

# The Talmid



**Talmid תלמיד** a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

*Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)*

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY  
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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## SIN AND CONDEMNATION: THE WORLD'S NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD

([Part 3](#))

### God's Case Against All Men, [Romans 3:9-20](#)

([Romans 3:9-20](#)) **Man, Depravity—Salvation**: in looking at such passages as this, a person must keep in mind the whole point of the passage. The point is not to charge man with sin, nor to berate man; it is not to look upon man with cynical contempt. The point is not to call man to hopelessness and despair, leaving him with a hanged head and low self-

esteem. **The point is to give man hope:** to challenge man to seek a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Man must *never minimize* his sin, lest he ignore or neglect the right way to God. But neither must he minimize the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, lest he hang his head in hopelessness, or wallow in self-pity, or roam the world in despair.

1. [The charge: all men are under sin \(v.9\).](#)
2. [The case of a sinful nature \(v.10-12\).](#)
3. [The case of a sinful tongue \(v.13-14\).](#)
4. [The case of sinful acts \(v.15-18\).](#)
5. [The case of the law \(v.19-20\).](#)

#### [1. \(Romans 3:9\) Sin— Man, Nature: all men are under sin.](#)

**Romans 3:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup>“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”

The words “**under sin**” (*huph' hamartian*) means to be subject to the power of or under the authority of. A man outside of Jesus Christ is under the power of sin and he is helpless to escape from it (**cp. [Galatians 3:10, 25](#); [Galatians 4:2, 21](#); [Galatians 5:18](#); [1 Timothy 6:1](#)**).

**Galatians 3:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“**For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it**

is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

**Galatians 3:25 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> “But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

**Galatians 4:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> “But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.”

**Galatians 4:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> “Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?”

**Galatians 5:18 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.”

**1 Timothy 6:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against.”

The religionist (Jew) is “under sin” just as much as other men are “under sin.” The Scripture has just declared that being religious does not make men acceptable to God (cp. [Romans 2:17-28](#)).

**Romans 2:17-28 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> “But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

<sup>18</sup> and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

<sup>19</sup> and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

<sup>20</sup> a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

<sup>21</sup> you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

<sup>22</sup> You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

<sup>23</sup> You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

<sup>24</sup> For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.

<sup>25</sup> For indeed circumcision is of value if you

practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

<sup>26</sup> So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

<sup>27</sup> And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

<sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.”

Religionists are shocked: “What then! Are we not better—do we not have any advantage over other men?

Are we not better if we...

have the Bible?”

profess God?”

know God’s will?”

approve the best things?”

study the Word of God?”

guide and teach others?”

know the truth?”

The answer is a strong exclamation: “No! Not at all! Not in any way are you better than other people. Both Jews and Gentiles, both religionists and non-religionists—you are all under sin.”

**Now note.** This has been the point of all that has been said in Romans...

God has a case against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ([Romans 1:18-32](#)).

God has a case against the moralist ([Romans 2:1-16](#)).

God has a case against the religionist (Jew) ([Romans 2:17-3:8](#)).

Scripture shows that God has a case against all men. All men are “under sin.” And the fact is clearly seen by any person who will honestly look at man and his world.

**Romans 3:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

**Romans 5:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

**Galatians 3:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> “But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

**1 John 1:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

**1 John 5:19 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one*.”

**Genesis 6:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

**1 Kings 8:46 (NASB)**

<sup>46</sup> “When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near.”

**Psalms 130:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> “If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”

**Proverbs 20:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> “Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin”?”

**Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NASB)**

<sup>20</sup> “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.”

**Isaiah 53:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> “All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”

**Isaiah 64:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”

## 2. (Romans 3:10-12) Man, Nature— Sin:

there is the case of a sinful nature.

**Romans 3:10-12 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

<sup>11</sup> THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

<sup>12</sup> ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

1. A sinful nature is unrighteous (**Romans 3:10; cp. Psalm 14:1**): “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Not a single person is righteous, that is, perfect and sinless—not by nature nor by act.

**Romans 3:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> “As it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.”

**Psalms 14:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.”

No man has ever lived a perfect life, not perfect...  
in every thought  
in every word  
in every act

“There is none righteous [perfect, sinless] no, not one.” (**Romans 3:10 (NASB)**) By nature, man is sinful.

**John 7:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> “The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.”

**Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,  
<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,  
<sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

2. A sinful nature is ignorant (**Romans 3:11; cp. Psalm 14:2**): “There is none that understands [*sunīōn*].”

Not a single person grasps, comprehends, or perceives.

**Romans 3:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> **“THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD.”**

**Psalm 14:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> **“The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.”**

The word literally means *to put things together*. It means to look at things and to intelligently discern and comprehend the truth. No man looks at the world and thinks and puts the truth of things together—not perfectly—not about...

1. God
2. man
3. the world
4. the origin of all
5. the purpose of all
6. the destiny of all

No one looks at the world and intelligently discerns the truth of things, not in grasping the truth...

**of where they have come from  
of why they are here  
of where they are going**

**“There is none that understands.”**

**Acts 28:27 (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> **“FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.”**

**2 Timothy 3:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> **“Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**

**Psalm 82:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> **“They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken.”**

**Micah 4:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> **“But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, And they do not understand His purpose; For He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.”**

3. A sinful nature is indifferent and selfish (**Romans 3:11; cp. Psalm 14:2**): **“There is none that seeks after God.”**

**Romans 3:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> **“THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD.”**

**Psalm 14:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> **“The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.”**

The word “seek after” (*ekzēteō*) means **“to seek out and search for.”** The idea is that of a diligent, careful, determined seeking and searching. No one searches and seeks after God, not after the only living and true God, not with so careful and determined a spirit. Why? Because men are indifferent and selfish.

Men want gods that allow them to do their own thing.

- ⇒ Some want gods that allow them to glory in self by demonstrating their extreme self-discipline and sacrifice.
- ⇒ Others want gods who demand less and who allow them to live as they wish, in the pleasures and greed and possessions of this world.

Men do not want a God who is true and living. If He is true and living, it means He is Supreme, the only One who is to be glorified and honored and obeyed. Therefore, in dealing with the only living and true God, men are indifferent and selfish. **“There is none that seeketh after God.”** By nature men are sinful, indifferent, and selfish.

**Ephesians 2:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> **“Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”**

**1 Timothy 1:9-10 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> **“Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless**

and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers<sup>10</sup> and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.”

**1 John 2:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

**Psalm 10:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> “The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

**Psalm 14:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.”

**Malachi 3:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> “You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked in mourning before the LORD of hosts?’”

4. A sinful nature is crooked (**Romans 3:12; cp. Psalm 14:3**): “They are all gone out of the way” (*pantes exeklinan*).

**Romans 3:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> “ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

**Psalm 14:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> “They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.”

The Greek means that men lean out, turn away, and turn aside...

from God.

from the way that leads to God.

to another way.

Men are crooked; they are not straight with God. They do not follow God nor pursue the right way to God. They take another path, another road, another way.

**1 Timothy 1:5-6 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

<sup>6</sup> For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion.”

**1 Peter 2:25 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> “For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

**2 Peter 2:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> “Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

**Jude 1:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> “[The ungodly are] wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”

**Proverbs 21:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> “A man who wanders from the way of understanding Will rest in the assembly of the dead.”

**Proverbs 27:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> “Like a bird that wanders from her nest, So is a man who wanders from his home.”

**Isaiah 53:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> “All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”

5. A sinful nature is useless (**Romans 3:12; cp. Psalm 14:3**): “They are together become unprofitable” (*achreioō*).

**Romans 3:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> “ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

**Psalm 14:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> “They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.”

The word means “to become worthless, useless, sour, bad. (cp. sour milk.)” All men without Christ are worthless, useless, sour, bad.

**Matthew 5:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.”

**Matthew 25:30 (NASB)**

<sup>30</sup> “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

**Luke 9:25 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> “For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?”

**Luke 14:34-35 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> “Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?

<sup>35</sup> It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

6. A sinful nature is evil (**Romans 3:12**; cp. **Psalm 14:3**): “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

**Romans 3:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> “ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

**Psalm 14:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> “They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.”

The word “good” (*chrēstotēs*) means “moral goodness, kindness, graciousness, gentleness, justice.”

All men fail in being good toward God and their neighbor, in being...

1. kind
2. gracious
3. gentle
4. just

Men come short—too often, too much. “**There is none that doeth good [not always, not perfectly], no, not one.**”

**Matthew 23:27 (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.”

**Mark 7:21-23 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

<sup>22</sup> deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness.

<sup>23</sup> “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

### **3. (**Romans 3:13-14**) Tongue— Man, Nature: there is the case of a sinful tongue.**

**Romans 3:13-14 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;

<sup>14</sup> “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS.”

1. A sinful tongue is foul and corrupt (**Romans 3:13**; cp. **Psalm 5:9**): “Their throat is an open sepulchre [grave].”

**Romans 3:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS.”

**Psalm 5:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> “There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”

An open grave is foul, and it is a symbol of corruption. So is a man with a sinful mouth.

His mouth is...

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. foul      | 2. dirty        |
| 3. obscene   | 4. polluted     |
| 5. filthy    | 6. detestable   |
| 7. profane   | 8. dishonorable |
| 9. offensive |                 |

The obscene mouth may range from off-colored humor to dirty jokes, from immoral suggestions to outright propositions. But no matter, a man with a foul mouth stinks just like an open grave; his filthiness causes corruption, the decay of character. The filth from his mouth eats and eats away at his character and at the character of his listeners so much that he becomes as offensive as that of a decayed corpse. The foul, filthy mouth kills character, its attractiveness, trust, faithfulness, morality, honor, and godliness.

**Matthew 12:34 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup>“You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.”

**James 3:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup>“And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.”

**Proverbs 24:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>“For their minds devise violence, And their lips talk of trouble.”

2. A sinful tongue is deceitful (**Romans 3:13; cp. Psalm 5:9**): “They have used deceit.”

**Romans 3:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup>“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS.”

**Psalm 5:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup>“There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”

The Hebrew says, “They make smooth their tongue.” A deceitful person has...

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. a false tongue      | 6. a misleading tongue     |
| 2. a lying tongue      | 7. a treacherous tongue    |
| 3. a cheating tongue   | 8. a beguiling tongue      |
| 4. a deluding tongue   | 9. a smooth talking tongue |
| 5. a flattering tongue |                            |

The word “deceit” (*edolioustan*) is continuous action: “They kept on deceiving.”

Man is not only guilty of deceiving, but of constantly deceiving. He is *constantly* hiding and camouflaging his true thoughts and feelings and behavior, seeking to protect himself or to get whatever he is after.

**Psalm 10:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup>“His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.”

**Psalm 36:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup>“The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise *and* to do good.”

**Psalm 55:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup>“His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.”

**Psalm 116:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup>“I said in my alarm, “All men are liars.”

**Jeremiah 9:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup>“Everyone deceives his neighbor And does not speak the truth, They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves committing iniquity.”

**Jeremiah 17:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup>“The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”

**Micah 6:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“For the rich men of *the* city are full of violence, Her residents speak lies, And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.”

**Nahum 3:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“Woe to the bloody city, completely full of lies *and* pillage; *Her* prey never departs.”

3. A sinful tongue is piercing and poisonous (**Romans 3:13; cp. Psalm 140:3**): “The poison of asps is under their lips.”

**Romans 3:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup>“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS.”

**Psalm 140:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup>“They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; Poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah.”

The asp (*aspidon*) is the cobra, a deadly snake. God charges men with having tongues that are just as pierc-

ing and poisonous as the tongue of the deadly cobra. The idea is that the tongues of some people have a diabolical nature; they are filled with so much malice that they set out to inflict punishment.

A poisonous tongue...

talks and gossips about  
strikes out against  
inserts and spreads venom  
seeks to hurt and destroy  
desires to cause suffering  
lies in wait to strike  
poisons character and reputation

### **Colossians 3:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> “But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth.”

### **1 Peter 2:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.”

### **Proverbs 12:18 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

### **Psalms 140:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> “They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; Poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah.”

4. A sinful tongue is full of cursing and bitterness (**Romans 3:14**; cp. **Psalms 10:7**): “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

### **Romans 3:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS.”

### **Psalms 10:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> “His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.”

Cursing is sin; a cursing tongue is a sinful tongue. (See below—**Deeper Study #1—Matthew 5:33-37**, **Deeper Study #2—Matthew 5:34**, for more discussion.)

Jesus Christ says:

**Matthew 5:34 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> “But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God.”

### **Matthew 5:37 (NASB)**

<sup>37</sup> “But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.”

a. Men use profanity; in fact, their mouth is full of cursing and swearing. They curse both God and men. Their cursing may range from what society considers to be a mild word of slang to using God’s name in vain. No matter how mild or how acceptable to society, it is sin. God’s case against man is that his mouth is full of cursing (cp. **James 3:8-10**).

### **James 3:8-10 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> “But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison.

<sup>9</sup> With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

<sup>10</sup> from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.”

### **Matthew 5:34 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> “But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God.”

### **James 5:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.”

### **Exodus 20:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.”

### **Leviticus 19:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> “You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.”

### **Psalms 59:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> “*On account of* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips, Let them even be caught in their pride, And on account of curses and lies which they utter.”

### **Ecclesiastes 7:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> “For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others.”



Note a man's cursing shall fall upon him.

**Psalm 109:17-18 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> "He also loved cursing, so it came to him; And he did not delight in blessing, so it was far from him.

<sup>18</sup> But he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment, And it entered into his body like water And like oil into his bones."

b. Man's mouth is also full of bitterness. His tongue is often...

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. sharp      | 6. cold        |
| 2. intense    | 7. distasteful |
| 3. resentful  | 8. harsh       |
| 4. cynical    | 9. stressful   |
| 5. relentless | 10. unpleasant |

Any expression involving any of these is sin to God. God desires men to be filled with love and joy and peace and to express such. Anything less than the expression of these is sin. This is God's case against men: a tongue full of cursing and bitterness.

**Ephesians 4:31 (NASB)**

<sup>31</sup> "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."

**Hebrews 12:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."

**James 3:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth."

**DEEPER STUDY # 2**

**Matthew 5:34 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God."

**(Matthew 5:34) Swearing:** there were two kinds of swearing to the Jews.

1. **Bound swearing.** These were oaths using God's name. When God's name was used, He was considered a partner; therefore, the oath

could never be broken.

2. **Unbound swearing.** These were oaths which omitted God's name but used such sacred phrases as "by heaven," "by earth," "by Jerusalem," "by my head," or some other statement to emphasize one's intention or truthfulness. Such oaths were not necessarily binding because God was not considered to be a partner in the oath.

What man so often fails to see is that God is always present. He sees and is concerned with all that a man says and does, whether by word or action, by statement or oath, by swearing or profanity.

**CORAM DEO**

**(Before the face of God)**

**THE RECORDS OF THE WORK AND TEACHINGS OF THE APOSTLES**

**The Significance of the Apostolic Age.** The Apostolic Age began with the death of Jesus in 29 or 30 A.D. and ended about the close of the first Christian century. This brief three-quarters of a century is significant primarily because it represented the practical application, the testing, and the crystallizing of the principles of faith and life which Jesus had set forth. Christianity then came into close contact and competition with many rival religions, such as the Roman emperor-worship, Greek Cynicism, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Judaism, many Egyptian and oriental cults, and, above all, with the popular mystery religions. In this infinitely complex environment Christianity ceased to be based on certain simple principles proclaimed by Jesus and illustrated by his life and acts; it gradually developed an elaborate system of doctrines, rules, and institutions. This period marked the beginning of that creed-making era which culminated in 325 A.D. in the formulation and acceptance by the Western Church of the Nicene Creed. It also witnessed the spread of Christianity from the little community at Jerusalem to Rome and to the widest bounds of the Roman Empire. It saw the growth of a chain of Christian churches reaching from Babylon in the East to Spain in the West and from the Black Sea in the North to the heart of Africa in the South.

The vital questions presented by the period are historical and doctrinal. How far was the faith of Christianity based on the teachings of Jesus? How far did it come from the active mind of Paul? How far was it a composite of Jewish, Greek, and oriental ideas? Fortunately, in answering these complex yet fundamental questions, we have as a basis of comparison the older records of Jesus' work and teachings. We can focus the search-light of these teachings upon those of Paul and of the other New Testament writers, even as the Great Teacher turned them upon those of the older prophets, priests, and sages. The historical study of the literature of the Apostolic Age gives us also a fresh vision of Jesus.

Until now the Christian church has seen him largely through the medium of Paul's theology; but now we are beginning to distinguish in Paul three distinct elements: (1) The Pharisee and devoted student of the Jewish law; (2) The Roman citizen and heir to many of the complex religious ideas current in western Asia during the first Christian century; (3) Paul the mystic and the devoted follower of Jesus who interpreted the teachings of his Master in the light of his own rich personal experience. With a clearer knowledge of the influences which entered into Paul's vision, we are better able to-day to interpret what he actually saw and thus to see Jesus anew through the eyes of the earliest New Testament writer.



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## **Hebrews 12 – Overview**

### **Part 2**

#### **Hebrews 12:2-3 – MAINTAINING A SPIRITUAL FOCUS**

In our last study, we looked at what it meant to “**lay aside**” those things in our life that hinder us and entangle us so that we can run the race that is set before us with endurance. [Hebrews 12:2](#), however, provides some significant insight into “how” that is actually accomplished. What we have repeatedly stated is that God is not going to live the Christian life for us. If He was going to do that for us, then there would simply be no need for commands or exhortations relative to the Christian life. We are in a spiritual “**race**” whether we like it or not, and in order to legitimately contend in any race, the individual has to do some fundamental things to even be able to compete. It would be difficult for an athlete to run in a race if they were constantly looking at other things while running. Just think of how difficult it would be if they were always looking down at their feet, or always looking above at the clouds. It would be very difficult for a football player to be effective during a play if he kept looking at the crowd in the stands to see if they were watching him. Any kind of race demands

that the individual be focused and that they concentrate on exactly what it is that they are doing.

In [Hebrews 12:2](#) it states that the ultimate focus for the believer is to keep “**looking unto Jesus**”. The NIV and the NASB state that the believer is to “**fix their eyes**” on Christ. The Amplified Bible says to “**look away (from all that will distract) to Jesus**”. The actual word for “**looking**” is the Greek word “*aphorao*”, and it means to turn the eyes from other things and fix them on something. Metaphorically, it has the idea of turning one’s mind to a certain thing. It means to concentrate earnestly on something, and because it is in the present tense, it means that it is something that the believer is to be doing continually. We could actually translate it as “**be constantly looking**” or “**always be concentrating on**”. The problem is that the average believer is so distracted with “other things” that this area of the Christian life often becomes woefully neglected. [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) gives some insight into what actually happens when a believer continually concentrates on the person of Christ.

**<sup>18</sup>But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

The word “**transformed**” is the Greek word “*metamorphoo*” from where we derive our English word for “metamorphis”. It is the idea behind a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. In Scripture it simply means to change, to transfigure, or to transform someone. Even though there is much that a believer is responsible to do in living out the Christian life, at the same time they will never be transformed or changed apart from Jesus Christ. No matter how we divide these Scriptures, we cannot leave Christ out of the equation. So, how does all of this translate into something at a practical level for the believer? The answer is really fairly simple. As a believer spends time beholding Christ and getting to personally know Him more and more, the Holy Spirit will begin to supernaturally effect spiritual changes in their life. However, it is critical to appreciate that God’s changes will NEVER be immediate. It takes much more than a week to be transformed so that you are mature and faithful in the things of God. You have to start somewhere and it has to be more than just a casual glancing at Christ. That is exactly

what many Christians seem to do. They take a casual glance at Christ on Sunday and then nonchalantly ignore Him the rest of the week. There are some meaningful “habits” that you need to seriously consider developing in your life if you are genuinely sincere about growing and maturing in the Christian life. If you do not start somewhere, then it is very doubtful that you will ever become a mature Christian. We cannot become mature without Christ.

The “Holy Place” in the temple of the Old Testament was a very special and strategic place for the nation of Israel. However, during the church age in which we live as New Testament believers, our bodies are called the “**temple of God**” and the “**temple of the Holy Spirit**”. [1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19](#) say the following,

**<sup>16</sup>Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that the Spirit of God dwells in you*?**

**<sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own*?**

The spiritual significance of this is staggering. Until a believer understands the spiritual significance of their own personal “**holy place**”, most likely they will never really grow as a Christian. The depth of their personal spiritual experience may never be that meaningful or significant to them, and the result is that they live their entire Christian life in spiritual mediocrity and indifference. What we do understand about our personal walk with Christ is that we need to find both a **time** and a **place** where we can draw near to God. If for some reason, we by-pass this part of the process, then everything will always be a distraction and our personal time with God will be marginal at best. We will find excuse after excuse and rationalization after rationalization for why we do not have meaningful time with God. In [Psalm 46:10](#), God said,

**<sup>10</sup>Be still, and know that I am God.**

[James 4:8](#) says,

**<sup>8</sup>Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.**

Why would God encourage a believer to “**be still**”? Well, the answer is actually twofold. The first is because our tendency is to always be busy doing things that absorb and diminish any meaningful time with God. It can be “good” things. Secondly, however, and obvi-

ously the most important is that it is what allows us to know that God is God. The more that you know God personally and intimately, the more you will trust Him. The verb to “**be still**” simply means to be relaxed. When I studied that word, it was so refreshing to me – to just find a time in my life when I can be relaxed and just yield myself to God and to His Word. What a great picture.

If someone were to ask you what it meant to “**draw near to God**”, I wonder how you would answer that question. How do you actually do that in a practical way? How does someone genuinely develop a personal relationship with God? You can spend the rest of your life just hustling all over creation trying to accomplish all that you can accomplish, and in the end you will simply suffer the same frustration and emptiness that Solomon did when he wrote Ecclesiastes. God is sovereign, you are one of His children, and what He desires more than anything else is that you spend some meaningful and intimate time with just Him. He will take care of you. He will provide for your life. When talking about this area of our Christian life, our excuses carry no weight whatsoever. They are meaningless and vain. Let me give you a very simple principle to help govern your life in this area. Your personal “holy place” is a **quiet** place and a **private** place where you spend meaningful time alone with God. It is a place and a time that you have to **personally cultivate**. God will not cultivate and develop this time for you. You must understand that simple truth. You have to plow the garden, you have to plant the seeds, and you have to keep it watered. This year I plowed my garden, I planted my seeds, and every day I watered my garden, but it is God that gives the increase and produces the vegetables. God is the One who creates spiritual life and spiritual hunger within you, but it does not just happen automatically. That is exactly what happens when He “**draws near to you**”. You cannot grow and mature in the things of God apart from what we are discussing. Your personal holy place represents a **private time** and a **private place** in your life where you **learn** how to meet God and to be in God’s presence. It is my opinion that the average Christian knows little to nothing about any of this. They are so busy with the things of this world and so infatuated with the things of this world, that God can never have first place in their lives - never. God and His

kingdom and the work of His kingdom are just a small part of their life. Obviously, each of us is to be responsible. What we are talking about does not relieve us of personal responsibilities to care for our families and to be productive in our life, but [Hebrews 12:2](#) directs the believer to change their priorities as needed. So many believers give priority to everything else except that which is the most important.

Please do not lose sight of the simple fact that the “**weights**” that the author referred to in [Hebrews 12:1](#) represent **anything** good or bad that absorbs and drains off our time and attention for God and ultimately and finally, just by default, causes us to lose interest in the things of God. No Christian is exempt from worldly distractions. The most committed of Christians has to literally fight to keep things in perspective and to maintain their meaningful time with God. If there are things in your life – good things – that are hindering you from spending meaningful time with God on a regular basis, then simply lay it aside. If you do, God will honor your commitment for Him to have first place and the spiritual priority of your life. Our problem is that much too often we simply do not lay these things aside. We live in a culture that is doing everything it can to sell us everything that it has, to do everything that it offers, and to go everywhere that we can. We have just become much too busy for God and certainly much too distracted to find the time to “**draw near**” to Him. Not drawing near to God is one of the great sins of the Laodicean church age in which we live.

When someone devotes time to personally draw close to Christ through both prayer and Bible study, there are some supernatural things that happen in their life. They will be “**strengthened**” in their “**inner man**”. [Ephesians 3:16](#) says,

**<sup>16</sup>that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,**

The Greek Interlinear Bible translates the word “**strengthened**” as “**to become mightily empowered**”. That is utterly fabulous! That is the very heart of that word. It is the Greek word “*dunamis*” from where the English words “dynamo”, “dynamic”, and “dynamite” are derived. Vine’s translates it as “**ability**” and says that it means “power and ability, physical or moral, as residing in a person or thing”. This is not just some ex-

tra energy that you have one day. This is a word that means that God infuses you with His spiritual power so that you can be an overcomer, so that you can walk victoriously in your life, and so that you can be a useful vessel in His kingdom. It means that this spiritual strengthening from God literally enters into your inner being. I have no means of describing what this actually means or entails for any individual believer. How God works in a believer's heart is not something that can be quantified. However, what it does mean at a practical level is that God is more than willing to give you the strength and the help that you need to overcome and maneuver through the difficult periods in your life – no matter how severe they may be.

The pronoun “**He**” is referring to God the Father (v14-15) and being “**strengthened**” comes “**through** (or by the means of) **His Spirit**” in your inner being. In very simple terms, God strengthens you to do what He wants you to do. I.e., God is going to give you the spiritual enabling that you do not have in and of yourself. God is able to give you the power to overcome besetting sins and things that hinder your walk and fellowship with Him. What we learn in [Hebrews 12:2](#), however, is that Jesus Christ is the actual “**finisher of faith**”. He is the One who perfects what God is actually doing in our life. What that means practically is that Jesus Christ cannot be by-passed. Jesus Christ is the One who is actually completing and maturing the Christian life within the believer.

Here is one of the major spiritual principles embedded in [Hebrews 12:2](#).

**Principle 1:** The more time that we spend meditating and concentrating on the Person of Christ, the more we will find ourselves being strengthened. The principle is simple – we cannot be strengthened apart from Christ. Most people concentrate on their problems. What if Israel had concentrated on the walls of Jericho rather than simply obeying what God had told them to do? They would have failed miserably. They would have evaluated everything and determined that there was no way for what God had asked them to do to be successful, and eventually they would have determined to do something different. That seems to be the normal default position

– we ignore what God has commanded us to do, and then we simply do everything our own way. Trust me, but that is a recipe for spiritual disaster and will produce grave disappointments in your life.

**Principle 2:** **Do not react** to your circumstances, **simply respond** to them. God's methods work and ours fail. God operates from a position of strength and wisdom, and we operate from a position of weakness and ignorance. Everytime that we react to difficult circumstances, we will generally reap very unpleasant results. It is inevitable simply because God's ways are not our ways.

**Principle 3:** It is critical that we simply lay aside our impulses to react and to speak our mind. Rather, we should determine that in all circumstances that we will be patient, gracious, kind in our response, and simply do what is right – not what we may want to do. Most of the time when we react rather than respond to stressful circumstances, we win the battle, but we lose the war. Patience is a great virtue that will deliver you from many stressful and harmful situations. There comes a point in our life where we have to decide who is going to be Lord of our life – us or Christ. It is a simple decision, but one that most often we are not comfortable with simply because our flesh is constantly urging us to react, to say what we want to say, and to take matters into our own hand. That is a serious lose/lose scenario, and certainly one that will create deeper hurt and disappointment in our life.

Now, one of the obvious truths in this passage relates to the word “**endured**”. It is a word that is used to describe Christ in v2 and v3. It states that He “**endured the cross**” (v2) and that He “**endured such hostility from sinners against Himself**” (v3). If you do not meditate on Christ and His person, then v3 says that you will become both “**weary and discouraged in your soul**”. The word “**endure**” is the Greek word “*hupomeno*” which is the word often translated “**patience**”. However, it means more than just simply being patient. It carries the idea of bearing up under trials and simply persevering in something that is difficult. The problem with reacting to difficult and stressful circumstances is that we remove God's intervention and strengthening from our life and simply insert ourselves. I want God to strengthen me when something difficult happens to me, but I cannot receive that strengthening if I insert my will over His will into the circumstance. The Bible declares that

His ways are perfect. [Romans 12:12](#) says that we are to be “**patient in tribulation**”. [1 Corinthians 13:7](#), speaking of God’s love working in us, says that it,

**<sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**

This is how God works both in us and through us – by our being patient and persevering when difficult circumstances arise in our life. This is how God is glorified and this is how God works. This is the biblical life of faith.

The following are several principles to help every believer practically maintain a spiritual focus.

First, **purchase a journal and read through the New Testament looking for passages that talk about Christ**. Simply write down what you see and understand about His person. Why are you doing this? It is because Jesus Christ is the example that God wants you to follow. [Hebrews 12:2](#) says that we need to keep “**looking**” to Christ, and [Hebrews 12:3](#) says that we need to “**consider Him who endured**” so that we do not become weary and discouraged. We saw that the word “**looking**” means to continually and earnestly concentrate on something. So, if you do not develop some method and some structure for seeking God, then most likely your time with God will not bear much fruit and eventually you will forsake it all together.

Secondly, **commit yourself to how God wants you to live and to respond to difficult circumstances**. Those moments will come for all of us. No one is exempt from stressful circumstances, so just accept it. [1 Peter 4:12](#) declares,

**<sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;**

Trials are a normal part of the Christian life. In reality, trials are what God uses to develop Christ’s character within a believer’s life. So, the more committed that you become to God’s ways, then the more of God’s strengthening you will receive and the more of Christ’s character will be developed in

your life. One of my favorite passages in the Bible is [1 Peter 2:21-23](#),

**<sup>21</sup>For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: <sup>22</sup>“Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth”; <sup>23</sup>who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;**

The NIV, NASB, and ESB use the word “**entrusted**” rather than “**committed**”. There simply must come a point in our life when we fully commit ourselves - no matter what the cost - to living how God wants us to live. In the Greek Interlinear, the word in v23 for “**committed Himself**” is translated “**handed Himself over**”. The verb is in the imperfect mood, indicative tense, active voice which means that He “**kept entrusting Himself**” to God. The active voice means that the action is something that He did and something that we have to do. I.e., this was something that Jesus Christ did over and over and over. He just kept committing His life to His Father, and the exercise is no different for the believer. What an amazing picture of what God really wants from us – for us to simply keep committing ourselves over to Him. The word simply means to surrender and to yield ourselves to God. Invariably when I fly, I see children that are flying alone. They have literally been handed over to a stewardess who ensures that they are taken where they need to be taken. Someone has committed their child to someone else for safekeeping.

Thirdly, **begin each day by consciously handing your life over to your heavenly Father**. Make it a habit of your life. Make it a prayer in the mornings that you simply come to a place that you cannot live without. Make this your simple prayer: “*Father, today, the deep desire of my heart is to be fully committed to what you want for my life. I ask you to continually be strengthening me as I meditate on the person of Christ so that I can follow His example. When trials come, I ask that you would remind me by your Holy Spirit not to react to them, but rather to respond graciously by the power of your Holy Spirit working in my life. And through those trials, I ask that you more deeply develop the character of Christ in me so that you may be glorified in my life.*” We will never rise above what we actually want to become. If you want to become a fully devoted follower

of Jesus Christ, then it is something that you have to yearn for and to long for. Desire creates direction, and the more of Christ that you desire, the more of His direction He will provide.

Then lastly, **simply rest in the sovereignty of God over your life.** Do not be afraid to trust God in trying and difficult circumstances. Do not be afraid to commit yourself to God's ways. Do not be hesitant to follow Christ's example. The one thing that we can say about Christ is that He won. We review all that was arrayed against Him and He still won. Death had no power over Him, His enemies had no power over Him, and Satan had no power over Him. Why? It was because Jesus Christ was fully and completely committed to the will of God for His life, and that is exactly where our personal victory lies as well.

#### **ENDNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> Wuest, 214.
- <sup>2</sup> Wilson's, 419.
- <sup>3</sup> Vine's, 3.
- <sup>4</sup> Strong's, 1430.

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