

SOUND DOCTRINE

**Teaching that leads to true
fear of the Lord**



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“Sound Doctrine”

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Preface

It is a great joy to be able to present “Sound Doctrine” in English. This is a different and prophetic book that has not been written on the basis of a good idea, but out of a call from God. At the beginning of 2001, I experienced how God gave me the message of “Sound Doctrine” one chapter at a time, each day for almost two weeks.

Since then, I have been waiting for God to tell me when it was time to publish the book, or if it was even to be published. He did that almost three years after I had completed the writing and, at the same time, told me to write a preface telling how it came into existence and a postscript titled “Three years later.”

Sound Doctrine is not just a book with a message. It is also a testimony of how the true Word of God has changed my life. I am sure it will change the lives of many others when they receive this message.

The book is divided in the following way:

- First, this preface that contains the testimony of how Sound Doctrine came into existence and how, since that time, God has confirmed His Word in my life.
- Next in line is the book itself, Sound Doctrine, as I got it chapter by chapter in the year 2001.
- Finally, a postscript where I sum up and deepen the message and go into more detail about Sound Doctrine according to what God has shown me.

Longing to bear fruit

At the end of 2000, I began to look at my life and consider its fruits. I have had a longing to serve God since I got saved in 1995 and have since then done many things to reach people. Most people in the surrounding churches knew me as a bold young man who was on fire for God and very active. Although I was very bold, witnessed to many people about Christ, and was known for that in the churches, I discovered that I had almost no lasting fruit from what I did. I could not think of one person who had truly come to God through what I did, or who had been healed or set free from demons. Together with others, I had probably prayed for one or two who were healed, but that was it. The more I thought about this, the more dissatisfied I became with my life’s fruit. I was not satisfied with the fact that the Christians thought I was doing a lot when there were no visible results to find.

One day while I was thinking about this, I read a parable in the Bible that led to the beginning of a transformation in my life.

Then Jesus used this illustration: “A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. Finally, he said to his gardener, ‘I’ve waited three years, and there hasn’t been a single fig! Cut it down. It’s taking up space we can use for something else.’ The gardener answered, ‘Give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I’ll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. If we get figs next year, fine. If not, you can cut it down.’” (Luke 13:6-9 NLT).

When I read this parable, I experienced God speaking to me. I felt that I was like this fig tree that did not bear fruit. The difference between the tree and me was that I had been without fruit not just for three years, but five.

When I realized this, I understood that something had to happen immediately! I could not continue like that. If I did not start to bear fruit, then I would be cut down, just as it was written in the parable about the fig tree. I said to God: “Okay, give me one year, and if I then do not bear fruit, take my life and cut me down, for then nothing matters anymore.” Maybe this sounds a bit too radical, but I had seen that God demands fruit in our lives, and there were no excuses.

40 days of fasting

I decided overnight that I would fast for forty days and seek God. I had to start bearing fruit in my life, as God demands. My fast began on January 3, 2001. I began by drinking only water, but, later, I drank some juice and a little cocoa to get some quick energy, even though it is not the exact right way to do it. In this period of fasting, I really experienced how God’s Word came alive to me. I did not pray much more than I usually did, but I read and studied the Word of God. One Scripture after another came alive to me, as if it was something new that God had just written.

After the forty days of fasting, I was filled up with new revelations from God, and I was filled with the Word as never before. I thought of the Word of God and meditated on it day and night, including while I was sleeping. It was a really special experience.

Shortly after that, I felt that I had to express some of the things God had given me, so I sat down by my computer and started to write. When I had written five or six pages, size A4 (8.3 x 11.7 inches), I stopped and thought, “What am I going to use this for?” There was too much content for my website (oplevjesus.dk), and it did not fit the purpose of the website either, which was aimed at non-Christians. This teaching was for Christians. Therefore, I did not know what to do with the things I had written.

While I was thinking about all this, God spoke to me. I will never forget it. It was so clear. He said three words to me: “Write a book!” I stopped, looked up, and said, “WHAT? Write a

book? Do you really mean that? Have you forgotten that my lowest grades were in writing and spelling when I finished school?” That was one year before I wrote the booklet, “Deceived,” which has now been printed in several editions. At that time, I was not used to writing long texts.

God did not answer my objections but spoke again and said just as clearly as before: “You shall write a book, and I will give you one chapter each day. But on Sundays, you shall not write. You shall have time off together with your family.”

“Wow,” I thought, “I am going to write a book”. That was an incredible experience that I will never forget.

I was totally excited! I knew it was from God, and I looked forward to experiencing it. The interesting thing was that, at this time, I had not seen anyone whom I had prayed for getting healed, and there was no lasting fruit of my life.

God confirms His word

Since the day God spoke all this, I knew that something would happen, and so it did. It was not even one week before I prayed for three people who got healed. I experienced very strongly how God let me get started with the things he had for me. After one good week, I was at home relaxing, and then it came to me: “Now something will happen.” In the same minute, I received a phone call. It was someone from the church who asked if I wanted to go with him and talk to the people on the street. I said: “Yes, I would like to do that,” because God had just told me that something would happen. The guy who had called came and picked me up, and we went downtown.

When we were about to park the car, I saw a girl walking with crutches together with her mother. I knew right away that God would heal her. I jumped out of the car, ran toward her, told her that I was a Christian, and asked if I could pray for her. She allowed me to do so. I put my hand on her foot, which was sprained, prayed a short prayer, and told her that she should try to walk. She did not dare at first, so I told her not to be afraid because she was healed. Then she slowly tried to use her foot. She quickly realized that it was true and that she had really been healed. I talked to them a little longer, and, when they were about to go, the girl walked normally while her mother carried the crutches.

Since then, I have experienced many things. In one year, I prayed for about 150 people who got healed, and ten of them threw away their crutches. I have also seen many more people receive the Lord Jesus Christ and really surrender themselves to Him and, today, are living strong with God. They are people I met downtown, in the supermarket, the library, and so on. At that time, I was not a speaker, so it all happened outside the meetings or the church.

When God said that I should wait to publish this book until He told me to do so, I thought it would take a few months, or perhaps half a year, but that was not the case. Finally, after three

years, the time came.

God did many things during those three years. I have experienced many people getting their life changed by God's power. I have seen many give their life to God and, still today, are truly living for Him.

About a year after all this started, I published a booklet that I felt I should write called "Deceived?" It is now out in its second edition, about 10,000 copies, and many of them are already sold. At least seven people I know personally got saved just by reading this booklet, and today, they are living close to God. I have also heard of many others around the country who got saved or met God through the booklet.

I have been on the radio and TV many times, and people have been healed. Some of those whom God has healed through me have told about it on TV.

On October 16, 2002, I was in a show called "19-Direct" on DR (the biggest TV channel in Denmark), where we talked about God and healing. As the show was coming to an end, I was allowed to pray for the viewers through the TV. The result was that many people around the country got healed in their living rooms in front of their TV sets. Because of those healings, they talked about them the next day during the same show, and they had an interview with one person who got healed through the TV. It was a lady who, for many years, had not been able to lift her arm because of a frozen shoulder, but when I prayed for the sick through the TV, she got healed and could lift her arm without any problems. Since then, I have met many around the country who have said they, or someone they knew, got healed through that prayer.

On October 29, 2003, God opened the door into DR's "19-Direct" for me again. This time, they showed how I prayed for a young man in "Jesus Shop" (a Christian bookshop) in Herning who got healed. One of his legs had been in a plaster cast because he had partly stroked off one of the bones in his foot two days earlier. I cut the plaster cast and broke it off his leg because he had been healed. The last thing they showed on TV was him leaving the shop without the plaster cast, sock, and shoe. He was supposed to wear the plaster cast for one week and then have another kind of plaster cast put on his foot for about eight weeks. He went home healed, with both crutches in one hand. When this was shown on TV, I personally received a lot of responses from people all over the country who wanted to be prayed for. Many have been healed and have met Jesus since then through this broadcast.

There is much more to say of what God has done. He has really confirmed His Word in my life, as He said He would. Because of that, if people go against this book, I can ask: "What about the power?" The kingdom of God is not just fancy talk; it is living by God's power.

Please understand that I am not saying this because of pride. I really fear God and know that I am totally dependent on Him because I can do nothing by myself. I am saying this with fear and trembling. I just want to get his Word out, and I want us, His people, to come back to sound doctrine. There is still much more to see, and I have only seen a small portion of it. God has so much for all of us to take hold of. However, I am writing about my experience so

that you can understand that God is powerful, and that He really wants us, His people, to come back to His Word as it is.

I know that I have received a message from God that I am to preach, and what I am sharing in this book is only a small part of it. However, I believe that it will open up new doors for His Word. Since I wrote Sound Doctrine, I have seen and understood much more. It started here, and even though I wanted to go deeper in some areas, I knew that I should not rewrite the chapters.

Now the time came

After three years of wondering if I would ever publish this book, God spoke to me on October 4th 2003 and said that the time had come. It was very special. I prayed and I did not feel anything, but suddenly God spoke and said that now was the time for me to publish “Sound Doctrine”. He told me to add a preface to say how the book was made, and a postscript to sum up and go deeper into some parts of the book

God also spoke to me about another book I should write. At first, I thought the messages in the new book should be published as a teaching on a CD, but He wanted them to be published in a book connected with Sound Doctrine. That book would be titled Life of a Christian and would consist of three messages: “Christians and Sin,” “Christians and Faith,” and “Christians and the Supernatural.” It would be a teaching about what faith and sin are, what they mean to us, and how the supernatural should be a natural part of being a Christian. As I have proceeded, I have realized the importance of the teaching. Through that, God has revealed many things to me and those I have been teaching. It has already been a great blessing, and I am really looking forward to publishing the book.

We are in great need of sound teaching. We have teachings, but much of it is unfortunately something that pleases people instead of being the true Word of God or the doctrine which brings true and sound fear of the Lord.

As a beginning, you can now read Sound Doctrine as God gave it to me. I know that I experienced something that God has for everyone. Receive the message, and let Him come in and transform your life. We have to return to the essentials. Solomon ends the book of Ecclesiastes by saying:

“But, my child, be warned: There is no end of opinions ready to be expressed. Studying them can go on forever and become very exhausting! Here is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is the duty of every person. God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad” (Ecclesiastes 12:12-14 NLT).

Enjoy the reading of “Sound Doctrine”, and may God bless you through this message.

--Torben Søndergaard

Introduction

If we look at churches today, both Lutheran and evangelical churches, we see that sin is not spoken of much. When we come from an evangelical church and tell someone how to become a Christian, we can do it almost without saying what the problem really is: namely, sin that separates us from God. We might mention a few scriptures about how we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that we need Jesus. This is almost everything that is said about sin. Then we mention, for example, Romans 10:9-10, that if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. We pray a prayer and let the person repeat it, and then: *“Congratulations, you are a new creation. You are on your way to heaven. Now, remember to pray to God, read your Bible, and go to church.”*

In some denominations you do not even have to open your mouth to get “saved.” You just have to get a little water sprinkled on your head, and then you belong to the Kingdom of God. Of course, this is not how it is done everywhere, but people are mostly introduced to the gospel without mentioning sin. If it is mentioned, then most often it is not about repenting from the sinful way of living, which means specific sin, but turning away to a new life where you can do almost the same things as you did before. The difference is “just” that you are on your way to heaven.

The situation today is that, in many cases, we cannot determine if people are Christians or not by looking at their lifestyles. The immediate visible difference might be that the Christian is a little more kind, does not curse and, of course, goes to church on Sunday. Actually, “Christians” can do almost the same things as non-Christians. We can drink alcohol, as long as we don’t get drunk. We can watch the same movies. We can spend our time on the same things that people in the world do. Yes, we are almost like “the world.” You might say, *“But we have to be friends with people or else we cannot reach them. Jesus spent time with sinners”*. It is true that Jesus spent time with sinners, but the difference between Him and many Christians today is that He did not compromise with sin in any way. It was not the sinners who influenced Him; He influenced the sinners. He spent time with them, but He was not a friend of “the world” (James 4:4).

I pray that everyone who reads this book will have their eyes opened to see the truth in God’s Word, so that we do not continue to be deceived by this world and its god, “the Devil.” God has a plan for each Christian and each church in this country, but I do not believe that we will get the breakthrough we long for before our relationship to sin is changed, in each of our lives individually and in the church of God in general.

What comes first, sanctification or revival?

God is Holy

"Obey God because you are his children. Do not slip back into your old way of doing evil; you did not know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God, who chose you to be his children, is holy. For he himself has said, "You must be holy because I am holy" (1. Pet 1:14-16 NIV).

God is holy and He cannot have fellowship with sin. That was why He had to sacrifice Jesus in order to cleanse us from sin so that He could have fellowship with us again. For us Christians it is important that we do not continue to live in sin, but that we let God change us. If we still live in sin, we shall die.

"So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking with you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. God's terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you." (Col. 3:5-10 NIV).

Our life as a Christian is a walk, a walk toward eternal life and the crown of righteousness that God will give to those who win. However, it is so important that we do not give up, or else we will miss the reward. Unfortunately, there are many people who once lived with God, but do not live with Him today. They had fellowship with Him, but now they will end up in eternal perdition. Make a decision now to reach the goal. Decide today that you are not going to lose the treasure that God has given you. Stretch out to get it. Reach for the goal, as Paul says:

"No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven. (Phil 3:13,14 NLT).

Let God come. Open up your life to Him so He can change you. Choose today whom you want to serve—sin, which ends with eternal perdition, or God, which ends with eternal life (Romans 6:20).

Basics of Christianity

"So let us stop going over the basics of Christianity again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start all over again with the importance of turning away from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. You don't need further instructions about baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding. For it is impossible to restore to repentance those who were once enlightened, those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come, and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people to repentance again because they are nailing the Son of God to the cross again by rejecting him, holding him up to public shame" (Hebrews 6:1-6 NLT).

We read here in Hebrews 6:1 that the basics of Christianity for believers are "turning away (repenting) from evil deeds." The most fundamental thing when becoming and being a Christian is repentance and faith. Sin was the reason why Jesus had to die for us.

"When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned." (Romans 5:12 NLT).

Jesus came with the message of repentance, and He passed it on to us that we should go into the world and cause people to repent. Some may argue, "No, that is not true. Jesus came with the message that we should believe in Him, and that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Yes, that is also true, but believing and repenting work together.

Repentance

At the beginning of the gospel of Matthew, we see that John the Baptist came with this message:

"Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2 NASB).

He came with the message of repentance. You might say, "Well, that it was John, and that was before Jesus started to preach." Let's look at Jesus then. In Matthew 4, we see that Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and nights where He was tempted by the Devil. After 40 days, He began to preach. Let's see what He said:

"From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matt. 4:17 NASB)

In the gospel of Mark, Jesus said that the kingdom of God is near and they should repent and believe (have faith) in the gospel (Mark 1:15). Here we see that He first talked about

repentance and then about faith. It is not quite the same as we hear in the churches today. Jesus said:

"I have come to call sinners to turn from their sins, not to spend my time with those who think they are already good enough." (Luke 5:32 NLT).

In Luke 15, we can read the story of the lost sheep and how Jesus leaves the 99 other sheep to go and look for the lost one. At the end, we read:

"Thus, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one [especially] wicked person who repents (changes his mind, abhorring his errors and misdeeds, and determines to enter upon a better course of life) than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance." (Luke 15:7 AMP).

Therefore, there will be more joy over one sinner who believes than over 99 righteous ones who do not ... NO, that is not what it says. There is more joy over one sinner who repents. Obviously, faith also has to be there because, without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). However, faith is expressed through our deeds and repentance (James 2:14-26). Peter explains the message of repentance very well here:

"So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you are willing to suffer for Christ, you have decided to stop sinning. And you won't spend the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. Of course, your former friends are very surprised when you no longer join them in the wicked things they do, and they say evil things about you. But just remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead." (1 Peter 4:1-5 NLT).

Therefore, to repent is to go from following the human lust to following God's will and to no longer live a life of immorality, lust, wild parties, and other things, as we did before we repented. This repentance will make others wonder, and they will see that something has happened in our life. Both John the Baptist and Jesus came with the message of repentance. Then what about us?

"...and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47 NASB).

"And Peter answered them, Repent (change your views and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it) and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 AMP).

The message at the time of Jesus and today is repentance in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Let's ask ourselves if there is if there is something here today that we as

churches have lost. We often hear in our churches today that:

“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13 NLT), but we rarely hear that:

“Those who claim to belong to the Lord must turn away from all wickedness” (2 Tim. 2:19 NLT).

Both scriptures are equally true.

Come to Jesus

When I came to faith in Jesus Christ in 1995, I heard nothing from the speaker about repenting from the sin in my old life. I just said: “Jesus, I believe that you died for me. Come and be Lord of my life,” and so on, and that was it. I was born again. At that time, I did not know that it was sin that separated me from God and that I should not continue to live the way I did before.

Of course, something happened. I became a new creation, and, in time, I began to repent for my old life. I held on to God. By His grace, I had a strong meeting with Him when I gave my life to Jesus, which made me willing to lay down everything because I knew that what I had experienced was right. I have not left God at any time since then. I have had hard times, but I did not go back into “the world” where I came from.

Unfortunately, that is not what we see in many cases today. If all the people who say yes to Jesus in the streets or in the church held on to him, then things would look different. I think one of the reasons is that we give them a gospel that is way too cheap, and, in some ways, false as well. We make everything sound so good and so sweet. “Come to Jesus, and you will be much happier. Come to Jesus, and you will receive everything you ask for. Come to Jesus ...” and so on. And people say yes. Why? Well, it sounds pretty good. However, when they are told afterward that they cannot continue to do the things they did before, and they find out that believing in God is not always so much fun, when they experience opposition and troubles, which will always come, then they backslide. Why? Can it be that they were not ready to lay down their old life and truly give their life to Jesus? If someone is born too quickly and in a wrong position, then it might end with a miscarriage.

If we face people who are in control of their life and feel happy, we sometimes think that we have nothing to offer them. Once, I spoke to a Christian friend who had a non-Christian friend, but he did not think there was any reason to tell him about Jesus because he was all right. He had a good family, a good job, and so on. He had spoken to him about Jesus once, though, but his friend did not feel that he needed Him because he had a great life, which my Christian friend then agreed with. It is scary to hear something like this, but, unfortunately, it happens in many places. We forget that they are sinners on their way to hell. I think one of the reasons why we do not see as many “successful” people saved as we see, for example,

drug addicts, saved is that we do not preach the true gospel. No matter how much money people have and how great their life is right now, they are still sinners on their way to hell. They need to know that they are sinners. People cannot repent and receive salvation until they see themselves as sinners. That is one of the reasons why we have the law:

"For no person will be justified (made righteous, acquitted, and judged acceptable) in His sight by observing the works prescribed by the Law. For [the real function of] the Law is to make men recognize and be conscious of sin [not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance, faith, and holy character]." (Romans 3:20 AMP)

The ten commandments

"Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: Good teacher, what should I do to get eternal life? Why do you call me good? Jesus asked him. Only God is truly good. But as for your question, you know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.' The man replied, I've obeyed all these commandments since I was a child. There is still one thing you lack, Jesus said. Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. But when the man heard this, he became sad because he was very rich." (Luke 18:18-23 NLT)

Here we see a person who comes and asks Jesus:

"What should I do to receive eternal life?"

Today, we would say that you have to believe in Jesus with all your heart and confess it with your mouth.

Here, however, Jesus talks about the Law, the Ten Commandments. Why does he mention the Ten Commandments? The rich man needed to see himself as a sinner. You cannot repent and receive forgiveness if you cannot see yourself as a sinner.

I once read an autobiography of Charles Finney, one of the world's greatest evangelists. He came to speak in a town where one of the members of the local church council was not a born-again Christian.

His wife, who was born-again, could not understand why her husband could not or did not want to receive Jesus. When she later spoke to Charles Finney, they came to the conclusion that her husband's big issue was that he was so nice and kind and lived such a good and right life that he was righteous in his own eyes. This self-righteousness hindered him from getting saved. Charles Finney and this man's wife prayed to God to remove the self-righteousness, so he could see himself as a sinner. The following day when this man woke up, his self-righteousness was gone, and, for the first time, he saw himself as a sinner and was able to receive forgiveness. He repented, and Jesus became Lord of his life.

One of the problems we have today is that we do not give people the true gospel about repentance and faith in Jesus as Lord and Redeemer. We don't share the message that we have to die to our old life and live a whole new and holy life so that we do not perish forever into the fire of hell. Charles Finney talked about repentance. He spoke God's Word as it is. Of all the thousands of people he led to Jesus, there were only a few who did not reach the goal. Of course, it was not that he just spoke the Word, but he also lived a life in repentance, holiness, and prayer. He experienced that:

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Heb. 4:12 NIV)

We can learn much by looking at Charles Finney's life.

Let us ask ourselves this question: "Do we experience God's Word as a sword? Does God confirm His Word to us by signs and wonders? (Acts 14:3)

There are probably several reasons why we do not experience this very often. For example, lack of holiness and prayer. Can one of the reasons also be that we do not fully preach the Word of God? Let us be willing to lay down everything we have been taught until now and investigate if it is in accordance with God's Word.

"Test everything. Hold on to the good." (1. Thess. 5:21 NIV)

The Sound Doctrine

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations.” (2. Tim. 4:2-5 NIV)

Verses 2 and 3 say: *“The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”* The time to which the Bible is referring is now. We see it in our churches today.

In many denominations in the world today, they teach that when you get baptized as a child, then you belong to the Kingdom of God and everything is fine. That is a lie directly from hell. I know people raised in a Christian family who did not dare to drive for a long trip with their little child before he or she was baptized. What if something happened? Today, many baptisms are held in hospitals. If you have a sick baby, or one is born prematurely, and you do not know if the baby will survive, you can call upon a priest to come and baptize the baby.

What deception we are living in! If a little water on a baby’s head makes the difference, then it is the parents who are making the decision. If your parents decide, then it is not up to you if you want to believe and get saved, is it? No way. I was both baptized and confirmed as a child, but I would still have perished if I had died before April 1995. Why? Because I was not in Christ. I lived my “own” life in sin, without fellowship with Jesus.

Most of us can see that what is happening in some churches is a deception. At the baby baptism, you are told that everything is all right now. And after a long life, when the child dies without God, the priest says at the funeral that he belonged to God’s Kingdom through the baptism, but that is a deception.

Unfortunately, the 82% of Denmark’s population who are members of the Lutheran church are not all on their way to Heaven. What is the situation like in some evangelical churches? Are things going any better there? What does the Word of God say? Is everything all right when you are baptized as an adult? Are you “once saved always saved?” Can you perish when you are baptized with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues? Do we preach the Word of God, or is it a mixture of humanism and Christianity? Do we only preach the things people want to

hear?

“But God is love.” Yes, but do you not show love by telling the truth so people can be set free? I have one specific scripture in mind which says: *“Not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged by God with greater strictness.”* (James 3:1 NLT)

Why will they be judged with greater strictness? It is because they are responsible for preaching the true Word of God. It is so important that we do not hold back the truth.

Much of the teaching I am writing here is very different from what we hear in the churches today. I know that the Scripture quoted above is also valid for me. That is why it is important to be able to confirm everything from God’s Word. Many use a Scripture and have teachings based upon it, even if the Scripture is totally out of context and has a completely different meaning. I will show you some examples later on. We must remember that:

“The sum of Your word is truth.” (Ps. 119:160 NASB)

I began to think about a study made in November 2000 in 92 state churches in Copenhagen that showed how preaching was done. That Sunday, all of the priests were to speak about Matthew 18:1-14, a text that clearly states there are only two ways out after this life: heaven or hell. The majority of the priests treated the subject vaguely, with only about one out of ten churches even mentioning the subject. For example, there were two places where the priests adamantly objected the message about eternal perdition. One said that verses 6 through 11 did not belong in the Bible because that was not a loving speech. Another one used the parable about the lost sheep as proof that there is no such thing as perdition. Apart from those, there were many other examples of the text being misinterpreting. Read again:

“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (2 Tim. 4:3-4 NIV)”

We are living in this time right now, but let us not just look at others. Let us look at our own lives and our churches.

Conforms to godliness

Second Timothy 4:3 tells us that men will not put up with sound doctrine. But what is sound doctrine?

“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness...” (1. Tim. 6:3 NASB)

Therefore, the Bible tells us that sound doctrine conforms to godliness.

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness...” (Titus. 1:1 NIV)

The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine that leads to the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 1:7 (NIV) says: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”* I believe that this is the right place to begin.

The words “fear of the Lord” have just recently been revealed to me. In my first four or five years as a Christian, I went to many services and heard many sermons, but I never heard these words. It was either because I did not listen well enough or because they are rarely mentioned in the churches today. I do not think there is anything wrong with my ears. Fear of the Lord is something rarely spoken of today. If it is even mentioned, then it is most likely given a different meaning than its original intent.

Before we move on, I would like to share a testimony from my own life. I have experienced that God has been working in my life. I feel that my life has been under His sharp light, and all sin has come out. I have experienced a new dimension of God, a Holy God Who cannot have fellowship with sin.

“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5 NIV)

I have received the fear of the Lord, which I had never known before, and that made me begin to live a more holy and pure life. I dealt with the sin I had struggled with before, and I experience that, perhaps for the first time, I am really free from sin. Today, I do not feel bound by sin.

Not sinning

The Bible tells us that we should hate what is evil (Romans 12:9), and that has truly become real for me. I hate sin. I can still do something that I later find out to be wrong, and God is still working on my stability, revealing new things that I should stop doing. However, today, I do not fall into the same sin again and again. I used to watch something on TV that was not good, and I would repent, but a little time afterward, I fell into the same sin again. It is not like that anymore. Today, I know that if I live in sin, I can lose my salvation. This sounds radical, and you will probably give me a lot of Scriptures to prove that this is unbiblical. Maybe you are saying: “God is not like that. He is good, and what you are saying is not from Him.” I understand you, but the striking part is that after I had received this fear of the Lord, I experienced a total victory. Thanks to that, I do not dare or want to do anything I know is wrong.

When you hear this, it might sound like living in fear, which can stop one from lifting a finger in fear of doing something wrong. At first, it might seem right to believe that, but the truth is absolutely different. I feel more free than ever before in relation to sin. Read Romans 6. I have greater boldness toward God (1 John 3:21). I have dealt with sin that used to bind me. And the best thing of all is that I have become so dependent on Jesus. I know that I cannot make it without Him. I have become so grateful for what He has done for me, and that has made me pray and read my Bible more than ever before.

I have experienced that God has opened my eyes, so that I see many things in a different way. That is also one of the reasons why I dare to write a book like this. I know that it will meet opposition because in many ways it defies much of what many people stand for and believe in today. I have therefore studied the Bible as never before to know if the book is really in accordance with God's Word. Through this I have experienced indescribable freedom in relation to God and to sin.

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"God is love. There is no fear in love." (1. John 4:16,18 NIV)

The fear of the Lord that I have experienced is not the same fear the world gives. Fear of the Lord sets us free. I pray that, through His Word, God may lead us into what He has for us as individuals and as His church so we can come to the right place and see our country, wherever we live, changed, as we believe and pray for.

Before we move on

Before we move on with the teaching, is it really important that you understand the difference between living in sin and happening to do something wrong—finding out later that what you did was not so good—or falling into sin. When I am telling you that I have gained power over sin, it does not mean that I am never going to do anything wrong. I am still being brought up by God, and He is calling me into a higher level of purity and holiness all the time. There are, for example, things I did just two years ago (before the time of this writing), but I do not do them now because God has revealed to me that they are wrong. If I do the same things today, then I commit sin willfully. Before it was revealed to me as sin, it was not conscious sin, or willful sin (John 15:22).

The Bible also tells us about some specific sins, such as fornication, murder, lies, hatred, envy, and adultery, etc. Everybody knows these things are sin because our conscience testifies that they are sin. If you practice these sins anyway, there is no excuse for it (Romans 2:14-15). You can go so far into sin that your conscience is seared, and you will not see sin as sin anymore, or you will not let God speak to you about anything wrong. This does not mean that you will start to do the right thing. If you close your eyes to God's upbringing, it will end badly. The important thing is that we let God come through to us with His Word, so that our mind and judgment are being renewed all the time, so we can discern what God's will is and distinguish between right and wrong.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2 NASB)

I will later talk about other areas that God proves to be sin through His Word. It is important that you do not close your eyes but that you are open, so God can take you to a higher level in holiness and purity.

"And find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." (Eph. 5:10-11 NIV)

Throughout this whole book. I will try to create a boundary between accidentally doing something wrong—sin that has not yet been revealed as sin—and doing something that you know is wrong, thus, living in “conscious” or “willful” sin.”

Fear of the Lord

The word *eusebeia* is translated as godliness, for example in 1 Timothy 6:3 (NASB). *“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness...”* This word can also be translated as “piety,” “holiness,” or “respectful fear of God.” In another place it says:

“Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others.” (2 Cor. 5:11 NIV)

Here, “to fear the Lord” comes from the word *phobos*. This word means “to get fear or terror.” We can translate the verse this way: “Because of fear of the Lord, we try to persuade men.”

What kind of fear of the Lord is it that I have experienced? It is not the kind of fear that is in the world. For example, I do not go around in fear that someone will come and kill me. Neither do I think that I am not good enough or that I cannot live up to this and that. It is more like enormous honor and respect and, at the same time, fear toward God because of who He is—a Holy God. He is also our good and loving Father. It is this kind of respect and fear that makes one look up to Him and wish to please Him. You love what God loves and hate what He hates (Proverbs 8:13). Therefore, you do not want, or dare, to do anything that God hates. Fear of the Lord makes you hate fornication, lies, immorality, and so on, and fear of the Lord makes you love what God loves—holiness, purity, helping people, and witnessing about Him (John 14:15; 2. Cor. 5:11; 1 Tim. 6:14).

Through him

How do you get this fear of the Lord? You begin by discovering who God really is. I began to experience some of it when I heard a series of tapes that, among other things, talked about the reality of hell and fear of the Lord. The speaker was a pastor from the USA. It was so radical in all ways.

The message was not made soft. He called sin by its right name and taught that it separates us from God. I began to see a side of God I had never known before. He started to work in me, and I began to read and study what the Bible really says about Him and how it all fits together. I realized that if we, as Christians, live in conscious sin, we are not any better positioned than people in the world who do not know Jesus. It created fear of the Lord and a whole new sharpness against sin in my life.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (2 Peter 1:3 NIV)

As you see, it is through gaining knowledge of Him as He really is that we will fear the Lord. I will mention various things in this book, that will let God’s Word show you Who He really is.

You might believe that someone writing about sin in such a radical way could create a wrong kind of fear inside of a person. But as long as it is God's Word we hold onto, then it should not be softened, no matter how radical it is, because God's Word is truth. If there is a truth therein that we have not yet obtained, then isn't it about time to get hold of it before it's too late in some areas? Let me say this again: As long as it is God's Word, it cannot be too radical! Of course, it has to be said in a right way because, if it is not said out of love, it can create something wrong that God never intended.

My only wish is that people will be set free, as I have experienced. We should not hold back or soften the Word of God out of fear that people might misinterpret our words and get hurt or be turned back to the bondage of the Law. We have held back in the past, and it resulted in nothing good. The Word of God needs to be preached because it is the truth. Look at the life of Jesus. People mocked Him and were angry at Him because He spoke the truth to them. Almost all of His disciples left Him once, not because He had done something wrong, but because He spoke the Word of God radically, as it is. He spoke the truth to the people, and it hurt:

As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven — not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.

These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6:57-68 NKJV)

Here we see that even Jesus would not and could not satisfy all people. He spoke the truth even if there were some who did not like it and went their way. Although He knew that they grumbled about the things He said, He continued speaking. Finally, almost everyone left. Isn't it about time we stopped trying to satisfy people by only telling them what they want to hear? It is only the truth that sets people free.

We can also see that in the story of the rich young man:

"When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth." (Matt. 19:22 NIV)

Here, Jesus did not give the young man the answer that he wanted to hear. Jesus did not hold Himself back from speaking truth, so why should we hold back for fear of offending or hurting people? Of course, some will get hurt, but if we speak the truth of the Word, many more will be set free.

As we continue teaching the fear of the Lord, we must let God reveal to us Who He is through His Word. We must be open and willing to be changed, even if it defies some of the things we are used to hearing or, in some ways, seems too radical and too intrusive for us. Our desire as Christians should be to be more like Him and to live the life that God has for us.

Grace

Grace is a very important part of our Christian life. Without grace, there would be no hope for us. We would walk around in constant fear and wait for our deserved punishment. I will not use a lot of space to say what it means to be saved by grace because I am certain that we have often heard about it. However, I will try to show another thing that grace does as well.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:21-24 NIV)

The words used here, “justified freely,” give probably the best description of grace. We are saved by grace, not because we are so good, not because we have done all kind of things. It is not by living up to the Law that we get saved, but by His grace we have freely gained access to God through our faith in Jesus.

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5 NIV)

These verses are saying that if you work, you get paid for your work. However, we have received salvation through our faith in Jesus, not as payment for something that we have done. This is the great difference between Law and grace.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17 NIV)

The Law came with rules and commandments that one should keep. But, as we know, no person has been justified by the Law (Romans 3:20; 11:6). That is why God had to create a “better” way, so that we did not have to do a lot of things to get saved. That better way is the way of faith (Romans 4:13).

Someone may ask, “Why are you now saying that it is by faith and not by deeds? That is exactly the opposite of what you have written before.” No, what I want to show you is that there is a difference between coming to God and living with Him. As I have been saying all the time, you can only come to God if you see yourself as a sinner, come to repentance, and believe on Jesus. Then we can receive forgiveness and eternal life. We are saved by grace. I do not wish to go back to the Law where we have to do all the right things to get saved. God has once and for all paved a much better way through Jesus, and that is what we should hold on to. Without Jesus, there is no salvation. We cannot possibly live righteously enough to earn our salvation. However, after we are saved, things are a bit different.

People should also be cleansed

Let me give you a little example. God says that we should be fishers of men (Matthew 4:19), which means that we should “catch” people into the kingdom of God. Just like with fish, you cannot cleanse people from the bad “guts” before you have “caught” them. As sinners, we are undeservedly saved by grace through Jesus Christ and not by keeping the Law. When we got “caught,” we were still dirty and sinful. But the Word says that God is holy, and that is why we should also be holy (1 Peter 1:16). When we give our life to God through Jesus Christ and are brought “ashore,” He will begin to cleanse us because He cannot have fellowship with sin. As long as we are willing to let God come with “the knife” and “rip us up,” He can come all the way inside with His spirit and remove all the filth, and then we are living in grace. So, when God points to some dirt in our lives, we must open ourselves and let Him cleanse it. It is so important that we do not abuse God's grace because if one is not willing to let God come through, it will go wrong.

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:3-4 NKJV)

Here he speaks about some who turn the grace of God into lewdness. He also talks about some who deny Jesus Christ, but we do not do that. As you see, it is possible to abuse God's grace, and I think that we can perceive that around us. I had done the same in some areas before I experienced the fear of the Lord that I am writing about. I did things that I knew were wrong, but I thought that God is gracious. I was like that in some areas, and there are, unfortunately, many today who are also like that.

“God is a gracious God.” Yes, He is, but be careful not to abuse His grace. God forgives sin in our lives when we come to Him, but we should not play with sin by thinking, for example, “God is gracious, so I can always go to Him later and receive forgiveness. There is no reason for me to throw out my TV, even though I see some wrong things over and over again. I will just ask for forgiveness later.” It is wrong to have this attitude. If you are like that, then watch out because, one day, it will go wrong. Let us not insult the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29).

Shall we remain in the flesh?

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? (Romans 6:1-2 NIV)

As you see here, Paul asks one of the frequently asked questions that comes directly from the flesh trying to find any little door that is just a little bit open so that sin can creep in and find its fulfillment. Paul answers, “By no means!” You can almost hear him saying, “What are you

thinking about?” He continues, “We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” The answer he gives is understandable, is it not? He says clearly that we should not have anything in common with the flesh, not even if we are under grace. Why?

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:1-8 NASB)

"So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:12-13 NASB)

Paul says clearly that the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, and if we, as brothers of Jesus, Christians, who live by grace, live in obedience to the flesh, then we shall die. But, hallelujah, he also says that with the Spirit's help, we can put to death the deeds of the flesh and live. Let us see what those deeds are:

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21 NASB)

Here, we see what the deeds of the flesh are. Notice the ending of verse 21, *"I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."* If there is anything that is radical, then this is it. Paul mentions that if we, as Christian brothers and sisters who live by grace, live according to the flesh, we shall die. Yes, he even says that he has mentioned it before, so it is not just another quick remark.

Grace teaches us

Let us go back to grace for a second, and later we will go deeper into what the deeds of the flesh are. Romans 8:12 said that with the Spirit's help, we should put the flesh to death. Another Scripture that explains this quite well is:

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in

this present age." (Titus 2:11-12 NIV)

Here, it is written that grace teaches as well. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live a self-controlled and upright life. It was sin that separated us from God before we received Jesus, and it is the same sin that will separate us from God today, after we have received grace and salvation in Jesus. However, the big difference is that we have the grace that helps us live upright lives so that we do not have to fall into sin again and again. This is the big difference between we who are saved and those who do not know God. Through baptism, we are delivered from sin. The power of sin is broken in our life. Apart from that, we have the grace that teaches us to say no to sin and the world. It helps us live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life in this world. Just think about it: by the help of grace and God's Spirit, it is possible to live in purity, free from sin. Hallelujah! When I realized this, something was set free inside of me, and I felt that I had already overcome sin. I saw that by the grace of God, it was possible for me to be free from any bondage to sin that I had before. Now, with the help of God's grace, we can live up to the Ten Commandments and all of the other things that people had been powerless over before the time of Jesus.

In the next chapter, you will be able to read more about what it means to overcome sin. Through Christ, we are bought into a life of victory over sin. Some people may argue, "No, you must be mistaken. We cannot live in victory over sin. Like it says in Romans 7, sin has power over us."

Let us take a closer look at it, and see what God's Word says about that.

Are we bound by sin?

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.” (John 2:1 NIV)

It is so important for us to understand that our goal is not to fall and be forgiven afterwards. The goal is that we should not fall at all. But if we do fall, there is forgiveness for us. Therefore:

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.” (Romans 7:15-20 NIV)

This is a well-known part of the Bible. These verses are often used as an excuse for one’s sinful acts. It is important, however, that we not take a few verses out of context and build a teaching on them. Unfortunately, that has been done many times with these verses.

Remember that God’s Word says, “every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” (2. Cor. 13:1 NIV), and that “the sum of Your (God’s) word is truth” (Ps. 119:160 NASB). If we look at what we have just read and say that it is normal to sin because we are under sin and we cannot help it anyway, then we are wrong. It does not match with the sum of God’s Word. God’s Word clearly says that the power of sin is broken over us who live with Jesus. If we are in Him, we have power over sin. You may argue, “But these verses clearly tell us that it is sin that acts in him, and he cannot help it.” Yes, it is true, but these verses explain Paul’s situation before he received Jesus. Without Jesus, sin has power, and that was exactly why Jesus came: to break the power of sin.

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8 NKJV)

You could say that the headline for the verses that we read before in Romans 7:15-20, where Paul says that sin has power over us, can be found here:

For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.(Romans 7:5 NKJV)

He speaks about the time when he was in the flesh, before he got to know Jesus, and when he was still a sinner. We see, therefore, that we are no longer sold to be subject to sin, as we were before.

"For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin." (Romans 7:14 NASB)

Now, since we live with Jesus, we are free from sin, as it says in the previous chapter:

"But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."(Romans 6:17-18 NKJV)

But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.(Romans 6:22 NKJV)

Sin has only that power over you that you allow it to have. Because of Jesus we are free from sin and its power.

Romans

Some time ago I began a study of the Book of Romans, particularly chapters six through eight. In Romans 7:7, Paul speaks of the Law and its affect on his old, unregenerate man—before he was born again in Jesus. He says the Law is good because it revealed his sin nature. After speaking of the conflict that the two natures cause, he says:

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." (Romans 7:24-25 NKJV)

Paul asks who could rescue him from this body of sin that is destined for death. Then we come to chapter eight and read that Jesus can set us free.

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." (Romans 8:2 NASB)

In Jesus, we are set free from sin, and there is no condemnation in Him. Everything is now total victory! Jesus does not just give us victory. He IS our Victory!

During the time of my study of Romans, we were going to visit some of my family who were living on the opposite side of Denmark. On the way there, I felt led to especially study Romans 6 through 8. It was not long before I realized that Romans 8, verses 1 and 4 go together, so it actually says:

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... those who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (Romans 8:1, 4 NASB)

This Scripture struck me because there are many people today who immediately start quoting

Romans 8:1 if they experience anything that feels like condemnation. Instead of listening to God and examining themselves to see if they may be “in the flesh,” they use Romans 8:1 as a form of denial of the sin in their lives. God often speaks conviction to our hearts. If we have been born again and continue to walk according to the flesh, or continue to live in sin, then we will experience condemnation in our hearts. That condemnation should make us repent for the sin and receive forgiveness. Then we will be set free from the condemnation and guilt because we do not walk according to the flesh anymore. The Scripture that says there is no condemnation should not make us close our ears but, instead, listen to what God might say to us in our cleansed conscience.

When we arrived at my family’s home, I saw a Christian magazine on the table. I picked it up to see if there was anything exciting in it. On one of the first pages, an article caught my eye. A young man wrote that, as a Christian, one lives a double life because of all the wrong things that are done. He quoted the Scripture from Romans 7 that we just read and continued saying: “All week long, you do a lot of sinful things, but on Sundays you can stand in the church as God’s child.” I thought: “What is going on? This cannot be true.” I continued reading, and he said that he, as a Christian, experienced condemnation almost all the time, and it was difficult for him to feel righteous. That is why he quoted the Scripture from Romans 8:1, which says that there is no condemnation in Jesus. As I read that article, it did not sound as if the writer knew Jesus or lived with Him as His child. Of course, you will experience condemnation if you live in sin. I prayed quietly: “Oh, God, You have to do something. There are so many people in the churches today who are being deceived, and if something does not happen soon, they will be lost.”

It is finished

What Jesus did on the cross is finished. He won a victory over sin and death once and for all (1 Corinthians 15:54-55; 1 John 5:4). He paid the price so that sin would not have power over us, but for us to have power over sin because of what He did.

Let’s see what God’s Word says, so that God can reveal through His Word the freedom Christ has given us. First, let’s look at Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus talks about the Law in Matthew 5. He says that He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (vs. 17). He repeated five times in this chapter, “You have heard that it was said...”

He says they have heard that the Law says this and this. He speaks about the Law of Moses. He mentions five different things the Law says: You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not give false testimony, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. Then Jesus speaks of some of the laws and commandments in the Old Covenant that He came to fulfill. If we read what He says about the different laws, we can see that He makes them stricter instead of breaking them. He wants a higher standard.

It says in the Law which Moses brought down from the mountain that you shall not murder, but now Jesus says that if you are angry with your brother—some original texts include “for no reason” or “without a cause”—you will be in danger of the judgment. If you say “you fool,” you will be in danger of hell fire.

Therefore, the Bible says that if you say “you fool” to a brother or if you are angry with your brother for no reason, then you shall be found guilty. This shows that sin is not something we should treat lightly. That is why it is so important that we test ourselves all the time. If there is someone you are angry with or someone you have not forgiven, then hurry up and repent. Do not go to hell just because you are too proud to forgive or because you think that it is not you who should ask for forgiveness. It is very serious and not something we should play with.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:27 that you have heard it was said to those of old, “You shall not commit adultery.” Committing adultery in the Old Covenant meant you had sex with someone to whom you were not married, but look how it is written in the New Covenant:

“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt. 5:28 NIV)

We see that, now, just looking at a woman lustfully is to commit adultery in the heart. This also applies if a single person looks lustfully at their boyfriend or girlfriend. It is sin to lust after them outside of marriage. Just because you are “dating” someone, it does not mean that you two are already one. Your boyfriend or girlfriend does not belong to you before you are married. So hurry up and repent, if this is what you do.

You might argue, “But it is not easy. When we kiss, we get a desire for each other.” Yes, but neither does the Bible say that you should kiss each other when you date. Kissing arouses passions. It awakens a desire and a lust that is sin as long as you are not married. This is something about which we have a totally wrong picture in our churches. We play with sin! If we do not stop and repent, it will go wrong because sin separates us from God. If you desire someone who is not your wife, you live in fornication, and fornicators have no inheritance in the Kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:5). So if you are living with a desire or lust like that, you need to repent.

“If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.” (Matthew 5:29-30 NKJV)

We must really start to see how radical God’s Word is. Something like this creates godliness. Jesus says also in verse 20 that “unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20). We should not play with sin, but pursue to live rightly.

Be perfect

As I mentioned before, there is hope. Before God opened my eyes and this true fear of the Lord entered into my life, I fell again and again by looking at something I should not look at. But now there is victory. For example, I do not need to stay home to avoid looking at a girl and falling. The temptation and desire that had the chance to come through in the past does not get the opportunity to do so now.

You may say that “God surely cannot mean that we have to keep every thing that is written in this Scripture, that we should not look lustfully at someone, that we must not be angry with a brother, and that we have to love our enemies, and so on.” I can tell you that it is really not as difficult as you may think. When we are walking in the Spirit and living close to Him with true fear of the Lord in our lives, then He helps us. It is explained in 2 Peter 2 that if He saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, from the flood and righteous Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah...

"...then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment" (2 Peter 2:9 NKJV)

Hallelujah, God can deliver us from the temptations so that we will not fall but live as Jesus commands us at the end of Matthew 5:

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48 NIV)

It also says:

He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1 John 2:4 NKJV)

Are we sinners?

In the Bible it looks like it is actually possible to live without sin. “That is not true,” you might say. “All of us are sinners. Read yourself what it says in John 8:7, where there are some who want to stone a woman taken in the act of adultery. Jesus says that the one without sin should throw the first stone. And we see that no one throws because they are all in sin.” Yes, it is true that they were all in sin, but that took place before Jesus died and showed His great mercy for us by winning an eternal victory over sin. This victory applies to you and me, so we can be free from sin.

Another question might be: “What about 1 John 1:8?” John says there that *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:8 NIV).

Remember that the “sum of God’s Word is truth.” In the previous verse John says:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 NIV)

Jesus purifies us from all sin if we walk in the light. If He purifies us from all sin, then we have no sin.

”But Paul also says that he is a sinner.”

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. (1 Timothy 1:15 NASB)

Yes, Paul was a sinner, even the foremost of all sinners, as he said, because he had persecuted the church of God (1 Corinthians 15:9). However, he states in the very same verse that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. What he says is in the past tense. The word translated as “am” in the original text can also be translated as “was” or “have been.” In this context, “was” is the best word that can be used for this translation because Jesus has already saved him. Why should Jesus come into the world to save sinners if we are still sinners after receiving Him? Therefore, the life which God has for us is a life in victory. Yes, we were sinners, but not anymore, if we do not walk in sin anymore. If we do that, then we are still sinners.

What does John say a little further?

"We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him." (1 John 5:18 NASB)

We read here that Jesus can and will keep us so that we will not sin. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul says that God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability. What he means here is that, because of Jesus’ victory, we as Christians can always resist any temptation. We will never be confronted with a temptation that is so big we cannot resist it in Jesus. Therefore, it seems possible not to fall into sin.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV)

A few words of wisdom

"Come to your senses and stop sinning." (1 Cor. 15:34 NLT)

"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:14-16 NIV)

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts." (Rom 6:12 NASB)

You might think: “It is easier said than done. ‘Let not sin reign.’ It cannot be done.” Yes, it

can. In the next chapters, I will show you how and what it takes.

Do not let sin rule

If you do not want sin to rule, it is important to have the right attitude toward it. You must hate sin because, if you love it, you will never become free from it. "Love sin? Who loves sin?" Let me tell you about a testimony that I once heard.

There was a man who had progressively attended church for some years. He smoked and had tried almost everything to become free. Many different preachers prayed for him, but it did not help. He was not set free. One day, his friend became a Christian. The strange thing was that his friend was set free from cigarettes the same day he became a Christian. The man who still smoked said to God, "What is happening? I have been attending church for so many years. I have been prayed for by many different people, and still I have not been set free. Then comes my friend, who has just been saved, and he becomes free right away." He was about to light a cigarette when God spoke to him: "The reason you have not been set free is that you love your sin." He stopped, looked at his cigarette, and thought, "Yes, it is true. I have loved sin." After that, he got angry with his sin and threw his cigarette away. Then he became free, and from that day, he smoked no more.

This testimony really pushes the right buttons. There are so many people in churches today who walk in sin and do not feel they can be set free, but the problem is that they love sin. God does not come and make you suddenly hate sin and become free. It begins with you. You must come to the point where you hate sin so much that you think it is disgusting and sickening.

"Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." (Rom. 12:9 NIV)

Paul is speaking to Christians. If you live like some of those he mentions here, it doesn't matter whether you speak in tongues, pray, read the Bible, are a pastor, or experience signs and wonders. You are not going to inherit the kingdom of God. Yes, this creates the fear of the Lord, but that is what is needed.

Before we move on, it is important to understand that the standard by which we are supposed to live is God's and not those of humans. We are too busy looking up to other people and comparing ourselves to them. In some areas, it is all right, but do not take it for granted that people are living a holy and pure life because they are being used by God. God does not withdraw His anointing and calling (Romans 11:29). Thus, even the most anointed person in the country can be living in conscious sin and be on the road to hell while producing signs and wonders in ministry.

If there is someone you look up to because he is anointed, and you see him do wrong things, do not think that if he can do this and that, it must be all right for you to do it, too. No, let us not look upon other people as the standards for our lives. Look to God and His Word to see how we should live. Imagine that you start doing the same sinful things you see other people doing. It does not help you in the Judgment that the person who does that is a pastor or

someone who experiences power and miracles.

If you are living in conscious and willful sin and do not care what God is telling you about it, you will perish even if you experience signs and wonders. You can read in John 12:6 that Judas Iscariot, a disciple of Jesus, was a thief because he stole from the money box. Thieves will not inherit the kingdom of God, but we still see in Matthew 10:1 that Jesus gave him authority over unclean spirits and power to heal in the same manner as the other disciples. We can also look at Samson. He lived in fornication with a prostitute, but the power of God was still upon him (Judges 16). Just because people are walking in the power of God, it does not necessarily mean that we must live like they do. We should live only as God says.

The Bible is extremely radical

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, forni -cation, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV)

It is very important that we live in righteousness. This strong Scripture is written for Christians, so it is about those of us who attend church and know Jesus. Let us be changed and not practice such things, so we will not miss salvation. First Timothy 1:10 says almost the same, but liars are also included there. It is not something to play with.

I will tell you a little testimony before we move on. One day, I was picking up my wife at the office where she was working. When she stepped into the car and we began the drive home, she suddenly said: "I wonder if I'm going to get fired." I exclaimed: "What? Are you going to get fired? Why?"

She then told me that there had suddenly come a man to whom they owed money. Her boss had hurried to say to her that if the man asked if she had transferred some money to him, she should just say: "Yes, I have done that." This was not true, so she refused as the man came in. She did not want to lie.

Later on, the man asked my wife if she had transferred the money to him, and she told him the truth: "No, I have not, and I have not been told to do so, either." She got pretty nervous about what her boss would say when he heard this. When we got home, she called her boss because she had not spoken to him since. She told him that it was, of course, up to him what he was going to do, but he could not make her lie. Her boss said it was all right.

I thought she handled the situation very well. My wife is so cool. She did the only right thing. We must not lie! If you are living in a lie today, then hurry up and come out with the truth. Remember who the Bible says is the father of lies. It is the devil, and if we as Christians lie, then we are his children (John 8:44).

"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear." (1 Peter 1:14-17 NIV)

We are not going to begin living in the fear of the Lord before we start to see sin as something that separates us from God. We need to see that if we allow sin, then we cannot have fellowship with God and get our reward but, instead, will be judged. Remember, however, what I have written earlier: There is hope, for grace helps us and teaches us. As long as we are willing to let God come through to us, there is grace over our lives.

Do not play with sin

Here is a section that can give you something to think about. I have never heard this preached in any church, but it is a part of God's Word.

"For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did — and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did — and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (1 Corinthians 10:1-13 NIV)

We have heard the last two verses about temptations many times, but I do not think that we have often heard the whole context in our churches today. Why? Because Christians have slackened their resolve to be holy as He is holy. We allow sin. We do not dare to tell the truth because we might hurt somebody. That must come to an end. Let the truth come out so that people can be set free. Let God's Word work inside of us. Let this which we have just read be a warning to us so that we do not set our hearts to do evil.

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies

without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31 NKJV)

This is strong! If we sin willfully after we have received knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Such a Scripture pricks the heart. If you are thinking: "It is me. I have sinned wilfully," then I just want to say that I have also done that, but after I received the knowledge that I am presenting in this book, I have not been living in conscious sin like before. Personally, I have come to the point where this Scripture applies to me. I believe that if I keep on living in willful sin, I can lose my salvation, and then it will be too late. You might try throwing a lot of Scriptures at me, but remember that the sum of God's Word is the truth. While I have been trying to prepare you for this throughout this whole book, I, at the same time, have shown what this recognition has done in me: I have become free from sin.

Throughout this whole book, I have been trying to draw a clear line between sinning on purpose and doing something that is sin. I still might do something that is sin because I am not perfect, but I am working on it. God is still working in me. He is showing me things all the time that I should work on. Sanctification does not happen in a moment. It is a process that takes time. That is why it is important to let God work in us all the time so that we can distinguish between good and evil.

"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." (Hebrews 5:14 NIV)

I know today where I fell before, and I know what can make it happen again. However, it will not happen because I will not allow the flesh to take over. I know, for example, that impure sexual thoughts used to be a problem, and that is why, today, I do not look at underwear commercials or other things that can awaken the flesh inside of me. Sin is not something we should play with. Remember, we are going to live forever, either in heaven or in hell.

Cut it off and throw it away

"And if your right hand [friends, TV, Internet, alcohol etc.] causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body [friends, TV, Internet, alcohol etc.] than for your whole body to go into hell." (Matt 5:30 NIV)

It is incredibly important that you not have an open back door for sin. For example, why do you have satellite TV with a lot of programs if the only thing they show is junk? "But I am not watching it." Then why do you have it? Let me try to explain what I mean.

If you, for example, have a good day and feel that God is near, then you do not think of doing anything sinful. You are very sharp against sin. If you are going to watch a movie, and there comes a scene that is not the best, then you hurry up and fast-forward, while you are looking away. You absolutely do not want to look at something wrong because you do not want to have anything to do with sin. After you have seen the movie you just bought, you put it back on the shelf and think: "Good movie. There was just one scene that was not so good, but I am strong, so I did not see it because there is victory." However, after five or six days you come home from work in a really bad mood. Perhaps the boss has been criticizing you the whole day, and then you come home and everything irritates you. You walk around, mad at this and that, and you put aside all these things with God. In the meantime, while you are feeling sorry for yourself, you see the movie on the shelf where you placed it. Suddenly, you are not as strong as you were a couple of days before. You turn on the movie, and instead of fast-forwarding past the naughty scene, you are now fast forwarding toward it.

I know this is something many people know. Maybe not the TV part, but what about the Internet, magazines, music, friends, alcohol, chocolate cake, or other things? Are you aware that your home is your church? What would you do if Jesus came and said that He would like to be a guest in your house today? Do you have some things that are wrong? For your own sake, throw them away. I think that we as Christians could benefit from taking a big black trash bag and cleaning out our homes, so we can get the back door closed to Satan.

I can say that our home is clean. I do not have anything that can make me stumble. However, I do have access to the Internet since I have a website about Jesus. I know there are many who have fallen into sin because of the Internet. There is so much junk there, and it is so unbelievably easy to get hold of it at any time. That is why I have decided that if I just once surf on one of the wrong pages, I cannot keep my access to the Internet anymore, which also means that I will lose my Christian website. Sin must have a consequence! "Yeah, yeah, I have heard that one before. I have also said it once, and it did not hold." Make a deal with a friend, so that he gets into your computer from time to time and checks what pages you have been visiting. Then you cannot just visit some pages without your friend knowing it. It is important to remember that God sees everything, including our sins. If it is you I am talking about here, then repent and confess it to someone else before the flames of hell start to devour you. This can sound really extreme, but now is the time of grace. Tomorrow, it can be too late.

If you have true fear of the Lord in your life, it is not important to make such deals, but until you get it, it can be necessary. Having a good friend is worth gold. We all need a friend that we can trust and speak to if we experience a battle with sin, a friend who will not laugh at us but help us and stand together with us. In general, it is important to have friends. Choose the right ones that you will spend your time with. If there are some who influence you in the wrong direction, then drop them, no matter how nice you think they are. God is big enough to find other friends for you. Do not have "bad" friends. They are not worth it. Do not lose your salvation because of bad influence from so-called friends, even if they call themselves Christians and attend church. I will address this later, but now let's go back to having the right attitude toward sin.

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." (Hebrews 12:14-17 NKJV)

Hate sin

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” (Rom. 12:9 NIV)

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed...” (Rom. 12:2 NIV)

“Make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” (Rom. 13:14 NASB)

“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace.” (2 Tim. 2:22 NIV)

Here, we see what our attitude toward sin should be. As I said before, it is so important to have the right attitude. Sin is not something we should treat lightly. We should look at it as something destructive. We should not touch it or come near it. We must hate it together with what it brings, both in our own life and in our countries. Our attitude toward sin decides what kind of victory we will have over it. If we treat sin lightly, then we will not achieve victory over it. If we want to conquer sin, we have to come to hate it. Let us look at a section in the Bible that I think is really cool.

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:14-23 NKJV)

There are many words of wisdom to grasp here, but let us look at the ending where it says: “Abstain from every form of evil.” This is the attitude we are supposed to have because, like I said before, our attitude toward sin decides the victory we will have over it. And if we abstain from every form of evil, then: “The God of peace Himself will sanctify you completely; and your whole spirit, soul, and body will be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is strong. It means that if we abstain from every form of evil, then God will preserve us blameless. It even says that our whole spirit, soul, and body will be preserved blameless! In other words, it is possible to be without sin because He preserves us, spirit, soul and body! The original text has a little “and” between the last two verses, so it should actually be: “Abstain from every form of evil, and now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Make a choice

When we talk about abstaining from evil, we have to make some choices and get rid of things in our lives that have a bad influence on us. It can be friends, Internet, TV, etc. I find TV to be one of the huge problems among the people of God today. Not only does it steal a lot of time, but it also entices many to fall into sin and ruins families and homes. We have chosen not to have TV in our home, not because it is sin in itself, but because most of what comes out of it is sin. Its content is mostly nothing but fornication, murder, shameless talk, and much more, which God clearly states in His Word we should flee from. TV brings a lot of dullness and lukewarm attitudes into Christian homes. It has made people too dull to distinguish between good and evil.

TV is also one of the things that makes people fall in sin again and again. You see something wrong and repent, but soon you end up in the same sin again. I know it. Since I became a Christian, I have watched TV many times. One of the reasons I say many times is that I gave it up after a great meeting with God, and after a while, when the circumstances were a little tough, I plugged it in again. I did that many times, but now it is different because I have the fear of the Lord in my life, and because, today, I know that I should not play with sin.

Today, we have so much more time in my family for being together with people, more time for God, prayer, and reading His Word. Instead of spending an evening in front of the TV, I sit and read or do something else, and that is worth a fortune.

“Well, you could just turn off the TV.” Yes, but I have to confess that I have not always been strong enough to do so. When we had a TV set, I felt that it was hard to spend time with God because, first, I had to see what was on TV. It is easy entertainment and pastime. Time is something we have all received equally. We all have 24 hours a day, and God wants us to manage that time properly.

“But it is not a sin to watch TV, is it? It is something everyone does, so there cannot be anything wrong about that.” Good question. I will let the Word of God answer for you, so it will not just be my own thoughts and ideas. Then you cannot come to me and say that I am too extreme. As I have said before, there were some things I did two years ago that I do not do today. The reason is that God has been working with me and has led me into deeper holiness and purity. He wishes to do that for His whole church and come back one day for a pure bride, one who has kept herself unstained by the world.

"Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." (James 1:27 NASB)

Higher standard

Another of the things I no longer practice today as I did before is going to the cinema and

watching movies because, today, I know that I should not play with sin.

“It is not a sin to go to the cinema, is it?” No, it is not, and it is not a sin to have a TV, but it is sin if you fill yourself with the wrong stuff, if what you see is impure, or if it makes you live impurely. If you, for example, watch something sexual that creates a wrong desire in you, then it is sin. This is sometimes enough to cause the committing of fornication, and fornicators will not inherit the kingdom of God. When you dream at night, it often relates to something you have seen or experienced in the last couple of days or even farther back. When I was watching TV and going to see movies, I would sometimes dream about something impure and sinful, which made me wake up with a bad conscience. It really annoyed me. I had remorse toward God, and my day was ruined. One day, I asked God why I could not control the things I dreamed about, and why I dreamed about something sinful. He said to me that it was because I lived in sin and filled myself with sinful things. I put my TV, movies, and other things away because I knew that the times I dreamed about something impure was almost always after I had seen something sinful on TV or in a movie. It is different today. I do not dream about wrong things anymore, and if something comes to my mind at night, I feel that I can control it. I know there are many who dream about impure things, and I just want to say to you that what you fill yourself with is often what you dream about at night. Therefore, if you dream about something impure, it is about time you started to give up some things and fill yourself with something else.

"In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn man from wrongdoing..." (Job 33:15-17 NIV)

God's standard

It is proven that watching TV works in the same way as when one goes into a trance. You shut off the outside world and real life, and you open yourself to all the influences that come through the TV. Why do you think TV advertisements work so well? Because the influence goes right through. If you think you cannot be influenced because you are strong and can just turn it off when something wrong shows up, then you should think again. The opposite is proven.

The Bible clearly tells us that we should not watch and fill ourselves with something that is wrong. However, before we look at what God says through His Word, it is important, as I mentioned before, that you do not begin to imitate what others do. “But my parents can watch those movies, and they are serving God. And there was this person in the church who recommended this movie or this program.” Remember that the anointing and power do not depend on whether you live purely or not. What if the person who recommended the movie he had seen later fell into sin because of it?

Do not just look at others, but look primarily at what God says is right and wrong. We have to look at God’s standard for His people.

The big problem about TV is that sin slowly sneaks in, and your limits get pushed more and more. When I started to date my wife Lene, her limits were very sharp in relation to what was good to watch and what was not. I thought that she was pretty delicate and that she should relax a bit. However, as time went by, I realized that it was not her that had a problem. It was me. I was dull in distinguishing between good and evil. I was influenced so much by the world—and other Christians—that I did not admit that what I saw came directly from hell. Her discernment was sharp because she came from a family where they did not have a TV. This allowed her to see right away if something wrong came up. She could see what had a bad influence. Today, it is the same way with me. I cannot stand watching certain things I used to watch.

The Bible says that it is a sin to steal, murder, and fornicate. If we are completely honest, is this not what most people are filling them -selves with when they watch TV?

"He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises gain from fraud and from oppression, who shakes his hand free from the taking of bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes to avoid looking upon evil." (Isaiah 33:15 AMP)

The Bible ranks the righteous one side by side with the one who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed and shuts his eyes to avoid looking upon evil. This means that we as righteous Christians should not fill ourselves with murder, fornication, or other sinful things. How much is left to see on TV that does not show murder or sex? Not much, especially in movies. Most movies today contain sex and murder, and usually both. You can call me fanatical or whatever you want, but it is not me who made this up. It is the Word of God. If you want to be free from sin, then you must hate it and not pay to sit and fill yourself with it.

"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." (1 Peter 4:1 NKJV)

We will now go further and look at what our relationship toward sin must be in our churches. There is something about sin in the churches that is a big problem today. Sin hinders the power of God from breaking through, and we as individuals should know that if we have sin in our lives, we will not see breakthrough in the church.

Sin in the church

Some time ago, I attended a meeting where someone shared a testimony. He mentioned that he had been to a service in another church where he received intercessory prayer. The preacher asked him if he had been smoking because he smelled of nicotine, which he admitted. Then the preacher told him that he should be happy it was not him who was the pastor in the church where he went because then he would be thrown out. After the testimony the man started to thank the leadership in his own church for being as they were and not throwing him out because of smoking.

When we heard this, my wife turned to me and asked if it was a compliment to the congregation. I thought that it was definitely not so. Quite the contrary! There is nothing to be thankful for if the attitude toward sin is so slack. Of course, you should not get thrown out just because you once smoked a cigarette, but there is something here that we have lost. The Bible gives us some clear statements regarding sin in the congregation, but we have become humanistic and secular in so many ways that we have deprived God's Word of power.

"But you cannot throw people out of the church just because they sin because that is not love." Is that true? What if one person in the church is living in conscious sin, and you know about it? Is it not the most loving thing that you can do to make the person aware of the problem? I do not mean that we should throw out all the people who fall into sin. We must speak with them, so they can repent. "But what if they do not admit that it is a problem and do not repent?" It should not be necessary to exclude people from the church, but we have fallen completely into the opposite ditch and are allowing too many things. If there is one in the congregation who lives in conscious sin, is it showing love if we allow it? What does it help if we allow sin when God does not? We can pretend that everything is all right, but if people are living in conscious sin, they are on their way to hell.

When people today are living in sin and will not repent, we do not exclude them from the congregation. Why? Is it because we want to be a big church? If they live in sin and will not repent, then it does not matter if they are members of a church or not. If you live in sin, you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

"We wish to have many people in our church, so that is why we do not punish sin so hard. If we do, they will just find another church to go to." Is it not possible that one of the reasons for not having more members is that we allow something that God clearly forbids in His Word? Have we forgotten that we cannot lead people to God ourselves? They cannot come to God unless the Holy Spirit draws them (John 6:44). If we allow something that God clearly forbids, then it will hinder His Spirit from working as He could, and we will not see the breakthrough we long for.

Dangerous subject

I know I am touching a very dangerous subject here, but I feel that God wants me to address this because it is a problem today. When the Bible says that people should be excluded from the church, we should not just think that if someone sins, then the person concerned must be thrown out immediately. We must judge in each case how we should deal with this since there can be various reasons for the sin. There might be, for example, something in people's lives that must be broken first before they can be set free. Let us look closer at what God intended when speaking of sin in the congregation. Do not judge me and say that I am harsh and that I want to throw this and that person out because that is not what I wish. I have myself been in leadership of a church where there have been problems with sin. I once stood and talked to a girl who was walking farther and farther away from God. One of the reasons was that she got some "wrong" friends. One day, she visited my wife and me. We talked to her, and I told her something, but she was completely closed. I spoke harshly but in love, so she could understand that it was a big problem, but she would not listen. When she left, I felt really sorry because it is so important that people do not perish. I wondered if I had been too harsh with her, and it was difficult for me. It was not pleasant.

Some time later when we moved to another city, I felt that if I had to be in leadership again one day, then I wanted it confirmed to be 100% sure because it is such a great responsibility one has as a leader.

Do not think then that I treat lightly what I mention here. I just want to add that, today, I do not feel that I was too harsh with her because now she will always know that there is something wrong as long as she is not living with God, and she will not forget what we told her. God has something to work with in her. I could have chosen to be nice and just say: "What you are doing is not so good, but God is still with you, and we are still with you, so do not be sorry." I think that would have hindered her from seeing the seriousness of what she was doing. No matter how much we say that it is not so bad, and that everything will be fine, it does not change the fact that it is actually bad and that perhaps the person is on the way to hell.

I believe if we pay more attention to the consequences of sin in our churches, people will take sin more seriously. It will make them think twice before they do something stupid. It is better to be rebuked in time, even if it does not feel nice. If you live in conscious sin, you will perish. It does not matter if you are a pastor or attend a church. Let us deal with the sin as long as there is time because one day it will be too late!

The Word of God is true

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17 NKJV)

As we read here, excluding people from the congregation is the last solution, and hopefully, it will never come that far. However, if we see a brother or a sister sin, we should not be indifferent (1 John 5:16).

"My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins." (James 5:19-20 NIV)

It really means so much that we help one another and not just look at ourselves because when sin first comes into your life, it will dim you so you will not see the problem clearly anymore. That is why it is important that we help one another.

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1-2 NIV)

Later I will explain more about standing together and exhorting one another, but first we must look at something else:

"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES." (1 Corinthians 5:1-13 NASB)

These are very intense words that the man who committed fornication must be delivered to Satan, but let us look at it now. When God comes with this commandment, it is not because He does not want the man to come back to Him. No, God wants all people to get saved. He does not want anyone to perish, and as we see in verse 5, the reason for excluding him from the congregation is “for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Even if we think that it was not a loving act, it is actually done with a

loving purpose, which is that no one should perish. The reason why sin has such great consequence is that you will realize how big a problem it is, so that you can repent and come back to God. It is important that we start to be obedient toward God and not think that we know what is best because God is far greater than us.

It is easier said than done when you have to speak to someone who is living in sin, and maybe exclude them from the church, since it is humans we are dealing with. Nobody wants to do something wrong. As I said before, I have myself been in leadership in a church where we had to deal with one who did not want to realize that sin was a problem. It requires wisdom, but what God wants from us is obedience, even if it sometimes may be uncomfortable.

A little leaven

When Paul says that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough,” then there is nothing else to do than to be obedient toward God’s Word. God is a holy God, and He cannot have anything to do with sin.

That is why it is important that we do not tolerate sin in our churches. We all have a desire to see a breakthrough, people getting saved, and people getting healed and set free. This is not something we can accomplish by ourselves. Only God can do it. No matter how much we try to see it happen in our churches, we cannot do it ourselves. Only the power of God can do it. I believe there is a connection between not seeing the power of God moving, as we wish to see, and allowing sin in our churches. Since we do not see much of God’s power in our churches, we are trying to make people come in many different ways. We try to reach them by worldly means; for example, with video-marathons and disco-parties. Youth meetings are about having fun, playing games, and watching movies, instead of about the power of God because we have become so desperate. Instead of repenting and shouting out to God, we let “the world” come into our churches, and we try to compete with “the world” so that we can reach people in this manner. However, people do not need us to become like “the world.” They need to see God.

If one starts to worry that some of the members of the church will leave and begin to go to another place, then one agrees, for example, that it is all right to drink alcohol, go to town, and smoke, etc., and the purity and radicalism that God wants disappear. When there are some who finally get saved and start to attend church, then they experience the same things they saw in “the world,” just not as extreme as “the world” offers. Then they think that if they offer the same here as in “the world,” they might just as well live in “the world,” since it is more wild and more fun.

Do not eat with everyone

"I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such

a one." (1 Corinthians 5:11 NASB)

If a brother or sister starts to live sinfully, we often handle it in a completely wrong way. Instead of showing them how serious their sin is by giving them a choice between their sin or the fellowship in the church, we compromise and lead them to believe by our lives that it is not so bad. Perhaps we say it is not so good, for example, that the person concerned moved in together with his or her girlfriend or boyfriend, but there are no consequences in the church. If we eat with them and have fun with them like before, then they will not see the seriousness of living in sin.

If, for example, my best friend considered taking drugs, I would do everything possible to talk him out of it. I would try to make him understand that it was the most stupid thing he could do, and, in this way, he would be warned. If he still did not want to listen, I would try to save him by giving our friendship a test. I would tell him that, if he wanted to take drugs, we could not be friends any longer. I would hope that, by setting that boundary, it would make him consider it one more time. Then he could see the consequence right here and right now, and the choice he was going to make would change from being a choice between taking drugs and avoiding making me mad, to a choice between drugs and our friendship. If he still chose the drugs, I would tell him that if he turned around, I would be there as a friend again, but, in the meantime, I would not have anything to do with him.

I hope everyone can see from the perspective of this example that what I am doing is not so stupid, and that it exactly shows that I care about him. This is the same thing that Paul is talking about. It is not because one does not want to have anything to do with the person living in sin. It is to save them. Think about this the next time you stand in a situation like this, and pray that God may show you what you have to do. In this way, we avoid following our own humanistic and worldly way of thinking and, instead, start doing what is best for the person concerned in the long run.

Remove the wicked man from among yourselves

The Word says that we should remove the wicked man from among ourselves (1 Corinthians 5:13). This is important for two reasons—because the person who is living in sin will experience its consequence so that he might repent, and because conscious sin in our congregations will affect the whole church and not just the sinner. Sin hinders, among other things, the Holy Spirit from doing what He wants.

To understand this, we will look closer at Achan from the Old Testament. You can read in Joshua 6 about the Israelites preparing to take Jericho. God gave the command that they should abstain from taking the accursed things, lest they should become accursed when they take them. *“But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord”* (Joshua 6: 19).

Then Joshua cried out to God and asked why He had failed them:

"So the LORD said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things. Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst." (Joshua 7:10-12 NASB)

Even though only Achan, one man, had sinned, all of the Israelites were held responsible. The punishment did not just fall on Achan but on the whole congregation, and thirty-six men were killed as a result. The story continues with Achan, his children, animals, and everything he owned being stoned and burned. After they removed the wicked man from among themselves, they were able to easily prevail over those whom they had been defeated by before. Why? Because this time God was with them (Joshua 6:18, Joshua 7-8, and Joshua 22:20).

This is a serious story, and together with what we have read from the New Testament, we see that sin in the congregation is not something to play with. That is another reason for standing together and helping one another, so that sin will not have a right to get into our lives and churches. In the next chapter, I will say more about the principle of standing together and exhorting one another.

Let us stand together

But exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13 NKJV)

We all need one or more people who will stand together with us. We need someone who is not afraid of telling us the truth if we are about to do something stupid or if we have sin in our life. The Bible talks a lot about exhorting and helping one another, and even rebuking if sin is seen in the life of a brother or sister. It is really important that we do this. It is rare that someone can or will acknowledge sin in his or her own life. Sin often sneaks in slowly, unnoticed, and that is why at times it is realized very late, maybe too late. Let us therefore speak the truth, in love, to one another without concealing anything.

It is said that love makes you blind. So does sin. When sin is already at work, it is difficult to see it. The problem can not be seen anymore because the consciousness has been dazzled by it. In such cases, is it so important to have someone who can tell you the truth, so you once again can see the deception of sin and become free from it. It must be someone who can stand with you when you feel that Satan has come for a visit, and you experience an intense battle. You both can resist Satan's temptations together. Remember, there is exponential power when two stand together. And if there is sin in your life, then it is also important that you have someone you can confess it to because the only way to defeat sin is by letting it come out into the light.

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7 NKJV)

In the light

As long as the sin is in darkness, God cannot work with it. That is why it must come out in the light by being confessed to someone. You need to have a friend with whom you can be open, one who will not start laughing at you but understands how to keep a secret. One you can share everything with.

Unfortunately, these kinds of friends are rare, and we must be careful in our choices. It starts with slowly opening oneself and, in doing so, building a confidential friendship. Some time ago, I heard a friend say that one day he experienced a huge temptation relating to pornography. He hurried to call someone to come to him and stand together with him as he fought the attack. The person came, and they fought together to resist that temptation in Jesus' name and won. Most people would have probably kept the temptation to themselves so it would not come out into the light, which almost always results in succumbing to the temptation.

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." (James 1:14 NKJV)

Remember, as I have stated before, that there is always a way out of the temptations so that you do not have to give in. What my friend did by calling someone and confessing the temptation and bringing it out into the light is the only right thing to do if one wants to gain victory over sin.

The way he opened himself and said that he had experienced a battle helped me to know that if I need

someone to stand with me, I can go to him. Why? Because I know that he will not laugh at me since he has experienced battles himself. We will all face battles.

It is important to not think you must be the only one going through temptations and battles because you are not. There is no reason for you to be embarrassed or think that you are weak, and fear what might happen if you mention your problem to someone. You should rather think about what might happen if you do not tell it to somebody. Remember that the only way to overcome sin is by living in the light, bringing everything into the light. Sin will eventually come out. Is it not better that it comes out now before it is too late? Remember that God sees everything, both when you are tempted and when you sin. Thinking that it is best to hide it to keep someone from thinking this or that is a deception straight from hell. As long as the sin is hidden, Satan has the power, but as soon as it comes out in the light, he cannot win. That is why it is so important that we open ourselves to one another when we experience a problem and not just when we experience victory.

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." (James 5:16 NIV)

If you do not have anyone you can go to, work on finding someone that you know you can trust and speak with him or her. Start to open yourself up. If you have friends who influence you in a bad direction, get new friends. Do not spend time with them. You are exceedingly influenced by those you spend time with. You become like those you socialize with. Therefore find someone you would like to resemble in the way they live their life with God.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." (Prov. 27:17 NIV)

Face to face

I used to meet someone every week, and we talked together and prayed for each other. We took a piece of paper with twenty to thirty questions and asked each other the questions. In this way, it was much easier to talk about the more "private" areas in our lives. Some of the questions were: "Have you hurt someone with your words, either behind the person's back or face to face? Have you given in to temptation in sexual issues? Have you had romantic fantasies about someone other than your spouse, or have you read or seen sexually stimulating materials? Have you been under the influence of hash, alcohol, or similar?" It may seem a bit stiff to ask each other questions from a piece of paper, but thanks to that, it quickly became normal for us to talk about the more private issues that otherwise would have taken longer to dare to talk about.

Another good thing when meeting a person regularly is that if, for example, you are facing a temptation, then you know that you will soon have to stand face to face with someone and be asked if you have done this and this and then you will have to tell the truth. This makes you consider things one more time. As Christians, we cannot lie because liars do not belong to the kingdom of God.

There should be so much fear of the Lord in one's life that it is not necessary for another person to be involved in order for one to consider his actions when facing temptation. God sees everything, including when you sin. If you sin, then that will have a consequence, no matter if others see it or not. However, being responsible before another person can help, so that you will see the consequence immediately. It can help you grow and learn to deal with the temptations. Let us therefore begin to open ourselves toward

one another. It is better to become a little embarrassed than to perish. Remember that sin separates us from God. Let us begin to exhort one another, as Paul did, so we will not fall.

“Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.” (1 Pet. 2:11 NIV)

What has happened?

I will continue with a small testimony of how we need one another.

When I first came to Jesus in 1995, I was an apprentice in a baker’s shop. After I had been a Christian for three or four months, I was about to go back to the technical school for ten weeks together with some other guys I had been to school with earlier. There were three or four guys I hung out with a lot, and usually when we were in school together, there was partying and boozing for all the ten weeks. We used to be those who had to try everything, but now it was a little different because I had become a Christian. I felt that all of them should receive Jesus and start to believe. I had to take the train early in the morning, and while I was on the train, I was praying and felt really excited. I arrived at the school, and my old friends came to me: “What’s up, Torben? Here we are again. How are you doing? Shall we go clubbing on Wednesday? There is cheap keg beer.” Suddenly, I felt very small, and I did not have much to say.

Neither I did not say a word the next day about having become a Christian. I felt that it was becoming harder and harder for me to resist the temptations that were there. Wednesday came, and my friends asked if I wanted to go clubbing. Even though I had decided at home that I would not go and would tell them that I had become a Christian, to my own surprise, I heard myself say: “No, I cannot go today, but maybe tomorrow.” When I went home later, I felt completely wrecked, and everything with Jesus was suddenly so difficult.

What should I do? I knew deep down inside that they needed Jesus and that it would not be good if I went clubbing. Luckily, I did the right thing. I needed someone who could stand with me. I picked up my phone and called my cell group leader, but he could not come. After a moment of panic, I called my youth leader and told him that I was experiencing a battle and felt very confused. He said he would arrive in an hour, so I began to tidy up a bit. I was still very confused and dismayed, but when I was taking the trash out, I met two ladies from the church. They asked how I was doing, and I told them about the situation. They said right away that I should stand firm, and that God was with me, and so on. After a few minutes with them, the trash still in my hand, I was totally changed. I felt already that I had won. Some time later, when my youth leader arrived, I was really happy, and we talked a little and prayed together. When I arrived at the school the next day and the friends came to me and asked if I was going to the club with them that night, I said: “No, I don’t want to go clubbing because I have met Jesus, and He has changed my life. You also need to meet Him.” Then there was victory. After I said that I had become a Christian, there was no problem in resisting their offer. Two weeks later, someone from my class came and asked me what had happened with me since I did not want to go clubbing anymore. We had a really good conversation, and a week later, she met Jesus herself. What would have happened if I had not called and met those ladies from the church? I do not know, but it would definitely have ended differently. You see, we all need one another. We all have something to give, and when we stand together, Satan cannot come in and beat us.

Upbringing hurts

Let us not be afraid of rebuking one another if we see something wrong. Let us say it. I know it might not be the easiest thing to do, and it is not pleasant to be rebuked either, but it is so necessary. For example, if I start to talk about someone behind their back or do other wrong things, then my wife will surely tell me about it. What usually happens then is that I get a little annoyed at her. Why? Not because she is not right, but because it hurts. My flesh does not like it. After a few minutes, I have to admit that she is right, and I repent. It is not always so nice to be rebuked, but it is necessary if we are to reach the goal. Let us not be afraid to tell the truth if there is sin in somebody's life. That is the only loving and right thing to do.

“Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” (Heb. 12:10-11 NIV)

“And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.” (1 Thess. 5:14-15 NIV)

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6:1-2 NIV)

Now what?

We have looked a bit at the sound doctrine and fear of the Lord, as well as grace and sin in the church and in our own lives. Now what? Well, I hope that God has spoken to you through what we have covered, that you have received a revelation of a new side of sin and what it does in our lives, and that you will get to experience more fear of the Lord than you have had before. I will then say as Paul:

“Exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”
(1 Tim. 4:7-8 NKJV)

I can boldly say I feel that, through this book, God has called me to lead His church into holiness and godliness, which will allow us to see His power as never before. God has revealed to me much of the teaching here through an extended period of time in sanctification and prayer. I can boldly say that this is a prophetic book. My prayer is that it will help us as Christians to deal with the sin in our lives—as individuals and in our churches. I am certain that sin is a huge obstacle to seeing the breakthroughs we pray and beg for. The way forward is through prayer. I am convinced that in the time to come, we will see a breakthrough in connection to prayer because we are about to realize that we can only win this battle we are standing in with spiritual weaponry, which is prayer.

“Then why do you not write about prayer?” you may ask. It is because we must understand that before we can experience major victories through prayer, it is important that we are living a pure and holy life in repentance. If there is sin in our lives, God does not hear us.

“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:1-2 NIV)

Many prayers have been prayed through many years, but I think we can pray from now on until Jesus comes again without seeing the revival that we yearn for, as long as we allow sin in our lives and churches. I am also convinced that if we as the church come back to sound doctrine, so that we have the fear of the Lord in our lives and churches and deal with sin, then we will start to see God’s power as never before. We will start to see that sinners have a desire to get out of sin and repent, and that people are set free and healed.

God speaks to His church

Some time ago, a prophecy was read at a meeting I had attended. One person in the church had received this prophecy and written it down. As I write it here now, I believe it is a prophetic word from God, not to a certain church but to God’s people.

“The Lord says to the church:

I desire a people with pure hearts. I am tired of getting honor only from your lips, and not your hearts. I am a holy and jealous God, who cannot stand sin. I sent My Son to the earth, so that you can receive forgiveness for your trespasses, but you are playing with My grace. When you know a sin is in your life, I want you to carry it to the cross and leave it there. It is not about whether you feel that you are ready to do this and that. When My Holy Spirit moves in your hearts, then you MUST obey. It is a decision I want you to make if you desire holiness in your lives.

I wish to reach out to the whole world with my love and salvation, but you are in the way. I cannot come through with my Holy Spirit. You are not worthy to carry my glory and holiness out to the world because your hearts are filled with sin that is not dealt with. Do you think I sent the most precious I have to this earth for fun and let Him suffer so much under your sin that I had to leave Him in the moment of death? NO! I did it out of love, and it hurts Me so much when you take it so lightly. I cannot stand it. If you take your commitment to Me seriously, if you treat your life in eternity seriously, THEN REPENT!!!

Oh, My children, do not harden your hearts when I speak to you by My Holy Spirit and remind you of things. Make a choice and deal with it. It will hurt in your flesh, and you will feel humiliated and displayed toward people. You will experience Satan’s attack and his attempt to make you stop, BUT DO IT! Today rather than tomorrow. He has no right to speak into your lives when you belong to Me!!!

I long so unspeakably much to be allowed to permeate your lives. I desire to see My love and holiness through you shining out to this world. THE WORLD NEEDS YOU. You are My messengers, I do not have any other!!! Oh, how I long for you to surrender EVERYTHING to Me, so that I might be allowed to bless you and let you be part of the revival I am expecting to send over your country and your cities. You have had many words from Me about revival, and you do not believe it anymore. You do not pray for it anymore. No, because you have hardened yourselves! The revival is here, but I am missing workers who will lay everything down for Me to live a life that is holy and well pleasing to Me.

You hypocrites, you look at the outward things. I cannot use your traditions and rituals for anything. If you are not surrendered to Me, then it is empty words and actions and even mockery toward My holiness. You have many skills. I have given them to you, but not to walk in your own power. I am led when I see it. You cannot accomplish anything if it is not Me who is number One!!! If you will choose to repent from your sin, then you will see My glory break through and a revival rise over your city. yes, even the whole country, but if you will not, then you have hardened yourselves and defied My commandments. You are no longer My servants, merely hearers of the Word and not its doers. Oh, how I cry, when I look at your hearts. If you would just let go of all your own and let Me come through, I have so much to give you. It is not Me who holds back, but you who are in the way so that I cannot pour it out. Repent today. Repent!

These are harsh words. It is something we should read again and again and really take it to

ourselves. When He points at something in our lives, we must obey and repent, so God can come through. This prophetic word confirms much of the content in this book. God is a holy God who hates sin. We should not play with His grace. God wishes to transform our nations, but if we allow sin and live a lukewarm life, He cannot use us. Let us not be a hindrance to God's kingdom breaking through by not repenting. Let us meditate on it and let God speak to us. Let us live a life in surrender and fear of the Lord where we humble ourselves before Him. When we live a surrendered life in fear of the Lord and then shout out to Him with the full power of our lungs, we will get to see an outpouring of the Spirit as never before.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (Joel 2:28-29 KJV)

When we read about this pouring out, which we also saw at Pentecost, we can see that verse one begins with: "And it shall come to pass afterward." When it says that it shall come to pass afterward, then it means that something happened before what we have just read, something that had a meaning for this pouring out:

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." (Joel 2:12-13 KJV)

You can read here that God urges them to repent. He urges them to turn with all their heart and cleanse themselves from sin. Then after they have repented for their sin, verse 15 says that they call together for prayer. First repentance, then prayer, and then comes the result in verse 18:

"Then the LORD will be jealous for His land, and pity His people." (Joel 2:18 KJV)

Let us not be a hindrance

We need God to spare our nations. In many ways are we living in a world that is worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. God desires to see our countries transformed. Let us not be a hindrance to God by allowing sin. We have deceived ourselves much too long by believing that we can live as we wish and then still pray to Him and expect that He hears us. Many prayers have been prayed for our countries, but we have not seen a breakthrough. Why? Because the conditions are not all met. I believe with all my heart that if we as His church step into what, among other things, I have mentioned in this book about living a pure life in the fear of the Lord, and start to preach the Word as it really is, then we will see a revival like never before. We must preach that sin separates us from God and that repentance from sin gains admission to Him through Jesus. Before we continue to cry out to God for revival, let us deal with sin, and then we will begin to see our countries transformed.

*"He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination."
(Proverbs 28:9 NASB)*

However, there is hope because *"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective"*
(James 5:16 NIV).

The end

May God bless you in your life with Him. May you step into the life that God has for you. May we all be sanctified, so we who are living with Jesus now and telling others about Him may not perish but obtain eternal life.

"But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27 NKJV)

"But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life." (Romans 6:22 NKJV)

And may we all bear the fruits that repentance requires, so we can be well-pleasing to God.

Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves: [I attend church. I read the Bible and pray to God. I witness to people. I speak in tongues, and so on.] 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Luke 3:7-9 NKJV) [Bracketed words added]

"First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds." (Acts 26:20 NIV)

Three years later

By getting a revelation of “Sound Doctrine” and having my eyes opened to the fact that God is really holy and that He will judge sin and disobedience where it can be found, I have experienced freedom that is still the same after three years. I still feel this freedom from sin and boldness toward God that I did not have before. My whole life has been changed by what happened three years ago.

By the revelation of “Sound Doctrine,” I have a deeper understanding of the whole Word of God. Others have experienced the same when they heard the message of this book. Today, I do not have to skip the places in the Bible where it speaks of “sin against the Holy Spirit,” “sin leading to death” (1 John 5:16), and where Jesus says that if the salt loses its power, it will never become salt again (Matthew 5:13), and so on. All of this is connected, and it makes sense.

As an ending to this book, I will tell you more about what it means to lose your salvation, sin against the Holy Spirit, and how to get to know the truth. Remember, as I have said throughout, that there is a difference between committing a sin and continually living in conscious, willful sin. If this creates a wrong form of fear in you, which I have also mentioned before, then go back and read the book from the beginning, so that you will get the right understanding of it.

This teaching should cause you to see a need to surrender every -thing to God and live in the light, which happened in me. I understood that I could not have a bit of the world and a bit of God, but that it was either one or the other. I understood that I should not treat my salvation lightly, but that it has been something I should work on with fear and trembling, as Paul says it in Philippians 2:12. I understood that ten minutes in prayer to God here and there, while I am filling myself with a lot of other stuff, is not enough. It is really a question of dying to yourself and your own desires and of understanding that we do not live for ourselves, but that we let Jesus be Lord in our lives in all areas (Galatians 2:20). We really need to live in a close relationship with God, seek Him, get to know Him, and free ourselves from sin, so we can endure the race ahead of us.

The Bible says that the sound or true doctrine is a doctrine that creates true fear of the Lord. Therefore, if this fear of the Lord is missing in our churches, it must be a sign that we do not preach the true Word of God and sound doctrine, but just the things that tickle people’s itching ears, as Paul warns us:

"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV)

First Timothy 2:4 says that: “(God) wants all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of

the truth.” We must understand that there are depths to grasp. Some things will not come when we raise our hands during a service but by the revelation of God and His Word. Jesus says that we shall get to know the truth, and the knowledge of the truth shall make us free. It happens when we keep His word and acknowledge Him.

"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32 NIV)

Many who attend church today live in sin, and one of the reasons for this is that they have never really learned the truth. Through the knowledge of the truth you will get true fear of the Lord, which makes you see sin as sin and understand what it means that sin has a consequence in your life, and that it is a holy and righteous God that we serve. When you get this fear of the Lord and, thus, keep away from sin, meaning that you get the right attitude toward sin, God frees you from temptations, so it gets easier to overcome sin. However, if you are living in filthy lust and not listening to the Lord's rebuke, God will keep you in sin until the Judgment Day. Sin is not to play with. When the presence of God was so strongly present during the incident with Ananias and Sapphira lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5), the result was that they both fell dead right away. After that incident, the whole church and everyone who heard it were filled with great fear and experienced even more progress.

If we have really received the knowledge of the truth and repented, got baptized in water, and experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit and freedom from sin, and then keep sinning continuously, knowing full well what consequences it brings, the same thing that happened to Ananias and Sapphira can happen.

"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:26-29 NIV)

Since one of the tasks of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world about sin, some think that sinning against the Holy Spirit is not to believe in Jesus. However, this Scripture indicates that it is more than that. If it talks about someone who does not believe in Jesus and does not care about the truth, then he does not walk around with a fearful expectation of the judgment since he does not believe that there will be a judgment. This Scripture says that we can come so far away that there is no forgiveness anymore, even if we later would like to get it, because we have sinned against the Holy Spirit.

This should make us as Christians realize that we must treat seriously salvation and what Jesus did on the cross. We have to see the need to live close to God and make sure that the wrong things do not come into our lives and, as a result, hinder us from reaching the goal—the salvation of our soul. Therefore, we must make sure that we keep ourselves on fire

throughout our whole life and not let the deception of sin fool us.

I hope that through this teaching, people will get to know the truth, which will set them free. The problem with receiving this kind of teaching is that we often take our own experience and put it above the Word of God. We think: "It is not like that because I know someone who lived with God for many years, who later fell completely away from God and lived in conscious sin, and, after that, came back to God again." To this I want to say that the Word of God is evident:

"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace." (Hebrews 6:4-6 NIV)

Many who attend churches today have not really come to the knowledge of the truth, and many are still living in deception. They may have tasted God a little bit, but they are not really saved. They may have had an experience or a touch from God, but they have never really repented or laid their lives down to live with Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

When we speak about receiving forgiveness, we must remember that forgiveness and repentance are interconnected.

Charles Finney, one of the world's greatest evangelists, came up with a good definition of what true repentance and penitence are. From the book, *Principles for Revival*, he teaches how to lead a sinner to God.

"Penitence always involves hate toward sin. It is feeling about sin the same way as God does. It always involves renunciation of sin. Get sinners to understand this! Penitent sinners do not feel the same way as the non-penitent sinners think they do. The non-penitent sinners think that if they become Christians, they will have to stay away from parties, theatre, games, and other things they care about. They think that they can never have fun again if they have to stop with these things. But that is far from the truth. Christianity does not make them unhappy by excluding them from enjoyable things because the first step of becoming a Christian is to repent, to change your mind about all these things. They do not seem to understand that a repentant person does not have any desire after these things; they have abandoned them and turned their hearts from them. Sinners feel that they would like to go to sinful places and make sinful things in the same manner as they do now. Living as a Christian, they feel, will become a long, unhappy sacrifice. This is a misunderstanding."

And then Finney makes this radical statement:

"I know some people who claim to be Christians who would enjoy going back to their old lifestyle if they did not have to fear for their reputation. But listen: If they feel this way, they cannot claim to be Christians; they do not hate sin. If they long for their old lifestyle, they are showing that they have never really repented because repentance always consists in changing

points of view and feelings. If they had truly repented, they would have turned with disgust from these things instead of wanting them. Instead of longing for Egypt and wishing to go back to their old friends and companion -ships, they would find their greatest pleasure in obeying God.” (Principles for Revival, page 280)

I believe if one really gets through what we are reading here, they will not backslide again. They will want to do as Peter said:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68 NIV)

You will put your hand to the plough without looking back, and then you will be fit for the kingdom of God.

“But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'” (Luke 9:62 NKJV)

Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' (2 Sam. 12:13 NAS)

King David was a man who lived in repentance and confessed his sin. That is why he was a man after God's heart.

Ananias and Sapphira committed a sin that was much smaller in their eyes, but God's judgment fell upon them immediately (Acts 5). Their attitude toward sin was completely different from what it should have been. They had the Holy Spirit in them, but they treated their sin much too lightly anyway.

Just like David, we must quickly fall down at God's feet and ask for forgiveness. We must fear God, as I have encouraged in this book. Then God's grace will be as we read about in Psalm 103:

"For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him." (Psalm 103:11 NKJV)

This is sound doctrine, the doctrine that creates true fear of the Lord, as you perhaps already can perceive.

God bless you

Torben Søndergaard

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The Last Reformation The Beginning

Watch the movie:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zka4DUYeJ5g>