but they can’t stop! The song continues, “We meet at the same café at the same time. We both know it’s wrong.” Then why are they doing it? Well, Mrs. Jones, it is because you are in the flesh. Mrs. Jones, you are not thinking biblically and whoever this “Sancho” is—we do not know who he is, but he said Mrs. Jones’ name and he does not give his

own name—so he is very smart. He will drop her name but not his own name or even a fictitious name.

Now, what does “carnal” mean? I shared with you that it basically means the meat, the body, or the flesh. But biblically here it implies: an earthiness, weakness, sensuality, and the absence of sensitivity. It involves the dominance of the lower nature, and it is diametrically opposed to spiritual maturity. Being carnal is characterized by the physical rather than by intellectual or spiritual orientation. It is giving too much heed to the material aspects of day to day life. It implies a person who is no longer walking in the spirit. We are told that these are the works of the flesh—works. You have to really work at being lewd. You have to work at being a fornicator. You have to work at becoming an adulterer. You have to work at becoming a sorcerer and to have hatred—you have to work at these things.

Now the contrast is the fruit of the spirit, which is found in [Galatians 5:22](#).

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control. Against such [wonderful emotions] there is no
law.

Jesus said, “The world will know that you are my disciples by the love that you have for one another” (cf. [John 13:35](#)). You see, love should be the supreme manifestation of your Christian walk, genuine love. It does not mean that you should be like Tiny Tim and with a little violin say, “I love you, I love you!” It does not mean that. It does not mean at your workplace in the morning you have a little skip in your jump and you walk around with your coffee saying, “Hello, good morning, I love you.” That is not reality.

What I am talking about is your composure, your assurance, and confidence in the hope of life in Christ. It does not mean that you have your act together. It means that God has the act together for you! It is not that you have your whole act together and that you are more religious than others because you went to the third service. It does not mean that. But it does mean that you have the hope of God and the joy of the Lord, the strength of God and His goodness, gentleness, kindness, and the long suffering that it takes. This is especially needed in a job that is always precarious when dealing with weird people. You have to have patience and long suffering with joy.

Now, there are people who are always bitter and it is seen in their character, even though the carnal Christian has been born again. If you know anything about the Corinthians, you know that they were morally reprehensible people. They were Christians but they were still acting like Greeks, practicing the philosophy of the Greeks; and they were quite confused. They had the philosophy that the spirit and the body are two different entities; the spirit belongs to God, but the body is separate. So if my body wants to sleep, I am going to heed to my body and I am going to sleep. If my body is hungry, I will eat and engorge myself. If my body wants to have some kind of passion, I am going to yield to it

because my body needs it. That was the philosophy of the Greeks. They believed that the body and spirit are two different things.

Jesus said, “Oh, no. The body and the spirit are one. When you become a Christian, the Spirit dominates the body. Before you become a Christian, it is the body that controls the spirit. But as Christians, the body and the flesh let go and the Spirit takes over. And now the Spirit of God controls our passions. He controls us. Notice what it says in [Galatians 5:22](#), “But the fruit of the Spirit.”

[Galatians 5:24](#) says,

And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the [what?] flesh with its [what?] passions and [what?] desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

So you see that the Christian life is active; it is walking in the spirit. It has nothing to do with your philosophy. It has nothing to do with your resolve to be a good Christian and doing the mechanics, generated by your desires of the flesh. No, it is the Spirit that causes you to act in such a way that denies the flesh. It is the Spirit of God and it is not a religion. God just gives you that inducement to be kind, to be gentle, and to be patient. But if you walk in the flesh and someone steps on your tail and your eyes bug out and claws come out and garbage comes out of your mouth, someone will say, “Hey, don’t you go to Calvary Chapel Montebello?”—then you must embarrassedly answer, “Yes, yes I am sorry. I got a little fleshed-out.” This type of thing happens. But Paul is talking about people who are carnal Christians in Romans 8 and they have a deliberate agenda to sojourn in the world and to act like worldly people.

Once I backslid for a only a day and a half or two days; it was back in 1978. My wife went to a choir retreat and while she was away I got a call from a friend who I used to go with to another church. You see, at the time I was not tired of Christianity, I was tired of “churchianity.” I was going to a church that was very traditional. I went from one tradition to another tradition. I had received the Lord in Costa Mesa, but because that was so far from home, I had to go to a church right around where I lived. That other church was so cold and just okay because it was so traditional and I was tired of it.

Some of the people there were not speaking to me and I got mad. The conflict arose when we were giving baskets away for Thanksgiving. Across the street from our church there were apartments where poor people lived. And it does not take a social scientist to know that these people were our neighbors on the street and they needed some assistance. So we had all of these baskets that we were going to deliver, and we ended up going to a ritzy area up in the hills.

So I asked the pastor, “Why are we giving these baskets to affluent people?” He made a lame excuse. I asked, “Do you know where these people live? I mean, right across the street from the church there are people in need...” And right away the radar took over in

this rebellious maverick. Pretty soon I was marked for doing something that I thought was right. I still stand correct in my heart because I think that we should have given the baskets to the poor people across from the church. They needed it most. So I began to get tired of the way they were running things; I had confused it with Christianity, but that was not Christianity—it was “churchianity.”

So, at this particular time I was bummed out and I said, “My wife’s gone to a retreat and I am not going to church tomorrow morning.” The phone rings and it was a guy who used to go to church with me and we started talking trash. “Yeah man, I am tired of it too, man. Listen, let’s go party!” We put on our war gear. And it was like Cheech and Chong, and we went to the Icehouse. There was a comedy show that night and I realized that everybody was laughing, but I was not laughing. I started to think: “Why is the place dark and why do we have to drink?”

I could not smoke cigarettes like I used to, but when I was in the car I was trying to act cool like I used to do. I did not even know how to hold a cigarette anymore. And when I walked into the club, a guy said to me, “Hey what’s up, what’s going on, what’s happening!” And I go, “Hi.” I did not even know how to act because I was married and I was a Christian now. And after a while I just got freaked out and I told my friend, “I want to go home.”
“What?”
I said, “I want to go home. I don’t like this and I want to go home.”

So I went home and we had a bottle of wine and so I said, “Give me the bottle.” And I drank some of it and I had a horrible headache. I had not drunk in three or four years, whatever it was. And I just felt so sick and I was vomiting. Here I am a Christian and I was acting like I used to act in the old days.

And then my wife comes back from the mountain top and she comes down like Moses, “Hello, Panch! I had a wonderful time. Ohhhh!”
And I said, “I fell.”
“From where?”
“I fell, man!”
“From where?”
“I went to the...crying...telling the story...and I want to go home, man.”
“What?”
“Yeah, man.”
“So what happened?”
“Well, I am a Christian and I had no fun. I freaked out. I felt that I let you down and I let God down and I feel guilty inside.”
And she said, “You feel guilty about it?”
“Yeah, I feel terrible.”
“God loves you because if you were not feeling anything, you would be lost.”
And I said, “Hey! You have been to the mountain top, Amen! Thank you, Solomona. I appreciate that.”

That revelation was so wonderful. And that was my last time of going backwards. I know what is out there in the world, it is like Egypt. I have been there and I have done that. And there are tendencies for us to go and pursue the world. As in the book of Jeremiah, we want chariots and horses and Egypt to rescue us. We always look here and there and we never look up and say, “God help me!” If you are walking in the flesh today, and you are not walking in the Spirit, do not get disillusioned. Listen, if the shoe fits, put it on, wear it, and confess it to God.

Now let me ask you something. I assume that there are people who are walking in the flesh, and entertaining the flesh, energized by the flesh, and they have a little bit of knowledge about Jesus in their heart and they have been dominated by the flesh. If you are hearing or reading this and that is where you are and you told God in your heart, “God, this dude is talking to me. Lord, I am walking in the flesh,” then you have one of two options: either you say, “Yes and I like it.” That is your prerogative and the consequences are traumatic. Or you can say in your heart, “I am tired. Father, forgive me. Father restore me and give me back the joy that I had and let me walk in the Spirit again, I ask You.”

Will God listen to you, yes or no? Will He restore you? Will God forgive you? Absolutely! The question is: do you want to be restored? And I am putting that on the table before you. I am putting that decision on your side of the net. See, you do not have to do it right now, but you can wait until you get to your car or when you are alone. If you have someone in the car with you, wait until you get to your house. If you are alone, you can go into your room. If you have no room of your own, go into the bathroom and there you are alone. And in the quietness of your own heart and the privacy of your own relationship with God, you need to say: “Lord, I know why I am going through what I am going through.”

You do not need counseling or a lightning bolt from God. You need an instant of quickened emotion. It is just that you are experiencing the consequences from wheeling and dealing with people who do not love Jesus and who are not walking with the Lord and with those who do not care about the Word of God. And you are no longer part of them and their lifestyle. You cannot even act like those people. You cannot even talk like them, but you sure are being influenced by them. Now you have a little bit of knowledge about Jesus, but you have more of the world in your heart and you are convicted. And when it comes to decision making, you are unable to process your quality decisions because they are clouded and darkened and you are not able to discern good from evil.

Turn with me to [Hebrews 5:11-12](#). Let me give you the background so that you can understand it. The writer of Hebrews wants to speak about this priest from the Old Testament in relation to Jesus Christ. The priest’s name is Melchizedek and right in the middle of when he is about to tell them about him, the writer says, “Oh, forget it. I wanted to tell you some deep stuff about Melchizedek, but you know that I cannot tell you because you have become dull of hearing. And I want to talk to you about deep things. I want to talk to you about biblical truth, but you are still into Bible stories. The writer says that he wants to speak to them about eating meat, but they were still holding

on to their bottles. He said, “I want to talk to you as men, but I have no respect for you because I see that you still have diapers on and I cannot talk to you as a mature man.”

Notice what is said in [Hebrews 5](#) and the context,

9 And having been perfected, He [Jesus] became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,
10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"
11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

What does “dull” mean? Well, it just means when we hear something it does not excite us any more. How are we excited? It is done through our senses, when we see something or hear something or we feel something. Those are our senses and that is what tells our mind what the eye sees and what the audio acknowledges. And it conveys to our brain what we see and hear. So basically, what these carnal people are seeing and experiencing they have no more joy or excitement about. Everything spiritual is dull. They say that they hate to go to church because it is dull. They hate to read the Bible because they say that it is dull. They do not want to pray because it is dull. Everything spiritual is dull. The ushers are dull. So what will get them excited? At this point it is the world and the mentality of the world that gets carnal Christians excited and not the things of God. So, these believers have become dull of hearing.

In [verse 12](#) Paul says,

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

He said, “By now you ought to be a teacher teaching others and yet I see you with your bottle and you are drinking milk instead of eating solid food.” This relates to the Christian faith. Some of these carnal Christians and their relationship to the Christian faith, number one: have no practical use in the church because they have a critical spirit. People in the flesh always have a critical spirit. Secondly, there is no source of joy. They are always chronically downcast, gloomy, or bummed-out. I am not saying that you cannot have one day or two or even a week of being bummed-out. But when you have it every day of the week—twenty-four seven—you are always gloomy, you are always bummed-out, and you always have the face of a bulldog, then something is wrong.

When asked, “How you doing?”

“Growl.”

“Everything alright?”

“Growl.”

“Good morning!”

“What’s so good about it?”

And all you hear from them is sarcasm and cynicism and criticism.

Thirdly, carnal Christians are often fretful and peevish. That means that they complain a lot. When you say, “hello,” they are so cold. Fourth: they are often not very open to reasonable appeal. Like a child they want to do everything their own way. Like Frank Sinatra sings that old song, “I did it my way.” Fifth: they are no credit to Christianity, but they make it questionable to the eyes of those in the world because they have become poor witnesses. And people say of them, “If that is a Christian, I don’t want to be a Christian.”

Now if you know anything about the Corinthian church, they were very immoral men who had deviated from the truth, right? And yet when Paul writes to them there are six things that I see that tells me they are Christians. He says to them in [1 Corinthians 1:4-8](#),

4 I thank my God always concerning you [Corinthians] for the grace of
God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,
5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all
knowledge,
6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,
7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of
our Lord Jesus Christ,
8 who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the
day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although they were carnal Christians, Paul acknowledged that they had been born again and that God is going to present them faultless. They had been entrusted with the Holy Spirit and there are six elements mentioned, so these people are Christians. But Paul says, “You are dominated” and that is the problem. It is a life being ruled and governed and dominated by the flesh. It is a life that is dependant upon human effort and resources. It is a selfish, self-centered life. It is a lifestyle that is opposed to one that is directed by God’s Spirit.

Now these are some conspicuous signs of the carnal Christian in the body of Christ. Just so you can see. They are jealous and envious. Basically they are mal-content. They are dissatisfied, they are disgruntled, and I share with you that they are grumpy.

Secondly: they clash with dissention, they are argumentative, disagreeable, quarrelsome and non-conformists. They always like to argue. They always like to confront. They always like to question. They ask, “Why, why, why?” And when you try to explain, they continue to ask, “But why?” And I tell them that there is a problem here and they say, “Yes, there is a problem. We do not have anybody doing this or that.”

I say, “Would you like to volunteer and help the church with this?”

“No, I just wanted to bring it to your attention.”

I say, “Well you are part of the problem. If you see something that other people do not see, God is giving you a preview of what you need to do.”

“Well, I just want to bring it to your attention. That is all.”

And they walk away and they are not part of the solution, but part of the problem.

They are men followers. They follow a personality rather than Christ. There are people who come to this church and they say, “I go to such and such’s church” or “I go to so and so’s church in Downey.” And I ask what they want from us and they say that they have just come to “check us out.” The point is that there are people who like to visit other churches and they are men followers. And then finally, of course, carnal Christians have arrested or suspended growth. In other words, they have a failure to thrive and they become simpletons in their Christian faith. They are still into Bible stories, as opposed to Bible truths.

Paul says in [Hebrews 5:13](#),

13 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age [mature], *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

A child who is two years old cannot walk down Washington Boulevard by himself because he does not have the maturity to understand that he cannot make it across the street without getting hit. I have good news for you. A child of our friend’s family was found floating in the pool. He was only eighteen months old. The dad found him and immediately they rushed the child in to the hospital and I have good news. They took him to Kaiser downtown and he woke up and he recognized his dad and the last report that I heard, he was doing well. In the name of Jesus, we pray that he continues to be well.

But do you think that this eighteen-month-old child said, “Oh, I want to see my mom and dad care for me.” Do you think he did that? No, he does not have that reasoning ability. He cannot acknowledge anything. He was not able to discern that he could not swim and that he was going to die. He could not figure that out, and yet there are Christians who are immature and are not able to discern what is evil and what is not. And they make quality decisions and choices based on their carnal posture. And then they ask, “Why am I going through chaos? Why am I going through confusion?” It is because they are allowing themselves to be dictated, monitored, and governed by the flesh. They have an attitude of “my way or the highway.”

Jesus said, “I am the way, I am the truth I am the life.” The carnal Christian says, “Yes, I will follow You, but from a distance.” And if Jesus makes a left turn, the carnal Christian says: “He’s going to get lost. I know the city much better than He does.” And he goes another way and he makes a major mistake.

I have had men who come in and say, “Pastor, I want to talk to you, do you have time?” They say, “Check this out. I walk around here and you know I love Jesus, you know what I mean? I walk on the street and people say, ‘Where you from?’ What should I say? What is up? What do you think?”

And I say, “Well, first of all lower your pants from your chest. When you walk, make sure you do not walk like a duck. Put your feet straight. Now, put on pants that fit you, and you know what, if you really do not want violence or anyone to challenge you, put on a Hawaiian shirt.

And the dude says, “No that ain’t right!”

I say, “Who is going to ask you where you are from when you are wearing a Hawaiian shirt? If they do, just say ‘Aloha.’”

And yet these people are not able to see that they are still wearing the gangster regalia. They have the gangster walk and they walk with their Bible under their arm. They are born again, but they still have the look. They stop at a crosswalk and push the button with an attitude. They are not able to discern the difference. There are many people who make foul choices, wrong choices, wrong decisions; and it is not because God is not with them, but because they insist on doing things their own way. Their hearing has become dull.

Now, Paul says in Hebrews that they have their senses exercised. It is the same thing as those who practice to get better. So, when we are growing, we begin to exercise our faith. You see, when the doctor tells us something that is drastic, we will not get shaken up. Why? Well, we have been exercising at the spiritual clinic for a long time. The doctor says that he sees something in the CAT scan. And it does not jolt us anymore. We do not panic at what he sees like we did during our first experience. When we heard: “Millie we see something on your brain and we do not know what it is,” we broke down. But we do not break any more. Why?—because we are spiritual giants? No, it is because we have been down that road before and if God wants to do something, we know that nothing happens to us without his authority. Nothing!

Paul says, “I will give thanks in all things.” Remember in Philippians he says, “Even if I have to die, it will be honorable” ([Philippians 1:21](#)). He says that he would rather be with Jesus and there is a confidence that Paul has. But here the carnal people, by reason of their senses not being exercised, they are unable to discern good from evil. Your senses include your eyes. When you are walking in the Spirit, you need to understand the mechanics of the process. If you are a man and were blind and a skimpy-dressed girl passes by, will it affect you? No, because you cannot see. You have to depend on someone whistling at her.

“Wow! Did you see that?”

“No, I cannot.”

Well, we have to see and we have to hear. And if a person is deaf and blind, then he is missing two senses. If we are able to see and we see something evil and if we are governed by the flesh, our eyes see it and we want it and our heart tells us it is good. And then the heart has failed us because our heart has departed from God. Our heart is not a neutral organ of emotions that tells us only what is right, because the heart is deceitful. And our heart says, “Go for it,” and then we make mistakes.

When we have our senses exercised and we see and hear something evil, in our spirit we hear whistles and bells warning us: “Get away, get away! She is no good, get away!” Or

“Girls, get away from him, he is a player! And players play only when they are playing. He is a player. Get away!” And that is how we are warned by the Spirit of God; that is discernment. The word “discern” means that one has the ability to see something beyond the obvious. And we see something else behind the situation. Some people have discernment of the spirits; they have that gift. We can be talking to someone who we think is cool, but someone with a discerning spirit comes along and says, “That guy is weird.” Why?—because he spiritually discerns something about that person.

My wife will simply say, “I do not like that person.” I ask why and she says that she does not know but the person gives her the creeps. If you know my wife, she is not easily creeped out. She is a wonderful lady. But she sees the creeps and that is heavy. And we find out a month later that this guy had been playing on his wife for the last twelve years. My wife says, “I told you.” It is not like he wore a sign, but she discerns the evil in her spirit. Discernment is a wonderful gift to have to be able to discern evil, to discern good from evil.

When we were going to lease the building on Greenwood and I told the congregation that we were going to go get it, we had a big signing of the contract ceremony in front of the whole church. This building was going to be ours and we were going to lease it. And then when we got to the real estate office, before we signed the papers out of nowhere, literally out of nowhere, I said: “Can I look at the building again?”

We were here on Telegraph and we had to go all the way to Greenwood. There were two owners who were brothers. One was a Hollywood guy and the other was a property management kingpin.

The guy says, “Why do you want to see it again?”

And when he reacted like that, I knew I really wanted to see the building. I said, “I just want to see it.”

And the innocent brother said, “Well, what’s the matter? Let’s let him go check it out.”

He asked again, “Why?”

And I insisted on going to check it out.

When I first saw the building, what attracted me was that it used to be an indoor supermarket, and it had a full-on kitchen with all the kitchen supplies. It had ovens, fryers, grills, and I thought: “We are Calvary Chapel Montebello and we are going to be eating every day!” And I thought that this could be a wonderful thing with a full-on kitchen with refrigerators and everything. I said, “We can open this up immediately.” With eight hundred people I knew that we could open it up and maintain it right here. And we had the whole open space where we could have fellowship and food and we thought it would be like an indoor swap meet, but it was going to be a Christian swap meet.

When we got to the building, all of the windows were gone and the air conditioner units were gone. All the kitchen supplies were gone and the honest man was just so embarrassed and he was looking at his brother like, “Wow, what a sneak you are, man!” And so I said, “I am walking away from this place.” And I just felt embarrassed and I got

in my little Volkswagen and I started to cry. I said, “Lord, I do not even know what you want me to do.” And I was sobbing.

And as I was passing through this area, I saw this place and it was empty—this was the same day. And in those days I had an LA Cellular phone, the type that looked like a big coffin. I looked at the building and I jumped the fence and I called the realtor. “Hey, I am from Calvary Chapel Montebello and we meet at the high school and I am interested in this building.” And he asked if I would like to make an appointment. And I asked if he could come over right then. He said that he was with another client and I asked if the client was giving him any money because I had a hundred and sixty thousand dollars in my pocket—which I did not, it was a check. I said I had cash in the bank and the guy said he would be right over and he hung up.

When he got to this building, he jumped the fence too because he did not have the key. We were looking around and we looked at the building and I said, “Let’s put in an offer for it.” We found out that the owner was the son of the original owner who had died. This son is a Presbyterian pastor and he wanted to get rid of the building. The realtor said that he could not believe it, the son wants to give it to Calvary Chapel! He knew we make churches out of bowling alleys, garages, skating rinks, and everywhere. He said, “I know that Calvary Chapel pastors are known for making churches out of warehouses, so go for it!”

At five o’clock in the morning when I was in Japan, I got the call that said: “We are in!” And I started yelling and the Japanese folks were looking at me. They would not understand what I was going through, but I did not care. I said, “So sorry, so sorry, but we got a church building!”

Now you see how the Lord opens doors and God gives us the discernment. It is not because I am smart or because I went to East LA College. It is not because of those reasons. God gives the simple man and simple woman the ability to have sagacity and the ability or discretion or prudence, and His wisdom. It is God who gives it to us so we can make the right decision, the right choices, at the right time, for the right reasons, and for the right purposes. And it is God who will bless us. Amen?

Turn with me to the last verse in [Jeremiah 17](#). The carnal Christian, as we see in [verse 5](#), is already cursed. The carnal Christian lives in a precarious or unstable lifestyle. Before I read this, we need to understand that carnal Christians are unstable in doctrine. Hebrews says, “They lack basic understanding and they are dull of hearing; they are unskilled in the word of righteousness. They experience an arrested or stunted growth. They have a life of inner discord and strife. They are destitute and derelict to fight spiritual warfare and they have become undiscerning and blinded by Satan” (cf. [Hebrews 5:13-14](#)).

Now let me give you some additional background. Jeremiah the prophet was warning the people of Israel that the Babylonians were coming. It was not a matter of “when or if,” it was happening. They were coming. And in Jeremiah 17, God told Jeremiah, “Tell my people to capitulate or give up. Do not fight the Babylonians. They are under My hand.

They are instruments in My hand. Tell My people to give themselves up. Go to Babylon. Let them take you in exile to Babylon. Buy homes in Babylon and built orchards and gardens, have children, and in seventy years, I, God, will bring you back.”

So Jeremiah, in the midst of the Babylonian attacks that were coming, goes to tell the people: “Thus says the Lord, ‘Give yourselves up.’ God said that He will take you to the foreign land, but He will bring you and your children’s children back to the homeland. This is punishment, but in seventy years He will bring us back.” (cf. Jeremiah 17).

Well, the priests, the civic leaders, the monarchy, and the princes and the prophets were all carnal. They were saying that they were not going to give themselves up. At this time the prophet was selling his visions; the priest was selling his counseling; and the royalty were getting bribes and exploiting the people of God. They were all doing even worse things than these. And so, Jeremiah warns them. But the people want to go back to Egypt. They want to ask Egypt if they can combine their forces to go against Babylon. And Jeremiah says, “Don’t go to Egypt. They have horses and chariots, but blessed is the man that trusts in God more than flesh.”

You see the Israelites wanted to go back to the world. They wanted to go back to Egypt and that is something that God always looks upon as a former way of life. Do you remember the movie the *Ten Commandments*? It was Edward G. Robinson who said, “Yeah, let’s go back. We need to go back. We had cilantro, we had melons and leeks. We can go back over there.”

And Moses said, “No, we will not go back to Egypt.”

And the two actors argued back and forth. Then Moses reminds Edward G. Robinson’s character: “Why would we go back to Egypt? Remember we were prisoners, we were oppressed, and we were slaves. To go back to Egypt just so we can eat some vegetables is not the right reasons to go back.”

And many people in the Christian Church come to service on Sunday but on Monday morning they put on their Egyptian garments, their Egyptian headdress, and their Egyptian sandals and here they go back there. And they live the week in the world, but maybe on Wednesday they take off the Egyptian headdress and they put on their halo when they come to church. But then the rest of the week it is party time like the Egyptians, dancing and walking and talking like the Egyptians. Then they come to church on Sunday and say, “Woe is me. I do not understand what is wrong with my life. I am a Christian, but I have all these problems.” Be realistic, you cannot expect God to bless you when you are living in Egypt and thinking about it and worshipping Egypt.

Look what happens in [Jeremiah 17:5-6](#),

Thus says the Lord,
“Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man
And makes flesh his strength,
Whose heart [what?] departs from the LORD.
For he shall be like a shrub in the desert,

And shall not see when good comes,
But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness,
In a salt land which is not inhabited.”

This particular brush or shrub does not produce succulence, which is moisture or water in case people need some water in the desert. It does not give flowers or fragrance or shade for the insects; this shrub is good for nothing. God says, “You will be like a shrub, you will be cursed.”

Now look at the contrast in [verses 7-8](#),

Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD,
And whose hope is the LORD.
For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not fear when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.
The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?
I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings.

Hey, what goes around comes around; in other words, you reap what you sow. You want to be treated the way you feel like being treated, then treat others the way you want to be treated. When you go back to work do not be mad dogging everyone. Ask the Lord to help you so that you can have joy and you can have His love. Love is not something that we merely say. We are not going to go into our offices or place of work and act like Tiny Tim and walk in there, “Hello, I’m walking through the tulips.” That is not realistic or reality.

But love is expressed in kindness, generosity, and substitution, all of those things. Just put a smile on, just a smile, a smile! Walk in with a smile. It does not mean that you are dingy and that you have no problems. No, what Christian does not have problems? I have problems right now, but they are not prohibiting me from rejoicing in the things of God. They push me further into the worship of God. Where else can I go? Go back to the Icehouse? Oh, no way! Go back to the laughing people in the dark? Oh, no way! I am not going to do that. I am going to look up and ask the Lord to help me. “I need Your help, Lord.”

And I hope that you will find that prescription for your life. If God has impressed your heart today, praise the Lord! Don’t walk out and complain that you came to church and

now you are all convicted. That is good and that is wonderful! Isn't it wonderful when God rebukes and God exhorts? It is better to be found out by God, than to be found out by man. Man does not know how to forgive, but God does. Man does not know how to nurture us and give us mental hygiene, but God does. "He restores my soul. He leads me to fresh waters. He leads me to green grass and He is my shield and my buckler. His staff and His rod comfort me because He is with me every day of my life. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because He is with me. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever and ever. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (cf. [Psalm 23](#)).

Let's pray,

Father, in the name of Jesus, we thank You for your kindness and generosity. I pray that you will go before Your sheep whom You love very much. Lord, You tell us that if even one is lost that You will leave the ninety-nine to go get that one. That shows how kind and good You are. Father, we pray that Your Holy Spirit will touch each and every one of us right now. I ask that You would begin to do a work in us. Amen.