

The PROJECTOR

Dr. Dayton Hobbs, FOUNDING EDITOR

"Projecting the Light of the Word of God on the Issues of the Day"

Marijuana's Moment: Why We Should Be Alarmed and Pray

by Dr. Mark Creech
Return America

Marijuana has once again surged to the center of national debate after President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing federal agencies to move cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act. While the move stops short of federal legalization, it marks one of the most consequential shifts in federal drug policy in decades, and it should concern anyone paying attention to the moral, medical, and societal costs of marijuana.

Supporters are already hailing the decision as compassionate and pragmatic. In reality, it opens the door wider to commercialization, normalization, and profit-driven expansion of an industry that has consistently minimized risks while overstating benefits.

Rescheduling marijuana does not make it harmless. It does, however, make it more lucrative.

Under Schedule III, marijuana businesses would no longer be subject to IRS Section 280E, which currently prevents drug traffickers from deducting business expenses. As Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) has warned, this single change would dramatically increase profit margins that will fuel more advertising, more retail expansion, and greater cultural saturation. In short, rescheduling accelerates normalization, not caution. That is precisely why legislation such as S.

471, the No Deductions for Marijuana Businesses Act, has been proposed in Congress: to prevent tax policy from becoming a subsidy for social harm.

Nationally, the reaction has been mixed. Industry advocates and legalization activists applaud the move as overdue. Critics rightly note that it fails to resolve serious public-health concerns, creates confusion between state and federal law, and does nothing to address impaired driving, addiction, or the growing medical fallout now being seen in emergency rooms across the country.

Even as federal policy shifts, local governments are responding to the lived consequences. Cities that once welcomed legalization are now banning public marijuana smoking due to quality-of-life complaints, public intoxication, and pervasive odor. The honeymoon phase is starting to end.

One of the most apparent signs of marijuana's medical downside is the rise of Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS), which is a condition now severe enough that the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have given it its own diagnostic code.

CHS is linked to chronic marijuana use and is characterized by relentless nausea, severe vomiting, ab-

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dominal pain, weight loss, and dehydration. Some patients suffer for months or even years before receiving an accurate diagnosis. Rare but documented complications include heart rhythm abnormalities, kidney failure, seizures, and even death.

Emergency room visits related to CHS have skyrocketed. A major study published in JAMA Network found that CHS-related ER visits increased by approximately 650 percent between 2016 and the pandemic years, particularly among adults aged 18 to 35. Researchers point to increased access to high-potency cannabis, often exceeding 20 percent THC, compared to about 5 percent in the 1990s, as a significant factor.

Many sufferers resort to compulsive hot showers for temporary relief, sometimes for hours a day. Yet the Cleveland Clinic is blunt about the cure: the only permanent treatment is complete cessation of cannabis use. Smoked marijuana is not medicine. It is pathology.

Meanwhile, claims about marijuana's broad medical benefits continue to collapse under closer scrutiny. A sweeping new review published in JAMA, analyzing more

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Editor's Desk

Internalizing the WORD

by Pastor Tod Brainard

I must admit that I love reading Psalm 119 on a regular basis. The 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are employed, each introducing an eight-verse sonnet expounding on the glories of the revealed Word of God.

There are ten names employed to describe God's revelation; word, law, saying, statutes, way, commandment, path, testimonies, precepts, and judgments. *(For an excellent treatment of each of these ten words, consult The Bible Knowledge Commentary by Walvoord and Zuck, pp. 879-880.)* These names used might seem to be employed merely for the sake of linguistic variety. Such synonyms do tend to have overlapping meaning, each including the specification of God revealing truth for the reader to know or follow.

However, we should be reminded that every word of God is inspired, carefully chosen in the original language, and graciously preserved for believers of all ages to know what God intended to have His people understand. I for one, am grateful for the Scripture's assurance of its preservation *(Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withereth, the flowers fade, but the word of our God shall stand forever." Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." 1 Peter 1:25: "But the word of the Lord endureth forever." Psalm 119:89: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." 1*

Thessalonians 2:13 "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. ")

In contemporary times, the preservation of God's Word continues to be a significant concern for believers. The proliferation of digital media and the internet has made the Bible more accessible than ever before, allowing for its study and dissemination on a global scale. However, this also presents challenges, such as the proliferation of dynamic equivalence or cultural context translations and interpretations produced by translators with an agenda. As such, the church should remain vigilant in upholding the integrity of Scripture, ensuring that it is faithfully taught and understood.

The preservation of God's Word is a testament to God's faithfulness and a source of assurance for believers. It affirms that the Scriptures remain a reliable and authoritative guide for faith and life, providing wisdom, instruction, and hope for all who seek to know God and His will. Psalm 119 serves as one of the greatest arrangements of Scripture dealing with the reliability of the Word

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Dr. Dayton Hobbs, (1924–2006) Founding Editor
 Pastor Tod Brainard—Publisher and Editor
 Mr. Ludwig Opager,
 Mrs. Doris Peppard
 Contributing Editors
 Layout—Mrs. Brenda Whitney

Published by Grace Bible Church
 6331 Chestnut Street, Milton, FL 32570
 E-mail us at Issues@theprojector.org
 Visit us on the Web at www.theprojector.org

Phone: (850) 623-4671

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than 2,500 studies from the past 15 years, found that evidence supporting most medical uses of cannabis is limited or insufficient. Apart from a small number of FDA-approved cannabinoid medications for chemotherapy-induced nausea, HIV-related appetite loss, and certain rare seizure disorders, there is little high-quality evidence supporting marijuana for chronic pain, anxiety, insomnia, or PTSD.

The review also raised red flags about increased risks of psychosis, anxiety disorders, cardiovascular disease, heart attack, and stroke, especially with daily inhaled use and high-potency products. Marijuana, researchers concluded, is not a panacea. Patients deserve honesty, not hype.

This national debate is especially relevant in North Carolina.

Despite repeated attempts, North Carolina has not legalized medical marijuana statewide. Limited low-THC use is allowed for intractable epilepsy, and a medical cannabis program operates on the tribal lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Beyond that, fortunately, and in part, because of the opposition of social conservative groups like Return America, proposals remain stalled.

House Bill 413 – Marijuana Legalization and Reinvestment Act, which would broadly legalize and regulate marijuana, sits in committee. A narrower research-based proposal, HB 984 – Regulate Research of Medical Cannabis, has also failed to advance. In prior sessions, the Senate passed medical marijuana legislation only to see it die in the House. An advisory council created by Governor Josh Stein is studying the issue, but no comprehensive program has been enacted.

Public polling shows support, but public opinion does not determine

medical truth or moral wisdom.

The Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA) has offered one of the clearest and most responsible voices in this debate. CMDA distinguishes sharply between FDA-approved, pharmaceutical-grade cannabinoid medications and what is commonly called “medical marijuana.”

CMDA warns that state legalization of medical marijuana has bypassed rigorous FDA standards for dosing, safety, production, packaging, and monitoring. Conditions are approved despite inadequate research. False advertising misleads vulnerable patients. Addiction risk increases. Psychosis and mental impairment rise. Lung damage occurs when marijuana is smoked. Pregnant women and unborn children face added risks. Dispensaries increase access for minors. Emergency room visits among marijuana-intoxicated children increase. Moreover, historically, medical marijuana has functioned as a stepping stone to full recreational legalization.

From a biblical perspective, CMDA reminds us that Scripture speaks to stewardship of the body, the promotion of genuine good, and the role of civil authority. While the Bible does not dictate every policy choice, it does call us to sobriety, truth, and protection of the vulnerable.

The debate over marijuana is not merely about compassion or freedom. It is about evidence, consequences, and responsibility. The record from legalized states is growing clearer by the year: higher potency, higher addiction rates, higher emergency room visits, and higher social costs.

President Trump's action may dominate the headlines this week, but North Carolina and the nation must resist the illusion that marijuana has somehow become safe, thera-

peutic, or benign. It has not! It should be reiterated: It has not!!!

Legalizing marijuana, whether recreationally or under the misleading banner of “medicine,” is not progress. It is a surrender of public health, moral clarity, and common sense.

Christians in North Carolina should not be passive observers as this debate unfolds. We must be informed, articulate, and prepared to speak when called upon, whether in conversations with lawmakers, in churches, or within our communities, to oppose efforts to legalize marijuana in the Tar Heel State. Silence in the face of mounting evidence is not neutrality; it is abdication.

Above all, this issue must be carried consistently before the Lord in prayer. We should pray for wisdom and courage among public officials, for protection of our children and vulnerable neighbors, and for the defeat of the expanding influence of the marijuana industry, whose financial ambitions now outpace its concern for public health. Policies shaped by profit rather than truth will always leave damage in their wake. The Church must respond not with fear, but with conviction, anchored in truth, compassion, and a sober love for the common good.

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Dr. Mark Creech is Director of Government Relations for Return America and former Executive Director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina, where he served for 25 years. He also pastored six churches over a 20-year ministry, bringing a total of 45 years of service in pastoral leadership, public policy, and Christian advocacy. Ω



Proverb Practicals

by Ludwig Opager

Proverbs 20:27, **The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD,
searching all the inward parts of the belly.**

God gives each person a spirit and that spirit is assigned the duty of being a candle of the LORD. What is a candle but a tool to spread light in the darkness? Things in the dark cannot be discerned because there is no separation between them. Without the light all blends together and nothing can be seen of itself.

The lamp of God, which bears witness and accuses men of their sin, is comparable to our spirit or perhaps our conscience. The ancient Israelites thought of their conscience as a lamp lighting up the inward portions of themselves to prevent their thoughts from getting too dark.

Why can't you find the light switch in the dark? Because the light switch, the wall, the ceiling, and the floor are dark. There is no discernment without light to outline and define the switch on the wall. So, without a candle searching the inward parts of the belly man cannot have discernment about what is right and what is wrong. Without the candle of the LORD man will not have the ability to alert themselves of improper thoughts or actions.

The word "inward" in this verse comes from the Hebrew, *cheder*, *kheh'-der*; meaning *an apartment, bed chamber, or parlor*. So, the spirit of man is that which is designed by God to search all the intimate places of the belly or heart and to compare what it sees to a standard. This is what we know as conscience! The conscience is real and given to all men and women.

1 Corinthians 2:11 reads: **For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**

I don't know what your spirit judges you for. I don't know what

causes your conscience to alert you. I don't know what your conscience has been taught. I don't know what your conscience compares your actions to. But I do know you have a conscience because you have a spirit and the spirit of man is the candle of the LORD searching all his innermost parts.

This does not say that the candle will reveal actions that are against the Word of God. For that is not how the conscience of the natural man has necessarily been taught. Conscience is simply a moral consciousness given by God which compares the actions of a man with an internal standard God gives to every soul. In Romans 2:14 the Apostle Paul explains that although the law was not given to the Gentiles, **yet they have an innate knowledge of right and wrong. They know instinctively that it is wrong to lie, steal, commit adultery, and murder.** The only commandment they would not know intuitively is the one concerning the Sabbath which is more ceremonial than moral. The conscience then has an innate base-line knowledge of morally acceptable conduct established by God in every soul.

It is also true that the conscience is malleable and can be offended and seared over time by what it is taught and the innate moral code given by God can be corrupted. For instance, you can be taught that it is right to sacrifice your new born baby to the god of fire. And the candle of the LORD, which is your spirit, will prick you if you do not sacrifice your new born baby. The candle of the LORD simply compares your actions to the standard that you have been taught. If the standard is imperfect as compared to the Word of God, then the decisions of conscience will be

imperfect.

Paul, when he was Saul, was a conscientious wrong doer. But he was conscientious! Paul had a twisted interpretation of the Old Testament, and his conscience alerted him to whether or not his actions conformed to his interpretation. Paul listened to his conscience. His actions matched his standard and therefore he had a pure conscience. Therefore, Paul could say that he had lived in all good conscience even during the time he was killing Christians. Why, because he had obeyed his conscience; he did not go contrary to his standards.

Because the conscience is given of God as a moral anchor it is important to teach our children the right standards so the conscience can be strengthened to do its work to the glory of God. God intends for the candle of the LORD, which is the spirit of man, to compare actions against the standard of the Word of God. This is the most effective use of the candle of the LORD.

A person can react wrongly because of incorrect information, wrong environment, or wrong habits. Conscience is not the problem. The problem is the standard that the conscience is given to compare actions with. That is why Christ desires for his children to abide in Him that they may have the same mind as He. If they have the same mind as He they have the right standards in which the conscience can be fully effective in bringing glory to God. The conscience, judging right actions against right standards will please God. The conscience does its work as a servant of the LORD, but its full effect is only realized if the actions that it measures itself against are standards based upon the Word of God.

Ω



Teaching Grace

by Pastor Tod Brainard

The grace of God is a dynamic that is manifested in obedience and not merely the forgiveness of sins. Grace teaches one to *"deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly (seriously), righteously and godly in this present world (age)"* (Titus 2:12). That truth is lost on so many identifying as "believers" today. There are those *"who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness..."* — Jude 1:4 In reality it could be called twisted grace.

Twisted Grace sounds like the following today:

- "It doesn't matter how you live—God's grace covers it."
- "We're under grace, not under law—so, get rid of your rules."
- "God loves you just as you are—and He's fine if you stay that way."
- "Repentance is works-based religion."
- "Holiness? That is legalism."

This message feels good to the flesh, but it leaves souls in bondage to sin. It comforts the unconverted and silences the truly convicted. Grace is not passive. It teaches me. It empowers me. It denies sin. That grace (as a central part of the true practice of following Christ) should come under the attack of Satan comes as no surprise. Paul wrote much in defense of the truth of grace, proclaiming at one point, *"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!"* (Rom. 6:1-2, 15) The devil's strategy has always been to take what God says and spin it in the opposite direction so as to allure men into a lifestyle of sin under the guise of grace, suggesting that one's actions do not matter because "grace" covers all.

True grace is not disconnected from life transformation. It:

- Calls us out of darkness
- Teaches us to say no to sin
- Leads to godliness, not indulgence
- Brings humility, not entitlement.

The apostles never preached grace apart from transformation. Grace was the doorway into a new life, not a free pass for the old one.

Looking for the return of Christ

Continuing that same thought, the same scripture also reveals that grace instructs believers to be looking for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace teaches God's people to expect and prepare for the *"blessed hope,"* which is the appearing of the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, at the rapture (v.13). The blessed hope is not glory or heaven as many teach; rather it is the person of Jesus Christ welcoming His body unto Himself. Followers of Christ do not merely wait for the Lord's return but also live holy lives in expectation of His coming. Believers are "looking for" the return of Christ and are to be ready for that blessed day.

Every generation of believers has shared that longing for the Lord's appearance. There are those that object to rapture truth because they only see the Second Coming. The Second Coming will include Jesus touching the earth, conquering the enemies of Israel at Armageddon, and then judging of sinners and ruling and reigning for a thousand years. The rapture occurs in the clouds and Jesus never touches the earth. The argument is that this idea of a "rapture" is a new teaching in the history of the church. Certainly, undeveloped aspects of the rapture doctrine are found among the early church fathers and even centuries prior to John Nelson Darby. Dispensationalists, of course, recognize that one significant reason for the revival of pre-tribulational thought was the result of Darby's systematic theology. It is only natural for those opposed to dispensationalism to attack that influence and to develop false narratives for the origin of Darby's thinking.

One recent diatribe against pre-tribulational rapture teaching was on a televised podcast with Tucker

Carlson and Country Music Singer John Rich.¹ During the podcast John Rich attacked the Scofield Bible, John Darby, the Rapture, Pre-Tribulational teaching, etc., and said it came from unreliable sources and the Rothchild's influence on John Nelson Darby. Nothing he said was based on facts but assumptions. He regurgitated Marvin Rosenthal, though he did not name him, who had written in 1984 that pre-tribulational rapture doctrine was of Satanic origin and unknown prior to 1830. He went on to say that rapture teaching was based on lengthy vision given by a 15 year old girl named Margaret Macdonald upon which John Nelson Darby based his pre-tribulational beliefs concerning the rapture.² (I will not take time to refute this false narrative and will instead refer you to Dr. Thomas D. Ice who has written a tremendous article entitled A Refutation of False Origin of the Rapture Theories on the error of this oft-repeated slander against John Nelson Darby.³)

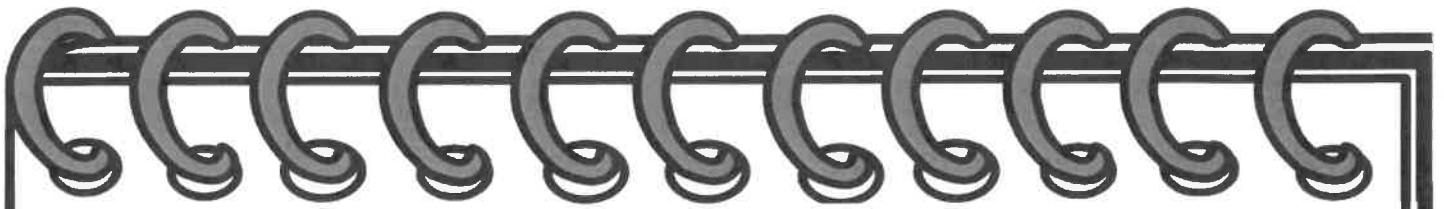
The back and forth between Carlson and Rich was painful to listen to due to the erroneous statements being made throughout the podcast. My point is that grace in Titus 2:13, (*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*) teaches us that we as believers are to be looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. A looking for our Christ who is the blessed hope. That blessed hope should never be downplayed or misrepresented. Instead, the appearance of our Lord should be loved (2 Timothy 4:8) and looked for. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!

Ω

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/JohnRichTuckerCarlsonScofieldBibleJohnDarbyandPre>

² Marvin J. Rosenthal, "Is the Church in Matthew Chapter 24?" *Zion's Fire* (November-December 1994): p. 10.

³ Thomas D. Ice, A Refutation of False Origin of the Rapture Theory, *Journal of Dispensational Theology JODT* (ISSN 1947-9492) Volume 26, Number 73 Autumn 2022, pp. 139-156.

*Teaching Tips**by Doris Peppard*

New Food Pyramid

Teachers have often noticed what their students eat for lunch and often realize that their students are not getting enough vitamins, minerals, proteins, etc. American children today have been brought up on the old "Food Pyramid," which the present administration has flipped. Until people are educated on this topic, teachers will continue to deal with students whose diets have been overtaken with sugars, unhealthy fats, dyes, and high caloric foods and snacks. The ramifications (health issues, obesity, ADHD, allergies, etc.) of dealing with these students affect every classroom. Since this topic is newsworthy, Christian schools should use this opportunity to educate students (and parents - if they are willing to learn) of what God's Word says about nutrition. It is vital that we take the time to study up on nutrition and teach our students what is good for them and what is not. The medical community has seen fit to add nutrition classes to medical school curriculum and the educational community must do likewise.

God's Word always sets the standard for our lives. He created food for the good of mankind. Genesis 1:11-12, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

Proverbs 24:13, "My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste."

God has always been concerned with our nutrition and provided fruits, vegetables, legumes and other plant based products for mankind. Consider the dietary laws God gave the Children of Israel, God's provision of manna and quail for the wilderness wanderings, the dream God sent to Peter regarding eating foods He had cleansed - which led Peter to go into Cornelius' house to give the gospel. The lesson for us all is to eat REAL foods. Back as far as the 1950's scientists manipulated many original seeds through hybridization and other means which have sacrificed good nutrition into a money-making enterprise and our children have suffered.

Students need to understand that the days of snacking and mindlessly consuming processed foods should come to an end. Teachers working with parents will need to step up and educate their students in what is truly healthy for them to consume. Children do not necessarily care about the politics behind this transition, but they must learn to make changes for their good health. This change to a healthier diet will not be easy for us, parents, or our students. Just imagine a "birthday" party with fruit rather than cupcakes being brought to school! Of course, moderation should rule; but, Christian educators can help by instructing their students and parents regarding healthy alternatives. Ω



Children's Bible Club Corner

Some lessons from the world's biggest bird

Job 39:13-18



Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? Which leaves her eggs in the earth, and warms them in dust, And forgets that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear; Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. What time she lifts up herself on high, she scorns the horse and his rider.

The World's BIGGEST BIRD What a strange, comical-looking bird! It has long legs, a high back, and an exceedingly small head. Some people call the OSTRICH the camel-bird because of its high back and humping walk, and like a camel, it can go a long time without water. It is extremely fast and powerful. It can run up to 50 miles per hour and outrun a horse. It can defend itself with a powerful forward kick that can disable a horse or a man.

The male is quite handsome in its glossy black feathers and beautiful, white, wing and tail plumes. The expensive plumes were often used for ladies' fine hats and other decorations. Ostrich eggs are big and heavy, weighing about three pounds! The mother lays them in a hollow in the ground, which the father digs out with his big toes. Father has night duty keeping the eggs warm, and mother has the day shift. When the chicks hatch, they are as large as barnyard hens! Whew!

God says a few things about the ostrich that we can learn as lessons of life. The old fable that the ostrich hides her head in the sand when frightened is just that – a fable. The ostrich is to be pitied for she is a living example of how not to do things. First, when the ostrich buries her eggs, she forgets that larger, heavier animals can step on the ground above and crush the eggs below, thus destroying the potential of a future baby ostrich. How incredibly sad!

Secondly, the ostrich is not a caring creature. Most

mother animals take exceptional care of their young. The mother ostrich though spends extraordinarily little time caring for her young and in fact, acts as if they are not really hers.

Thirdly, the mother ostrich has little wisdom or understanding about what things are important. She has no fear that her little ones will be taken away by a predator. She does not think of where the next dinner is going to come for her young because she has not planned and gotten food for them. She is in her own little world. God, in His plans and purposes, made the ostrich this way as a living example of how not to do things.

Fourthly, God's Word even says that the ostrich is "cruel" in Lamentations 4:3. Wow! To be **cruel**, according to Webster's 1828 Dictionary, it is *to give pain to others; to lack compassion or kindness; fierce; ferocious; savage; barbarous; hardhearted*. That is a lot of terrible things strung together in that definition. God says the ostrich is "cruel." It lacks the ability to be compassionate and kind. Something is going on with the ostrich, and it is not good.

So, what can you learn from the ostrich? God has given us an example from the animal kingdom for the express purpose of teaching us that without Jesus Christ in our old nature, we are thoughtless, careless, inconsiderate, and even cruel. Ephesians 4:30-32 says, *"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* Jesus Christ makes all the difference in our lives. He helps us do the right thing in the right way by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Do not be like an ostrich, kids! Be what God wants you to be in Jesus Christ, His Son. Ω



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of God and the expression of His will.

I recently was studying verses 9-16 for a series of messages on the internalizing of God's Word as a means to resist sin and cultivate a deeper relationship with Christ. The letter of the Hebrew alphabet that sets the second sonnet is BET. All Hebrew letters have a meaning and BET means "house or dwelling place." **In the context of this passage, the Word of God is to be our dwelling place, the place where we are at home.**

The capstone of the second sonnet is verse 11 which every Sunday school child has learned at one time or another, "Thy

Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

The psalmist is testifying that he has internalized God's Word so that he might remain morally pure. To internalize *is to accept or absorb an idea, opinion, belief, etc. so that it becomes part of your character* (Cambridge Dictionary). My experience with this verse growing up was that it means to memorize Scripture. I think committing the Scripture to memory is wonderful. However, "hidden" is the idea of internalizing the Scripture where no one can see it or take it away. In other words, we need to obey the Word of God. It is wonderful to commit Scripture to memory, but if it is not obeyed it is just knowledge of words.

Permit the Word of God to become a part of you. Internalize it so that it becomes part of your character. **The less you internalize the Scriptures, the more you will externalize your sinfulness against God.** This verse expresses the New Testament equivalent of 2 Timothy 3:16, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* The Scriptures internalized (made profitable within) will give us direction as to what is right, what is wrong, how to get it right, and how to keep it right.

May we join the Psalmist in rejoicing in the power of God's Word!

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