

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
Marks of Old Covenant Living – Part 2
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Continuing our study of Triumphant Living, looking at life in the new covenant, the new arrangement that God has instituted as a result of the accomplishments of the person and work of Christ, turn in your Bibles please to 2 Corinthians 3. We're examining what we're calling marks of old covenant living.

When I refer the old covenant living, I'm really talking about trusting yourself. The contrast is old covenant is trusting yourself. The new covenant is trusting Christ because of his sufficiency. When you hear me talk about old covenant and new covenant, it's really one covenant, the covenant of grace. It has two different manifestations—one known as the old, one known as the new—and refer to it as the new because that's the phrase that Jesus used when he said "This is the new covenant in my blood." When we're talking about it, just in a quick summary, one system is trusting yourself to earn your righteousness, and the other one is trusting the sufficiency of Christ and his righteousness. The difference is being justified by faith alone.

What we're talking about today in our passages of 2 Corinthians 3:1-9, we're looking at what I'm calling marks of the old way of living, the marks of trusting yourself. We say that we have a saving relationship to God through the person and work of Christ, but how do we really know that we're living by faith? Sometimes you have to look at the other side of the coin to say, "You know, wow! I'm doing more of this than I am that, and maybe that's an indication I'm living according to the old system of trusting myself and my own resources."

You see, the difference is who's resources are you trusting? As we've already seen, our adequacy comes from God. Life in the new covenant, based upon the person and work of Christ, is trusting Christ and his resources as opposed to trusting myself and my resources.

What are some of the marks of trusting yourself? There are four contrasts in this passage, verses 1-9 of 2 Corinthians 3. Let me just give you these contrasts, and then we'll take a look at these marks of old covenant living.

First of all, you'll notice in verse 3, there's the contrast between tablets of stone and tablets of human hearts. The indicator there would be measuring by externals. The issue there is am I measuring myself externally, or am I measuring myself internally? The second contrast you will find in verse 6, and that is the letter versus the spirit; the letter versus the spirit. That is going to teach us that we're maintaining by rules. Measured by externals and now maintained by rules.

Then we'll look at two more today. You'll see those in verse 6, and that is marks of spiritual death. The difference there would be death versus life. The contrast is death versus life. Spiritual death versus spiritual life. The last one is motivated by guilt. You'll see that in verse 9, and that is condemnation versus righteousness.

There are four contrasts that really help us understand what Paul is teaching us about indicators that you and I have a tendency to live according to the old arrangement of trusting myself and trusting my resources to appease the wrath of God and to put me in a position of having a relationship that's manifested by living in the new covenant, which is by faith.

Last week, we looked at the first of these, and that was measuring by externals. We talked last week, just in summary, the real issue is that whenever you begin to maintain by externals, or measure by

externals, you're basically falling into the trap of comparison. Two things happen when you compare yourself. The real issue here is am I comparing myself internally to the righteousness of Christ, or am I comparing myself externally to somebody else's standard?

Comparison will lead to two things, neither one of which are good for you. The first one is pride because you're always going to find somebody who does it less than you do. You might have a sense of pride saying, "I'm better than they are." It might be, "Our church has more people than they do," so you begin to think that, "We have a better church," whatever I may be. You're beginning to measure by externals as opposed to measuring yourself internally according to the righteousness of Christ. The other side of the coin is you're going to be depressed, because you're going to be discouraged because you're always going to find somebody that does it better than you do. Comparison produces two things—pride or discouragement—neither one of which are good for you.

When you're suffering from discouragement, or suffering from pride, it may be an indication that you're measuring yourself by externals. Those two responses—discouragement and pride—are really a response to the same question. The question is who am I trusting? You see, when you answer the question who am I trusting...when you're trusting yourself, the two consequences will be discouragement or pride. That's an indication you're trusting yourself, as opposed to I'm trusting Christ and his sufficiency. The difference there is you will not have those indicators. The real issue is, it's the answer to the same question, "Who am I trusting?" Am I trusting myself or trusting the person and work of Christ and his righteousness? The issue here...examining yourself and saying am I measuring myself externally compared the other people's standards?

One of the things that I'm doing in my business consulting group called Transformational Leadership Group is I'm trying to help people understand to quit trying to be successful and pursue excellence. There's a difference. The only thing success leads to is failure because once you get to the top, the only way you can go is go down. Be excellent. You can be excellent on the way up and you can be excellent on the way down. Success is not measured by how high you go; it's how quickly you rebound when you've hit bottom. That's the real definition of success. Quit trying to be successful because success is really determined by somebody else's standard, and it's an external standard.

I think if you were to go to my company where I work, you ask our CEO what is the definition of success, you'll get one answer. You ask my boss who heads up wealth management, you'll probably get another answer. You ask me, you'll probably get a third answer. Pursuing success is like chasing a cat up a tree. You don't know which limb it's going to go out on. Whose definition are you going to try to achieve? This one? This one? This one? Or how about this one? You're going to find the definition of success in as many people as you ask. What I'm suggesting is, you see, that's measuring by externals. We need to measure ourselves externally. Am I being excellent? You see, excellence is something that can be consistent.

The world says it this way, "Become and then you will be." You become something, then you'll be the person you want to be. Christ turns that around and says this, "Be the person, then you'll become." That's why Paul says, "Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." You see, we need to become, be excellent, so we need to be excellent so that we will be become successful. Try not to be successful. Pursue excellence, not success. There's a huge difference. That's what we're talking about when we're talking about measuring by externals. Remember this—discouragement and pride are the answer to the same question. That question is who am I trusting? Am I trusting myself? Or am I trusting the standard of somebody else? The first indicator that might be prevalent in our life that we are living a life trusting ourselves is we're measuring ourselves by externals. That can happen in the church, it can happen in business, it can happen in your own personal life.

The second one is maintaining by rules. Here we see the contrast is the letter versus the spirit. Maintaining by rules. How many of you think that if I just do that, then God's going to do this? That's a sign of trusting yourself and not the righteousness of Christ. How many of you have had this mentality? If I just have a good quiet time today, then I'm going to have a good day. Well I'll tell you what, friends; I've had some of my best days when I have not had a quiet time. I've just had the time to do it. Now you see, if you begin to think that you're making bargains with God, "If I do this, then God will do that," you see, you're measuring yourself by rules. The contrast here is the letter versus the Spirit. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

When you have this tendency to maintain by rules, you're thinking this; that the sufficiency of Christ is not enough. Essentially that's what you're saying. That Christ's sacrifice on the cross is not enough because I've got to add one more thing to it. Now yes, we need to be obedient. Yes, we need to be obedient to the law, but we trust the ultimate law keeper, who is Christ himself. Christ did not come to abolish the law; the law is still in effect. The way that we fulfill the law perfectly is because we trust the one who fulfilled it perfectly; we're trusting the person and work of Christ.

Don: *I'm going to plunge in here. A quiet time, I mean, I think it's good...*

Absolutely

Don: *...if we can have it. It's like, if you and your wife don't spend time together, how are you going to know each other, love each other. Yeah, I think we can get legalistic and say I didn't spend this much time or whatever, but I think if you are in Christ, that would be something that you would want to do.*

There you go. That's the difference, Don. That's the difference. It's the motivation behind the quiet time. Do I do it to make a bargain with God? Or do I do it because I love God and want to develop a relationship with him?

Don: *[UNCLEAR] the latter, of course.*

You see, that's the reason. That's what I'm saying is...when you're maintaining by rules, it's this. If I have a quiet time, then I'm going to have a good day. That's measuring by rules. The real motivation is gratitude, not manipulation. So do you need a quiet time? Absolutely you do. Every one of us ought to be spending time with the Lord. But the reason, the motivation is radically different. I don't do this to make bargains. I do this to express my gratitude for what he's already done. I do this as a means of expressing my desire to know him more intimately, to have a relationship with him, to get to know him because he's my Savior and my Lord. Your motivation is different. That's what I'm suggesting about.

I know some people who have said, "If I could just have a good quiet time, I'm going to have a good day." Well my point is that's the wrong motivation have having a quiet time. The motivation is because I want to get to know the Lord because I'm in a relationship with him. I'm in a unique relationship with him.

Let me show you something. Go to John 10. Don brings up a great point. The whole issue here, of maintaining by rules, is one of motivation. Is it manipulation, bargaining, or is it gratitude? Go to John 10, the magnificent chapter about Jesus teaching that we'll never lose our salvation because we belong to him; he's our shepherd and we are his sheep. There are some indicators there of who are the true sheep. Look at John 14.

One of the indicators that you are Christ's sheep is not only you hear his voice, you follow him, but one of them is you are in a unique relationship with him. Notice verse 14, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me." In other words, he's saying this. Here's the reason for a quiet time. I know him and he knows me. I want to get to know him better. I want him to know me better. That's why you have a quiet time. That's because you're in a unique relationship.

Here's how he describes the unique relationship that the sheep have with the shepherd. Those of us who have true saving faith are in a unique relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Here's how he describes it. Notice this, "I am the Good Shepherd and I know my own and my own know me." Here's how he defines it, "Even as the Father knows me and I know the Father." Now how is it that you know the Lord? You know him so intimately, that he uses a description of, "The way that I know u and the way that you know me is exactly the way that the Father knows me and I know the Father." Do you see that? How much more intimate can you be? There's nothing more intimate than the relationship that the Lord Jesus has with the Father. The Father and the Son have a unique relationship.

Jesus is saying, "When you are one of my sheep and you have true saving faith, the relationship you have with me, intimately, I know you and you know me, is exactly the same degree of intimacy that I know the Father and the Father knows me." Now men, right there is the reason for us to spend time with the Lord because of the unique relationship that we have. You see, that is such a powerful description. Do you realize the intimacy that you have with Christ is described as the same intimacy that Christ has with the Father?

Bill: *We have a one side, the discussion here that we do not spend time with the Father because we're obligated to do so or we should or because it has benefits. We do so because we want to. We have, though, by definition, the teaching of the card, that you said, the world system versus the spiritual system of feel-act-think versus think-act-feel. The problem within the Christian walk is there are those days, weeks, moments, whenever the case may be, that clearly David wrote of in the Psalms, where we don't feel that we have any desire to be in quiet time.*

Correct.

Bill: *I guess my point is how we balance off the fact that we have to do that nevertheless, as opposed to wanting to do it as you're propagating there. I mean there times, once again, when we hit those blunts in life where...*

Oh sure.

Bill: *...I mean, you need to remember the promises that David remembered and go before the Lord and you're not wanting to go there, but you know you have to go there because you intellectually know you have to go there.*

Sometimes you just have to do it in spite of your feelings because you're relying upon the promises of Scripture. That's all you can do. You have to go back and say who do I believe? What the world says or what the Scripture says. Bill is absolutely right. There are times in your life when you're not going to feel like you want to do it. That's when, I don't know how you handle it...the way that I handle it is, "Lord, you have to remove those thoughts from my mind. Because if you don't do that, I'm not going to do it. And so you're going to have to overrule my own mind." That's where I have to really go just plead for the Holy Spirit to say, "Spirit, you're just going to have to remove those thoughts from my mind of being lazy. Give me the desire to go do it. Give me the determination to go do it. And move me to go do it, and give me that desire." And then you go do it, out of just obedience and love. Remember, in John

14, Jesus says, “If you love me, you’ll obey my commands.” It’s really an act of obedience. You see, obedience is a love response. It’s not a manipulation; it’s a love response.

Bishop Rogers: *Wouldn’t it be fair to say that every act of duty is not necessarily trying to earn something?*

Correct.

Bishop Rogers: *But it’s still an act of duty.*

Absolutely. There’s nothing wrong with duty. Sometimes we have a feeling that we’re in the dispensation of grace, that duty is a bad word. It is not a bad word. Duty is a duty, and it’s something that we’ve been given to do. Sometimes we just have to do it. Sometimes we just have to say, “Lord, help me fulfill my duties and give me the desire to do that.”

Sig: *Isn’t it also, Bruce, where the fellowship of the brothers come in? If we’re close enough to someone and we know what they do and how they think or feel about their relationship with Christ, that we can encourage them. I know, for me, the alarm goes off at 4:30 in the morning, I snooze sometimes till 5:00 and I’m racing to get here, but boy, am I glad when I get here. It’s hard sometimes if I know, I know Bill, and I know the struggles goes through and he knows the struggles I go through, but we help each other, remind each other, “Let’s do it. Let’s get started. Let’s think and let’s talk about it.” I think that’s where we can help each other, to encourage each other, and you get around the men, I don’t know, for me, that makes a huge difference, and then hearing you talk about it, it reminds me what I need to do.*

Well absolutely. The Scripture says, “Encourage one another to do acts of good deeds,” so we do need to encourage one another. “Do not forsake the assembling of the saints,” because we do encourage one another. That’s a very...we were not designed to live the Christian life alone. We’re not the captain of our own ship. It’s not on an island. We need each other. You’re absolutely right. Those are all things that motivate us.

Bishop Rogers had a great point. There’s nothing wrong with duty. You don’t do it to gain merit. There’s no merit in your duty fulfillment. But I’ll tell you this—joy comes after the obedience. Joy comes after the obedience. You don’t get joy before the obedience; it’s when you’re obedient and you do your duty, that the joy comes after that. We need to understand that because the world turns that around and says, “You don’t do it until you feel like it.” Sometimes we just have to do it because it is our Christian duty to do that and joy comes afterwards.

Audience Member: *[UNCLEAR]...caught up in that. We wouldn’t even be thinking about that if not for him.*

Amen. That’s why, for me personally, what our brother just suggested, those spiritual thoughts really come from him and not from us. That’s why I personally, I have to say, “Lord, you’ve got to remove those thoughts from my mind, because if you don’t do that, I know that I’m going pursue that.” That’s where you just have to trust the Holy Spirit’s work. Excellent.

Tom: *Bruce, in the past, some other section of Scripture, you taught us to develop holy habits, too, as far as our living. So part of that holy habit would be immersing yourself in Scripture, surrounding yourself with your brothers. That speaks to quiet time, it speaks to going to church, that’s like that.*

Absolutely. The real issue we’re talking about here is a mark of trusting yourself, is are you measuring by externals and are you maintaining by rules? In other words, I’m going to do my duty to gain merit.

Or am I going to do my duty to express my love and appreciation for what's already happened. The difference is your motivation. You need a quiet time? Absolutely. The difference we're talking about is the motivation for that quiet time. I've had so many people tell me this mentality, that if I can do this, then God's going to do that. That's really the old covenant style of trusting your own resources. You're making bargains with God. That's an offense to the sufficiency of Christ. The cross is enough, guys. The cross is enough. It's been accomplished for you. Now you and I live in the midst of that. You and I now live in the realm of having the grace of God be the means of our motivation.

We fulfill our duties, realizing that there's no merit in our duties. But we do that as an expression of the love for what he's done for us. That's why we constantly remind ourselves what has Jesus done. That's what will help us do that. But you're absolutely right. We do need a quiet time, but the motivation has changed. The motivation has changed.

Audience Member: *When you were talking about like as far as [UNCLEAR] obedience in some ways, I think, [UNCLEAR] it talks about in the Bible about giving God our firsts, like [UNCLEAR] back then, it would be our crops...*

First fruits.

Audience Member: *...or our food or our money, our tithes. [UNCLEAR] we're to give the first of our time.*

Absolutely.

Audience Member: *When we wake up in the morning, [UNCLEAR] start the day, gotta be here by a certain time, gotta beat traffic. When I try to give my time in the morning, I say, okay, I say in mind I need to do ten things, but I know it can wait. When I do that, it's such a much better day for me. I don't do it for that reason, but I've just noticed it just always works out that way [UNCLEAR] give God your first. [UNCLEAR] all these other things are on my mind, but [UNCLEAR] all these things happen. When you do give God your first of the day, it's a much better day.*

Amen to that. The real issue is what's my reason for doing it? My motivation. That's the difference what we're talking about. You see, this whole difference between the old and the new is one of motivation. Who am I trusting? Am I trusting myself and my resources, or am I trusting the sufficiency of Christ and his resources? Those are some of the marks that we see.

There's a third one we need to look at, that would be this—marked by spiritual death. The contrast here is life versus death. You'll see that in verse 6. Let me just take you to another verse to help us understand why this is so...look at Hebrews 7:20. We're told this; that Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. In other words, the covenant there means arrangement. There's a new arrangement in which we now operate, and the one who makes it the guarantee is Christ himself. He is our guarantee. That means Jesus in the service of the Father, is the guarantee that the new arrangement, the new covenant relationship is not going to be violated. This covenantal relationship that God established in eternity past is never going to be violated because Jesus Christ is our guarantee. He's the one who's going to make it happen. It's like Jesus appealing to the Father in the difficult times of our life. He would say something like, "I, myself, Father have guaranteed their safety." That's what we're talking about, "I, myself," Jesus says, "have guaranteed their safety." That's what it means that he is the guarantee of this new arrangement.

God is satisfied with Jesus as your guarantee. The question is this. Are you and I satisfied with Jesus as our guarantee? When we're not, who do you begin to trust? Yourself. When you are, you begin to have the freedom and the joy of trusting him. The real issue is do you recognize that God is satisfied with

Christ being your guarantee of the covenant of grace relationship? The question is am I really satisfied with that?

That's why I'm going through these marks of old covenant living, which help us indicate that there may be some indicators that we're not trusting as much as we think we are. Not to produce guilt on you at all, but to help free yourself to recognize the joy you have of having Christ be sufficient, because God has accepted him as our guarantee. The question is do I accept him as my guarantee.

Some believers think that they have to maintain the arrangement with God, that they have to do their efforts. As Bishop Rogers says, they do these things to gain merit. When God gave you himself, he gave you all that he had. The cross is sufficient. And Christ is sufficient. These issues of trusting yourself are indicators that we really do not believe the sufficiency of Christ. We need to stop being satisfied with our resources and recognize that Christ has been accepted by the Father as our guarantee. We just need to work at trusting that and help each other do that.

Let's look back at 2 Corinthians. That would be the marks of spiritual life versus death. Under the Mosaic Law, perfect obedience was required if life was to be obtained. The sinner couldn't do that. That was the purpose of the law, to be a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. Thus people became liable to the penalty of disobedience, which was death. The Old Testament says it this way, "The soul that sins shall die." The New Testament says, "The wages of sin is death." You see, the old arrangement, the Mosaic Law, was perfect obedience or there's death. That's the contrast we're seeing here.

Under the Gospel arrangement, Christ vicariously endured the sinner's death. He died for us. That's why I get so frustrated when people say, "That's not fair." Well fairness is not one of God's 28 attributes. Righteousness is and holiness is, but not fairness. I'll tell you what's not fair. It's not fair that Christ died for me. That is not fair at all. But it's righteous. It's holy. It's just. But it is not fair! You see, that's what we're talking about now. There's a difference between spiritual life and spiritual death. It wasn't fair that Christ died for us. But he did! That's why you and I now have spiritual life as opposed to spiritual death.

Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21. If you were to ask me what might be the most important single word in all of Scripture, I could not argue if you said it was grace. I certainly wouldn't argue or suggest that love is not an appropriate response. There are many ways you can have that. But for me, personally, if you ask me what is the most important word in all of Scripture, I would say it's this little Greek word, *hupere*, which we translate in 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf." Right there. That's the word *hupere*. On behalf of me. You see, everything is a result of that understanding of that one word. That's where you understand grace. That's where you understand love. It's all wrapped up that little concept of "on behalf of."

Go back and take a look at this, "He made Him," Christ, "who knew no sin *to be* sin," on behalf of me, on behalf of you, on behalf of us, "on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21) You see, that little idea? *Hupere*. It's a Greek word, "on behalf of," in place of, instead of. You see, but that's not fair. But it's righteous. It's holy. It's just. The little word, "*hupere*." That's what we're talking about, and the difference is spiritual life versus spiritual death.

Sig: *Can you explain a little bit further on that passage about how Christ became sin?*

Well, Christ was sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient. He became sin in the sense that he took all the consequences of sin on our behalf. He did not become sin at that moment. He was still the Deity. He did not become sinful. He took all the consequences of those whom God gave him as love gifts to the Son. He took on the consequences of all of their sins. That's what it means. It does not mean that

he became a sinful man. It did not interfere with his holiness or his deity. He took over the consequences of all of our sins.

Let's go to 1 Peter 2:24. What I just read in 2 Corinthians 5:21 means this; that everything, our sin and all of our failures, have been paid for by Christ, on behalf of us. We live by faith now in the guarantee that Christ gives us this new arrangement called grace. Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:24, "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin," that would be our failures," "and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

What is death? The contrast here is marked by spiritual death. When you talk to a physician, when they go to a 911 call, what's the first thing they look for? They look for signs of life. Look for signs of life. They take the pulse, they check the breathing, look at the blood pressure. They're looking for signs of life because they're trying to find out is there life here or is there death here? They don't go look for signs of death. They look for signs of life. That's what we need to do in our own spiritual walk with the Lord. What are the signs of my life? Not my spiritual death. Your death has been taken care of because of the sacrifice of Christ, as we've already seen.

What are the indicators of my spiritual life? Well, I would take you to Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit. These are signs of spiritual life. Here's what you need to check in your life. Do I have these signs? "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23) Remember the law means death. Spirit means life.

What we need to do, brothers, is we need to be a doctor and examine our own spiritual life signs. The contrast here is spiritual life versus spiritual death. Let's play doctor for a minute and examine and compare our spiritual life signs with some of our spiritual death signs. I'm going to give you a couple of spiritual death signs, and I know there are many reasons why people might have these emotions, so I'm not suggesting this is very simplistic. Please understand just the contrast that I'm trying to draw, not go into the basis of people's psychiatric analysis. I'm not trying to do that. You understand that?

Let's just take a look at the contrast between spiritual death and spiritual life. Depression could be one of those. I define that as self-preoccupation, self-pity, no concern for others, no action on behalf of other people. What's the opposite life sign of that? Joy. Joy. Do you have depression or joy? Now I understand there are many reasons for your depression, so understand what I'm not saying. I'm not saying that this is a critical analysis of one's psychiatric tendencies. All I'm saying is we're looking for contrasts. That's what Paul is teaching us. He's saying there are contrasts here between spiritual life and spiritual death. What I'm suggesting is some form of depression could be a sign of spiritual death as opposed to the spiritual life sign would be joy.

How about another one? Anxiety. Anxiety might be another spiritual death sign. Fear that something I need will not be provided. Preoccupation over how someone else will respond to me. That's anxiety. Now what's the opposite of that? The life sign would be peace. The opposite of that would be peace. Anxiety versus peace.

Now, just let me give you a crass illustration. All the surgeries I've had in my life, I kind of enjoy going to...I've had so many, I'm used to them. I get a good day's sleep when they put me out for 24 hours. {LAUGHTER} Some of the best sleep I've had...the last time I had a major surgery, when they replaced my upper arm and my shoulder with titanium, so my elbow to my neck is titanium. The anesthesiologist had to wake me up to put me to sleep. I was there, she did my blood pressure and it was something like 115/60 or 70 or something like that. My heart rate was 52. She woke me up and she said, "I've got to wake you up to put you to sleep. You're so relaxed. You're so relaxed." You see, the difference is anxiety

versus peace. Now that peace is something the world doesn't understand. You can't have the peace of God until you have peace with God. The reason you have the peace of God and are not anxious is because you have peace with God. Now you have the peace of God.

All I'm suggesting is some of the contrasts of spiritual life versus spiritual death may be something as simple as anxiety. Am I preoccupied with the way somebody's going to respond to me? Or do I have the peace of Christ that only becomes because of my knowledge with him?

How about a third one? Resentment might be another sign of spiritual death. I define that as believing that my needs are threatened by something which God has allowed to happen to me. See what happens? You blame God, "Well if God hadn't done this. How could God do that?" How many times have you heard that? You see, that's a form of resentment. It's believing that my needs are threatened by something which God has allowed to happen to me, in his sovereign providence.

Now what's the life spiritual life sign of that, looking at our list of Galatians 5? It might be patience. It could be faithfulness. Those are some of the life signs. All I'm suggesting, guys, is when you have these emotions, you have these feelings, there are many reasons for them. I'm not so much worried about the reason as I am my response to it. That's where you understand in the Spirit, now the Spirit of Christ, because you have a saving relationship and this unique relationship and he's your guarantee, your sins have been paid for. You and I now can have a sense of peace, a sense of joy, a sense of patience, a sense of faithfulness that the non-believer is not going to have because they don't have the resources.

Bill: *Would you speculate that the Reformers had a, and the Puritans, had an easier time with this than today's modern Christian because they understood providence much better than we do?*

No, I think they probably had a more difficult time, because they understood so much what it meant, spiritual depression. You ought to read some of the great Puritans works on spiritual depression. They really battled with this, I think probably more than we do.

Bill: *So you're saying Owen's work was a spiritual depression then?*

Some yes. Some of it was. There are a lot of great works on spiritual depression. Jeremiah Burrows, Ezekiel Hopkins, Obadiah Sedgwick have written some wonderful things on managing spiritual depression. It's because it's basically, the root of that, they say, is trusting yourself and not trusting the sufficiency of Christ. That's the simplistic answer. But I think they probably had a more difficult time than we do.

Don: *What about the Psalms, which, I mean, if you read a lot of Psalms, talk about spiritual depression.*

Oh, absolutely.

Don: *But I wouldn't say that David was trusting himself. Would you?*

No, he's examining himself.

Don: *Okay, there's a difference.*

Yes. Exactly. The Psalms are written for us to teach us how to worship God. That's why we read the Psalms. No, I'm not suggesting David was trusting himself. All I'm trying to say, guys, in your own life, there are certain emotions you have that may be indicators that you're trusting yourself more than you should. That's all I'm trying to say. This is not a dissertation on emotional psychiatric analysis.

All I'm saying is, I'm just looking at some indicators. There are such things as spiritual depression. Sometimes we have that. God uses those in our lives to make us more dependent upon him. The Puritans would say that that's one of the, that the spiritual depressions you go through are really a positive sign of how God is drawing you more away from yourself and more to himself. There's a difficult time of going through it. They call it a spiritual depression. But the end result of that is you come out on the other side of the coin more closely related to Christ than you were beforehand.

Bill: *If you don't mind, could I add some Scriptures [UNCLEAR]?*

Please.

Bill: *Jeremiah 17 beginning at verse 5, "Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant.'" (NAS) Then it goes on to talk about that blessed person who trusts only in the Lord.*

Don mentioned the Psalms. David says, "Why am I discouraged, oh my soul?"

Don: *Psalms 42 [UNCLEAR]...*

I think here is one of the great principles of how you and I can manage this ourselves. Look at Psalm 42:5-6. Here David is doing something that is really critical. He's examining himself. He's not experiencing depression; he's examining himself and getting himself out of it. ⁵"Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me?" He's talking to himself. Notice what he says, "Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him *For* the help of His presence. ⁶O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan."

Now notice what he's doing. He's talking to himself. Sometimes, brothers, you and I just need to talk to ourselves and remind ourselves of the sufficiency of the person and work of Christ. One of the things that I learned in flight school when I was at Pensacola, John McCain was one my flight instructors. He said, "You need to talk yourself down." Every time I would come in for a landing, I would verbally talk myself out, going through my checklist, making sure I...talking myself down. He said, "If you don't do that, sometimes the environment is going to control you emotionally and you're going to lose your focus." Now that's a great principle. Whenever I would land, I would always talk myself down verbally. You'd hear myself, "Gas, your settings, your flaps, your trim, your heading," all those things. You verbally talk yourself down.

How many of you are pilots in here? You know what that's like. Jim, isn't that right? You need to talk yourself down? I'm sure his son, Brandon, who's a top gun, would know how to do that. You talk yourself down. That's what David is doing. He's talking himself out of the situation where he has these emotions, whatever they are, and he's reminding himself that he has the responsibility to manage those emotions, and so he's talking to himself and he says, "Why am I discouraged, oh my soul? Hope in God." Sometimes we just need to talk to ourselves, and remind ourselves, that our hope is in God.

What are the spiritual signs? Some of those might be...there's one more I'd go through just quickly, and that would be guilt. That would be believing that which God provides is not enough, and then going outside of God's will to secure what he has not provided. Guilt is believing that what God has provided is not enough, and then my going outside of God's will to secure what he has not provided.

The life sign there would be what? Self-control. Self-control. All I'm suggesting, brothers, is, again, this is not an analysis of your psychiatric being. That's not what I'm doing. I'm just trying to say when you have these emotions, and you have these feelings, they're legitimate, they're yours. Remember feelings are neither positive or negative. They're neutral. It's how you respond to them. That's why Paul says, "Think right, act right, feel right."

When you have these emotions, just ask yourself, check them with Galatians 5, which is the fruit of the Spirit, which would be spiritual life, and say, "How can I take this, and as David said, talk to myself, I need to hear myself say no, I need to exercise self-control. I need to be patient." Ask God to give you the grace to be patient. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the resources to be that which you know you can be because of the sufficiency of Christ.

One of the indicators, now, of our trusting ourselves, might be the whole difference between spiritual life and spiritual death. Do you understand what I'm not saying? I'm not saying, discussing the root cause of all these. I'm just trying to say there's an indicator that might be helpful to us as we look at Galatians 5. With that in mind, we'll take one more next week and we'll look at motivated by guilt. That's another way we'll know that we're trusting ourselves, when we recognize that we're being motivated by guilt.

Let's pray. Father, we just pray, Lord, if we've said anything that's inconsistent with who you are and your glory, your majesty, your grace and your mercy, that you'd remove those thoughts from our minds and only those things that are consistent with your revealed will in the Scripture as expressions of you and who you are and all of your righteousness will be the things that will remain. Father help us in our weakness. May we remind ourselves that sometimes we just have to talk to ourselves to realize who we really are, and that is that we are one of the sheep that's a love gift that you gave us to the Son, and then when he was on the cross, we were on his mind. May it be so for Jesus' sake. All the Brave Men said...Amen!!