

# 10 Whole Bible Applications

<sup>20</sup>Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah; and he did what was good, right and true before the LORD his God. <sup>21</sup>Every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered. (2 Chronicles 31:20-21 NASB95)

*A new definition of cult.* There is a strong chance, maybe even a guarantee, that some will accuse me of being in a cult because of this book. That word gets thrown around a lot, sometimes rightly. But lots of times it's a nice little hay maker, intended to dismiss and bury. Never mind that many of the church (and a lot of the synagogue) teachings cannot be sustained from the Word as a whole. Never mind that all churches were cults when they first got started.

Oh sure, parts of the Bible are used all the time to support weird teachings. In fact, considering how few people actually want to follow the Word, it is amazing how many parts of it get plastered on buildings, bumpers, and signs at football games. But when the whole of the Word is brought to bear, the weird teachings just sort of dwindle away. I think this book gives a viewpoint that is unique and very un-cult like. The difference is in balancing all of His Word together to arrive at the conclusions.

Cults are traditionally defined by somebody's opinion of orthodoxy, not the Bible. If a person or group is lacking in any of the 'orthodox' or accepted doctrine or dogma, then in the opinion of the 'orthodox' they must be a cult or part of one. With respect to Dr. Walter Martin, I propose a better definition of orthodox, and of a cult or cultist.

My definition of a cult is a group who at most gives only lip service to God. This takes into account all those who smugly wrap themselves in church or synagogue doctrine, yet have no intention of anything more than lip synching the Word of God. It includes anyone who is in a 'religion' and denies the whole truth of the Word. It also includes all those part-Bible people who sit in judgment on the Word, picking and choosing what part of it they want to follow. Lots of cult people want to be in the kingdom without having to do what God really commands. You know, "Everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die."

Some ideas I have presented here have been advanced by cults (by the Martin definition) but that's not very surprising, is it? The deceiver is the original part-Bible person, and loves to mix truth with his lies. Otherwise, they just wouldn't be that easy to take. We would laugh him right out of the room. But just because he misuses the Word does not mean the parts he uses are invalid. And like Jesus, we can fight part-truth simply by applying the whole of the Word. I'm not trying to imply that His Word is some magic elixir for curing all that ails us. Much of the good in following the whole of the Word comes from humbly submitting to His will. Humility is a big factor in all that we do with the Father.

He doesn't take us out of the world when we become new creations (John 17:15). We don't change into some sort of angel-type being unaffected by what goes on around us. We have bodies that hurt and spirits that lose courage and minds that still make dumb decisions. But when we lay down our lives for Him, and observe all His Torah on a minute-by-minute basis, the Spirit flows freely and the fruit of the Spirit pops out all over.

We *do* have to watch for the typical cult-trap of misusing the Word though, especially

The Law. Some cults create tons of extra laws outside the Bible. They are trying to be seen as ‘more holy’ than their brothers and sisters because they are follow more rules. I call these ‘more observant’ people Torah tyrants. A cult can beat people up with extra laws and still not follow God’s. As with medications, more is not better. Laws can be plastered all over the surface of a person like a bunch of ads on a downtown wall in a gritty TV drama. Or whitewash on a tomb. But while it might make the outside look better, the Bible message is lost in the clutter.

Other cults swing the opposite way and ignore the bulk of the Law. Or they consign it to “the Jews” or “another age,” thinking that the magic eraser of Jesus is enough to wipe out any sort of lawless thought or action. Both extremes have been raised to an art form. The whole Bible, balanced and filled up full with the Spirit and love, is the goal.

We really shouldn’t need a bunch of laws from God. His ways should be as normal and natural as breathing or heartbeats. But they’re not, because we’ve wandered off into the wasteland of our own limited knowledge. We are discontent yet lethargic in our stupidity, floating toward the Niagara Falls of life.

We keep thinking if we’re in the barrel of ‘church’ (synagogue, mosque, and cult, whatever) we must be okay. But we’re just sleeping with our eyes open. So He slaps us with the Word on occasion, attempting to rouse us from our stupor. His law is a gracious effort extended from His bottomless love, attempting to pluck us from disaster and place our feet firmly on His Rock.

I’m not advocating the breakup of existing groups. I’m just saying that wherever people claim to follow Him they should go all the way. One body living by one biblical faith humbly obedient to one Lord in the one household of our one God and Father. Anything that gets in the way should go bye-bye, including bureaucratic tradition and sectarian infighting.

We need His Word, His Law, more than ever before. We find ourselves now like Israel spoken of in Isaiah. Because of our refusal to do it the Word sounds like the stuttering, broken language of a foreigner. Instead of maturity, we are stuck in baby land, needing constant repetition and only grasping the most basic instruction. If we understand at all.

<sup>9</sup> “To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message?

Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? <sup>10</sup> For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.” <sup>11</sup> For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue the LORD will speak to this people, <sup>12</sup> to whom he has said, “This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose”; yet they would not hear. <sup>13</sup> And the word of the LORD will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little, that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. (Isaiah 28:9-13 ESV)

Our ears are so stopped up with pride so that only bits and pieces of His Word come through. If we continue in our stubbornness we will be broken, snared and taken.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I’m going to give you some suggestions for bringing all of God’s Word into your daily living. I’m not going to give you a step-by-step manual for all of it, because most

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<sup>1</sup> Some use this reference as if it was a proper teaching method. However, it is really a lament and an insult. It also means that Israel will hear the Word from Gentiles, who have embraced it better than their elder brothers. But we haven’t been living it, and they haven’t been listening. So is the message in this book an answer to that?

of it can be easily figured out. You don't need me making decisions for you.

I'll just give you some starting points and a basic outline with some Scripture references you'll need to get you started. Part of the fun of doing everything God has for a believer is in sifting and deciding how to work it all in. I prefer to figure out how many different ways I can obey His commands instead of making them harder to bear.

*The Feasts of the Lord.* A real good place to start is the feasts of the Lord (Sabbath, Passover,<sup>2</sup> Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles, see Leviticus 23). They are not 'Jewish,' they are God's (Leviticus 23:2) and like Him they belong to all believers.

*Sabbath* was given to man by God right after creation, and He set the example by resting on the first one. He didn't wait until Sinai (Exodus 20:8-10, see also Exodus 16) and create some new holiday. Sabbath is on Saturday, and the Bible says we are to rest from work (you and all your household Leviticus 23:3) set it apart, and make it holy. You haven't experienced rest until you experience a Sabbath set apart for you by God. The Law protects you on the Sabbath because you are required by God to avoid work. No one can legally make you work. When we 'rest' from our work to make a living it's a picture of the eternal rest we will have one day.

The work of making a meal is okay, but other work is not (Exodus 16:23-26). There are also a couple of rules for not kindling a fire (Exodus 35:3) and staying in your place (Exodus 16:29). Nehemiah locked merchants out of Jerusalem on Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:15-22 see also 10:31). This is where some get the belief that we shouldn't buy or sell on Sabbath (in addition to the 'everyone should rest' instruction). But it wasn't the buying and selling. It was the work.

Orthodox Jews get radical about what they consider making a fire by turning on a light switch. Or they get uptight about the distance of a home from the synagogue. However, these things are tough to support from the Word. I live in Colorado, and we use a wood stove for heat in the winter. I hardly think God meant my family should freeze or run up an electric bill (making others working on Sabbath) in order to avoid a fire. In an ideal world the meeting place would be a short walk from home, but finding a godly assembly close to home is pretty tough.

As Jesus said, man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27). Religious leaders got uptight with Him, not because He was changing God's Words, but because He sent them back to the Word.<sup>3</sup> If we get radical about how many details we can load up on His day, we end up holding a weight that God did not intend for us to bear.

The Sabbath is a delight and a beautiful way to rest from our cares for a while. Taking the day off refreshes me and strengthens me for the coming week. Giving God one day out of six is not a sacrifice at all. You'll hear some excuses for avoiding the Sabbath, such as we don't know which day it is or "all days are a Sabbath." These are false. All anyone has to do, to track the day of the Sabbath, is count to seven. And if we don't know which day is the last day of the week, how do we know Sunday is the first day of the week?<sup>4</sup> Oh please. Just look at any calendar and you'll see Saturday is the seventh day and Sunday is the first.

As far as every day being the Sabbath, you can choose to rest on any one of them if you want. But there is only one day that is God's day of rest.<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 4:10 is used a lot to justify ignoring the real Sabbath, but the whole context is obedience, and "there remains a Sabbath rest" (Hebrews 4:9). People don't enter it by 'believing in Jesus,' they enter it by obeying God (the

<sup>2</sup> Passover includes Unleavened Bread and First Fruits.

<sup>3</sup> Examine carefully Matthew 12:1; Mark 6:1-11, Luke 13:10-17, 14:1-6; John 7:22 and 9:13-16. What He did was different than their traditions but not different than the Law. See also Matthew 15:3, 6 and Mark 7:8, 9, and 13.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2.

<sup>5</sup> Although God did say to work the other six. Being blasé about something so important isn't love.

reason the Sinai church didn't enter His rest).

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD, "Preserve justice and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come And My righteousness to be revealed. <sup>2</sup>"How blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who takes hold of it; Who keeps from profaning the sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil." <sup>3</sup>Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from His people." Nor let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." <sup>4</sup>For thus says the LORD, "To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, <sup>5</sup>To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off. <sup>6</sup>"Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath And holds fast My covenant; <sup>7</sup>Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."  
<sup>8</sup>The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered." (Isaiah 56:1-8 NASB95)

*Passover* can include Unleavened Bread and First Fruits, and in modern times does. The Passover meal is on the first evening of the seven-day Unleavened Bread feast. First Fruits is the day after the first Sabbath<sup>6</sup> after Passover. So they all get sort of lumped together. Specifics for Passover and Unleavened Bread are mostly in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23. Exceptions are that we don't do the blood on the doorway, and we don't go anywhere.<sup>7</sup> The first and seventh days of the feast are Sabbaths in addition to regular Sabbaths.

Some object to eating lamb because of the lack of a temple, but the original Passover didn't have a temple either. My family has a lamb barbecue. We just make sure to burn up the leftovers (Exodus 12:10). One of these days, we might even go from scratch with a lamb if we can find other families to share it with.

We eat with a staff close by and our shoes on, and we use some of the good traditions we have learned. Jesus is our Passover lamb, and He is the unleavened bread that feeds us all year round, so these things we speak of and teach our children. There isn't much to do for First Fruits, other than start counting weeks until Pentecost.

*Pentecost* is a Sabbath 50 days after First Fruits (Leviticus 23:15-22) as near as we can tell from the text. There is not much to do here except perhaps socialize together. Reading the Law is a good tradition to follow if you'd like. We can also remember the ascension of Jesus and bake two loaves of leavened bread to share at a party. It is interesting to note that the Law was given to Israel at this time, and the Holy Spirit visited the apostles. Coincidence?

<sup>6</sup> Somewhat confusing, because it's a little unclear whether it's the day after the regular weekly Sabbath or not.

<sup>7</sup> Although Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles are referred to as the Pilgrimage feasts because all males were to travel to (eventually) Jerusalem to present offerings and sacrifices. This is why so many different people were present in Acts 2 to hear the disciples speaking in their own languages.

*The feast of Trumpets* is the first of the fall feasts. Like the name implies, it is for blowing horns. We purchased some large shofars (curly horns) but you can use a trombone if you'd like. It is a Sabbath and called the Day of the Awakening Blast. We borrow the Jewish tradition of eating sweet stuff (like apples with honey). My family buys (or makes) fancy caramel apples just for this day. There are not many specifics in the Word for this, so we go up on a high point overlooking our valley and blow our shofars while praying for spiritual walls to come down (like at Jericho in Joshua 6).<sup>8</sup> Traditionally this is a wakeup call for the coming Day of Atonement.

*Atonement* or Yom Kippur is ten days after the feast of Trumpets. It's a special Sabbath, so even the work of preparing a meal is absent and we fast all day. My family will walk around a little (one year we walked around Main Street of our town) and blow shofars. At the end of the day, we'll go out to a nice restaurant to eat. Small children, of course, and nursing mothers are exempt, as are any people with medical problems. This is a day to "afflict ourselves" but not a day to grind people into the ground. Sometimes we'll go down to the river to read our Bibles and pray for those who need to repent before the actual Day of Judgment.

*Tabernacles*, or the feast of Booths, is a holiday we have taken to calling 'God's camping trip.' The basics are to wave pleasant smelling branches and spend time in booths or tents. One day all people will be traveling to Jerusalem every year, and we'll probably camp out there too. Our family sleeps in tents in the back yard for the week. Some Jews make special booths. The feast is eight days long with the first and eighth as Sabbaths. Nice meals with sweet things are routine, and we'll try to come up with special things to do in keeping with the holidays.

Every day the shofars are blown, and during the week, we read all five books of the Law. When the temple was up then sacrifices were made for the nations (70 bulls). This is one of the feasts that are specifically mentioned to continue into the reign of Jesus on earth according to Zechariah 14:16-19.

*Calendar.* You're going to need a calendar to track God's holidays. A standard Jewish one is good or you can go online and email me through [www.wholebible.com](http://www.wholebible.com). Ask for a copy of our 'Manna for Whole Bible Christians' Scripture reading schedule which has the dates (and you get the reading schedule too). Days by tradition start the evening before (Genesis 1:5).

God sets up the holidays on a lunar schedule and our calendar (the Gregorian) is a solar calendar. That's why the dates tend to move around. There are groups that think the lunar schedule is the only way to go, and there are some who take the extreme (and unwarranted) position that if we don't observe the feasts at a specific time we will miss God or "lose our salvation."

If it is important to you, do some investigating and make your choice for a calendar. I can find no law equating the specific day of a feast with salvation. Nor do I find instruction that if we don't have the days right we will be penalized. I think it is more important to do it together, but that's just my opinion.

*Pork and shellfish.* Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 have most of the instructions for diet. There is 'food' and there is 'not food.' Animals with cloven hoof that chew cud are food. Animals with solid hooves or no cud chewing are not food. Pigs have split hooves but do not chew cud, so they are not food. Neither are horses, or rabbits, or carrion eaters.

For water critters, if they have scales and fins they are food. If not, they are not food. Simple. Read the labels of the food you eat, because you'll be surprised at how much pork is in a lot of processed items. We were eating a certain brand of turkey bacon for a while until we read

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<sup>8</sup> There's a group called 'Shofars Around the World' ([www.shofarsaroundtheworld.net](http://www.shofarsaroundtheworld.net)) that informally tries to coordinate the blowing of shofars worldwide at the same time on Trumpets. We participate every year.

the fine print on the package and discovered it had pork in it. We switched brands, and now we read very closely.

We get the frozen cheese pizzas from the grocery store and add our own turkey pepperoni. Are we extreme? Not at all. Unless trying to put His Word into every tiny area of our lives is extreme. We don't get neurotic about it, but we try to be thorough because we love Him.

Some people like to say that Israel at Sinai did not know how to cook pork (or shellfish) and didn't have refrigeration.<sup>9</sup> Since we "know better" now, it's okay to eat pork. Well, Israel may not have known, but God sure did.<sup>10</sup> He didn't say, "You gotta cook it real well and stick it in an ice cave." He said it wasn't food. The people who think up these brilliant arguments obviously aren't thinking too well.

*Tassels.* Numbers 15:37-38 tells us about wearing tassels with one blue thread on the four corners of our garments. Some people want to make an issue about what is a corner (has to be a right angle in their opinion) and what shade of blue should be on the thread. This is too nitpicky if you ask me, and can't be sustained from the Word.

The earth is round, and yet it has four corners. Any circle has at least four corners. All you have to do is draw a plus sign, like the crosshairs on a rifle scope, on the circle to see where they are. I'm round, so I must have four corners too! That's why I wear tassels on my pants in four spots. I tie them myself in the Jewish prayer shawl style in order to identify with Israel, but you can have any kind you want. I've seen rainbow colored (just make sure to include a blue one) short ones and long ones. The more different kinds we have the better it is I think.

We wear the tassels as reminders to follow God's ways instead of our own. You might think that wearing tassels is no big deal, but it helps more than you know if you haven't tried it. They don't guarantee you won't sin. They only work as well as you allow them to work.

Sometimes, after I've messed up (again) and said or done something I shouldn't, I look at them and think, "Well, at least I've done one thing right." And from that, I can rebuild, remembering all the things God has done for me. I refresh myself by touching Him through this command. Wearing tassels as He instructs helps me feel I am surrounded by His love. I renew my love for Him by a determination not to fail again.

*Tithe and Money.* Ever wonder why the tithe, which is ceremonial, is kept by the church, after they throw most of the other ceremonial laws out? Originally it was used to support the priests who couldn't own land, and some of it was to be used for the poor (Deuteronomy 26:12). The tithe was mainly agricultural in nature; people would give a tenth of their gardens and orchards to help feed the priests. Money really wasn't a part of it.<sup>11</sup>

Now of course the tithe has been twisted to hit the paycheck and is only monetary. Funny how that happened. It doesn't make much sense that the church keeps the tithe in view of their 'ceremonial rejection.' Unless, of course, you need a method to obtain money for keeping the Nicolaitans in power.

God expects us to be generous with the things He has given us (Deuteronomy 15:7-11) because it's all His in the first place (Exodus 9:29). Exodus 22:24-25 has rules on collateral. Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-20 concern sloppy harvesting so the poor can

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<sup>9</sup> By the way, did you know there is a virus in pork that cannot be cooked out? It's not supposed to affect humans, but how do we know it really doesn't? Pigs are also plagued with arthritis, and it's a problem in humans.

Connection? Could it be that we are what we eat?

<sup>10</sup> This is from people who have bought in to evolutionary theory, thinking that a long time ago people were dumber than they are now. I think it's the opposite – people 3,500 years ago were more likely much smarter.

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 14:22-26 says that we eat of the tithe, or sell it for money if we have to go a long way.

maintain some self-respect and work the harvest some too.

The teachings by Jesus in Matthew 6:19-24 on a ‘good eye’ and a ‘bad eye’ are related to the concept of generosity (good eye, light) and stinginess (bad eye, dark). Clearly, God doesn’t want to have to flog us to get us to part with our money or produce or whatever. That doesn’t mean we should just go around handing it out to anyone, because we are supposed to be good stewards (Luke 12:41) of what He gives. But being loose is better than being tight.

I think the national average for paycheck giving at churches is 3% or something. I don’t know how they arrive at that figure, but the thing is we don’t have to give to a church. That whole system is out of whack with what God intended. We use it wrongly to make our leaders ‘do ministry’ for us, or to construct edifices that aren’t big enough for our egos.

A small argument can be made not to muzzle the oxen<sup>12</sup> (pastors, rabbis) that are treading out the grain. But it’s stretching the Word past the breaking point to find support for huge buildings or big mission networks. Tithe was intended for support of the poor and people who were not allowed to have land or other jobs (priests). It wasn’t intended for starting priesthoods outside of the Scripture, or for building monuments to vanity.

*Circumcision.* The first reference to circumcision in the Word is God’s command to Abraham to circumcise all the males of his household as a sign of the covenant (promise) between them (Genesis 17). Another reference is the debacle at Shechem (Genesis 34). Moses errs in not circumcising his son and his wife has to do it (Exodus 4). Exodus 12 (the Passover) has another mention of circumcision, where no one can partake unless he is circumcised. Notice that this is only for males, and notice further that all of these were before Mt. Sinai.

Other body parts can be circumcised, and with greater effect. Twice in Deuteronomy circumcision of the heart is mentioned, one of these connecting circumcision with loving God.

16“*So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. (Deuteronomy 10:16 NASB95)*

6“*Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6 NASB95)*

Jeremiah also speaks of circumcising the heart (4:4, 9:25, 26) and that ears can be uncircumcised (6:10). It seems clear that circumcision has more to do with a response to God than a condition of the flesh. To have ears that refuse to listen and a heart of stone that disobeys is the same as being uncircumcised. Even if a piece of flesh has been removed here and there.

The other main references to circumcision simply tell of a command for Israel to circumcise a male child on the eighth day after birth. The child was already part of Israel, but had to be circumcised as part of the covenant (involuntarily, I might add). As already mentioned, everyone who eats the Passover meal has to be circumcised, which of course meant only the males. This is a sign of response to God, but it goes along with loving Him and doing whatever He says whenever we can. As a side note, there is no such thing as female circumcision.

Circumcision was practiced by a number of ancient cultures besides Israel’s. Generally, however, much of the practices seem to have been for older children and adults. Israel seems to be one of the few, if not the only culture, that did it to 8 day-old male babies.

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<sup>12</sup> See 1 Corinthians 9:9-18; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; and Deuteronomy 25:4.

By the time of Jesus, circumcision had become a required religious ceremony for becoming a part of Israel, or in other words becoming ‘Jewish.’ It was thought that in order to be ‘saved’ one had to become Jewish by converting to Judaism. But nowhere in the Word do we find instructions linking circumcision to salvation, or even linking Jewishness to salvation. Paul speaks rather negatively about circumcision in several places, most notably the book of Galatians, and yet also practiced it. He circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) seemingly to avoid arguments with Jews so Timothy could travel with him. The big difference seems to be the use of circumcision as a salvation requirement.

Acts 15 was all about this controversy. It wasn’t that circumcision wasn’t valid; it was the misuse of circumcision for salvation that was the real problem. The council in Acts 15 decided circumcision wasn’t necessary for salvation, yet pointed out that “Moses is taught in the synagogues every Sabbath” (Acts 15:21). Paul strenuously teaches that if a person tries to gain some sort of merit sufficient for salvation through following the Law, especially through getting circumcised, the Messiah loses value. The Christ is the only basis for approaching God, not merit. Again I note that this has always been true, since the beginning.

There are debates raging worldwide at the moment over circumcision. Some try to argue that it is medically beneficial, while others decry it as a “mark of uniformity and servitude.”<sup>13</sup> I’m sure there are many logical sounding arguments either way. But God never said to do it for health or any other reason. He simply instructed Abraham, and Israel, to circumcise all male children as part of the covenant (remember, also known as ‘The Promise’). It wasn’t necessarily for health, but it certainly could be seen as a mark of uniformity and servitude. And what’s wrong with that? In fact, it seems that the anti-circumcision crowd is really attacking the practice for religious reasons. In other words, the anti-circumcision arguments are, at heart, anti-God arguments. This is odd; until you consider that it really is more of a spiritual battle than a purely medical or physical one.

There might be a question in some people’s minds about whether to seek circumcision as an adult, because of the desire to follow all of God’s Words. Jesus was circumcised (Luke 2:21), and there is an argument there along the lines of ‘what would Jesus do.’ I know I’m glad I was circumcised when I was a baby, because I wouldn’t look forward to it now. But, for myself, I would probably seek it if I wasn’t. Not because of any identity with Israel, or any thought that I needed it for conversion or salvation, but just because God wants His people to do it. I would do it because I think it’s what God would want me to do.

However, for other people, I cannot say. You will have to make up your own mind, just like you will have to make up your mind about the Law and whole Bible Christianity. I know that a person who wants to submit, in every way possible to every Word God says, experiences many, many blessings. But if a person does not think he should, then don’t. I’m not going to say that blessings will not be forthcoming for that person. But I will say that partaking of the Word even to the point of circumcision, out of a desire to please God and as part of living life more abundantly, will not go awry.

*Clean and unclean.* One of the things that infuriated God about Israel was the failure of her priests to teach His Word properly. Especially the differences between clean and unclean.

<sup>26</sup>“Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. Robert Darby, self-described ‘medical historian,’ [www.historyofcircumcision.net](http://www.historyofcircumcision.net), main page under United States of America.

not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. (Ezekiel 22:26 NASB95)

Clean and unclean are not identical to sinless and sinful, although disobedience to the laws is sinful. The general procedure for getting clean was by bathing, washing clothes, and waiting till evening (the three ‘ings’). Uncleanness from touching a dead human body was a different process, which we’ll talk about in a minute.

Becoming unclean was easy too. A certain kind of disease or sore could do it, as well as certain body discharges (Leviticus 15) and childbirth or a woman’s menses (Leviticus 12 and 15). Most everyone bathes and launders clothes now, and evening still rolls around like clockwork every night. It’s good to be aware of what is clean and what is unclean, and remember to follow through on the steps to get clean.

Some will argue that a certain kind of bathing is required (for instance a bath rather than a shower) but the text isn’t so specific. The idea behind baptism comes from these rules for cleansing. One of the reasons for changing Israel’s diet was to teach the difference between clean and unclean (Leviticus 10:10, 11:47).

Some people will isolate a woman for two weeks during her monthly cycle. They will refuse to sit on a chair that she sat in and other similar actions. Yet they ignore the fact that a man makes a woman unclean through a discharge of semen. This kind of skewed practice gives the Law a bad name. Nowhere does God require isolation except for certain instances. This is a shameful way to treat a woman. There’s way more uncleanness in the way some misuse the Law than is specified by the Law. Jesus is said to have cleansed everything, and in a way that is true, but I still wash my hands before I prepare food.

Here’s a riddle for you: Is the following command civil, ceremonial, or moral?

<sup>12</sup>“You shall also have a place outside the camp and go out there, <sup>13</sup>and you shall have a spade among your tools, and it shall be when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and shall turn to cover up your excrement. <sup>14</sup>“Since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you. (Deuteronomy 23:12-14 NASB95)

The answer is (envelope please) all of the above. Civil is in the “defeat your enemies” clause. There is some ceremonial in the clean/unclean aspect, and there is moral in the relationship with God. So much for the three-fold division of the Law.

The issue of clean and unclean is both very simple (dirt) and complex (holiness). There is still a difference between clean and unclean. Ideally, we should continue to observe and teach the differences instead of teaching there are none (Ezekiel 44:23) as the priests did.

One form of uncleanness cannot be taken care of by the three ‘ings’ (bathing, laundering and evening) and that is contact with a dead human. The only way to cleanse this was by the red heifer solution, which we haven’t had for thousands of years.<sup>14</sup> Anyone touching a body is unclean, and anyone they touch is unclean. After all this time, you’d think everyone would be

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<sup>14</sup> See Numbers 19 for an outline of what this is and its applications.

permanently unclean by now, with no hope of cleansing. Happily, we have the ‘solution’ in Jesus. His blood really does cleanse, even from the effects of death.

However, it is one thing to have His blood and quite another to wallow in filth again, physically or spiritually. If we presume on God’s grace by ignoring His instructions, we can’t just keep going back and taking a bath in the Blood. This is worse than lip service (Hebrews 10:26-30). We can be clean and yet still have to be cleansed every now and again, much like the washing of the feet Jesus did for the disciples (John 13:5-15).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. <sup>16</sup> They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. (Titus 1:15-16 ESV)

*Sex.* This always gets people’s attention, doesn’t it? God’s Word tells us that sex is for a man and a woman in a marriage. There is no other place for it, even though perverse people keep pushing the envelope.

In the beginning, it seems that genetics weren’t such an issue. By the time of Sinai, it was important enough to make a rule against it.<sup>16</sup> So God tells us that near relations are off-limits for sex (Leviticus 18:7-18, 1 Corinthians 5:1-2).

But wait, not all the forbidden relationships are strictly genetic. In-laws and relation by marriage (like step-moms or step-sisters) are included. So there is something more going on here. While we might not understand all the whys and wherefores (there’s that stupidity thing again) we just avoid what God says to avoid.

The only law about the sex act is to avoid it during the woman’s menses (Leviticus 18:19, 20:18). This is usually about six or seven days and is not that big of a hardship. Other than that, we shouldn’t deny each other except by agreement for a short time (1 Corinthians 7:1-5). A woman’s body is not her own, and a husband’s body is not his own (in spite of current cultural teachings). When we start a marriage, we give up our ‘rights’ of independence in exchange for the benefits of an inter-dependent relationship.

Some of the sex laws overlap with clean and unclean. Most of these are in Leviticus 15 and can be followed with great profit. There have been studies done, for instance, on people who avoid sex during a woman’s cycle having lower rates of some types of cancer. As I’ve said, we don’t always know the connection between laws and consequences, but that doesn’t mean they don’t exist. It also doesn’t mean that consequences are the only reason for the law.

Rules concerning sex are some of the clearest examples of our stupidity. How far has the person drifted from God who needs a law about sex with animals? (Leviticus 18:23.) What soul is so cut off from the light of God that it gives itself over to sex with the same gender? (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1.)

Perverse acts arise from lightless depths of hatred for God and all He is or has created. It is very clear that people who practice perversion are driven by hatred to the extent they want to destroy God, starting with His Word. In the process, they destroy other people in addition to themselves. If we are in the light as He is in the light, hate cannot continue.

<sup>15</sup> A side note: if everything has been declared ‘clean,’ then why in Revelation 18:2 is fallen Babylon said to be the dwelling place of “demons and a prison of every unclean spirit” and “every unclean and hateful bird?”

<sup>16</sup> Obviously, in the beginning people married sisters and brothers. After the flood, genetics was more of a concern, perhaps because the canopy of water protecting us from the sun’s radiation was destroyed at the flood.

*Vows.* God is a person of His Word, and expects the same from the people He created. A vow is a statement of action. There's usually a penalty if we fail to carry out what we vow (Numbers 30). We should avoid vowing when we cannot or will not follow through. A vow is a permanent, concrete promise that God will hold us to (believers or non-believers). If we make a vow, God demands that we follow through on the terms. He always follows through with His.

In the present day, vows are common, and just as commonly ignored. A driver's license is a vow or promise to drive according to the laws of the licensing government. Yet we frequently drive as if we are rewriting the laws to suit ourselves. A marriage vow is heavy with commitment, and just because civil courts allow divorce doesn't make the penalties go away.

<sup>21</sup>“When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the LORD your God will surely require it of you.

<sup>22</sup>“However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you. <sup>23</sup>“You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God, what you have promised. (Deuteronomy 23:21-23 NASB95)

In general, we should be very careful about making vows. The responsibility for a vow has not gone away, so we should simply give a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ more often than invoking one (Matthew 5:37; James 5:12). Our word should be our bond. There are some foolish enough to tell you that vows aren't very important anymore and can be ignored. That's not biblical.

*Stuff that is not commanded.* Head coverings (the kippah for men and scarves for women) are not commanded. There are a couple items on hats for priests, and a small section in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 that some take as a head covering for women.

Lots and lots (and lots and lots) has been written about head coverings for women. The reason it is pushed, I think, is mostly because of a desire for asceticism and authority transfer rather than a desire for the Word. Paul is speaking of hair (verse 15 in the NASB95 even says outright that “For her hair was given to her for a covering”) and it takes a severe stretch to read a cloth into that section. Six times words for hair are mentioned here. Bottom line is, at worst it isn't very clear there is a cloth involved, so let's avoid adding one, shall we? I like to wear Levi's button-fly shrink to fit 501 jeans. I like them so much I wear them to church (my good ones). I haven't worn another type of pant in a long time. But I can't find any biblical admonition that I should wear them, and I certainly do not tell other people that the only ‘right’ pants are Levi's 501's. Even if they are 100% cotton and the Bible tells us not to mix threads.

There is also no regulation for which day to meet together. It is no big deal to have a church meeting on Sunday (or any other day) if you want. Meeting on Sabbath is great because you have the day off anyway, but then the people putting the service together have to work. The Day of Rest is not in dispute (even the people who switched it admit this) but the day of meeting is frequently an argument. It doesn't matter. If you want to get together on Sunday, fine. If Saturday is better for you, fine and dandy. This issue should be disconnected from the Sabbath because it is not related.

*Christmas and Easter.* This might sound harsh, but these two holidays are examples of the church's perversity. Both include idols such as bunnies and evergreen trees, and neither is suggested by God's instructions. The roots of these go far back into the pagan past. They contain teachings that are humanistic at best, and twist God's promise into obscurity at worst. We can slap some Christian labels on them, and throw some Bible stories in there to make them more

appealing, but that's like throwing flowers in a cesspool before taking a dip.

You know what's really funny? These are the types of things mentioned in places like Galatians and Colossians 2:22. The pagans observe days, months, seasons and years!

<sup>9</sup>But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? <sup>10</sup>You observe days and months and seasons and years. (Galatians 4:9-10 NASB95)

How strange is it that many in the church get very mad about a believer observing God-ordained holidays and avoiding the pagan holidays? Why is it more acceptable to observe the pagan ones and avoid God's? Has wrong become right and right become wrong?

What is bad about these so-called holidays is that many people think you are not a Christian if you don't swim in the cesspool with them. My son got dumped by several ladies who didn't like his stand on keeping paganism out of his future home. My mom thinks that I've somehow traded in my salvation because I've stopped observing Christmas and Easter. Members of our former church were uncomfortable when we wouldn't volunteer to help with special events around those times. All of this and more over minor practices that specifically go against what God instructs.

If you get to the point where you want to ditch the paganism, you may have to deal with family and friends who can't see the turds for the flowers. It is better in those instances to refrain from condemning and give them time to see the truth. If you have to go to family functions, try to keep the peace as best you can by not preaching behavior that they can't understand anyway. You risk getting only a legalistic response out of them.

Calmly explain your reasoning if you get a chance. You may not have a tree in your home. But someone else might want one, and it's no big deal to be at their house if they do. I still don't eat the ham (amazing isn't it that this is the 'Christian' choice for a meal?). I tell my kids who Santa really is. But I don't have to jam my beliefs down the relative's throats, either.

*Two Sacraments.* Baptism and Communion are said by many in the church to be the only two sacraments given to the church, but this is not biblical. Aren't these two, um, ceremonial? And didn't the church throw out the ceremonial commands?

Baptism comes from the bathing concepts in the clean and unclean laws (the 'ceremonial' for those so inclined) such as that for the leper in Leviticus 14. The physical cleansing helps us understand spiritual cleansing and a new beginning, and it seems it was used by the apostles as a public testimony of the new life in Jesus.

It is important, and I think everyone who is able should be baptized by immersion, but it is not a salvation issue. The thief on the cross next to Jesus wasn't baptized, but was going to be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:43). There are many who die suddenly who might be chosen by God, but did not have the opportunity for baptism (such as aborted babies).

Communion has its roots in Passover and Unleavened bread. The Lord's Supper of 1 Corinthians 11 is Passover. It is not a separate ceremony newly instituted and given to some separate entity called the church. There may have been other meals where unleavened bread and wine were used for a memorial. I don't see a problem with this 'shadow,' but we should not forget the substance. Paul uses the example of Jesus to remind the Corinthians that there is a proper way to do the Feast, and it should not be done haphazardly. This is not the same thing as creating a new sacrament.

*Meat and dairy.* Some Jewish people refuse to put meat and dairy together, such as with a cheeseburger. You wouldn't know it to look at the verse, but this practice comes from a law given to His people concerning what is thought by many to be an obscure pagan practice.

19“*You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the Lord your God. “You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother. (Exodus 23:19 NASB95, see also Exodus 34:26 and Deuteronomy 14:21)*

It is not clear where this practice came from, but from the context of this reference it seems to be related to the pagan ritual from Egypt where this was done at the end of the harvest. The resulting liquid was sprinkled on the ground before planting again as a sort of invocation for the pagan deities to make it fertile. Somehow, over the centuries, rabbis made one of those ‘fences’ to protect people from possibly disobeying the command not to do the kid and milk thing. I guess they didn't know if the milk product came from the mother of the meat product.

On the one hand we can respect the seriousness of the way the rabbis looked at the Word, but on the other this is just nuts. There is no way that putting cheese on a burger would ever be mistaken by God for the pagan ritual. This is one of those examples of good intentions run amok, of adding to the Word one more burden, and making the whole thing harder to bear.

*Drinking alcohol.* Lots of people want to make spiritual legislation<sup>17</sup> from the Word prohibiting the drinking of alcohol, but there are no commands that God made anywhere that do so. Of over 300 references to wine or strong drink in the Scriptures, the vast majority of these speak of wine as having alcohol, and there are no prohibitions anywhere against drinking it.<sup>18</sup> The references to ‘strong drink’ suggest an alcohol content that is greater than wine, but still there are no drinking prohibitions even for this product.

However, this doesn't mean that drinking is recommended either, and the Word has a bit to say about the negative effects, and the consequences of drunkenness (abuse of alcohol). Very frequently drinking a little can lead to drinking a lot and even to alcoholism, so caution is indicated whenever dealing with it.

Jesus undeniably made wine, and very good wine, at the wedding in Cana (John 2). At least 25 times in the Old Testament ‘new wine’ (Hebrew *tiros*) is connected with fruitfulness and blessings from God. In one reference wine, strong drink, and grape juice are included together, showing that they were separate products and that when wine is mentioned it is not just grape juice but alcohol.

2“*Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to the Lord, 3he shall abstain from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar, whether made from wine or strong drink, nor shall he drink any grape juice nor eat fresh or dried grapes. (Numbers 6:2-3 NASB95)*

If we take a complete look at all Scripture concerning alcohol and balance the various meanings together, we can see that alcohol by itself is not a bad thing in moderation. It is not the

<sup>17</sup> For one effort among many, see [www.biblicalperspectives.com](http://www.biblicalperspectives.com) for the book by Seventh Day Adventist Samuele Bacchiocchi titled ‘Wine in the Bible,’ Signal Press and Biblical Perspectives, June 30, 1989.

<sup>18</sup> For more information, see ‘In Vino, Veritas’ by Bruce S. Bertram, March 2003, which can be found under Commentary on [www.wholebible.com](http://www.wholebible.com), or you can email [info@wholebible.com](mailto:info@wholebible.com) for a copy.

consumption but the overuse or abuse that produces ‘bad fruit.’ There are a lot of people who cannot handle it at all, however, and for those it would seem that total abstinence is the only sure-fire method of avoiding the consequences. But we should all seek to be filled with the Spirit through His Word, which would go a long way toward avoiding argument.

There are many ‘laws,’ some of which are good applications of biblical principles, but they are not really law. If you don’t think you should watch certain movies then don’t. But try to avoid making a law about it for others. I watch a lot of movies because I don’t like commercials. When I watch TV I drive my family crackers because I keep switching channels when the commercials come on. I get tired of the inane babble that passes for news and entertainment. Four hundred channels and nothing on.

However, that doesn’t mean that another person can’t watch TV if they want. In my opinion, we should be careful of the time spent on it (and on video games, etc.) and we should devote more time to reading the Word. It’s much more productive to spend time with the Lord and with each other, but it doesn’t quite come up to the status of a law. Philippians 4:8 has a good thought on this, but if it has to be a law then something is wrong somewhere.

*Bad things and good people.* The whole Bible lifestyle has many benefits and blessings, but there is also a downside. I sometimes get bummed out because it seems as if bad people ignore God’s Word in the Law yet have wealth and fame and other good things given to them. Bad things seem to happen to good people who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It’s tough to follow God, because He said there would be thorns and thistles, sweat and pain for a while.

But through living a whole Bible life I realize that not everything is as good as I think, and not everything is as bad. I have had to realign my thoughts of good and bad by the Word.

12 Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly. 13 But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.

(Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 NASB95)

For instance, winning the lottery might look good (and sometimes I wish I could win it) but it is not necessarily good. It destroys lives and introduces all sorts of evil that wasn’t present before. So if you are a whole Bible believer, you can actually thank God that He doesn’t ‘bless’ you with winning the lottery!

Some of what we consider bad is not really that way either. A financial setback might just cause you to look for a more beneficial path. For instance, you could go into business for yourself after losing a job. I remember one time I lost a job while building our house, but we managed to convert the construction loan to a mortgage and I ended up starting my own business. God chastises His children for their benefit. Sometimes that’s the only way to get something through our hard heads.

I’ve gone on many trips to the proverbial woodshed with my Father. While the momentary experience was certainly unpleasant, He made some good changes in me. And I’ve gotta admit that generally the trips were my own fault too. The ‘rod’ and ‘staff’ of Psalm 23:4 are His Word, and will indeed discipline and comfort us.

11My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord Or loathe His reproof, 12For whom the Lord loves He reproves, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:11-12 NASB95)

7It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (Hebrews 12:7-8 NASB95)

We have to be careful also of characterizing people as good or bad. Living is a process of decision making, and as long as we are alive, there is opportunity for change. There are believers and non-believers, and people who look like one or the other, but actions tell the true story.

Some people switch back and forth a few times, and some well-meaning people are just momentarily led astray. The only thing we can judge by is consistent action. We cannot tell (and we are not tasked with deciding) whether or not someone is ‘saved’ or ‘unsaved.’ That is for God to decide at the end. All we can do is encourage people to do what He says and govern affairs in our own sphere of influence according to His Word.

I find that because I want to embrace all of God’s Word, I’m frequently cast in the ‘bad’ mold. Most often, this comes from people who consider themselves ‘good’ because of “mainstream Protestant doctrine” (or even Jewish doctrine). Outwardly they appear righteous by their own standards, but inside they are full of lawlessness and hypocrisy (as in Matthew 23:28). Don’t be surprised by their vicious attacks; our fight isn’t against flesh and blood. I know you will have heartache, but there isn’t much we can do about other people’s actions. We can take comfort in eating and drinking His body and blood, and in the community of our family and those others who have seen and live in the light of the whole Bible.

1Righteous are You, O Lord, that I would plead my case with You; Indeed I would discuss matters of justice with You: Why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease? 2You have planted them, they have also taken root; They grow, they have even produced fruit. You are near to their lips But far from their mind. (Jeremiah 12:1-2 NASB95)

One odd thing (among several) about our concept of bad and good. We insist on free will, and then blame God for all the things we think are going wrong. But we can’t have it both ways. If we insist on choosing, we’d better choose correctly or face the consequences. It is true we have a certain amount of volition purchased for us by God. But that volition is subject to His sovereignty.

God has ultimate control, but He gives us the power to do as He commands. Sometimes He allows things to happen that challenge us to continue choosing Him, and other times we are protected and sheltered. Partly He has His own plans; partly He’s exercising grace in waiting for repentance. Sometimes we are a demonstration like Job (Job 1:8-11) and sometimes He’s training and disciplining (1 Peter 5:10). Jesus was ‘perfected through suffering’ (Hebrews 2:10) and we are not greater than our Master. We are tested, tried, disciplined, chastised and purified through all life situations, good or bad. The answer to the challenge is ‘God in all things’ (Romans 8:28).

You will have difficulties. Some will come from people who follow the Law but add all sorts of extra tradition, such as Jewish orthodoxy. Sadly, a large amount will come from those who call themselves Christian. They will hammer you with all the excuses to disobey that we've covered, and then some. Members of my family have been literally cornered by three or four alleged Christians at a time shooting away like a firing squad with their standard objections. We've been called "dangerous" because we make too much sense when defending the Word.

Why do we get such a response? In my opinion it is because by nature people do not want to obey. We started clumsily dodging Him in the Garden, but raised it to an art form in the thousands of years since then. We've developed all sorts of complicated interpretation methods to give ourselves permission to avoid obedience. So we don't like to be reminded that all of that is smoke and mirrors.

We don't want to carve a day a week out of our busy lives doing our own thing to rest and honor God, especially when it has become a favorite day to catch up on chores. We don't want to be told what to eat or what to wear. Much less do we want to be told what is true or honorable or right or pure or lovely or of good repute (Philippians 4:8). We want to pick and choose our own holidays and our own traditions. We want to decide things for ourselves, and we resent being reminded that God and His absolute standard is the foundation for all good things. The sentiment and tradition we've loaded onto the pagan holidays we've stolen is more fun than an objective standard that takes away wiggle room.

There are those who refuse to accept objective, absolute standards, preferring instead to judge everything by feelings. Trying to be 'right in their own eyes,' they will do all in their power to discourage and dissuade you. There will be resentment as the Word pierces the dark places, shining light on what some would rather stayed hidden. They don't want to be reminded that they are dodging God's Word. The fear is that carefully built, hypocritical facades won't stand examination.

Your armor and weapons for these occasions will be the Word of God (Ephesians 6). You will be faced with censure and expulsion from your current church or synagogue if you have one. It's going to be a fight, but I encourage you to persevere. We can reclaim modern culture with His absolute truth. We've done it before. The Remnant has always been in tough situations like this. And we will always win. But we have to live it, not just preach parts of it. Feel "free in Christ" to live as you choose, just don't tell me that His living oracles aren't for me. Call His Word 'old;' kick it into a distant age; spiritualize it out of existence for yourself, but count me out of your lawlessness.

*Our true identity.* Balancing the Word causes identity problems. Most Christians reject whole Bible beliefs because of the Law, and many Jewish people won't accept us because of Jesus. So are we Christians or Jews? I don't think we have to decide. 'Whole Bible' can apply anywhere, anytime. You can be a whole Bible Lutheran, a whole Bible Baptist, and even a whole Bible Jew.

Of course, in trying to live out the whole of the Word we are not going to be able to maintain any sort of sectarianism (dividing into sects) for long. The name Christian simply means 'partisan of the Christ,' which is what we are. Lots of people wear the name but there are many degrees of partisanship. It depends on actual obedience. Some partisans don't know any better because of false teaching. Some know better and don't care. But just because many Christians (or Jews) have dragged His name through the mud doesn't make the name invalid.

Okay, I'm a partisan of the Christ, but what kind? There are many combinations heavy on words and light on biblical living. So many people want to use His name and claim His blessings

without actually living His Word. Accepting the whole of the Word as a valid lifestyle and discipleship method makes me distinct from most of them. So almost by default, I'm a 'whole Bible Christian.'

We don't really need a name, but a short hand way to refer to ourselves is simpler for those with short attention spans. Many labels have been co-opted by people for whom hypocrisy is an art form, and I'm sure this will get the same treatment. Lots of partisans of the Christ want to think of themselves as whole Bible because they 'believe' it.

One lady told me she was whole Bible but "not like you." What she meant was that she 'believed' the whole Bible, but she didn't follow the feasts or many other parts of the Law. Ye-eh. That's like a Pharisee who 'believed' the Tanakh and crucified Jesus.

Believing without acting doesn't make sense. Seems to me we are either whole Bible or not. That word 'whole' nails it down pretty well. There is no end to some people's hypocrisy, but whole Bible Christians are dedicated to returning God's love by living out the whole of His Word. In every detail and every part of our lives.

In Matthew 15:21-28 Jesus resists a little bit giving help to a Gentile woman asking for healing for her daughter. He tells her it's not right to give the bread of children to dogs. She has an amazing response, saying that even dogs get crumbs from the table. Jesus is so impressed with her faith He heals her daughter. Her faith was shown by her humble submission and obedience.

At first it might seem off-putting that Jesus would regard her (or me) as a dog. But I think this was more of a statement of where He was focusing His work at that time ("to the Jew first and also to the Gentile") rather than a judgment against either the lady or me. Although Canaanites were historically pretty 'doggy' too (Ephesians 2:12, Hebrews 11:6).<sup>19</sup> Those who by nature do what God requires, even if non-Jewish, belong to Him because of their faith, and aren't dogs at all. But even if it's true that my identity (in the eyes of some) is that of a dog in the kingdom, I'm okay with it. He made me and can assign me any place He chooses. I'd much rather be a dog in heaven than a lion in hell.

The material in this book is not for the purpose of creating yet another separate group or doing away with existing groups. It may (and probably will) happen that we cannot fellowship with existing groups. Those of us who believe and practice the whole of God's Word might have to find solace in meeting separately like the first century believers, but that is not the goal. If you have to split because of the Word, remember you are not alone. God scatters His people like salt among the unbelievers, whether they have nothing to do with a church or attend religiously.

He wants us to be like priests, after the order of Melchizedek, representing His interests wherever we are. We are one Body with one faith and one God, and we don't need to create a unity or identity for ourselves. Our identity is in the Messiah Jesus, our root and head and life force. All we need to do is maintain or preserve that unity in a bond of peace.

*1Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3 NASB95)*

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<sup>19</sup> Canaanites were very bad in general. They made up the population of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 10:19), they practiced all sorts of sexual immorality, they sacrificed children, and they were some of the people to be pushed out of the Promised Land (Exodus 23:23). They were descended from Canaan, the son of Ham, who saw his father's nakedness (Genesis 9:22-25). The Philistines were also part of the Canaanite family (through Ham).

*Be gentle but firm.* Those of you who embrace all of what God has for believers remember that not everyone shares your understanding and may need extra time and gentleness. The whole-Bible way is not for sissies or fair weather fans. But we don't have to go around smacking people upside the head either.

You may be quite aggravated about the lies you have been taught. You may be unhappy with the stone-hearted refusal of people who've been part of your circle of friends and leaders to listen to the truth. I was very angry for a while and bordered on hatred of everything church or Christian. Take my advice, and don't waste your time. For one thing, not everything church or Christian is bad. For another, anger and hatred only affect you. It's like drinking poison expecting the other guy to drop dead. If God cannot reach them, you certainly won't.

What is better is to plunge yourself into learning God's ways and teaching them to your family. Let's face it – if everyone did that, there'd be no need for evangelism or teachers in the first place. Be filled with the Word and be ready to give a defense for what you believe.

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (2 Timothy 4:1-2 NASB95)

Some self-appointed part-Bible pastor one time told me how frustrated he was with people who were learning from the Word as I have suggested in this book. They would constantly respond to his non-biblical teachings with, "That's not in the Word." He refused to pay attention to the stupidity in his own protests. Either his teaching was in the Word or it wasn't. If it's just opinion, he shouldn't have said it was from the Word.

Of course we should know the Word inside and out so that we can respond as Jesus did in His desert experience – "It is written." When part-Bible people try to justify their actions and teachings with fragmented verses torn out of context, all we have to do is say, "It is also written." The whole-Bible response does not have to be in anger or in kind. The more you know and do the Word, the more it fills you and governs you, and the more peace will reign in you.

Don't be afraid to engage in discussions or even heated debates, because there's nothing wrong with passion. As long as you think it is productive, and as long as people will stay in it with you, continue presenting the Word (2 Timothy 2:22-26). But try to avoid arguments with people who will not investigate the truth for themselves, because those will go nowhere. It becomes obvious when you keep going in circles. Save your precious time for those few who really do want to study and follow the Bible.

You can find out where someone is in a few minutes of conversation simply by asking basic questions. One type of question is to ask for Scriptural support for dogmatic statements ("Where is that in the Word?"). When they show you a verse, look at the context (read a few verses or chapters before and after to find out how the verses are really being used – like we did with Colossians 2). Show them what they missed in the context (such as Peter's vision explained by Peter in Acts 10:28, 34-35). Show them the context of the whole of the living oracles.

The standard reply for a typical Christian is to try one or two times to explain their view, with a couple of verses. Then they get mad when you show them the truth from the Word. The antinomian (against the Law) teachings of the church in general have attracted many others who resist the Law. Birds of a feather and all that. They will either shut you down ("I don't want to

argue”) or they will run for their leader to get fresh ammunition. This might continue for a few exchanges, but eventually their leaders will encourage them to have nothing to do with you (saying something about “divisive people”). You might get fortunate and find a person who really wants to do the learning thing and will continue to study with you.

<sup>19</sup>For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. (1 Corinthians 11:19 NASB95)

As long as you can do it, help them learn and practice the Word, being careful to distinguish between your opinions and meaning. Don’t count on finding a lot of these people though. Remember only a few really believe God’s Word. You will usually find it easier to talk with non-believers (or the unchurched) than with people for whom lip service is the limit.

Show anyone who will listen where your position comes from in the Word and be ready to learn yourself. Avoid turning your opinions into Scripture, and just live and teach the Word. If someone seems to be lagging where you think they should be, you are not assigned to keep them in line. If we are in a leadership position, that requires a different approach, but even then, we work to include rather than exclude. There’s a big difference between helping and shoving.

*Torah tyrants.* Not all who follow the Law are whole-Bible either. There are those who make a career out of coming up with all sorts of legal rulings on just about every letter and syllable of the Word. They pride themselves on how much more observant they are than others. Some of these are just bullies, and we relegate them to the status of ‘Torah tyrants’ while trying to repair the damage they cause. Funny, it seems the more observant they get, the further away from God and His Son they go. They also have form down pat, but deny the power.<sup>20</sup>

*Rest on the Rock.* I hope you see now how to restore the wholeness of your God, the Body, and the Bible. It’s amazing how eating His body and drinking His blood clears the eyesight. It stops the bleeding, binds up the wounds, and restores the hearts of all believers. It truly is the healing medicine we need. My thoughts on this are not original, but they are quite radical in view of the many attempts to dodge God. Some of us at least can now stop diving into the bushes and grabbing for fig leaves.

He hasn’t hidden Himself, and the path to finding Him is right in front of our eyes. We discover the Way when we just take Him at His Word, remove the masks, and move forward in trusting obedience. Follow the footsteps of Jesus and you’ll find Him every time.

Taking on the whole of the Word is tough. It’s like putting your feet down while floating in a river. As long as you float, there is no resistance. As soon as you take a stand, you will feel a lot of pressure. Jesus will give you the heart, and the Spirit will give you the power, but it can still be a mighty struggle sometimes.

<sup>4</sup>For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4 NASB95)

I can’t even promise that you’ll get a ‘payoff’ when you commit to the whole of the Word. If you own a retail store and you decide to close on Saturdays, you might suffer real economic harm. You will be ridiculed for not eating pork and shellfish. People will think you are not Christian if you switch from the pagan holidays to His. You will be outcast from many so-

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<sup>20</sup> See for instance 1 Corinthians 5:11 (“immoral so-called brothers”) 2 John 7; Jude 19; 1 John 3:10.

called Christian groups, Jewish groups will not accept you, and even the pagans will think you are just weird. (Although the pagans tend to leave you alone, where the Christians and Jews will actively hate you.) And yes, it's hard to tell who's a pagan nowadays anyway.

But like Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of life." Even if we don't get a payoff in this life, if we are despised and spat upon; if our material wealth suffers, if we get thrown into a furnace and He doesn't rescue us, He is still God and He still has the Words of life. To whom else would we go? Who else would we stand with?

When all else is crumbling around you, and the hypocritical façade of the church dissolves in your hand as you reach for it; when mountains shake, and it seems there is no firm footing anywhere and no one to turn to for help, rest your hope on the Rock. Shalom.

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, <sup>12</sup>instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup>looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, <sup>14</sup>who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. <sup>15</sup>These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. (Titus 2:11-15 NASB95)

<sup>4</sup> "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup> "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." (Malachi 4:4-6 ESV)