

*“We Don’t Have to Win,  
We Just Have to Fight”*

For the title of this introduction to the Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul, the full quote borrowed from Mel Gibson in the Brave Heart Movie is, “We don’t have to win, we just have to fight!” How this relates to the Epitaph of Paul, “Remember My Bonds” as a comparable title of the Life and Letters of Paul, remains to be shown. And these two titles also compete with a third from which much of the previous material of Life and Letters of Paul is taken, that is BELIEVE AND BE BAPTIZED, volume 3 of the LEARN CHRIST FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS commentaries. It remains part of the future 2 years of Bible Sessions, through monthly E-mail newsletters and PDFs online, of this free, online Bible course about the Life and 14 New Testament letters of the Apostle Paul to show during the course of the course, how the 3 possible titles are related.

First of all you perhaps remember the movie and the occasion of the quote from Mel Gibson’s Brave Heart movie. The Scottish father of Mel Gibson in the movie was about to depart to war with some of the British invaders, leaving the young Mel Gibson behind and alone; and when hearing a statement from the young man with encouragements to win against the British, the father replied with conviction and a laugh as if that was not possible, “We don’t have to win, we just have to fight.” Perhaps like with this author, those words from the movie stuck in my mind. Cultured as an American, a Texan, and ex-military, it at first seemed strange not to assume victory. As the years have passed and the historical realities of the world wide Great Apostasy called the “Falling Away” have dawned on

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us from Bible Study and current events in churches and Christianity, it is true as a group of world-wide Christians that we can and will not win the Falling Away, yet we must continue to fight.<sup>1</sup> The victory is ours at the end of the Falling Away which is also the end of this old earth, and with the Second Coming of Christ, which with many other great events of world history ushers in a new earth made for a new people of Jews and Gentiles.

*I-I: "Remember My Bonds" from the Apostle Paul in Colossians 4:18 (KJV) is first of all a reminder that the Life of Paul from the worldly perspective, martyred as a criminal on a cross much like Jesus, was a no-win situation.*

Ephesians and Colossians are like two-sides of the same coin, both being a summary, more like a precis, of 10 previous letters from the Apostle Paul. The bottom line verse {Colossians 4:18}--"Remember My Bonds"--is also in many ways the bottom line message of the Life and Letters of Paul. It summarizes both all the doctrinal teachings of Paul under the seven ONES of Ephesians and Colossians as well as summarizing the life of Paul with a cross to bear for the sake of Christ and Christians of the first century.

### 1. The Apostle Paul was human.

He knew he about to die when he wrote "remember my chains" or "bonds"; and this dominant leader of First Century Christianity, who had already written so many letters under the inspiration of God that would become books of the Bible, wanted to write his own Epitaph. "Remember my bonds" (Colossians 4:18 KJV), Paul wrote in is own shaky hand:

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1. Now this does not mean that democracy of the United States will lose before the end of the history of this old earth. What we like to think of as "The American Democratic Faith" will possibly win, or at least not lose because when the vast army at the end of the Falling Away and of time, and led by Satan and the son of perdition, come against Jerusalem and the camp of the saints, God through Christ, and Christ at the Second Coming, intervenes to destroy that army and to close out history as we know it on this old earth! You have to know that, according to Jesus in Matthew 24:14, the end comes after the Gospel is preached to every nation {see THE END online at [www.bible-combibleman.com/TheENDPartI.html](http://www.bible-combibleman.com/TheENDPartI.html) and [www.biblecombibleman.com/TheENDPartII.html](http://www.biblecombibleman.com/TheENDPartII.html)}; and in spite of the falling away conditions of churches today in America {some like to call these churches and denominations The Church in America}, you must recognize the part America has played in the past as they have spread the Gospel all over the world, and even somewhat imperfectly today as can a church already marred by the Falling Away.

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"This salutation by my own hand--Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen." (Colossians 4:18 NJKV)

This personalized Epitaph close this one letter of Colossians, and likewise was referenced in other letters. Paul, always very self-aware, knew that he was allowing himself this one human weakness; yet he wanted to be remembered on earth among Christians, and even in this fleeting display of mortal frailty {**the need to be remembered**}, Paul desired to turn the bonds of a criminal from the perspective of the Roman world, and by the way of the majority of the Jews, into a positive thing for the glory of God and the furtherance of the primary teachings of Christianity. It is jumping far ahead of the introductory presentation, but in order to have some initial concept of the latter part of the Epitaph, that is of the furtherance of doctrine, you must briefly consider without complete exegesis, that waiting for later, the Seven Ones of Ephesians 4:1-6.

"I, therefore, the prisoner {prisoner of course is another way to talk about the bonds or chains}, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond {see right back to bonds, this time the "bond of peace"} of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:1-6)

NOTE: You will see references time and time again during this study of the Life and Letters of Paul since Ephesians {and the twin of Colossians} are summaries of all the teachings from Christ, God, and the Old Testament that Paul received and on which he wrote; and beyond that the Seven Ones here {another form of bonds, if you would}, are in turn a summary of both Ephesians and the 10 books Paul wrote before this. YOU WOULD NEED NO OTHER BELIEFS, TEACHINGS AND DOCTRINES FROM GOD THAN THESE SEVEN, IF YOU UNDERSTOOD THEM IN YOUR HEART AND MIND. To spiritualize somewhat, if you had these same 7 bonds on your heart and mind, you would be well on your way to working "out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

2. "Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives" (Ephesians 4:3 NEV)

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The bonds of a Roman prisoner had been a controlling influence in his life for years; and these shackles of a criminal, negative symbols of restraint from the continued preaching of the gospel all over the known Roman world and of restraint from assisting the churches he founded, Paul obviously desired to make these bonds into a more positive testimony, writing of bonds the most unique and profound theme of his books, "Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives" (Ephesians 4:3 NEV). About these "bonds" Paul writes in the letter of Ephesians; and "remember my bonds" he writes shortly thereafter, encouraging the Christians at Colosse **{of course in Colossians}** to also read the earlier Epistle to Ephesus.

The surprise to the serious student of the life and letters of the Apostle Paul, is not so much that he turned the figurative word "bonds" into something good; but that he indulged himself in Colossians and other books with a public declaration about imprisonment **{how many preachers would you invite to your pulpit who had been in prison}**, a fact that made many of even the churches he founded, especially at Ephesus the place of his longest missionary ministry, had turned them off because of the stigma of imprisonment. **{The more worldly in philosophy of the churches had the most trouble with these bonds of captivity in a Roman prison, the "world" from the Bible being a concept that is also large in the teachings and writings of Paul as well as the Apostle John, always a background concept and assumption in the teachings from Jesus as the Apostles, and therefore a doctrinal concept from Paul that we must come back to later.1}**

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### *1-2: Paul was a Fighter.<sup>2</sup>*

Like the Scots of Brave Heart, the Apostle Paul was a fighter. Since Paul was a fighter and most often a winner even from a worldly perspective or philosophy,

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1. Just so you have a preliminary concept to work with before we get to all 14 letters of the Apostle Paul, and with reinforcement from the Apostle John, you should know that: (1) what summarizes the teachings of the Apostle Paul on the relationship of a Christian to the world is "in the world, not of the world"; and (2) the Apostle John in a good summary of what the world is, and how it is contrasted to what is godly, or comes from God the Father, is found in I John 2:15-17:

**"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (I John 2:15-17)**

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the bonds of a criminal had to embarrass him. Everyone knows that a fighter can hardly fight with his hands and feet tied. Paul had been a Hebrew of the Hebrews in his own nation as well as being by birth a Roman citizen; he had studied at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most scholarly of Jews. Paul had fought against Christians before conversion, and against the very first century foothold of the church in the Roman Empire and world, traveling to many cities of the Roman Empire to put those in prison bonds that claimed association with the name of Jesus of Nazareth the Christ.

"For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh {another phrase Paul uses to describe the world and the philosophy of the world}, though I might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ." (Philippians 3:3-7)

Paul during the missionary journeys constantly fought with his fellow Jews and Romans in order to spread the Gospel of Christ, sometimes literally as when he was beaten for the faith, even left one time for dead.

"Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I receive forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was ship wrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters; in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness--besides the other things; what comes

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2. Paul was also extremely tolerant. Later in other Bible Sessions, we must look at the tolerance of the Apostle Paul as in today's culture in many instances he is given a bad rap, as for example on gap issues and the status of women in the churches, even on allowing deacons and pastors to have previous divorces. However Jesus Himself has been given a bad rap on demanding that divorce is a sin, and it is Jesus who reminded us that as the world persecuted him so they would persecute His disciples also, that we were no better than our Master.

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upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches." (II Corinthians 11:22-28)

*1-3: In a last letter to his own son in the faith, Timothy, the epitaph of "remember my bonds" is more in the form of "I have fought a good fight..." (II Timothy 4:6,7)*

**"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith..." (II Timothy 4:6,7 KJV)**

1. "Remember My Bonds" was a reminder to first century Christians, indeed to all Christians of all times who read and study the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul, that Christians must rise above the worldly philosophy which saw his bonds as a stigma. Letting love of the Father (I John 2:15-17), replace the love of the world in such matters as "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life".

2. "Remember My Bonds" was a reminder not only that His life had been determined and directed by and large by the will and direction of God, "I have finished my course"; but in spite of all these non-winning situations as the world sees a life, Paul had: (1) fought a good fight, fighting not to win but to fight the good fight of faith; and (2) in spite of all oppositions, Paul had "kept the faith". The faith as Paul used here in II Timothy is very similar to the same as the Seven ONEs or bonds of Ephesians 4:4-6.

If you have been to Scotland or studied Scottish history, in particular of the Highlands, perhaps you are familiar with the saying from that country of, "I wish the Brits would leave us alone, so we can fight in peace." One might say that Paul strived to fight in peace; but nonetheless always and in all places, in prison and out of prison, Paul fought against all internal and external odds, the good fight of faith.

4. "Remember My Bonds" was a unifying theme of the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul, in Philippians 1:7-17 alone the word "bonds" is mentioned 4 times.

5. "Remember My Bonds" was both an epitaph and a plea for prayer. By now, Paul knew in the history of his life and as he had expressed to his son Timothy

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in II Timothy that he was about to die the death of a martyr. {It is not recorded in the Bible, but tradition of first century Christian history has it that both Peter and Paul was killed by the Roman government on the same day in Rome on crosses.} Paul's death, even like his life, he passionately desired to be for the glory of God. If W. O. Carver properly summarized the subject matter of Ephesians in the title of his commentary as THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE CHRISTIAN CALLING, Paul made a greater generalization as with "Remember My Bonds", it included: (1) "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21); (2) a plea for supporting prayer from the churches and Christians (Philippians 1:19,20); (3) bonds leading to the major 7 doctrines of the Bible in the Seven ONES; (4) completion of a good fighting course of action directed by God; and (5) a life counter to the ways of doings of the world, and the philosophy of the world, a life controlled and directed by things of God the Father that would last forever.

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### *I-4: Some Obvious Case Histories of the Falling Away.*

Case History #1: The Presbyterian Church. Recent cases where the world of the Falling Away has won out over the love of the Father. A Classic CASE of denominational Falling Away approximately 15 years ago was when the Presbyterian Church {really denomination<sup>1</sup>} came so far in the intolerance toward sound doctrine as to actually make a vote on whether Christ should actually be claimed as the only way of salvation.

Case History #2: Hollywood Baptist Church in Rome, Georgia as you saw recently on Dateline.

At the Hollywood Baptist Church in Rome Georgia, and as recently presented on Dateline, where the youth pastor became involved sexually with the wife of a church deacon, killing the deacon in order to covet what the deacon had in the way of a wife. Here the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

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1. "Church" or "ecclesia" are we will see later in the teachings of Paul has 3 distinct meanings: (1) most usages of the word church apply to a local congregation by location like the church at Ephesus, or at Rome, or the FBC at Amarillo, Texas; (2) there are quite a few usages especially in Ephesians and Hebrews where church is a living body of Christians of all time and places; and (3) there is even one time when "assembly" or "ecclesia"--the literal meaning of church--refers to a group that persecuted Christians. It always stretches the credulity of the Bible, however to apply any of these meanings to a denomination. Denominations are strickly man-made, not God ordained and established organizations.

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life became very visible as first adultery was committed often on the part of couples, and then finally murder on the part of the youth pastor.

Case History #3: In the village of Cloudcroft, New Mexico, twice in approximately 35 years at the First Baptist church and more recently at the Church<sup>1</sup> of Christ. 3 men of God who loved God and were "not of this world" were killed in reputations and careers by church members who itching ears beliefs, and sometimes from the standpoint of long-standing customs and traditions of over 40 years of adulthood {remember the Falling has been going on at least since 1968, and will last from 40-80 years}, caused them to unmercifully and violently throw out pastors.

Last week, the termination of the pastoral ministry of the pastor of the Church of Christ at Cloudcroft, NM after only one year of service, for doctrinal issues where unsound doctrine through custom and tradition {ways of the world} won out over current sound teachings of the Bible. Obviously love of the Father had departed as there ceased to be any Christian love at all, as the churches exhibited less Christian behavior toward employees than companies would dare to do. In at least one case, the pastor and his family with one week notice was kicked out of the church and parsonage, with no place to live and no income. Two very similar removals of the pastor at the FBC of Cloudcroft over doctrinal issues, one Cyrus Fletcher of approximately 35 years ago and seven years ago a faithful pastor, Hugh Rogers, of over 17 years, both removed to heap out sound Bible teachers and in order to heap in itching ears Bible teachers.

Case History #4: At the Lexington Park Baptist Church in Lexington Park, Maryland where the loss of doctrinal moorings such as on evangelism, "the outreach for the unreached", departed from the foundation history of the 1950'. No spirit in worship could be detected as in the foundational days when I served as youth pastor. A secular educational program wagged the dog instead of the tail; worldly and established people ran the church instead of the pastor; and tolerance for all beliefs had gone so far that, in the words of Peter Marshall, "The people stood for nothing and fall for anything."

And it would be possible to go on and on with current examples, illustrating how deeply into the Falling Away are churches and church members. Many churches you know of where "Den of Thieves" and "Hideout for Bad Habits" has become

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1. Again an improper usage of the word church.

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the norm instead of the exception. One of the best gauges of how far intolerance for sound doctrine has gone, is the vast number of cases where you hear that the church has run off their pastor.

*1-5: THE CALL FOR SEPARATION, the individual Christian from the Falling Away Church Group.*

Sorry to encourage more splits<sup>1</sup>, but it is the words of God in II Timothy 3:5, "from such persons turn away", that advice you thusly in order to prevent yourself being a victim of the Falling Away. The "church" and all Christians are losing the battle, and according to the Word of God from Jesus in Matthew 24:12 and Paul in II Timothy 4:3,4, this loss is inevitable.

The world is winning out over Love of the Father on the group or church level; however individual Christians on the individual level can still minimize the bad controlling influences of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and individually during the Falling Away working out their own salvations, like Paul, ending the course of life with great gain that abides forever.

2. How to minimize the influence of the love of the world in the individual Christian life, fighting the good fight of faith like the Apostle Paul.

**"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might {in these case histories where the church body or majority of the church are well into the 5 stages of the Falling Away, you will find little expression of even a desire to "be strong in the Lord"--many strong physically and in status and reputation, even strong in net worth and appearance but not in the LORD God.} (Ephesians 6:10)**

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1. Actually if you as a Bible believer and practitioner heed seriously the admonition of II Timothy 3:5 to "And from such people turn away", it is conceivable that you can do it without complete separation from your present church. Seems like it must depend on whether you can go to the same church with the boasters, proud, lovers of money and sex, {those bad habits of II Timothy 3:1-9}, and still avoid them; or also on how extensive those bad behaviors are in your local church. When Paul set up the Christian principle of "in the world, but not of the world", he also made it clear in I Corinthians 5:9-13 that the requirements for fellowship with fellow church members was much more stringent than of fellowship with those "of the world".

"I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world." (I Corinthians 5:9,10)

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**"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Ephesians 6:11)**

The fight is against the world order run by Satan and Satan himself; and apart from wisdom and strength in the Lord, we are not smart enough to be a match against such an experienced, powerful, and subtle enemy. **{He, remember, is a fallen angel.}** And true although "He that is in us is greater than he who is in the world " **{in the world order}**, we must do something and do it often and aggressively: (1) first "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"; and then (2) second **PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD**, that is the only way you can stand, and having done all stand, against the wiles of the devil.

It is not to say that there are not Christian and spiritual fights against other people **{children of this world who are often wiser than the children of light}**, knowing always that "they who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12); and even fellow church members and Christians can be "despisers of good" (II Timothy 3:3) when good Christian behavior sheds light on their unsound doctrines of Christian living.

3. On the group level of churches, denominations, and Christianity inevitably the Falling Away will win on the group level, not the same as for every Christian individually.

What really has been going on in all the current case histories of churches above is what Jesus said about the Falling Away, "As sin will abound, the love of many will grow cold." (Matthew 24:12) Keep the love of the Father in first place above the love of the world by mediation, prayer, and practice on the seven doctrinal ONES of the Bible.

4. Working out your own salvation with fear and trembling leads to the greater gain over "cares of this world" and "the deceitfulness of riches", leading to treasures in heaven that abide forever.

5. Start right now with a serious, comprehensive, and prayerful study and practice of the Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul. This is doctrine for life and living, not for the accumulation of knowledge alone. You are going to be amazed at the depth of the writings of the Apostle Paul that you have never seen before, what members at the Hollywood Baptist Church did not see, of the churches at Cloudcroft have never seen as a larger group. Truths that are

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part of the great salvation of God called the One Baptism, truths that could have prevented these cases of complete Falling Away.

**"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today', lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:12,13)**

*1-6: When you "spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the spirit gives" (Ephesians 4:3), you are not only exercising the only means of real unity between all Christians, that of the Seven ONEs; but you are providing unity {more integrity} to your own life by actually putting on the whole armor of God.*

You will notice, if you look carefully at the armor of God that is to be put on, there is a one to one match with the Seven ONEs of the major doctrines of the Bible.

**"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4-6)**

1. The only grounds for real unity among all Christians is an inherent unity given by the Holy Spirit of God, never from man made organizations or movements<sup>1</sup>. and it is based on the 7 Major doctrines of the Bible: one church body of all Christians, the approximately 20 times in the New Testament where the other 100 it is not talking about the local church; one Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of all Christians; one faith, both a personal process and a statement of beliefs; one baptism, one salvation; and one God the Father, first the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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1. Some leaders in each generation have falsely hoped to provide unity among all Christians by physically getting them together in one organization, but the unity of which Paul writes in Ephesians 4:3 is an inherent unity given only by the Spirit of God. More recent efforts at unity of Christians has been the Community Church movement, and churches dropping the word "Baptist" from their name in order to take up the name community church. All this does is pick up attendees with few convictions. It is good to have a group for evangelization; but in reality what it does in most cases in like the Community Church in Colorado Springs where Ted Haggard fell from Christian faith while head of the National Evangelistic Association.

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*I-7: It requires Bible convictions like above in Hebrews 3:12,13 to explain the “why” and “how” of such impressive and talented young adults in their fall away from the Living God. {At the same time it is a falling away from the sound doctrine of the Bible and of Christ, it is what Paul calls in the 5 stages of the Falling Away of II Timothy 4:4,5, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine....”}*

Real church and denominational CASES like those listed below, in the words of the Prosecutor in Rome Georgia that such murder and adultery among very active church members is hard to understand and explain is simple to explain from the Bible. You can not see in the heart of an individual church member, total church, or denomination the Falling Away process of “because sin shall abound, the love of many will wax cold.”<sup>1</sup> That sin has been abounding in our environment for the last few years is self evident by looking at one obvious sin in the world and among church members, that is the sin of taking God's name in vain.<sup>2</sup> It is jarringly repeated time and time again, and almost casually for emphasis, by hundreds of actors on TV; and it would seem that writers know no other way to make a point without the taking of God's name in vain. So prevalent and commonly accepted is this still condemned violation of one of the 10 commandments of God, that there exists an abbreviation for in *OMG*.

By the time it becomes apparent that church members and churches have become intolerant toward sound doctrine (“will not endure sound doctrine”, II Timothy 4:4,5), abounding sin and love waxing cold in the heart of the CASES below has invisibly already taken place. In other words, it is too late when it becomes visible in actions of unsound doctrine, as for example at the extreme of murder and adultery. **{There are many less subtle acts of unsound doctrine, like for example in hate of the heart or adulterous lust of the heart, running off pastors of sound doctrine and heaping up pastors and other Bible teachers of “itching ears” teachings, taking God's name in vain, and many of the bad habits of church members cautioned against in II**

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1. Jesus about the Falling Away and last events of this old earth just before the Second Coming.
  2. The Bible still reads in Exodus 20:7 that God will not hold anyone guiltless that takes His name in vain. When the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth, the work that the Holy Spirit came to do on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ--that is, to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment--the world, especially the world of church members will feel less guilty of this sin as there will be little or no accountability to God for judgment. Sometimes it makes you wonder if that withdrawal has already happened!

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**Timothy 3:2-9.1}** And by the time, church members have come to the 4th stage of the Falling Away<sup>2</sup>, "the turning away from truth"

The time came in the life of each of these churches and real case histories of America below where many individuals departed from living doctrines of the Bible and the living God; in fact, if you really knew these churches and were willing to overcome community concepts about "good people", you would probably recognize that these fallen members are only representative of the majority in those particular churches. You might say these are the ones that got caught, or rather the ones that could not longer cover up their in their hideout of bad habits. Years ago when SunGrist\_Bible wrote blogs on Ted Haggard, trying to make clear that the falling away of the once leading evangelist of churches in America, according to Falwell, was only representative of the Falling Away by the majority of his fellow church members and the denominational movement of Community churches. To put it bluntly the love of the world has overcome the love of the Father in the same churches where certain members have overtly been caught. It continues with the twin influences of the Falling Away and the continuing mystery of the rising tide of lawlessness and sin, to more lust of the flesh, more lust of the eyes, and more pride of life into abundant fruition in the life of church members.

1. Over a period of years while active in Hollywood Baptist Church, and in spite of active church activities, they became victims of the Great Apostasy called the Falling away by "an evil heart of unbelief" in The Living God.
2. In spite of religion and church attendance, they departed from the Living God. The ease and repetitive nature of the current way the name of God is taken in vain, and allows the writers and actors to publicly on TV take the name of God in vain, indicates among many other factors that a little god in the mind only has been substituted for the great and holy Living God.

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1. Paul while still alive cautioned church members to stay away from the bad apples of church membership such as men who obviously loved themselves, were proud and boasters...and on and on in II Timothy 3:1-9. See the book HIDE-OUT FOR BAD HABITS from SunGrist\_Bible and on [www.biblecombibleman.com](http://www.biblecombibleman.com) for details on these warnings.
  2. Check out the 5 stages of the Falling Away from II Timothy 4:3,4: (1) intolerance toward sound doctrine; (2) purpose driven "desires" replace Christ and Spirit driven motivations; (3) the heaping up of Bible teachers and preachers with itching ears, a two step process of first preachers of sound doctrine must be heaped out and then preacher and pastors of "itching ears teachings" can be heaped in; (4) wholesale turning away from truth itself, almost impossible to conceive of as the case in churches and denominations, but true; and (5) finally most Christians and church members are turned into fables.

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3. Casting stones, no; because we can look and say "but by the grace of God, there go I {not superficially being satisfied with only this as an answer or more like in most churches today as an excuse}, exhorting ourselves every single day with the great truth, assurances, and doctrines of the Bible.

4. Sin and the world will enter your life, your church every time the doors are opened so that there is always the pressure to "be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"--alias the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--and the self-exhortations through doctrine and prayer, must be just as great as is the relentlessness of the world and sin!

"...lest any of you become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

And you have probably noticed that all of these last quotes are summarizing quotes from the books of the Apostle Paul, so that while you were being introduced from the Bible on how to live sound doctrine, you were learning about the Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul.

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*I-8: Sin is Abounding in American Life and in Church Life, obvious Signs of the Falling Away from God, Christ, and the Bible.<sup>1</sup>*

1. The sin<sup>2</sup> of taking God's name in vain is becoming more and more an accepted practice to the extent that any day now we might find *OMG* in our dictionaries. This is just about the worse sin there is as it indicates both no real respect for the Living God nor love for this Our Father in heaven. Right here you can see immediately why Jesus taught that love for the Father during the last days of the Falling Away would be inversely proportional to the increase in sin. Sin goes up and love for the Father goes down. How can you measure it since both sin

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1. If you will study the book of Hebrews closely, you will notice that Falling Away is not from a lack of church attendance, but rather from an increase in lack of faith in God, Christ, and the Bible. In the previous e-mail study of "Jeremiah and Prophecy" we learned that backsliding, closely related to the Falling Away, is a unique word from Jeremiah and refers to how the majority of God's own people, while active in Temple worship, departed from the Living God and from His fountain of salvation. No, please do not count on church attendance at your local church as a means of salvation; for no matter how faithful to God, Christ, and the Bible, that building will not save you!
  2. There is no real effort to prove the common existence in society and church life of these signs, only to present them. If you are going to believe it, you are going to believe it! And if not you, no doubt, have already moved into the 4th stage of the Falling Away, where you are doing a wholesale "turning away from truth" (II Timothy 4:3,4)

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and love for the Father are often more invisible than visible. {Sin like in the case of the couples in the Hollywood Baptist Church was invisible for months and years before it showed up in overt acts of adultery and murder, but before that it was invisible in "lust" which Jesus says is also a violation of the commandments.} You can count on the fact that many more of the church members were violating these commandments internally than were visible, and still are! Unfortunately, even after initial regeneration {the new birth} the evil spirit remains in the heart of the believer, that spirit of which Pastor James writes in James 4:5, "The spirit within us lusteth to envy." Even before church members blame Satan for abounding sin in their heart and life, they should look inward at the human spirit that so easily and quickly lusts and covets to envy. Obviously the youth pastor at Hollywood envied the wife of the deacon, even telling him just before the stabbing to death with a knife, that he "wanted what you have."

2. The sin of divorce is abounding in society and churches. Years ago in our churches, the milestone was passed of over 50% of church members being divorced. {This is not a fatal sin to the extent of no salvation, and certainly not a reason to be kicked out of a church as some denominations believe; however it is a sin that must be recognized as a sin, and confessed as a sin to God through Christ by the divorcees, before there can be any forgiveness by God and the cleanses of "all unrighteousness."}

3. The sin of homosexuality<sup>1</sup> is abounding in society and invading the churches to the extent that some denominations now allow gays and lesbians to be pastors. In fact in that marvelous treatment of the sins of civilizations of Romans 1, homosexuality is given as one of the main signs that any society has "refused to honor God as God", thereby God gives them up.

**"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting..." (Romans 1:28)**

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1. All these doctrinal convictions especially about "sin" and what is sound and unsound in doctrine, what is or is not "itching ears" Bible teachings are only introduced in this first Bible session. Most of them come from the Apostle Paul and will be discussed more thoroughly as we come to the individual 14 books from the Apostle Paul. Also, especially on the teachings and sin of divorce, the teachings of Jesus will be used for backup to the writings of the Apostle Paul. That was another fact in the life of the Apostle, he was careful to keep all His writings consistent with the teachings of his acknowledged Lord and Master.

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4. The sin of truth "cover up" is an abounding sin today in American society and church life. You know what I mean, in education, in government, in business, and in religion cover up has been shown, about the same time as the economic practice, to be a common practice among all national leaders. The stress on appearance over reality, of impression over truth, and the public relations of ad propaganda has lead thousands and millions of Americans into the loss or minimization of their retirements. It is a contagious sin. As the churches stress appearance and impression over reality and truth, so goes the rest of the nation in education and government and business.<sup>1</sup> Hopefully, you are not saying, what were they covering up, and where was the sin? The cover up was of greed, and the abounding sin was a nation wide preference for dishonesty over truth.

5. That brings us to another abounding sin in American society and churches, that of a lack of truth that runs all the way from lying and dishonesty to in the words of Elton Trueblood, "intellectual honesty"<sup>2</sup>. Paul chose in the giving of the 5 stages of the Falling Away to call it "a turning away from truth". It is the ultimate in self-denial of the sin, without confession and forgiveness, in your personal life and in that of your church!

**"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine {intolerance toward sound doctrine}, but according to their own desires {a movement is well under way in churches to replace purpose driven Spirit and Christ with purpose driven "desires"}, because they have itching ears {pastors, Bible teachers, and church members have itching ears that desire to selectively hear only what pats them on the back}, they will heap up for**

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1. Once again this does not have to be proven. You read about it in the news at about the same time so many large companies had revealed the cover ups of their financial losses, often time caused by greed and deceit, also school systems and local state and city governments were doing the same, and even educational systems were admitting huge retirement payments to select teachers. What were they covering up, essentially "greed"
  2. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION by David Elton Trueblood is a textbook used in many colleges and seminaries to teaching a Philosophy of Religion course, a subject more of Christian Apologetics than of Christian Evidences. Trueblood was a Quaker and for years Professor of Philosophy at Earlham. Please get your copy right now as it, with other conservative books not on the elite list of fundamentalists, will continue to disappear as fundamentalists spread their control over the Southern Baptist bookstores and Convention. At the same time, you will want to pick up such good commentary sets as THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY and Carroll's AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE. Although Carroll started Southwestern Seminary and the commentaries were his lectures, fundamentalists as they were also killed reputations of professors and other sound Bible teachers like at Baylor, were reluctantly leading their followers away from books by both Carroll and F.F. Bruce. Especially have they replaced to two former leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention on the book of Revelation and eschatology, that is Ray Summers in WORTHY IS THE LAMB and THE MEANING AND MESSAGE OF REVELATION.

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**themselves teachers** {this is a grassroots movement in all the churches where church members heap out pastors of sound doctrine, faithful in the Word and the preaching of the whole counsel of God, and heap in these itching ears teachers that will soothe their sins}; **and they will turn their ears away from the truth** {the fatal 4th stage of the Falling Away where American creativity and initiative finds so many ways to replace the truth of the sound doctrines of the Bible for lack of truth}, **and be turned into fables.** {this is the end result of the Falling Away, the Roman Catholics did it years ago, and the Mormons did it with a substitution of 4 unsound Bibles for the known Word of God, the Bible.1}

**NOTE:** That will preach as we preacher-boys use to say at Ouachita Baptist, Baylor, and Southwestern Seminary. And if you want to study the Life and Letters of Paul apart from such preaching, you had better remove the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul from your Christian Bible; for the very nature of the writings of Paul, as Word of God--divine in origin, absolute in authority, sufficient in message, and high fidelity in communication--is to preach through teaching. Paul is always strong on application to real life. He was a scholar of the Old Testament and of Hebrew and Roman learning, but also he was a tentmaker that supported himself during the missionary journeys so that he would not be a burden to the churches. You are advised to put aside this study of the Life and Letters of Paul right now in the first session if you are not willing to see (1) teaching in good preaching, and (2) preaching in good teaching. **PREACHING THE BIBLE** as suggested years ago by Andrew Blackwood, where teaching and preaching go hand in hand and always based on support of Scriptures, unfortunately with all other sound Christian doctrine has fallen by the way side during the Falling Away. What many call preaching and teaching is more in the "itching ears" category of that stage of the Falling Away, and no longer can you count either on the

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1. Extreme American concepts of tolerance have often kept us from the aggressive statement of sound doctrines and teachings of the Bible. About the Roman Catholics Falling Away during the Dark Ages, Paul writes in I Timothy 4:1-3:

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times {second half of the last days that run from the coming of the Holy Spirit to the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from earth} some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." (I Timothy 4:1-3)

About the Mormons who claim both a false Gospel {"another of a different kind"} and 4 Bibles not recognized by Christians, they have two curses from the Bible on them: (1) the preaching of another Gospel not from God, as they will tell you of a "reformed" Gospel that they invented; and (2) the curse of adding to and taking away, with their 4 other Bibles, from the Word of God.

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majority opinion of church members for sound doctrine nor on the church leaders who have substituted a Popular Gospel of Prosperity. {Please see "Popular Preachers of Prosperity" on [www.biblecombibleman.com](http://www.biblecombibleman.com) .}

6. The abounding sin of I Corinthians 14:36, with the related sins<sup>1</sup> of priority for Tongues over Prophecy<sup>2</sup>, where churches and other groups take the stance that the Word of God came to them only or that the Word of God came out of their group.<sup>3</sup> That is one way to get unity among a large body of Christians, but not recommended in the Bible; and certainly not part of the teachings of Paul in Ephesians as a means to output maximum effort to promote peace, based on unity, among Christians. It would almost seem like we must again wield the sword, that is the Bible as the Sword of the Spirit, in order to get this peace and unity among Christians. At least, it is part of our fight in spiritual warfare!

7. The abounding sin of fighting against "flesh and blood" by fundamentalists that split the Southern Baptist Convention into 3 denominations, killed the careers and reputations of many pastors and professors, conservatives but labeled by fundamentalists, in order to justify their bad behavior as moderates. Such men as Criswell, Rogers, and Stanley--all originally from other denominations but lusting after the larger churches of the SBC--in efforts to propagandize us that had grown up in southern baptist churches, colleges, and seminaries--even RAs and youth camps--excused THE FIGHT as against "principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:10), falsely with a cover-up of untruth labeling these men of God as "moderates", claiming it was a battle of principles on verbal literalism when in reality, as we know who lived through it, that it really was a battle for literalism of the Scofield Notes on eschatology. You know it too, if you are willing to be intel-

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1. The sin of neglect of the democratic nature of Prophets {the Ascended Christ gave prophets at the same time as pastors and teachers, evangelists, and apostles (Ephesians 4:11) and lopsided preaching and teaching, unlike in I Corinthians 14:3 where "prophecy" {preaching} is for "edification, exhortation, and comfort"; and preaching as a sin of the Falling Away has become acceptable without the 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof {how long has it been since you heard any reproof and correction?}, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'" (II Timothy 3:16)
  2. Please see "Prophecy versus Tongues" on [www.biblecombibleman.com](http://www.biblecombibleman.com) as part of the "Jeremiah and Prophecy III" Appendix Bible Study.
  3. In the case of the fundamentalists, the attitude became obvious as they with Scofield and Darby were the only ones who knew about a rapture before the Second Coming and a "one thousand years" other than the long period of time between the coming and withdrawal of the Holy Spirit taught by Summers and others. And although almost any religious group tends to become clannish in that they think of their own group as exclusively Christian, only 3 denominations--Roman Catholicism, Mormons, and Church of Christ--have carried the abounding sin to the extreme of salvation is only available--that is, only their members are Christians--to their denominations.

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lectually honest! Many of the present leaders in the Convention can not and dare not admit this as the Convention is dying, fighting and a good spirit of evangelism as testified to in church history and the history of denominations, just like love of the Father and love of the world and other sins, can not profitably co-exist. Many of these fundamentalists today, in their continuing efforts of the Falling Away to "turn away from truth" will not even admit **{another sign of self-denial}** that W. A. Criswell, acknowledged leader of the fundamentalists, said to Bill Moyer in a television interview that "we are going to keep fighting until one side **{fundamentalists and moderates}** or the other wins".

The fighting practiced by the Apostle Paul was based on principles and doctrines, and a fight for truth against the lies, half-truth, and deception of Satan; and it was not a fight against flesh and blood as was the fight of the fundamentalists against the so-called moderates of the Convention whose reputations and careers they destroyed. The example of fighting advised against the Falling Away in this Bible session is also against the principles, doctrines, against Satan, lack of truth, lack of love of God the Father, and against worldly philosophies and behavior in the churches of the SBC and of America. It is a fight against which we lost a major battle when the fundamentalists took control of the Convention. It is a fight that we can not win as a group only as individuals {in other words Christianity and the church will not win against the Falling Away}; but on which we must continue to fight based on principalities and doctrines until Christ Comes again, and then the win is total and the full extent of the victory can be known!

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*1-9: Love of the Father is Invisible being pushed out as sin floods into the Christian and church life.*

1. Love of the Father just like love of the "world" can not coexist as predominate in the life and church at the same time as habitual sin. In the name of reality and truth, overlooking the excuses of most Christians and churches today to make excuse for sin, this is HABITUAL sin, HABITUAL Love of the Father and Habitual Love of the world. A trick of Satan, and you will hear it often today from Mr. Average Christian and church leaders of "we have our faults as we are sinners like all the world, and at least we are saved sinners, trying to do our best" **{this has the appeal of American democracy and extreme toleration, but can you imagine what Paul and John would have replied?}**; No, false premise and conclusion, habitual sin, like habitual love and worldliness, is not the same as

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being a sinner by nature and an occasional sinner. With the usage of "habitual", we are talking about a pattern of life, consistent, and each week, not an occasional sin or sinful nature that still lives in the heart after initial regeneration.

2. The extreme example of an intolerance for habitual sin is seen as near the END, just before the Second Coming of Christ and before the completion of the church's Falling Away, God withdraws the Holy Spirit from earth {II Thessalonians 2:7}. The Bible teaches that habitual sin in the life of a believer "grieves" God the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> {"**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**"<sup>2</sup> (Ephesians 4:30)} When the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, Satan is released during the Falling Away to do his worst; and the continuing teachings of II Thessalonians about these end times<sup>3</sup> is that at the same time, there will be (1) the appearance on the world scene of the son of perdition, and (2) a peaking in the rapid rise of the mystery of the rising tide of sin and lawlessness.

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1. For more on the subject, go to Ralph Herring's marvelous book, one also no doubt on the hit list for fundamentalists, of GOD BEING MY HELPER. Also see "Satan Versus the Holy Spirit" on [www.biblecombibleman.com](http://www.biblecombibleman.com).
  2. Redemption is just one of the words used in the Bible, especially by Paul, to describe "salvation" or the preaching of the cross. During a close look at the 14 letters of Paul, we will see this and many other words of the cross of Christ and salvation like reconciliation, justification, and the atonement. The Bible Sessions like in previous free and online Bible course, for example "Jeremiah and Prophecy" will be supplemented with an Appendix, archived step by step online on the PROGRESS page and made available to you free as a PDF download after completion of the 2 year course. In the mean time if you chose, and once again you must rescue these books and the future of such conservative books from the fundamentalists, by buying your copy of THE APOSTOLIC PRECHING OF THE CROSS by Leon Morris. The "turning away from truth", especially on eschatology which started back as Darby, a Roman Catholic and Irish priest, set a wrong timing for "rapture", and continued as Scofield, a divorced lawyer and Congregationalists pastor influenced backwoods and fundamentalists preachers {largely Bible Baptists} with his Scofield Notes correspondence course on "one thousand years"; and has been given impetus by two movements: (1) the Scofield Bible Association of Memphis Tennessee, and (2) the fundamentalists that were largely Bible Baptists before they took control over the Southern Baptist Convention.
  3. Everything happens in the ONE DAY of the LORD and Lord with the Second Coming of Christ, and Paul primarily teaches in II Thessalonians that only two things must happen before this END at the Second Coming: (1) the Falling Away, and (2) a world wide visual on the man of sin. {For more on these subjects of last things, or eschatology, see THE END on [www.biblecombibleman.com](http://www.biblecombibleman.com). }

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*1-10: "Believe and Be Baptized" is the same as the One Great Salvation of God, the One Baptism of the seven major doctrines of Ephesians 4:4-6.*

**"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (II Timothy 3:16,17)**

You will fail to see where Paul is coming from if you overlook his perspective, by the way the only correct perspective, that He was writing in all 14 of his letters, "inspired" Words from God, alias Scriptures by the inspiration of God. And therefore being Scriptures from God, based on the authority of an Apostle, then they make demands on the life of any that is a Creature of God, those demands above being summarized as (1) doctrine, (2) correction, and (3) instruction in righteousness. If you treat the study of the letters of Paul as in the category of doctoral dissertations, only a scholarly dissertation, you will miss the primary application as "profitable" for life and living. Granted they are extremely intellectual in understanding as well as spirit filled, meaty and satisfying; but the "rest of the story" is that they are profitable for life and living.

1. Doctrine {Bible teachings} for Living and Life.
2. Doctrine {Bible teachings and meat} for Eternal life with the Living God, God the Father.
3. Doctrine {Bible and Christian maturing} for learning, practice, and sharing.
4. Doctrine {Bible and something to hold onto} for making decisions of life and the church.

**NOTE: Much of this has only been listed and abbreviated to give you an overall exposure to the Life and Letters of Paul, with the implications for you and your church; before a more thorough look and exegesis of each of these 14 letters from the Apostle Paul: Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, Philippians, I and II Corinthians; I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Romans, I and II Thessalonians, and Galatians.**

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