

A photograph of a forest scene. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of trees, creating a dappled light effect on the ground. The trees are mostly green, with some brown leaves scattered on the forest floor. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

IDENTITY WARS

Revival Series 2006

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Identity Wars

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1 – IDENTITY LOST

What I want to present tonight and over tomorrow is a series of presentations I guess that are a reflection of my own journey, to understand the ways of God. And I guess you could sum up this weekend series of presentations by the verse, “My ways are not your ways, and my thoughts are not your thoughts.” What you perceive me to be is not what I am like at all, and what you read in my book, the Bible, the way you read it, you’re not actually reading what I’m trying to tell you, because of a number of issues. And we want to unpack those issues over this weekend, and hopefully as we do that, we’ll get a picture of God that is more and more beautiful.

You know there’s two ways that you can motivate people. One is to scare them half to death, and we could talk about the disasters, and all the terrible things that are happening in the world, and all the reasons that we should get our lives ready. But I think more so, that as we look into the beautiful face of Jesus, and we see how much he loves us and how much he cares for us, that we’re just drawn in by that love. And that motivates us.

In the end love is a much more powerful motivator than fear, and hopefully that is what we can do as we spend this time together. We will unpack this a little bit. Let’s just pray once more before we begin.

Father in heaven, we just pray that you would be with us as we start to take this journey, of how the human race lost their identity, and how

we've been affected by this process. We pray that you would speak to our hearts, and help us to see how much was lost, and how much the recovery involved. And we just thank you and we praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you have your Bibles turn to Matthew chapter 4, verses 8 and 9, and of course this has to do with the temptation in the wilderness. The two great kings representing their two kingdoms come together. And it climaxes in verse 8 and 9 of Matthew chapter 4. It says:

“Again the devil took him up on an exceedingly great mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if you will but fall down and worship me.’”

I'm amazed as I read this verse, at the bold-faced audacity of Satan, to say, “Look, I'm so desperate, I just need you to fall down and worship me.” He is in so much need of Christ to bow down that he just comes straight out and says it. Obviously what's going on here is that Jesus knows that His life is destined to take the path to the cross. And here Satan is offering Him an alternative. “Look you want this world. You want everything that's in it. You want the people and all these kingdoms. I will give it to you! You don't have to go to the cross! You don't need to sacrifice yourself! Just do one thing for me. Bow down, just once! It's only once! Just bow down and worship me.”

And of course, as Jesus was shown all the kingdoms of the world, Satan gave Him a sweep of those kingdoms, I'm sure that Satan made sure that what He saw was all the beautiful things of the world. He covered up certain parts of the world that represent Satan's kingdom. The crime, the discouragement, the killing, the murder, the destruction, the disease, the sickness, the earthquakes, the floods....he covered all of those things up and said, “Isn't it a beautiful world? I'll give it to you.”

But we see Jesus' response to Satan's request in verse 10:

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you Satan.’” Away with you! “For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.’”

He said, I have not come to claim your kingdom. I have come to establish My kingdom, and My kingdom is nothing like your kingdom. That is what we want to look at in our presentation tonight, the difference between Satan’s kingdom and God’s kingdom, and how that affects us.

If we think about this world and the way that it operates, and the things that are involved in this world, I want you to consider this next statement. It’s an interesting statement to give you an idea of what Satan’s kingdom is really like.

It says here:

Depression and Suicide

“In her opening address, the World Health Organisation’s Director General Dr Gro Harlem stated: ...initial estimates suggest that about 450 million people alive today suffer from mental or neurological disorders.... Major depression is now the leading cause of disability globally.”

Why are so many people depressed today? Is there anyone here that hasn’t, or hasn’t had someone in their family experience depression? Feeling that it’s just too hard, that I just can’t continue anymore? Why do we get these feelings? Why does this come upon us? These are the things that we want to unpack as we look at this issue.

Just some statistics on depression and suicide. As I put these statistic together, I stopped for a moment to think about it’s implications, and it was quite startling to see where many people are in the world today

1 million suicides every year

10 to 20 million attempts every year or up to 38 attempts every minute

38 times a minute, in this world someone gets to the point where they say, It's too hard. It's not worth it. I can't....I can't maintain this process. I can't continue on in this life. Suicide in the US for males between the ages of 35-49 is the number three cause of death

And Australia's youth suicide rate is the highest in the world.

At least it was in 1998, I don't know whether it's changed since then.

Why is this so? Why are there so many people coming to this conclusion? What is it about life that is so terrible that death would be better than life?

These are the things that Satan didn't show to Christ when they were standing on the mountain. He didn't show him these kinds of statistics. He didn't show him these kinds of things. But these statistics here are a clear manifestation of living out the principles of Satan's kingdom.

We may not fully realise that this is the case, but it is indeed the case because obviously to live in God's kingdom, you would not feel like you want to end your life. To know God is to have joy and to have peace and to have the life abundant, as we are told.

So let's go back to the beginning. We were looking at some of the results that we see today. Lets go back to the beginning and unpack how Satan began his kingdom, why he began his kingdom:

Genesis 3: 4-5: It says in verse 4; Then the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

And this is the first time in Scripture, the very first time that he speaks. And these two verses here give to us the very centre of Satan's kingdom. He says here, "You will not surely die," and that you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

If we have a close look at these two statements [we can draw] some conclusions from Genesis 3: 4 & 5

But what Satan is saying to Eve? He is saying that every object in this world has a certain power in itself, that Eve, you are autonomous, you don't actually need God to survive. You can live apart from him. You may choose to live with him, you may choose to follow Him, but you don't actually need Him. "You shall not surely die." If you go against what God says, you won't die. You'll live on. God's actually afraid, and this is, this lie above every other lie, is the source of nearly all the problems that we have today. This belief in some kind of power that we have within us.

And the second conclusion that we draw from Satan's presentation to Eve, is that there are objects of power that we can acquire to more fully empower ourselves. Not only do you have power within yourself, but by acquiring more things you can become more powerful. He's saying to Eve, "Eve, you need to become a material girl!" It's in assets, you need to take hold of these things and you will become more powerful, and your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God knowing good and evil.

Don't you want that? Isn't that what you want?

Well, there's a heavy price to be paid for taking this view to light. This belief that we have some kind of life source within ourselves. Some kind of power within yourself. Let's have a look at what scripture actually says on how life really is. Where does life come from?

Look in Colossians. Colossians chapter 1 verses 16 and 17:

"For by Him (this is speaking of Christ) by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities of powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

In Him all things consist. Everything has its life source in Christ. I want you to turn to Acts chapter 17, and we'll look at verses 24 and 25.

“God who made the world and everything in it, since He is the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshiped with men’s hands as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”

Life comes from God. What makes our heart beat? God. It comes from God. You see the cells of the heart the way that they pulse. There’s no battery, there’s no hook-up power, they pulse, because God makes them pulse. God is the one that sustains us. He is the one that keeps us alive moment by moment. And we’re going to look at some more texts on this particular issue.

James 1:17 says every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights. Everything good that you experience in this life comes from God. Everything good.

Every joy, every happiness, every moment of calm and peace is a gift to us from our Heavenly Father. And when we begin to understand these things life becomes something very different. Not only physical life, does God give to us. It says in the book Steps to Christ on page 9, that God is the source of life, of wisdom, and joy. He is the source of all these things. Every time that you have a good thought about something, God has inspired that thought. Every time that you desire to express love and appreciation to someone, God has originated that thought, and you have embraced it and expressed it. As it says in Steps to Christ, p 26, Christ is the source of every right impulse. Every time you desire to do something good, it is because Christ has inspired you to do it.

There’s good news in that! People often say to me, Where is God in the world today? I say, “Did someone smile at you today? Did someone tell you that they love you today? Did someone do something nice for you today? Well, God did that for you.” Through that person. All we have in this process is a will. We have a will to decide to manifest what God impresses us to do or to manifest what Satan impresses us to do. We choose, we decide, and we get the benefit or the curse that comes from

that choice. God impresses us. We enact what He thinks and feels. We share it with somebody else. We get the blessing. Our character is developed and encouraged. Satan says something to us, we do it, he tells us to do it, we receive the consequences and our character goes in a downward direction.

This is how the Bible would present to us the way it really is. So when Satan says, "You shall not surely die," it says in John 8:44 that Satan was a liar from the beginning and he abode not in the truth. He lied. You cannot live without God. It's impossible.

I remember thinking about this principle once. And as I was walking around a lake there, I saw a mother swinging her daughter on the swing, and they were both laughing and enjoying one another's company. And the thought struck me, Jesus is the one that has given them this. Jesus is the one that allows them to enjoy one another's company. He has impressed on them the need to spend time with each other in a fun way, and they are reaping the benefits of listening to that voice. It matters not what their profession is, it matters not whether they claim to be Christian or not. The fact is that they responded to the spirit of God.

That's a big concept, isn't it?

Profession means nothing! What counts is whether we respond to the spirit of God or not. And so I thought, Wow, this is an incredible concept. You know, to feel my pulse and to feel my heart beating and to know that God Himself is keeping me alive, that when I feel good thoughts it is He that is wanting to give these thoughts to me.

Some time ago my son came running into our room early in the morning and jumped up on my bed and he threw his arms around me and said, "Daddy, I love you!" And right there Jesus said to me, "It's Me. It's Me. I wanted to tell you that I love you, so I asked your son if he could come and give you a hug for Me."

Woah!! I had to sit up and think about that for a while, even though it was very early in the morning.

Jesus wanted to tell me that He loved me. He could have done it directly, He could have done it through the Scripture, but because the God of the Bible is a God of relationships, He wanted somebody else to enjoy what He felt as well, so He put it into the heart of my son, my son responded, he comes into the room, he throws his arms around me and we both – all three of us – enjoy that moment together. Now, that’s a God that I can love.

That’s a God that I can love. The most wonderful thing to realise as we read the scripture, the most freeing thing that you will ever learn in life, is that without Jesus you can do nothing! That is the most freeing concept in the world. Once you are released from the burden of having to do something, to be something, to achieve something, then the world is before your feet. It’s yours, to let God live and through your life, and to maintain that relationship with Him.

Let me read you a couple of statements, or one statement in particular from the book, Education. Listen carefully to this, Education page 99:

Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognise the working of infinite power. Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties, and year by year continue its motion around the sun. An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. A mysterious life pervades all nature – a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit.

The same power that upholds nature is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart’s action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the

laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.

That's a powerful statement. Everything you see, everything that has life has the impress of God. It is not God, but it is His power coming out of Him to sustain everything, and of course as we think about Lucifer, wanting to establish his own kingdom. If he continually had to acknowledge that all life, all power, all wisdom, all knowledge comes from God, his kingdom is at an end.

And so he had to invent the lie that every object within the world has a certain power within itself, that energy is not, or that source of life does not come from a Person, it actually is just there. And this is the lie that is destroying the human race. Destroying each one of us.

When we look at the kingdom of God we deal with the issue of value. Everyone of us needs to know that we are valuable. And because the Bible tells us that we have nothing within ourselves, no life, no ability to originate new things. It all comes from God, He inspires everything. We just embrace it and it becomes part of us, and blesses ourselves as well as others. When we realise that, then we must see that in God's kingdom, that your value as an individual cannot be based upon what we can do and what you cannot do because we can do nothing. Your value must be based only upon the fact that God made you, that God is your Father, and that God loves you. There is no other value for us than in that. That God is our Father, we are His children, and that He loves us.

Anything outside of that will only bring depression, discouragement, and disappointment. If we try and gain value from anything else.

In Luke 12: 6 & 7, Jesus explains how God's kingdom works. The value system of the kingdom of heaven. It says here:

Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

This is a formula. Jesus says here that not one of the sparrows is forgotten by God. Of course, He can't forget the sparrows. He can't forget the ants! He can't forget the sand flies, because it's His power that is living in those creatures, and He knows where their power is, so He cannot forget the sparrow. When the sparrow falls, He knows. When someone hurts themselves, He knows. When someone is suffering pain, He feels it. He knows because it's His life source – it comes from Him.

Remember the story of the woman who had the issue of blood for 12 years, and in the midst of the crowd, she reaches out and touches the hems of Christ's garment. What did Jesus say? "I perceive that virtue has gone out from me." He knew. Life goes out and healing occurs, He knows; God knows.

So, you talk about the fact that God does not forget the sparrows, which means that God has thoughts towards the sparrows. And then He uses the word, "but" as a contrast... "the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Do you know how many hairs are on your head? I guess it varies from day to day.

What is Jesus trying to signify here? For someone to know the number of hairs on your head? What does that say about that person? They're very interested in you., they have an intimate knowledge of you. And details about you that no one else would know. Not even yourself.

"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows."

In this verse, what makes you valuable? God's thoughts towards you. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. He thinks about you, He knows where you live, He knows the thoughts you think. Psalm 139 – before you speak He knows the very words you will say. When you rise up, when you sit down, He knows where you will be next week. He knows where you were last week. He knows everything about you, and He loves you.

And as you think about that, it should start to create a sense of, "I am important. I am valuable. The God who made the heavens and the earth thinks about me!" And the more we think about the fact that He thinks about us, the more valuable we become. How much does God think about us?

Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Psalm 40:5.

How much does God think about you? What does it do when you hear these words, what does it do for you to think that God was there when you were born, there was a smile on His face, there was joy in His heard when you were born? He's watched you grow. He has plans for your life. He wants to see you enjoy life, He wants to see you prosper, He wants you to experience all the fullness that He has created. He wants you to experience the best of relationships. All these things He has planned for you. All these things He wants for you.

When you cry, He marks the tears. When you're hurt, He's there. When you're really down, there's one set of footprints in the sand. When you think about that, how does it make you feel? When you think about all the things that you're wrestling with, and all the things you're trying to achieve, and all the things you're reaching for, does it really matter? The One who made the heavens and the earth, the One that rules everything, the One that has His hand on the power switch all the time, He's the One that loves you. He's the One that has plans for you, as it says, "I have plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future." That's the God that we serve.

So, when I start to feel that things are not going to well, I remember this verse, that His thoughts toward me are more than can be numbered. And as I think about that, I'm investing in a value system that nobody can take away from me. If I invest myself in other people, if I invest myself in property, if I invest myself in land and money and knowledge

and all these things, in other people, all these things can be taken away from me. But the fact that God loves me, nobody can take that away from me. And that's where I want to find my value.

I wanted to share with you the story that God needed to share with me to help me to understand this principle of how much that He loves me. See, it's OK that I've told you all these things, and maybe some of you will feel a little warm and fuzzy about that, but it needs to go deeper than that to understand, to really believe that this is how God feels about us, and when I had this experience with my son initially, I said, "Hey, wait a minute God, You don't know me!" And then I'm going, 'What am I saying?' Of course you know me. And this was the experience, this was the day my son Michael was born. This is a picture in the hospital. And when he first came out, and I held him in my arms. My eyes locked onto his eyes. It's what I refer to as an eternal moment. You can't describe it, only those that have been there will understand. An eternal moment as I looked upon this beautiful creation. He didn't look so beautiful having just come out, but he was part of me and my wife. And he was ours, and God had given him to us. And he was looking up at me, and saying 'Hi dad, I'm here.'

And as I looked down at my son, this thought came into my mind, this boy has my nature, this could be a problem. He is stamped with a nature that is rebellious, and he could grow up and turn away from me. He could maybe choose not to want to be my friend. He may choose to turn away from me. And I said to God, I prayed a prayer right there as I held my son, I said "God I never want anything to come between me and my boy. And I just want him to know who I am." That's what I prayed. It was a very, very powerful moment.

Four years on, after that event, we were living in Queensland, I said to the Lord, a number of times, even before I became a Pastor here in Penrith, I said, "Lord, one day I'd like to move out of Sydney because it's really too much traffic. I thank a number of you here that helped me to move to Queensland, the Lord certainly blessed. And for quite a number of months I used to just walk in the forest as I was regaining my

strength after I had that health collapse. And it was about 4 years, when Michael was about 4 years of age, that I started, or the Lord started to impress me about when I first held my son. I was thinking about what God meant to me, and what I meant to Him. And as I walked along, I started remembering holding my son, and I started remembering the prayer that I prayed, "Lord, please don't let anything come between me and my son. And I just want him to know who I am." And right there at that moment, as I replayed those words in my head, it was like I heard in my mind a very distinct voice, and it said, "You remember those words? You remember what you said about your son?" And I can still remember it today as clear as a bell, I heard the voice say, "Adrian, that's how I feel about you."

I didn't know what to say. That's how You feel about me? "Adrian, I just want you to know who I am, and I don't want anything to come between you and Me because you are My son. I made you, I formed you in the womb. I made you to be Mine, so that we can enjoy one another's fellowship. And I don't want anything to come between us, and I will do whatever it takes to make sure that we are together forever."

Man, that just blew me away. Suddenly, all this stuff started surfacing, all this stuff that I had learnt over the years about how you just can't enter into a relationship with someone so holy and so good when you are so vile and so bad. I mean I could if I wanted to in front of other people. I could say "I'm not such a bad person". We've all got our lines that we can use to assure ourselves that we're OK, but when you're talking to God, that doesn't cut it. I'm saying, "God, why would you want me?" What would you see in me? Why do You waste Your time with me? You keep calling me and I keep falling. You keep drawing me back, and I keep stumbling, keep making mistakes. I'm not true to the relationship. I'm often off and doing other things, and I say "oh, sorry God." Why do You persist? "Because you're My son. You're My son. I made you. That never changes. Nothing you can do can add to that, nothing you can do can take away from that, you're My child and I love you."

And that experience, thanks to my son, has preached a most powerful sermon to me. God through my son, helped me to look at things very differently. It taught me about what's important and what matters in the Christian walk.

And so, this is the relationship that God wants to have with us, but this is the relationship that Lucifer rejected. He rejected this relationship. Here we have the verse where he says:

“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.” Isaiah 14:13

I don't know how God creates a spirit being like Lucifer, not with flesh and blood like we are, he was a spirit being. But when God spoke him into existence, or he formed him or whatever He did, there is Christ and He made Lucifer, and Lucifer was His son. And the thing that God was aware could happen, happened. Lucifer said, “I don't want a relationship with you. I want to do my own thing. I want to go my own way. I want to be my own person.” And the only problem with this is of course that even angels have no power in and of themselves. It all comes from God. That's a thought to remember when someone tries to scare you with how powerful Satan is. He's only as powerful as God allows him to be.

If you read in Revelation 13, talking about the beast with the 7 heads and 10 horns, it says it was “granted” to the beast to have power. It was given, God allowed it to happen, to help us to understand what happens when you move away from the system that God has established.

And so Satan forms a new kingdom, he designed a new kingdom. Not based on relationships, but based on achievement. He could no longer say, God is my Father, because then he would always have to say, I'm indebted to the Father. He wanted to push all that aside and say, “No, I have my own life, I have my own energy, my own intellect, my own

skills, my own abilities, and I will form my own kingdom and be my own person and be amendable to no one. “

This is the kingdom that he wants to establish. There's a kind of sadistic attraction, to be amendable to no one, to rule in your own capacity, to do your own thing and not be responsible to anybody. There's a kind of a strange attraction to that kind of kingdom, which all of us I'm sure have felt the attraction of.

It's a system that Satan has established. Look at the self-powered cycle, believing that you have power within you, and that's what keeps you alive. And this is the problem that you have to deal with. If you have success, and you believe that power has come from you, or even if you somehow have even remotely connected the fact that God has given it to you but it's something that you've done, when you have success, then you will have pride. Pride, because you can say "I've used my power, I've achieved these things, I did these things." What happens when we say this? Pride, Pride will always result. Self-satisfaction, complacency, when we feel that we can do something., when the Scripture plainly says, you can't do anything without me. What happens when we make a few mistakes? We make a few mistakes, we mess up, your value based on your performance, your ability to do things and you make a few mistakes. Fear, desperation, working harder, denial.

I remember working on a computer project. I was working on some modules, and I had to hand those modules on to someone else to look for all the mistakes and the problems I had in the code. And he came back with all these different things that I'd done wrong. I went into denial. I said, "No, you're just doing this to have a go at me. It's not that way at all. You're just being a bit rough." Does anyone have that kind of problem at work? People going into denial? Because their value is based on their performance? I handed over that code saying 'I've done a good job,' he handed back saying it was garbage. Yeah, but I went to university, and I !

How much money is wasted, and people's egos bouncing off each other, trying to protect themselves. They make a few mistakes as I've heard some people say, "I'm quite willing to admit when I make a mistake, I just don't make them."

Or you might have heard the song, "O Lord, it's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way." Have you heard that song? Because in this system, you can't make mistakes. There is no room for mistakes. Mistakes mean you're nothing. You're useless. And so what happens when you make a total mess up. Failure, fear, despair, worthlessness. I'm just no good. I tried, and can't do it. Hopeless. And then after going through that cycle for a while, some people never come out of this, they just stay there until they die, but others think I've got to try harder, I've got to have another go.



So, we get determined, we work ourselves up, "Alright I've got to have another go at this, I'm going to try again. I'm going to get that raise, I'm going to get that job promotion, I'm going to do that PhD, and I'm going to get all these things and then I'll feel better. And then you get to the top, and then you're proud again. And then it just keeps going around,

and around, and around. That's the way life is in Satan's part of the world. Constant oscillation between self-satisfaction, pride, looking down your nose and despair and worthlessness. Up, down, up, down. Does anyone sometimes feel their life is up, down, up, and down. Where's the consistency? Where's the consistency?

You know, people get home from work. How's your day? You should have seen what happened today!! Ugh!

You know? And then you've got, you know, those mothers that do home duties, and it's very hard when you're working at home looking after kids and doing all those things, and you get to the end of the day and Satan says, 'And what have you done today? Except change a few nappies, various things like that. You've done nothing, haven't done anything!' Oh dear, no wonder I don't want to stay in this job. Because there's no performance, there's no achievement, we're not going anywhere. Looking after kids is a dead-end job, you're not going to get anywhere with that. That's what Satan would have us believe. 'Put them in day care, get rid of them.' They can then get out there, get that degree, that's stuff that you need to get, that's more important.

So, you get stuck in this cycle, and this cycle of depression and discouragement. People get sick and tired of this cycle. Round and round and round, and then they say "I'm hopping out." And the only way they know out is to end it. The only way to get out.

So we need to do a comparison. Let's have a bit of a comparison between the two kingdoms, and this will be very important as we look at our next presentations. We'll need to remember this very carefully.

If you look at the two kingdoms, the attributes of the government, the currency – what do you trade on in that kingdom?

A Comparison of the Two Kingdoms

Attribute	God's Kingdom	Satan's Kingdom
Government	Family	State - Territorial
Currency	Character	Assets
Citizenship	Sons and Daughters	Performance & Achievement
Value	Relationship to God	Personal Achievement

The citizenship – how do you become a citizen of that kingdom, and how are you valued in that kingdom. Let's have a look at the two.

In God's kingdom it's a family based kingdom – God is our Father and we are His children. The family system. That's why family is so important.

“The success of the church depends upon home influences.”

No point getting all worked up about satellite dishes and all types of evangelism until you sort things out at home, because the success of the church depends on how things are at home. - Adventist Home, p15

Satan's kingdom: State, territorial. Satan is not our father. We have no allegiance to him as an authority figure, and so what does Satan do? He draws a line, a big line in the sand around us and he says, Alright, you're in my circle. You do what I tell you to do. See? And you pay tax and you support me and you fight my wars, you do my dirty work, and if you get out of line, I'll get rid of you. We see things like that happen today in countries. We do, don't we? That's his system: a state territorial, system.

I'm sure as lovely and as nice as our Prime Minister is, I'm not related to him in any way. I have no allegiance to him in a family sense. I pray for him that he'll do a good job, but I have no response to his authority in terms of a family sense. It's just a state territorial thing.

I'm not saying that he's willingly in Satan's kingdom. I'm not saying that. That's just the system that we're in. The currency of God's kingdom is character. The transfer of, like as I said before, when my son was impressed by God to tell me that he loved me, God impressed my son, my son expressed that to myself, we all became rich through that experience. That's the currency we trade on our characters. We invest in each other, we bless one another, and we grow in our knowledge, in our understanding and our love for one another. That's how you grow rich in God's kingdom. Because character is everything. Assets, well, let God worry about that. He's the source of life. Don't get too hung up on assets. But in Satan's kingdom you need assets, you know, he who has the most toys wins. Keeping up with the Jones's, everything like that.

Alright, citizenship. God's kingdom. Sons & daughters of God. You're a citizen in God's kingdom simply by believing that you are a son and a daughter of God. In God's kingdom, by being a son and daughter, you have citizenship in that kingdom. In Satan's kingdom, performance and achievement. And we're big on performance and achievement in Australia. We came fourth in the Olympics last time! Small nation of 20 million people standing up against China and America and Russia. We must have rocks in our heads!

Spending all that money and all that effort, is it any wonder that's why we have the highest youth suicide rate in the world. How many kids go to bed at night because they can't be like the great sports stars of Australia.

Your value in God's kingdom comes from your relationship to God. That's where your value comes from, if you're willing to see it. In Satan's kingdom, personal achievement, power within your own life-source, that's where it comes from.

So, in Satan's kingdom we get imprisoned by this false identity, this sense that we have a power within in us, and that we can do and achieve and be all these things, and we get caught in this cycle, and we see that in Genesis chapter 3.

Genesis 3: 10-12. "So he said, 'I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself.' And he said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Adam has now shifted into a performance-based kingdom. He's accepted Satan's lie that you have life in yourself. "You shall not surely die," and "you shall be as gods knowing both good and evil." And he's moved over, and now there's an issue of accountability. "Did you eat of the tree?" I know that eating from the tree means bad – bad performance. I can't acknowledge bad performance. So, how do we get out of that? Through Denial.

It says here that the man said, "the woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave to me of the tree and I did eat." He can't acknowledge that he made a mistake, because in a performance based kingdom you don't make mistakes, and if you do, you pretend that you don't, and you just hope that it goes away.

And I hope that you can see from this that this is the problem with the fall of man. Why couldn't Adam just got back to God and say, Oh look, I made a mistake. I'm wrong. Can we rewind and start that again? We won't go to the tree, I promise, we won't go there anymore. He's in this performance based kingdom now, and he's got to admit he's got a problem. But the fact is that if God is the source of life, God is the source of wisdom, God is the source of knowledge and the ability to reason that he has a problem, he hasn't got that any more. He can't reason that he's got a problem, he can't see that he's got a problem. He can only see that God has a problem in making this woman who a few hours earlier said he was willing to die for. And that kind of fell on it's face when God pointed the finger at him, which is another problem all of its own.

So, you can see that once you're in this system, you can't get out. There's no way out because you can't acknowledge that you're wrong, and this kingdom is wrong. This kingdom is bad news. But once you're in it, you can't acknowledge that it's wrong, you've just got to ride it out until you die. And that's where many people go.

This is the point we need to finish on. God is in a very difficult situation. Adam and Eve have now lost their identity. Their identity is bound to the fact that they are children of God, and that He is their life source. That has been stripped away by Satan's lie, 'You shall not surely die.' Now they have a wrong perception of who they are, they have a wrong perception of who God is, and their ability to get back to God, you know, at this point we were gone. The human race was finished. Absolutely finished, except for the plan that God had already enacted, and we will talk about that tomorrow. This is what God had to do with Adam and Eve, and with all of us. God had a big task

1. Help them to recognise their desperate situation. We have a problem here.
2. Influence the human race in the right direction without force.
3. Show them that they had a wrong perception of their character and kingdom and show them that He really loved them. How was He going to do all this?
4. A way to remove their guilt and insecurity and to restore their identity and value as children of God.
5. A way to reclaim their sense of purpose and destiny as children of God.
6. They needed a life support system to give them time to choose and decide.
7. And lastly their had to be a penalty for their rebellion.¹

¹ This last statement reflects my former false understanding that God's law demands punishment. I have retained it in the booklet as a reminder of what I once believed and how we have now changed.

That's a tall order. That's a lot to ask. And tomorrow we look at what Jesus did in His work in the wilderness and then the cross, He answers all of these things, but at this point identity is lost and this is what all of us have been stamped with. Every time we feel that discouragement, we feel that emptiness, we feel that worthlessness, we are experiencing the poison of this original statement in Genesis 3, "You shall not surely die." Whether you know it or not we can blame Adam and Eve for eating from that tree, but we eat from that tree every day, because there was nothing wrong with the fruit., what was wrong was the lie that was attached to that fruit, and that lie you and I embrace every day. Got to prove myself, got to achieve, got to do something, got to get out there. Embrace it every day.

I just want to close with sharing the lyrics of a song and it's from when I was doing a funeral service for someone and at the service they played this song, and it sounded beautiful, and then I asked for the lyrics and I took it home and I listened to it, and it's the theme song from a film called City of Angels. And it was played a lot around the time of September '11 when those planes were alleged to have run into the towers. And as I listened, as I looked at the lyrics I could see there's a double meaning in this song. Someone else has put meaning into this song, and as I listened to the lyrics to this song, I could see this what this person is experiencing is an echo of what Satan experiences. He is locked in that cycle going round and round, he can't get out, there's no way back for him. And so there's this sense of hopelessness that he will take to his death, and its reflected in the words of this song. Just listen carefully:

Spend all your time waiting for that second chance
For the break that would make it OK
There's always some reason to feel not good enough
And it's hard at the end of the day
I need some distraction, oh beautiful release

Memories seep from my veins
let me be empty
and weightless and maybe I'll find some peace tonight

In the arms of the angel
Far away from here
From this dark cold hotel room
And the endlessness that you feel
You are pulled from the wreckage
Of your silent reverie
You're in the arms of the angel
May you find some comfort here.

So tired of the straight line
And everywhere you turn
There's vultures and thieves at your back
Storm keeps on twisting, keep on building the lies
That you make up for all that you lack
It don't make no difference, escaping one last time
It's easier to believe in this sweet madness, oh this glorious sadness
That brings me to my knees.

In the arms of the angel
Far away from here
From this dark cold hotel room
And the endlessness that you feel
You are pulled from the wreckage
Of your silent reverie
You're in the arms of the angel
May you find some comfort here.

There is no comfort in the arms of this arm of death. The only way to escape this cycle of worthlessness is by finding your true identity in being a child of God and knowing everything you have and are inspired to do that is right comes from Him.

2 – IDENTITY RECLAIMED

Last time, we looked at the concept of 'Identity Lost; how we lost our identity, and what the two kingdoms are, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Now we're going to look at identity reclaimed, and how Jesus purchased for us our identity once again. And if you were here last night you would recognise, that if you have come to listen to me, Adrian Ebens, the Pastor, well then, you're going to be sorely disappointed, because as we discovered last night, that there is nothing that we as human beings have to say. There is nothing that we can say of any good or of any use to anybody. But if God happens to take hold of me and speak through me and blesses you today, then you know that it is God Himself that has blessed you.

And that's my prayer today. That He will bless you. If you prayed and you've asked God to speak through this person, then you will be blessed. If you've come hoping that something might happen, you may or may not be blessed. Now's the time to start praying. Why don't we bow our heads right now and we'll pray before we begin?

Our Father in heaven, it's a privilege to come into Your house. Lord we recognise that without You we can do nothing and so I pray for a freedom of speech, to express the things that You've laid on my heart. And that a picture of Jesus will be given that will draw us closer and closer to Him, so that our desire to be ready for Christ's coming will not be motivated so much by fear of the things that are coming upon the

world, but what our Father has done for us, and how much we mean to Him. And we thank You in Jesus' name, amen.

'Identity Reclaimed.' Last night we gave the distinction between the two kingdoms: God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. We looked at the fact that God's kingdom is a family-based kingdom. It's based on relationships. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom that is based on geography. Because we don't have any direct parental connection to Satan, the only way that he can gain people or make people follow him is to draw a circle around all of us and say, "You are in my territory, you do as I tell you to do." All of you here live in the state of New South Wales and so you must do what the state of New South Wales tells you to do. And there's this bigger circle around Australia, telling us what we must do as Australians. And we must follow that because we live in that territory, as opposed to a parental influence.

The currency. We talked about the fact that in heaven the currency, that which makes us rich, that which develops, that encourages, that which we invest in—is character. Speaking words of love and joy and peace, and encouragement, we invest in one another. This is the currency of heaven. Because when we get to heaven, there'll be no money. Hallelujah! Meaning that there will be no tax! Even better. No money. We won't need money any more. It'll be wonderful because everything will be on God. He'll be providing everything for us. But in Satan's kingdom, everything is based on assets. We talked about Genesis chapter 3, verses 4 & 5, how Satan said, "You shall not surely die, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And he was basically telling Eve, that "If you want to live in his kingdom, you need to be a material girl. You need assets. You need things to help you to be more powerful. The more you have the better it is. He who has the most toys wins."

Citizenship in God's kingdom is simply being a son or daughter of God. If you accept the fact that you are a son or daughter of God and you accept Him as your Father, then you are a part of His kingdom. Of course, at the fall of mankind, it's not simply accepting God as our

Father, we had to be purchased and brought back through Christ, and that's what we're going to look at today.

A Comparison of the Two Kingdoms

Attribute	God's Kingdom	Satan's Kingdom
Government	Family	State - Territorial
Currency	Character	Assets
Citizenship	Sons and Daughters	Performance & Achievement
Value	Relationship to God	Personal Achievement

In Satan's kingdom, citizenship is based on performance and achievements, or, on non-performance and non-achievement. It doesn't matter. If you make a name for yourself by being lazy then he's happy for that. If you want to make a name for yourself by doing good things and achieving good things, he's happy. As long as you get value out of performance and achievement, that's how you become part of his kingdom.

And notice the distinction. There's nothing wrong with performing and achieving. The problem is getting value out of that. That's where the problem is.

And, of course, value in God's kingdom comes from your relationship with God. If you obtain value from anything else, other than from your relationship with God, you are being influenced by Satan's kingdom. Are we being influenced by Satan's kingdom? I think so.

Of course, value in Satan's kingdom is based on personal achievement. And the difficulty comes when you base yourself on personal achievement. If your value comes from these things, then a relationship

system cannot operate very well. We looked at the fact that last night, that once Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit and embraced the lie that they had a power source within themselves, that they could live independently from God, they could choose whether or not they wanted a relationship with God, it was up to them, it didn't matter because they didn't need Him. This is the lie that Satan gave to Adam and Eve. And once they embraced that lie, they lost their value as children of God. Up until that point when Adam and Eve were asked, "Who are you?" They could say, "We are a son and a daughter of God. He is our Father. We love Him. He loves us." The rest is irrelevant. But after they fell into sin, the relationship with the Father was broken.

It was funny the other day, I was walking with my son. We went for a walk and we were talking. My son said to me, Dad, I'd like to go for a walk and have a talk. I want to talk about a few things with you. Okay. We go for a walk. Sounds serious. We're talking about responsibility, appreciation. I was talking with him about the importance of him appreciating the work that his mother does at home. She goes through all this effort to cook his food. She puts it up on the table. The first thing he says is, "Oh, yuck! Not that again!" I said, "Son, we've got a problem here. We need to discuss this." So we discussed some of these things. And as we discussed together my son said to me, "Dad sometimes I do things for you not because I like it but because I don't want our relationship to be broken." And I'm like, "How old are you? You've been listening to what I've been preaching." I thought, "Wow... Out of the mouth of babes." "Dad, sometimes I do things for you not because I enjoy it but because I don't want to break our relationship." I said, son, "That's a good thing to remember. You keep doing that because that's what I'm trying to do with God." There are some things that God asks me to do that I don't fully understand, nor sometimes fully appreciate. But I do them because I don't want to break my relationship with Him. His relationship to me is more important than anything else. I would like to say it was that way 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but sometimes I find that, well, other things seem more enjoyable at times. I have amnesia. I go back into my false identity, into Satan's kingdom.

But when we believe that this lie that we have a power within ourselves, that whether or not we have God in our lives, it doesn't really matter—we get caught in this performance-based system, where we get value when we do well and achieve things. In Australia this is something that is very much true. Our Prime Minister stated that the value of an individual within Australian society is his ability to work and to perform and to achieve. That's interesting. Very interesting. Your value as an individual is determined upon those things.

So, if your value is determined on those things, if you perform well, then you should be satisfied, shouldn't you? You should be satisfied with yourself, which produces pride. And this is something that I found difficult when I first began to preach and share. The better I preached, the more smug and self-sufficient I became. "I'm doing a good job, I preached very, very well." And then this became a difficulty, where I said, "Well, I don't want to be proud, so should I preach worse? No, that doesn't make sense. It's obvious that I've got a problem here and I need to understand what's going on.

Then if we make a few mistakes, we start to go on a downward trek. We looked at this last night. Failure - when we produce failure, if your value is based on your ability to perform when you fail then you are worth nothing. We looked at the fact that 38 times a minute across this planet people come to the realisation, life's not worth living. It's time to end it all. We need to finish. Because your value is based on your performance—a very, very bad system to live in, yet that's where most of us live. We live in that system.

And then we just struggle. We have to get improvement. We're going to try harder. Which means that if you need to improve yourself, that means that your need to spend time with your family and your friends may become secondary to your need to perform and achieve, more over time, doing that extra work on your PhD, doing all of these sorts of thing to gain that sense of worth again. How many of us are caught in this cycle? I certainly have been, certainly got sucked back into the vortex of this system. There's something wrong about living a life where you

oscillate between pride and depression, pride and depression. Up, down. Up, down. Can anyone relate to that experience?

It's not much fun. And we look to the fact in Genesis 3:10 that once you move into a performance-based system, that Adam had broken his relationship with God, God then had to come up and tell Adam, "You have a problem. You have the problem. I am your life source. If you cut yourself off from Me, you are dead!"

And I would like to take time to go into the whole story of how Adam and Eve were able to maintain a life source. We don't have time to explore all that today, but of course they continued to live. God is the source of life and when Adam and Eve ate the fruit they immediately flipped from a direct life source from God to a life source through the Promised Lamb. Through the Promised Lamb. They died that day, as God said they would. Their heart only continued to beat because of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And we are alive because of that same reason.

And so God comes to Adam and He says, "Adam, you have a problem. What is the problem when you come to someone who gets value out of performance? When you come to someone who needs to get value from their performance and you tell them they've got a problem, then that's a problem, because they're not listening." And we talked about this again last night, how that how many times in a work environment you come to someone who has done something incorrectly and you try to explain to them they did it incorrectly. It's interesting the reactions you get. "You're just picking on me. No, no. You're wrong. I'm right, you're wrong." They're in denial. A good way to get jobs done, isn't it? How many businesses have lost millions of dollars through denial? People say, "No I didn't do anything wrong. It wasn't me. I didn't do anything. No, not me."

Performance-based system, rather than acknowledging. So when God says to Adam, "Did you eat from the tree?" Simple question. Adam understands the consequences. It means that his performance was bad.

He has not done that which is correct and so he goes into denial. "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the fruit and I did eat." Denial. "God, this is a conspiracy! You made this woman to get me! It's Your fault." That's what happens when you get caught in the system. Relationships get fractured. Could you imagine Eve standing there, and there's Adam, the knight in shining armour, who promises to give his life for her, and he's just dumping it all on her, saying, "It's her fault, not me. Leave me out of this." Not nice at all.

And so we see that because of the fact that we've broken our relationship with God, we have a sense of guilt. Whenever we think of God, as human beings, we are often reminded that in a performance sense, we're not good. We're bad. And human nature as a result tends to resent that. Human nature actually really hates God because in a performance system we can never be as good as God. God's always better than us, smarter than us, lives longer than us, everything better than us. We'll never be as good as Him. And as something subconsciously, we don't necessarily think about it but subconsciously, as the Bible says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Enmity meaning hatred. Enemy. That's the situation.

And so this is what happens. Adam and Eve have now embraced the mindset where they actually don't like God. They actually like this system. There's some kind of strange mystical attraction to this lifestyle of pride and depression. This poison of belief that you have freedom in doing whatever you want, being responsible to no one, caring for no one, do whatever you please. There is an intoxicating influence in believing that. And all of us have been seduced by it to some degree. So much so, that God speaks to us as the sons and daughters of Adam. In Psalms 4:2 where He says,

"How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame?"

And we'll talk about this glory this afternoon in our presentation, 'The Glory of Children.'

“How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?”

As human beings, we love worthlessness, because it is worthless to gain your value from what you think you can perform and achieve. Because we can't do anything without God. It's a lie. It's a misunderstanding of who we are. It's an incorrect sense of identity, to think that we can do anything other than to choose life from God or death from Satan. It' all we can do, and develop a character along the way as we make those choices.

“Why do you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?” The falsehood of believing that you are something, that you have some kind of power or life in yourself. Why do you love these things? You're sick, you're intoxicated with the wine of Babylon.

It says, “I will ascend into heaven, I will be like the Most High, I will be like God.” This is what Satan said.

And of course, this verse that I mentioned before,

“The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be.”

And so we need to understand that with the end of Genesis Chapter 3, the human 'Identity is Lost,' the human race is in massive trouble. This cycle of pride and depression cannot be broken. Once you're in a performance-based system, you have to be told that there is a problem. The only problem with that is that you will not be told that there is a problem, and on that basis alone you can't get out. You're stuck. Pride will not acknowledge anybody else that they are right. And so just recapping where we finished off last night, this is what God had to do with the human race. We need to understand that at this point, Adam and Eve actually really enjoyed Satan's way of life. They were intoxicated by it. They were cut off from the life source which gives wisdom and knowledge and logic to be able to work their way out of that system. They couldn't do that anymore because all wisdom and knowledge comes from God.

So first of all God had to help Adam and Eve recognise their desperate situation as He has to with us. *To influence the human race in the right direction without force. It couldn't be an issue of force. A relationship can never be maintained with force. It doesn't work.*

A Big Task

- Help them recognise their desperate situation
- Influence Human race in right direction without force
- Show them that they had a wrong perception of His character and kingdom and to show them that He really loves them
- A way to remove their guilt and insecurity and to restore their true identity and value as children of God
- A way to reclaim their sense of purpose and destiny
- A life support system to give them time to choose and decide
- There must be a penalty for their rebellion.

Take out the choice factor just to make us a robot if you want force.

Show them that they had a wrong perception of His character and kingdom and to show them that He really loved them. How did He do this? Performance-based people, you love them right. Why don't you tell them that they're doing the wrong thing all the time? Is that love? How is He going to get that across to us?

A way to remove their guilt and insecurity and to restore their true identity and value as children of God. That our value comes alone from Him and not from anywhere else.

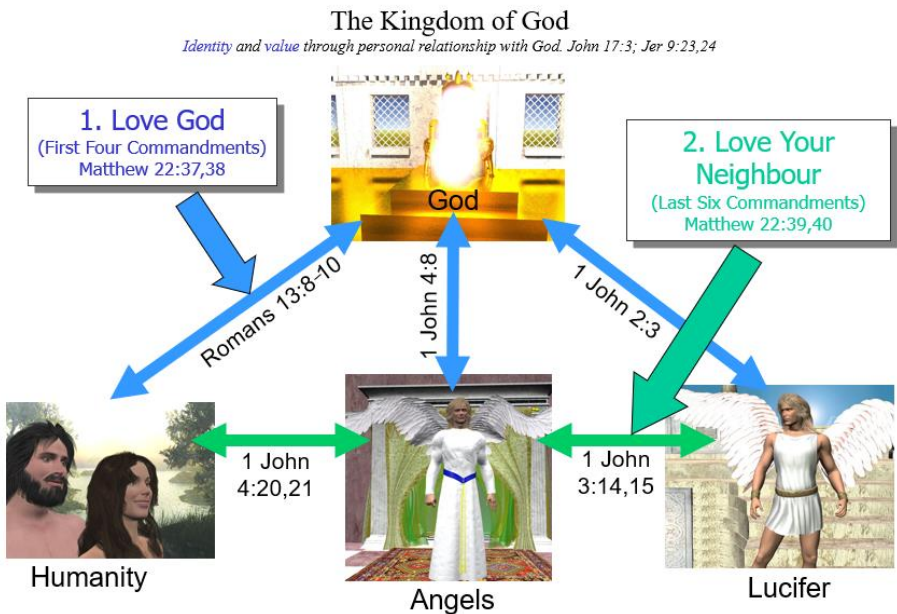
A way to reclaim their sense of purpose and destiny. What we were created for is something very different from what most of us are engaged in today. What it means to be a son and a daughter of God.

And we talked about this a little bit earlier. He needed to give them a life support system to give them time to choose and decide. Since God is life.

And as soon as you choose the wrong way, you're dead. No time to choose. Instant heart attack. Gone. No second chance.

But God provided a way to give us time to think, to reconsider. Maybe this kingdom is not so good after all. When the intoxication of the wine of Babylon wears off and the hangover begins to set in and we feel the guilt of the worthlessness of living in Satan's kingdom, we start to yearn to go back to our Father's house where He has the fattened calf prepared for us. We think maybe it's time to go home and to be with our Father.

We talked about the fact that God's kingdom is based on relationships. But how do you define relationships? And many people will say that a relationship means that you love one another. But what is love? How do we define love? Well, if we look in God's kingdom, God's kingdom, His relationships are defined by the 10 commandments.



The 10 Commandments are something very different from what many of us understand and we're going to talk about this a bit later as well. You see because the 10 Commandments are very important in Satan's

kingdom as well because they're a good tool to perform. If you do all of these things, then you're a good person. But in God's kingdom they're not designed that way. They're designed to protect relationships. And the first four commandments it says in Matt 22:37,38—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind, and all your soul and with all your strength."

And that's the relationship that we have with God. Humanity to God, the angels, the unfallen worlds, everyone of us is governed by those first four commandments. It's a protection mechanism, to protect us from going down the path that our parents went down. We follow—the last six commandments are about loving our neighbour, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

I wish I had time and maybe this afternoon if we have time, we might have a look at this to show how that our identity and the identity of our God is defined by the 10 Commandments. If you destroy or change or break the 10 Commandments, you've destroyed, broken who we are and who God is.

You take the creative aspect out of the fourth commandment, you destroy who God is.

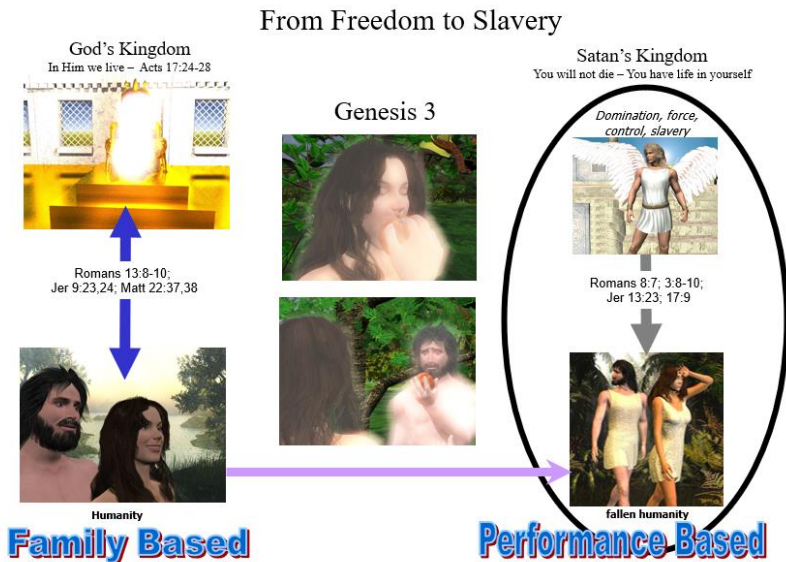
If you remove elements of the second commandment, you destroy who we are. Or any of the commandments. If you change then, we don't know who we are any more, and when you don't know who you are any more, it's impossible to communicate and understand what you're actually trying to say. I wish I could get more into that but we won't.

So this is what God's kingdom is based on. The fact that God is omnipresent. Because God is omnipresent, meaning He is everywhere *present by His Spirit* all the time, means that He is the only one in the universe that can guarantee a relationship-based kingdom. Because He can have a relationship with every one of us at the same time. Nobody else can do that. Only Him. Satan can't do that. He has to have a hierarchy, with the top dogs up the top kicking the people underneath; the plebs at the bottom of the pyramid. That's his system.

But God can have a direct connection. He works through authority structures, but He also has a direct system with every individual which means He is the only one that can guarantee relationships as the basis of His kingdom. And I think that's something that, at least for me, I think that's a good option. I like relationships. I like that way of doing a kingdom rather than Satan's way of doing a kingdom.

But of course, humanity, when we were created, when Adam and Eve were created, they were in this kingdom. They loved God supremely. They loved one another. But then, when Satan came along, they broke the commandments. Satan's kingdom, which is domination, force, control, mistrust, doubt, performance-based kingdom. Adam and Eve broke the commandments, lost their identities, and shifted into this kingdom and became enslaved in that cycle. Performance, pride, depression, around, and around, and around.

Just trying to give a chart or an illustration of what we've been talking about. And I just want to spend a bit of time now looking at some of the effects of this kingdom. Let's put some practical aspects to this. Living in Satan's kingdom.



Nationality. Do people get value out of their nationality? Yes? When I grew up, I knew I didn't believe. "I knew" that Dutchmen were smarter, more intelligent, more good looking—than any other people on the face of the planet. It was obvious. Did I get value from that? Absolutely.

And I know it's the same for every other race. They have all the reasons to tell you why their nationality, their customs, their way of living is superior to anybody else's. It's a fun game to play, isn't it? Nationality. Nationality. These things sometimes get a bit heated, and then we go to war, and then we kill each other—because "we make rice different to you, we add this..." It escalates into war. Nationality, that's one of the effects of Satan's kingdom. Getting value out of your nationality. The only nationality I want to get value out of is that I'm a child of God, from the kingdom of heaven. That's the nationality that I want.

In terms of where I was born, the geography issue – who cares? It doesn't matter. It has no relevance.

Education. Do people get value out of their education? Knowledge is power. So often we see people will get up to speak and they'll list off, "This is Mr. Such-and-such, and he has a PhD in this, and he's done extensive research here and he's travelled here, and he's done this—as if that is the reason why we should listen to him. And I find that the more educated people become the more narrow-minded they become and the less able to understand what real life is about.

(Audience comment: Absolutely)

Oh, you've found that too? The old question, how many angels can fit on the head of a needle? This sort of thing. That is where we sort of go. I mean, I'm not knocking education, but when you get value out of it and you start to do strange things, like when you graduate you wear these funny caps and gowns, and handed pieces of paper and all these strange rituals, just to prove that you're superior to the rest of society. And they actually pay you more for doing that. You get—you've got this—"Oh, okay. I'll pay you more now." But that doesn't guarantee that that person knows more than someone else who's been out in the field

working in that industry for many years. They probably know heaps more. But he's got the certificate—"Oh, we'll pay him more." It's no wonder the country's in such a mess.

Education. There is value in education. The Bible tells us that we should get knowledge. We should get understanding. But don't get value out of it. Just because you know something doesn't make you smart. It doesn't make you more important than anybody else. That's an important thing that we need to remember.

What about job status? Is there value in job status? My background is in the white collar industry. Notice 'white collar.' 'White collar' is a distinction from 'blue collar.' That's a bit further down. White collar – but in the white collar industry we're no different from chickens. We have a hierarchy. The people at the top of the hierarchy, like the boss, the top boss. He has his own room with the high-backed chair and the arm rests. He has the fastest computer with the best view out the window. Okay? Yes. You know what I'm talking about. Then the vice-president, his view is not quite as good, computer is not quite as fast, big mahogany desk is not quite as good—maybe it's just chip board. No, not quite. It'd be a bit better. But it's less quality. And then you go all the way down to the office worker who doesn't even have partition. He's got a lousy computer, no arm rests, no high-backed chair. You just have to sit there at the bottom of the pile just to remind you that you're at the bottom, son. You're at the bottom. Is there value in job status?

You go to parties. "I earn \$90,000 a year." Well, who cares? "I'm on Centrelink." So what? Doesn't mean anything.

Job status.

Wealth. Is there money and wealth? Money and wealth. There's also value in wealth. You know, we come out with these lists. Why do we come out with these lists of the world's top 100, you know, top 100 wealthy individuals. Well, who cares? Where would you see a list of the world's poorest individuals? Top 100 poorest individuals? Where do we see that? We don't see that. There's value in money. People who have

money think that they're powerful. And we all think they're powerful, too. And because we buy into this system where money has power, we all get sucked into this system. Wealth.

What about possessions? Is there value in possessions? I was talking about this last night, you know, he who has the most toys wins. Possessions. We are all busy paying off debts and paying off all the technology. I must admit I'm a bit of a sucker for technology. Possessions. Houses, boats—whatever you're into. I've got all these things. "And how big is your house." "Oh, mine's 40 squares." Well, who cares? As long as God provides for you. Doesn't Jesus say, "God provides for the sparrows. He provides for the birds. They don't have to worry about paying off a mortgage. Just go and set up shop up in the tree. "This is a good place. Let's set up shop here. It's okay." But we worry about all these things.

The thing is that when we come into the church—see all of us have been schooled in this system of gaining value from nationality, education, job status, wealth, possessions—we haven't mentioned beauty and good looks. Do people get value out of that? Oh, dear! Cosmetic surgery is really big at the moment. All these crazy things. We're getting value out of these.

When we come into the church, we give our life to Jesus, all of this value from power, position, performance, it all disappears right? It just goes. We come in to church, everyone's happy, we're all the same. Nobody higher than anybody else, we all love one another. Is that right?

Interesting isn't it?

We are all still trying to overcome the hangover of living in the world. And when someone's hung over, sometimes they can be pretty irritable. And that's why probably in the church, we sometimes lash out at each other. Because we're overcome with this hangover of living in the world and being affected by this value system.

So what about in the church? Do we have parallels in the church? You know, the image to the beast. All right.

Effects of Satan's Kingdom

Comparisons in the world

- Nationality
- Education
- Job Status
- Wealth
- Possessions

Comparisons in the Church

- Conservative/Liberal
- Bible Knowledge
- Church Positions
- He who pays says
- Converts, Bible Studies,
Singing Ability

Nationality. Conservative or Liberal, what are you? Nationality. What nationality are you? We have the same thing in church.

Education. Bible knowledge. "How many books of the Bible have you memorised?" You know? "Well, I've memorised lots, that makes me better than you. Bible knowledge. The more knowledge you have of the Bible, the better it is.

I remember when I first went to Bible study, half of me was listening to what the person was saying and just enjoying it. But the other half of me was still intoxicated, and was going, "Boy, how does he know so many Bible texts? I don't know that stuff? How am I going to learn all that? He makes me look bad!" So, this constant oscillation between being half-

drunk and half-sober, it's not really good. No wonder we have so many problems in the church.

What about job status? Do we ever have a problem with church positions? Anyone here ever been to a nominating committee? It's fun isn't it? Church positions. Well, for most of you here I'm better than all of you anyway because I'm a pastor. You've got nothing on me. Church positions. There are no conference presidents here, is there? Phew! I'm at the top of the pile.

Do we get value out of these things? You bet. You bet. Our church is just as drunk on these issues as any other church. Church positions. Position is power.

Wealth. He who pays says, "Look if you want to get valuable in this church, you're saving up money for an air conditioner, someone here just put up the money, and let everybody know you're putting up the money. That'd make you popular." And when they want to do something else, they'd go, "I paid for the air conditioning, remember. I could get them taken out. I paid for them. See?" Does that ever happen in the church?

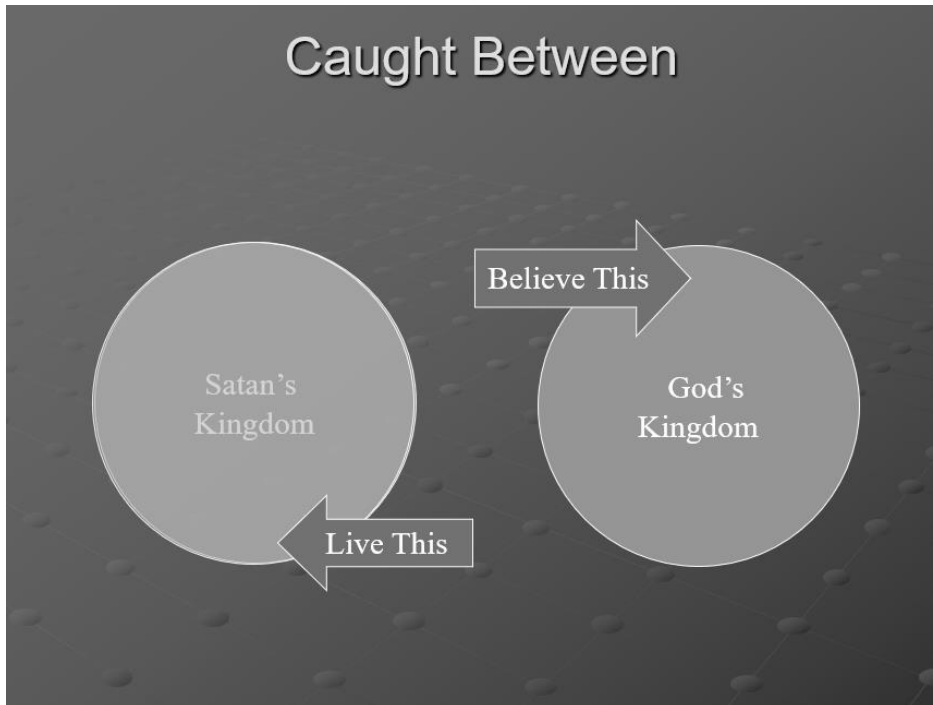
What about possessions? We have spiritual gifts. How many converts, how many people have you converted, eh? How many Bible studies do you have? Do you sing? Do you have any gifts or abilities? Well, if you don't then you're not worth much then. You're not worth much at all, you see? And Paul, speaking on this particular subject said, "I speak as a man. I can boast of many things. I was this, I was this, I was this. And I've done all this, and I persecuted the church and did all these things, but this is all rubbish." This is—you're in the church but you're still in Satan's kingdom. That's a problem. If you operate by these principles, if you get value out of these things, you know, I've seen some people in positions, and they may hold down a Sabbath school job, or they've been an elder for a couple of years, and then they're not an elder. And you'd think that someone had shot them in the head. "Oh, it's not fair! It's all a political scheme to get rid of me! I'm going to another church, and..."

Get over it. Just get through the hangover and follow Christ. There's no need for all of this stuff. You'll be a lot happier.

Have you ever noticed that it's not much fun being angry and upset? It's really bad on your health, actually. Not much fun at all.

So we find that when we come out of Satan's kingdom, if we recognise the need to come out of Satan's kingdom—some of us just like to be drunk all the time. If we come across, we would hope that when we transfer, it's a clean transfer. That we just leave all of the world behind, leave all of the value systems of Satan behind, and we get our value only from God. That would be optimal.

But what we often find is this. We start moving across. We start embracing some of the things of God, but we're still caught by some of the things of the world, and we end up in the hellish situation of believing this but living this.



A better definition of hell I could not describe. Caught between, caught in the middle. God gave us an illustration of this, through the children of Israel. It's called 'wandering in the desert.' Caught between. Not having the faith to go into the promised land, and yet not wanting to stay in Egypt, although some of them wanted to stay in Egypt. But they thought, "Oh well, we might as well follow along." That is a hellish situation to be in. And if you're having a difficult path in your Christian life, then you need to look at some of these issues. Where do you get your value? What makes you important? I have to pray every week, every day, "God, remind me that I'm Your child, that's where I get my value, because I'm going to go out there today. Someone's going to start punching my buttons and try and make me go back to my other identity, getting value out of what I do and achieve. And then I'm going to get upset, and then I'm going to get annoyed and have a bad day, and I don't want to do that. So, please help me to get out of this system."

The self-power cycle, as we said before, just reminding ourselves that we get success, we get pride, we get a few failures, we get desperate denial, resistance—all this stuff. Fear, despair, worthlessness, and a few successes. That cycle. We've just done the cycle.

And I might just point out. If you look at the comparison between the world and the church, this thing was played out on the grand scale in the 4th century, when the world came into the church. It simply changed the names of its gods. They just kept doing exactly the same thing. And before we start attacking other churches, namely, the Middle Age church, saying how bad it is, maybe we should look at the idols that we have. Maybe we should look at the log in our own eye before we pull the speck out of our brother's eye. And maybe once we do that, we might be able to see clearly to help our brother, that may be in this other church.

Maybe that's something to think about because you can get value out of pointing at another church like, "You believe in false doctrine. I'm better than you." There's a lot of value in that. A lot of people get value in that. But we need to break out of this cycle. It's a hard cycle to break and I

want to give us an illustration of this. Matthew 18:1. Jesus had been working with the disciples for a number of years trying to teach them what His kingdom was about. He said it in Matthew 10, "I am not here to be served but to serve." He told them over and over again. Too many times they would say, "My brother is stealing my inheritance." God said, "Who made me a judge and a divider over you?" He said—and we looked at that verse last night—"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins and yet not one of them is forgotten before God, but you are more valuable than many sparrows." This is what He's trying to teach them.

But the disciples, caught between two systems, it says in Matthew 18:1, "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Why did the disciples want to know that? Who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Imagine Jesus saying, "Why do you want to know that?" "Oh, no reason. No. Nothing at all." Why do you think they wanted to know?" Which kingdom does this question represent? Satan's kingdom. It doesn't represent God's kingdom. Why would you want to know who's the greatest?

And this question, this is very important for us to understand in terms of intoxication issue. This issue here of wanting to know who is the greatest is what prevented the disciples from understanding what Christ was actually trying to do.

That's why Mary Magdalene had a better concept of what Jesus was trying to do than all the disciples. She understood. She anointed Him. She prepared Him for the burial.

And it gets really, really serious. On the very night that Jesus was betrayed, you would hope the disciples would have come to an understanding of this issue. That it doesn't matter. Your possessions, your position, your wealth, your intelligence, your good looks—all those things. You don't get your value out of these things.

But on the very night that Jesus was betrayed, when He needed their support, He needed their help—let's remember that Jesus took upon Him our human nature. It would have been so much easier for Jesus if He had known that the disciples understood Him and what He was about. But they didn't because they were drunk with Satan's kingdom.

What did He say?

“Truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” And He – watch carefully the performance system start to kick in.

Jesus said, “One of you is going to betray me.” And immediately there's a performance issue. They're working out of their performance kingdom. And they're going, “Oh, no. Who's going to do this?”

It said, “Then they began to question among themselves, which of them, who it was that would do this.

“I wouldn't do it. I bet you'd do it. Not me.”

Self Power Cycle



They're getting caught in this cycle. And of course, once they've been threatened and they're starting to feel discouraged, they have to try and get themselves back up to the top.

So it naturally flows into this next discussion.

"Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest." "I wouldn't betray Him because I'm the greatest."

Muhammad Ali must have learned from these guys. "I am the greatest!"

On the very night that Jesus died, you've got the disciples having dispute about which of them is the greatest. They are still completely in Satan's kingdom. How much encouragement would that be for Jesus? It would be very discouraging. Very discouraging.

But the good news is that Jesus does break the cycle. And it comes from a simple statement in Scripture. When Jesus was in the wilderness—and this is the one statement that I can't highlight this enough. This is the one statement that provides the door out of that cycle. If you believe the statement, then you will find escape from this cycle. Believe it. Embrace it. Live it.

Jesus Breaks the Cycle

This is my beloved
Son, in whom I
am well pleased.
Matt 3:17



“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17)

That is the door to freedom. That is an understanding of what your true identity is. Jesus had to come to earth as a man. He had to demonstrate what it means to be a real human being, to have a real identity. And Satan is about to attack Christ in the wilderness. And God, instead of giving Him bombs and guns and ammunition to go and blow Satan up in the wilderness, gives Him one statement: “This is my beloved Son.” Identity. “In whom I’m well pleased.” Value. Value comes from the Father.

This is what Jesus needed more than anything else. This is what you and I need more than anything else.

Let's have a look at Christ's victory and what Jesus did in the wilderness is to break this cycle for you and me.

Many of us think that what happened in the wilderness was that Jesus overcame the desire to eat chocolate and pizza. That's won He wants for us. The issue was a lot deeper than that. The issue is, "If you are the Son of God," the issue was, "Who are you and how do you support your claim? If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." The medium was appetite. The medium was food. That's what Satan used to try and confuse you about who He was. Jesus had a choice. "I turn these stones into bread like before and show Satan that I am the Son of God. Or I believe the Word of God." That was said in the beginning. Forty days ago. "This is my Son."

When God has spoken, there is no second-guessing. You believe it or you don't believe it. And if Jesus had turned those stones into bread, He would have been saying to Satan, "I don't believe what my Father says. I'm going to show and choose for myself." Big thing. Very, very big. That's the issue.

"If you are God's Son, throw yourself down." The issue is attacking Christ's identity because that's what Adam and Eve lost. So that's what Christ had to reclaim. Let's try and get a grasp on what the real issues are in the plan of salvation.

The issue is—who are you? And how do you define your identity? And what makes you valuable? When you answer those questions, as the Bible highlights them, then you will find freedom.

Victory in the Wilderness

- If you Are God's Son
 - Turn these stones into Bread
- If you are God's Son
 - Throw yourself down



Christ reclaims our true identity for us and breaks the cycle of Satan's Kingdom

Christ reclaims our true identity for us and breaks the cycle of Satan's kingdom.

Listen carefully to the couple of statements. 'Desire of Ages,' page 116.

"Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan [in the wilderness] as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. But within the domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated. 'Desire of Ages,' page 116.

You and I are facing those same questions. "Are you a child of God? Prove it." That's what Satan is saying to us every day. "You claim to be a Christian. How many Bible studies do you do? How many people are you winning? What are you doing? You're not a Christian. What do you do at home? I've seen you and the way you treat your husband or your wife. I see how you treat your children. You're not a Christian. You're nothing!" And because we're all caught in this performance-based system, we get discouraged. We feel guilt. We go down. We do the

penance. We whip ourselves. We beat ourselves. It doesn't work. It doesn't work.

The Bible says, "To agree with your adversary quickly while you're in the way." But Satan tells me I'm wicked. "Oh, what took you so long to work that out. I've known that for a lot longer than you have." You're slow.

But my value doesn't come from that. My value comes from being a child of God. And the more I keep believing that, the more my behaviour will start to change. It's not my behaviour that makes me a son of God. It's Jesus that makes me a son of God. And that will influence my behaviour. Let's get the horse and the cart in the right order. Not back to front.

Okay. Next quote. This statement for me completely revolutionised my thinking on what the plan of salvation is about.

"The scene of trial with Christ in the wilderness was the foundation of the plan of salvation." ['Confrontation,' page 63.]

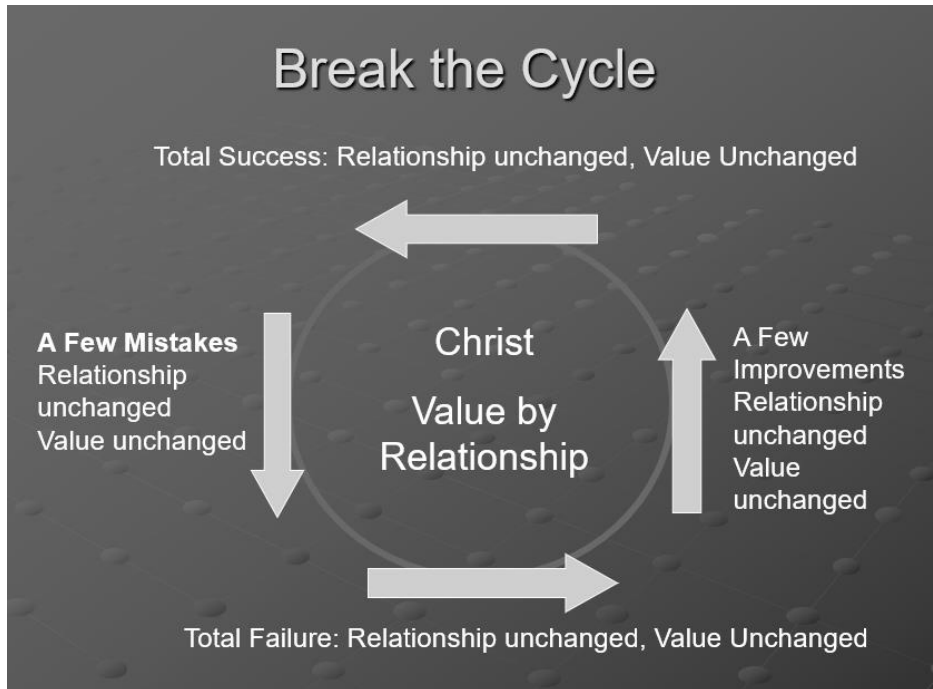
The foundation of the plan of salvation was the work that Jesus—not the work He did on the cross—the work He did in the wilderness. Interesting. Because what use would it be for Jesus to pay the debt for our sins when we had no way of understanding who we are? He had to first reclaim our identity as children of God before He could offer us the cross. Or else it wouldn't mean anything to us. "Oh, just hang on the cross." That's not very good.

"And gives to fallen man the key whereby he, in Christ's name, may overcome." ['Confrontation,' page 63.]

The key to overcoming Satan is knowing that you are a child of God. That's the key. We could forget everything else. This is the central issue.

And so as we continue forward, this imprisoned cycle of false identity is broken by Christ with the statement, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased." When we value our relationship to God, He's the only

one that matters to us. When we have success—who cares if you have success. You can be happy. You can enjoy the success. But you don't get value out of it. You don't become proud. You're just happy. And you enjoy it with everybody else. But it doesn't make you a better person.



If you have a few failures, your relationship is unchanged. God still loves you. You're still His son. You're still His daughter. Your value is unchanged. You make a few mistakes. It doesn't affect your value. Certainly, we want to rectify the situation but our value isn't based on it. What happens if we have total failure? God still loves me. What does it say in Micah? When I sit in the darkness the Lord shall be a light to me. I shall arise." It doesn't matter.

Paul says, "I have learned how to abound and how to be abased." It doesn't matter. He that humbles himself. God says, "I will exalt." It doesn't matter. Failure is a good tool to test which kingdom you are in.

A few improvements your relationship is unchanged. You're completely set free of this system. You don't need to keep up with the Joneses or the Smiths, or whoever. You can just be you. You can just be a son of God as He designed you to be. A daughter of God as He designed you to be. You don't have to care about what other people are doing. And so your relationships can be maintained.

Now, here's a statement we need to remember:

Will You Believe God's Word?

The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. *Desire of Ages* 113



“The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, ‘This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.’”
[*Desire of Ages*, page 113]

That is our ticket to freedom from that cycle. Do you believe that you're a child of God? Not by what you do, not by how much Bible study you do, not by how many hours of praying you do, not by any of those things are you considered a child of God. You are a child of God because God has said it. Will you believe His Word? Will you embrace His Word? Or will you continue to try and turn stones into bread? Coming to church

each week, proving that you are what God has already proclaimed you to be.

That is the test.

And so in closing. This was the task that God had to achieve. To help them recognise their desperate situation. Jesus certainly did that on the cross. We behold Christ on the cross, we see this is what it cost for us to be reclaimed. To influence the human race in cooperation without force. We don't have time to go into all the details. The fact that Jesus became human like us and the Spirit was able to begin to enter and whisper into our minds the things of God. The things of God. So that we can hear that still, small voice. Not the thunder, not the lightning, not the earthquake. The still, small voice.

To show them that they had a wrong perception of His character and kingdom and to show them that He really loved them. When Jesus went through the villages and He healed the people and He embraced them and He loved them. And He taught them. He showed them. You have a wrong understanding of who God is.

A way to remove their guilt and insecurity and to restore their true identity and value as children of God. He did that in the wilderness.

A way to reclaim their sense of purpose and destiny. He did that in the wilderness.

A life support system to give them time to choose and decide. He did that from the foundation of the world.

He paid the penalty *of* their rebellion. He did that on the cross.

Christ has reclaimed our identity. And I really, really hope today that you will not allow this thought to be distracted. Some of you might already be tempted to think about what's for lunch. Don't do it. Keep your mind on the issue. Satan doesn't want you to know this. This issue is going to destroy his ability to control you. And he doesn't want that to happen.

So I pray that you'll hang on to your true identity as a child of God.

3 – THE GLORY OF CHILDREN

What we want to do this afternoon is to expand the concept of the blessing. The key part of us being able to break the cycle of the pride, depression—was that blessing, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I’m well pleased.” And that’s the part that I want to amplify and pull apart.

As we do this, I want to remind you of the two kingdoms. In God’s kingdom, we get value only from our relationship with our Father in heaven. In Satan’s kingdom, we get value from other things. And that will play a crucial role as we look at this particular subject and the roles that we play in our home environments.

Let’s just bow our heads and we’ll pray.

Father in heaven, we just thank You so much that we can talk to You; that because of Christ, I can speak without phones, without any of those things, and know that You are listening, that You are actually leaning forward on Your throne longing to hear the voice of Your son. And Lord, I ask You to give me the words to speak for I have nothing to say. And I pray that You would help each one of us here this afternoon to know how much You love each one of us and how Your kingdom really is a family kingdom, and how that our families represent that kingdom. And we thank You in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

I have memories of when I was much younger. Rosemary was talking about when she was in Warburton, where I spent from age two to seven

in Warburton. And the first part of that, of course, I don't remember. But I have these pictures in my mind, pictures that my parents took when I was a small baby. And those pictures have a profound impact on the sense of who I am. We are, each of us, should I say, we have different rooms in our mind with different pictures, memories, and experiences. Some of those rooms, we go into and we like to sit there and remember and reflect and enjoy. Other rooms, we don't want to go in there because of the pain and the sorrow and the terrible experiences we've had there. I have a room where there are a few pictures. And here is a picture that I want to show to you.



That's me. Three weeks of age. See? I don't get value out of hiding these things from you, see? And that's my father. That picture is in a very sacred part of my mind because I remember as a small boy looking at that picture, not realizing its significance to me, that there is my father, he's looking at me. He's holding me in his arms. There is so much power in that picture. So much more power than I ever realized. That picture says to me that I'm important. I'm special to the one that brought me into

this world. A beautiful picture. I have other pictures in my mind. I've obviously lost weight since then.



That was in Warburton. Not far from the hospital. And again that picture is important to me because I can see in my father's face, "This is my son." He's holding on to me. And even now, it's something very special to look at, to know that I was important to my father. I have other pictures of my father – memories, rooms that I'd like to go into from time to time and to remember. My mother told me that after I was born, that my father, when he found out that it was a boy, this was in Sydney Adventist Hospital, he went running through the hospital, singing at the top of his lungs,

"It's a boy! It's a boy! I've got a boy!" And looking back now, I didn't realize how important that was for me to know that, to know that my father wanted me, that he cared for me, and that he wasn't worried about looking like an idiot running through the hospital. He didn't care about what other people thought. He had a boy. "If you don't like it, that's your problem. I have a son. And he's my son." And that's another beautiful picture that I have had given to me.

I have another story—another picture. It's a picture of when we were visiting at the Manly Flats and Dad was pretending to be a horse. He's down on his knees and I was on his back and running along and the big grin on my face. Very, very important picture to be able to play with my dad.



Another story that I do remember vaguely. I remember going across to the neighbour's house. And the neighbour was chopping wood preparing for winter. This was early '70s. He's chopping the wood getting ready for winter and I stand there and I'm looking at him chopping the wood and I piped up and I said to him as he was chopping, "My dad can chop wood better than you

can. My dad can do anything."

Powerful statement. The picture of my father and what he meant to me. I didn't know that later on, that same man used me as a sermon illustration of child-like faith and how that my dad was better than anybody. And that's just the way it was.

I remember my dad would go running early in the morning before he got to work. He worked at the hospital and he had to be there at six o'clock in the morning and sometimes he'd go early and I'd say, "Dad, I want to come with you some time." And we'd go down to the oval early in the morning and running. And then Dad had big legs and he could run fast. I'm trying to keep up with him but he was so strong. I just thought, "My dad's so strong. My dad's so powerful. My dad can do anything."

Such memories have a profound impact on later life. The more and more I look back now, the more and more I realize that I had a father that was one-in-a-million. Or more than that. There are some aspects that my father did not have and I guess I focused on those things within my teenage years. But I didn't focus on the things that my dad did have. And I'm starting to try and do that now.

I have deep pictures impressed upon my mind from my teenage years. I remember once, we're travelling from Sydney to Brisbane and we were in Coffs Harbour. We stopped at an ice cream shop and we had some ice cream together. We get in the car. We travel seven or eight kilometres up the road. My dad suddenly twigs that the shop assistant has overpaid him two dollars. What would most people do? Ah well, my dad turns the car around. He drives the seven kilometres back. He goes up to the shop assistant and says, "You overpaid me two dollars. Here's the change." My father could have spent millions of hours explaining to me the importance of honesty. But in that one moment, he impressed upon my mind –honesty, at any cost. Any cost.

Cost us money. Cost us time. We were on our trip from Sydney to Brisbane. It took time out of our schedule. He drove all the way back. And it had an impact on my mind.

I remember Dad working on difficult projects, things at home that he was wrestling with and struggling with and sometimes he gets really frustrated and was trying to do home improvements or something at home –I can't remember exactly what it was –but I remember my father would never give up. He would never give up. And that's something that's stayed with me. I can't say I have always been as good as he has on that particular one but determination - determination. He wouldn't let something beat him. In other sense, the thing that I learned from my father is that –and I don't recommend you do this–it's a good recipe for getting very angry –he used to regularly watch the current affairs programs and all the injustices and all the bad things that are happening in the world. And my dad would sit there and say, "These rotten people are letting –getting away with these things! They should be brought to justice!" Those programs are designed to do that, to get you all worked up and things like that.

But I remember thinking about listening to my father, the way he would speak about injustice and the need to have things done right, and all these sorts of things.

Dad was also funny. He would make me laugh. Just cracking jokes and having fun together.

It's something that I didn't realize at that time but never once did I ever receive any indication at the time that I lived at home that my father, in any way, responded to temptation from a woman or women outside of our home. And I look back at that and I'm so thankful. I'm so thankful. Never once gave any indication that that was the case. And I realize what a blessing it has been to have a father like my father. And it reminds me of a verse in Scripture which I've been blessed a lot by lately, as I've thought about this particular verse.

Proverbs 17:6. "Children's children are the crown of old men and the glory of children is their father."

There's deep significant truth in this verse which our society is fast moving away from. "The glory of children is their father." What does the word 'glory' mean? Let's unpack this word. Glory is the active word. That's the thing. The glory of children. Let's unpack this word. If you look in Jeremiah 9:23 and 24, it uses this word 'glory.' God says this. And these two verses here are very much part of the 'Satan's kingdom/God's kingdom.' Where do you get your value?

Jeremiah 9:23. "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things, I delight.' says the Lord."

Glory. "Let not the wise man glory in his riches." Let's insert a different meaning to that word. The word 'glory' means beauty, splendor, jewels, to boast, something from which you find value. And we've been talking a lot about finding value in our presentations. So if we put the words to

find value in this verse, we'll find that it fits very neatly. "Thus says the Lord, "Let not the wise man find value in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man find value in his might. Nor let the rich man find value in his riches. But let him who finds value find value in this: That he understands and knows Me."

Very clear distinction of the two kingdoms. So if we bring that meaning find value into this verse, the glory or value of children is their father. The glory or the value. The value of children. That which gives them a sense of value, a sense of purpose, a sense of destiny, is directly connected to the father.

You can read all kinds of psychological studies and materials that indicate the crucial role of a father in the life of a child. That's very, very important at this point that we understand the two kingdoms. By pointing out this here, the glory or value of the children is the father, immediately, some may be tempted to suggest, well, "What about the mother?" Well, we're going to unpack this. We're going to look at this.

The Bible says, "The glory of children is their father." If you break or diminish the child's connection to their father, you break or diminish their value. And do we see movements from within our society to get the father out of the home environment or to encourage him to leave or to make him irresponsible so that he doesn't see the necessity or the importance of looking after the family and doing what needs to be done in the home? We see this in many places happening today.

It's interesting to note that in the Hebrew language, the very first word in the alphabet, in Strong's It's number one, the very first word is 'father.' Is that a coincidence? 'Abba.' 'Ab.' Hebrew for father. I don't think it's a coincidence at all.

And again as we listen to these things, if you attempt and just start to find value in your gender, you're in great trouble. This is not representing God's kingdom. Remember, the value system of God where it says,

“Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:6,7)

The representation of the father to his children is a symbol or a reflection of God's love for us as His children. It's a special role that God has given to represent God in this capacity.

And again, we looked at this verse last night.

“Many, O Lord, my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts towards us cannot be recounted to You in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.” (Psalms 40:5)

Again, a reflection of God's incredible love for us.

I just want to share with you some thoughts that represent this. I went to a website called imissmydad.com. And there are some beautiful statements there of people who are writing to their fathers who've passed away. And they just want to write something to their dad. And I want you to pick up on this particular point.

This is from Noelle who lives in Ireland. Says,

“Dear Daddy, today I am 30 and you are not here. No hug, no kiss, no birthday wish this year. No smile, no eyebrow raised, no singing me a song. I can't believe the time has passed. I can't believe you're gone. I love you. Always have. Always will.”

I'm sure just listening to that, that for each us, a stirring begins to take place as we think about the impact of those words, of things that are most precious to us, the things that are most important to us.

Let me read another one. This is Paul from the U.S.A.

“Dad, I miss you everyday and just wish we could talk again. Losing you has made me question who I am and where I'm going.”

We see the sense of destiny, sense of purpose and identity connected to the role of a father.

“Can I be the Dad you were? You were the best. I just wish you could have lived longer to see my accomplishments.”

When you accomplish things in life, when there aren't important people in your life blessing them, they're not really worth much.

“And share in that joy. Even a year later I find myself wanting to pick up the phone to call you. I love you.”

A few more if you can take it.

“Dad, it was quiet on Thanksgiving today not having you around. I felt an emptiness in me and I know everyone else felt the same.”

And these are just a few of thousands of people writing. Imissmydad.com.

This is the one that really, really hits hard. She just signed it, “Daddy's Princess.”

“Hi, Daddy! I hope you're proud of me. I'm really happy and things are going well in life. Work is a little overwhelming but I guess that's what I signed up for. I think I'm doing all the right things and I hope you approve. 'Miss you. 'Love you always. Princess.”

It's hard to read things like that without getting a little bit emotional. But it's because we're starting to tap into the very heart of what God's kingdom is all about. The relationships. The intimate close relationships. The family relationships that God has established. And we need to

realize that when this young lady expresses this, something as beautiful as this, remember what we said before, the human heart in and of itself does not have the capacity to write and do this. We don't. The **carnal mind** is enmity against God. We don't have the capacity to love. We don't have the capacity to care for anything other than our own enjoyment and pleasure. When someone writes like this, it is because the Spirit of God is in them.

They are responding to Christ. Yearning. God has allowed us through our family environment to feel the yearning that God has for us. And He hopes that we will have for Him. And that's something that's really, really important.

These notes reveal the yearning hearts' desire of humanity for its creator.

When you feel a desire for your father, you're really actually desiring your Heavenly Father. That's what you're desiring. That's what that yearning is for. So for some of us that haven't had a good father, the fact is Psalms tells us, Psalms 27:10, "When my mother and my father forsake me, the Lord will take me up." He will take care of me. And the father was only ever intended, well, one of the main things the father was intended for was that he represent the yearning of the human heart for God.

So every time we feel that desire for our earthly father, it's really a desire for God. That's who we're desiring. Deep down. It's expressed through our earthly father and it's a blessing to have an earthly father who loves us and cares for us and takes care of us. But he is only a reflection or a symbol of what God wants for us. But of course it's a very important symbol. And if that symbol is taken away, the symbol is shattered. It's pulled apart.

These are some of the words that God would say to us in Scripture. His yearning for us in response to our yearning for Him.

“Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.'” (Jeremiah 1:4, 5)

To be thought of as known before you were even created. God knew you. He thought about you. He planned you. You were a sparkle in your Father's eye from before time began. That's a hard concept to grasp but it has immense power. Immense power.

“The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: 'Yes, I've loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.'” (Jeremiah 31:3)

One of the ways He draws us is through our earthly relationships. Through our parents. Through those that we are connected with. And God here is reaching out for us. How could so many of us get God so wrong? So misunderstanding what He's like and how He operates. It's a constant mystery. It's part of that drunkenness of being in the wrong kingdom, that we see God as exacting and controlling and trying to restrict anything that is fun for us. It certainly appears that way when you were younger.

So we want to move on to the roles of a father and mother. We will look at two different roles. The roles of father and mother are vitally under attack today. They are really being attacked by our society in every way. If you watch any television for any extended period of time, your perception of what it means to be a mother or father, husband and wife is being attacked. It is being shredded. And if what God designed for the human family in terms of husband and wife, mother and father is obscured, then we're in great trouble. Remember, God's kingdom is a family-based kingdom.

If you turn to Ephesians Chapter 3, Ephesians 3:14, 15.

“For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.”

We're all part of one family. We need to understand that. And any time we want to represent God's kingdom on earth, it has to be done through family. As I said this morning, the success of the church depends upon the success of the family. Church is built on families and the right perception of families. And anything that comes in that destroys the concept of what it means to be husband and wife in a biblical sense will destroy the concept of God's kingdom. And these are challenging thoughts.

When you look at the way Jesus prayed, when the disciples came to Him and said, "How should we pray?" He doesn't say to the disciples, "Your hallowed majesty." He doesn't say, "Bow six times and then go through a rosary bead and then, "Dear King." No. He says, "Our Father." That's your first point of reference. Our Father. When you pray, say, "Our Father." What a wonderful, wonderful thing. Our Father.

Twenty-six times in the gospels, Jesus tells us that God is our Father. Sixty-one times, Jesus calls God, "My Father." It's a recurrent theme through Scripture. "My Father. My Father." And that's why the importance of the statement, "This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased." If your father is important to you, then when he makes a statement, it has power. If your father is insignificant, when he says something, it's not really important. And can it be, can it be that through our rebellious nature growing up and not appreciating the roles of a father, or a mother for that matter, that as we grow up, when our true Father sends us His Word, we don't really understand its power? Does that make sense? It doesn't mean that much because we're more focused on what we want to do rather than what our Father is saying to us.

Okay. As I've got here, God has laid down guidelines for, I guess we're moving now from identity, personally, child of God, to identity within the family. Different roles for husband and wife because there are different things that need to be achieved from both mother and father in the home environment to bring up a child that is well-balanced and well-rounded.

The Bible in Genesis 3:16, what does Genesis 3:16 say? Now, we're really going to test on which kingdom influences your thinking. Genesis 3:16. Where do you get your value?

“To the woman He said, I'll greatly multiply your sorrow in your conception, in pain shall you bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.”
Genesis 3:16

Now, when I hear that verse, with the upbringing that I've had and experience and I have, I have immediate aversion to that verse. So I'm like, “Oh! That's male chauvinism. Husband ruling over the wife?” Anyone else feeling the same thing?

Rulership. How you understand rulership depends on which kingdom you're living out of. Satan's kingdom, performance-based kingdom, means position is power, position is value. Which means that to interpret that verse as ruler, as “I'm the one with the power. I'm the one that controls. I'm the one that determines.” If that's how you're reading it, you're in the wrong kingdom. But if you're reading it from a relationship position where positions are given to bless and to enhance relationships, then you're reading it in the right sense. And I find it hard as I read these passages, because of the training that I've had in the performance-based system that I've had and the drunkenness of experience in the spiritual realm on this issue, I find it hard to interpret these verses correctly. I don't even like to preach about them because I'm not, I don't want to get my suit messed up from throwing eggs and tomatoes at me, and stuff like that. I want to keep my suit clean.

“He shall rule over you.” Rulership. 1 Corinthians 11:3, it says that “The husband is the head of the wife.” The head of the wife. Ephesians 5:23 says the same thing. 1 Timothy 3:1-4 talks about qualifications of an elder in terms of ruling his household well. In 1 Peter 3:1-7, he's described as the leader. Why does the Bible talk like this? Is this all culturally-conditioned stuff? Is that what it is? I don't think so. I don't think so.

Let's have a look at this quote from 'Adventist Home' page 212.

“All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice.” Adventist Home' page 212.

Responsibility. If I can word it this way, most young men today, because of our society, don't actually understand what it means to be a man. Most of them don't have a male role model that they can follow, that is a real man. The men that we have portrayed to us today are men that are irresponsible, playing around, let the wife look after all the kids in the home and “I'll just muck up, play around, do whatever.” Because he's never actually been taught what it is to be a man. You watch Simpsons, you watch all kinds of other programs, and they give you a very clear picture of what people think of the father: he's just an idiot. He's just a dope. He doesn't have a clue of what's going on. He's behind the times. He's losing his hair. He's losing his marbles. He's losing everything.

That's what the world would portray to us. But the Bible tells us that God has given a special blessing to come through the role of a father. The most important thing that the father will do in his life is to impart to the next generation a sense of worth, a sense of resilience, a sense of “You are important; you are special.” There's no higher calling in this for a man in his life, in his culture, in his society, in his home, in his church. Your job, your work, everything else pales into insignificance compared to this one role. If only men could understand that they have a power to bless the children. The next generation look to their father for guidance, for identity. They model themselves. They need approval. As we read in those statements before, “Daddy, I hope that you approve. I need to hear these words from you. 'You're doing good. What you're

doing is wonderful. I'm really happy about what you're doing.'" We need to hear these words because that's how God's kingdom operates.

And when you turn around and you make the role of the father insignificant, you make it appear that what he has to say is stupid, idiotic, and not worth anything, then you have cut off his ability to bless. So that when he says, "I love you," "Ah, yes, whatever. I don't care what you have to say. You're not important to me." And now the child who normally would look for the blessing from the father now looks for it somewhere else, looks for it in the arms of some other young man, young lady. Job. Some performance-based thing. Because the father's irrelevant now. He has no role. And men who have no role have no importance or significance in life. And again, I like to talk about my good friends down at Centrelink.

Centrelink has really destroyed many aspects of the role of the husband as provider for his family. We don't need men. What do you need them for? Just go to Centrelink. Now I'm not saying that it doesn't help people in certain situations. But one of the consequences of having this system is that the men feel irrelevant. We don't need them anymore. They have no role to play. "Just as long as I get the baby, I don't need you. Just leave." Obviously not everyone feels that way. But this is in society, some of the things that are starting to take place.

We need to recapture the biblical model so that we can bless our children. You need to understand the cycle of pride and depression. I wish I had time to explain this. And all I can say is that it's on the CDs which we'll make available later—is that after a number of years of being at school and constantly being compared with your peers on a multiple number of labels, by the time you get to the early teenage years, your sense of self-worth is starting to unravel and fall apart. And your perception of what it means to be valuable and important has completely shifted. It's at that time that often the father has often left home or just become irrelevant. At the time that children need their father the most, he's out of the picture. And the child is destined to

struggle through life trying to find who they are and why they are in any other means than the way God has ordained it.

And so in God's kingdom, all members of the family centering in the father means that he has the ability to bless and to create value, or allows God to say to the children that He loves them. It's a role specifically-designated for that purpose, to allow God to say, "This is how I love you." He does the same thing through the mother but in a different way. In a different way. We need to look at some of those things.

The mother. Genesis 2:18. I wish we had time to unpack this whole segment. But time does not permit. Genesis 2:18 presents helper, the role of a helper. And we get all kinds of interesting scenarios on this verse. So I heard someone the other day saying, "Your husband," and in Genesis 3:16, "Your desire will be toward your husband and he shall rule over you." That particular verse is only just describing what's happening because of sin. It's not a prescription for the way it has to be. So it's just going to be that way because of sin. And I'm looking at that verse and I'm going, "Your desire shall be toward your husband." Okay. So we can thank sin for the fact that women want to have an intimate relationship with a man. We can thank sin for that. That's good. That's really good. No, this is the way God set it up to ensure that His blessing could continue to pass through the roles because let's remember, always, value does not come by position. It only comes through relationships. So that when this occurs, you can have people in differing positions and not worrying about it in the slightest. Did the cherubim get really "narked" and annoyed with God because the seraphims had six wings and they only had four? Did they really get annoyed about that? And what are you going to do when you get to heaven and the 144,000 of the closest to God and you only make it into the martyr class? You're in the second ring out there and what about the great multitude? Well, you're just a bunch of plebs. Are we going to live like that in heaven? Role has nothing to do with your value.

What did David say? "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." It has nothing to do with

it. And if we can just stop being so drunk on this issue we might actually get somewhere with presenting the third angel's message to the world.

"Desire towards the husband." Genesis 3:16. The beautiful thing about this verse here. It says, "The woman's desire will be toward her husband." Do you know that when it comes to verbal communication, we all recognize that women have a better ability at expressing their feelings than men do. We know that. Anyone not know that? You're in denial. And that's because women use both sides of their brain for verbal communication. Men only use one side of their brain. Don't get value out of that. And surveys have shown that on average per day, women will speak, use about 25,000 words per day on average. Men use about 12,000. We all knew that, too. That's only as a general rule. But what that says is that the desire for communication, a young man or a young woman growing up will learn more from their mother about communication, the importance to express feeling, to express thoughts, to desire to understand. Often, at the end of the day, when I've finished work and I come home and it's late and we're lying down going to bed, my wife hasn't seen me all day. We're both really tired. And then she just gets this energy from somewhere. And she just starts talking and talking and "How is this and this...?" She wants to communicate. She wants to know what's in my heart and she wants to see what's in her heart. And I need to learn from her in that capacity. I need to learn.

Now, if a young man can learn this from his mother, he can save the future wife he will marry a lot of frustration in trying to get this point across to him. "I want to communicate with you. I want to understand what's in your head and I want to tell you what's in my head. And I want to share." If you learned it from your mother, you're going to save your wife a lot of headbanging experiences. "He doesn't get it. I just want to sit and talk." And men just want to solve problems this way. Solve problems. And this is vitally-important. The desire for intimacy, the desire for communication, is a gift and a blessing that a wife and a mother can pass on to the next generation and teach the next generation. So combining your sense of destiny and purpose and blessing that

comes from the father, with the need for, or the blessing of intimacy and the desire for communication, you put those two together, you've got a complete person. Both mother and father play critical roles in developing the next generation. If you scramble those roles, you pull it apart, you pull the whole thing apart, you misrepresent God's kingdom. And the more we begin to understand why God has established the family the way that He has, the less drunk we're going to get on Satan's kingdom.

I'll spend a bit more time on this particular issue. Spirit of prophecy very clearly says that reflecting this role that the husband is the head of the house, not as a performance issue but as a blessing issue, as imparting the blessing. Why does it say in 1 Peter chapter 3 that Sarah called Abraham, "Lord?" My Western culture upbringing, Greek philosophy mindset says, "Ugh, that's blasphemous to even think that way!" But that's because of the performance-based kingdom. She called her husband, "Lord." She had a level of respect for her husband because she knew that as she respected her husband, her children then would respect her husband. They would follow her lead and then they would respect her as well. And that she would be securing a blessing for her children, to the next generation. She understood the principle. There is nothing to be lost in referring to her husband in this way. She didn't lose anything by doing that. She understood the principle that the glory of children is their father and that she could work on her role to impart communication and the desire for intimacy and the need to express your feelings. And the two together were a blessing.

Now, obviously, it gets difficult when you get into a situation where a man does not take up his responsibilities. Many women are placed in very difficult situations because men are really still boys. Irresponsible. Let their wife deal with it. Nothing worse for a woman than to be married to a boy. That's hell. Very difficult. And I can understand why many women want to rise up and fix the situation. We can't blame them for that. But it's going to bring a curse in the end. We have to ask God. God, He's the head." So you go past your head, you go to his boss and

say, "Lord, we got a problem here. Can you help my husband? He needs to understand?" It's not easy. Human relationships are never easy. It's never cut and dried. But we need to maintain these roles that God has given to us.

Reading again.

"God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided 'a help meet for him' - a helper corresponding to him - one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him." *Patriarchs and Prophets 46*

I heard someone the other day. This is the problem when you get locked into Satan's kingdom of performance I heard someone saying the other day. "The word 'helper' means, well, God has referred to as helper. And it's actually a position of superiority." Give me a break! Can't you stop being so drunk? Can't you see the issue? It's not the issue. You don't get value out of your gender. It's just not what God is on about. But when you're in Satan's kingdom, oh, yes, gender is very important. Very, very important. 'Helper' means one who works alongside, one who you can share everything with, to support and encourage one another. That's what the Bible would tell us. But you can only see that when you see God's relationship-based kingdom. And we're having a little wrestle with this issue in our church. Really big wrestle. This issue. In terms of leadership roles and positions and things that are often so prevalent in church because the church is reflection of the family. And one is the reflection of the other. And we need to re-do some thinking on this particular issue and lose the value issue on roles.

I like this verse.

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:27, 28

What that is saying is let not man or woman glory or find value in their gender. That's what that verse is saying. Some people use this verse to completely twist it and make it into something else. So we can do anything and go in place or any role. That's not what it's saying. It's saying don't find value in those things. It talks about race. It talks about jobs. Slave or free. It talks about gender. They're the three things. Don't find value in those things. No barrier, no position, no separation between those things. That's what that verse is trying to say to us.

All right. [Next Slide] Family Roles Under Attack.

I'll read you some of these statements.

Capitalism is challenging the simple truth that a child's relation with his or her biological father is valuable. The image of fathers has come under increasing attack as more TV sitcoms feature fathers as incompetents (“The Simpsons” and “King of Queens”, whatever it is I don't know what that is, are current examples) and movie plots involve abusive fathers (“The Breakfast Club,” “Affliction,” and “Daredevil” to name only a few). Many courageous women have long been forced by circumstances to raise their children alone. Now, however, as celebrities like Camryn Manheim (Eleanor of TV's hit lawyer show, “The Practice”) choose to have and raise babies without a father (both in real life and her fictional character, in the case of Manheim), Hollywood sends the message, “Who needs a father?” Academics deride fatherhood in books like, 'Feminism,' 'Children,' and 'The New Families,' in which Susan E. Krantz dismisses the notion that “two parents are necessary for the well-being of a child” and argues that “the role of the father has been overemphasized.”

Can you hear the voice of the serpent? Because he knows. Try and understand, Satan has a big plan. A big program. That is, cause a child

to be cursed. Take the father out of the situation. Break the family up. Give that child a sense of worthlessness. "Then I can control him." Because when you're worthless, when you're not worth anything, who cares? Who cares whether you live or die? Who cares whether you smoke, drink, sleep around, do whatever? Who cares? "I'm not worth anything anyway." I see many stickers on the back of cars. "Care Factor - Zero Percent." It's pretty bad when you get to that point.

I remember my father when he used to drive buses as well. And this kid was smoking just before he was hopping on the bus. And my father said to him, "You know, you'll kill yourself if you smoke." He said, "Who cares? We're all going to die anyway."

You can't discipline a child that doesn't care about themselves. Ever tried it? Tried to do it with a child that doesn't have respect for themselves or for anybody else? You can't reason with them. You can't discipline them. You can't do anything. They're just on a path to self-destruction. And you can't stop it.

And this is what comes about when we pull apart the family roles that God has given us. We need to educate within our churches the critical nature of the roles of both husband and wife, mother and father. How many times have you seen programs in the church where young men are taught what it means to be a husband according to biblical definition. Where have you seen that? Have you seen anything like that? I haven'tt seen anything like that. I've seen plenty of stuff where there's a continuing focus on equality according to the world. Equality of position. Equality of power. Equality of all these things. I've seen plenty of that sort of stuff. But not the way the Bible describes it. And Satan's intentional on this issue. Splitting up Mum and Dad.

Liberal politicians and advocacy associations have increased the rate of divorce in the United States enormously by enacting policies based on the premise that fatherhood is not important. The result has been a host of social,

psychological, and economic problems suffered by children caused by their fatherlessness.

[<http://www.childrensjustice.org/fatherlessness1.htm>]

I don't have time to go into all this but the belief in evolution is driving most of this. We're just biological animals. Look at the animals. People who have children. Father disappears. Mother disappears or whatever. It's irrelevant anymore. As if we're just animals. And a lot of our social systems are based on this type of thinking.

A major cause of the increased divorce rate has been the introduction of "no-fault" divorce coupled with the policy of family courts of awarding the mother solely, instead of both parents jointly, exclusive physical custody of the children (unless the mother is grossly unfit) and requiring the father to pay child support sufficient for the mother and children to maintain their former standard of living, even though it impoverishes him (courts often garnish the man's paycheck directly). Once rare, divorce is now common and two-thirds of divorces in the U.S. are initiated by women.

[<http://health.discovery.com/centers/loverelationships/articles/divorce.html>]

Now, there's another side to this story. That's a one-sided argument. But that's certainly one side. The other side is women have been put in intolerable situations. Men are being irresponsible and just drinking all the wages and bashing up wives and children and causing all kinds of problems. And so we need to try and understand how we can address this kind of issues. If you're watching television and movies and stuff, these concepts are constantly being thrown at you, constantly being pumped into your head. And as I say, our church is succumbing to these things. It's not responding to it very well at all. Not in my understanding of things. We need to get back to what the Bible talks about.

The state has essentially told women, “Feel free to leave your husband whenever you feel like it, no matter how trivial the reason, because the state will make sure you keep your children and your husband's income.” The result is that in millions of broken families, the state has moved in to assume the role of head of the family and “parent” to both mother and father.

Again, there's another side to this story. But this is why I talked about Centrelink. “You don't need the father. Just get Centrelink to look after you. No problem at all.” Don't try and work it out. Just move on.

Just before we look at that particular issue, I want to appeal to those of us that are here and I guess this presentation hasn't been so much, touchy-feely, warm, fuzzy, talk presentation. This is hardcore stuff about what families are really about that we need to go in and say, “God, what does it mean to be a family?” And some of the ways that we've tried to respond to this, and I'm suggesting this to you as something that could be very powerful, is that understanding the need for children to receive blessing from their father, I began to understand the importance of my role to bless my children. And Jesus did that in Mark Chapter 10. I talked about that this morning. The children's story. So every Friday night, we open Sabbath. I bring the boys to myself. They kneel down and I place my hands upon them. And I pronounce a blessing over my boys. I tell them, “You're my sons. I love you. You are precious to me. And you will grow up to be strong young men for Jesus.” And in that capacity, and because of their desire to please and follow my role model, because the glory of children is their father, those words are prophetic. Prophetic. Because whether we realize it or not, as we grow up, we spend the rest of our lives either denying or confirming the words that our parents spoke to us. Confirming or denying what they told us. What they thought of us.

And so this is what I see I need to do for my children. I tell my sons, “You are precious. You are important. You have value. You're important to me. I believe that you'll grow up to be a strong young man. I have

confidence in you." If you hear that week after week, week after week, someone telling you they have confidence in you and that they feel that you will be successful and you will do well, do you think that's going to rub off? I believe so. And then we spend some time. I read to my wife Proverbs 31 because I want my sons to understand how they should treat a woman. I need to reaffirm her identity in their eyes, and in my eyes remind myself, "A virtuous woman who can find, for her value is above rubies." She does this. She does this. And I say to my boys, "Do we appreciate what Mother does for us? Do we appreciate her role in the home, all the trouble she goes to?" Because the Spirit of prophecy says, there's one thing that a mother needs in the home is appreciation. To teach my boys, "When you receive a meal and she's prepared a meal, you thank her for that meal." Not because you have to but because you realize all the work that she's gone into: she's gone out, she shopped, she's done this, she's had to weigh all this stuff. She's done a lot of work. And we need to appreciate it. And hopefully by doing that, when my boys grow up and get to the point where they get married, they will learn to appreciate their wife and not just sit down and eat and not express any words because a woman needs to hear the words, not just have the money handed over.

And then my wife will read to me from Psalms 112 about what it is to be a righteous man. A man that has compassion and is gracious and is loving, who guides his affairs with discretion, who leads his family well. And then I'm reminded of my responsibility. And we've been blessed as we've tried to reaffirm the roles that God has given us as father, mother, and children. There've been times when I have forgotten to have the blessing and my son will come to me and say, "Dad, we haven't done the blessing yet. Where's my blessing?" There is power in simple things! Simple things.

We sat down the other night and I'd been reading 'Adventist Home' and it says that the father is the house band of home treasures. The home treasures are the memories and the experiences that we share together as family that are precious to us. And it is my responsibility to ensure

that those things continue and are reminded of. And I said, "Lord, how do I do that?" When I read these books, sometimes, as you do, you read something like 'Adventist Home.' You read something like 'Child Guidance.' If you're in a performance-based kingdom, you're going to get very depressed reading those books. But those books are not designed as a how-to. They're not designed for that. They're designed as "This is God's promise to you. This is what He wants to give you." "You have to come to Me and pray and ask how to do these things. I'm not going to give you a how-to." There are so many how-to books out there. How to do this, how to do this. It's all legalism. You got to get it through God. Get on your knees and pray and ask Him, "How do I do this?"

And so I sat down and I said, "Let's just spend tonight sharing three things that we appreciate about each other." It's only a simple little thing. And I began to share what I appreciated about my son. Three things that I appreciate about Michael. And then Daniel. And then about my wife. I'm modelling to my son what it means to show appreciation. And then my wife began to share. And then Michael began to share. And then after that, because we'd shared things that we appreciated about each other, we then felt comfortable and able to share the things where we felt we'd let each other down. And we started to share, "Look, I'm sorry about this. I made a mistake here." And it was at that point that my son put his head down and he began to cry. And it moves me now as I think about it, as he realized that he had not shown the appreciation to his mother and his father as he should. The Holy Spirit spoke to him through that simple process. He was affirmed and that allowed him to reveal where he felt he was failing and then the spirit was able to speak to him and convict him that he'd been unappreciative. I'd been praying, "Lord, how do I show my son that he lacks gratitude? He doesn't appreciate the things that he's getting." And God says to me, "Do the things that I've asked you to do and leave the rest to Me. I will look after it. I will take care of it. I will make sure that your son shows gratitude." It just blew me away.

And so I'm asking you to consider these things. To reclaim the family roles that God has given to us so that our children can be blessed.

Matt Rogers. Anyone know Matt Rogers? Some footballer. He's a footballer. Famous footballer, I think. I was blown away by this statement. This is a man who plays football. He makes a living out of bouncing off other men, beating other peoples' heads and stomping on them with studs and stuff like that. He's in a tough profession. And this is what he said about his dad who had an untimely death of Steve Rogers. He said this, "Dad was the softest, most gentle human being." Now, Matt could have said lots of things about his dad and how tough his dad was and how great he was. But this is the room that he went into and shared with people at the funeral. "When I was young, he would stroke my hair and I would fall asleep in his arms." This is coming from a tough footballer. Footballers aren't suppose to say stuff like this. "He would make me feel so safe. All I ever wanted to be was just like Dad. You're my hero. I'll miss you everyday for the rest of my life. I love you, Dad."

That's why this verse says, "Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father." (Proverbs 17:6)

I've got another little audio-visual that I'd like to share with you, called "A Father's Love Letter." The quality's not the best but I think you'll appreciate it, what God wants to say to us. I find it hard to sit through this unemotional. But it's very powerful.

[Audio-visual starts at 61:51]

"The words you are about to experience are true. They will change your life if you let them. For they come from the very heart of God. He loves you. And He is the Father you have been looking for all your life. This is His love letter to you.

"My child, you may not know Me but I know everything about you. (Psalms 139:1) I know when you sit down and when you rise up. (Psalms 139:2) I'm familiar with all your ways. (Psalms 139:3) Even the very hairs

on your head are numbered. (Matthew 10:29-31) For you were made in My image. (Genesis 1:27) In Me you live and move and have your being, for you are My offspring. (Acts 17:28) I knew you even before you were conceived. (Jeremiah 1:4-5) I chose you when I planned creation. (Ephesians 1:11-12) You are not a mistake. For all your days are written in My book. (Psalms 139:15-16) I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. (Acts 17:26) You are fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalms 139:14) I knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalms 139:14) and brought you forth on the day you were born. (Psalms 71:6) I've been misrepresented by those who don't know Me. (John 8:41-44) I'm not distant and angry but I'm the complete expression of love. (1 John 4:16) And it is my desire to lavish My love on you simply because you are my child and I'm your Father. (1 John 3:1)

“I offer you more than what your earthly father ever could. (Matthew 7:11) For I am the perfect Father. (Matthew 5:48) Every good gift that you receive comes from My hand, (James 1:17) for I am your provider and I meet all your needs. (Matthew 6:31-33) My plan for your future is always filled with hope (Jeremiah 29:11) because I love you with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3) My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. (Psalms 139:17-18) And I rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17) I will never stop doing good to you. (Jeremiah 32:40) For you are my treasured possession. (Exodus 19:5)

“I desire to establish you with all My heart and all My soul. (Jeremiah 32:41) And I want to show you great and marvellous things. (Jeremiah 33:3) If you seek me with all your heart, you'll find Me. (Deuteronomy 4:29) Delight in Me and I will give you the desires of your heart (Psalms 37:4) for it is I who gave you those desires. (Philippians 2:13) I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. (Ephesians 3:20) For I am your greatest encourager. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17) I'm also the Father who comforts you at all your troubles. (1 Corinthians 1:4) When you are broken-hearted, I am close to you. (Psalms 34:18) As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to My heart. (Isaiah 40:11) One

day, I will wipe away every tear from your eyes and I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. (Revelation 21:3-4)

"I'm your Father. And I love you even as I love my Son, Jesus. (John 17:23) For in Jesus, My love for you is revealed. (John 17:26) He is the exact representation of My being. (Hebrews 1:3) He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you, (Romans 8:31) and to tell you that I am not counting your sins. Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) His death was the ultimate expression of My love for you. (1 John 4:10) I gave up everything I love that I might gain your love. (Romans 8:32) If you receive the gift of my Son, Jesus, you receive Me. (1 John 2:23) And nothing will ever separate you from My love again. (Romans 8:38-39)

"Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. (Luke 15:7) I have always been the Father and will always be Father. (Ephesians 3:14-15) My question is, would you be My child? (John 1:12-13) I am waiting for you. (Luke 15:11-32)"

Love,

Your Dad

Almighty God

4 – HAM AND THE RISE OF WORTHLESSNESS

So tonight we look at the subject of 'Ham and the Rise of Worthlessness.' Now, that does not have anything to do with pork on the stock exchange but it does have very much to do with identity and its effect on us.

Let's just bow our heads and we'll say a prayer before we begin.

Our Father in heaven, we're just so thankful that we can come into Your presence and Lord, based on what we said last time, we know that every good and perfect gift comes from You. So Lord, I know that if anything good is said this weekend, it would be because of You. I pray for freedom of speech, to speak the things that You have shown me, the wonderful things that You have opened to me in Scripture. Allow me to share them this weekend that Your Name will be glorified and that we will be blessed as we open Your Word. We just thank You and we praise You in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Just as I said, I just want to recap where we have been or where we were a month ago. It doesn't seem like a month, it only seems like last week. But it was a month ago.

If we look at the series of presentations, we looked at a number of things. The first thing was God's kingdom. The things that we noted about God's kingdom is that God is the source of life, something that all of us reasonably understand. But the impact of that truth is so profound, it should affect every area of our life. God is the source of life. And it says

in Acts 17:25, that God gives to all life and breath and all things. All things. We looked at the fact that God not only gives us breath but He gives us inspiration. He gives us will. He gives us ability to do things. He gives us love. And we talked about the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace. He gives us these things.

God's Kingdom

1. God is the source of Life Acts 17:25
2. Therefore: We can only have life through a relationship with God. (Ps 104:27,28)
3. Our Relationship with God is the basis of our Identity & value. (Matt 6:9; Luke 12:6,7; Ps 40:5; Jer 31:3)
4. This relationship/Identity is guarded by the ten commandments (Deut 6:24; Matt 22:37,38)
5. Because God's kingdom is based on relationships. His kingdom focuses on the unseen rather than the seen. 2 Cor 4:18; Heb 11:1; Ex 20:4

And to put this into practical terms.

I talked about the fact that one morning, my son comes running into my room before I'm awake. I like to wait, particularly in winter mornings, I like to wait until the sun comes up a little bit before I get out of bed because it's too cold for me. Some of you are nodding going, "Amen, brother. That's the way to do it." Anyway, he jumped on to my bed and he threw his arms around me and he said, "Daddy, I love you." Now, we could pass that off as something that's just very nice. But if you go into the fact that God is the source of all things, it is God Himself that came to my son and said to him, "I want you to tell your father, My son, that he's loved." And so He puts that thought in my son's mind and my

son, with his will, he embraces that thought and he comes and he performs that for me. Something beautiful. So that not only am I able to see that my son loves me but also that God has reminded me that He loves me, because God is the source of everything. A beautiful thought.

I was reminded of that the other day. I was walking along and I was listening to the birds as they were singing in the sun, reasonably early in the morning, the light and the sun, beautiful. And I saw a mother swinging her child on the swing and I was reminded once again, there's God, touching that mother, touching that child as they enjoy each other's company. God has inspired this moment. Whether or not they acknowledge Him, He still inspires that moment for every soul that opens themselves to do right, to express goodness, is allowing God to work in them whether they recognize it or not.

As I've said to some, God makes His rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Do we restrict that to simply physical rain? Isn't the rain a symbol of the Holy Spirit? His Spirit reaches out to the just but it also reaches out to the unjust. Obviously, they can't receive as much because they haven't given their lives to God. But He still pours out His spirit on those people. I hear many people say to me, "I don't understand. I have these friends and they're such nice people, and yet they don't believe in God, they don't profess any religion, and yet they seem so nice. Well, that's easy when you understand that God is the source of all life. They're responding to Him even though they don't realize it. And maybe one day, they will realize it and turn to Him. And if they're responding in this way, there's a good chance they will turn to Him. And that is something that is wonderful.

So God is the source of life. As a consequence of this, if God is the source of life and everything comes from Him, therefore – deduction - we can only have life through a relationship with God. We can only have life through a relationship with God. We have to have that life through Him. In Psalms 104:27 and 28, basically tells us (I won't go into now) that all of creation wait upon God and He pours out His benefits upon us.

We have life through a relationship. And if we have life through a relationship, then relationship becomes very important, doesn't it? It becomes very important.

Point Number Three that we looked at last time was our relationship with God is the basis of our identity and value. If our life comes from God and we are in a relationship with Him, if He is the origin, then our worth, our value, identity, everything is connected to Him. And we see this reflected in the fact, even within earthly families, a child that has been part of an artificial insemination program, finds out later on as they get older that the father actually was not the father that he is now living with. And then this desire within that person for many to find "Who was my biological father? Who was he? Who was I originated from?" And because we are originated from God, everything that we are is bound up in Him - our identity, where we come from, and our value is all connected to Him. And we spent a lot of time looking at that.

Matthew 6:9. It says, "Our Father which art in heaven." We had to pray 'Our Father.' Luke 12:6:7. We looked at the fact that says, "Are not two sparrows sold for five copper coins yet not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. You are of more value than many sparrows."

And Psalms 40:5, it tells us that God is thinking about us all the time.

And Jeremiah 31:3 says, "I've loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, with loving kindness, I have drawn you." All these things connect us with God and give us a sense that we belong to Him and our value comes from Him. Just the fact as we described, just the fact that right now, if you were to think about the fact that right now, that God is thinking about you. He has plans for you. He loves you. He's preparing a home for you. He has dreams and desires for you. When you hear those words, what does it do? Does it make you feel important? Does it make you feel special? I hope so. Because it's true. It's true. And that's why our value comes from God. So that was Number Three.

We looked at the fact briefly and we're going to go into this a little bit more. I touched on this but we're going to dig more into this tomorrow afternoon when we talk about 'Identity and the Commandments.' But we touched on this basically saying that this relationship, identity, is guarded by the Ten Commandments. It's the commandments that protect our relationship with God. It reminds us who God is, and who we are, and how we negotiate the relationship. I'm going to go into that in a lot more detail.

And when we start to look at things in this way, we see that the commandments serve a very different function in God's kingdom than they do in Satan's kingdom. Satan's quite happy for you to believe in the Ten Commandments. He doesn't have any problem with that as long as we believe it the way he wants us to believe it. But in God's kingdom, the commandments are a protection, a guard of that relationship. If God is our life source and we only have life through a relationship with Him, then we need something to protect that relationship, don't we? Or we're dead. We're finished. And that's what the Ten Commandments are. They are there to protect our relationship with God. Is it any wonder that the psalmist says, "Oh, how I love Thy Law; it is my meditation day and night. I delight in Your Law."

Have you ever pondered how David could have an emotional connection with the Law of God? Isn't it just ten words? That is there constantly reminding us of our evil and our wickedness? Well, if that's the way you see it, then you have a very shortened view. Certainly the law does that but it is much more. And we will look at that.

Because God's kingdom is based on relationships, His kingdom *finds its source in* the unseen rather than the seen. And we're going to really expand that concept tomorrow night when we look at Elijah, the visible, and the invisible. And simply saying at this point that two people that have a relationship, you can see that two people have a connection, but you can't actually see the relationship. We don't know. Everyone in this room has different relationships with different people. But I can't see the quality of that relationship. I don't know how good is the relationship. I

don't know how bad the relationship is. I don't know where the problems are and where the strengths are because you can't see it. And because God's kingdom is based on relationships, it's based on the unseen rather than the seen. And the implications of that for us in our relationships with each other and our worship of God, have profound ramifications. And we're going to have a bit of a look at that. Here are some texts that we have on that.

2 Corinthians 4:18 While we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are unseen, because the things that are seen are temporal but the things that are unseen are eternal. In Hebrews 11:1, it says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, and etc. And of course, Exodus 20:4 is the second commandment, it says, "You shall not make unto you any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in and above the earth, beneath," etcetera, etcetera. And we will come back to that tomorrow night.

So then we looked at 'Identity Lost.' God is the source of life and if this is the most foundational principle that we will ever need to understand, then isn't this the place where Satan will attack? That God is the source of life? That everything comes from Him? And that's what He does. In Genesis 3:1-5, he says, "You will not surely die. You can disconnect your relationship from God and you will live on." Satan attacks at the very foundational principle that you and I need to understand if we want to live on forever. And that is that God is the source of life and we only have life through a relationship. But Satan says, "No. You can have your own life source. You don't need a relationship with God and you'll be okay." And so he introduces the concept of the power within. "You are autonomous. You don't need God." This is the most destructive principle. And we live out these principles every day. Every time we feel worthless, every time we feel discouraged, every time we feel life is too hard, we are living out this principle. The power within. We can go more into this a little bit later.

And we did touch on this a fair bit, of course, before. And that's where Satan attacks. By embracing Satan's lie, Adam and Eve lost their identity,

their value, the family relational model was broken, of husband and wife. The order of the family was broken. And entered into the cycle of worthlessness. (Genesis 3:16-19) You will remember, those of you that were here last time we talked about the cycle of worthlessness.



The problem with believing that you have life in yourself is that when you do something, then you were the one that originated it. You were the one that created it. Therefore, you are the one worth of the exultation, the praise, for doing such a thing.

And so, if you are in a situation where you're disconnected in your relationship from God, then

you need recognition. You need value. You need people to tell you. And so you need to achieve. And so when you have self-power, value-by-achievement focus, if you do well, you become proud. You did poorly, you experience failure. And this is the way that most people in this world experience life - a cycle of roller coaster between pride and depression. Pride and depression. Round and round and round until either you find Christ or you end your life. Or you take substances to block out the pain. That's the way it is in this life.

'Imprisoned by False Identity.' Once Adam and Eve disconnected themselves from God, they entered the cycle. And all of us with them have entered this cycle. As the Bible says, "When we are born, we go astray from the womb." We enter into to this cycle. We desire to be first. Any child growing up, the desire is to be last. When you're looking through the school album and you know that your picture's in there somewhere, what do you look for first? Or is it just me? We are self-absorbed. Self-interested. And this we have received from our father,

Adam. And other forefathers along the way which have embellished, increased, intensified, and then passed it on to us. This desire for recognition.

And you see it everywhere. You see it in many places. The desire for power. The desire for recognition is what drives most people. And this is the cycle of worthlessness. The problem with living within this cycle is you never truly can have relationships that can last, because you have to be better than other people and in control of other people to feel worth. But when you have to control other people and be better than other people, your relationships suffer. Does that make sense?

That's what happens in the cycle of worthlessness. And of course, I look at the fact of Genesis 3:10-12 that we were imprisoned in this system because when God comes to Adam and He says, "Did you eat from the tree?" Now that he has a system of belief that his value is determined upon his performance and God is now challenging his performance, he cannot acknowledge that he's done wrong. And so he blames everybody else. "This woman, whom you gave to me, she gave me the fruit and I ate and it's not my fault. It's your fault and her fault but not my fault."

Do we see that spirit manifested today? All evidence of the cycle of worthlessness. Denial. Going into denial. And this is the system that Jesus came to release us from. This cycle of pride and depression built on a system of self-powered belief, going back to Satan who taught us that "You will not surely die." That is the poison from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That is the intoxication of the wine of Babylon as we looked at. That is what makes us drunk. That is what causes us to forget who we are and who we belong to. And it makes us do crazy things.

Number Three. We also looked at the fact that Adam and Eve only lived on or continued to live because Christ became the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8). Many people interpret the text where God says, "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die," they say, "Dying, you shall die." Not true. Because that would infer that

man has a life source within himself that not even God can kill and it takes Him a few hundred years or now 80 years to wipe him out. Not true. We only have life from God. From the very moment that Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus stepped in and said, "I pledge My life for theirs."

And so your heart and my heart beats stamped with the cross of Jesus Christ. That is the only reason we have life. Before it comes directly out of the throne of God straight to us,² but now it comes through Christ, through the cross, and we live because of what Christ has done for us. And that's good news, isn't it? Nothing without the cross. The food you eat is stamped with the cross of Christ because the life source that produces that food comes from Christ Himself. Everything within the creation comes from Christ. And I thank God for that life. We should thank God for that life every day. Every day you wake up, every day that your eyes are open and you see the sun rise and you can see life through the birds and the animals. And even around you, everything teeming with life. We can thank God for life that's come from Him.

And so Adam and Eve lived on because they needed time to reconsider the suicide they had just enacted. They were dead but yet they were alive. They had no life of their own. They're living by the life of Christ. Yet they did not fully realize, and most of us don't realize that this is the case.

Number Four. To reclaim a sense of identity and value, the human race embraced a performance and achievement-based system. (Genesis 10:8-10) And we're going to explore this in depth. It says that Nimrod was a mighty hunter before, or against the Lord. And he built this city and he took this city and he did this. He became known because he was a mighty hunter and that he was this and he was this, and he was this. We often have that even with our situation. When someone comes to speak,

² This statement is not correct. The life of God always comes to us through Jesus Christ. My former misunderstanding of the atonement facilitated me expressing it this way back in 2006 when this presentation was given.

they get up, and then you get this long list of all the things they've done and all the things they've achieved and all the wonderful things they've done, as a reason as to why you should listen to them. There's only one reason why you would listen to a person. That's because you believe that the Holy Spirit speaks through them. Who cares about their degree? Who cares about how many things they've done, how many evangelistic programs they run? They mean nothing. What's important is that you understand that God is speaking through a person. If God is speaking through a person, you listen. You can forget all the degrees. As a friend of mine said to me once, that he's heard an evangelist say, "I've plenty of degrees in my thermometer. We don't need any more than that."

So we moved to a performance-based system. And you'll remember we looked last time how that performance in the world, nationality. Remember I told you how that Dutchmen are the smartest, most intelligent, most good-looking people on the face of the planet. Did I hear an amen out there? Value by nationality. And I know each of you with your nationalities would beg to differ. Education. Value by education. That's something that's very much part of the world. Value by wealth. Value by who you're connected to. "I had lunch with John Howard³ yesterday." Name-dropping. It makes you feel important that you are associating with important people. And other things. But in the church, do we find the same thing happening within the church? Do we have labels within the church? Are you valuable because you're conservative or because you are liberal-minded? Does that make you valuable? What about education or power or position? Are you valuable because you're an elder? Or because you're a song leader? Or something like this? We see the same things happen in the church. And we know that these things are important to us because things can get really ugly in the nominating committee when things go wrong. If it wasn't important to us, things would not go wrong in the nominating committee. We'd all just love one another and wouldn't worry about it.

³ John Howard was the current Prime Minister of Australia at the time.

That's important to us because there's value. "I'm climbing up every day, going from deacon to elder. I'm now pastor. I've pastored two churches. So I'm doing better than most of you." What did Paul say? "I consider this but dung, that I may win Christ."

But this is the system that we embraced and we're all affected by it. We talked about the fact that we attempted every day to turn stones into bread. "If you're a child of God, prove it." And that's something that we need to escape from. There's an intoxicating power to that temptation. "If you are a child of God, prove it. Do something. Be eloquent in your prayer. Give more money to the church. Do Bible studies. Do this. Get up an hour earlier." I've said this to people. When someone comes to me and says, "I'm struggling in my relationship with God. Maybe I need to get up an hour earlier and I know that will fix it." And I said, "No, it won't. You need to believe that Christ is the Son of God and that you are His child. You need to become a son rather than servant. And then you can get up an hour earlier and I think you'll find it a lot better. You need to get the things in perspective."

We look to the factor, the two kingdoms, the comparison of the two kingdoms. The government of God is a family-based government. Satan's government is state-territorial system. He did not originate us so he can just draw a line around in a big circle and say, "You're in my paddock. You belong to me. You do what I tell you." Because he's not our father. Thank God for that.

Currency. The currency of heaven is based on character. Currency of Satan's kingdom is based on assets. He who has the most toys wins.

Citizenship in God's kingdom is based on the fact that you are a son or daughter of God. Where in Satan's kingdom, it's based on your performance or achievement.

Value in God's kingdom is based on your relationship to God. Satan's kingdom is based on your personal achievement.

And all of us have been tested on these issues. Every day. Where is your value? What makes you valuable? I'm reminded of this every day and again we look at this when we look at 'Identity and the Commandments' because it says, "Great peace have they which love Thy Law and nothing will offend them." Why? Because they know where they get their value. They get their value from Christ and Christ alone and nothing will offend them.

A Comparison of the Two Kingdoms

Attribute	God's Kingdom	Satan's Kingdom
Government	Family	State - Territorial
Currency	Character	Assets
Citizenship	Sons and Daughters	Performance & Achievement
Value	Relationship to God	Personal Achievement

If you are offended by other people and what they do to you, then you are still eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. You're still intoxicated by the poison which says that another person standing in my way and preventing me from achieving what I want to achieve, or they're not allowing me to control and they've given me a sense of worth by the fact that I can control them. "Great peace have they which loved They Law." And nothing –zero - nothing will offend them. That text still haunts me because I do sometimes still get worked up. And then God says, you remember that verse? Nothing, Adrian, nothing will offend

them. "I'm offended, Lord. So I'm still under the influence of this tree. This poison is still in my system. I need to go into rehab and get detoxed from this stuff."

'Identity Regained.' Again, we've covered a lot last time and just bear with me as we go through. So we looked at the fact that the kingdom of God and the source of life. And then identity lost and how we got stuck in this worthless cycle. And then Jesus comes to reclaim us.

Point Number One, Jesus becomes a second Adam by becoming a human. He's the new representative from earth. (1 Corinthians 15:45) The fact that Jesus became the second Adam means so much to us. If we could only understand what that means. "For unto us, a child is given. Unto us a son is born." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He became one of us. Not for 33 years but forever. He's one of us and He is our elder brother. That in itself is just, sends tingles up and down my spine that the Creator of the universe is like me! He knows my temptations. He knows my trials. He took my humanity upon Himself and He overcame the worthlessness and the pride that I experienced. So I've no excuse to feel those things or believe in those things. As it says in 1 Corinthians 15:45, "The first Adam was a living soul but the second Adam was a quickening spirit."

Jesus models a perfect relationship with His Father and makes this available to us as our representative. (John 17) It's a beautiful statement. It had Jesus model that relationship. And some people I know over the years, *I've found that many people struggle to understand concepts about the God head or the Trinity. I think one of the most beautiful things about God is that even though Christ is identical with the Father,⁴ that He places Himself in the position of submission to teach you and I what it means to be submissive.*

⁴ This expression is a reminder of my former false belief in the Trinity. In the book *My Beloved* I show how it is impossible for Christ to be co-equal and teach us true submission. This is a deception of which I have repented many years ago.

How can God tell us to submit when He doesn't show us how? But God shows us how through His Son. And Jesus submits to the Father. He has nothing to lose. He did not grasp for godhood as it says in Philippians 2. He willingly gave that away because He was safe in the relationship with His Father. And I just wish we could understand that concept, that *Jesus is His Son voluntarily*,⁵ to teach you and I what it means to submit and yet feel like you have lost nothing.

There's identical parallels there also in terms of, as we talked about the role of husband and wife. Wife, same, identical to the husband. But she should feel no difficulty in submitting to her husband, to teach to the children what it means to submit to authority and leadership. Ramifications to that are huge. And again, we're going to look at that in a bit more detail.

I'm getting off-track. Number Three. Jesus reclaims our identity and value at the baptism through the blessing, "This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well-pleased." (Matthew 3:17) In my study in reflection, this is at the very heart of reclaiming the human family to God, to hear those words, "You are My beloved son. You are My beloved daughter. In whom I'm well-pleased."

We cannot understand the cross. We cannot understand what Christ has done for us until we hear those words. "You are My beloved child in whom I'm well-pleased." If somebody who was my enemy brought me an expensive gift, I would challenge their intention. "Why do you offer me this gift? Is it a bobby trap? Is it a time bomb? Are you trying to control me? Are you trying to manipulate me?" But once I hear the words, "You are My beloved child, in whom I'm well-pleased." And then I look at the cross. Then I understand what that means and we have Jesus wanting to reclaim me. But until then, He's still my enemy. Because

⁵ Jesus is the begotten Son. He did not choose to become a Son but was made a Son by virtue of the fact that He came forth from the Father in eternity. See the book *Wisdom of God and Divine Risk* for more on this subject.

it says in Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Not subject to the Law of God, neither they can it be.

And so this is the critical phase of breaking that cycle of worthlessness. That blessing. "You are My beloved child in whom I'm well-pleased." And God spoke those words to you and I through Christ, the second Adam, the head of the human family. As God spoke those words to Christ, those words were for you and I. 'Desire of Ages,' pages 113, 116, You read it there. "The words which were spoken to Christ were for us." "You are My beloved child in whom I'm well-pleased."

Jesus overcomes humanity's false identity by overcoming the temptations in the wilderness. Many people believe that what Jesus did in the wilderness was to overcome appetite and overcome presumption and overcome these other things or the worship issue, and that was the central issue. No. Those things were the medium. Those things were the access point at which the devil comes to us. But the issue of identity: "If you are the Son of God, then do something. Perform. Achieve." And Christ said, "No. My Father has spoken from heaven. I'm His beloved child, 'in whom I'm well-pleased.'" When Satan comes to you and he says, "Oh, you're child of God, are you? Did you read your Bible this morning? Did you pray this morning? I see you're a bit light on, in this area today. You're not a child of God." And we fall into that trap. We believe that rubbish. What makes us a child of God is a simple statement of faith. That we are His children whom He loves. And once we begin to believe that, we might actually want to study the Bible. It might actually be interesting to us. But until then, it's something that we must do to appease God, to appease His wrath. "If I don't study my Bible, I'm going to go ahead and have a motorbike accident or a car accident, because I want God to look after me." What kind of a picture of God is that? And yet how many people believe that. We think God is against us but He's not.

So He overcame in the wilderness. And as I read to you that statement, 'Confrontation,' page 63. Ellen White writes. "The conflict with Christ in the wilderness lays the foundation of the plan of salvation and gives to

fallen man the key whereby he in Christ's name may overcome." That statement revolutionized my thinking as to what the plan of salvation was all about. What Jesus did in the wilderness was critical to His work on the cross. It's we reclaiming of a sense of who we are. He's rejecting Satan's attacks on "If you are the Son of God..." He repulsed Satan on that issue. And once again, we are told, His victory is ours. You don't even have to try and resist Satan on believing that you're child of God. Christ has already done that for you. You simply need to hang on to Him and believe that He loves you. That's your battle. Could God love someone like you? Could He love you? This was what it means to overcome. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me on My throne." What do we overcome? The fact that we are unworthy of His grace and His goodness and yet He's still willing to give it to us. That's what we must overcome. And when we overcome that, all the fullness of the Gospel, all the fruit of the Spirit is ours, everything is ours because we are inheritors of His grace, heirs of the kingdom as it says in the Book of Romans.

Identity Regained

1. Jesus becomes the second Adam, becoming a human. He is the new representative from Earth. 1 Cor 15:45
2. Jesus models a perfect relationship with his father and makes this available to us as our representative. John 17
3. Jesus reclaims our identity & value at the baptism through the blessing – This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Matt 3:17
4. Jesus overcomes humanities false identity by overcoming the temptations in the wilderness. If you are the son of God?. Matt 4:1-10; Confrontation 63
5. Our Identity and valued are reclaimed through accepting Jesus' work in His life and death to forgive us and make us accepted in the beloved. We are reconnected through His blessing. Eph 1:6; 1 John 3:1; DA 113,116

Point Number Five. Our identity and value are reclaimed through accepting Jesus' work in His life and death to forgive us and to make us accepted in the beloved. We are reconnected through His blessing. Through His blessing. "This is My beloved Child, in whom I'm well-pleased." Ephesians 1:6 of course, 1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love." And John the disciple, the beloved, I believe he understood this principle so clearly when he said in John 1:12, "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the authority to become" what? "Children of God." 1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God." This is what John could see. This is the truth. This is the miracle. That we are His children and we are reconnected, no longer having to listen to Satan's accusations against us. What does it say in Romans 8? It says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who is He that accuses, yea, that is Christ, that has died, yes, He is risen from the grave.

So identity is regained through what Christ did in the wilderness as well as on the cross. That's the point that I want to bring out there. And the blessing plays a central role in that reconnection that we have with God.

The blessing breaks the cycle. We looked at the fact that the blessing returns us to God's Kingdom. Matthew 18:1-4 says, this is the disciples, and again I'm trying to move quickly through this. "The disciples said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of God?'" What did Jesus say? "Unless you become as little children, you will in wise enter the kingdom of heaven." And He took the children, and another part where they were asking similar questions, He took the children up into His arms and He blessed them showing this is what it means to be part of God's kingdom.

Galatians 4:7, 8 says, "Wherefore, God has sent forth His Spirit into our hearts whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.' Therefore we are no longer His servant but a son." But a son. The blessing through what Christ received. This is ours. Christ received from the Father the blessing, "You are My beloved Son..." By becoming Christ's we inherit that blessing. That is the spiritual riches that Paul talks about that we shall possess.

“You are My beloved Child whom I love.” Can we say that there's anything else in this life that we could desire to possess than this blessing? To know that God says, “You are My child and I love you.” What would you pay to receive that blessing? What would you give to have that? Is anything worth more than that? Can't be. This is the pearl of great price. We should sell all what we have to possess this. “This is My beloved son. This is My beloved daughter. In whom I'm well-pleased.” That's all I want to know. That my life is pleasing to God.

The Blessing Breaks Cycle

1. The Blessing returns us to God's Kingdom. Matt 18:1-4; Gal 4:7,8
 - You are my child – Identity
 - Whom I love - security
2. Family Roles Critical to Blessing Preservation. Gen 12:3 AH 15
 - Leadership, Appreciation of Wife, The Blessing - The Role of the Father. Eph 5:25; Prov 17:6
 - Desire to Husband, Submission – Role of Mother. Gen 3:16; Eph 5:22,23
 - 1 Cor 11:3 Channel of Blessing
 - Role Identity of Husband and wife critical to protecting the blessing.
 - Current environment hostile to Family roles
3. Blessing of Father centre of Elijah Message Mal 4:6

I wish that I can say as Christ that Satan has come and he has found nothing in me. That's the witness that I want. And we are to say, like Paul, “I wish that you could be as I am.” Is that boasting? No, that's a man beside himself with joy at the fullness of God's grace. “I wish you could be as I am, to understand the fullness of the Gospel.

Number Two. Family Roles. And this is, and we spent a bit of time on this. Family Roles, critical to Blessing Preservation. If the blessing plays

an important part in reconnecting us with God, then the family plays an important role. And we looked at the text in Genesis 12:3. And I've got it right here where it said, where God said to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you. And in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed.'" It doesn't say 'individuals.'" It says 'families.' Family will play a critical role in the preservation of the blessing. And of course, we know through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs, they passed on to their children the blessing. A blessing, of course, which Esau and Jacob misunderstood. They got into a performance understanding of that blessing and they fought for it. And Jacob was even willing to deceive his brother for it, not understanding its significance. But the passing on of that blessing so that we could hear, "You are my beloved child, in whom I'm well-pleased."

'Adventist Home.' page 15 says, "The security or the prosperity of the nation, of the community of the church, depends upon home influences." If the home is not right, the church will not be right. If the home is not right, the nation will not be right. And this is my major thrust. What point is it for us to evangelize this community if we don't even know how to order our families and live the Gospel in our own families? What are we doing other than to bring people out of their misery into our misery? And what are we doing there? Putting a yoke of bondage upon people. If we bring it into a context of the Advent faith without understanding these principles, we put a yoke of bondage on them. We make them twice-fold the sons of hell than ourselves when we do that. And we don't want to do that. I don't want to do that. We need to understand the family.

It says here that "Through you, all the families of the earth will be blessed." Family will play a critical role in this blessing. We look at the fact that leadership, the role of the husband in leadership, number One, to appreciate his wife, to express that with words, not just bring home the pay cheque. The blessing for his children. The role of the father. Ephesians 5:25. Proverbs 17:6. "The glory of children is their father."

The thing that we have lost in our culture today is that men have lost the understanding of what it means to be a priest and to be the head of his home. This, above everything else, we should be studying and seeking to understand. This is what we should be teaching to the next generation of young men. To be a father and to be a husband, there is no higher calling than this. To bless your children and to express appreciation to your wife. There's no higher calling than this. No job, no salary, nothing more important than this. If you want to preserve the order of heaven within a family context.

It says in reference to the role of the wife that "Her desire would be towards her husband." And we talked about the fact that a woman's ability to communicate or express her feelings is better than that typically of a male, and she's able to express her feelings better and that she will pass on to the next generation important principles on expressing feelings of intimacy, of desire for communication, essential for the binding together of the human family. That's a blessing that the mother will pass on. And in her role of submission, she will teach her children to respect authority and respect the role of the husband and the father. If she rises up against her husband, if she considers her husband to be inadequate, if she thinks that she knows better than he does, she's destroying her children. She's cutting off the blessing and she is making it very, very hard for the Gospel to get through to her children.

That's a sobering statement. As I was saying to Edward [Perez] on the way down, you read Titus. I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about this but read Titus 2 where it says, "That the older women should teach the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children." And then it says, "That the word of God be not blasphemed." How does blasphemy associate itself with that relationship? Blasphemy? To blaspheme the Word of God by not loving your husband and loving your children? Those are serious statements.

And of course, there's a flip side to that in terms of the husband needing to understand his role and to appreciate his wife and not make her lot hard and to learn to express his feelings on love and care and concern

for her. When he doesn't do that, it makes it very, very hard. And we know that many of you experienced that. But what I want to say is that we need to re-examine the roles that God has laid down, not to be sucked into the way the world operates and the world thinks, as to what it means to engage in marriage or in relationships.

Equality in the Bible is something far different from what the world teaches us that equality is. We think equality means equality of power, equality of money, equality of intellect. How far is that from what the Bible teaches us? Equality means something completely different in biblical terms. And that's what we need to study out.

We looked at 1 Corinthians 11:3, the channel of blessing. The Father is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man who is the head of the woman over the children. And through that line, where everyone is secure in their relationship, God's love is poured out. His life source is poured out through that channel. And when rebellion begins to occur, we begin to break that channel of blessing and curse and darkness come upon our families and our nation and our church and not in that order.

Role identity of the husband and wife is critical to protecting the blessing. And I spoke to you last time about the fact that I've been praying and asking God, "How do we enact this?" And each Friday night, our family will kneel, and my sons will come and they will kneel before me and I'll place my hands upon them and I will tell them that "You are special and you are important and you are the next generation to carry this Gospel to the world, and that you are dearly loved by your mother and your father."

There's no greater thing that I can do in life than to do that.

Again, as I was saying to Edward on the way down, we know that Jesus is coming soon. But I've never given a thought to what my family would be like in 300 years from now. What legacy do I leave for my family, my posterity? I think of my children but do we think far enough ahead about the influence of what we do now? It could turn nations around.

It could turn nations upside-down by what we do now. Things to ponder about.

And the last thing that we looked at is the fact that the current environment is hostile to family roles. And we need to protect our families against this hostility toward the family.

The blessing of the father is the centre of the Elijah Message. (Malachi 4:6). As I sometimes like to say, many of these things you already understand but what makes them powerful is to understand them in their right context, to tell fathers to love their children, and children love their fathers, is something that we understand. But when you say that to do that is the heart and centre of the Elijah Message, that's power. This is what we're all about. If you study our history as a people, we are told that we are the ones that proclaim the Elijah Message. What if at the heart of the Elijah Message we see fathers turning to the hearts of their children and children to their fathers and that this is at the very heart of what we are doing? That's power. That tells us something. And really, as I look at our church, 50 years ago, many ministers never saw their children and children never saw their fathers because they were out doing the work of God. How blind can we be in our understanding of these things? There was no greater role for a minister or any man than to impart a blessing to the next generation. That is one of the greatest things that we can do. And the sooner we can regain a sense of that, the better we'll be as a church and as a nation.

The Elijah Message. We'll look at that again tomorrow night.

Okay. That's our introduction. Are you tired? We won't take too long. Take a few deep breaths. I just needed to cover that and I got a little bit carried away. I have to thank my brother. He sang so beautifully I got carried away.

Ham and the Rise of Worthlessness. It's important that we lay this foundation regarding the family. I'm bringing out this point here that "By embracing Satan's lie, Adam and Eve lost their identity, their value,

their family relational model, and entered into the cycle of worthlessness." (Genesis 3:16-19)

I now want to explore this worthlessness. When this cycle is not broken, what develops? What happens when this cycle is not broken, when a person does not come to an understanding of the Gospel? This is what we want to explore.

Genesis 9:20-25. Something very interesting. It says, "And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent." One of the things I want to do when I get to heaven is have a talk to Noah and say, "Please explain. Why did you get drunk and how come you were uncovered?" We won't go there... the mind boggles. But the thing that is interesting of course is that Adam and Eve, when they fell, what did they fall on? What was the medium? Appetite. We have the fall. God wipes the slate clean. And this is after the flood. And we see Noah. What happens? He falls. On what issue? Appetite. Satan's very cunning. Very cunning. He gets Noah. Noah creates a difficult situation here. But let's read on. It says, "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away and they did not see their father's nakedness." What does that tell you about the level of reverence and respect that these two men had for their father? They treated him like a king. Does that tell us something today? What society are we building? If boys come in today and see their father, "Ha! Look at Dad! He's wasted himself. He's drunk. Silly old fellow." When we say those words, we are destroying our blessing.

Our fathers are the most powerful instruments that God can use to bless us if we have things set up the right way. And of course, for those that don't have fathers in that context, God says, "I will be your father and I'll bless you directly." Thank God for that. For those that are unable to have fathers like that. But it was never intended to be that a boy or a girl

never had a father. God never intended it to be that way. But He says, "I'll be a father to the fatherless."

And so we see the reverence that Shem and Japheth manifest. They treat their father like a king just as Sarah, as it says in 1 Peter 3, that she says, when she referred to Abraham, she called him, what does it say? "Lord." "Kyrios." "Sir." Sir? Sarah calls her husband 'sir?' What does this woman understand that we don't understand? That in treating her husband with such respect, she's teaching her children such respect and she's securing for her children the blessing that she so much wants for her children. Wisdom. Wisdom in these words.

We see here that he then turns and says in verse 24, this is interesting, "So Noah awoke from his wine and he knew what his youngest son had done to him." That's interesting. Then he said, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants he shall be." Is this just an old man getting angry because he got caught out? Is this what is going on? He pronounces his curse! What on earth is going on here?

The thing that I wish to point out to you here is that Noah, obviously, when he was drunk, he was asleep. And without getting too detailed, it says, "When Noah awoke, he knew what his younger son had done to him." Ham had done something to his father that was very grotesque. Sexually-deviant. And he had broken his relationship with his father in a way that would reap consequences on succeeding generations. One act would reap misery and destruction for millions of people. By this one act.

I want to read you a statement from 'Patriarchs and Prophets,' page 117. What does it say there? "The unnatural crime of Ham," what does that suggest to you? Unnatural crime. Walking in and seeing your father and go, "Ooops!" That's an unnatural crime? This man was vile in what he did to his father. Now it says here, "...declared that filial reverence had long before been cast from his soul, and it revealed the impiety and the vileness of his character." Ham, obviously in some way, interfered with his father. It's not something that we would really like to think

about. But it's important to understand this. It says, "These evil characteristics were perpetuated in Canaan and his posterity, whose continued guilt called upon them the judgments of God." One act. Obviously, it was building up to this one act. But it says, 'filial reverence.' What does that mean? What's filial mean? From the word 'filos,' brotherly love. Tender affection between father and son. It says here, in inspiration it says, that by this act, he revealed that the connection between himself and his father was broken. And once it was broken, Ham now did not have the blessing of his father. "The glory of the children is their father." The glory was lost to Ham. And he now would have a curse pronounced upon him, similar to that of Cain. What did it say of Cain when he slew his brother? It says that he would be a vagabond and a wanderer. The word vagabond in the Hebrew means "one who staggers and shakes."

Uncertain. And in pronouncing this curse upon Ham, he was merely stating the reality of what Ham had done to himself. There was no venom. There was no anger in Noah's words. He was saying in effect, "My son, you have destroyed yourself and your posterity by what you have done. A servant of servants you will be." And certainly we can see in reference to the emotional needs of Ham's children, the insecurity, their worthlessness would increase and increase and they would indeed become a servant.

In a political sense, we know it says in Verse 26, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem and may Canaan be his servant." We know that in recent centuries, that the sons of Ham which occupied the nations of Africa and Syria and Babylon and Egypt, that many of these were taken and used to serve as slaves to the European nations and to the Americas. And so we see it fulfilled in that political sense. But I believe there's a deeper fulfilment in the insecurity and the worthlessness that was manifested in this line of people. Startling things that we see here.

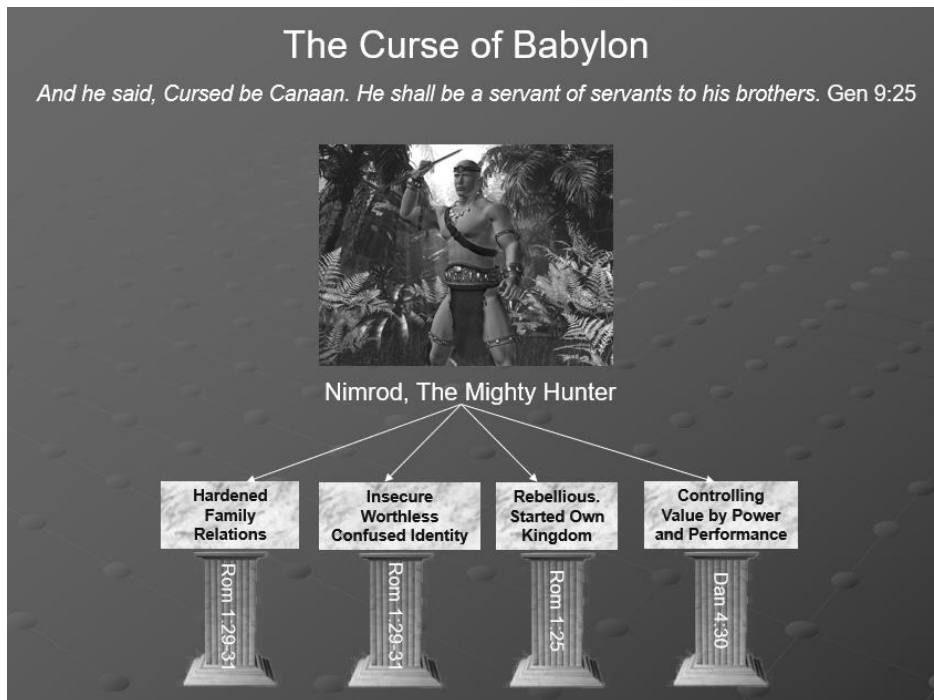
Here's the curse. The curse. He said, "Cursed be Canaan. He shall be a servant of servants to his brothers." This curse has perpetuated. As we come down to Genesis 10, Ham had a number of sons. It says in Genesis

10:6, "The sons of Ham were Cush, Misraim, Put, and Canaan." Do you think what Ham did to his father would have had any impact on Cush? The rebellion and the rejection, the filial reverence that is torn away from Ham? Since that was torn away, could he pass it on to his son? No, he can't pass it on now. Not unless he comes back to God and makes a confession and reconnects. But he can't pass on what he doesn't have. And so his son learns to rebel against his father. And then the son of Cush, in Verse 7, "The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah," well, a lot of list there, isn't it? I won't read all those. And in Verse 8, it says, "Cush begot Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one on the earth."

Why did Nimrod feel the need to become a mighty one on the earth? Because inside he felt worthless. He felt nothing. And he needed to feel powerful. And here is the point that we wish to make. That when a child does not receive that blessing, "You are My beloved son, you are My beloved daughter, in whom I'm well-pleased," you plant the seed within that child to desire, conquest, and kingdom, and to rule. Does that make sense? Either to rule or to allow yourself to be ruled and violated and controlled and dominated by somebody else because you're worth nothing. You either allow your worthlessness to manifest itself by being controlled or to control, to kill or to be killed. Does that make sense? This is what we see in the curse of Ham.

So we see in Verse 10, it says, "In the beginning of his kingdom." What a minute? Kingdom? What does a kingdom represent? Power. Throne. Dominion. Nimrod had his own kingdom? Nimrod had so lost his connection with God that he wanted to set up his own kingdom. He fully embraced the lie, "You shall not surely die." I'll show you a statement in a minute from Josephus that reflects that. And he built his own kingdom by his own might and his own power. It says, the beginning of his kingdom was what? Babel. Babylon. Babylon is important because it has a big impact on the Book of Revelation. Babylon is built upon, well, let's have a look at what Babylon is built upon.

There's my artist's impression of Nimrod. Interesting-looking fellow. The mighty hunter. The first thing we see that Babylon, and this is the first city that he built. The first thing that we see that Babylon is built upon is hardened family relations. We see Ham performing a vile act against his father. And this strange, debauched sexuality is passed on through the generations. So much so that Nimrod decided that his mother was good-looking and he married her. Now that's sick, isn't it? Some reports, we don't have enough, a lot of information on this but some reports suggest that Nimrod actually killed his father and married his mother. That's even more sick. Not a very happy home for Nimrod.



But this is the man. Hardened family relationships where relationships are only as useful as they can be useful to be used for your own purpose and design. Hardened family relationships.

Number Two; Insecure, worthless, confused identity. He didn't know who he was. Ham, his grandfather, had broken that connection. And

that curse is now being passed on at least to the third and fourth generations as it says in the Book of Exodus. Unless one of them would decide to hang on to God and break that curse, for which, they did not. Insecurity, worthlessness, confused identity, rebelliousness, the desire to start your own kingdom, the desperate need to be worshipped, to be appreciated, and to rule.

As I've often said there's, one sure-fire way to know that a person is insecure, and that is when they feel the need to control other people. Do we feel the need to control other people? Do we get upset when other people don't see things our way? Of course all of us know what we need to do. Everyone of us here knows how to fix the Adventist Church. Just nobody else can see it. Rebelliousness. And finally, controlling. As I said, value by power and performance. These are the spiritual foundations upon which the city of Babylon is built. There are deep implications in this. Hardened family relations, insecurity, worthlessness, rebelliousness, and a controlling spirit with a desire for value by power and performance. And I didn't talk about this last time. When you see these points, do we see some other things in our families? Some points to ponder.

The point that we need to make here is that broken family relationships can turn into despotic ruling nations. This is where the connect occurs. What Ham did in Genesis 9 has a direct connection to the beasts that rise from the sea in Revelation 13. These beasts are controlled by their desire for worship and need for acceptance with people, their insecurity which causes them to want to dominate and control people. These beasts come from hardened family relations, insecurity, and worthlessness, and a desire to control. And that should really, really tell us something. That's where the connect is. The Book of Revelation is full of families that have gone wrong and have never broken the cycle of worthlessness. That's all those beasts are. And if we can understand them in that light, Revelation I think really starts to come alive.

Is it an accident that the church of the Dark Ages forbade their priests to marry? Is that an accident? That's not an accident. Is it an accident that

the epitome of Christianity within the church of the Dark Ages is not to present the representation of a father blessing his son? But a Madonna and child. Is that an accident? No, it's not. These things have deep and significant meaning because they strip away the blessing that God would give through Abraham, "Through you, all the nations or all the families of the earth will be blessed." Let's not forget this point. We ourselves could be creating without realizing it, individuals in the next generation, two or three generations down, that if given the opportunity, could become despotic, ruling, dominating individuals. Is that what we want to create? And do we see those things manifested now? Some of us may feel we've experienced that in the board room or the nominating committee. I want you to note this and we've just got a few more things before we finish.

Worthlessness rises. You know the stuff, that light stuff always floats to the top? Have you always wondered why in many organizations the boss always seems to be a complete idiot? Well, there are reasons for that. In some cases, it maybe you rather than him. But in some cases, people who desire power will always reach for the top and feel like once they get to the top, that they have arrived. But their character is useless. Look at the world leaders through history. Were they very savoury, bedtime reading type individuals? They're debauched, horrid individuals. They float to the top. They grasp for the top because once they get there, they go, "Now, I've arrived. Now I'm valuable." Is not this great Babylon which I have built by the might of my power for the glory of my majesty? Is it not what many rulers have said?

Says here, this is in Daniel 4:17, where Nebuchadnezzar had a dream about the cutting down of the tree. It says, "This matter is by decree of the watchers and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." It's good to know that even though these families that have never broken the cycle of worthlessness and they develop these kingdoms, it says God is still in control. God is still in control. He, in the kingdom of

men. "And giveth it to whomsoever He will." And then it says something interesting. "And He setteth up over it the basest of men."

What does that mean? The basest of men? A number of versions of the Bible try and interpret this to say the lowest of the humblest of men. That's not what it's saying. Not in this context. This is a context of God will send them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie or an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul. That's the context of this verse. That if you want to understand how this system works, I'll show you how it works. I'm going to allow you to have the most despotic individuals to rule over you and to see how stupid it is to live this way. He will set up over these kingdoms the basest of men, the most vile characters.

That's what we see in many of our societies today. That's what we see in reference to the world elite, the international bankers. These vile elite. If you understand what some of these individuals are doing, their promiscuity and their strange sexuality, things like Bohemian Grove and other secret societies. Skull and Bones. That these world leaders are involved in. It's all connected to this. God sets over this world, the basest of men, that we can see that this doesn't work. That's why when we get to heaven, sin will not rise again a second time because we have to come face to face with the fact of what happens when we allow the cycle of worthlessness to play itself out.

Wouldn't it just be easy for all of us just to believe God and go home? Oh, but no, no. We have to learn the hard way. Sad.

This is a statement that I want to bring out before. "The heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation, is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences." That's the statement that I want you to remember. Adventist Home, page 15.

We can forget about all our evangelistic programs until we get this issue sorted out. Don't even bother. We have to address this issue otherwise we're not preaching the Elijah Message. We're not preaching the

Commandments. We're not preaching the Three Angels' Messages. Unless we get this issue right.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5,6) What is that curse? “Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” That curse I believe is the curse of Ham. When filial reverence between father and son, father and daughter, is pulled apart, there is no hope but for despotic ruling, beasts and nations, to rule over us, to drive us into a tyranny of government as we are seeing right now happening in America and other western nations. A tyranny. A war on terrorism. It is a front for something for something very different to bring us all into one system, to be controlled, and for a few small individuals to get their jollies [thrills] out of controlling all of us. That's what it's about. That's the curse that's coming upon this world.

But Elijah, in the last days, will say, “No, we'll turn the hearts of the fathers to their children. We will produce a group of individuals and families that will not bow down to your image nor worship your gods. And we will follow God and His kingdom.”

And so the challenge for us tonight is do you want to live according to God's kingdom? Do you want to follow His principles? Do you want to be husbands and wives, mothers and fathers that are according to the Bible? Not according to what the world tells us. Not according to what the world says is equality. But what the Bible says will preserve our families and keep the next generation. That's what I want to leave with you tonight.

Let's bow our heads. Our Father in heaven, Lord, we looked at a lot of things and I just pray that in our minds will be stirred up, that we will open our Bibles, get down on our knees, and we will say, “God, teach us what really is the message of Seventh-day Adventists. Have we understood it? Have we grasped its depth or have we had a surface

understanding of this message? What does it mean to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? What does it mean for Babylon to fall? These are the things we must connect to our understanding of the family. Lord, I pray for each of us here that we will study. That we will pray. That we will seek to understand these things. And we thank You, in Jesus' Name."

5 – ABRAHAM AND NIMROD -THE TWO KINGDOMS ILLUSTRATED

Our presentation today will be looking at the two kingdoms illustrated. Nimrod versus Abraham. Looking at how they illustrate the two kingdoms which I have been talking about both in this series and in the series last month. I really would encourage you to follow the sequence through, to come back this afternoon and to have a look at identity in the commandments, how vital the commandments are to our relationship with God. And then at 4:30 p.m., we'll be looking at doctrinal implications of the two kingdoms. That's where it really gets interesting, seeing how the principles we've been talking about, how they affect our understanding of the Bible and the teachings that we believe as Seventh-day Adventists. And then finally tonight, we will end with the Elijah Message in the context of the visible and the invisible. And we will talk in there about how our understanding of the Advent message affects the way we worship and our relationship with God. And I have some extended material there to see how long we can go and how long I can go, as to how much we can fit in in one day.

Also, I'd like to point out that the material that I'm sharing is an extension of the principles that I put together in a book that I've written which I put in audio format called "Identity Wars." We'll be making these available tonight. If you want to explore the subject further, I

certainly will encourage you to do that. That you get hold of a copy of this audio series tonight.

Let's just bow our heads once again and we'll begin.

Our Father in Heaven, we want to thank You that we can come into Your house, reminded of that beautiful music that heaven is not far away. And Lord, we pray that Your Spirit would speak to us, that You would instruct us and then teach us in the way that we should go. Open our hearts and minds to an understanding of the way You see things. And I pray that we'll be drawn closer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Nimrod and Abraham. The two kingdoms illustrated. We just want to do a little bit of a recap on where we went last night. Last night was, in food terms, it was a bowl of muesli. It was fairly intense but there was plenty of things to consider and for those of you who weren't there, I can only feel sorry for you. But you can get the DVDs from Shane. He'll be making those available.

And if we can turn in your bibles, we'll just pick it up there once again. Genesis 9. Looking at the impact of family on world affairs. How significant is one small family on the community, on the nation, on the world?

And we looked at how that one act by one individual, one unfortunate act, had repercussions for this whole world. Repercussions that you and I are suffering the consequences of. From one person and what they did. Notice in Genesis 9:20. It says, "And Noah began to be a farmer and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent." Again, I'm tempted to amplify and comment on that but I will refrain. I'll talk to Noah when I get to heaven. "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away and they did not see their father's nakedness." And we said last night how that we see in Shem and Japheth a reverence manifested for their father that we do not

see today in our culture. They went backwards. They didn't stand at the door of the tent, snicker and laugh, and say how silly it was that their father had put himself in this situation. They manifested their respect and their reverence for him that is significant, as opposed to their brother Ham where it says, verse 24, "So Noah awoke from his wine and he knew what his younger son had done to him." Many people do not understand what this passage is actually saying because it says, "Then he said, 'Cursed be Canaan (Canaan will be the son of Ham); a servant of servants he shall be (to his brethren).'" And many people seem to think that possibly, that Noah was a little bit upset that his younger son had caught him naked in his tent and so he would retaliate and he would put a curse on him, would put a hex on him. Well, that was not what was going on at all.

If we look a little bit further into the text, it says, "So Noah awoke from his wine and he knew what his younger son had done to him." The Bible is discreetly trying to tell us that Ham was not a very nice individual. If you are asleep and someone walks into your tent, would you know that they had been there? If they just looked and walked out? You wouldn't know. But if you had been asleep and you awoke and you had been interfered with, would you know? Well, that's what has happened. Ham had interfered with his father. It's not a very nice thought. The Bible obviously tries to be discreet about it. But it was not a very nice thought. And we find in the Spirit of Prophecy, 'Patriarchs and Prophets' page 117 says, "The unnatural crime of Ham,"...that gives us another clue, doesn't it? The unnatural crime of Ham. I wouldn't have thought that accidentally bumping into someone in a tent was an unnatural crime. That would be an unfortunate circumstance. But this is an unnatural crime of Ham "declared that filial reverence" - filial from the word 'filios,' meaning, brotherly love, care, and loving concern between family members in this context - "had long before been cast from his soul, and it revealed the impiety and vileness of his character." And this is the point. "These evil characteristics were perpetuated in Canaan and his posterity, whose continued guilt called upon them the judgments of God."

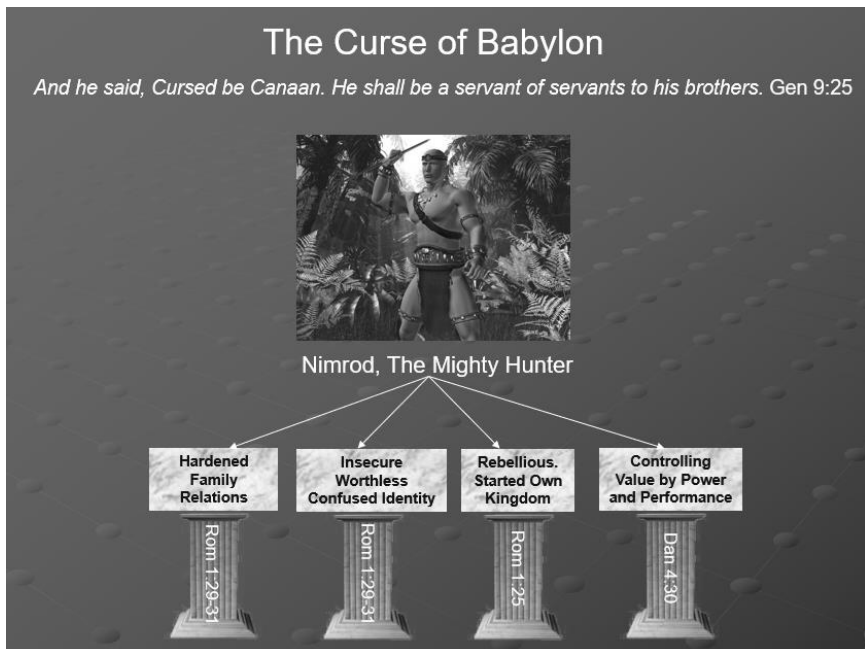
One act by one individual reaped consequences for generations. Death, destruction, misery. By one act of selfishness and debauchery. And so we see, as we mentioned last night, that Ham not only was the father of Canaan, but he was the father of Cush, who was the father of Nimrod. And we read in Genesis 10, it says in verse 8, "Cush beget Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before" or in this case, against "the Lord; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter' against or 'before the Lord.' And don't miss this next point where it says, "And the beginning of his kingdom" The first time the word 'kingdom' appears in the Bible - "his kingdom was Babel." Babel means short for Babylon. The beginning of his kingdom was Babylon. Giving us the sense that he was a man who got to the point where he felt that he would be his own god. He would have his own kingdom, his own throne, and he would be worshipped. This is what Babylon signifies. Self-worship. Self-glorification. Living independently from God. Which of course is a grand delusion. The beginning of his kingdom. And we know, too, that because of what Ham had done, strange family relationships, dysfunctional family relationships, strange sexuality within those families, creates such a level of insecurity and worthlessness within the following generations that it causes men and women, and in this case, Nimrod, to rise up and desire so greatly to be accepted and to be wanted that he decided he would want to rule the whole earth.

This is what happens when we smash family relationships. We create individuals that are not safe in our communities. Individuals that want to rule. Individuals that want to control. Individuals that care nothing for families and relationships. But only to rule and to control. This is how Nimrod was created. And he is a lesson to us about how important our families are.

So we see, this was the curse we talked about. The curse of Canaan. And it says up the top, "Cursed be Canaan. He shall be a servant of servants to his brothers." (Genesis 9:25). This is a curse that is an extension of the principle of the curse that came upon Cain. We notice, Cain violated

a family relationship. He killed his brother. A curse was pronounced upon him. Ham violated a family relationship. A curse was pronounced upon him. When we violate family relationships, a curse will come. And it will have repercussions through the following generations.

This is so significant. And the question we raise is, "What are we doing as a church and as families to ensure that these curses do not occur within our families?" Our church here, our church throughout the world, depends upon the stability, the soundness of mind of the individuals within families. We'll look at a quote shortly on this where it amplifies this. But we see Nimrod. The mighty hunter. He had to be mighty because he had no value. So low was his understanding of the importance of family values that Nimrod, seeing the power of his mother, decided that he would marry her. And so Nimrod's mother becomes his wife. That's a bit sick, isn't it? A bit strange. But these are the foundations of Babylon. Strange, twisted family relationships, deep-seated insecurity, worthlessness, a desire to control. As we have listed here.



Hardened family relations. Insecurity and worthlessness. A confused identity. An individual that thinks there's nothing wrong with rising up and marrying his mother has serious psychological issues. And it's interesting that it's often people that are most psychotic are the ones that often end up ruling over other people. As we've seen in the cases of Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Hitler. These maniacs with a desire to rule and to control. They came from weird, strange, family relationships.

Rebelliousness, the desire to start one's own kingdom and of course controlling value by power and performance. What you achieve defines who you are. These are the elements that form the basis or the reason for why Nimrod created Babylon. And the question we have to ask ourselves, as I said last night, "Do we see these principles in our families?" Hardened family relationships, insecurity, worthlessness, rebelliousness, controlling, value by power and performance. Do we see these things in our families? That is the question.

And the summary of what we looked at last night was broken family relationships can turn into despotic ruling nations. One act that you do within your family, could have repercussions for generations to come. Obviously, we live in a context where we know that Jesus is coming soon. But the fact remains that what we build here on earth will continue for us in heaven. The blessings we pour out now will continue for our posterity in heaven. But if we were to live say, a thousand years ago, do we give consideration to the fact that I wonder what will happen to my family name 500 years from now? Will it be a strong family? Will it form its own nation? Will it be might in the earth doing deeds for God, representing God, representing Jehovah and His kingdom? Or that go the way of other nations? Other family groups to become debauched and to become immoral, destroying and killing and murdering? And what am I doing to encourage the right direction?

We have such power in this area and we don't realize it. We think that what we do is so insignificant, that everything we do has such impact on everybody around us. The Bible says, "No man lives to himself. No man dies to himself." We all have impact upon one another. One family

that decides not to raise their children appropriately may inadvertently raise a killer. The only problem is that one who raises a killer, another family must provide a victim to be killed. That's the sadness of the situation. One family raises a killer; another family raises a victim. We all affect one another. We are all interconnected in our relationships with each other.

Broken family relationships can turn into despotic ruling nations. And the reason I raise this point is to say the things that you do day by day in your home have dramatic consequences over the generations. And we ought to think seriously about that. We ought to spend more time thinking about, what does it mean to live in a family? How do I live? We need to get on our knees and say, "God, teach me what it means to be a husband or a wife or a mother or a father or a child. How should I live? How should I respond?"

We also looked at the fact in Daniel 4:17 where it says, 'worthlessness rises.' We mentioned last night that when Adam and Eve embraced the fruit and ended the cycle of worthlessness, that God allowed this cycle of worthlessness, this constant cycle and pride and depression, to continue to manifest itself so that we would understand what it means when we continue to reject God's system, God's family order, God's way. And so we looked at the fact, as it says here in Daniel 4:17, where it talks about the tree that was cut down. Nebuchadnezzar representing the tree that was cut down. "This matter is by decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will," and then it says, "and setteth up over it the basest of men."

And some versions say, "the lowest of men" or some even infer "the humblest of men." But that's not what it means.

God allows men of the most vile character to rule over the kingdoms of men so that you and I will understand why this system, this worldly system that we live in, cannot work. And that the only one that can rule

is Jesus Christ. No one else can rule. And so God allows these individuals because as it says, "He sets over it the basest of men." In the context of 'God will send them a strong delusion,' He allows this to happen. And again, as I mentioned last night, which is more an illustration that we can relate to, many people feel that the organization they work for, they feel that the boss is a complete idiot. And that is in many cases because he is, because worthlessness rises. The desire for power, the desire to control, the desire to be better than everybody else forces that individual to the top of the chain. The only problem is, he doesn't have the emotional stability to deal with being in that position.

Worthlessness rises to the top. That's the way our system works. That's the way the system operates. And if a good man or a good woman is leading at the top of an organization, it is by the grace of God. He allows good people to be put in places, to check evil, to hold it back. And so that is why we see the basest of men - these basest of men are set up in these positions.

And let me tell you that Satan is intentional on preserving these individuals at the top. He binds them together in secret societies. He calls them to do vile things to one another so that they are completely worthless. And then he causes them to desire, to control, to become presidents of countries like the United States and other great leading powers. This is what happens. And that's why this world is in such a mess because of these situations.

Here is a quote that I mentioned before and I want you to remember this quote. I want you, if you can, to pray and to think about this statement. It has profound ramifications. And I don't care where you're headed in your life, what aspirations you have, what goals you are seeking, remember this statement: "The heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation, is the household." (Adventist Home, page 15). Do you think that we have forgotten that as a society? I think we've forgotten this. "The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depends upon home influences." (Adventist Home, page 15)

And as I said last night, it is being shown within the Adventist Church that divorce rates and difficulty within Adventist homes does not differ from those in non-Adventist homes. Which brings me to one question, What difference does the Gospel have for us if there's no difference in the home life? What's it doing for us? Are we just playing games if there's no difference? Or is it simply that we do not really understand what the Gospel is saying to us? If we understand the Gospel, the changes will take place and the change will take place in the home. It's not simply a matter of coming to church and smiling sweetly and singing nice songs. It's a matter of in the home smiling sweetly when your partner or your children are giving you a hard time. That's where the test of true Christianity is. In the home life, where nobody can see you except those that you are close to.

Are you someone that is desired to be around by family members? Or are people eager to get out of your way and to stay away from you? That's the test of Christianity. The test of Christianity.

The success of the church, and I think we should be having more emphasis on strengthening families as a form of evangelism, to save our nation, because our nation in Australia is in big trouble on this issue. Our government supports and upholds systems that encourages families to break apart. And I know that there are cases where some family relationships become intolerable. And then there comes a time where there needs to be a separation. But in many cases, it's just too easy. It's just too easy and everything falls apart.

We finally looked at last night, I told you I get into long introductions, didn't I? We're still on the introduction. 'Elijah Message Reverses Ham's Curse.' "Noah said, cursed be Canaan. He shall be a servant of servants to his brothers. (Genesis 9:25) That curse came about by separation of father and son. The love between father and son was broken in a terrible way. And then we see Elijah coming in the last days, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children." (Malachi 4:5-6). A reconnection. An undoing of what Ham and Noah

experienced. Are reconnecting. Filial reverence is restored. Children having love and respect for their parents. And parents understanding the importance of their words and what they say to their children.

Elijah Message Reverses Ham's Curse

And he said, Cursed be Canaan. He shall be a servant of servants to his brothers. Gen 9:25

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Mal 4:5,6

I have pondered many times the statement in the book, 'Child of Guidance' where it says, "Parents, you must not ...you must not..." and I'm doing it now! ..."raise your voice to your children." And I read that statement and I say, "Lord, how? How? How is that possible?" It says, "With God, all things are possible." Yes. But how? "You must not raise your voice to your children." That just tells me how far I am away from God's ideal for family relationships. If I feel the need to raise my voice and to get angry with my children, it shows me that I don't understand some things. Obviously, God sees that we can encourage and train and help our children to obey without raising our voice. And again I say, "Oh, Lord, how? How? How do we do this?" And it's something to pray about.

"He'll turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:5-6)

The Elijah Message for those who understand history of the Adventist Church, the Elijah Message is at the very heart of what we preach as a people. And here we see it. The heart of the Elijah Message is a message of restored families. That to me is powerful. Restoring families. That's what Elijah is about. And I can't help but wonder, as I wondered with you last night, how that many of us in our church maybe 50 years ago, where ministers gave an example of what it means to be a Christian by spending hardly any time with his family and always out reaching and preaching out to other people and not spending time at home with the family.

What kind of message are we sending when we live like that? We can be preaching all about the commandments, all about the three angels, all about justification, all about righteousness, and yet the curse just continues to fall because we are not strengthening family relationships has Elijah has told us to do, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers. And the curse has come because we see that family relationships with an Adventist life differs nothing from those in a non-Adventist context. In terms of knowledge, we have done great things in sharing the knowledge of the Bible with others. In terms of its practical application to family life, we have failed miserably as a church. And that's something that affects me deeply as one representing this church, as a minister of this church, that that is something that must change if we are to avoid this curse that continues to fall upon us, because I know for myself that my work gets harder and harder as a minister of the Gospel having to pick up the pieces of families that have been shredded and pulled apart because they don't understand these principles. It's not fun. It's heart-wrenching. It brings you to tears to have to do that.

Prevention is better than cure. Much better. And many of us have been shredded by these issues. But God is saying to us, it's time to plan ahead. It's time to make a change in our families and to do the things that God has asked us to do. I was praying about this the other day and saying, "God, how do I do this? How do I reaffirm family values?" And the

Lord said to me, “Well, you know what inspiration says. Family worship. Morning and evening.” This is a critical part of strengthening family values. To spend time as a family, opening the Word of God and praying together. Not simply opening a book and reading from it in a monotone voice and having the kids sit there and be quiet. Oh, yes. Some of you know about that. “Let's read from 'Great Controversy.'” And when I finish this paragraph, I want you to say, 'Amen.'” Yes. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about bringing the Bible alive in a family context. And that takes effort, takes effort, it causes you to get on your knees and go before God and say, “God, teach me how to teach my children because I can't do it. It's something I have to do.” You might think, “Oh, he's a minister. He knows how to do it.” No. I have to go on my knees, “God, how do I teach my children? How do I do this? I don't know how to do this. I'm good at talking to adults. I'm not good at talking to kids. Explaining these things to kids. You have to show me how to do it.” And that's something I have to pray all the time. Making it real.

Family morning worship. It's not easy in our society, is it? Morning and evening worship. Well, we're getting the morning worship thing sort of happening, but the evening one, man, that's hard. God says, “You want to strengthen family values? This is where you start.” Get on your knees. Pray. Ask God.

Now we get into the sermon. It's twelve o'clock. I better go through this quickly. Keep going. To practice what I preach, I'm mindful of parents with small children. So I have to try and make it as quick as I can.

Now, we look at the comparison between Nimrod and Abraham. These two individuals represent the two systems that are on offer for you and I in the world today. And I'm building on the principles that we looked in our last month's presentation and last night. In Nimrod's system, we have a state-controlled system. Genesis 10:10. It talks about all the cities that Nimrod controlled. The more cities he controlled, the more power he felt, the stronger he was. And as he built the state system, and because he had state territorial borders, he needed armies. And because he

needed armies, he needed to raise taxes. And because he needed taxes, he needed to build banks. All of these things were created by Nimrod. Banking. Taxation. Armies. State territorial system. Legislation based on a state territorial platform. And now we see the whole world is ruled by this system. All the world drank of the wine of Babylon and was made drunk. State territorial system. This is Nimrod's system. We live in this system. And we have to live in this system, but let us be aware of the implications of that system.

Secondly, Nimrod and his fellows were city builders and dwellers. (Genesis 11:4) They needed to build a city because it's much easier to control people when they live in cities. Does that make sense? You live in a city environment. If you're living in a rural environment or even if you are nomadic and you move around from place to place, how easy is it to control people like that? It's very hard. So you must build cities and you must drive people into the cities and you must supply all their water, their power, their communication. You provide everything for them, even their entertainment you provide for them. And then you control them. Nimrod was very smart. Satan taught him how to set up a system where you could blot God from your memory. And living in cities was very much a part of that program. City builders and dwellers. They said, Genesis 11:4: "Let us build a city and a tower."

Number Three. Identity Through Achievement. (Genesis 11:4) The reason they built a tower, as I said, "Let us make a," what does it say? "...a name for ourselves." Why do we need to make a name for ourselves? What if their hearts could speak, they would say, well, because our father Ham did what he did to his father and now "we are worthless individuals. We need to make a name for ourself." That's what their heart would be saying. "We feel worthless. We feel insecure. So let's build a tower. Let's make a name for ourselves so that we will be glorious and our name will live on forever." How many times do we hear about individuals saying, "I want to do something so that my name will be remembered." Well, my name is already written in the palms of

Jesus Christ. I don't have to worry about that stuff. My name's already written in the best place possible.

Number Four. Reject the Ten Commandments. (Romans 1:29-32) Nimrod obviously rejected the Ten Commandments. And again I ask you to come back this afternoon as we dig into this issue of identity and the commandments. Nimrod was his own god. You can only do that by rejecting the commandments of God. He believed that life existed within himself apart from God. You can only believe that when you reject the Ten Commandments. And so this system is built on a rejection of the Ten Commandments. The carnal mind, is enmity against the law of God, not subject to the law of God. Neither indeed can it be.

Number Five. Sun-(day) Worship. (cf 2 Kings 22:17, 23:5) When Nimrod died, Semiramis, his mother-wife, said that Nimrod had flown into the sun and now that the sun was actually Nimrod and that they should bow and worship and he was the god that would protect them. And this of course was simply a way of individuals to worship themselves. Idolatry is simply a mechanism for human beings to worship themselves. If you study Greek philosophy and you look at the 12 gods and goddesses of the Greek culture, it is simply a deification of human personality and sinfulness. For instance, Dionysius, the god of sexuality and wine, it's just a glorification of human stupidity. And is it any wonder that the beast of Revelation 13 that rises up out of the water with seven heads and 10 horns is predominantly leopard? Self-glorification. That's what the system is all about. And sun worship is at the heart of this system.

Number Six. Immortality of the Soul. (Genesis 3:4; 1 Samuel 28:3,8) I have time to go into this. This is another whole subject. But in essence, if you believe that when you die you live on, you must therefore believe that you have some kind of power within yourself that not even God can destroy. It is a monstrous concept to believe that when we die, when all this is finished, that God will burn sinners in hell forever and ever. Why? Because He's not strong enough to kill them? Is that why? Because they have some kind of a life source within themselves that not even God can

kill? Immortality of the soul is vital to Nimrod's kingdom. It is vital to Babylon. It is one of its central pillars because it subtly teaches us that you have life in yourself. Life in yourself. And that teaching is vital to a belief in righteousness by works and a whole lot of other things. I wish I could go into it but that teaching is vital. Why did I want to study that out? Because inspiration tells us that the immortality of the soul is one of the key doctrines of Babylon. Why? I wanted to know why. Study it out. Make the connection. Fit it together.

And Number Seven. The system of Nimrod, they worship material objects. Their relationships are based on the external. You enter into relationships with people not because you like them but because they can do things for you. You own more and more things because you know that the more things you own, the more people realize that you have power and the more that they will come under your influence. The worship of material objects. And it all goes back to Satan's little lie that says, "You shall not surely die but you shall be as gods knowing good and evil. If you eat from the fruit of the tree, you'll become like god." And that fruit was a material object. That tree was a material object. And so materialism becomes the heart of Nimrod's kingdom.

In contrast, we look at Abraham's kingdom. In Abraham's kingdom, we see that it is a family-controlled kingdom. The relationships within Abrahams' government, because he had many people under him, many people with him. But those under him were directed by a family, a patriarchal, a filial reverence and love and respect. Isaac would do things for his father because he loved him, not because he'd be told, "If you don't do it, I'm going to cut your head off," as Nimrod did to those that worked under him. He did it because it was his father. As it was for Ishmael. Family-controlled.

Nomadic rural dwellers. Abraham believed that God owned the heavens and the earth. And obviously, at this particular time, he could live out his belief and move from place to place and know that the land was owned by God and he'd go from place to place. And this is a concept that we still see reflected in the aboriginal culture. The land belongs to

everybody. It doesn't belong to individuals. You can't parcel off a piece of land saying, "That's mine." That's not God's way. Never intended to be God's way. Obviously, when Israel was set up, accommodation had to be made for God's people to have a space where they could practice this principle, where they could have a piece of land and you could sell it. You could do all this but after 50 years it would all come back to that family. You couldn't lose that piece of property. God had given it to you. Nomadic rural dwellers. A focus on rural living as opposed to city living. In a rural atmosphere, the more rural or the more country you go, the more independent you have to become. There's less services to provide for you. There are less things to help you. And you become more dependent on God. Hopefully. Or yourself. But you're not so dependent on other people. And this is a principle.

Babylon And Israel Power Structures

NIMROD



1. State Controlled (Gen 10:10)
2. City Builders and Dwellers (Gen 11:4)
3. Identity through Achievement (Gen 11:4)
4. Reject 10 Commandments (Rom 1:29 - 32)
5. Sun-(day) Worship (cf 2 Kings 22:17; 23:5)
6. Immortality of the Soul (Gen 3:4; 1 Sam 28:3; 8)
7. Worships material objects (Rom 1:25)

ABRAHAM



1. Family Controlled (Gen 18:19)
2. Nomadic Rural Dwellers (Heb 11:8-10)
3. Identity through Parental Blessing (Gen 12:2)
4. Observe 10 Commandments (Gen 18:19; 26:5)
5. Sabbath Memorial of Creator (Ex 20:8-11)
6. Soul Sleep and Resurrection (Heb 11:17-19)
7. Worships the Invisible God (Heb 11:3; Rom 1:20)

Number Three. Identity Through Parental Blessing (Genesis 12:2). We see Isaac being blessed by his father. We see Jacob being blessed and Esau crying out, understanding this issue. He cried to his father as a

grown man. He cried like a little boy saying, "Father, father, is there not a blessing for me? Even for me?" A blessing for me. And Jacob blessing his sons, telling them what will happen, what will take place. This is the basis of God's kingdom. And I would say again, I can't reiterate this enough, to those who are fathers, if you are not blessing your children, if you're not bringing your children to yourself and placing your hands upon them and telling them that God loves them and that they are special and that they will do great things for God, you are not fulfilling your role as a father in God's kingdom. That is central to God's system.

Of course, observe the Ten Commandments. (Genesis 18:19; 26:5) The Ten Commandments clearly identify the roles of God and our roles. And it says in Genesis 26:5 that God knew that Abraham would observe His commandments. It also says God also chose Abraham because it said He knew that he would order his family correctly. That's why Abraham was chosen over everybody else. He knew that he would order his family correctly. He would reflect the order of heaven. That's why he was chosen.

Number Five. The Sabbath Memorial of the Creator. (Exodus 20:8-11) They worshiped on the Sabbath day to remember that God is the source of life. That's what the Sabbath is about. That God provides everything and we are totally dependent on Him. And we enter into a special relationship with Him on the Sabbath where we are reminded of this fact. Sabbath observance is critical to preserving a sense of God's kingdom. It has nothing to do with, "Well, I go to church on the Sabbath. Therefore I'm a good person." That's garbage. That's Nimrod's kingdom. You can go to church on the Sabbath. You can keep all the commandments and still be in Nimrod's kingdom because if you're doing it to show that you are a good person. No, we do it so that we remember, that everything comes from God. That's why we do it.

Number Six. Soul Sleep and Resurrection. (Hebrews 11:17-19) We know that Abraham believed this because when God asked him to slay his son, it says in Hebrews 11, that he believed that God will raise him from the dead. So he believed in soul sleep and resurrection. He believed that we

are mortal. We have no life in ourselves. We're totally dependent on God. That's why it's so critical to believe in the state of the dead. The second re-issue is not to be deceived by evil spirits that may masquerade as human beings. That's the secondary issue. The primary issue is to believe that when we die, we're going to the dust and that we are no more, our spirit returns to heaven, is that life comes from God. That's the primary reason we believe in that teaching.

Number Seven. Worships the Invisible God. As it says in Hebrews 11:3, "We worship Him who is invisible." And because we worship an invisible God, the essence of our worship is a focus on the invisible. And we're going to talk about this tonight. I hope you come back. The focus of our worship is invisible. Not visible. The more jumping, the more beating of chest, the more spinning on your head, the more swinging from the chandeliers, and you've got chandeliers here, that's good. The more of that that you do, the more you show that you're really not entering into the God who is invisible. You're still stuck in the visible. And if you're stuck in the visible, you really haven't crossed into the relational, in the relationship with God. You're just having a good time. And that's not the way we worship God. Just having a good time. I want to have a good time but I want to have a good time in connection with God.

So there we see the two sides. The two sides between Nimrod's kingdom and Abraham's kingdom. Which kingdom do you want to live in? We are severely affected by Nimrod's kingdom. It's all around us. The whole world is drunk of this wine and is intoxicated. We're affected by it. But we have a choice. How are we going to live? And how do these principles that we believe as Seventh-day Adventists affect living in Abraham's kingdom? Don't you see the list of things that we believe? See it as a complete package. It affects our relationship with God.

All right. I just want to read these statements to you. Time is running out. I love the clock.

This is from 'Patriarchs and Prophets' page 118. "Here they decided" - this is talking about Nimrod. Let's get a bit of a background behind why they built this tower. "Here they decided to build a city, and in it a tower of such stupendous height as should render it the wonder of the world. These enterprises were designed to prevent the people from scattering abroad in colonies." There again, once the people spread abroad, they are a lot harder to control. Keep them together then we can control them. We can manipulate them. "God had directed men to disperse throughout the earth, to replenish and subdue it; but these Babel builders determined to keep their communities united in one body, and to found a monarchy that should eventually embrace the whole earth." Satan is determined to achieve this objective. And Revelation 13 tells us for a brief period of time, he will achieve his objective. All the world will wonder after the beast. That all-seeing eye will finally shit upon the pyramid and Satan has been wanting to bring together for a long time and there will be one system. And one small group of individuals would say, "No. We will not worship your god. We will not bow down to your idols. We'd rather die than serve your gods and follow your system because we know that to worship your god and follow your system is to destroy ourselves, to destroy our identity, to destroy our posterity in everything. And that is a price too high to pay."

"Thus their city would become a metropolis of universal empire; it would command the admiration and homage of the world and render the founders illustrious." There is the key. Why did they build it? Because they needed the glory. As Satan said to Jesus in pitiful words, "All this I give you if you will but bow down and worship me." His insecurity could not be concealed. He needed Jesus, he willed Jesus to kneel before him just so he could feel valuable just once more, because he knows that he's worth nothing. "The magnificent tower, reaching to the heavens, was intended to stand as a monument of the power and wisdom of its builders, perpetuating their fame to the latest generations." And that tower of Babel is going to be completed. It is in process right now. By movements. By international bankers. By world

leaders. They're going to finish this monument for their own glory and their own power, as it was in the time of Nimrod.

And another statement here. "The men of Babylon had determined to establish a government that should be independent of God." (Patriarchs and Prophets, page 123) That was their intention. And this is the system that it was built upon. This is the curse of Babylon, built on hardened family relations, insecurity and worthlessness, desire to start your own kingdom because of rebellion and a controlling spirit, where value is achieved by performance and power.

So what is the application for our time? Notice this. "There are tower builders in our time. Infidels construct their theories from the supposed deductions of the sciences, and reject the revealed the Word of God. They presume to pass sentences upon God's moral government; they despise His law and boast of the sufficiency of human reason. Then, 'because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.'" (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

We see that today. Why is evolution being pushed so hard? Why is higher criticism regarding the Word of God being pushed further and further? This is the tower-building of today. To lead men away from the Bible. To reject its family structure. To reject family relationships as the Bible dictates. And once that happens, and individuals are so insecure and worthless, then we can easily be controlled and pushed into that final world system that Satan's longing to bring about and will soon bring about.

So there is the comparison. There is the choice. Which system do you want to belong to? Nimrod or Abraham?

That is the thought that I want to leave with you at this point.

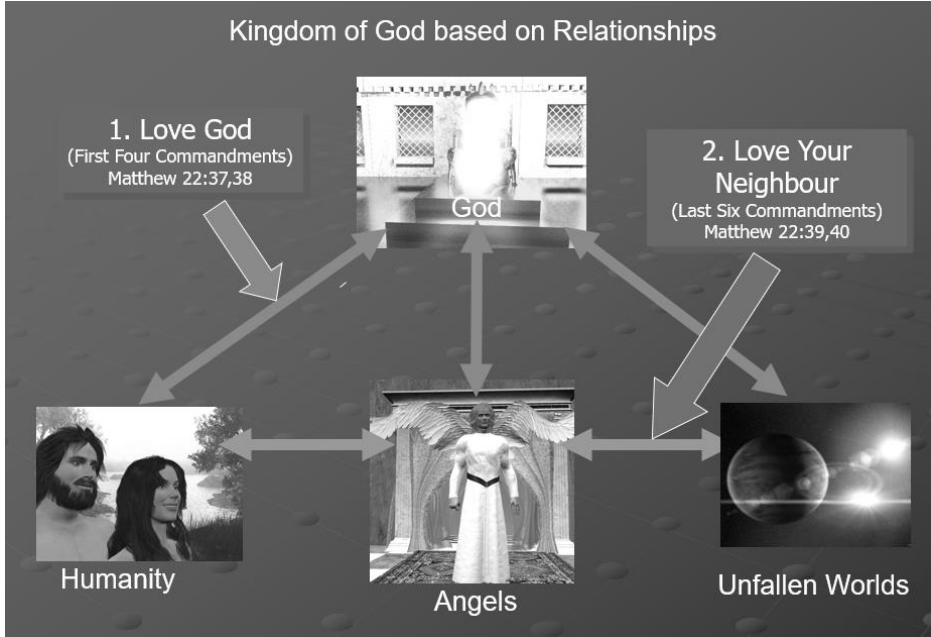
6 – IDENTITY DEFINED

For many people to claim to keep the Ten Commandments is seen as legalism, for others not to keep the Ten Commandments is seen as anarchy or just a license to immorality. And somewhere in between, there's another group of people that is going, I don't understand, I don't know.

So we now want to move to the subject of the Ten Commandments. How does our understanding of the two kingdoms affect this subject of the Ten Commandments because it goes to the very core of our faith, of our belief, because we believe that in the last days that the hour of his judgment is come. And what is that judgment based upon? The Ten Commandments. So how we understand the Ten Commandments will affect the way we understand the judgment, and I can certainly say that within the last particularly 30 years within our church, we've had a real crisis of conscience on this issue and it's not resolved, and I'm hoping that with this presentation, we can go towards harmonizing or bringing some of these thoughts together from two different sides of our church.

If we have a look in a diagram form of God's kingdom, this is diagrammatically what I've been talking about in terms of God's kingdom being based on relationships. We know that in Matthew 22:37-38, that Jesus says to love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and all your strength is the first and greatest commandment. And that the second commandment is that we

should love our neighbour as our self. And then He said on this hang all the law and the prophets. This is the centre.



And so when we look at God's kingdom, God is at the centre and protecting His relationships with his created beings is the first four commandments. To love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and then between humanity and also between the angels and between unfallen worlds, the created worlds and created beings that God has made, we are bound by the last six commandments to love your neighbour as yourself. And this is the structure of God's kingdom. They were designed and are designed to protect relationships.

We now want to look at the two sides of the law of God. In God's kingdom, which is a relationship based system, how do we see the Ten Commandments? In Satan's kingdom, a performance based system, how do we see the Ten Commandments? Both systems can accommodate the Ten Commandments. Both systems have a way of dealing with the Ten Commandments.

The question is, how do we relate to the Ten Commandments? How do we see the Ten Commandments? For instance, if you read in Psalms 119, I'm not going to pull out any particular verse, I pondered about the fact that David wrote about the law in relational terms. He said, Oh how I love your law. It is my meditation day and night. In your law I delight. These are emotional terms which are significant of a relationship rather than simply a list of rules and regulations that you understand in your head and you follow and if you follow them, then you're in; if you don't follow them, you're out. So he was expressing a relational concept of the law. I must say that I haven't heard too many people talk about their love for the law in a relational context. So these are some of the things that we will look at.

I have an illustration that I want to share with you that is significant: identity and communication. It's an interesting little story, some of you might know this. This is a transcript of radio communication between a group of Americans and a group of Canadians. The Canadians wire to the Americans, "please divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision". The Americans respond, "recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision". There's an interesting scenario going to occur. Canadian's, "negative, you will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision". Now we start to see the position, the power and the performance start to come out. "This is the captain of the US Navy ship. I say again divert your course." Canadians, "no I say again, you divert your course". Americans now in lengthy discussion now, "this is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States Atlantic fleet. We are accompanied with three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that you change your course 15 degrees north. I say again, that's one five degrees north or countermeasures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship." Very interesting, so what happens next? "This is the lighthouse, your call."

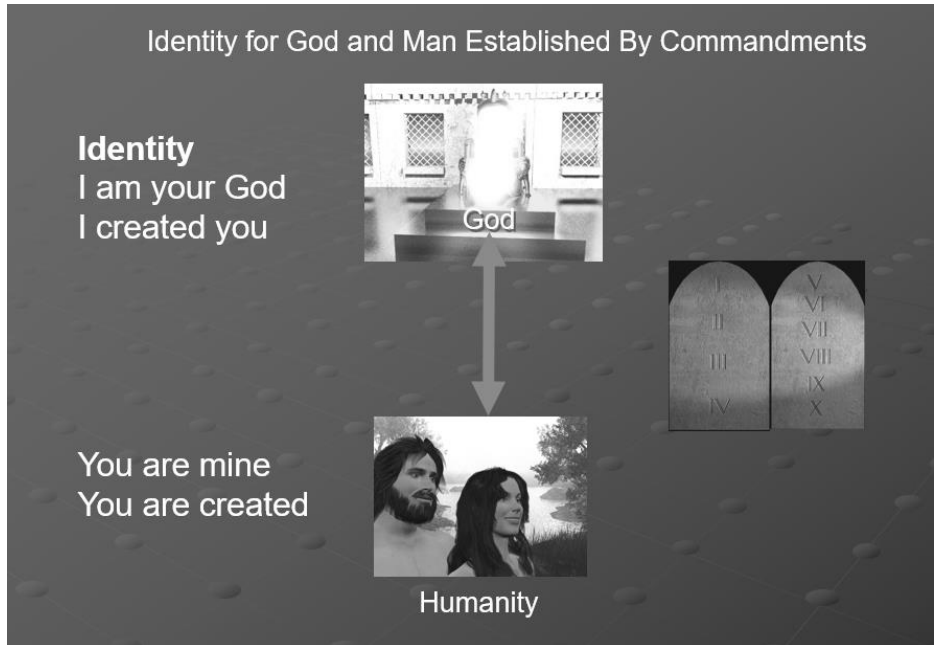
Identity affects communication. How you understand the person you are talking to affects the way that you communicate, and I think that

illustration really serves that well. Once that great naval destroyer understood that that was a lighthouse, it didn't matter what how big it was, or how great he was, he wasn't bigger than that big cliff face that he was about to run into. He had to alter his behaviour. He had to alter the way that he was moving and going because he understood the identity of the person he was talking to. And I think that that's a very, very important illustration. Identity affects communication and this happens on many levels.

Let's illustrate this in relationship between God and mankind and I've got humanity where Adam and Eve is a picture there. Adam says to God, "divert your course. I've eaten from this fruit now and I no longer will be what I am to you, we're going to change, divert your course". God says, "it would be wise for you to divert your course". Humanity responds, "I am man, intelligent, creative, determined, superior to all". "I'm your creator, I hold your life in my hands, your call." Identity, understanding who God is greatly affects the way we communicate with Him and I think that it's good that we bear that in mind.



Identity for God and man established by the Commandments, this is where the commandments become very important. And this is a view of looking at the commandments that I don't think many have seen before. It excites me as I look at this, because it opens up many opportunities. Many of the aspects of what I'm going to share with you, it's all in the inspiration. It's all in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, but it's just a matter of connecting it and seeing it this way.



God says through the commandments, He says, I am your God, I created you. That's what the commandments tell us. It says I am the God that brought you out of the house of bondage. I brought you to myself and in the fourth commandment particularly, it says, I made the heavens and the earth, the seas and the fountains of waters. That tells us who God is. And the Ten Commandments also say, you are mine, I created you, you belong to me. You remove the commandments, you remove the protocol for humanity and God to be able to understand each other and if you remove that protocol, communication becomes ineffective. And that's why it says in Isaiah 59, your sins have separated between you and your

God. Our ability to communicate has vanished because the protocol, the law, the commandments has been negated. It's an interesting way of looking at things.

I want to now expand this concept. The commandments reveal God's identity. Some of you have probably seen this chart. If you go through the Bible and you look at all the things that refer to God on many of the things that refer to God in His person, those same descriptions are also used to describe His law which means that the law is a revelation of God. And so we have here, it says that God is spiritual, says the law is spiritual; God is love, the law is love; God is truth, the law is truth; God is righteous, the law is righteous and on and on and on down the list.

Commandments Reveal God's Identity

God's Character		God's Law	
1. Spiritual	John 4:24	1. Spiritual	Romans 7:14
2. Love	1 John 4:8	2. Love	Matt. 22:37-40
3. Truth	John 14:6	3. Truth	Psalms 119:142
4. Righteous	1 Cor. 1:30	4. Righteous	Psalms 119:144,172
5. Holy	Isa. 6:3	5. Holy	Romans 7:12
6. Perfect	Matt 5:48	6. Perfect	Psalms 19:7
7. Good	Luke 18:19	7. Good	Romans 7:12
8. Just	Deut. 32:4	8. Just	Romans 7:12
9. Pure	1 John 3:3	9. Pure	Psalms 19:8
10. Unchanging	James 1:17	10. Unchanging	Matt. 5:18
11. Stands Forever	Ps. 90:2	11. Stands Forever	Psalms 111:7,8
12. The Way	John 14:6	12. The Way	Malachi 2:7-9
13. Great	Ps. 48:1	13. Great	Hosea 8:12
14. Cleanses	Matt. 8:3 Ps. 57:2	14. Clean	Ezekiel 22:26

**God's law is the transcript of His character.
It embodies the principles of His kingdom. COL 305**

So the commandments reveal to us who God is. And down the bottom, 'Christ's Object Lessons', page 305 it says, "God's law is the transcript of His character." You've heard that before, haven't you? "God's law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom." And when I heard that I go ah, the principles of His

kingdom. Identification. The commandments of God are the most succinct and the most accurate portrayal of who God is in terms of communication. You break the law, you break your ability to communicate. Does that make sense? It's very, very important.

So let's unpack this a little bit. I want to go through commandment by commandment. Some of this will be a little bit repetitive, but it will help make the point and hopefully you won't forget commandments reveal God's identity. The first commandment, I brought you out of bondage. You will have no other gods besides me. What does what does that commandment tell us about God? Let's just stand back. Why did God say this and what does it tell us about Him? It tells us that He is our redeemer. I have saved you from a bad situation; that tells us that He is a redeemer. It tells us that He's a saviour. And you are to have no other gods besides me, that He is the only God. And He's brought us out of it a difficult situation or a bad situation to be with Him, which means He brought us out of that situation so we can enter into a relationship with Him. So He's relational. That's what that first commandment tells us about God. Does that make sense? No. Yes, good.

All right, second commandment, you shall not make any carved image. Why did God say that? Or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, the earth beneath, the waters under the earth? You should not bow yourself down to them nor worship them, for I the Lord, your God, am I jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, etc. What does that tell us about God? It says that God is relational. How? Well He wants to focus on the spiritual, not on the material. Don't make carved images of me because then you will worship the image of me rather than me. I want a spiritual connection with you, not a broken connection through a piece of dead stone or wood or a dead idea or a false philosophy. I don't want to be connected to you through that. I want to be connected directly to you. I want to speak to you mind to mind and heart to heart so don't make any graven images. That's what that commandment tells us about God, that He's spiritually focused and He's intent on having a spiritual

relationship, a real relationship. Not a relationship where we go through beads or we kneel before statues or this kind of stuff. Just to talk to God. And that was the whole point of what Moses was supposed to do when he was taking the children of Israel out of Egypt. After he had struck the rock symbolizing the cross, he was then to speak to the rock symbolizing the relationship that God wants to bring us into, to speak, to talk directly, to communicate, that's what God wants.

What is the third commandment tell us about God? You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God in vain. Many people I talk to just think that that means to don't swear. Well, that's part of it. But to take the name of the Lord, your God in vain, is to take on His name and then live contrary to that name. Does that make sense? To take His name in vain as if it was worthless, it was no point in you taking His name because you don't live according to His name. And so the third commandment says, when I enter into a relationship with you, I want it to be honest; I want integrity in the relationship; I want transparency in the relationship. I don't want anything hidden. I want us to be together. And that's what the third commandment tells us about God and what He wants and how He is. It tells us that's what He is like. I will be transparent with you. I will have integrity with you. I will hide nothing from you in our relationship. That's what He says. And that's what He's like.

Fourth commandment, what does that tell us about God? Remember the Sabbath day for in six days, the Lord made the heavens and the Earth. That tells us He's the creator. He's the source of life. And of course, He sets aside a day of rest so we can worship Him. It also means he is relationally focused. Comes back again and again and again that he wants a relationship with us. That's why the fourth commandment is so important, because it, more than any other, makes the distinction between the created and the Creator. And that's what the fourth tells us.

Honour your father and your mother tells us that, God, why did He give us this commandment? Tells us that He is family focused, He's

relationally focused, and He is paternal. That's what it tells me about God.

Commandments Reveal God's Identity	
God's Character	
1. I brought you out of Bondage. You will have no other God's Besides Me	Redeemer, Saviour, Only God, Relational
2. You shall not make any carved Image	Relational, Spiritual Focus
3. You will not take the name of God in Vain	Integrity, Transparency, Relational
4. Remember the Sabbath for in Six days the Lord Made the Heavens and the Earth	Creator, Source of Life, Relational
5. Honour Father and Mother	Family/Relational Focus, Paternal
6. You shall not Kill	Life is Precious, Relationships are forever, I am the Source of Life
7. You shall not Commit Adultery	Valid Intimate Relationships are Forever
8. You Shall not Steal	Spiritual/Relational not material focus
9. You shall not lie	Integrity, Transparency, Relational
10. You shall not Covet	Creator, Source of Life, Relational

God's law is the transcript of His character.
It embodies the principles of His kingdom. COL 305

You shall not kill. That tells me that God believes that life is precious, that relationships are forever and that He is the source of life. You have no right to take somebody else's life. That life is My life given to them, you have no right to take that life because relationships are forever.

I remember just a few days ago, one of my colleagues had to bury his son. Twenty-two years of age killed in a motorbike accident. Had everything going for him and as we sat there in that church, we felt the sting of death, the separation. Even though I had never met that young man, I could feel it. I felt the pain of these parents and the young people that knew this twenty-two year old young man. The sting of death; a relationship severed. Relationships were never meant to be severed but death has caused us great pain, many of us great pain, but of course,

God is going to change that. But the commandment tells us that relationships are forever. That's the way God is. That's why He wants us to have eternal life with Him, because He wants to always be with us. And I get excited when I think about that. He always wants me to be with Him. And I'm learning this through the commandments. Through the commandments.

You shall not commit adultery, what does that tell me about God? He says that valid, intimate relationships are forever. There are some relationships that are illegitimate. There are some relationships that we should not enter into and that we should only enter into valid relationships intimately. That's what it tells me.

Number eight, you shall not steal. That tells me about God that be spiritually focused. I'm the one that provides everything. I'm the one that gives you everything. If you rest in me and in me, why would you want to steal anyway? Don't be materially focused, that's what that commandment tells me on this level.

You shall not lie. This is an extension of the third commandment. The third commandment and the ninth commandment are linked together. They say the same thing in essence. You shall not lie as in when you're in a relationship with someone, you cannot have intimacy with someone when they are lying to you. Can you? Is it possible? You're not sure. Can you really be close to someone and be confident with someone when they're lying to you? You can't, it destroys the relationship. God wants to protect relationships. That's why He says you shall not lie. He wants integrity. He wants transparency. He wants it to be relational. This is what protects relationships. When people feel at liberty to lie to one another and to not tell their partners about important things in their relationship, their relationship is on shaky ground. Oh, I don't want to say that to them it'll hurt their feelings. Well, it's not a good foundation to lay. When you marry a person, hopefully you marry a person that you want to share everything that is in your heart with them. That's what marriage was designed for. If you engage with a person, going out with the person that you can't share everything in your heart with then stop,

get out of it. That's what marriage was designed for. And if you find that too hard, well ask God to give you the value and the worth to be able to share everything in your heart. That's what relationships are about.

Number ten, you shall not covet. Again, this is an extension of the fourth commandment that God is the Creator. He's the source of life. Why would you covet something that belongs to someone else if God is supplying all your needs? If He is giving you everything, why would you covet those things. It just doesn't make sense.

So can you see when you look at the Ten Commandments like this, it tells us a lot about God, it tells us about what His interests are. It tells us what He is like, tells us what He wants and what He wants for us. And that's why the commandments, as the Bible says, are life for us.

If we could summarize the commandments in terms of what the commandments tell us about God: one, that He's the creator, that He's the redeemer, that He's the source of life, that He is relational, paternal, spiritual. That's what the commandments tell me. And through the commandments, I interact with God because I want to follow the commandments. I interact with God knowing that He is the creator, that He is the redeemer, that He is the source of life, that He is relational, paternal and spiritual. My recognition of that fact affects my behaviour. It affects my behaviour as to how I relate to Him. Does that make sense? No. Man, lunch must have been good.

Commandments Reveal God's Identity

1. Creator
2. Redeemer
3. Source of Life
4. Relational/Paternal/Spiritual

It's like the lighthouse issue, isn't it, you are speaking to someone in a certain way and then the identity is revealed and the communication changes. When Satan said I will ascend to heaven, I will be like God, I will be like the most high, he had lost sight of the commandments. He had ceased to remember that God is the creator, the source of life. He had broken his connection with God, and therefore he had lost a sense of who God was, and consequently he lost a sense of who he was. When the commandments are broken, identity is lost. And if you remember nothing else this weekend, remember that: when the commandments are broken, identity is lost; and when identity is lost, communication is finished; when communication is finished, the relationship is over; and when the relationship is over, you and I are dead because God is life and we are nothing. That was a good line of reasoning wasn't it. But that's the fact, that's the way it is.

All right, God's law is a transcript of His character. How does the commandments reveal our identity? How does it tell us about who we are and how we are to relate to each other and to God? Well, firstly, I brought you out of bondage and this is very much similar to the last one but it's just in our context. The first commandment tells us that we are redeemed and we are to worship one God. The second commandment tells us that we should be relational and spiritual, not materially focused. That we will have integrity, transparency in our relationships, that we are created and that life comes from God and we should have a relational focus. That family relationships are critical. Number six, that life is precious, relationships are forever, and that God owns everyone. Number seven, that valid, intimate relationships are forever. Number eight, that spiritual relational, not material focus in reference to stealing, integrity, transparency, etc and number 10, God provides all your needs. That's what it tells us, who we are.

How many people think about when they're in a situation, say, for instance, where they are attempted to commit adultery, how many people think that when in committing this act, I'm destroying who I am and my concept of who God is. Do people ever think on that level? I'm

destroying everything? Maybe people would think, is it worth it? I'm destroying who I am, I'm breaking my connection with God, I'm losing my identity, my worthlessness will be complete, my doom will be sealed. People don't think about that, but that's what happens. When you lose your identity, your worth is gone. And that's why God gives us these commandments. We think from where we come from that God wants to harm us with these commandments, but He desperately wants to protect us, wants to save us from oblivion, from being destroyed.

Commandments Reveal Our Identity	
Our Identity	
1. I brought you out of Bondage. You will have no other God's Besides Me	Redeemed, Worship One God
2. You shall not make any carved Image	Relational, Spiritual Focus
3. You will not take the name of God in Vain	Integrity, Transparency, Relational
4. Remember the Sabbath for in Six days the Lord Made the Heavens and the Earth	Created, Life Comes from God, Relational
5. Honour Father and Mother	Family/Relational Focus, Paternal
6. You shall not Kill	Life is Precious, Relationships are forever, God owns everyone
7. You shall not Commit Adultery	Valid Intimate Relationships are Forever
8. You Shall not Steal	Spiritual/Relational not material focus
9. You shall not lie	Integrity, Transparency, Relational
10. You shall not Covet	God Provides All Needs

And so the commandments reveal that we are created, that we are redeemed, that God is our life source, that God provides all our needs, that we are to be relational, spiritual and children of God. That's what the commandments reveal to us in this context. And when we understand that, we don't need to have this discussion between the Canadians and the Americans, this miscommunication, this misunderstanding, so that we're talking to God in a way that's like the little horn power speaking blasphemous words, pompous words, sitting

in the temple of God, claiming to be God. How can someone do that unless they have lost sight of who God is and who they are? You can't speak that way unless you lose your sense of identity, meaning the little horn power does not know who it is. It does not have a true sense of its own identity therefore it is worthless, therefore it is insecure and that is why it wants to dominate and control the whole world. Does that make sense? It all fits together, the pieces all fit together.

Commandments Reveal Our Identity

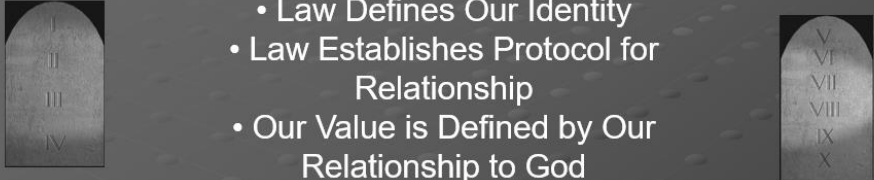
1. Created
2. Redeemed
3. God is our life source
4. God provides all our needs
5. Relational/Spiritual/Child of God

Let's have a look at something important here. The law reveals God's identity. The law defines our identity. The law establishes a protocol for relationship, how we relate to each other. Our value is defined by our relationship to God therefore our value is protected by the law, therefore our life is protected by the law. Can you follow that sequence? The law establishes a protocol for relationship, and our value is defined by our relationship with God therefore our value is protected by the law, therefore our life is protected by the law.

Is this how you've understood the law? Is this how you see the law of God? Do you think this is what David might have said, oh how I love your law? It is my meditation day and night because it protects my value. It allows me to continue to communicate with you in a

transparent way, in an unbroken relationship. If I break this law, I lose my ability to communicate with you, I lose my sense of worth and value. I'm dead. That is why the wages of sin is death. The wages, the act of violating this 10 commandment law seals you doom. Your worthlessness, it's not God pulling out the big stick and saying, oh, naughty, naughty. That's the way we see it. It's God going, no, you've destroyed yourself, why are you doing this? You need to be connected to me.

Law Protects Our Identity and Worth



- Law reveals God's Identity
- Law Defines Our Identity
- Law Establishes Protocol for Relationship
- Our Value is Defined by Our Relationship to God
- Therefore our Value is Protected by Law
- Therefore our life is protected by the Law (Ps 119:93)

Now, taking all these things we're going to move a little bit quicker. Listen carefully to this statement. When people say, I can't keep the commandments, they are saying, I can't identify or know God or really know who I am and I'm destined to remain worthless. Now, if anyone here knows anything about the controversy going on within our church over the last 30 years, that's a big statement. That's a huge statement. When someone says you can't keep the Ten Commandments, you can't keep the law of God, they are saying in God's kingdom, in God's context, they are saying, I can't really know God. And they say I'm destined to remain worthless. That's what we're saying when we say we can't keep

the commandments of God and Satan is very happy for us to believe that. Because when we reject the law of God and remember, James says we only have to reject one, we don't have to reject all of them. We only have to reject one but if we reject one, we reject all. When we reject one or more, we reject God as the Creator. We reject God as the Redeemer, the source of life, even though on our lips we are saying, oh, I believe God is the Creator, I believe He's the source of life. But if we reject His law, we are living a lie. We don't believe. We do not believe. Whether we say it or whether we not, they are just empty words that mean nothing. And we reject that we are created, that we are redeemed, that God is our life source, that He provides for our needs and that we are children of God, relational, spiritually focused. That's a too high a price to pay for me. What about you?

Law Breaking Destroys Relationship and Worth



When People say I can't keep the commandments they are saying "I can't identify or know God or really know who I am and I am destined to remain worthless"



Rejection of God's Identity

1. Creator
2. Redeemer
3. Source of Life
4. Relational/Paternal/Spiritual

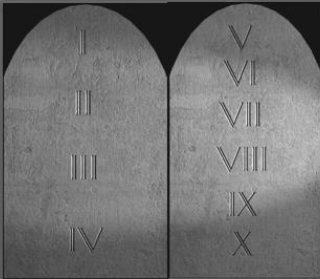
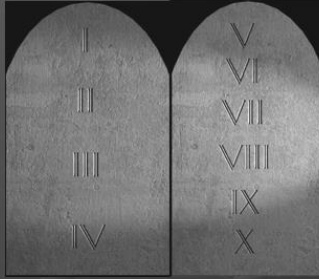
Rejection of Our Identity

1. Created
2. Redeemed
3. God is our life source
4. God provides all our needs
5. Relational/Spiritual/Child of God

We have had within this church this ongoing statement, can we keep the commandments, can we not keep the commandments? And I would like to suggest to you this is why we are struggling with this issue, because we haven't recognized two ways of looking at the law of God.

And as I've got written here, the point is, this is the main point of this presentation. How do you see the law? How do you see the law? Do you see it in God's kingdom, in a relationship based system, or do you see it in Satan's kingdom? A performance thing on the one side in Satan's kingdom? If you see the law as a performance thing, you will hear statements like it's a yoke of bondage. That it is legalism. But it can't be kept. Or conversely, it's a means to appease God when I keep the commandments, I am acceptable to God. All of this is not God's way of looking at the commandments.

The Point is...
How do you see the Law?

<p style="text-align: center;">God's Kingdom</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defines Identity Protects relationship Protects value Central to effective communication</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">Relationship Based</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Satan's Kingdom</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A yoke of bondage legalism Can't be kept Or means to appease God</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">Performance Based</p>
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And my suggestion today is that this is where we've been looking at the law, we've been looking at it through Satan's lens, not through God's lens, otherwise we wouldn't have this confusion that we're having today over this issue. Because it cannot be legalism. To have your identity and your value and your life source protected, that's not legalism, that's just smart. That's just what you have to do. It's not legalism. And on God's side, in God's kingdom, when we see the law, we see that it defines

identity. It protects relationship. It protects value. And it's central to effective communication. The law of God.

I hope you can see that this is huge. If we start to look at a law like this, it has massive implications for us in terms of how we present our message. The hour of His judgment has come and our relationship to the law, it has massive implications, and as I said, I'm going to try and intersect what I'm presenting into Adventist theology. So I'm using a few words here that may be a bit long, but it has a massive implication for how we understand justification, sanctification, how we understand the sanctuary message, how we understand all of these teachings are massively impacted by how we view the law of God.

And so, the question is, how do you view the law? What did Jesus say to the lawyer that came to him? He says, "What shall I do to be saved?" What does it say in Luke 10:25, "And behold a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And He said unto him, what is written in the law? what is your reading of it?" or as it says in the King James, "how do you read?" He doesn't say so much what do you read? This man knew the law. He could recite it more than most of us. But He says, how do you interpret it, how do you see it? Do you see it in the lens of God's kingdom or do you see it in the lens of Satan's kingdom? That's the question you have to answer. How do you read and once you answer that question, all these other issues that we wrestle and fight about and write reams and reams and destroy heaps of trees writing stuff down about will all find its proper place once we get the foundation set.

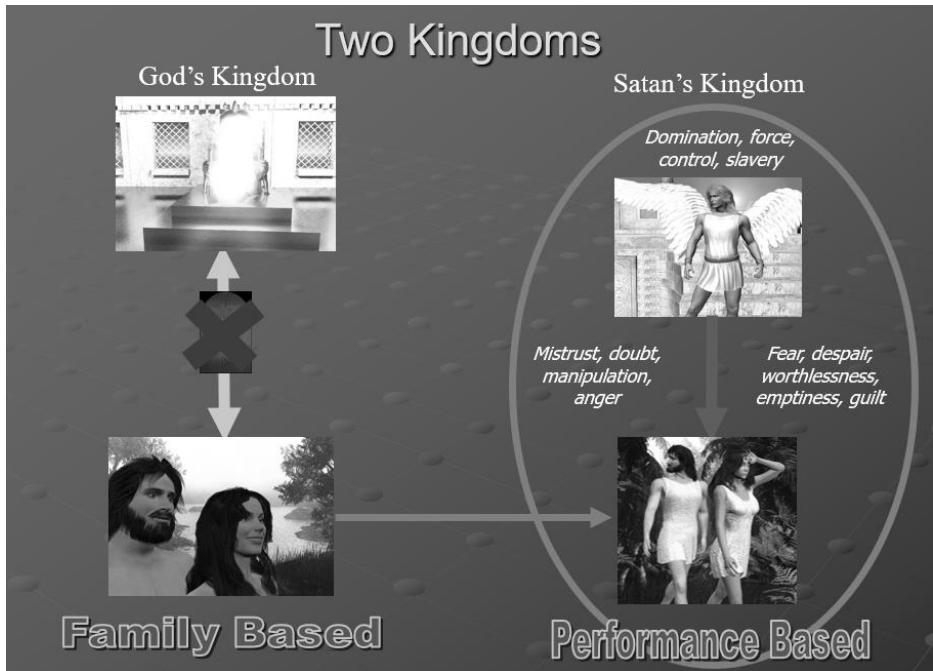
7 – VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

Let's bow our heads and we will begin.

Father, we're into the last session and it's just been such a blessing to have our thinking challenged and to look at things possibly in a different way and to try and touch the heart of God and see that Your ways or Your thoughts are really not our thoughts, and we've been caught in a false system, a false understanding. And as we engage in this last presentation, please, Lord help us to understand the surface things and the deep things, there is both involved in this presentation. We thank you in Jesus name, amen.

By now you'll be fairly familiar with these charts so I'm not going to spend time with these. The shift, how humanity shifted and the comparison between the two kingdoms, God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom and the elements that are in both. Now we want to look at the fact of God's kingdom being invisible and its impact on our thinking, on our doctrines, our theology. And this is an interesting verse, Luke 17:20-21. "Now, when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come. He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with outward observation;" That text, that statement has, what's the word "severe application" for us today. "The kingdom of God does not come with observation (or outward observation as the Greek would say), nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Does not come with outward

observation with the eyes or the physical eyes, it comes with spiritual eyes because it's within you. And this is a concept that we want to develop.



I've been talking a lot about relational. What is some of the ways that we help to facilitate a relational kingdom-focus with God? Well, the first thing here is that it's invisible. Many people say to me, how do I conduct a relationship with an invisible God? It's a fairly basic question, but it's a good question. How do I relate to someone that's invisible that I can't see and sometimes I feel that I can't talk to? This is an important question. Let's bring it down to the human level.

Here is a couple we assume it's a couple. Do you know who they are? I neither do. I just got it off Google, off the Internet. I thought you'd like that. I don't know who they are. I think they are a couple. Now what can you tell me about their relationship? They seem happy enough. She might be standing on his toe and he is smiling, saying, get off. But, you know, we don't know, do we? We don't know. They look happy. They

might be two actors that have just posed for the camera. We don't know. We can't tell, not from this picture, but I would assume they are a couple. How stable is their relationship? Do you know? You can't tell can you. What else? Stable, healthy, do they trust one another? How much do they trust each other? Are they content in their relationship with each other? Can you tell from that picture? You can't? The point I'm trying to make here is that relationships are not seen. You can't see them. Husband and wives, you can see the effects of the relationship, but you cannot see the relationship. The relationship operates in the spiritual realm. It is one mind connected with another mind with a set of protocols. And I hate to make it sound so errrrr., but where two minds agree together on a number of issues and they have experiences, and they have memories together, that's what a relationship is. But all those things are not seen, they're all unseen. And this is an extension of the principle of our relationship with God. The relationship is unseen to the human eye. We see the results of the relationship, but we can't see the relationship.

Relationship/Connection



- Stable?
- Healthy?
- Trust?
- Content?

We can see results of a relationship but we can't see the relationship

All right, 2 Corinthians 4:18, “while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Has it ever occurred to you that everything that you can see right now and everything that you have ever seen in your life will one day be gone? Have you thought about that? Nothing that you see, nothing that you own in a material way will be here soon. It'll all be gone. There will only be one thing left. And that's the part of you that's invisible. Not even your flesh and bone will be here. We will have new bodies, immortal bodies. There's only one thing that will go through, and that's the part of you that you cannot see. The invisible, the character, the personality. That's what goes through, and so we are told here to focus on what? The unseen, the unseen.

Let's explore this a little bit with Moses. It says, “And he [Moses] said please show me Your glory.” It's interesting, I remember as a young Christian kneeling down and saying, Dear Lord, you know what, I'd really like to see an angel. It would be really nice, you know. Because then I get brag rights. I've seen an angel. I'm sure that was part of my motivation. I'd like to see an angel. But Moses here probably for a different reason to my prayer said, please show me your glory. “Then He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But He said, you cannot see My face; for no man shall see my face and live.” Notice even as Moses says show me your glory, how does God respond? What does he talk about? Graciousness, compassion. He talks about characteristics, things that are not seen. And then he says, you cannot see my face and live. There's really significant issues here in this text. “And the Lord said, here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.” Exodus 33: 19-23. God is patient, isn't he? Did He need to do that for Moses? He went to great lengths,

but why was it that God says you will not see My face? Could you imagine if Moses had quickly sketched down the face of God? What would have happened? Having the face of God everywhere on pictures, everywhere. What would happen? Idol worship. God says you will not do that to me. I will not allow you to corrupt yourself like that. You will not see my face because you are idolatrous in your outlook on life. We will see God face to face one day when idolatry is removed from us, when we no longer are like that, and of course, we're in that process right now to remove idolatry.

Notice another verse, Deuteronomy 4:12, another verse along these lines. This is Moses reciting. "And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form, you only heard a voice." God's way of interacting with the human race, the voice. What does it say in Isaiah, it says you will hear a word behind you saying when you turn to the left and to the right, a voice to speak to us. Why the voice? The voice represents the character, the person that's the significant factor. And of course, Exodus 20:4, "You shall not make for yourself any carved image." I love you too much to allow you to make an image of Me and fall in love with that image rather than Me. I will not allow you to do that to yourself. And if you do that, you will lose your connection with Me. And please don't do it, please don't do it.

We start to begin to understand when there's a focus on the invisible, why Jesus said He had to go away. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (John 16:7) How could the Comforter come if everybody on the Earth knew that Jesus was living somewhere on the Earth? Would they even sense there was a Holy Spirit? They wouldn't even be thinking about the Holy Spirit. They'd just be thinking about where Jesus is. But when Jesus moves away, the visible becomes invisible, the Holy Spirit is able to come in and minister and bring Christ to us in an invisible way. What if Christ had had his photo taken while he was here on Earth, what would happen? It would be terrible. We have enough trouble with this thing

called the Shroud of Turin that we're worshipping and all that we have the face of Jesus now. We've got to go and touch it now. Even the serpent that Moses... the bronze serpent that Moses put on the pole, remember that they look to the serpent and they were healed. You know what the people of Israel did after that? They started worshipping the serpent on the pole rather than the God that healed them. Let us understand from these lessons that not only the Israelites, but us, we are so idolatrous in nature and it goes back to Adam and Eve when the serpent or Satan said to Eve, if you eat, you will experience the divine through the material. You eat the fruit, you experience the exhilaration and that is how you find the divine.

Does that make sense? It's a big point. That's Satan's big push experience the thrill. Blow your nervous system apart. That's what it is to experience the divine. Blow your brains out with all kinds of substances and stuff. That's experiencing the divine. Experience sexuality to the max. That's experiencing the divine. That's what the Gnostics would tell us. That's what The Davinci Code would tell us. That's the essence of the divine to experience sexuality.

So “nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage to go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.” And if He did not go away, we would have been stuck with idolatry. We would have wanted to worship him. Even Mary struggled with this issue. Jesus knew this. You know, when she comes to the tomb, the King James doesn't render it as well, but Jesus says Mary, you have to let go of me now. I have to go back to my Father. There was that temptation of clinging to the person. How nice it would have been to feel the touch and feel the embrace of Jesus, wouldn't that be so wonderful? But that's not what God's kingdom is primarily about. It's about the relationship. It's the hug and the embrace in the spiritual realm, not the physical realm. There is still embrace, there is still hug and God still does it through each of us. He still gives us the hugs through each other. But we are too idolatrous to risk. He can't risk it with us yet. Not yet, but in heaven.

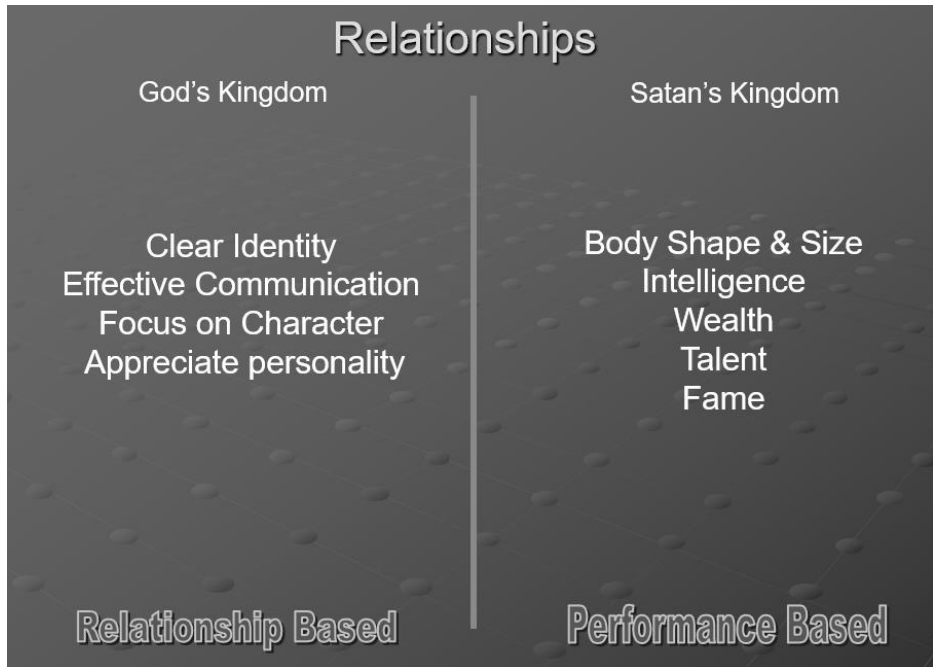
John 4:20. Speaking of this issue, this is the woman at the well. "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.'" That statement clearly tells us that in terms of geography, that there are no holy places on the face of this planet. Did you hear what I said? There are no holy places. You will not worship in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, but those who worship the Father will worship him in spirit and in truth. Your focus will not be on geography. It will not be on material, physical substance, but it will be on heaven and your spiritual connection and relationship with God. That's the focus. So all this fighting and killing over holy places and all this stuff, it's all a decoy. It's all a decoy. To claim that you have a church or a mosque and understand me when I say this, to say that you have a church or a mosque or whatever place of worship you have and to say that that place is holy in and of itself is a decoy. It's a decoy. The building doesn't make the place holy. It's God's presence that makes the place holy. This church is holy because of God, not because of the building. Now we are understanding that this is God's house, we don't treat it with disrespect, but always get the balance here. We don't as I often say to my son, please don't run to the church. I wish I said it like that. We want to have respect for God and we want to be in an atmosphere where we can feel His presence, but it's not the vinyl and the carpet and the chandeliers that make this place holy. It's God's presence that makes this place holy.

OK. Just stay with me on this. This has to do with the new covenant. Jesus had to go away for the law to be written on the heart. This is what the new covenant is all about, the visible and the invisible is so important to understand in terms of the new covenant. For if the first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Hebrews 8:8-10 says, "Because finding fault with them, He says, Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the

covenant I made with their fathers in the days I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt because they did not continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts, and I'll be their God, and they shall be My people." Notice the shift in the covenant between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was a visible. God spoke to them through the visible, *He had to give them the symbols, but they had to see through the visible into the invisible*. The problem was, as it says, finding fault with them they could not see past the visible and all they saw was the temple, the temple, the temple of the Lord. So great became the desire to protect this temple that they would rather crucify the Creator of that system than give it up. That is serious idolatry, isn't it... serious. This man that can destroy the temple and build it in three days. So Jesus, to write the new covenant on our hearts, He had to leave because we are so idolatrous, we are so focused on the physical, we are so enamoured with touch and feel and sight that He had to go away and send His Spirit. And that is the only way He could write His law on our heart. The real Jesus, not the Jesus where you feel the flesh and the bone or His power. You know, I have New Age friends who said, "oh, man, I had an awesome Bible study this morning." He said, "yeah, I just picked up a new version and I just put it to my chest and felt great." That's idolatry. How about actually reading it, hearing the voice, can you see the difference? You know, you just feel the aura around the book and you put it on your chest and you have an awesome Bible study. I tried hard not to laugh, believe me. I'm going, well, that's heavy. Oh, Lord, give me wisdom. How do you answer that?

So this is the essence of the new covenant that Jesus needed to go away and I experienced this firsthand because, when my wife and I were engaged, there was a time when we were apart and we had to write letters to each other. And we had to see whether we could survive just on writing letters and we actually began to write and talk about the things that were important without the touch, without the feel and we

found that we still had a connection. We still had a love for one another. We still had interests that were the same even though we couldn't see each other and that taught me an important lesson, taught an important lesson. I was like this, young people, you want a relationship, got a touch, got to feel, got to experiment, you've got to try everything. Talk, yeah that's right, you got to talk too. Just want the experience. Yeah. But mind to mind. Let's have a look at the next point.



Relationships. In God's kingdom, relationships are about clear identity, effective communication. We've talked about all these things. Focus on character and appreciate personality. The unseen personality, character are not things that you can hang up on the wall. They're unseen to the physical eye. In Satan's kingdom, it's all about body shape and size, intelligence, wealth, talent, fame. These are all the things that are important. You need to connect yourself to someone because visibly they are all of these things. They look beautiful, they look strong, they have money, they drive a nice car. They have something that you want

and you can connect yourself to them then you feel powerful as well. That's what relationships are about in Satan's kingdom.

This next slide is interesting and we're coming down to human relationships now and we're seeing a disturbing pattern continuing to re-emerge for us in terms of how we negotiate relationships. Do you know those girls? No, it's Google again. And I write down here what women want most they are taught to advertise least. And I won't read out that list, but when you're advertising like this, what are you advertising? Personality, character, invisible? What are you advertising? Your advertising flesh and there's one thing the Bible says, without trying to get too grotesque, there's one thing the Bible says about flesh is that's where the eagles and the vultures love to gather. Flesh because it's dead. Dead flesh, that's where vultures gather. And if you dress like that, you're only going to attract vultures. You've got the joke.

What women want most – they are taught to advertise least



Hair
Jewelry
Lips
Straps
Cleavage
Midriff
Low cut pants

You don't want to attract vultures, do you? You want to attract someone with high moral principle and we are losing within our culture, within our church, the ability to teach young people how to advertise correctly, how to establish a relationship that's on a platform that will last. And so we push the physical and we push all of these things and then you get into a relationship and it all feels good until the next morning and it's all gone. All the warm, fuzzy feeling is gone and you've got a headache and you've got a hangover and it's all too late. And that's how many relationships have started just like that. And we need to reverse these trends.

If you want to feel special, and this is what it comes down to, if you want to feel special and particularly for a young lady, if she doesn't have a father-figure to tell her that she's special, to tell her that she's pretty, to tell her that she's really, really important, then somebody else will tell her but for a very, very different reason. For a very, very different reason. And for some young ladies, they find out too late that men are very, very different and have very, very different motives and objectives in mind. They're not like their dad if they've got a decent father. That's why the role of a father, particularly for a teenage young lady, is so important to be able to experience intimacy and closeness with someone that will not take advantage of you and love you just for who you are. So important. And yet we're losing that today. We're just everyone everywhere. It just comes in through the movies. It comes through everywhere. Poor Britney Spears, I don't know. Everyone's wearing this midriff stuff, you know, they've got no idea these young teenage girls, they have got no idea what they are doing. No idea. And who's going to tell them you're advertising for vultures and that's what you're going to get. Someone that's going to devour you and destroy you and rip you to shreds. That's all that that does. But when you need value and you know that you can turn heads because of the way you dress like this, it's almost too overpowering not to do it because it makes you feel special. And that's something that we have to deal with.

I think this is another area where it says, well, I'll turn there right now, Titus. Let's turn to Titus. This is a passage that I've been pondering. Titus 2:3 says, "the older woman likewise, that they be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. That the word of God be not blasphemed. This is not an option, people. This is what the word of God says. And I can hear all the bells going off. What!!! Be obedient, submit? I'm not submitting to him. That's what we failed on. Teaching in the right way, not in Satan's kingdom, submitting to dominance and control and woman being a slave, that's not God's ideal. But in God's kingdom, this is critical, the role of husband and wife. And if I can say just briefly on this point, digressing slightly, it says in the Book of Timothy in regard to roles, it says in 1 Timothy 3, it says about a husband, about a number of things, and it says "one who rules his own household well, having his children in submission with all reverence for if he does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God?"

There is an intimate link between family and church and this is why it is my personal conviction that our church is making a big mistake by moving down a path to ordain women to pastoral leadership, because it says here that they must rule their house, but if they must rule the house then the blessing that the patriarch gives is lost. I can understand in Satan's kingdom why we would need to create equality in those roles because that's the way it is. *But in God's kingdom, role does not mean value. Role does not mean value.* And I would say to most ladies that would desire that position, are you crazy? You know how hard it is, the stuff you have to deal with, why put that on yourself? We're starting to break up the order of heaven. We are starting to say that value does come by position rather than through relationship. And I know that sometimes men make it very difficult for women by their laziness and their arrogance and just sitting back and saying we're not doing anything and something needs to be done. Men, we shouldn't put ladies in that

position. When something needs to be done, we need to stand up and do it. And it's no wonder the ladies get frustrated. Well, it's not getting done and they feel like what we've got to do something. That's putting them in a temptation that's very difficult. We should deal with it. That the word of God be not blasphemed, as it says here. Anyway, that's another whole subject. I can see the cogs are turning and going. Interesting. So to my friends within the church and those that believe that we need to create ordination for women as pastors that are watching the DVD, I say we're making a big mistake. We're creating equality on a false basis and that's on the basis of performance and you don't want to do that. If you feel you've arrived because you get ordination in this role, you're making a big mistake. A big mistake. All right, what does it say?

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward” or as the King James say, to be outward. “Don't let your focus be on outward adornment, arranging of the hair, wearing of gold, putting on fine apparel.” You know, how do we teach this teaching to young people? You know, no jewellery, no makeup, dress properly. Come here, how long is your skirt? I've seen it done. That really gets the benefits across. Sometimes we're pretty lousy salesmen aren't we? How to sell a doctrine, how to sell a teaching. You know, sometimes it's hard and the peer pressure is there where we pull our hair out trying to explain this, but if we want a lasting relationship both on earth and in heaven, we need to focus on the invisible rather than the visible. That's what we need to focus on. Don't advertise the physical. That alone should be kept for husband or wife. That's something sacred. It says the marriage bed is holy and undefiled, it's not for anybody else to look at. The degradation, you know, the stuff that I see people wear today, it makes me weep. How can you do that to yourself in an effort to gain attention?

It says, “rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.” This is the focus and trust God, I guess, to say to those that, you know, feel that they're being left behind or left on a shelf. Trust God, don't sell yourself short. Don't enter into relationships based on

advertising something that really you're not really looking for. And that's what I didn't say this before, I guess from a from a lady's point of view, it says in Genesis 3:16 that a woman's desire is towards a husband. She wants more than anything else to be close to someone, to be able to share what's in her heart and to have her husband share what's in his heart. That's the most important thing, at least as my wife tells me. And I'm trying to do the right thing. But from a man's perspective, he has to learn those things it doesn't come natural for him. He's more interested in other things, the physical. And if you advertise the physical and then you say you want the spiritual, then you're advertising falsely. That's false advertising. Isn't it, but I wouldn't call it false, because if you don't know, then it's not really false, it's just ignorance. And we can say that God at times of ignorance, He does wink at. But now for everyone here, we command all to repent. All right.

You'll like this next picture. Men just simply don't know what they want. So God puts within women a desire for a relationship, the ability to express their feelings and their thoughts, men have to learn this. It's a learned skill to do it. He's a cool dude, isn't he? Just the typical male, all the testosterone. Look at me, I'm so cool. Men don't know what they want. They have to be taught and they should be taught by their father and their mother what to look for but unfortunately, that doesn't happen. We just say all men are just men, you know, they're just boys will be boys. And because men are visually driven, if that is not checked, if they are not taught to discipline themselves and to see that if you want to lay a strong foundation for a long lasting relationship, you need to allow God to cultivate your passions and your tendencies. You don't do that, you are going to end up with Delilah and that's not good. You can lose your strength, your dead. And so this poor fellow thinks he's got it all. He's headed for destruction. Visually driven, being a hero, strength, intelligence, aggression, assets, you know. That's why men love to watch all these Braveheart type movies.

And this is another thing, just by the way, if you watch movies on a regular basis, you know, you're being evangelized for a false

relationship system. You are taught that a relationship is only achieved once a man proves and does something great to win the affection of a young woman, which means that a relationship is only contracted in a performance context.

Men don't know what they want



Visually driven
Being a Hero
Strength
Intelligence
Aggression
Assets

Hollywood's not dumb, they understand that. So you keep watching that stuff, you're going to keep believing that stuff and you'll never, ever be happy. I mean, Hollywood proves that to us, don't they? Look at their relationships. Talk about a group of mixed up, worthless individuals. They don't know which way is up. We should pray for them, all right? And we need to pray for the men that they will know what they want in God's context, that they be taught to look for the things that are unseen, rather things that are seen, learn to appreciate in others, the unseen, rather than desiring to see the visible and the tangible all the time.

All right, let's bring it now to the issue of worship. Now it gets interesting. Worship. If God's kingdom is invisible, if it has an invisible

focus, how does an invisible focus affect the way we worship? Will it affect the way we worship, how we worship God? It must. Do we focus on the visible or the invisible in our worship. In God's kingdom, the focus is going to, must be, has to be, the word of God. That's the focus. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17. 1 Peter 2:23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God. Worship must be based around the word. I heard a word behind me saying this is the way walk ye in it. And Jesus in Revelation 19, when He comes again He has a banner and it says on Him what? The word of God. Jesus is the word of God. Our worship is based around the word, if we're having an invisible focus. The word of God. All right.

Worship	
<p>God's Kingdom Invisible Focus</p> <p>Word of God Meditation on God Emphasize Stillness Character Focus Emphasize Melody and Harmony</p> <p>I Kings 18:36</p> <p>"Then, bowing reverently before the unseen God, He raises his hands toward heaven and offers a simple prayer...as Elijah prays, no senseless shrieks resound over camel's height. He prays as if He knows Jehovah is there..."PP 150</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">Relationship Based</p>	<p>Satan's Kingdom Visible Focus</p> <p>Intensity of Feeling Miraculous of God Activity and Action Power Focus Emphasize Rhythm and Bass</p> <p>1 Kings 18:26</p> <p>"As they continue their frenzied devotions"... "All day long the people have witnessed the demonstrations of the baffled priests. They have beheld their wild leaping around the altar" PP 149,150</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">Performance Based</p>

Meditation on God. Do you ever sit down and actually think about God, how wonderful He is, the good things that He does for you or are you just saying, gimme, gimme, gimme. I need this, I need this, fix this,

change this. How do you pray, how do you talk to God? If you sat down and just thought about, you know, sometimes I think, Lord, what were you thinking when you made a lorikeet? That's wild. You're awesome. Do you ever think like that? Meditation on God. Emphasis on stillness. Be still and know that I am God. Mind to mind occurs in the stillness, in the quietness as we talk softly to each other. Quietly. What did it say when Elijah ran off and God came to him and there's an earthquake and there's fire and the mountain shakes, and God wasn't in any of those things, where was God? Still small voice. He speaks to us with a still small voice. He comes close to us. We all understand, you understand don't you, that when you want to be intimate, something intimate, a symbol of intimacy is someone whispering in your ear, isn't that something intimate? And so our focus is on intimacy, it's going to be stillness, quietness, listen, listen to the word of God as he speaks to your soul.

Character focus. Emphasis on character, love, joy, peace, all of these things. And I've written there emphasize melody. We talk about music. In the domain of music, the melody line is what carries the spiritual. The harmony is what carries the mental and the rhythm carries the physical. That's interesting, isn't it? Well, you can feel when you feel the bass, you can feel your whole body is just, it's a massage, isn't it? Feels great. Is that the centre of our worship? I had a man I was speaking to. He asked me what religion I was. I said I'm Seventh-day Adventist. He said my religion is rhythm. At the time, I thought, he's an idiot but then I thought later on, yeah, I can see what he's saying now. Rhythm, the worship of rhythm, the massage of the body does everything. It makes you feel really good. You can just let yourself go with it. Feels great. Feels like God doesn't it. But there's nothing going on up here, it's just a feeling. Emphasize Melody. As we're singing those songs before, the emphasis is on the melody. The word because it's the word, the word is carried on the melody and the melody is what we speak to God and we want to communicate with Him so the emphasis will be on melody and harmony.

In Satan's kingdom, the emphasis is on intensity of feeling. Now it doesn't mean in God's kingdom you don't feel, you will feel, but the focus is not on feeling in God's kingdom. But in Satan's kingdom, you must feel because it's in the realm of space, in the realm of three dimensions, that you feel something. If you don't feel then it's not real and the focus becomes on intensity of feeling. I need to feel something. That's why so many people are happy to go to meetings and they will themselves to be slayed in the spirit, to be knocked over and to feel something. I'm feeling something. Must be God. Well, that's not a connection. That's just feeling and I thought you could probably get the same feeling in the microwave.

The miraculous. I need to see with my eyes, people falling over and things happening, a word of prophecy and something happening, and I can stomp up and down like this and be Oh it's great isn't it? Reminds me of the prophets of Baal jumping up and down as we're going to talk about here. The miraculous, we don't know if God's there unless we can see something happen. What kind of faith is that? That's not faith, that's legalism, I have to see something and then I know that God is with me, must perform something, you must do something, God do something miraculous, otherwise I'm insecure, I don't know that you here. Speak in tongues, do something. You have to do something. That's the worst gospel I've ever heard. Legalistic to the max. Got to do something. Got to perform.

Activity and action. There's activity and action in God's kingdom, don't worry about that. But the focus, there's always got to be something happened because if you be still and you have to deal with your thoughts and you might not like your thoughts, no rest for the wicked. That's an interesting thought. Activity and action, you know, just boring, just listening to the word of God, just, you know, opening the Bible, so boring. Now, I remember when I was 18 years of age and I was sitting at home and had the radio blaring, the whole room shaking and moving, and I just give my heart to the Lord and God said to me, you know, I'd like you to read the Bible. OK, I just felt this impression. I really should

read the Bible. So I sit down and I turn off the music and it goes quiet. And, you know, I'm just sitting there and in You, oh, Lord, I put my trust. Let me never be ashamed. Boring. Turn on the music, ah that's better. God said to me, you're not going to get far like that, if you need the music all the time, you're being medicated. You need to discipline yourself to be still. If you can't live without the music, you've got a problem. That's what God taught me. That's my testimony, my experience. Believe me, I love music, love lots of music, still like it loud too, but certain types of music that's not going to take away the emphasis on the melody.

Power focus. Invoking the power of God and the power to heal and the power to do this, and it's all about power. That's what happens in Satan's kingdom. Emphasized rhythm and bass. Rhythm and bass, because it touches you in the physical. You can feel it. You can feel the floor shaking. You can feel it all happening. Oh, God is here. What God. The God of flesh. It's a dead God. And, you know, if we think that simply by getting together and we can say the name of Jesus and we can sway around and the beats going and we feel great, if you think that you've had a connection with God just on that basis, I refer to that as froth and bubble. It's not very sustaining, you can't live on that. Doesn't work, doesn't work, tried it, it doesn't work. So take it from an old pastor, it doesn't work. 1 Kings 18:36, let's have a look at the issue of the contrast between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Says in Patriarchs and Prophets, page 150, "then bowing reverently before the unseen God". Interesting. "Bowing reverently before the unseen God, he raises his hand towards heaven and offers a simple prayer ... as Elijah prays, no senseless shrieks resound over Carmel's height. He prays as if he knows Jehovah is there." Now that's faith. He didn't have to say, oh, God, please, I hope you are there, help me. He knows God's there. He doesn't have to do any crazy stuff. He just praised Him by faith. That's powerful worship. And when he finished praying, man, you should have seen power in action, fire and boom and stuff happening, but of course before that we see the profits of Baal. "As they continue their frenzied devotions", whipping themselves up, trying to make themselves feel

wonderful. "All day long the people have witnessed the demonstrations of the baffled priests. They have beheld the wild leaping around the altar." Sounds like a mosh pit to me. Let's just surf the crowd, peoples. That's an interesting, that's a performance based you've got to feel it, you know, feel it then it's not happening for you.

Worship. God's focus. In the invisible focus, the focus is on preaching of the word, conviction and repentance. Notice Great Controversy, page 461, "Wherever the word of God has been faithfully preached, results have followed that attested to divine origin ... Sinners felt their consciences quickened ... Deep conviction took hold upon their minds and hearts. They were convinced of sin and righteousness and of judgment to come." If you come to church just to have fun, you're in the wrong place. You're in the wrong place. You come to church to be challenged, to be convicted, to be confronted and to deal with sin in your life in an atmosphere of security, that God loves you and He cares for you, but He loves you too much to allow you to go on sinning. He wants you to change to save your life. Conviction and repentance, when the Holy Spirit comes to you and some people seem to overlook this in John 16:8 says when He, the Spirit comes, He will convict you, what of first? Sin. Is that a nice feeling or nice, warm, fuzzy feeling? Being convicted of sin? No. Then of righteousness. Now we have a need for righteousness because we've been convicted of sin and of judgment to come. That's how we worship in God's kingdom.

But in Satan's kingdom, it's a visible focus. We focus on drama, we focus on upbeat music, we focus on entertainment. Let's have fun as long as we laugh and we can entertain and we can do all these things. Now we're really stepping on toes. Reassurance, just keep reassuring, you hear messages coming from this side, you're OK. It's OK. Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. And you have to keep that mantra up because deep down inside the Spirit of saying you got a problem, you need to change. Worship. What God do you worship? A visible God or an invisible God? This is the question. "Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for

what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to the Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attraction for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded. (Great Controversy, page 463). And I can say, brothers and sisters, that we have a massive problem in this area in our church. A big problem.

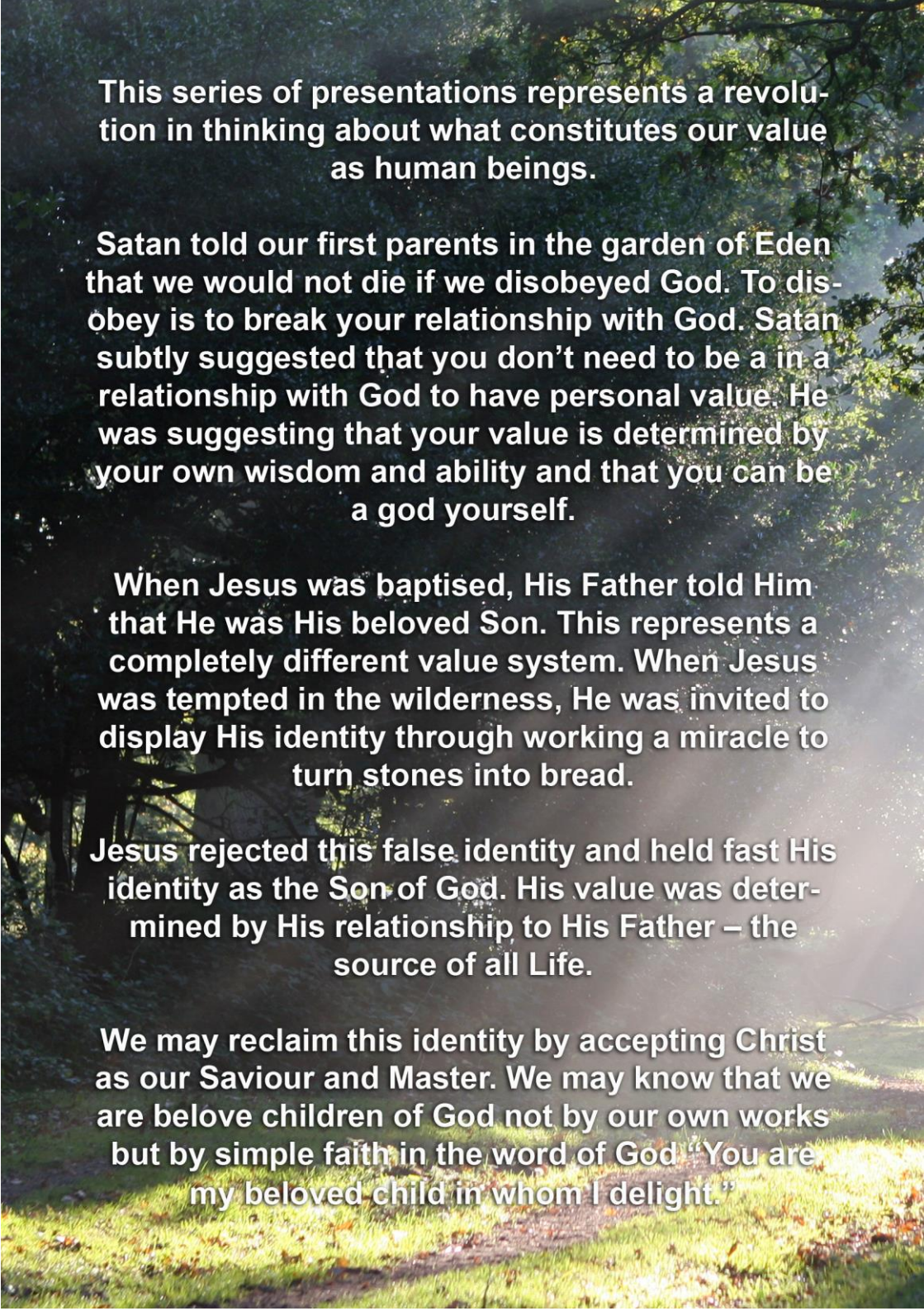
We are losing our sense of who we are as a people over this. We are exchanging. And let me make this very clear when God's people came to Mt Sinai and Moses was up in the mountain, the people couldn't handle the invisible. Moses, their leader was gone and so they made themselves a golden calf that they could see with their eyes. And they didn't call it Baal worship, you know what they call it, the worship of Jehovah, the worship of God. They come to God with their Baal worship and they call it the worship of Jehovah. Are we in danger of doing the same thing today? I think we could be. It says in the last days that these things will happen as it happened in those days. And like in the time of Moab, when the Moabite women came in and they had a feast and they had all these things happening, we said that those things will be re-enacted in the last days, music and dancing and all this kind of stuff in God's church. It wasn't the worship of God. It was the worship of Molech, Baal and Ashtaroth and it was dressed up as the worship of Jehovah. It gets a good crowd and if it gets a good crowd, it must be right. Right?

The point is, how we conduct our relationship and how we worship God will reflect which kingdom we favour or belong to. That's a challenging statement, isn't it? How we conduct our relationships and how we worship God will reflect the kingdom we favour or belong to. Do you desire physical, tangible, visible, or do you desire the invisible? Is that what you are looking for?

And I think probably at that point, we better stop. I've got another whole hour here of implications, but I've had it and I think we're probably a bit

full up. So I just want to leave those thoughts with you. Think about the visible versus the invisible. The reason I bring that up is because of relationship and we've been talking about relationship based kingdom, a relationship based kingdom will have relationship based worship, not performance based worship. That's important. Our relationships that we have with each other will be relationally focused, not performance focused, and I think if we can take on board some of these things, we need to pray about them and look at them, then I think that we'll be saved from many heartaches and many challenges. Let's bow our heads as we pray.

Father in heaven. Lord, we looked at some challenging material tonight. But, Lord, we just so thankful that you love us enough to challenge us, to make us think. Lord, I just pray for each of us here that we will not conduct our relationships on the physical level alone, but first through the spiritual and let that live out through the physical rather than through the physical and let that squash and demolish the spiritual. And Father, we just pray that in our worship that we will think carefully about which God we worship. The names are unimportant, the style will determine which God we worship. We thank you in Jesus name. Amen.

A sun-dappled forest path with green grass and trees. The scene is bright and natural, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a peaceful atmosphere. The path leads into the distance, flanked by lush greenery and tall trees.

This series of presentations represents a revolution in thinking about what constitutes our value as human beings.

Satan told our first parents in the garden of Eden that we would not die if we disobeyed God. To disobey is to break your relationship with God. Satan subtly suggested that you don't need to be in a relationship with God to have personal value. He was suggesting that your value is determined by your own wisdom and ability and that you can be a god yourself.

When Jesus was baptised, His Father told Him that He was His beloved Son. This represents a completely different value system. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He was invited to display His identity through working a miracle to turn stones into bread.

Jesus rejected this false identity and held fast His identity as the Son of God. His value was determined by His relationship to His Father – the source of all Life.

We may reclaim this identity by accepting Christ as our Saviour and Master. We may know that we are beloved children of God not by our own works but by simple faith in the word of God "You are my beloved child in whom I delight."