

***“If a man love me, he will keep my words.”*** John 14:2

When we are believing, the love of God has been shed into our hearts and we desire to remain close to Him. The life of a believer is in a constant state of warfare with the three-fold enemy. We continuously see and hear about the rampant life of sin in the world around us. Previously held morals and values are eroding. We often feel as righteous Lot, “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)” (2 Peter 2:7,8). As children of God we realize that we are not immune to temptations of sin. Our earthly portion is sin-corrupt. As the world around us becomes more accepting of all manner of sin, we, too, face the danger of becoming “accustomed” to and conforming to the worldly ways of this world. How can one find the strength to battle and fight against temptation and sin? By taking heed of the Word of God.

Judas, not Iscariot, an apostle of Christ asked Jesus how would he reveal himself unto his own and not unto the world. Jesus responded “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

**If a man love me, he will keep my words**

Luther wrote: No one is a Christian unless he keeps Christ’s word. And no one can keep it, unless he has the love of God in the heart. Thus a Christian’s life is to love God. And we love him, because he first loved us. (John 4:19) His love is so great that he gave his only begotten son to suffer and die on behalf of the sins of the entire world (John 3:16, 1 John 4:10). When love awakens us, we then learn who Christ is. Peter writes in his 2nd epistle 3:18, “but grow in the knowledge of our lord and saviour Jesus Christ.” Also John writes “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7).

The only thing that will keep God’s commandment and word in us is the desire to love and serve God. Thus, in the kingdom of God, His word in love and truth is for instruction, rebuke, guidance, consolation, encouragement of faith, and forgiveness. As the world around us continues to open the floodgates of sin, we need to remain sober, watchful and ever more fervently turn to God’s Word for support, for answers, for comfort. It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path!

The Apostle Paul instructs young Timothy to cling to the Word of God in the midst of the enemy’s attack: “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of,

knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:13-15).

When we love God, we desire to study His Word. We want to read it and study it as often as we are able for learning, comfort, and support of our faith. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

A child of God has hunger for the Word. He wants to be there where the spoken word is able to warm his cold heart through the gospel, the glad tidings of Christ. This is not a small matter, for “faith cometh by hearing.”

### **Worldliness can remove the love of God from us**

With love and truth let’s examine ways that worldliness can creep into the life of a believer and remove the love of God from us. Worldly ways may seem like “no big deal,” but they are a consuming force which are sin. Following are a few examples:

Dress or apparel: What we wear on the outside also reveals what is in the heart. By conforming with worldly clothing styles we do not separate ourselves from ways of the world. Offensive apparel often arouses the lusts of the flesh. Peter instructs preciously of the appearance of a child of God: “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (I Pet. 3:3-4).

Our speech and our actions send a strong message. Cursing and worldly speech is prevalent in this world but should not come from the mouths of believers. Also loud and boisterous behavior, especially at public events, does not set the kind of example of which Timothy speaks: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

Courtship is for those who are ready to get to know another believer from the heart with the prayer to God that it would lead to marriage. The dating model of this world does not belong to a believer. Hugging, kissing, caressing, etc. arouse the flesh and lust, which the Bible instructs to flee: “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (II Tim. 2:22).

Worldly music can little by little creep into the life of a believer. Its beat, rhythms, words and lyrics show the erosion of morals and values in today’s society. One may start by listening to seemingly innocent worldly music, but little by little stray further and further.

Movies and inappropriate video and internet material corrupt our inner being. This material is easily within our reach. It is so seductive and powerful to draw us in and once there, it’s hard to get out. The Apostle instructs: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

We must view these dangers in the light of God's Word. Love of the world can separate one from God's kingdom. The cares, glory, and pleasures of the world quickly choke the Word and it becomes unfruitful as described in the parable of the sower: "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful (Mark 4:18,19)."

The Apostle of Love, John, wrote that man cannot live with a divided heart: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17). Worldliness is sin! Dear young, do not idolize the life of the ungodly. Do not accept their worldly speech, dress and lifestyle. Let us remain humble and childlike not desiring to do anything that would transgress the will of the Heavenly Father and that could eventually lead us into unbelief and unto perdition, eternal damnation and hell.

### **Care for each other with the word of grace**

The proclamation of the Word has effect when it contains grace and truth. In this proclamation the calling voice of the Good Shepherd is heard. The Good Shepherd yet calls the straying and lost sheep. God's grace belongs to the penitent and contrite of heart. The gospel is preached to the poor and needy.

Dear young brothers and sisters, help one another on the journey. Love each other's undying souls even if it means that your flesh suffers. When you see in your midst that which is contrary to God's Word, do not remain silent. Speak individually to those over whom there is concern. Hasten to help and restore the straying or fallen one "in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1). If there are those who are not concerned about their wrongdoing after you have spoken to them, seek help from some older trusted brothers and sisters in faith.

### **And we will come unto him, and make our abode with him**

The enticements of the enemy of the soul are great. Our journey leads through this world, "the valley of the shadow of death." Yet we need not fear when we follow the Lord Jesus. He will abide with us through His spirit. He restores our souls and leads us in the paths of righteousness, paths which are illuminated by God's Word, paths which lead to eternal life. If we continue to follow Him, we will experience that which the psalmist has written, not only in this life, but also in the life to come: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 23).

Dear brother and sister in Christ Jesus, take comfort in John's writing "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that are in him" (1 John 2:5). We who keep His Word and walk in the light will inherit heaven's glory. Be encouraged and believe all sins forgiven in Jesus name and blood.