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The Power of

We Love! One Another

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Paul never mentioned the word “molecule” but he sure knew what it meant to build with people at the “one another” level. So too, if we want to be successful at ANYTHING in life, we must understand the place of other people in our lives and the part that they play with their differing gifts, callings and personalities.

These properties in the other people in our lives can be frustrating and intensely annoying at times. We are often found asking questions such as;

Why don't they get it?

Why can't they see it?

Why do they do this, or do that?

Or making statements like;

They really make me mad

I simply cannot work with him or her.

Who does she think she is?

What is happening here?

‘One’ is not getting along with ‘another’ or ‘another’ is having problems with ‘one’. It is all zinging around on the molecular level.

The most familiar “one another” is husband and wife. These two people are bound together by the valency of covenant and hopefully ‘calling’ and ‘love’. If children are involved in their marriage they have the common challenge of raising the family, which should be a unifying factor and the commonwealth of jointly owned property and finances should also be an incentive to help them face and fulfill the commands of the biblical ‘one another’.

Broadening this thought from a marriage relationship, we have multiple spheres in church life where the junctures of 'one another' come into play. Pastoral teams are based on 'one another'; music groups are made up of 'one another'; children's workers are teams of 'one another'. The list goes on, but we can all readily agree that the healthiest groups are made up of people who have got their 'one anothers' together, including the groups that are studying this short series.

As we proceed, we will be getting into some honest dialogue together as to the reasons why we find it difficult to work with certain people. It may be that we refer to some people by name - especially if they have been part of a failed encounter in the past - or we may simply say "I have a real problem with such and such a person"; for this read on.

The rest of the people in the group can then share their own points of view on the matter and suggest ways to enable harmony or they can tell their own narratives of success or failure in their particular 'one another'. Thus, we can all move forward into that blessed place spoken of by Paul in the opening verses of **Ephesians Chapter 4**, culminating in a place called The Unity of the Spirit. Believe me, when we arrive at the Unity of the Spirit, things really do go well.

In the following chapters are the ten 'one anothers' that we will be addressing in the next few weeks. It is not an exhaustive list and you may want to add a couple of your own by the end of the study.

Chapter 2

Receive, Welcome and Accept One Another



Romans 15:7 - *Wherefore receive (accept) one another as Christ also received us unto the Glory of God.*

We find an easy access point into our study in the book of **Romans**, the 14th and 15th chapters. These passages deal specifically with judging wrongfully other members of the Body of Christ and it often happens at the **WELCOME** point, where new people are encountering the congregation for the first time.

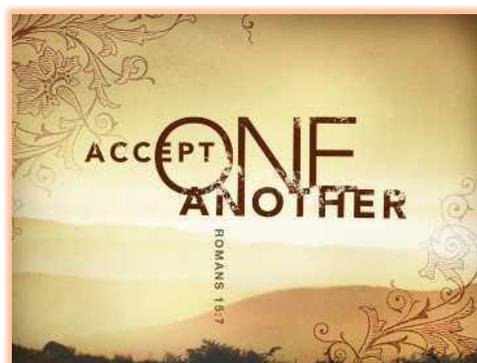
All of us carry an instant check list in our heads. This check list comes from our life experiences, it may have been expanded or modified over the years but it has been memorized and used on thousands of occasions. As we are introduced to new people, the check list may include “what sort of car do they drive? Is it expensive or is it old and in need of repairs?” “What sort of clothes do they wear (and maybe the car questions apply to the clothes as well).” “What color is their skin? Are they well groomed? Are they rumpled and in need of a shower? How do they speak? Do they seem friendly? Do they know some of the people we know? How do they respond to our worship meeting?” These are just a few of the things that we have on our instant check list.



After a couple of meetings, if these people should assemble with us again, other questions need to be answered. “Where do they live? What sort of work do they do? How many kids do they have? Are they French Canadian or of European origin? Do they support our favourite hockey teams? Do they vote liberal or conservative?”

Then come the theological questions, which is comprised of the big ten, culminating in “Do you read the King James Version or another version?”

It must be said that such an approach to “welcome and acceptance” is a long way removed from the book of **Acts 15**, where the check list of the Pharisees was folded and put away after James had said that we are no longer building the Tabernacle of Moses but we are seeing the restoration of the Tabernacle of David. He then explained that the former was an assembly where rules dominated lifestyle, where as the Tabernacle of David was an experience crowned by praise, celebration and the acceptance of new converts into the congregation.



There were boundaries and standards and they were summed up in a sentence, “*Let them refrain from sexual sin and from the eating of unclean food*” (**Acts 15:20**) but other than this let them alone and let the Spirit of God and the preached Word of God **DO THEIR OWN WORK**.

Each member of the congregation needs to understand this ‘welcoming’ and receiving at the ‘one another’ level or else we have an unwilling and unconscious rejection and judgment of people - the very people who can bring and enrichment to the church of Christ.

All of us in these days of modern surgery understand what it means where TRANSPLANTS are spoken of. A person’s kidney fails, they receive another from a loving donor. A person’s heart fails, they receive another from a recently dead cadaver. Such medical miracles were unheard of sixty years ago, but now they are common place. However, what is true for each of the recipients of a new organ is that for the rest of their lives they will need to take anti-rejection drugs. Amazing isn’t it, the body that was going to die will unconsciously and continually reject the healthy organ given to rescue it.

That would be my prayer for every local assembly of God’s people, that they get a large shot of anti-rejection drugs. That we work at the one another level, welcome and acceptance, and trust that the Lord Himself, who gave all sinners a wide welcome when he said “*Come unto me all that labor and are heavy laden*” and, “*he that cometh to me, I will not cast out*”. He will walk us past our differences in the joy of true fellowship.



In closing, be honest in sharing experiences where you feel that you met judgment instead of welcome in the church or tell us of difficulties you have in the area of acceptance, particularly of new arrivals.

Chapter 3

Forgive One Another



Ephesians 4:32 - *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

In this chapter, let's talk about the 'one another' of forgiveness and contrast this with the holding of grudges spoken of by James in his epistle. We have already seen that the gospels and the epistles focus upon relationships. Relationships that exist between one another. This smallest of couplets embrace the entire population of the planet earth and is true for every human being. In the same way that a molecule of water is H₂O in China or the balance of air is the same in Russia, as it is in Canada, so to do these 'one anothers' embrace every people on earth and are binding to every race, regardless of wealth and status. While other historical movements on earth have involved great armies or massed numbers of people, the teaching of James comes back again and again to two people; 'one another'. Which world leader has ever told his followers to wash one anothers feet and show how that's done by his own example?

Once the welcome has been given and acceptance expressed to incoming members to any congregation of believers, they find themselves in a community called the church, which Paul described as being "members one of another". Being a member of a local church in all its daily and weekly function is not an experience for the overly sensitive or the faint of heart.

This sneer that church is only for old ladies and children who can't think for themselves, couldn't be further from the truth. Among other definitions

found in the Bible, the church is called a “FAMILY” and as everyone knows, if you are in a family, you will go through a whole spectrum of experiences - the good, the bad and the ugly.

I once wrote a poem to describe working and living with the people of God. It came out of my travels around the world and the thousands of different Christians I had met, “The Long, The Short and The Tall”.

The notion of the church being made up of perfect people is quickly dismissed after we have worked in any capacity in a local church. Things take place that are hurtful, words are spoken that are cutting, rumours are set abroad that are untrue. How can this be, we may ask. The answer is simple, we are living with a family of people, who, despite their faith, have not yet been perfected and we can include ourselves among that number. There is a little poem that comes to mind that goes like this;

To live above
With saints in love
O wouldn't that be glory.
To live below with saints we know
Now that's a different story.

This being so, we need to be ready to forgive and to also ask for forgiveness. Hence the injunction “*forgive one another even as Christ has forgiven you*”, **Ephesians 4:32**. The great chapter on forgiveness is **Matthew 18** and in the center of it all is the telling question asked by Peter. “*Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother - unto seven times*” and the famous reply of Jesus, “*Not seven times, Peter, but unto seventy times seven.*”

Oops! That was not the reply that Peter was expecting, but tells us that being a member of any local church will eventually involve either giving or the taking of offense. **Matthew 18** does not simply leave us with the

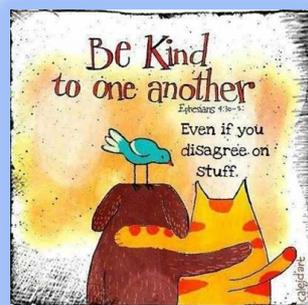
mathematics of forgiveness. Jesus gives us, in detail, the way that offense should be dealt with at the *One Another level*.

In its essence, it means going to see the offended party ALONE. To reinforce this point, James, in his epistle, says do not hold grudges against one another. What a contrast.

The one describes someone who SEEKS out his brother to bring about reconciliation and forgiveness. The other is of the person who harbors grudges and feeds his resentment by telling his story to other people and so love breaks down at the one another level.



At this point, we need to make an honest appraisal of our own relationship history. If there has been dislocation between ourselves and others, what part did we play to produce the discord? The discord that ruined the symphony of fellowship. In our discussion time, let's talk about why the INSENSITIVE people can easily cause offense in a fellowship of God's people and why overly sensitive people can take offense UNNECESSARILY. Let's also speak about the remedy of reconciling GOD'S WAY. Let us also ask the question, why in a wide, wide world, it seems such a great problem to be able to get ALONE one with another to sort the matter out, instead of producing a church brawl.



Chapter 4

Love One Another



This is the open secret of all good and lasting relationships.

Can it be that simple?

Jesus said it all in a sentence in **John 13:34**. “*Love one another as I have loved you*”. Surely there must be a more complex formula for life.

Love one another.

Surely there must be a more complicated psychological equation to equal success in a relationship.

For we can be assured to succeed in relationships is to succeed in life and to fail in primary relationships is to ultimately fail in life. Jesus said in answer to a question posed by a lawyer, “*Which is the greatest commandment?*” (**Mark 12:29-31**), the whole of the Bible can be summed up in two commandments, “*Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as you love yourself.*” (**Matthew 22:37-40**). So, we come to the one another of love and as we do, we contrast that love of **John 14** with the malice and hatred spoken of in **Titus**.

In **Titus 3:34** we have a contrast between the past life of the believer and his present values and behavior, and the REASON FOR THE CHANGE.

He has been transformed by the love of Christ and the redeeming message of the Gospel. It is simply put by Paul in another epistle where he writes, “*We love Him because He first loved us*”, **John 4:19**. In fact we should read the proceeding verses which put this whole matter in the clear context and is directly connected to our favourite verse, **John 3:16**, which was penned by the same person.

It is a dangerous thing to harbor or hold a grudge against other brethren for whatever reason. It does them no good and it prevents us from receiving the full blessing of grace and guidance in our own lives. Right in the center of the Lord’s prayer we read, “*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us*” (**Matthew 6:12, Luke 11:4**). The implication is very clear. Namely that if we do not forgive others, hold grudges, then we ourselves will fail of the grace of God and shut ourselves off from His forgiveness.

ˆIn loving one another, proof is given to the rest of an unbelieving world, who are about the business of cheating, stealing, exploiting and hating others, that Christianity really works. Jesus said “*Love one another, for by this shall all men know that you are my disciples.*” (**John 13:34-35**)



It is worth observing that in the early church, as described in the book of **Acts**, there was a fervency of love that prevailed in their fellowship and congregations. I am of the opinion that one of the reasons for this is that the numbers that comprised these congregations were **SMALL** enough for the members to get to know each other and that in these small congregations, **THERE WAS NO PLACE TO HIDE**. The truly large

congregations came after the conversion of Emperor Constantine (305 A.D.), when it became fashionable for the general population to go to church, and where everything became diluted. Suddenly there were tens of thousands of meeting in temples formerly used in pagan worship and the era of the MEGA church began. People avoided meeting one another.

To meet in a smaller church makes it VERY DIFFICULT to avoid people and this is a good thing. It allows disputes to be aired and settled quickly. It also means that needs are known and can be met by love and care of other members. When I was leading a mens' meeting in town, we used to meet in a restaurant for breakfast. One morning one of the brothers arrived early and told me that he had a problem with a man already in the restaurant who had failed to do a good job fixing an appliance in his house. As we were about to ask the blessing on the food, I addressed both men, seated at opposite ends of the table, to sit at a separate table and work out their differences before they began their breakfast. They did. It took only a couple of minutes before they hugged each other and resumed their places. Grudges were not allowed to fester and love and forgiveness prevailed.

In this chapter of our study we need to assess the impediments to fellowship through this simple command of loving one another. Jesus did not say if you are like minded, love one another. If you are all in agreement, love one another. If you are all the same color skin, love one another. No, there were no exclusion clauses. The command was simple, **LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**

I remember Juan Carlos Ortiz from Argentina speaking on how revival took place in his church in Buenos Aires. Sunday, he stood up in his pulpit and began his sermon, Love One Another. He found he could go no further, so he repeated the verse again, having tried three times, he sat down and suddenly the Spirit moved across his congregation.

People began to pray with each other, inquire as to others needs, money began to pass from hand to hand; dislocations were healed as member to member the spirit of love and grace flowed. It was a God moment and led to a great flow of grace, not only in his church, but others also.



In our discussion time, let us think of the PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS of what it means to love one another.

What are some of the ways in which this one another can be worked out in our church OR how are we seeing it worked out in our own fellowship?

Are there any grudges or malice that we need to release in our own hearts?

Is it possible that some of your attitudes have obstructed the flow of God's blessing upon our lives?

*A short exhortation is found in **Ephesians 4:26**, where we read “**Let not the sun go down on your wrath.**” The implications being that anger left buried will turn into something worse. Therefore, it is good to keep short accounts in our relationship with other people daily.*



Chapter 5

Submit One to Another



The other exhortation in **Ephesians 5:21** is to submit one to another.

In our western world where human rights and personal right and the rights of minorities are legislated into our society, the concept of submission is hateful in the extreme.

The list of personal ‘rights’ is almost endless and are ferociously guarded and fought over. Transgender rights, privacy rights, rights of free speech, worker’s rights, washroom rights, land rights, water rights, on and on it goes, and the idea of surrendering rights and of mutual submission to one another is absolute anathema - and looked upon as a sign of weakness. Nevertheless, the word of God makes no apology in this business of submission and apparently, NO EXCEPTION. SO, WHAT IS BEING SAID HERE?



The example before us is always Jesus, whose great statement concerning His life on earth was “*Lo, I come to do the will of the Lord*”. When He walked on earth, He showed majestic composure while under great suffering and provocation. Think of His submission to the Father’s will when facing Pilate or the Sanhedrin of Himself. He could have said, “I am the Son of God and you are all toast.” Yet He remained in submission

even while His beard was being plucked out and spit ran down His face. His final submission was to the nails of the cross and His crucifixion at the hands of sinners. He, therefore, becomes our example of submission to the Father's will.



That submission to the will of God is the secret of being in submission to *one another*. There is the overriding knowledge within our hearts that the will of the Father will ultimately be carried out in our lives and that all things really will work together for our highest good. (**Romans 8:28**)

People are around us everyday all with their own ideas, self interests and exercising their own wills and this is where we need guidance to whom and to what we submit to. Firstly, we must never submit to evil (or what we know to be an evil outcome as a result of or submission). If our submission brings 'another' into moral hazard, then we simply do not submit. If our submission means complicity in a lie, then our submission is an act of abetting (such as in the case of Ananias and Saphira), we do not submit. If our husband demands submission to partnering in a crooked business deal, to defraud another person, we do not concur. Matters of personal conscience also define boundaries to submission. Giving way on minor points of doctrine for the sake of unity of the Spirit is a delicate matter. We do not make a Custer's last stand off on the questions of whether head coverings are for ladies in today's western church. However, if as a lady, you travel to a place where all the he ladies are with covered heads, then, for the sake of unity of the Spirit, cover yours. There are certain groups of people who are convinced that foot washing is the true expression of spirituality. They quote John 13 as their example. If you are meeting with such believers (as I have been) and they bring out bowls of water and begin washing each others feet, then I would think it an expression of love to take your shoes off and let the brother wash your feet, but you are not obligated to wash his, since HE is the one convinced of this 'one another' NOT YOU. These are but a few examples of the conditions

that may be applied to this ‘one another’ of submission. However, rest assured that when believers have submitted to one another in matters of contention, fractured relationships have been avoided and even costly legal action.

Paul gives an admonishment in **1 Corinthians 6:1-3** about law suits. He is aghast that ‘one should go to law against another’ and give evidence to the world of a dislocation in the Body of Christ. Pauline and myself once were in a place where we counseled a couple not to take legal action in a separation, but agree peacefully to the division of property and custody of children. Such submission to godly counsel and to each other would have saved them thousands of dollars. But within two days, the wife had taken the advice of her lawyer over our own wise counsel. Within a year, she had failed to gain in a law court, what had been freely offered by her husband. The whole endeavor was an exercise in frustration, with her lawyer being the only one who profited.

In our marriage, I have seen that Pauline has an ability in financial management that exceeds my own. Therefore, I do not feel diminished in my role of a husband when I surrender the account books and all bill paying to her. Things simply go a lot better in our household finances when we do. She also has a wonderful fashion sense - better than mine - so guess what? The list of episodes when we submit to one another is pretty well infinite.



No doubt as we open the subject for discussion, each one of us will be able to give examples of how God worked to bring a happy or harmonious end because we found grace to submit and so prove that it is the better way.

Perhaps as a lead off into our discussion we could consider the Highway code of Canada. Its basis is surely submit (yield) to one another. If we fail to yield when we are told to or slow down when faced with a yellow light, mayhem would result. Yielding and submitting to other drivers is part of everyday live on the roads where even the biggest trucks and most expensive cars must give way and submit tot the weakest road users on bicycles.

Chapter 6

Inspire One Another or Provoke to Love and Good Works



Hebrews 10:24 - *“Let us consider one another to provoke into love and to good works”.*

This word provoke is one that needs to be understood.

It is often employed by mockers urging their children not to provoke their siblings into squabbles and argument. In the context of **Hebrews**, Paul uses the Word to speak of provocation to love and good works. The Latin base for the word provoke means to ‘call forth’ and in the sense in which it is used in **Hebrews chapter 10**, it means to ‘inspire by example’.



Inspiration is the purest form of teaching.

Students learn from their teachers who present them with facts, and information and hopefully something is retained and used to good purpose. On other occasions, the slow and recalcitrant need to learn by

admonishment and strong exhortation. But, we all must agree that learning that comes from the inspiration and example of the mentor is the highest form of education. This type of teaching that brings about change in the bearer is the most desirable. In **Philippians 4:9**, Paul refers to this type of example where he combines the instruction of his teaching with the provocation of his example. *“Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and SEEN IN ME, do! And the long peace shall be with you.”* The hearing form is the instruction, the seeing in me is the provocation to a higher lifestyle. This is the provoke one another to love and good works he later speaks of in **Hebrews 10**.

When I was in high school, I had many instructors. They all were experts in their own field of knowledge, but only a couple stand out in my memory. Those who inspired me by character and example. They may even have been Christians, but at that stage in my life I would not have cared since my mind was elsewhere. Later on, after I was converted to Christ and sat under excellent pulpit ministry, two men in particular provoked me to seek after God. They were mentors in the truest sense of the word - they taught by INSPIRATION.

The word ‘provocation’ in other instances of scripture is used to describe a severe testing of God’s patience. In fact, in **Hebrews chapter three** the whole of the 40-year period of wondering in the wilderness is summed up in one more, “the Provocation” - a time when the long suffering and patience of God finally came to an end and He said “ENOUGH”.

All of us can identify with people who take us to the edge of our own patience and here I speak of our brethren in the faith. Things happen sometimes again and again, and instead of being provoked to love and good works we are provoked unto anger and indignation. It is the same word ‘provoked’ (calling forth) but now producing a different reaction in us.

We cannot experience this severe type of provocation without sin somewhere being involved. Where there is sin being committed in the family of God, always at an individual level, the apostle Paul, uses stronger words to deal with it. Words like reprove, rebuke, correct and admonish.

To his young disciple, Timothy, he writes, “*preach the Word, be ready in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort - with all long suffering and doctrine*”. (2 Timothy 7:2) In another, 2 Timothy 3:16, he writes “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto ALL GOOD WORKS.*”



Notice that ‘good works’ are being aimed at as the end product. Whether as a result of provocation to them, or by correction, reproof and sound doctrine. WE all can recall those who have severely provoked us in our life in Christ. What things might provoke a lady to jealousy ... or a man to jealousy? The book of Ephesians speaks about parents provoking children to anger, but is this a one-way street? What or who has called forth the best in you? Consider the title My Utmost for His Highest. What was it that called for the UTMOST in Oswald Chambers or in you? When the temple was being built by King Solomon, the scriptures recount that all the stones were cut away from the temple and then rolled into place so that there would be no sound of hammer on chisel or the striking of blows within the temple. What does that speak of and how is that to be applied to the building of the local church?

Chapter 7

Edify One Another



Here we have a most significant ‘church’ word: EDIFY.

This word means BUILD UP. From it we have another word EDIFICATION and edifice. Paul says in **1 Corinthians 14:26** “*Let all things (in the church) be done unto edification.*” That is a most significant statement.

Think about it.



If there is singing, testimony, preaching, Spiritual gifts, teaching, announcements, after service fellowship, no matter what we do, we should ALWAYS SEEK to build each other up. It means that we should never be subverting, undermining or pulling down the faith or the character of one of our brethren. Edifying is the most powerful at the one another level. When a person’s health has been weakened by sickness or an accident, healing and rehab always begins at a cell level. Medicines, vitamins and supplements are wisely administered to rebuild the body at a

fundamental level. Pep drinks, like Red Bull, are only good to healthy people but for those who are in a dilapidated state, they need to be built up from the very basic level.



In time gone by, the trades people in England traveled from job to job, wherever there was work to be found. They would be ready to travel to ply their skills there. Hence, they were called ‘journeymen’, whether electricians or bricklayers or carpenters, they were skilled journeymen workers and wherever they went, they took their tool bag.

Christians are like these people (or should be), always ready to pass on a word that will be like a nail well driven or to brace somebody’s faith with a word of encouragement. In fact, in **Ecclesiastes chapter 12:11** it speaks of the words of the wise as fasteners used by the master builders. We need to be conscious at all times of the power of the right word given by God so that we might speak to another brother or sister to his edification and to clinch something in their lives.

One of the words used by Peter to describe other believers is ‘living stones’. The bible has many names for believers at different times, we are called members, we are called sheep and brothers and sisters, depending on the analogy that is being used, but the term ‘living stones’ perfectly suites our chapter on edification. Building stones have no value unless they are laid next to each other. They are of no use just left in a pile. They need to be set in order and cemented together and **STAY THERE**, WHERE they have been put. In the days of the building of the temple, the stones were held together by precision cutting and by their own weight. In other words, one stone, already cut, formed the shape of the other stone to be

placed next to it. Later, the Romans introduced lime based cements and their buildings still stand to this day as a testimony of their building skill.

Whether by precision cut or by the use of mortar, the living stones of the church must fit together and stay together. For this reason, God looks upon unresolved differences between brethren as a **SERIOUS** matter. Squabbles at the '*one another*' level, which result in members of the Body leaving or, in this case, living stones, leaving will pull down or jeopardize the unity of the building - the very building that Jesus is working to raise up. We must understand, therefore, the seriousness of holding grudges and bitter feelings against one another. Get matters dealt with quickly and if there is personal sin involved, confess your own part in the matter and come back to the cement of acceptance and love.



If we read the letters of Paul, it is noteworthy that much of the time he is employed in “conflict resolution”. He exhorts, persuades, beseeches brothers and sisters to be at peace with each other, for where there is peace with each other; for where there is peace ‘the work’ of God will go on successfully and others will be added to the church.

Sometimes, Paul uses ‘names’ of the people involved. In **Philippians 4:2**, he exhorts Euodia and Syntyche to resolve their differences. In the first epistle to the **Corinthians** he is exhorting the house of Chloe to settle their disputes telling them that these are trivial matters. In the 16th and concluding chapter of **Romans**, Paul gives a list of people, known by name to him, which he terms as ‘beloved’, ‘helpers’, ‘fellow workers’, ‘laborers’ who are BUILDING with him. Then he gives a warning to

stay away from people who are contentious, divisive and argumentative. AVOID such people.

The previous fifteen chapters of **Romans** are incomparable in their clear explanation of the plan of salvation. The doctrine so fundamental to our own statement of faith. But notice they culminate in a list of ONE ANOTHERS. The names of people who have been saved and are now loving.



Chapter 8

Comfort One Another

1 Thessalonians 4:18



COMFORT. CARE. They are words that go to the heart of our Christian walk and experience.

We live in a ‘fallen world’; a world that is both dark and disordered and the family of God is called to live in contradiction to the valueless landlords of the world, that is **HOSTILE TO GOD AND HIS PURPOSE**. The word is ‘Hostile’ not reactive. Saints receive an immense amount of abuse and ridicule from non-believers and, therefore, when they are together, care and comfort need to be paramount in their dealings with each other.

‘Comfort’ one another. The word means several things. Firstly, to ‘soothe in grief, relief in affection, to console, to save one from trouble.’ Therefore, because our life below is going to include suffering, it must also involve the saints applying the balm of comfort to each other. In the **Thessalonian** epistle, the words comfort one another apply to a very specific focus of our faith. That is the return the Lord Jesus and the simultaneous resurrections of the sleeping saints from the dead. Believers **DO NEED** to be reminded of the absolute certainty of these two events. The word ‘comfort’ here means reassure one another, but in the face of death itself, comfort means to come alongside and strengthen. We will have plenty of that sort of comfort to administer but in the case of death we apply comfort in both senses of the word ‘comfort’ because of loss. One consoling in grief and the reassurance of the certain knowledge that we will be reunited again in heaven.

There are other aspects of comfort that I have found in my years of pastoring that being able to give words of consolation and strength to the grieving is one of the greatest gifts in the Body of Christ. If we excel in the area of being able to comfort one another we will be valued wherever we go. We may even be given a name like the apostle Barnabas who was called ‘The Son of Consolations’. Better to have that title than the Boaherges Boys who are called the ‘Sons of Thunder’. I have found that, given the choice between receiving consolation or thunder and lightning, the saints would choose comfort every time.



There is another form of comfort and that is the one described in picture on the Bayeux Tapestry. This tapestry, woven by the nuns in the convents of England describes the build up for the battle and actual battle of Hastings in 1066. The Norman army sailed across the English Channel in a fleet by ships. Before disembarking on the beaches near Pevensey. There is one delightful frame on the tapestry where King William is prodding the backside of a soldier with his sword. Underneath the picture is the script - “William comforteth one of his soldiers”.



Prodding - comforting. The two don't seem to go together but in this case, they did. In the battle line, when hearts grow faint, we may have to administer this type of comfort. PRODDING ONE ANOTHER forward.



As a further exercise, we need to discuss occasions when we have administered comfort of one sort or another to our brothers and sisters. As we discuss together, let us remind ourselves that the ministry of comfort belongs to every believer. It is not the job of professionals only. Whether that professional be a funeral director, a pastor, a priest or a psychologist or counselor down at the 'Grief and Loss Centre'. The business of comfort is the true Provenance of Christians and it is the purest of all forms of love. So often (and increasingly in these days) after disasters and mass shootings we hear of teams of counselors sent to administer comfort to the victims' relatives. Usually these are paid people, NOT volunteers.

May God enlarge all our hearts that we may be able to weep with those who weep and mourn with those who mourn, not simply give them quotes from a positive thinking manual.



Chapter 9

Bear and Forbear One Another



Our reading as we begin this chapter is from **Ephesian chapter 4**.

“I, therefore a prisoner of the Lord, beseech you when you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness with longsuffering forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The definition of LONGSUFFERING, which has its roots in middle English is:

To refrain from

Not to mention

To have patience with.

That is very interesting when seen in this context of maintaining the Spirit of Unity and the bonds of peace between the saints or in the family of God.

The principle thought is very clear. It is this:

There are things that happen in the every day workings of any group of Christians which are regrettable. They should not happen, but they do. Words are said that should not be said, but they are. Offensive behaviour occurs that should never occur, but did. NOW WHAT? In short, the moment has come to forbear. The moment has arrived and an opportunity

is presented when we refrain. We refrain from taking action that we would be justified in taking, or from speaking words that would be in our rights to speak. Instead we choose to remain silent and let the matter pass.

Why?

For the SAKE of the Unity of the Body and the maintenance of the Bond of Peace.

This question of submitting my own personal rights for the greater cause of ‘unity’ have ever been a difficult decision for the saints to make, and for larger groups such as churches working within the framework of a larger denomination.

When should we ‘forbear and bear’ and when should we assert our position rather than refrain from actions or words?

We would all agree that Jesus exercised great forbearance with His disciples. Sometimes He was brought to the extremity of His patience, and on more than one occasion, He asked “**How long shall I bear with you?**” It was the reaction of someone who all-knowing, had to live with the ignorance and the willfulness of men who had only the first glimmer of light. They were, however, during a large part of His ministry, seeing only “men as trees walking”.



So, the ignorance of less enlightened people is a great cause for forbearance from mature believers. Ignorance is not a sin, but pride, which leads to

intolerance and the oppression of others, is. Forbearance does not extend to such violation. Nor are we expected to forbear with doctrinal error.

Recently, as the church has become more enculturated by modern society, it has become more tolerant of sexual sin and more censorious towards those who hold to the literal interpretation of scripture. We need to think deeply about the position we find ourselves in now that we are part of the post Christian western world.



As part of our study on forbearance, let us look at some examples of possible dislocations to the bond of peace and discuss whether we should bear and forbear or speak out and assert our position regardless of who is offended.

Sunday shopping. Most Christians have no conviction about the ‘Sabbath Day’. But some do. How would this work out between two families who go on a trip and want to spend an hour or two on a Sunday afternoon shopping in the mall. Do the Lord’s Day observance people forbear and go with the shoppers or the other way around?

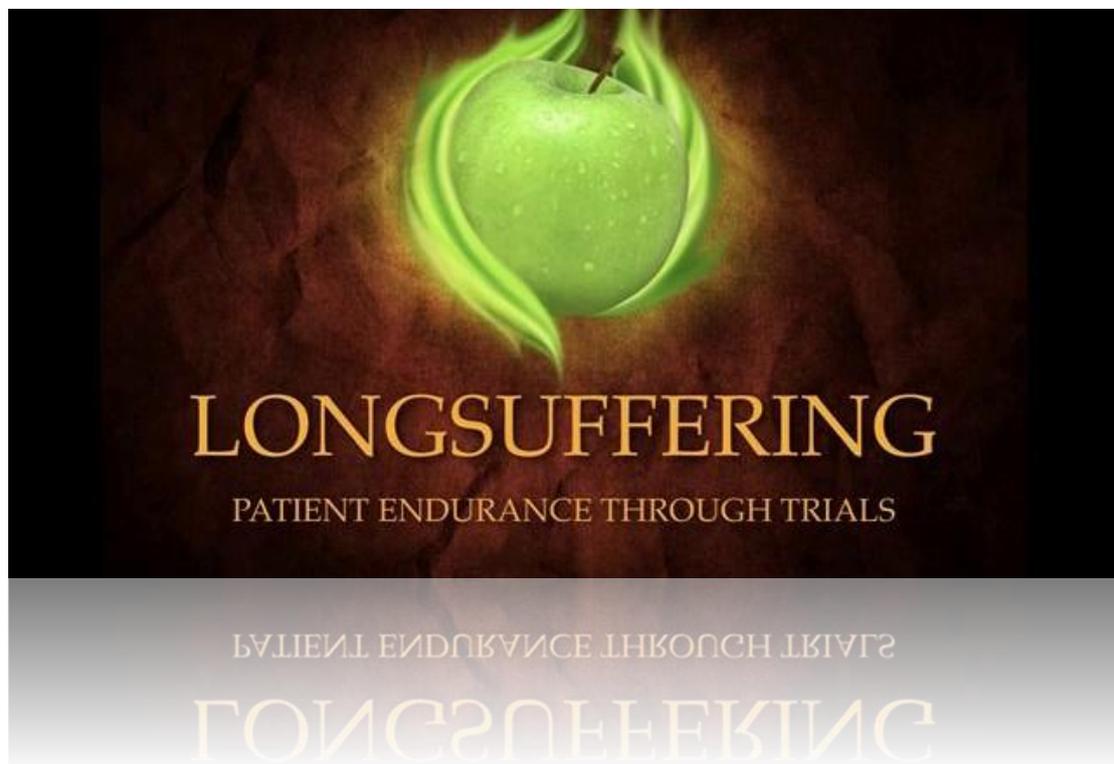
The drinking of wine is also another touchy area, where forbearance needs to be exercised.

Other areas of possible conflict that would endanger the bonds of fellowship revolve around personality differences, style or way of doing things, where people always think their way is the right way. Does it really matter which is the right way as long as the job gets done? Those who have ‘perfectionist’ leanings must bear with those who are more easily satisfied with a less than perfect job. But those who are used to

completing tasks quickly may need to forbear with those who demand higher standards from themselves and others.

The situations that require ‘bear and forbear’ are endless but this same passage that speaks of forbearance concludes with us all having received “grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ”. ‘The measure of the gift of Christ’ is infinite.

So here, endless situations meet infinite grace, giving us hope that will yet triumph in things both big and small.



Chapter 10

Lie Not to One Another



Colossians 3:9 - *Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.*

Paul is frank and to the point in all his dealings, especially in his letters to the churches. As a politician, he would have failed completely, also as a philosopher or a lawyer.

Someone once asked the question, “How do you know when a politician is lying?”

The answer, “When his lips are moving.”

The philosopher or the politician yes, and lawyers as well are all adept at parsing sentences, changing the plain meaning of words and communicating in the slippery orb of nuance and innuendo. Furthermore, we EXPECT them to do it, but not so for Christians and Paul is a perfect example to us all of what it means to speak plainly and without guile. How refreshing.

In this verse, he puts the matter very succinctly, “*Lie not one to another.*” Well how do we get around such a plain statement.

If we take the verse at face value, it means there is no place for lying in any form when believers are in communication with each other. **1 Peter 3:10** says “*let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.*”

Plain speech in love must be the substance of our conversation. There is no place for white lies or black lies or small fibs or whoppers. They all lead to one end, and that is the ultimate break down of trust between brothers and sisters in God’s family.

There was a question that was raised by Paul in **Romans 3:3**. “*Shall we do evil that good may come of it?*” It is more than a philosophical question. If we soften our language and introduce soothing words to ease a brother’s suffering, if we do not tell him the truth, does this fall into the category of not being entirely honest? If we repeat another person’s words but put a different connotation to them, does this fall into the category of lying?

The list of variables as to what constitutes the truth is pretty well endless. But at the heart of the matter is not only the text that is spoken but the motive behind what we say.

Look at these words that can simply lead to the falsification of facts

1. Exaggeration
2. Hyperbole
3. Glossing over
4. Omissions
5. Winking the eye
6. Parsing

They are all words or phrases or, in the case of ‘winking,’ action, that show simply something other than the truth is being told.



The injunction in the law court to a witness is to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The thought conveyed is that there is a difference between the truth and the whole truth and then the clincher is, nothing but the truth. The reason these three classifications are given in a court of law and with a hand on the bible, is to hopefully, prevent the witness from squirming around telling the absolute truth in his testimony. So, testimony is given under oath and to speak other than the truth is to open a person to the charge of perjury.

Even the enemies of Jesus acknowledged that he always spoke the truth. In **Mark 12**, the Pharisees approached Him with these words, “*Master, we know that you are true and do not care for any man but teach the way of God in truth.*”

That was quite a statement from people who hated Him. But it was a reflection upon Christ and His words which were always unflinchingly telling the truth! NO MATTER WHAT THE REACTION. As in all things, He is our example.

There are numerous ways in which we are to speak truth, however, and we need to discuss them.

Ephesians 4:14 - 15. Here two forms of communication are contrasted. “*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*”

Think of these people and their use of words.

Sleight

Cunning

Crafty

Lying in wait to deceive

What a picture of confidence trickery and then **verse 15**. *“But speaking the truth in love.”*

In this passage, which connects wrong doctrine with telling lies, by people who profess Christ I think particularly of the cults, *“every wind of doctrine”, “ready to deceive”*.



We will take this up in a further chapter, but sufficient to say that the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witness both arrive on our doorstep with their own glib version of the gospel and both are dangerously wrong.

Four of the founding principles of the Protestant Reformation were: The scriptures alone! Christ alone! Faith alone! Grace alone! What the false cults have done is to pervert these foundational truths.



Mormonism has added to the canon of sealed scriptures, the Book of Mormon and by so doing has added a false history and new way of

salvation. For them it is Jesus plus the Book of Mormon. This introduces the heresies of only Mormons are chosen elect of God. It also introduces the immoral practice of polygamy. Often heresy and immorality go hand in hand.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have also changed the scriptures to suit their own doctrinal views. Their New World translation calls Jesus "a Son of God", not "the Son of God". Jesus is in fact, to the followers of this heresy, only an angel. So, the orthodox doctrine of Christ's divinity has been rejected by Jehovah's Witnesses.

No matter what the doctrinal heresy, these cults have gone astray on these four foundational truths of scripture: The scriptures alone! Christ alone! Faith alone! Grace alone!

Besides these false religious believes, there are other world views that are lies from the devil himself. Secular Humanism puts mankind in the place of God, this reminds us of Satan's first challenge to God and His Word in **Genesis 2:4**. So whether we understand them or not we must come back to what Jesus says about the truth in **John 14:6**, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*"

The devil or Satan is the father of lies. He was a liar from the beginning and is the deceiver. Jesus said, "*You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.*" **John 8:32**.

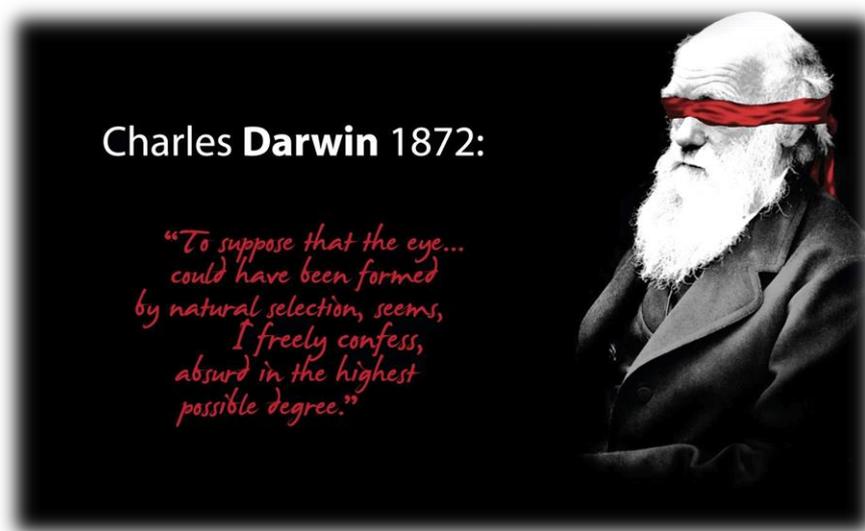


All of us have been lied to at one time or another, but there is a difference between telling a child that Father Christmas is a person who puts the present under the tree and deliberately misinterpreting facts of life to put that child on the wrong course in life. Such matters we will discuss as we conclude this present chapter.

So as in all other matters, we need to examine ourselves and discussion between other Christians helps us in the process.

Often, I hear Christian make a point by saying, “to be honest with you etc., etc.....”, but such preludes should be unnecessary in our conversation, for honesty is our standard in all matters. So, let us share for a few minutes to be about the business of honest discussion.

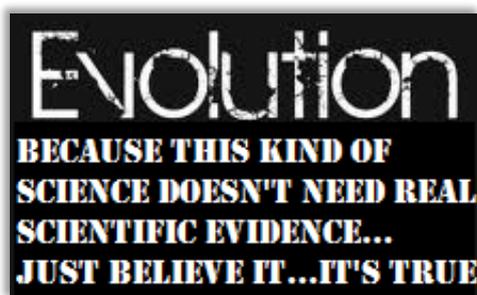
Every False Religion is Demonically Propagated



We are concluding our “one another” series with addressing the biggest of all lies that has been foisted upon us by atheistic scientist and that is the false claim of evolution.

The idea of evolution is pervasive in the western world not only in secular education but also in much of the church world. It is probably true to say that many Christian don't know what to believe, since the creation account of Genesis is propaganda in both public schools and from many pulpits as well. Be assured that no amount of juggling can fit the facts of a six-day creation into the fabrication of the evolution theory. The plain simple truth is this, and we must never forget it, either the earth was created by God or it was not created at all. **THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND.**

Let us for a moment, consider the five simple proposals of evolution.



- 1) The universe as we know it had a beginning
- 2) This beginning is call the Big Bang
- 3) After the Big Bang, there was a rapid expansion of material which cooled as it accelerated
- 4) This material then formed itself into structures that we see around us today, without any external influence.
- 5) There was no guiding mind or intelligence behind design in what we see around us. Everything, including ourselves, is the result of blind chance, and therefore without plan or purpose.

In contrast to this THEORY, we have the creation account.

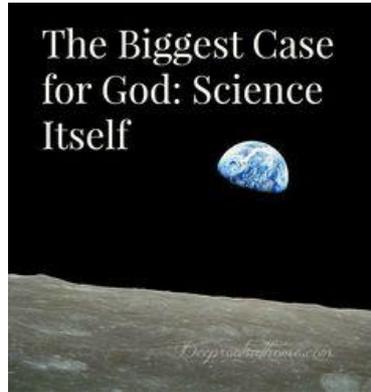
The evolution idea is confounded by a simple argument. It is this; Evolution violates 3 commonly held and PROVEN laws.

- 1) The law of BIO GENESIS which states living things cannot be produced from none living substance. i.e. Animate from inanimate
- 2) The law of PROBABILITY. This states that any event beyond the odds of 10 to the power of 7 is even beyond coincidence.
- 3) The law of ENTROPHY which states material (left to itself) moves from a higher to a lower order. Evolution states the opposite. It says that life forms always evolve from lower to higher forms WITHOUT any outside influence.

Each believer should know how to confront the lie of evolution, from the atheistical foundation of evolution and the other from the biblical position of creation.

- 1) _____

2) _____



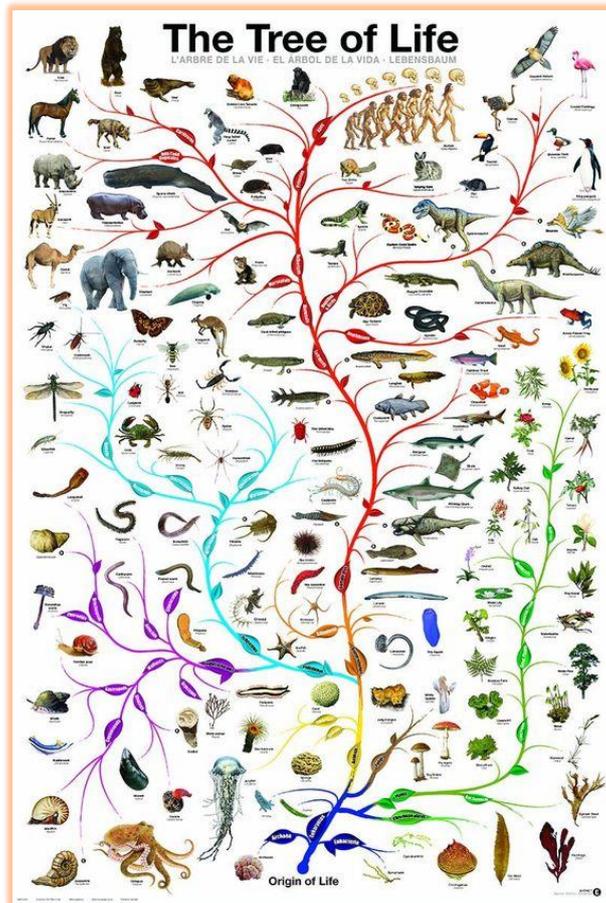
The argument of the evolutionists is entirely fallacious. They are based on the idea that something can come from nothing. How can this be? A magician can produce a rabbit out of a hat but we all know that the rabbit was there somewhere, whether up his sleeve or under his cloak. The evolutionist says that “hey presto” explains everything. As Christians, we repudiate the entirety of the notion of evolution as a lie and therefore do not speak the theory on to another except to refute it. The account of creation is given to us in **Genesis Chapter 1**.

This chapter tells of the original intention of God who created the visible universe with one almighty edict and, in successive phases, brought into form, being and balance the earth that we inhabit today. He placed mankind there as the apex of his design.

Our world view is determined by our beliefs.

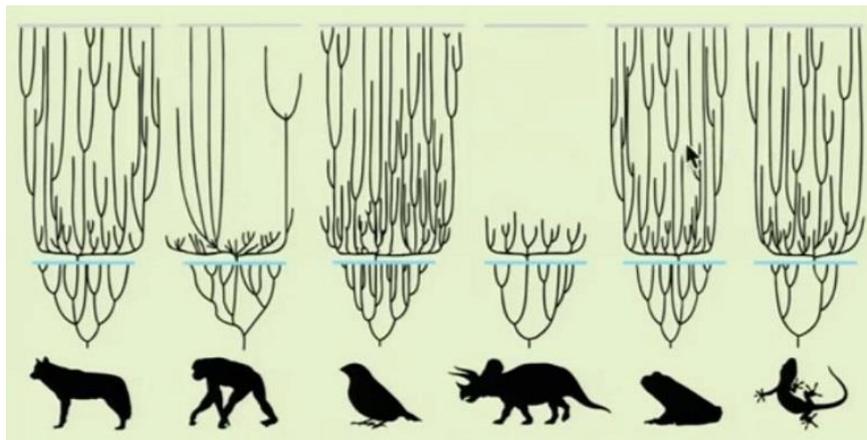
Look at the two contrasting views, the evolutionist and the Christian.

Evolutionist



I live in a vast meaningless universe that has no recorded beginning and will have no scheduled end. My planet earth is one tiny orb in a solar system that is dwarfed by the immense galaxy of the milky way with 100 billion stars and, itself, only one of a trillion galaxies. I and my seven billion fellow earthlings have no obvious reason to be here. We are the product of a strange coalition of forces that produced pools of pond scum 4 billion years ago, by diverse primal powers we emerged as members of the homosapien race. I am no more than a collection of atoms and molecules held together by electrical impulse and kept on this rotating ball by gravity. I am no more and no less than the elements that compose me and in a few brief years, the current that binds my component parts will be switched off. Then I will die and become fodder for worms and insects and I will be absorbed back into the elements from which I emerged. That is all I am and all I can ever hope to be. Then my few brief years upon this planet will be ended and my meaningless existence will have entered the black oblivion of eternity. It will become as if it never happened

The Christian



You are a special creation of a good, all powerful God. You are the climax of His Creation. The magna opus of the Greatest Artist of the universe. You are created in his image with a capacity to think, feel and worship. You are set above all other life forms. You differ from the animals not simply in degree but in KIND. Not only is your kind unique but you are unique among your kind. God has master minded the exact combination of DNA that constitutes your genetic code, making you different as each snowflake differs from each other. Your creator loves you so much and He so intensely desires your fellowship that He gave the life of His only Son that you might spend eternity with Him. If you are willing to accept His gift of salvation, you can become a bonafide member of His family. He cares for you so much that He listens to your every word and reads your every thought. He even numbers the hairs of your head. He cares for you deeply and has an eternal purpose for your life. Your destiny is to live in a magnificent kingdom and to reign with Christ over the universe. You will forever enjoy his wonderful presence and the unfolding marvels of His creation. You will spend eternity in intimate fellowship with your beloved Lord Jesus Christ and your precious Christian family.

Chapter 12

Speaking the Truth in Love



Ephesians 4:15 *“Speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”*

This verse is the positive side to the negative of “lie not to one another”

It is wholly necessary that we do not lie to people – but it is just as imperative that we speak the truth to them, and to speak the truth means:

- 1) That we ourselves are convince of the truth and also
- 2) That we ourselves are versed in the truth.

Ignorance in any form leads to problems but no more so than in the defence of our faith.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, we return to the subject of EVOLUTION and the lie that has been foisted upon humanity, that somehow the whole business of creation was a COSMIC COINCIDENCE. It is vital to our faith that we get this matter straight for what a person believes always affects that person’s CONDUCT.

In our local church at Barrie Christian Fellowship, we believe and hold to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. God is the creator of the universe and all it contains. Evolution is a lie from the devil. We believe God’s creation reproduces after its kinds, according to God’s word. WE believe that living things came from the Divine Designer who put the codes of His

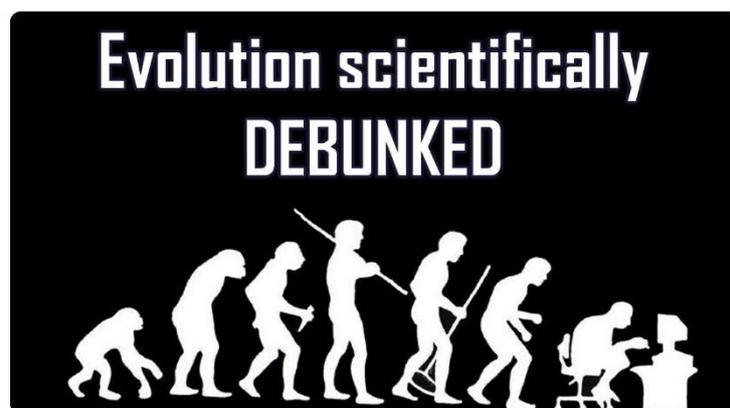
design in the D.N.A. from the beginning. Since the fall of man in **Genesis 3**, our sin has caused mutation in our D.N.A., resulting in death. **Genesis 1 – 11** is an actual historical record of mankind before the worldwide flood and subsequent ice age. It is of vital importance that we take God's word as the truth in its entirety from **Genesis 1:1** to the end of **Revelation**.

There is a branch of study in Theology called 'Christian Apologetics'. In fact, the term has nothing to do with apologizing or 'saying sorry'.

The Gospel of God says sorry for nothing. In fact, it is the very opposite. The Gospel, when rightly preached, calls upon all men everywhere to apologize and repent to God for countless sins committed against His divine majesty.

In its truest sense, Christian Apologetics means presenting an argument for the TRUTH which challenges the lies of commonly held views or prevailing opinion.

In the case of evolution, each believer needs to have some sort of answer ready to meet the challenge of the BIG BANG Theory of how the universe came into being.



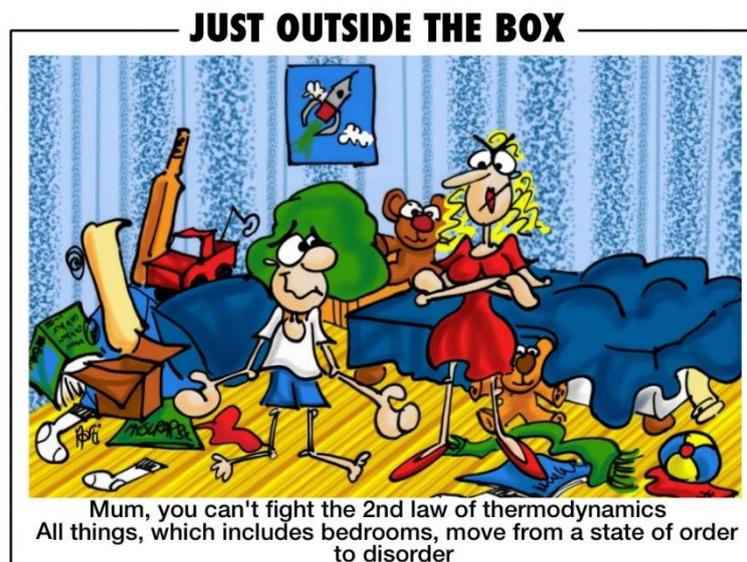
We need to understand and be able to explain how SCIENTIFIC LAWS contradict themselves when believers in evolution attempt to advance their theories.

Law 1 – Law of Bio-Genesis

The Law of Biogenesis = Evolution Debunked

The simplest of all. Namely one cannot produce something out of nothing, neither can living things be produced from non-living material. It is so simple that even a child can understand it.

Law 2 – Law of Entropy



This was formulated by Sir Isaac Newton, a famous Christian scientist of the 1600's. This law simply expressed says "Things left to themselves always devolve from a higher to a lower order. In layman's language, if you leave your BBQ uncovered for 2 or 3 winters it will rust out. Therefore, we must ask, how did the universe construct itself from a million flying pieces after the BIG BANG to its present state of beauty and balance without any outside help? Even a child can understand this principle, as well as the first.

Law 3 – The Law of Probability

$$P(A_1) = \frac{242}{452}, \quad P(A_2) = \frac{210}{452}$$

$$P(B|A_1) = 0.1, \quad P(B|A_2) = 0.15$$

$$P(B) = P(B|A_1) \cdot P(A_1) + P(B|A_2) \cdot P(A_2) =$$

$$0.1 \cdot \frac{242}{452} + 0.15 \cdot \frac{210}{452} = 0.123$$

$$P(\bar{B}) = 1 - P(B) = 1 - 0.123 = 0.877$$

The study of probability has become a specialized area of research in itself in the last century. Probability statistics help in marketing, in military strategy and in the insurance industry as well as a host of other areas.

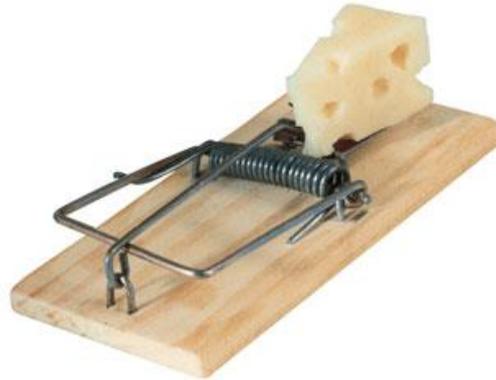
Basically, it is used to assess risk and chance in life on earth. Scientists, the very people who are promoting the chance theory of evolution are contradicted by their very own laws of probability. The figure of 10 to the power of 12 is generally accepted as an event taking place beyond mere chance. But what are the chances of the universe emerging from NOTHING and then ASSEMBLING itself? Quite obviously, it goes beyond any figure known to the mind of man and therefore violates the Law of Probability. Even a child can understand this thought also.



Theoretically, to roll a dice six times would produce one six. To roll a dice twelve times would produce two sixes. But to roll a dice a thousand times and produce a thousand sixes tells us that SOMEONE is interfering with the process and that puts 'dice rolling' beyond chance.

At the molecular level the whole business of evolution of the species also breaks down. For anything to work, all its parts must function in harmony as anybody who owns a car will attest.

But think of something much simpler than a car but known to all of us; a mousetrap.



This simple little machine has nine parts. If one of them is missing, then the mouse trap fails to work and it doesn't catch mice.

A single human cell has many more parts, nor will IT work if one part is missing. Therefore, the human cell had to be created as a complete unit, it could not be EVOLVED one piece at a time.



These things need to be THOUGHT about and discussed among ourselves until clarified. THEN we will be able to discuss the matter in the wider forum among atheists, agnostics or the uninformed.

As we do so we will grow stronger in our own faith and the church of Christ will grow in itself to the eternal glory of God.