

ARMED
WITH
Love
TO WAGE



War Against Worldliness

MAN OF THE WORD MANUAL • SPRING 2020

ARMED WITH LOVE TO WAGE WAR
AGAINST WORLDLINESS

MCBC Man of the Word
Spring 2020

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ARMED WITH LOVE TO WAGE WAR AGAINST WORLDLINESS

THEME

Our theme for the Man of the Word this spring is *Armed with Love to Wage War Against Worldliness*. This booklet is a ten-week study designed to challenge us as men to lead both ourselves and those whom we influence by cultivating our love for God and disciplining ourselves by grace not to love this world.

THEME PASSAGE

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

1 John 2:15-17

MANUAL

Each week’s resources consist of:

- SCRIPTURE MEDITATION – A passage pertaining to the week’s article to be read and considered during the week
- BOOK READING – Randy Leedy, *Love Not the World: Winning the War Against Worldliness* (BJU Press, 2012)
- M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE – A way to keep on track in reading through the Bible in 2020 using the M’Cheyne system
- PERSONAL REFLECTIONS – A week-by-week place to record what God is teaching you
- ARTICLES – Testimonies and devotionals related to the theme, written by Mount Calvary Baptist Church men

Don’t let these materials become daunting. Let whatever you do be a delight. If you can’t keep up every component, choose the ones that you can use consistently and stick with them.

TIME

10 weeks: January 26 – April 4, 2020

GOALS

1. To kindle our love for God and courage to fight worldliness through scriptural meditation.
2. To draw benefit from a wisely written book on worldliness.
3. To edify fellow Mount Calvary men through prayer and accountability.

EVENTS

Men's Prayer Breakfasts: January 25, February 29, April 4

MY PRAYER PARTNER (NAME, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL):

MAN OF THE WORD PROGRAM

The leadership of Mount Calvary Baptist Church created the Man of the Word program in obedience to the command of 2 Timothy 2:2: "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This ministry functions under the leadership of Pastor Mark Minnick and Pastor Jerid Jones. The following men are the current Man of the Word officers.

President Eric Newton

Vice President Tom Kendall

Treasurer Roger Bradley

Food Director Al Ellison

Project Coordinator Jesse Keck

We are grateful to Pastor Mark Minnick for his encouragement and leadership and for his vision for the men of Mount Calvary Baptist Church. We would also like to express our gratitude to the men who have donated their time, energy, and gifts by writing spiritually edifying articles for our growth and encouragement.

FOREWORD

“Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to *dishonest* gain.
Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Your ways.”
Psalms 119:36-37

Hearts abound in communication today. A recent study¹ found that three of the seven most frequently used emojis included a ♥. That fact probably doesn’t surprise you. We are accustomed to hearing people say they *love* this or are *passionate* about that or really *desire* to accomplish something. The idea of *love* surfaces so frequently and conveys so many different meanings today, many of which stand in opposition to God’s Word, that we as men may naturally recoil from even discussing the subject.

But consider the emphasis the Bible gives to *love* and the *heart*.

- How was Israel to express its allegiance to the one true God, the Lord? *Deuteronomy 6:4-5*
- What is one crucial way believers know they are walking the way of God’s Word? *Psalms 119:97*
- If loving God wholeheartedly is the greatest commandment, what is the second commandment? *Matthew 22:37-38*
- How does the world know we are Christ’s disciples? *John 13:35*
- What is the first fruit of the Spirit? *Galatians 5:22*
- What is the husband’s fundamental obligation to his wife? *Ephesians 5:25*
- What is the culminating virtue of a growing faith? *2 Peter 1:7*
- How would we know we are born of God and truly know God? *1 John 4:7-8*

In other words, love is no minor matter. Many have said that *we are what we eat*. If that statement arrests our attention (and it probably should), how much more the reality that *we are what we love*. The colonial theologian Jonathan Edwards wrote about *affections*—the disposition of our will, how our heart is inclined. You could say, we live according to what

¹ <https://emojipedia.org/stats/>, accessed January 13, 2020

we love most. Therefore, thinking about love is no mere sentimentality. If we want to discern how to please God and live for His glory in 2020, we must carefully consider what we love.

One of our brothers, Randy Leedy, has demonstrated love for God and His people by writing a book to help us love our Father rather than the world He sent His Son to rescue us from. The world exerts a magnetism that attracts our fallen affections. Its sights dazzle; its sounds tempt.² None of us is strong enough to battle it on our own. We need grace to arm ourselves with love for God and biblical discernment that enables us to wage successful warfare against worldliness. May our heavenly Father be pleased to use Dr. Leedy's book and this manual to that end.

Eric Newton

² "O Jesus, I Have Promised," stanza 3

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age . . .”

Titus 2:11-12

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 1-12

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Jan 26	Gen 27	Matt 26	Esther 3	Acts 26
Jan 27	Gen 28	Matt 27	Esther 4	Acts 27
Jan 28	Gen 29	Matt 28	Esther 5	Acts 28
Jan 29	Gen 30	Mark 1	Esther 6	Rom 1
Jan 30	Gen 31	Mark 2	Esther 7	Rom 2
Jan 31	Gen 32	Mark 3	Esther 8	Rom 3
Feb 1	Gen 33	Mark 4	Esther 9-10	Rom 4

PERSONAL REFLECTION

INTRODUCTION

RANDY LEEDY

To open our study, let's think back to a fascinating section of the book of Genesis that seems to serve as a pattern for all humanity over the centuries.

You know Abraham, right? What is he a pattern of? Well, the New Testament speaks of believers following the footsteps of faithful Abraham. So he's the pattern of a faithful (though imperfect) believer, justified by faith. And no doubt you remember his nephew, Lot. What's he a pattern of? That one isn't so easy; we'll come back to it. When you think of Lot, you immediately think of Sodom and Gomorrah, right? What are those wicked cities the pattern of? The New Testament also answers this question: they are the pattern of ungodly, unregenerate living (2 Peter 2:6, Jude 7). We could call Sodom "the world."

Now the same passage in 2 Peter that mentions Sodom also mentions Lot as an example (though it doesn't use that exact word) of one whom God delivers from the destruction that He brings upon the ungodly. So Lot is a kind of a pattern, too.

It appears, then, that we have three patterns in the section of Genesis that brings Abraham, Lot, and Sodom all together (chapters 13-19, a considerable stretch of text). Let's go with that for now.

Abraham, the man of faith, is not subject at all to the destruction that God rains down upon Sodom, other than whatever emotional suffering he endured as an observer of such calamity. Lot, though, came within a hair's breadth of perishing there. If the angels had not taken Lot and his wife and daughters by the hand to drag them out of Sodom, they'd have burned in the brimstone. And though Lot did not perish, he did lose all that he went to Sodom to gain for himself materially.

Lot's case was so bad that many readers of Scripture breathe a sigh of relief when they read in 2 Peter that Lot was a righteous man—they weren't so sure as they read the Genesis account, in which the escape from Sodom is followed by the sordid scene of his drunkenly impregnating both of his daughters as they acted the way the debauched culture of Sodom had taught them in order to have children. Some have thought that

Peter must have had special revelation to be able to say that Lot was righteous when there was so much carnality in the decision making that led him step-by-step from being a companion of faithful Abraham to becoming a civic leader in Sodom.

If we read the Genesis account with our eyes open, though, we realize that we can see clearly for ourselves that Lot really was righteous in the eyes of God. Remember the little bargaining session that God entered into with Abraham in the person of His angel (almost certainly Christ himself)? What was the whole issue? Abraham put it this way: “Far be it from you to destroy the righteous with the wicked, so that they are treated alike!” So Abraham and the Lord bargained until Abraham had brought the future of the city down to the question of whether there were ten righteous people in it. Obviously there were not, so the Lord destroyed the city and dragged the righteous out before the brimstone fell. The judge of all the earth did right (Gen. 18:25), and the righteous did not perish.

But wait. Didn’t one of those who came out of the city perish almost immediately? Yes, Lot’s wife looked back, apparently with longing desire, and instantly turned into a pillar of salt. She escaped the brimstone, but she ended up just as dead as those who burned. And Luke implies that she, too, is a pattern: “Remember Lot’s wife!” (Luke 17:32).

So we see in this passage now, not three, but four patterns, with a stark line drawn between two and two: the two righteous live, and the two wicked perish. Even prior to the destruction, it’s clear that some are righteous (Abraham) and some are wicked (Sodom and Gomorrah). But there are two other patterns: those who display elements of both righteousness and wickedness in a combination that leaves human observers unable to assess. Lot looks a great deal like the Sodomites when he offers his daughters to the raving, lustful mob beating down his door. But he looks a lot like a believer when he rebukes their evil deeds. His wife looks a lot like a believer as she escapes the city with him: the angels have the two of them equally by the hand, and they equally (if reluctantly) cooperate at first. But soon the polar difference even between husband and wife appears: he is righteous and she is not.

At the outset of this study, we will do well to seek from the Lord the grace of honesty with ourselves to “Test [our]selves” (2 Cor. 13:5). So much is at stake! Am I, like Abraham, on a path of rejecting this present, evil world (albeit imperfectly), with a view to inheriting God’s rich and eternal

promises? Or am I perhaps more like Lot, impressed with all the genuinely good things that characterized the situation of Sodom and Gomorrah (the agricultural richness Lot saw was genuinely good!) and tolerating a great deal of the world's wickedness in order to enjoy its pleasures—even after at least one very close scrape with calamity from which I was delivered only by the power of God and the sacrificial care of a loving brother or sister in Christ?³ (I speak of Genesis 14:1-16.)

Or, more darkly, am I perhaps not even “in the faith” at all (2 Cor. 13:5 again)? Is my current freedom from the worst of the world's temporal cancers only an advantage I enjoy due to an external connection with Christ and His people that has no inward spiritual vitality? Am I a dead branch attached to the vine only externally? Was Jesus' call to remember Lot's wife His warning to me? Or am I, perhaps, even living the life of Sodom, whether openly or secretly, and somehow justifying myself in doing so?

It's hard to think of any biblical basis for some additional category of spiritual status. Each of us is either alive in Christ or dead in our sins. And within those two categories, we are either more on the side of faithful Abraham or else worldly Lot on the one hand, or, on the other hand, more on the side of the overtly wicked Sodom or else the covertly wicked wife of Lot.

Wherever we may be at this moment, there is only one issue that prevents anyone who is not following the footsteps of Abraham from getting onto that path, and that is our own will. The Lord has made all the provision for us to overcome the world. He has given us all His promises of victory by faith. He has commanded us to walk in His ways, and He has abundantly shown us those ways in His Word. So, brothers, let's allow the Lord to use this study to move us into the path of Abraham, or if that's where we already are (as I trust is in fact the case with the great majority of

³ By the way, the contrast between Abraham and Lot is nowhere starker than in Genesis 14. After Lot has chosen Sodom because of its temporal advantages (Gen. 13), Abraham flatly refused to accept any spoils of the battle in which he rescued Lot. He wanted the king of Sodom to have no claim on him whatsoever. Lot, by contrast, apparently accepted considerable temporal advantage from Abraham's daring expedition: before long he is sitting in the gate of Sodom, where the city leaders gathered to transact various kinds of business. It's easy to see how he could enjoy such stature after his uncle had restored the city's wealth temporarily lost in battle!

readers), let's allow Him to confirm and strengthen us on that path. The pressures of the world are not likely to relent in the coming years; we will need all the strength that God sees fit to provide us by faith in His Son who is our victor.

Our study will especially warn us against Lot's path: that of the worldly believer. We will do well, here at the outset, to let the Lord imprint deeply on our minds the picture of the widower Lot, drunk and destitute in a cave when he could have run to the wealth of his uncle Abraham, fornicating with his pitiful daughters. That's the Genesis pattern of the righteous but worldly man. It's not pleasant, for sure! But it's purposeful, and we must let God work its purpose into our hearts and receive the disciplinary training of His grace to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). There's no regret at the end of that path!

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;
And you who have no money come, buy and eat.
Come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without cost.
Why do you spend money for what is not bread,
And your wages for what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
And delight yourself in abundance.”
Isaiah 55:1-2

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 13-33

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Feb 2	Gen 34	Mark 5	Job 1	Rom 5
Feb 3	Gen 35-36	Mark 6	Job 2	Rom 6
Feb 4	Gen 37	Mark 7	Job 3	Rom 7
Feb 5	Gen 38	Mark 8	Job 4	Rom 8
Feb 6	Gen 39	Mark 9	Job 5	Rom 9
Feb 7	Gen 40	Mark 10	Job 6	Rom 10
Feb 8	Gen 41	Mark 11	Job 7	Rom 11

PERSONAL REFLECTION

WINNING THE WAR OF OUR AFFECTIONS

DANIEL MULLER

Our family had occasion over Christmas to visit Montpelier, Vermont and tour the state's capitol building along with The Vermont Historical Museum. During the tour of those buildings, several items caught our attention. The first was a copy of Scripture on display in the museum that was published in Brattleboro, Vermont by John Holbrook. The second was a quilt made by a young Vermont lady during the Civil War and given to injured Union soldiers. On the quilt was penned Revelation 21:4, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death..." Yet, in stark contrast to those rich spiritual treasures is a plaque erected outside of the state house which describes Vermont's monumental Equality for Same-Sex Couples court ruling that was passed twenty years ago this past December. One might think, "How could such a God-fearing heritage change course so drastically?" In less than one hundred fifty years, the picturesque church steeples are left barren with agnostics choosing the affections of the world. Perhaps, religious men's misguided affections had a part to play in this state's sad religious demise.

That scene paints a similar picture of what we read in the second chapter of our book with Israel's infatuation with the nations. In this chapter, Dr. Leedy establishes a biblical framework of the world from the Old Testament. The chapter begins with a very helpful differentiation between the world and culture. It also develops the idea of the nations as the world.

As I read through the chapter, several sentences on page 24 jumped off the page at me. It is here that Leedy assesses why Israel chose not to obey God but rather follow the worldly affections of the nations. He states, "Scripture does not leave us guessing about why Israel disobeyed. **The root of Israel's disobedience was not disaffection with God; it was affection for the ways of the nations** [emphasis added]. Israel did not wake up one morning with a sudden resentment against God; rather, she increasingly pursued her appetite for the fleshly ways of her pagan neighbors." That is a sobering assessment!

When I read those words, I made application to my own life and thought of how easily my affections are drawn to the things of this age. For instance, I find it a struggle to memorize God's Word. Yet, I don't struggle

following my college football team's performance each week. While this affection is lawful, it is not to overpower my spiritual affections. We as men must overcome these struggles even toward lawful affections and not let them crowd out spiritual affections!

At the end of the chapter Leedy writes on pages 32–33, “God’s own people, though, even in their best intentions, are overcome by the powerful urges of their flesh to pattern themselves after the surrounding pagan nations.” If that is true of God’s chosen people, the same is true of us and our desire for things of this age. Thus, we as men need to guard our affections for things of this age.

I couldn’t help but think it was providential to find in the December 22 worship guide’s devotional reading the words from one of John Newton’s sermon entitled, “Finally Satisfied.” The reading says, “The common, wearisome pursuit of the world is described as spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which does not satisfy (Isaiah 55:2).” That thought was so helpful for me as I was thinking of the framework that God lays in the Old Testament of Israel’s constant magnetization for the nations. Those affections that lure us into thinking that we will find satisfaction only fuel our thirst for even more. Only True satisfaction is found only in God and His Word!

In conclusion, may we as men be like Joshua and Caleb of old and stand up for right and win the war of our affections against this age so that our children and the generations that follow us, should the Lord tarry, have an example to look up to in walking with God!

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

1 Corinthians 10:11-13

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 34-44

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Feb 9	Gen 42	Mark 12	Job 8	Rom 12
Feb 10	Gen 43	Mark 13	Job 9	Rom 13
Feb 11	Gen 44	Mark 14	Job 10	Rom 14
Feb 12	Gen 45	Mark 15	Job 11	Rom 15
Feb 13	Gen 46	Mark 16	Job 12	Rom 16
Feb 14	Gen 47	Luke 1:1-38	Job 13	1 Cor 1
Feb 15	Gen 48	Luke 1:39-80	Job 14	1 Cor 2

PERSONAL REFLECTION

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

RIES BARLOW

A wise man once said, “When you go through a mine field, you want to follow in the footsteps of the one who went before.” One might think that a wiser man would say to avoid the mine field altogether. In our earthly pilgrimage, however, it is not to be. Jesus Christ stated that in this life you will have tribulation. Furthermore, Jesus concluded His Sermon on the Mount with an illustration of two types of houses—one built on a rock and the other built on the sand. While there is an eternal difference in the outcomes of those two foundations, both houses experience the same storms of life. This is exactly what John Newton is referring to in the third stanza of *Amazing Grace*—*through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come*. Therefore, brother, do not be surprised by the tribulations in life. The question you need to ask yourself is, what are the footsteps I should follow?

God has provided an extensive example for the NT believer—not necessarily to follow—but to learn from. At least 90% of your OT is consumed with the children of Israel—their beginning as one family to their rise as a nation under the bondage and subsequent exodus from Egypt, to their prominence under King David and their fall, starting with King Solomon. In fact, the Apostle Paul testifies to this in 1 Corinthians 10:11—the events recorded [of Israel] were for *an example, and they were written for our instruction*. Yes, brother, the OT is worthy of your time for study. Well, what things were written for our example?

One can make a case for all of Scripture, but in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul singles out five events in the history of Israel that you should pay close attention to. He phrases them as negatives. First of all, you should not crave evil things (v. 6). The children of Israel had grown tired of manna—God’s miraculous provision of food in the wilderness. They were desiring the food of Egypt. In the same way, you and I can grow tired of our current situation. For some, it may be singleness; for others a dead-end job or the feeling of “being stuck” in Greenville. And yet, you are in the very center of God’s will. Secondly, do not be idolaters (v. 7), referring to the golden calf incident of Exodus 32. You and I are guilty of this when we worship God in the wrong way. The second commandment in the Decalogue is dealing with this very issue. God has prescribed a way that He desires to

be worshipped. “True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23). Any deviation from what God has prescribed is idolatry. Thirdly, nor let us act immorally (v. 8), referring to Peor, where 23,000+ died. Men, we need to be extremely careful in this area. There is so much filth we are exposed to—whether it is billboards, ads in magazines/newspapers, co-workers, not to mention the internet. *Oh, be careful little eyes what you see* is a quaint children’s song that applies to adults as well. Your eyes are the window to your soul and exposing yourself to perversions robs God of glory, may destroy your marriage, and may ruin your life. Fourthly, nor let us try the Lord, a reference to the fiery serpent episode (v. 9). The Greek word translated *try* has the idea of tempting—a seeing how far one can go. We are guilty of this when we presume upon the grace of God. This is in fact what David prays to God in Psalm 19:14, “keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*.” Fifthly, nor grumble (v. 10). Yes, Israel was guilty of grumbling, but what about you? If grumbling were an Olympic sport, would you be the reigning gold medal winner? Think about it for a moment. Your day is full of grumbling—grumbling at home, at work, on the talk radio and blog sites. It’s all around you. What a great opportunity you have been afforded to show forth Christ! Grumbling is an outward display of being discontent with your current situation. As a believer, your contentment should be in Christ. Therefore, you are not moved by whatever providence of God you find yourself in next week, month, or year, for you are content in the LORD. Moreover, you can testify along with Paul, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

If we’re honest, we must confess with the hymn writer, *Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love*. The Lord has provided us with an extensive example in Scripture. God’s Word is meant to be taken literally and acted on obediently. Brother, the events of the children of Israel were written for your instruction. Keep in mind, they [children of Israel] were made up of the same stuff you and I are—a soul that is in desperate need of the Savior. May you purpose, by the help of the Spirit, to be faithful to the Lord and to finish your race well.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.”

Philippians 2:12-13

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 45-56

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Feb 16	Gen 49	Luke 2	Job 15	1 Cor 3
Feb 17	Gen 50	Luke 3	Job 16-17	1 Cor 4
Feb 18	Ex 1	Luke 4	Job 18	1 Cor 5
Feb 19	Ex 2	Luke 5	Job 19	1 Cor 6
Feb 20	Ex 3	Luke 6	Job 20	1 Cor 7
Feb 21	Ex 4	Luke 7	Job 21	1 Cor 8
Feb 22	Ex 5	Luke 8	Job 22	1 Cor 9

PERSONAL REFLECTION

BROTHER, ARE YOU WILLING?

KEN STILL

I remember a certain feeling that I had when reading through *Love Not The World: Winning the War Against Worldliness*. Dr. Leedy wrote an insightful book that thoroughly and logically lays out the facts and varied viewpoints about his subject. I read the book in 2012 when the Lord had started opening my eyes about the ineffective use of personal time. While I had already begun to make significant improvement, Dr. Leedy's book helped reinforce my new direction. Yet there was still another major aspect of my walk with Christ that needed some work.

While I agreed wholeheartedly with the book's message, I did not always engage my personal will to obey the Lord about some things. I had been acting as though His commands were optional.

Most of you older readers can relate to the fact that when we were small children, we were told what to do and we did it. Whether the command came from parents or teachers or any other adults, we obeyed. We even followed laws and moral dimensions of society (culture), and we made no fuss about doing it. Of course, I'm generalizing a bit. Not every 8-year-old obeyed completely. My point is that someone older and wiser than ourselves told us what to do. We had no authority of our own.

As we got a few years older, we were occasionally allowed to make our own decisions. We still were aware of and obeyed the rules that were laid down for us by others but had some latitude to choose our ways. Sometimes we made decisions for which we gained a reward and other times for which we suffered the consequences. Nevertheless, we exercised authority delegated to us by the adults in our lives.

When we became teenagers, even more authority was vested in us so that we eventually came to make every decision about our lives as adults: what we liked and disliked, where we went, who we befriended, what we spent time doing, etc.

While we generally followed this pattern of gradually receiving more and more personal autonomy, our exposure to spiritual things, including culture, differed. We took different paths and held different opinions. Some of you were saved as little children and were exposed to truth most of

your years. Others of you came to Christ late in life and turned around completely from your previous ways. Before the Lord saved me at the age of 16, I had no qualms about doing whatever I wanted to do. The Lord allowed me after salvation to shun many of those bad parts of culture. However, much later in life I had settled into a careless viewpoint about pleasing God. I needed to do something about that!

On page 91 Dr. Leedy writes, “the Bible does say all that needs to be said about how to please God. . . . however, some Christians fail to do enough with the Bible.” This statement was true of me. Obedience doesn’t just happen! A person must choose to obey (willingness) and then muster their personal will to act. Yes, the Spirit aids us to do this, “So then, my beloved, just **as you have always obeyed . . . work out** your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is **God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things** without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation [**culture**], among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life . . .” (Phil. 2:12-16, emphasis added). Notice that while God works in us (the Spirit’s prompting), He commands **us** to “Do all things” (engaging our will). Notice also that when we respond in obedience this way, the scripture refers to us as “blameless and innocent...children” (perhaps referring to a child’s unquestioning obedience).

Whether we are commanded “Do not love the world nor the things in the world” (1 John 2:15) or “Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them” (Eph. 5:25), we must realize these are commands from God and take action. Exercising our own will is sometimes perceived to be wickedness akin to that of Lucifer’s in Isaiah 14:13-14. But according to James 2:20-26 we cannot even demonstrate our faith without asserting our will. God created us for good works (acts of the will) “that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). So it is with not loving the world or obeying any other command of God. We have to assert our wills in order to obey that command. In other words, the Bible actually exercises authority in our lives when we apply it in loving obedience.⁴

On pages 89-90 Dr. Leedy writes, “Evaluating elements of contemporary culture for their appropriateness within our Christian lives often raises

⁴ Ken Casillas, *Beyond Chapter and Verse: The Theology and Practice of Biblical Application* (Wipf & Stock, 2018), 77.

the question of what to do when we find the Scripture silent on some specific issue.” I believe he is right. We don’t automatically and sufficiently know everything about a subject to form an opinion. Appropriate application of scripture requires applying our minds to gain biblical knowledge of a thing, then discerning the Spirit’s teaching in our heart, and finally—perhaps most importantly—making a personal decision of our will to obey the Spirit.

Am I— are you—doing enough with the Bible?

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.”

John 17:15-19

BOOK READING

Leedy, 56-69

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Feb 23	Ex 6	Luke 9	Job 23	1 Cor 10
Feb 24	Ex 7	Luke 10	Job 24	1 Cor 11
Feb 25	Ex 8	Luke 11	Job 25-26	1 Cor 12
Feb 26	Ex 9	Luke 12	Job 27	1 Cor 13
Feb 27	Ex 10	Luke 13	Job 28	1 Cor 14
Feb 28	Ex 11:1-12:21	Luke 14	Job 29	1 Cor 15
Feb 29				

PERSONAL REFLECTION

REFLECTIONS ON *RESCUE FROM THE WORLD*

ALLEN COLLINS

As I reflect on the topic of *Rescued from the World*, for this short article I will consider just one Scripture passage, John 17:6-19. Here, Jesus is praying for His followers. And the Holy Spirit has provided all future followers with the text. Jesus' heart toward us, His desire for us, is revealed. He is praying for us when He Himself is about to endure the trial of separation from His Father to whom He is praying. How we ought to take note considering these facts:

- the prayer is from the very lips of our Savior,
- the Holy Spirit preserved this prayer for us that we might be instructed, and
- this was uppermost on Jesus' heart when He was on His way to the cross.

Recorded for us in John 17 is the Lord's prayer—a prayer for Himself (vv. 1-5), His immediate disciples (vv. 6-19), and for the church universal (vv. 20-26). In verses 6-19, Jesus prays for His followers because of His great concern for the glory of God. He prays for them because of who and what they are; people to whom has been manifested the name of God, people who have been given to Him, people to whom the word has been given, people who believe certain things—in other words, Christians. He prays for them because of their task: they are left in the world to do something, to evangelize. Jesus prays for them because of their circumstances: they are going to have trouble in the world. He prays that they would be kept in true unity with Him, with God the Father, and thus with one another. He prays that His own joy may be fulfilled in them, that they would be kept from the evil one, and that they may be sanctified.⁵

Although, we may not consider ourselves to be the object of the prayer in verses 6-19, we might well remember that Jesus is the same yesterday,

⁵ These reflections are based upon readings in D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, "Studies in John 17 – The Assurance of Our Salvation: Exploring the Depth of Jesus' Prayer for His Own."

today, and forever. His desire for His disciples at that time remains true of us today. And He ever lives to make intercession for us.

You might also be reluctant to receive this as a prayer for yourself, stating that this speaks of those who “have kept Your word,” and you know how you have sorrowed at your many failings.

John 17:6 (NASB95) . . . they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

How can He say that? As we read the Gospels and look at these disciples, we see them quarreling with one another, we see their jealousy of one another and their desire for pre-eminence over one another, and finally we read how at the end they all forsook Him and fled. Yet what He said about them was, “they have kept thy word.” He did not criticize them; He prayed for them.

Psalms 130:3–4 (ESV) If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

We have such a High Priest, sympathetic and understanding, loving, seeing what is true of us, committing us to God in terms like that, not mentioning the deficiencies, the weaknesses, the faults, the failures, but saying, “they have kept thy word.” Let us ever think of Him, our faithful High Priest, our Representative, our Advocate, our Intercessor, who, in heaven and in glory at this moment, has the same character as He had when He prayed on earth for His followers.

Jesus is not praying for everyone in the world, but for those whom God has given to Him out of the world:

⁶ “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

⁹ “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;

¹⁶ “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

The Christian is not of this world; he does not belong to it. And we should not be ashamed of this fact. This often seems to be the case as many Christians seem to desire to be conformed to it, rather than be separated and differentiated from it.

Though the Christian is not of the world, he still dwells in the midst of it.

¹¹ “I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

¹⁴ “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁵ “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

¹⁸ “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

If you and I are of the world it means that Christ is not praying for us, but if we do belong to Him, we are not of the world. What a wonderful thing it is to go through life knowing that your life is in the hands of God, knowing that your Father is thus concerned about you and that your blessed Mediator who prayed for you on earth is still interceding for you in heaven.

We have been set apart for this special task of glorifying Christ, of bearing the message to an unbelieving world; and because we have been set apart for that, we must be fitted to do it. Thus, He prays for our sanctification.

¹⁷ “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

¹⁹ “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

This is the way in which we are to be kept from the world and from evil. The method of sanctification is that we are sanctified in the truth. Ultimately, we are sanctified through all that Jesus has done as our representative (John 17:19).

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

1 Peter 2:9

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 70-88

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Mar 1	Ex 12:22-51	Luke 15	Job 30	1 Cor 16
Mar 2	Ex 13	Luke 16	Job 31	2 Cor 1
Mar 3	Ex 14	Luke 17	Job 32	2 Cor 2
Mar 4	Ex 15	Luke 18	Job 33	2 Cor 3
Mar 5	Ex 16	Luke 19	Job 34	2 Cor 4
Mar 6	Ex 17	Luke 20	Job 35	2 Cor 5
Mar 7	Ex 18	Luke 21	Job 36	2 Cor 6

PERSONAL REFLECTION

HIS ALONE – THE FOUNDATION FOR DISCERNING AND DECIDING

TIM PHERSON

Dear brothers, we may have come to understand worldliness better, but do we have the right mindset and motivation? A right perspective here will give us great clarity in making daily decisions to avoid worldliness. I find within my own heart that the notion of separation from worldliness is a touchy subject. My heart sometimes cringes that it may be forced to give up something I like. However, several key foundational truths help us to embrace and grow in our calling to “be not conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:1-2). Follow this reasoning with me.

The Holiness of Our God

God is holy and was so before the creation of the world or the fall of man. Thus, God’s holiness is not primarily a separation from sin, but is the very nature of God Himself as distinct, unique, and pure. In Isaiah 6 the angelic creatures worship God with the cry that He is holy, holy, holy. Because God is holy, anything that belongs to Him is to be holy, that is, entirely devoted to Him alone.

Our Sanctification

Since God is holy, those who are God’s people are set apart entirely to Him. God created man in His own, perfectly holy, image. When man fell, that image was marred, and man’s sin separated him from his holy God. God sent Christ into the world to rescue men from their sin and bring them back into the image He designed them to bear. Romans 8:28-29 triumphantly declare that God’s good work in those who believe is to restore them to the image of Christ in order that Christ would be glorified. This process is progressive sanctification.

The Enemy

Our progressive sanctification, however, does not occur in a vacuum where it is gently insulated from any outside forces that might act upon it. Our progressive sanctification takes place in a war zone. The devil is the complete antithesis of the holiness of God and is intent, as a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8), on destroying those who are holy. In cooperation with

the devil is the world over which he temporarily rules (John 12:31) and which thinks us strange for not joining them in sin (1 Pet. 4:3-4). Perhaps even worse than these two enemies is the fleshly nature within our own selves that still resists every desire to be holy. This view of the war zone is one full of bomb craters from outside attacks and a list of traitors found within the ranks—all seeking to prevent the believer from becoming set apart fully to God and conformed to His holy image. Such a view should sober every believer to recognize that sanctification will require serious battle, but we need not lose heart for God is on our side. *In fact, our perspective should not primarily be on the enemies.* True sanctification is *not* centered on what it is against, but on the One like whom it is becoming. This perspective is key.

In the midst of such a conflict our Commander has made His mission clear—to set us apart to Himself: “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16). Because God is separate from sin and has called us to Himself, and because sin is entrenched against Him and us, we must separate ourselves from everything that is contrary to the nature of our God. *Why would we wish anything besides this?*

Brothers, that simple question has been pivotal in my life. If I am set apart to my wonderful, redeeming God why would I want anything besides what honors Him? My evaluations turn from “How many curse words in a movie are too many?” to “Why would I watch a movie that misuses the name of my God?” No longer can I excuse anger as “I just got a bit frustrated because they did . . .” With the truths above in mind I want to rid my life of any selfish anger because it is the enemy of my soul and of my Savior!

How then do we discern worldliness? God’s Word is filled with guidance, principles, and commands that direct us regarding what does and does not honor Him. The question is, *am I listening?* For instance, consider one passage such as Ephesians 4:17-5:21. In this passage the Lord calls us to put away lying, sinful anger, stealing, improper speech, sexual immorality, covetousness, and drunkenness. This list alone, if we are willing to expose our own hearts to God’s light, may give us plenty of direction for growth. I can take each one of those items, meditate on what God says about it, discuss it with the Lord and with God’s help remove from my life any practice or evidence of that sin. Gone is the sense of ambiguity or uncertainty about the term “worldliness.” God in His love and holiness has given us much clear guidance regarding what is pleasing and displeasing

to Him. The questions are, *will we listen, and will we obey?* We must! *We are His people and His alone!*

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

Philippians 1:9-11

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 89-101

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Mar 8	Ex 19	Luke 22	Job 37	2 Cor 7
Mar 9	Ex 20	Luke 23	Job 38	2 Cor 8
Mar 10	Ex 21	Luke 24	Job 39	2 Cor 9
Mar 11	Ex 22	John 1	Job 40	2 Cor 10
Mar 12	Ex 23	John 2	Job 41	2 Cor 11
Mar 13	Ex 24	John 3	Job 42	2 Cor 12
Mar 14	Ex 25	John 4	Pro 1	2 Cor 13

PERSONAL REFLECTION

PRINCIPLES FOR EXERCISING DISCERNMENT

MICHAEL WINNINGHAM

I often marvel at the varied and unexpected ways that God uses to get my attention. One of the most memorable and life-changing moments in my life took place a number of years ago shortly after Danielle and I had moved to Connecticut. One Sunday morning, our associate pastor preached a message that greatly altered my thinking. Actually, I only remember one sentence. He said, “Mark my words folks: whatever you allow in your personal life, your children will likely extend and expand in their own lives one day.” I don’t know what the pastor said before or after that sentence, but I know God used it to teach me four major truths about discernment that continue to guide my thinking today.

First, the Lord showed me that He has a specific will for *every* aspect of my life. Maybe you’re thinking, “Yea. Of course, He does. Captain Obvious strikes again, Mike!” Well, praise the Lord you realized this sooner than I did, but I typically viewed God’s will in terms of the “big” plans of life (e.g., marriage, job, and children). I assumed that I could make certain choices without consulting the Lord because they did not fall under the “important” category in which I felt I *needed* God’s help and guidance. God wanted me to understand that He cares about all that I do and that my choices impacted those around me as well. How else could I “be adequate” and “equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17) if I lacked discernment? My effectiveness in leading my family and in ministry depended on it.

Secondly, the Lord showed me that His will for me may not look exactly like His will for Joe Christian. Have you ever compared your personal choices to those of others? I often mentally cited the actions and choices of other people to defend my own choices. I thought, “They seem to be good Christians whose lives are blessed by the Lord. Surely I can adopt their standards as my own and enjoy God’s blessing as well.” I failed to understand that each person has a different set of pitfalls for which he must watch. What causes one person to stumble, may never tempt another person.

Let me give you one, hopefully noncontroversial example. Consider the lima bean. Some people, for reasons that defy explanation, love eating

lima beans. An uncontrolled love for lima beans may push some to over-indulge. Others, like myself, see them for what they are: pellets of sand and wallpaper paste stuffed into waxy casings (and no, butter cannot save them). Thus, lima beans will never cause me to stumble (unless someone throws one in my footpath). Anyway, I digress. God showed me that I needed to stop looking solely at the lives of others and read my Bible to discern God's personalized direction for me, my family, and the ministry He gave me.

Thirdly, the Lord showed me that I will never reach the point where I no longer need to exercise discernment. Undoubtedly, the endless discussions and worldly assaults on our beliefs can leave us spiritually exhausted. I think most people agree that spiritual warfare wears on us to the point where we may unwittingly allow a cloud of tired indifference to shroud our spiritual vision. However, as each age changes and the Devil's methods grow more sophisticated, Christians do not have the option of pushing these issues to the sidelines. Instead, our discernment and dependence upon the Spirit's leading must increase. Thankfully, we have the Holy Spirit to guide us and "everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). We have all that we need to win these battles of discernment.

Finally, God showed me that a spirit of discernment often requires self-denial. I am not referring to the denial of sinful pursuits (that seems obvious), but rather the denial of certain lawful activities for the sake of God's glory and the spiritual well-being of those around us. Did not the Lord Jesus provide us with a perfect example of self-denial when He came to earth to die for us on the cross? It took me a while to realize that poor choices do not lead to spiritual weakness. Poor thinking causes spiritual weakness, and poor choices inevitably follow. Discernment demands daily re-alignment with biblical principles and a desire for God's glory and truth to shine into the lives of those around us. A.W. Tozer once said, "For myself, I long ago decided that I would rather know the truth than be happy in ignorance. If I cannot have both truth and happiness, give me truth. We'll have a long time to be happy in Heaven." May we adopt the same attitude in this new year!

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

Colossians 3:1-4

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 102-116

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Mar 15	Ex 26	John 5	Pro 2	Gal 1
Mar 16	Ex 27	John 6	Pro 3	Gal 2
Mar 17	Ex 28	John 7	Pro 4	Gal 3
Mar 18	Ex 29	John 8	Pro 5	Gal 4
Mar 19	Ex 30	John 9	Pro 6	Gal 5
Mar 20	Ex 31	John 10	Pro 7	Gal 6
Mar 21	Ex 32	John 11	Pro 8	Eph 1

PERSONAL REFLECTION

SELF-TALK ABOUT PERSONAL CHOICES

DAN SCHAFFNER

I had some friends in my youth group try to talk me out of attending Bob Jones University. They said BJU would brainwash me. They complained that their older brother came home and told them their oldies music was worldly. They thought he was crazy. Was he right, or were they? Was BJU the only authority on worldliness, or can anyone with a Bible and the Holy Spirit discern what is worldly and what is not?

Truth be told, we all battle worldliness. You are not alone when you find yourself repenting of some worldly drift or some particular worldly habit. Nor do you stand alone in victory against it while others succumb. No sinned human escapes the influence of the world in all areas. We need to be able to discern its presence in our choices and way of life. I'll admit, though, that my main problem is not discerning what is worldly so much as it is properly yielding to what my Spiritually informed conscience is telling me about the matter (or told me long ago). But that's another discussion. Here, I'm going to provide you some helpful questions that I must ask myself when it comes to being sanctified from or being seduced by the world.

Do You Really Care What God Thinks?

Jude tells his readers to "keep yourselves in the love of God" after he reminds them what kind of people they would encounter in the last days. He said there would be "mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." They would also be divisive, "worldly-minded," and "devoid of the Spirit." This is the way humans naturally act, and it's translated as being worldly. Professing Christians can act like this, but Jude is drawing a sharp contrast. He urges us instead to keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 17-21). This is the way we keep ourselves from what our flesh is naturally drawn to, and this is also a way to discern what is worldly. To keep myself in someone's love (me loving that person, that person loving me) is to understand what that person loves and what that person hates. And we all know how it turns out if you wrongly assume the person loves what you love. You end up in the doghouse. God does not love everything you are naturally inclined to like.

You've heard the phrase, "God doesn't care about ____" (fill in the blank), haven't you? Usually, this is an assumption from ignorance, silence, a failure to consider Scriptures that speak principally about a subject, or a failure to take Scripture in its full context. If you love God, you better be concerned about what he thinks about all things!

Are You Being Honest with Yourself (and others)?

In order to know God and make him known to others I must live a life of truth. In Ephesians 4, Paul demands this of those who are also commanded to "walk no longer as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind . . ." In verses 17 and 25 the command is to speak truth. We understand it's not enough to simply say things that are true, but we also must live a life of truth—not deceiving others and not deceiving ourselves. Many have said, "____ (fill in the blank) isn't a problem for me," but some have admitted, "Maybe I'm not being as honest as I should be." Honesty will help us discern what is worldly and what is not. Is there something I'm pursuing that appeals to my flesh? (Think lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the sinful pride of life.)

Do You Really Have Time for That?

You have only so much time and energy to spend on your affections, interests, passions, or priorities. Paul goes on in Ephesians 5 to be careful and wise in how we walk (v. 15), explaining in the next verse a way we can do this by "making the most of our time" in the context of evil days. The marginal (and familiar) translation of "redeeming the time" is suggestive that we are already at a deficit, and we have a lot of making up to do. Oh! How I wish I would be gripped by this truth! How many years have I wasted on my own worldly, selfish pursuits? A proper sense of time can help us discern what is worldly and what is essential.

Is Your Focus Earthly or Eternal?

When I let myself operate as the world does, I am not only forgetting the real presence of Jesus with me now, but I'm also forgetting that he can come back at any time. Do I really want to be treating people like "that" when he comes? Do I want to be in the middle of "this"? Do I want "such and such" on my computer or in my library? Positively, what fruit am I sowing and reaping for God's kingdom? There is a sense in which we are striving to redeem the culture in which we live, but it's wrong to think that everything in our culture is redeemable in this age. My affections

must be set on things above, not on things of this earth (Col. 3:2). As mentioned, we have only so much capacity to spread out our affections, and we must have the right priorities.

Decisions about music from previous eras may not always be cut-and-dry. There most certainly must be songs out there with a pleasant tune, suitable rhythm, and lyrics with no hint of sinfulness. But how long is your radio dial going to be tuned there? Is there anything that would be more profitable? How many songs do you have to listen to in order to get to a “good” one? Should we assume that since it’s from a long time ago it must be okay? These are valuable questions regardless of your music preferences.

By the way I did decide to go to Bob Jones University, and I was helped multiple times to understand my need to purge things from my life such as music, movies, or TV viewing. Unfortunately, this did not prevent the need for ongoing battle. I’m also grateful that the Lord led me to Mount Calvary where I could prepare for marriage and my wife and I could begin raising our children under the teaching and mutual fellowship here. However, an institution can’t determine what is or isn’t worldly or set a standard that will prove to be appropriate “world without end.” As members of the body together we must graciously help each other draw closer to God—sometimes helping a wounded member and other times being helped for the sake of our own spiritual health. We must appropriate the grace of God daily, which can provide instruction in how to “deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age”—motivated by the hope of Christ’s return (Tit. 2:11-13).

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

Colossians 3:16-17

BOOK READING

Leedy, pp. 116-126

M'CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Mar 22	Ex 33	John 12	Pro 9	Eph 2
Mar 23	Ex 34	John 13	Pro 10	Eph 3
Mar 24	Ex 35	John 14	Pro 11	Eph 4
Mar 25	Ex 36	John 15	Pro 12	Eph 5
Mar 26	Ex 37	John 16	Pro 13	Eph 6
Mar 27	Ex 38	John 17	Pro 14	Phil 1
Mar 28	Ex 39	John 18	Pro 15	Phil 2

PERSONAL REFLECTION

THE CHRISTIAN'S GOAL FOR MUSIC

KEITH EKBERG

One question should come to a believer when the subject of music comes to mind. The question is: What is the ultimate goal of music? There are two possible goals—for man's pleasure or for God's pleasure. For the Christian, there should be only one goal. Music is to be for the glory of God. *"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Two questions should be considered in our purpose to glorify God through music. First, does it reflect God's holiness? *"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'"* (1 Peter 1:14-16). Secondly, does it show or display that it is for the Lord? *"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created"* (Revelation 4:11). We are to live for God's pleasure. *"Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You who serve Him, doing His will [His pleasure]"* (Psalm 103:21). (See also Psalm 100.) We are to *"be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord"* (Ephesians 5:18-19). Songs that are for the Lord need to prophesy or speak forth God's message (1 Samuel 10:5, 1 Chronicles 25:1-3), with the ultimate goal of showing God's greatness (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Our music should be patterned after Scripture. We are to *"be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"* (Romans 12:1-2). To *"be not conformed to this world"* is to not let the world pressure us into its mold. To *"be ye transformed"* is to have a complete inward change which comes by God's Word and His Holy Spirit. Believers should not follow the music style of unbelievers and the world's system by using the world's musical tunes which they use to reflect their sinful lifestyles (Ephesians 2:2).

Our music is to be done in a certain spirit. *"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the*

Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please" (Galatians 5:16-17). We cannot mix the flesh and the spirit because they are contrary one to another. The world emphasizes the flesh, so its music emphasizes the sounds to create a sensual bodily response. Therefore, the sound is primary, and the words are secondary. The believer emphasizes the spirit. The music of the believer emphasizes the words to direct a person towards God. The sound only supports the words; therefore, the message of the words is primary, and the sound is secondary.

Tambourines or percussion, pipes, flute, and organ were apparently instruments that were a part of the angel Lucifer (Satan unfallen). *"You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: . . . the workmanship of your settings [tambourines] and sockets [flutes], was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared"* (Ezekiel 28:13). Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, possibly led these instruments around God's throne, with the seraphim singing, *"Holy, Holy, Holy"* (Isaiah 6:2-3). Lucifer means *light bearer*, as the fallen Satan he still can transform himself into an angel of light. Now he is a deceptive angel who *"disguises himself as an angel of light"* (2 Corinthians 11:14). We must beware today that Satan does not influence our music. We can be sure that Satan has music form and style that are directed by him and that accomplish his purposes. Satan's method is to detract from God's glory in order to glorify himself (Isaiah 14:12-14).

"He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God" (Psalm 40:3a). The believer's music is to be a new song—new as in different, distinct, new in quality. Music is the language of the heart; it reveals what is in the heart. When our music is unto God for His glory and honor, what will be the result? For unbelievers—*"Many will see and fear and will trust in the Lord"* (Psalm 40:3b). Fear—have a reverential awe for God. Trust—or to confide, feel safe, be secure, out of the pit, and safe on the rock Christ Jesus. For believers—*"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father"* (Colossians 3:16-17).

With the Word of God our music will teach—instruct in truth and admonish—warn, reprove, and lift our hearts in praise to the Lord.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

BOOK READING

Ryle, pp. 127-144

M’CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Mar 29	Ex 40	John 19	Pro 16	Phil 3
Mar 30	Lev 1	John 20	Pro 17	Phil 4
Mar 31	Lev 2-3	John 21	Pro 18	Col 1
Apr 1	Lev 4	Psalm 1-2	Pro 19	Col 2
Apr 2	Lev 5	Psalm 3-4	Pro 20	Col 3
Apr 3	Lev 6	Psalm 5-6	Pro 21	Col 4
Apr 4	Lev 7	Psalm 7-8	Pro 22	1 Thes 1

PERSONAL REFLECTION

GOD'S METHOD OF KINDLING OUR LOVE

ETHAN HAMILTON

The Scripture reveals that worldliness is an adulterous love for the world (1 Jn. 2:15; Jam. 4:4). The antidote to this spiritual adultery is to kindle that affection for God which results in turning away from every competing love. By what method would God have us kindle our love for Him? Deuteronomy 6:5 records this command to love God (*you shall love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul and with **all** your might*). Every Christian will fall far short of such all-possessing love, but God has provided some helpful explanation here in verses 6-9 about the means of cultivating and maintaining such love for Him. Matthew Henry provides a helpful outline of these means.

Meditation. "These words . . . shall be on your heart" (6). What goes on in the heart? Everything! Our life is determined by the moment by moment decisions made in this secret place. God exhorts that His Word must be present to maintain the governing influence on our life and to affect a greater devotion to Him. Men, what is our plan in 2020 to lodge God's Word "on" our hearts for its continual influence through meditation?

The religious education of children. "You shall teach them diligently to your sons" (7a). "Teach" signifies the activity of learning something by repetition. Fathers, what is our plan in 2020 to formally assist our families in hiding God's Word in *their* hearts?

Pious discourse. "You...shall talk of them when you **sit** in your house and when you **walk** by the way and when you **lie down** and when you **rise up**" (7b). This verse essentially describes all moments of the day. In all moments and circumstances, we are to be preoccupied in our conversations with God's Words to assist ourselves and others in diligently obeying and lovingly responding to it. Men, what is our plan in 2020 to influence others with God's Words in our daily conversations?

Frequent reading of the word. "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead" (8). Henry comments that these very specific commands stem from the minimal exposure to God's Word with so few copies to circulate. This passage advocates writing out portions of Scripture and keeping them close to your person throughout

the day for frequent reading and review. Is this an irrelevant practice today with our multiple copies of Scripture? No! Many follow the practice of writing out verses on cards to carry with them during the day for this very purpose. Men, what is our plan in 2020 for a frequent reading of the Word *throughout* the day?

*Endeavour by all means possible to make the Word of God familiar. "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (9). Henry offers this point as a summary of the intent behind verses 8 and 9. Think about this, though: verse 8 describes more intimate encounters with the Word because they are on your person; although more distant in verse 9, it is still intentionally placed in the most trafficked areas of your property for frequent encounters: doorways and gates. I believe the Lord thoroughly exhausts His point: *intentionally make My Word your preoccupation by meditation, indoctrination, and reminder!* Henry further explains the purpose of such familiarity: "that we may have it ready to us upon all occasions, for our restraint from sin and our direction and excitement to our duty."*

Again I ask, what is our plan in 2020 to become a frequenter of God's Word, a constant meditator on it, a person who bleeds it from the heart at every moment of each day? Concerning the resulting influence on our love for God, Henry says, "Those [who meditate] will lay up his word in their hearts both as an evidence and effect of that love and **as a means to preserve and increase it.** He that loves God loves His Bible." Jim Elliot had the reputation of carrying a Bible and Bible memory cards and of constantly talked about them with others. In his college days he paused in the middle of the day for some extra time in the Word.

Men, if we do not make use of God's means here described, the devil will and already has. Our technology today provides the opportunity for "meditation" on anything anywhere. Our children's frequent access to it "educates" and discipless them. The internet and social media specifically provide opportunity for continual "discourse" as well as "frequent reading." It seems that by "means" of technology we have made ourselves extremely "familiar" with man's words. We so inundate ourselves with the world and its non-Biblical (at the very least) content that we could fitly say it is "on our hearts." I am not even addressing the morality of the content itself. I am simply exposing the fact that the devil has taken God's method of kindling our affection for Him and has repurposed it to kindle an affection for endless images, accumulated "likes," the latest gadgets and news, etc. It is impossible for our love to remain unaffected when this

method is used because God Himself made us vulnerable to it. If we need an example of what it looks like to be preoccupied with God's Word, look at our culture's—and many of God's people's—preoccupation with technology. May God redirect our energies in 2020 toward a more intimate and preoccupying relationship with His Word!

1 JOHN 2:15-17

DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD NOR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD. IF ANYONE LOVES THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM. FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD, THE LUST OF THE FLESH AND THE LUST OF THE EYES AND THE BOASTFUL PRIDE OF LIFE, IS NOT FROM THE FATHER, BUT IS FROM THE WORLD. THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY, AND ALSO ITS LUSTS; BUT THE ONE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD LIVES FOREVER.

MOUNT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH MEN'S MINISTRIES