

## **How can we be certain that we are on the right path?**

**Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins**

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**I have been exposed to Christian circles all of my life and yet it still amazes me to learn of incidences where family violence is a part of the daily routine within the Christian family circle. I get troubled in my spirit when I hear of pastors and spiritual leaders who are abusive and lack self-control in their dealings with others. A case worker for the Department of Human Services mentioned one day that there are more cases reported to their department from two main religious organizations than all the rest of society. That should trouble all of the Christians who claim to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.**

**Violence destroys lives, disrupts homes, and should be absent in homes that claim to be born again. Though much of it is done discreetly and behind closed doors, God will reveal the hearts and He will not bless that which is unholy and carnal. James 1:20 says that the wrath of man doesn't work the righteousness of God. Be careful of allowing bad temper to have control over you. Some people misunderstand their quick tempers as being part of their personality. That is no excuse for it is not personality; it is works of the flesh.**

**Today I want to give you some Scriptures that will help you to find the path that pleases God and will lead you to peace in your life and serenity in your home.**

**Psalms 1 says that God will bless the person who doesn't listen and follow the counsel of the ungodly. He doesn't stand in the way of sinners. If you claim to be a Christian but you live contrary to the Scriptures, you stand in the way of sinners. Sinners know what Christians are supposed to be and if your life doesn't shine with the love of God, you will not be able to witness to them concerning salvation. Your life may be the only Bible a person reads.**

**The righteous man doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful. He doesn't make light of the gospel; he doesn't make fun of holy things, nor ridicule the church of Jesus Christ.**

**The Psalmist says the righteous man delights and meditates on the law of God. He protects his mind by filling it with good things. See Philippians 4:4-8. Rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice. Always be gentle with others. Finally, my friends keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. Paul goes on to say that the Philippians knew what he taught and how he lived out his life and he exhorted them to follow his example and the God who gives peace would be with them. If you are going to talk the**

**talk, you must walk the walk. Don't be like those who hear the word yet live their lives contrary to what God's word directs. James 1:22.**

**The Psalmist wrote that the righteous man shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. They will produce fruit in season and always have leaves. This indicates that the tree had been transplanted from another spot. All mankind is planted in human carnality before they accept Jesus as their Savior. He is the one who uproots us and delivers us from the works of the flesh and places us where living waters flow which will produce the fruit of the spirit in our lives. These people succeed in everything they do. The wicked are not so for they are like the straw that is blown away in the wind. The LORD protects everyone who follows him, but the wicked follow a road that leads to ruin. The fruit of the spirit is manifested in these qualities: love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. When you are planted near water that God gives, nothing can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:39. No power of man, no spirit of the evil one, no circumstance has the ability to uproot you from the love, mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**In Jeremiah 17:8, the word of the LORD says this: The LORD puts a curse on all those who forsake him and trust in human strength. They will dry up like a bush in salty desert soil where nothing can grow. But he will bless those who trust in Him. They will be like trees growing beside a stream; trees with roots that reach down to the water and with leaves that are always green. They bear fruit every year and are never worried by a lack of rain.**

**In Colossians 3:18, from the CEV version, it reads: A wife must put her husband first. This is her duty as a follower of the Lord. A husband must love his wife and not abuse her. Children must always obey their parents. This pleases the Lord. Parents don't be hard on your children. If you are, they might give up.**

**I want to return to Acts 8:23 for a few moments. Simon, the Sorcerer, believed the message of Philip because he saw the miracles and the working of the Holy Spirit in Philip's life. He believed and was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. However, he had some residue clinging to his heart from his old life. When Peter and John came, laid hands on people and they received the Holy Spirit, he brought money to them and offered to pay them if they would give him the power to do the same. Peter answered him by telling him that his heart was not right with God and he and his money would perish if he didn't get right with God. Peter said, "I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." The word "gall" indicates poison and venom. It is used in Scripture to describe bitter experiences and harsh memories that cause pain and suffering**

to the person who holds on to them. Gall and wormwood are both used in the same context. In Deuteronomy 29:18-20 Moses admonished the Children of Israel concerning idol worship. He told them that if they worshipped idols they would be like a plant that produces bitter, poisonous fruit. Just because they knew the agreement that God made with them, God was not obligated to bless them if they disobeyed and rebelled against Him. Moses told them that they might think that they got away with it, but others would also suffer the consequences of their disobedience.

In Hebrews 12:14-15 Paul admonishes us to make straight paths for our feet. Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see God.

In Matthew 13:21, in the story of the sower, seeds fell on stony ground. People heard the message and gladly accepted it right away. But having no deep roots, they didn't endure when the trials and hard times came; tribulation and persecution were heaped on them. They gave up and turned away. Offenses, grudges, an unforgiving spirit, all are things that cause people to be tainted and the works of the flesh gets a stronghold in their lives. Titus 1:15 says that to the pure all things are pure but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure. Even their minds and conscience are defiled. Jesus taught us to pray "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

People say to me "To forgive others is a tough thing to do." That is why that Jesus spoke of the straight and narrow gate and few people (in comparison to the multitudes) find it. Forgive and you will be forgiven. You will find peace that you never knew existed and love that you didn't know was possible. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your understanding. Proverbs 3:5.

Proverbs 5:1-6 are very interesting Scriptures. It says this: Listen to wisdom and good advice. You will have sound judgment and will always know the right things to say. The words of an immoral woman may be sweet as honey and as smooth as olive oil, but all you will get from being with her is bitter poison and pain. If you follow her she will lead you down to the world of the dead. She has missed the path to life and she doesn't even know it. The living water that springs up within a person's life when they receive Christ will protect them from being entangled with evil people who would destroy them.

Believe on Jesus Christ and that He has the power to forgive your sins, that He is the Son of God who died on the cross that you might be freed from the bondages of sin and that He rose from the dead and has power over death, hell and the grave. He wants to fill your life with the fruit of the spirit that you might walk in victory and be a living testimony to the freedom that comes through yielding your life to his care. Let us pray for one another

**that God will continue to work in our hearts and lives that we will be imitators of his character. Love must be the motivation in everything we do. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.  
Colossians 3:17**