

West End  
**Messenger**

November – December 2020



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## Article 1

# How To Find Joy

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There is a global pandemic of “depression.” Studies show that people all across the world struggle to conquer depression. Even though people focus on trying to be happy and do things that make them happy, it seems to only be temporary and people are actually miserable. Thankfully, God provides something greater than the temporary emotion of happiness. He actually shows us that we can experience joy – regardless of our earthly circumstances!

**1) Joy is spelled J-O-Y.** When trying to escape misery, most people will settle for a solution we may call “happiness.” Happiness is an emotion that responds to the circumstances going on in a person’s life. So, the focus in happiness is on yourself. It is on whether your circumstances are pleasurable, difficult, or indifferent. Yet, the Bible calls people to experience a joy that is so much greater than this! For example, Philippians 4:4 says, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Even as a prison for Jesus’s sake, Paul could speak of joy! He found joy by focusing on Jesus first, others second, and himself last (J-O-Y).

**2) J is for Jesus first.** Rather than viewing his circumstances in a “woe is me, look at what I’m going through” kind of way, Paul was focused on how the Lord was using him through these challenging times. For example, Philippians 1:12-14 speaks of Paul saying that what had happened to him had “actually advanced the gospel” so that it became known “throughout the whole imperial guard,” everyone knew that his imprisonment was because he was “in Christ,” and even his Christian brothers had “gained confidence in the Lord” from his imprisonment so they spoke God’s word even more fearlessly.” And, even as he faced the thought of possibly being executed, he said, “My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:20-21). Like Paul, you must put your focus on letting

the Lord Jesus Christ be honored in your body above all else. If you do this, you too will find ways to rejoice in whatever situation you find yourself in!

**3) Others second.** When Paul contemplated whether he would live or die and considered his preference, he said, “Now if I live on the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don’t know which one I should choose. I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ – which is far better – but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you sake” (Philippians 1:22-24). Paul did not know which he would prefer: Being released from prison or being put to death. However, the only reason he wanted to be released was to serve the Lord and to help others serve the Lord. And, because there was still more work to do in helping people like the Philippians progress and experience joy in the faith, he was convinced he would be released from his imprisonment (Philippians 1:25-26). Like Paul, after you focus on the Lord you must focus on others above yourself. If you do this, you too will find joy in whatever situation you find yourself in!

**4) Yourself last.** Paul rejoiced because he put the Lord and others above his own desires. But, just imagine what emotions he could have experienced if he had focused on himself: Fear, anxiety, depression, anger, etc. In fact, the Scriptures show us that his imprisonment went on for over four years. When he thought about himself, he said, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. I know both how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content – whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11-13). Like Paul, your focus on yourself must come last. If you do this, you too will find joy in whatever situation you find yourself in!

Most people live their lives backwards. They put themselves first. Then others. Then (maybe) Jesus. This is a recipe for deep depression as you focus deeply on how every circumstance impacts you or someone else on this earth. However, when you focus on Jesus, then others, and then yourself, you can find a joy that lasts and that exists throughout any and every circumstance of life!

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## Article 2

# A god Named “God”

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There are many different idols in this world people worship and serve rather than the true God. Some of these are fairly obvious because they are physical statues and shrines (i.e. Buddha). Others are a little less obvious (i.e. money, jobs, earthly pleasures, etc.). But, there is still another that may seem incomprehensible. For, there are some who have a false god named “God.” Although they believe in many things the Bible teaches about God, they do not accept everything God says about Himself. So, they have established their own god named “God” by exchanging the truth about God for a lie that fits their own desires (Romans 1:24-25). Consider three common examples.

**1) A god who does not punish.** There are many people who worship and serve a god who loves mankind so much that he sent his only son to this earth as the sacrifice for sin and even cite Biblical proof of such a god (i.e. John 3:16). Yet, they claim that since this god is so full of love, he will not possibly condemn anyone to Hell. They often claim that the God of the Old Testament was a harsh and severe God who punished evil, but that the God of the New Testament loves people too much to punish them. However, people who worship and serve such a god worship and serve a god who really does not exist! For, the Bible (even the New Testament) teaches that the true God is a loving and severe God who punishes evil. Romans 11:22 says, “Therefore, consider God’s kindness and severity: severity toward those who have fallen but God’s kindness toward you – if you remain in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.”

**2) A god who considers man’s happiness more important than obedience.** There are many people who worship and serve a god who they believe is more concerned about them being happy and experiencing the good things of life than he is about them obeying what he tells them to do in the Bible. So, any time the Bible requires them to deny themselves of what they desire to have or experience, they believe that their god would rather them do

whatever makes them happy instead of obeying. Therefore, if that means an unscriptural divorce and remarriage, this god would want them to go for it. If that means to go out drinking with friends, this god wants them to have a good time. If that means going to a ballgame instead of church services, this god wants them to go root for their favorite team. Yet, to worship and serve this god is to worship and serve a god who does not really exist! For, the true God expects you to deny yourself whenever your desires conflict with His will. In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."

### **3) A god who directly controls everything that happens.**

There are many people who worship and serve a god who they believe is like a puppet master and pulls all the strings for everything that happens on this earth. They reason that since God possess perfect knowledge and complete power, then there could never be anything that happens that is not directly caused by this God. So, if someone dies, it is because this god made that happen at that specific time. If someone is in an accident, it is because this god chose for it to be that way. If someone hurts another person, it is because this god made it happen. And, if someone is saved or lost, it is because this god preselected who would be saved and lost. Yet, to worship and serve this god is to worship and serve a god who does not really exist! For, although the true God is in control of all things, this does not mean that He directly determines every outcome. There is much that God has simply set into motion on this earth and does not directly interfere with, though He can use the things that happen to accomplish His purposes. For instance, Ecclesiastes 9:11 says, "Again I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, or the battle to the strong, or bread to the wise, or riches to the discerning, or favor to the skillful; rather, time and chance happen to all of them."

There are many ways people distort the teachings of the Scriptures to form a false god for themselves named "God." Yet, everything we need to know about God has been revealed to us in God's creation and in God's word. We must not change who this God is. Instead, we must simply believe in Him, accept who He is, worship Him, and serve Him as the true God!

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## Article 3

# What If You Have Believed A Lie?

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What if you have believed a lie? That is a question that cuts us to the core and may make us defensive, uncomfortable, angry, scared, and more. For, what we have accepted as truth forms what we believe. And, what we believe forms the way we live. So, if we have believed a lie, it is possible that many of the things we thought we were doing right have actually been wrong! Therefore, God wants us to challenge ourselves to see whether we have believed any lies (2 Corinthians 13:5).

**1) Satan is the father of lies.** Satan is working to spread lies and deceive anyone however possible. Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

Just knowing that Satan is working to spread lies throughout this world is an important starting point. He has worked in this way ever since he lied to Eve about the forbidden fruit by making it sound appealing to her (Genesis 3:1-6). But, it hasn’t stopped there. Satan is actually spreading an abundance of lies in this world – and he often works through other people to accomplish this. This includes family members, peers, teachers, authors, government officials, religious leaders, and many others.

**2) Lies are spread through unexpected sources.** 1 Kings 13 records an interesting story about someone who believed a lie. It tells the story of a prophet of God (referred to as the “man of God”) who spoke against the idolatry of Israel. The man of God had been instructed by God not to eat or drink while he was in Bethel and to return from Bethel by a different way than he went. However, another prophet (referred to as the “old prophet”) told the man of God that God had spoken to him and said that the man of God could eat and drink with him (but, he was lying to the man of God about this matter). The man of God went along with the saying of

the old prophet despite what God had instructed. Consequently, the man of God was said to have disobeyed the word of the Lord and was killed by a lion on the road.

While there are some people you may expect to hear a lie from, there are others you may trust (i.e. a parent, a close friend, a preacher, etc.). However, Satan often uses these people to mislead you by taking advantage of the trust you have placed in them. For example, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 says, “For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no great surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will be according to their works.”

**3) You must test everything to see if it is from God.** Rather than blindly trusting *anyone* you must test *everyone*. Since God’s word is completely true (John 17:17), you must never believe anything that contradicts what He says. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 instructs you to “test all things,” holding on “to what is good” and staying away from “every kind of evil.” So, test everything by the truth God has revealed in the pages of Scripture! This includes everything your parents taught you, everything you hear through the media, everything you are taught by a church or preacher, everything you read, everything your friends tell you, and so much more!

After you put everything to the test to see if it harmonizes with God’s revealed truth, you must hold on to what is true and right! Make those things part of what you believe and how you live. Then, reject everything that you have tested by God’s word and discovered to be false. Don’t let those things have any part of your life either in what you believe or how you live.

This world “is under the sway of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). Therefore, this world is full of lies and deceptions of all kinds. There are lies about the origin of the universe and life on it, lies about God, lies about the soul and the afterlife, lies about the Bible, lies about sin and morality, lies about Jesus, lies about salvation, lies about the church, and lies about Christian living. Don’t take



anything you are told for granted. Test everything by God's word in the Bible!

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## Article 4

# Why You Need To Follow Jesus

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Christianity revolves around a basic choice: What will you do with Jesus? Throughout the New Testament, we read about people making different choices concerning Jesus Christ. Today, you will also make a choice about what you will do with Jesus. You might ignore Him, refuse to believe in Him, believe in Him but not obey Him, betray Him, or any number of things. However, the only right thing to do is to believe in Jesus so much that you actually follow Him! Consider some reasons why you need to follow Jesus.

### **1) Without Him, you will die in your sins without Him.**

Jesus has warned you about what will happen if you reject Him. In John 8:24, Jesus said, "Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins." Without Jesus, there is no possible way to overcome and be forgiven of the sins you have committed. Without having a true faith that believes in and obeys Jesus Christ, your life will end while you are still in your sins and you will be eternally separated from God in the fires of Hell!

**2) He will lead you to eternal life.** You don't have to die in your sins. Jesus Christ came to this earth and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice to remove your sins (1 Peter 1:18-19)! If you will believe in and follow Jesus Christ, you can have all your sins forgiven and have an eternal home in Heaven! After many people turned away from following Jesus and Jesus asked His apostles if they also wanted to leave, Peter replied, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68-69). In John 14:6, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

**3) To honor Him with your life.** Jesus died to save you from eternal death and punishment in Hell so you can have eternal life

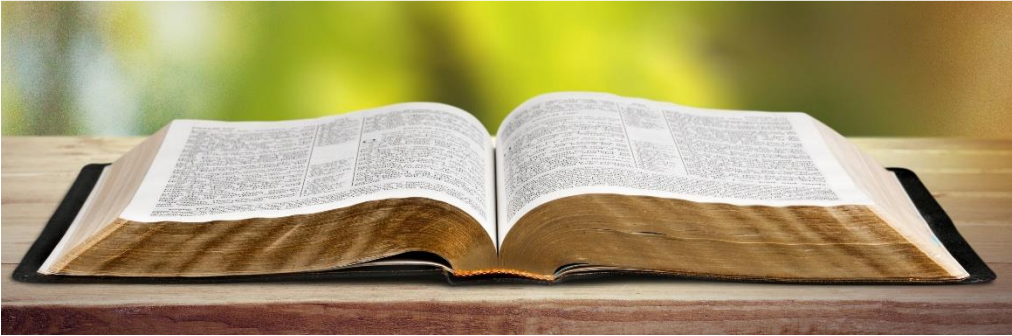
in Heaven! Realizing this, you should honor Him with every breath you take. As the apostle Paul reflected on his past sins, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and his commitment to live for Christ, he concluded, “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Certainly, this is the only reasonable response to the one who sacrificed so much to save you!

**4) To experience every spiritual blessing.** If you reject Jesus Christ, you may be able to enjoy some temporary physical things about your life (even sinful pleasures). However, you will miss out on everything that is truly valuable and eternal! Not only will following Jesus result in an eternal home in Heaven, but you will also experience some tremendous spiritual blessings during your life that will be greater than any earthly thing. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.” These blessings include peace that surpasses all understanding, hope that serves as an anchor for the soul, joy that is not dependent on your earthly circumstances, forgiveness of every past sin, and adoption to be a child of God!

You certainly need to follow Jesus Christ! The decision to follow Jesus is the single most important and life-altering decision you will ever make. And, it is the most rewarding decision you will ever make, as it not only pays to serve Jesus now – but pays throughout eternity!

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9:45a Bible study\*

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**\*Due to COVID-19, precautions have been taken that have impacted our assemblies. Please check our Facebook page or call for updates.**

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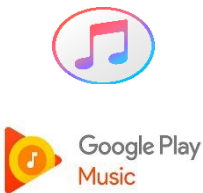


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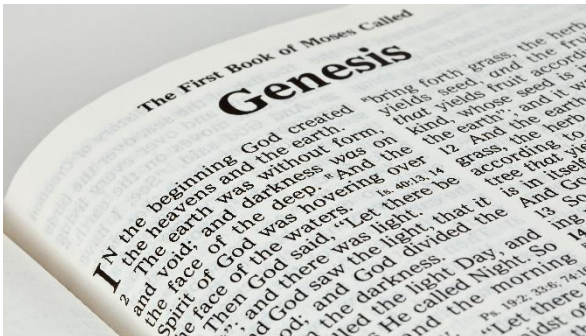


## When Life Doesn't Go As Expected

November 8<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30a

Mark your calendar and join us for two

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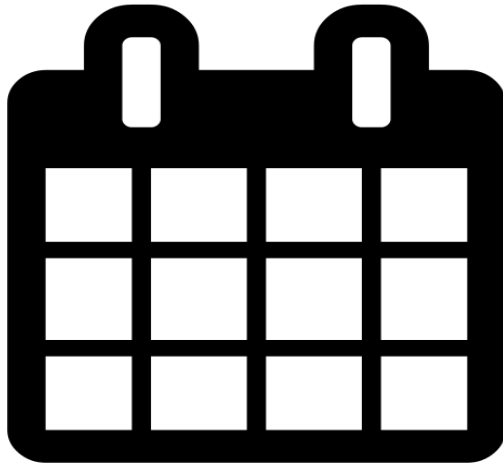


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## Article 5

# Does It Matter How I Am Baptized?

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Baptism is practiced in some way by many different churches. However, what these churches teach and what is actually practiced in “baptism” differs. This can often leave people thinking they have fulfilled God’s instruction concerning baptism when, in fact, they may not have obeyed God in this way. Therefore, it is important for you to seriously evaluate your own baptism and consider whether you have actually fulfilled God’s instructions.

**1) Some common practices of baptism.** People talk about many different things concerning baptism. Some refer to the practice of sprinkling or pouring water on a baby. Some refer to sprinkling or pouring water on someone’s head who is not a baby. Some refer to an experience they connect with the Holy Spirit. Some refer to an immersion in water that is necessary for being saved and forgiven. Some refer to an immersion in water but view it as a public demonstration that they have already been saved. Clearly, there are many different practices that are called “baptism.”

**2) There is only one baptism God requires and that pleases Him today.** Although there are various baptisms referred to in the Bible, Ephesians 4:5 says there is now “one baptism.” Other baptisms existed for various purposes (i.e. baptism of John and baptism of the Holy Spirit). And, people have added other forms of baptism in addition to these. However, those who desire to please God must obey God according to this one baptism God says is in effect today. Then, please recognize that true obedience involves doing what God instructs for the reasons God instructs – not just doing something people call “baptism.”

**3) The method of baptism matters.** The one baptism God has commanded of people today has a specific method attached with it. For one, the Greek word for “baptism” refers to an immersion, plunging, and overwhelming. So, whenever you read of “baptism” in the New Testament, this is what God is discussing. Specifically, the baptism God commands of us today is an immersion in water. Acts 8 demonstrates this when the evangelist

Philip taught the Ethiopian man about Jesus and what he must do to be saved (verses 26-40). When the man saw water and knew he needed to be baptized, he stopped the chariot they were riding in. Then, “both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer but went on his way rejoicing” (verses 38-39). This is clearly a picture of full immersion in water. This immersion in water is described as a burial (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). Therefore, if you have not been baptized by being immersed in water, you have not actually obeyed God’s commandment – and you need to be baptized!

**4) The purpose of baptism matters.** The one baptism God has commanded of people today also has a specific purpose attached to it. Although some teach infants can be baptized or that someone is saved prior to being baptized, God’s word shows such baptisms do not fit with His purpose for baptism. For example, God requires baptism in order for a person to be saved. Mark 16:16 records Jesus saying, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” 1 Peter 3:20-21 compares how eight people were “saved through water” during Noah’s day and that baptism “now saves you.” In addition, God commands baptism as being essential for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16) and to enter a right relationship with Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:27). Therefore, if you have not made your own choice to be baptized as a requirement for salvation, forgiveness, and to be in Christ, you have not actually obeyed God’s commandment – and you need to be baptized!

It does matter how you are baptized! Whenever people in the Bible had been baptized incorrectly (with the wrong baptism), they were baptized with the right baptism according to God’s instructions (Acts 19:1-5). In the same way, if you have been baptized in the wrong way or for the wrong purpose, you need to be baptized according to God’s teachings in the New Testament. This is a matter of eternal importance to your soul!



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## Article 6

# Is The Bible Outdated?

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In its “newest” section (the New Testament), the Bible is nearly 2,000 years old. Certainly, a lot has changed in our world in that time! Many books that have been written over this period that have lost relevancy. As a result, many people today have claimed that the Bible is also no longer relevant and applicable to our lives. Yet, is the Bible actually outdated?

**1) The Bible is from the unchanging God.** Both internal and external evidence proves beyond a doubt that the Bible really contains God’s words (2 Timothy 3:16). This is significant to our question because God said that He has “not changed” (Malachi 3:6). James 1:17 says that God “does not change like shifting shadows.” And, Hebrews 13:8 says that Jesus Christ “is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” In order for the Bible to be outdated and irrelevant to people today, God would have had to “evolve” in what He views as right and wrong. Therefore, God’s standard of what is right and wrong has not changed since the New Testament has been written!

**2) The Bible is enduring and must not be changed.** As God has spoken through the pages of the Bible, He has directly said that His words are designed to last! 1 Peter 1:23-25 teaches that God’s word is “imperishable” seed that is “living and enduring.” While everything else on this earth is only relevant for a short time, “the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now, if God’s word is no longer relevant and would need to be revised, God has just lied! Instead, the truth is that God’s word is always relevant to our lives today – and for as long as life on this earth continues. In fact, any attempt to revise God’s word by either adding to what He says or taking away from what He says is entirely forbidden by God (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19)!

**3) The Bible tells us everything needed for spiritual life.** The Bible needs no revision and never fails to be relevant because it teaches everything we need to know about pleasing God and spending eternity in Heaven. There simply is no other way to learn

the way to salvation besides what God has revealed in the Bible (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25). 2 Peter 1:3 says it is by God's divine power He has "given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." Namely, God's word in the Bible tells us everything we must believe, everything we need to know about what is sinful in our lives, everything we need to know about how to change what is sinful in our lives, and everything we need to know about living in the way that pleases God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God's word is just as relevant to do these same things today as it has ever been. For, God has said the faith (the system of acceptable religious belief, teaching, and practice) "was delivered to the saints once for all" (Jude 1:3). It simply does not need any revision!

**4) God's word will judge us.** Although people change their minds about many things and human laws are constantly evolving, we have seen that God's word does not change! And, it is essential that you accept this truth because God's word (as revealed in the New Testament) will be the criteria God will use to judge you on the Day Jesus Christ returns and eternity begins! John 12:48 records Jesus saying, "The one who rejects me and doesn't receive my sayings has this as his judge: The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day." Then, Revelation 20:12 records the picture of the Judgment Day, saying, "I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books." Yes, the approximately 2,000 year old books containing God's words in the New Testament will be the criteria by which God will judge whether you had lived to please Him or whether you rebelled against Him, with eternity in Heaven or Hell hanging in the balance!

God's words contained in the pages of the Bible are not outdated! They are just as relevant for teaching us how God wants us to live today as they were when they were first written. Although people may not like many of the things God's word teaches, His words remain true and will be the criteria used to judge our lives. We can either choose to accept them as truth today (while we can submit ourselves to their teaching) or when we stand before Jesus

in Judgment (when it will be too late to change our lives). The choice is yours.

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## Article 7

# What Is The Purpose Of Taking The Lord's Supper?

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Christians must take the Lord's Supper, consisting of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29). As we do, it is important for us to consider why it is so important. For, taking the Lord's Supper properly can draw us closer to Heaven, while taking the Lord's Supper improperly can draw us closer to Hell (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). Therefore, consider 5 reasons you should take the Lord's Supper.

**1) To remember Christ.** Jesus has given His people a weekly spiritual feast (the Lord's Supper) to use to remember Him. 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 records Jesus as instituting the unleavened bread in the Lord's Supper "in remembrance of me" (of Jesus's broken body, Matthew 26:26). Then, Jesus instituted the fruit of the vine "in remembrance of me" (of Jesus's blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins, Matthew 26:27-28). So, when you take the two elements of the Lord's Supper, you must use them to help you remember the sacrifice Jesus made to save you from your sins!

**2) To proclaim the Lord's death.** While there is an internal remembrance of Jesus in the Lord's Supper, there is also an outward proclamation. 1 Corinthians 11:26 says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Since the Lord's Supper was observed in New Testament times in the context of local church assemblies, others will see you take it. When they do, you will proclaim your dependence on Jesus Christ for your salvation. And, it should encourage other Christians who also depend on Jesus Christ and warn unbelievers of their need to follow Christ!

**3) To examine yourself.** Whether you take the Lord's Supper in the right way impacts your salvation. 1 Corinthians 11:27-

29 says, "So, then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself." Self-examination must happen in two ways. For one, you must examine whether you are properly taking the Lord's Supper (note that the Corinthians had perverted it by making it into a common meal). Then, you should also use it as an opportunity to examine your life and make sure you are living according to Christ's teaching. If you have sin in your life, the Lord's Supper should motivate you to get yourself right with God immediately! So, when you take the two elements of the Lord's Supper, you should look inwardly to examine whether you really are living to please God!

**4) To motivate faithful service.** Remembering this great sacrifice on the first day of every week ought to motivate you to greater and faithful service to Christ throughout each week. For, whenever you remember where you would be without Jesus, you should be drawn to love Him even more. When Jesus spoke of a sinful woman who recognized the true nature of her sins, He said, "Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little" (Luke 7:47). So, when you take the two elements of the Lord's Supper, reflect on how much Jesus has forgiven you and use that to love Him more throughout the week!

**5) To commune with Christ and Christians.** Sometimes the Lord's Supper is referred to as "communion." This word simply means "sharing" or "fellowship." 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 says, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, since all of us share the one bread." The Lord's Supper should remind you of your intimate relationship you now have with Christ and that your spiritual life is found through this sharing (John 6:53-58). And, as you take the Lord's Supper with other Christians, you also share in this relationship with them. So, when you take the two elements of the Lord's Supper, consider how you share in Jesus Christ and how you do so with other Christians!

If you are not taking the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week? Look at what you are missing! And, if you are not taking the Lord's Supper in the proper way? You are warned that you are sinning against God! When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He instituted much more than an empty ritual. Rather, He instituted something that truly impacts the spiritual health of every person. Therefore, you must take the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week and do so in the manner God has prescribed!

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## Article 8

# Things God Cannot Do

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God is all-powerful and there is nothing stronger than Him. This truth is repeatedly taught and demonstrated in the Bible. For example, Matthew 19:26 records Jesus saying, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." So, there is no foe God cannot defeat, no righteous task or purpose God cannot accomplish, and no promise He cannot keep. However, the Bible does teach that there are some things God cannot do because they are contrary to His holy nature.

**1) God cannot lie.** Because God is holy, every word He speaks is completely true and right. Titus 1:2 says that God "cannot lie." Hebrews 6:18 says that "it is impossible for God to lie." Rather than God being the origin of anything that is false, it is Satan who is "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). This is significant because if God's nature allowed Him to lie, then we would never know when to believe Him. There would be no perfect standard of truth to govern our lives and trust in. And, consequently, we could never have complete confidence in the covenants we enter with God. So, God's truthfulness is essential to knowing that God will not violate His covenant or change what His lips have said (Psalm 89:34)!

**2) God cannot tempt or be tempted.** Because God is holy, evil does not entice Him and He does not try to entice anyone to do what is evil. James makes this clear in James 1:13, saying, "No one undergoing a trial should say, 'I am being tempted by God,' since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn't tempt

anyone.” There is nothing in God’s nature for evil to appeal to (James 1:14-15). Although Jesus was tempted when He lived on this earth, we must remember that Jesus was both God and man during this time. He was tempted according to His earthly desires (i.e. to eat food, to avoid pain, etc.). Still, God’s holy nature prevents evil from enticing Him. Consequently, there will never be a time when God turns evil or tries to entice people to do evil!

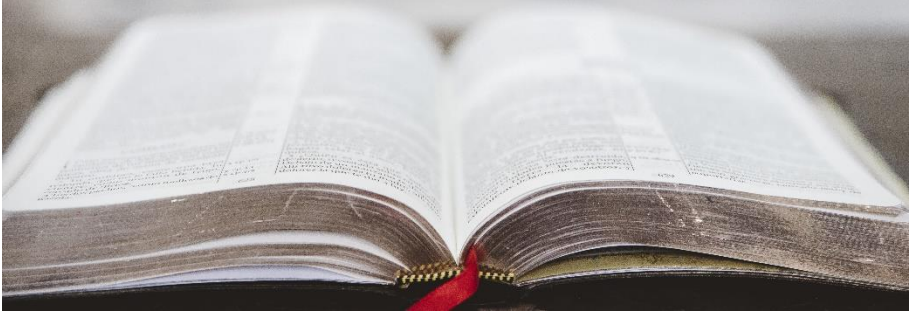
**3) God cannot look on evil favorably.** Because God is holy, God can never look at the wicked things people do with any kind of favor. The prophet Habakkuk addressed God and said, “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil, and you cannot tolerate wrongdoing” (Habakkuk 1:13). While God is ever-present and sees everything people do – including every wicked action (Proverbs 15:3), the point is that God cannot look on such things with favor and tolerate it. He is never pleased when He sees people violating His laws.

**4) God cannot be in fellowship with evil.** Because God is holy, God can never be in a relationship with someone who is practicing evil. This is why God sent Jesus Christ to this earth as the sacrifice for sin – so both His justice could be fulfilled and His mercy could be extended. Now, those who have sinned can be made holy through Jesus (Colossians 1:21-23)! For, without this sacrifice, we would have forever been destined to be separated from God in our sins. 1 John 1:5-7 says, “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely not darkness in him. If we say, ‘We have fellowship with him,’ and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” God cannot have us as His children if we are not committed to living according to His holiness. And, He will not allow anything or anyone sinful into Heaven (Revelation 21:27; Revelation 22:15). For God to be in fellowship with evil would result in God denying His own holy and righteous character. And 2 Timothy 2:13 makes it clear that God “cannot deny himself.”

God is a holy and righteous God. Although He has limitless power, He will never use any of His power contrary to His holy nature. This should be extremely comforting to us – as we know

God will not change His character and that He will always be true to His word! Then, God's holy character must also challenge us to live according to His standard of holiness so that He will welcome us into Heaven one Day!

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