

Restored Truth Bible Study #18 - Be Separate September 1, 2013

This is the final Bible Study in this series called the Restored 18 Truths. Each Bible Study has taken an in-depth biblical view into the 18 Restored Truths God put back into His Church through His late apostle Herbert W Armstrong.

As this series concludes, it's important to ask the following question: Why did God need to restore truth back into His Church? In Matthew 16, Jesus Christ specifically directs some important comments about God's Church to Peter.

Matt. 16:18 *I say also to you that you are Peter...*[referring to Peter as a small stone] *and on this rock...*[referring to Himself as a large stone - Christ says:] *I will build my church...*[The large stone is Jesus Christ himself. This is understood through a number of scriptures in the Bible. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone in the foundation of God's Church. He's the starting point. A builder must have a point to start from when making measurements to build a building that are square. In God's Church, Christ is the starting point. The Church is built upon Jesus Christ and Christ says He will build His Church] *and the gates of Hades...*[the grave] *shall not prevail or be victorious against it.*

Christ is making a definitive statement that God's Church will never physically die out. There will always be people on this earth that are the called-out ones of God. However, one might ask if Christ is making a contradictory statement in Rev. 3 when He says the following about the fifth era of God's church called Sardis? John writes:

Rev. 3:1 *And unto the angel of the church of Sardis write: These things says he who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works...*[a common statement made to each era in Revelation 2 and 3. Christ knows their works. He knows the Church's actions, conduct and behavior. That's what this statement means] *that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead...*[This verse doesn't contradict Christ at all. Christ is speaking to the spiritual condition of Sardis, not its physical existence. Christ told Peter the Church would never physically die out. Revelation 3:1 confirms the truth of Christ's words in Matthew 16:18. When Christ says Sardis is alive, He means they are physically alive] (vs 2) *Be*

watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die: for I have not found your works perfect before God.

This fifth era of God's Church is not in very strong spiritual condition. The things which remain refer to Church doctrine still in existence in this era. Christ's admonition to strengthen the things which remain speaks to the fact that doctrine has been lost.

'Strengthen the things which remain' refers to the Church doctrine still being followed by this era. When it says, 'these things are ready to die', it implies existing Church doctrine is under threat of being lost too. Both things which remain and things that are ready to die are referring to the Church doctrine that remains in this era.

When Christ talks about the fifth era of God's Church being alive but dead, He is speaking of this era being physically alive. Remember, Revelation 2 and 3 is prophecy about God's Church from its inception in 27 AD to the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ. When John wrote it was a prophecy. Today, most of what John wrote concerning God's Church is fulfilled prophecy.

What Christ prophesied about Sardis era is that it would be physically alive, maintaining some true doctrine, which defines God's Church; but also having lost significant amounts of true doctrine. Physically this era was alive, but spiritually speaking it was dead. The only way to correct this serious spiritual condition was to infuse life back into God's Church, by restoring to it the true doctrine it had when first founded. In the fifth era God's Church only had a portion of that doctrine. This dead spiritual condition resulted because of all the things that happened in the previous four eras. It developed from all the compromise, deception and attacks on God's true doctrine. Notice a big change in spiritual condition which occurs between Sardis and the sixth era, Philadelphia.

Rev. 3:7 *And unto the angel of the church in Philadelphia write...[The sixth era] These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens and no man shuts...[To the sixth era, Christ says:] (vs 8) I know your works...*

Just as with the previous eras, Christ is saying, 'I know what you're doing'. Few in God's Church today understand the importance of this statement. Every morning when people begin the day, God knows what is going on. He also knows what is not happening too. Even though God can't be seen; can't be heard Him; or talked with in person, God and Christ knows what's going on within the Church!

Rev. 3:8 *I know your works, see I set before you an open door...*[An opportunity to preach the gospel to the world as a witness. Few understand this open door has now been shut] *and no one can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept...*[Which means guarded] *my word, and have not denied my name.*

In order for Philadelphia to be able to keep God's Word, it had to be restored back into the Church. A change had to take place for Christ to make this statement.

Rev. 3:10 *Because you have kept my command to persevere; I also will keep you from the hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth...*[This is a promise of protection from a terrible period of time that's coming on this earth. This particular promise refers to primarily the sixth trumpet, which is an event that threatens the existence of all human life. In Revelation 12, another promise of protection is given for the entirety (three and a half years) of the Great Tribulation. It's important to understand the differences between these two promises] (vs 11) *Behold, I am coming quickly...*[Christ's return is not yet in this era, but it's close. It is eminent] *Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

Why would Christ make a statement like that? Because there was going to be an attempt once again, another assault that was going to take place, on God's Truth. This attack began after the death of Mr. Armstrong and continues today. Those who understand what is going on, have the Philadelphian spirit, while living through the Laodicean era. The number of Philadelphians in existence are few in number.

It's so important to understand the change God's Church has gone through - from being considered spiritually dead by Jesus Christ, to being spiritually full of life. What happened? What created this change? What created the change in Christ describing the Church as dead going to Christ describing the Church as keeping His command to persevere? One can't keep a command to persevere if dead. The change that

occurred in God's Church resulted when God revived the doctrine that had been allowed to die. In other words, the change that took place was the restoring of God's Truth back into His Church. That's what changed!

When God calls people to become members of His Church, God requires one thing to be done. There are other things God also expects, but this one thing is where everything begins. It is really the starting point of becoming a member of God's Church.

While this is the final Bible Study in the series; the information in this study it really is the starting point for someone coming into God's Church and beginning to live God's way of life. That starting point is; TO COME OUT OF THIS WORLD!!! This does not happen immediately, it takes time. To do so requires a mindset willing to be educated about what God wants and doesn't want, and an education in what this world is all about. Being in God's Church is an educational process that continues to the end of person's physical life.

This is really the foundation of this Restored Truths Series. This is a message that will go out to the people of this world right before Mystery, Babylon the Great is destroyed. Happily, for those in God's Church who remain faithful to the end, when this message is delivered, they will already be full-fledged members in the family of God.

Rev. 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, lest you receive of her plagues. (vs 5) For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

God knows very well the works (actions) of this world, not just the works of His Church. The word "come" means to issue. This is not talking about an issue or conflict one has with another individual. It means to spew forth, like the geyser Old Faithful, which spews water out of the ground every so often. It issues, meaning to come forth, to depart out of, to escape, get out, to go abroad, away, to go forth, or to go out, to go thence. It also means to proceed forth or abroad. The word "of" denotes origin, the point from where motion or action proceeds. It can mean from, or out of place, time, or cause.

In verse four, the word “her”, refers to Mystery, Babylon the Great. God’s message is to “come out of her.” The identity of Mystery, Babylon the Great was previous explained in Restored Truth Bible Study #17. What wasn’t covered in that study was the system and structure of Babylon. The way this world operates is also considered, Babylon.

Babylon the Great is that false mystery religion, which has deceived people down through the ages. God’s call is for people to come out of her because He is getting ready to destroy her.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong described Mystery, Babylon the Great in his 1983 sermon *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era* as a “deception” and a “counterfeit.”

“...then the great deception, the counterfeit of Revelation 17:5, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, her daughter churches, and who they are.”

This is a restored truth God’s Church had lost. At one time the church understood who Mystery, Babylon the Great was. Here are a few examples of ‘coming out’ and how it is such a necessity for being in God’s Church.

Remember, the gospels deal with Christ’s proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and training of the first ministers of God’s Church. This is understanding few consider when reading through the gospels. Many gospel accounts show Christ talking only His disciples. The gospel writers specifically point to who Christ was talking to; either a multitude, or His disciples. These writers also specify when He was talking to the Pharisees or Sadducees.

It’s very important to understand who Christ’s audience was, in order to be able to understand the point He was trying to make. Take the example of when people apply something meant for the ministry of God’s true Church and apply it to people of this world. This is a misapplication that happens when Christ’s audience is not considered. Notice what is said when Christ calls His disciples.

Matt. 4:18 *Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishermen...* [This was their occupation; what they did for a living to take care of their families] (vs 19) *and he said to them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men...* [Their occupation was getting ready to be changed] (vs 19) *Then he said to them, follow me, and I'll make you fishers of men.* (vs 20) *They immediately...* [Notice - immediately] *left their nets and followed him.* (vs 21) *Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets...* [They too were fishermen] *and he called to these two brothers.* (vs 22) *And immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.*

Christ called His disciples out of this world and out of their occupations as fishermen. Now, consider what Christ said about these disciples in His prayer to God the Father before being arrested. He said:

John 17:11 *Now I am no longer in the world, but these...* [Referring to His disciples] *are in the world.* (vs 12) *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name: those whom you gave me I have kept, and none of them was lost except the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled...* [Referring to Judas Iscariot] (vs 13) *But now I come to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* (vs 14) *I have given them your word: and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world...* [Christ makes a clear distinction between His followers and being part of this world] (vs 15) *I do not pray that you should take them out of the world...* [Christ did not want His disciples to be taken out of this world. He wanted them to remain in this world with its problems and troubles] *but that you should keep them from the evil one.*

Christ is requesting God the Father to protect these disciples from the god of this world, Satan the Devil. Satan is the arch-adversary of God's Church. He is behind all the attacks, deceptions and corruptions of God's truth.

In John 17:9 Christ says: *I pray for them: I do not pray for the world...*

This is an astonishing statement from Jesus Christ. Stop and think for a moment about Christ's statement.

That is a shocking statement from the Savior of mankind, isn't it? Understand and realize the magnitude of what Christ is saying: *I do not pray for the world: but for those whom you have given me; for they are yours.*

The Greek word used for 'world' is cosmos. It refers to an orderly arrangement or decoration. By implication it refers to the world, and this includes its inhabitants. The word refers to space and not time. If one is going to follow Jesus Christ; if one is going to be a member of the Church of God, that person cannot be part of this world. Christ's prayer does not apply to the people of this world.

Take notice of what not being part of this world involves. John writes about coming out of the world of Babylon.

I John 5:19: *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

Cross-reference this verse with Revelation 12:9. An example of being under Satan's sway involves worshipping God on Sunday, the first day of the week, instead of Saturday, the seventh day as God says to do. This shows that people aren't aware of God's Sabbath.

1 John 5:20 *And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life...*[John closes this particular chapter, by saying:] (vs 21) *Little children...*[Referring to members of the Church of God] *keep yourselves from idols.*

An idol is more than just a little statute that people attach deep religious significance to. It can be anything that people put before God. It could be a mate; it could be one's children; it could be a job; one's house; a hobby. Anything that is put before serving God is an idol.

Below are God's instructions to the Israelites before they entered into the Promised Land. Notice what God said through Moses.

Deut. 7:1 *When the Eternal your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and cast out many nations before you...[All the 'ites'] seven nations greater and mightier than you (vs 2) And when the Eternal your God delivers them over to you; you shall conquer them, and utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them. (vs 3) Nor shall you make marriages with them; you shall not give your daughter to their son, or take their daughter for your son...[Why?] (vs 4) For they will turn your sons away from following me...[This is what happens when people align themselves with this world. It automatically pulls people away from God] they will turn your sons away from following me, to serve other gods: so the anger of the Eternal will be aroused against you, and destroy you suddenly. (vs 5) But thus you shall deal with them; you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire (vs 6) For you are a holy people to the Eternal your God: the Eternal your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all peoples on the face of the earth.*

In essence, Israel was told not to become part of this world. Today, idols have been primarily replaced by the practices of this world.

Deut. 18:9 *When you come into the land which the Eternal your God has given you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of the nations. (vs 10) There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer...[These are wicked activities God tells the Israelites were to stay away from] (vs 11) or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. (vs 12) For all who do these things are an abomination to the Eternal: and because of these abominations the Eternal your God drives them out from before you. (vs 13) You shall be blameless before the Eternal your God. (vs 14) For these nations, which you will dispossess, listened to soothsayers and diviners: but as for you, the Eternal your God has not appointed such for you.*

These examples show what being involved with the world means.

God's people are to be separate and remain separate from these wicked activities. Paul writes:

I Cor. 6:18 *Flee sexual immorality...*[Flee means to get away from it, run from it] *Flee sexual immorality.*

Meaning both physical and spiritual.

Paul gives the same instruction to the Corinthians concerning idolatry.

1 Cor. 10:14 *Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*

Run from it. God's people need to flee from idolatry as fast they would flee from sexual immorality. There's no change in the speed of movement here.

Notice Paul's emphasis to young people in God's Church.

II Tim. 2:22 *Flee also youthful lusts.* Flee youthful lusts.

Lust gets anybody in trouble at any age, but when young people lack experience, knowledge and wisdom, lust is a driving factor in most lifestyle decisions. Paul provides excellent advice to keep young people from experiencing the troubles of this world.

Being separate from this world, and it does things, requires not associating and participating in activities that harm spiritual health and well-being.

Notice how Moses chose to separate himself from the ways of Egypt. Pay attention to how sin is described:

Heb. 11:24 *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.*
(vs 25) *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin...*

It says the 'passing' or temporary pleasures of sin. The word 'pleasure' means full enjoyment. Sin is fun; it's temporary fun, but Moses turned all that down. (vs 26) *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he looked to the reward.*

Learning to be separate in this world is not easy. Especially, when first coming out it requires sacrifice to give up things people really like and want to be involved with, but God must come first, and this requires separation, it's not optional.

Listed below are a few examples where separation was required.

Gen. 12:1 *Now the Eternal had said to Abram...[Later called Abraham] get out of your country...[Leave your birthplace. Leave your homeland] get out of your country, from your family, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.*

So, the very first thing God required of Abram was for him to leave his homeland. Where was his homeland? Ur of the Chaldees, which was in Babylon. God is telling Abram to come out of Babylon, which is the exact same message being made in this Bible Study.

Christ emphasizes this same point, in a much more direct way. He doesn't necessarily mean a person has to leave their family; but His emphasis is on priority in conjunction with family.

Luke 14:26 *If anyone comes to me...[How can one come to Christ? Through the calling of God the Father] If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his father, and mother...[This doesn't literally mean to hate. The word simply means to love less in comparison to God] If anyone comes to me, and does not love less his father, and his mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

God has very high requirements for those who become part of His Church. God has to come first. He codified this point into the first of the Ten Commandments: *You shall not worship any other gods before me.* God has to be worshipped first and only.

One must do an honest evaluation between God and family. Does God come first? This can be a difficult evaluation to do when loved ones are involved. They can easily pull a person away from serving God through their own wants and desires.

It takes courage and strength to put God first; and this courage and strength must come from God.

Josh. 23:6 *Therefore be very courageous...*[It takes courage to stand up and live God's way of life] *be very courageous to keep...*[Keep means to guard] *and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right-hand or to the left.*

It is very easy to get away from God's truth. One must be diligent in effort to follow it. There can be no compromise. One cannot take a day off from obeying God's law. God's people cannot allow themselves to be turned to the right or the left away from God's truth.

Josh. 23:7 *Lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you...*[And turn to the right or the left] *You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to serve or swear by them. You shall not serve them, nor bow down to them.*

As far as the family goes Joshua just basically lays it out as it is. He says:

Josh. 24:15 *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Eternal...*[If it seems wrong to follow God] *choose for yourself this day whom you will serve...*[Who you will worship] *whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river...*[Referring to the Nile] *or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell...*[Who are you going to follow? Joshua knew who he was going to follow. He says:] *but as for me and my house, we will serve the Eternal.*

Joshua talks about the importance of being able to keep God's law and not turning away from it. This is also emphasized by Moses in Deuteronomy.

Deut. 7:2 *And when the Eternal your God delivers them over to you; you shall conquer them, and utterly destroy them...*[Referring to the inhabitants of Canaan] *and you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them. (vs 3) Nor shall you make marriages with them...*[Why did God not want the Israelites marrying the children of the nations around them?] *You shall not make marriages with them; you shall*

not give your daughter to their son, or take their daughter for your son (vs 4) For they will turn your sons away from following me...[Because it cause the sons to turn from following God. This demonstrates the powerful impact of family on people. Especially, those not connected to God's truth] *to serve other gods.*

It's easy for people to turn away from God when they closely associate with the people of this world, who don't understand God's truth. One day this world will understand; but their time for understanding is not now.

Paul talks about these same principles of separation too. In Deuteronomy it specifically instructs about not marrying outside of the nation of Israel. Paul talks about it with an expanded perspective, saying:

2 Cor. 6:11 *O Corinthians, we...*[Referring to the ministry] *have spoken openly to you...*[Being very honest and open about the truth] *our heart is wide open.* (vs 12) *You are not restricted by us...*[Not being restricted by the message the ministry was teaching] *but you are restricted by your own affections.*

The Corinthians were restricted by their own breaking of God's commandments. Violating God's Law is what prevents people from being blessed. It keeps people from being able to enjoy the happiness, peace, and prosperity God intends for people to have and enjoy.

2 Cor. 6:13 *Now in return for the same, (I speak as to children.) you also be open...*[Show the same openness for truth the ministry is teaching] (vs 14) *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers...*[The word 'unequally' means to yoke up differently, to associate discordantly] *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness, and what communion has light with darkness?...*[Fellowship is a better word to use for communion. God separates the night from the day] (vs 15) *And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?* (vs 16) *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?...* [Who is the temple of God? God's Church is because God's Spirit dwells in Church members] *for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk among them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (vs 17) *Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, do not touch what is unclean; and I will receive you.* (vs 18) *I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and*

daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Which is a reference to God the Father.

This principle of being unequally yoked comes from the book of Deuteronomy. It refers to not yoking two different farm animals together to plow a field. Specifically, an ox and a donkey.

Deut. 22:10 *You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.*

Looking at this arrangement, one might conclude the reason for this might be different sizes or different gaits the animals walk with, but the real reason is the donkey's bad breath will kill the ox. The donkey puts off an odor that literally will kill the ox. Applying this principle to God's people means not being yoked to the things of this world. Doing so will lead to a person's death.

One has to be equally yoked with the right people. That's why people are encouraged in God's Church to marry within the Church. This does not guarantee marital success. What this principle boils down is a person's personal commitment to follow and obey God.

If two people are equally committed to following God, they will enjoy the great benefits of marriage in a much deeper way, mentally, emotionally and physically. When two people aren't equally yoked in serving God, there will be difficulties. If those types of problems exist in a marriage, don't look at the mate, look at self. Ask, 'Am I doing what God wants me to do?' If not, repent and change. There will be immediate improvement in the marriage. God's Word is clear: don't be unequally yoked.

So, what's the problem with being separate? People coming into God's Church claim to want to obey God and do what God says. Yet somehow, people get all mixed up; and instead of separating from this world, they get separated from God again. The problem is the inability to translate God's way of life into action. Another way of saying this is to take what is taught from the Bible and being able to live by it.

Is. 59:1 *Behold, the Eternal's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor is his ear heavy that it cannot hear...* [The problem doesn't lie with God. God is quite capable] (vs 2) *But your iniquities have separated you from God and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*

The old saying in the churches of this world is, “come as you are.” Guess what? In the Church of God, a person can come as they are; but can't stay as they are. God requires people in His Church to change.

The word ‘separated’ in the Hebrew means to divide, to separate, distinguish, be different. One has to choose between obeying God or obeying the gods of this world.

God turns away from those who sin against Him. It's important here to stress that God turns away from unrepentant sinners. If one sins trying to live God's way of life; go to God and acknowledge the sin; admit it; God will not turn His ear away from a repentant sinner. He is not going to turn away because a person commits a sin. If He did, why in the world is King David, a sinner, given such high praise by God?

Isa. 1:15 When you spread out your hands...[Pray to God] I will hide my eyes from you: even though you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

God purposely turns away from those that refuse to repent, refuse to change their ways. These people can pray five or ten times a day. God is not hearing it. As a matter of fact, Isaiah, also says; God turns to one who is humble and of a contrite heart. This is who God turns to. If this is one's attitude after committing a sin, the word of God is a guarantee that God is going to turn toward the sinner. He's going to listen; He's going to respond; and He's going to help the sinner deal with the sin.

How does sin separate people from God?

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world, or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him...[James says being a friend with the world, shows hostility toward God. That's basically the same thing John is saying. This is where people get in trouble. This is how sin separates people from God] (vs 16) For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh...[Inordinate personal desires] the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

This cannot apply to a member of the Church of God. People get in trouble responding to the lusts of the

flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life.

Being in God's Church is a humbling experience. If one is really committed, trying to do what God expects, it is going to be an experience in humility. Humility is developed by going through very difficult and trying circumstances and situations of life.

1 John 2:17 *The world is passing away...[The world is temporary] and the lusts of it: but he who does the will of God abides forever.* Separating oneself from this world leads to the freedom of eternal life.

Every member of God's Church has shared in being part of this world. Paul says:

Titus 3:3 *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*

Those things are the ways of people in this world. Paul provides more detail about what God's people once were before coming into God's Church.

Col. 3:5 *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires and covetousness, which is idolatry (vs 6) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience...[Referring to the Days of Vengeance/Day of the Lord] (vs 7) In which you yourselves once walked, when you lived in them...[When members of God's did these things in their own lives]*

That's what God's people once were before becoming separated from this world. The things Paul describes next in verse eight are things God's people must still contend with because these flaw in character have not fully been overcome. (vs 8) *But now you yourselves are to put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. (vs 9) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.* The old man is the enemy. It's always trying to pull a person back into living the ways of this world. Separating from sin is hard work.

How many people in the WCG really understood what called to be separate really meant? How many brethren understood the need to become separate from the world? If these people really understood it, then there would have been no belief in the lies told by the Tkach administration to corrupt these 18 Restored Truths.

Heb. 12:1 *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...* [Referring the examples given in Chapter 11] *let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us...* [Notice how sin easily ensnares people. The word ensnares, or in the King James Version, besets means standing around. In other words, sin is standing tall and erect all around us. It is standing well. This word refers to a competitor fording a racer in every direction. Picture somebody trying to run a race, trying to get from point A to point B, in the fastest time they possibly can, while someone is standing in their way. The racer goes one way, and the other person deliberately blocks their way. They try another way and that way is obstructed; or they go straight into person standing there. That's the way sin is. It's all around in this world.

Sin thwarts spiritual direction, which is leading toward the Kingdom of God. God's people are required to deal with the sin that so easily ensnares them. There has to come a point where God's people are not so easily ensnared by sin. God's people will never shake sin off completely in this lifetime. It's always going to be there. It's always going to be something to contend with. At some point, progress must be made in dealing with it. Quit blaming people and circumstances; quit making excuses for bad behavior] *Let us lay aside every weight that so easily ensnares us; and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

Heb. 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the stake, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

When Paul says there's an old man, he also means there must be a new man.

Col. 3: 9 *...you have put off the old man with his deeds (vs 10) And have put on the new man who is renewed in the knowledge according to the image of him who created him.*

People are renewed by the word of God. One must let the word of God guide and direct all human actions on a daily basis. When actions aren't guided by God's word; it must be recognized; it needs to repent of; and change must take place. Paul is very clear what must take place, but it isn't an easy process.

Rom. 7:15 *For what I am doing, I do not understand...* [Every member in the Church of God has experienced this] *for what I will to do...* [What Paul wants to do] *that I do not practice...* [That which he wants to do, he does not practice] *but what I hate...* [That which he doesn't want to do] *that I do.* (vs 16) *If then I do what I don't want to do, I agree with the law that it is good.* (vs 17) *But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me...*

There must be a mental change in how a person lives and operates by following God's way of life. The ability to do this is not fully in a person yet. That's why it's so easy to get angry quickly. That's why people become fearful. It's why people with a carnal reaction versus a godly reaction. This happens not because people reject God's way of life, but because of sin that dwells in them. This is what God's people have to fight against. It's the sin that so easily besets or stands in the way

(vs 18) *For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) nothing good dwells: for the will...* [The desire to obey] *to do God's way is present with me but how to perform what is good I do not find.*

A lot of times, the good way is not found because it's not being looked for. People aren't really trying to find it. It's called being spiritually lazy.

Rom. 7:24 *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* (vs 25) *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with my mind I serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.*

Separation from this world is very difficult; but it is possible, and that possibility only comes through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God's people need to ask the following question: Is repentance ask for every day? Is that request made with specific sins in mind?

Consider the sins that plague life and need recognition, the finer aspects of human carnality. These things need to be repented of: Is it losing one's temper? Is it evil thoughts toward someone? Is it hostility toward someone or situation? Are these problems being addressed with God on a daily basis? Is a request for the application of Jesus Christ's sacrifice being made for specific sins? Don't just ask God, please forgive me and apply the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Be specific. God, help is needed with this temper or with this attitude in particular. If this approach is taken toward sin, then forgiveness will be given. Great change will begin to take place and separation from this world will occur.

As this final Bible Study concludes, consider the following scriptures.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; to him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God... [Those who overcome sin will receive eternal life] (vs 11 – second half) *...He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death...* [Overcoming sin guarantees no threat from eternal death] (vs 17 – second half) *... To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna to eat, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written; which no one knows except him who receives it...* [Those who overcome and grow will receive a new name when Jesus Christ returns. This is one of the many benefits for separating oneself from this world] (vs 26) *And he who overcomes, and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations (vs 27) He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like potters' vessels: as I also have received from my Father. (vs 28) And I will give him the morning star.*

Members of God's Church have the opportunity one day in the near future of becoming a ruler in God's Kingdom.

Rev. 3:5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot his name from the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. [White garments refer to everlasting righteousness] (vs 12) *He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more: I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write on him my new name...* [The word 'pillar' is a reference to being a teacher, at the very headquarters of God's government, in Jerusalem]

(vs 21) *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

These are all promises that apply to those willing to separate themselves from this world. When one honestly studies the Bible, the message is clear: God's people must be separate from this world. Period. By separating from the world, and staying separated, it demonstrates to God a desire to be part of His Kingdom and ruling family.

This Bible Study will end with a series of important reflections:

Why should a person want to be a member of God's Church?

It should be to become a king and a priest in God's Kingdom. If that is not the driving focus and purpose for being in God's Church, why then is a person even part of God's Church? Why are they there? To be used by Satan the Devil to create chaos and division. People not in God's Church for the right reason damage the Word of God and threaten the spiritual lives of God's people.

Paul asked the following question in Rom. 8:35, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* Paul's answer is nothing can. But consider this question in a different way: the only one who can separate themselves from the love of Christ is you. This is because you are your own worst enemy:

When you don't listen;

When you don't accept and respond to correction;

When you don't fulfill your role as a man or woman/husband and wife;

When you think your way is better than God's way and act on it;

When you resist and don't submit to authority;

When you allow materialistic desires to affect your decisions;

And when you neglect the study and practice of God's word.

Then you are not separating yourself from this world, you are being just like the world., and if you are not separating yourself from this world, why are you a part of God's Church?

There are several priorities involved in separating oneself from the world:

- #1 - You need to be praying on a daily basis.
- #2 - You need to be studying your Bible daily.
- #3 - You need to be fasting regularly.
- #4 - You need to constantly be thinking about God's way of life.

Not just when praying and studying; but when you get up and walk out the door into this world, all throughout the day.

- #5 - You always need to be taking action on God's way of life.
- #6 – Repent of all sins and correcting all mistakes.
- #7 - You have to be willing to accept correction.

Do you believe in God, or do you believe God? That's a question Mr. Armstrong used to ask all the time. There is a big difference in those questions.

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you

This is a real promise. It requires a belief in what God says enough to do it – even when there is a lack of confidence and the outcome of a decision is not clearly seen. Just know what God says to do, despite being scared, uncertain and not confident. The only way to take action is to know God says to do and do it.

Will you do it to separate yourself from this world? The information received in this series of bible studies is again being lost by God's Church. Except this point in time of human history and Church history, God's Church won't descend into the state of being spiritually dead because the Days of Vengeance will come before the Church reaches that stage.

This is shown in Revelation 6:9-11 where John writes of those who will be killed for the word of God, for

standing up and being separate in the midst of great tribulation.

However, in Luke 21 there is a promise that should motivate people in God's Church. NOW!!! It is a great benefit for separating from this world and staying separated from this world.

Luke 21:34 *But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day...[Referring to the start of the Days of Vengeance] come on you unexpectedly. (vs 35) For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. (vs 36) Watch therefore and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass...[These end-time events are going to happen] and to stand before the Son of Man.*

When will this take place? At the sound of the seventh trumpet.

This series of Bible Studies has made three important points:

1. It has established that God's restored truths are alive and well on the face of this earth.
2. It has shown the counterfeit teachings to these restored truths.
3. It has clearly demonstrated how these restored truths were easily compromised and corrupted.

Difficult times lie ahead for this world and many in God's Church. Those who understand would do well to focus more deeply on separating themselves from this world. Many in God's Church have lost sight of this last, but extremely important, restored truth, which God's late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong spoke about in his sermon, *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*. He said:

“And how in Revelation 18:4 that God has called us out from among them to be separate.”

The Church has woefully forgotten these restored truths, but especially the one requiring them to be separate from this world. As this series concludes one final question must be asked: Will these restored truths continue to be maintained? The answer is yes, if, God's Church will hold fast to them, continue growing and not compromising God's wonderful truth!!!