

VISITING PROGRAM TRAINING CLASS

Tenth Class

January 26, 1969

FORMAT:

1. Open with prayer.
2. World news discussion and drill (5 - 8 minutes).
3. Difficult scripture drill (30 minutes).
4. Sermonettes and evaluations (30 minutes).
5. Recess (10 minutes).
6. Lecture (one hour).

**NOTE: There are no assignments for next class.

DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

1. Disprove: We don't have to keep the law because we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Rom. 3:28).
 - A. Paul was saying that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. He is not preaching that the law is done away. Being justified means to be brought into right standing before God. Romans 3:20 tells us that no man shall be justified by the deeds of the law. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law defines sin -- it tells you what sin is -- but it does not and cannot take away the penalty for previous violations. Obeying the law in the future does not pay for past guilt. If a man commits a crime, his obedience to the civil law in the future does not make him any less guilty of his past offense.
 - B. Verses 24-25 of Romans 3-explain how we are justified. We are justified by God's grace through the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Christ was a propitiation (a sacrifice that reconciles) for us to God. By His sacrifice our past sins are remitted.
 - C. Once you are reconciled to God, you must keep the commandments if you want to remain justified (Rom. 2:13).
 - D. Being justified by faith does not mean we do away with (make void) the law. On the contrary, we establish the law (Rom. 3:31). Once our sins are forgiven we are able to receive God's Holy Spirit which He gives to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). This Spirit gives us the

love of God (Rom. 5:5) which is the keeping of His commandments (I John 5:3).

2. Disprove: We don't have to obey the law because we are under grace, not under the law (Rom. 6:14).

A. This scripture does not say we don't have to obey the law. It does say we are not under the law, but under grace. The term "under the law" does not refer to being under the jurisdiction of the law. It means being under the penalty of the law. This penalty is death (Rom. 6:23).

The term "grace" as defined in Webster's Dictionary means mercy, favor, unmerited kindness, and exemption or pardon as from a penalty. Grace is God's forgiving us for our sins, pardoning us, taking away the penalty.

B. When we sin -- break God's law (I John 3:4) -- the law has a claim over our lives (Rom. 6:23) We are then under the law -- under its penalty. It is the sinner who is under the law. On the other hand, when we repent and receive God's grace made possible through the sacrifice of Christ, we are pardoned and the penalty of death is taken away. Then we are no longer under the law -- under the penalty of death for having broken the law.

C. Does this give us free license to sin (break the law) because we are under grace and not under the law? Paul asks this very same question in Verse 15 and answers it saying, "God forbid." Verse 1 states that we should not sin just so that grace might abound.

It is like a condemned murderer on death row waiting for execution. At the last minute the governor grants him a pardon. He is now a free man. But that does not mean he is at liberty to murder again. That would be absurd. His pardon covers only the past offense -- not future crimes.

D. If grace did away with the law, there would be no sin because where there is no law, there is no sin (Rom. 4:15) This is obviously true because sin is the transgressing of the law (I John 3:4). The law is still in effect, and so we need grace to remove the penalty for breaking the law.

3. Disprove: We don't need works because we are saved by grace through faith -- not by works (Eph. 2:8-9).

A. This scripture does not say Christians don't need works: It merely

states that we are not saved by works. Of course, we are saved by grace through faith. Salvation is God's free gift. No amount of law keeping or works can earn anyone salvation.

- B. Even the faith that saves us is a gift (Verse 8). It is not our own faith but the faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20). It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). We cannot work up this faith on our own. It is supernaturally imparted to us by God's Holy Spirit.
- C. But Paul does say we were created to do good works (Eph. 2:10). James says, "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:20), and continues to show how Abraham was justified by works (Verses 21-22). Then are we saved by works? No, we are saved by faith -- but faith wrought with works (obedience to God's law). By works our faith is made perfect.

LAW AND GRACE

I. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Herbert Armstrong and the leading evangelists and ministers in God's Work were dumbfounded recently to find that some of the leading men in the Church -- men in the Visiting Program Training Class -- were not tithing! And in recent weeks, certain sins such as adultery, fornication and drunkenness have been widespread throughout the Church of God! At a time when we, as a Church, should be drawing nearer to God than ever before and getting "up" for the job just ahead of us, we find the Church as a whole "out of condition" spiritually!

God has set before this Church the most gigantic, awesome job that has ever been given a group to perform in the history of man -- the job of carrying His message as a final warning to a sick and dying world which is teetering on the brink of oblivion! This is the Work that the Almighty Creator God has called us to have a part in. We have been called to share in the most exciting, the most staggeringly momentous Work on the face of the earth!

You need to understand that this Work is now -- and has been for the past 35 years -- laying the foundation for the end-time Work which we will be doing the last few months before this Work is snuffed out! We have not yet blasted this world with the full force of God's warning, but rather, we have been warning only those who have ears to hear. Just as Christ did not speak plainly to those without but spoke in parables, God's Work is deliberately waiting until the time is ripe to tell the world clearly and plainly just what is about to occur.

When we begin to blast this world -- especially Israel -- over nationwide

network television, or the equivalent on independent stations, and when The PLAIN TRUTH articles all of a sudden start plainly explaining that Germany will conquer the United States in a few months, then this Work will be quickly silenced -- but not before the world hears the warning! The world, and especially Israel, will be dumbstruck at what they read and hear!

I Corinthians 1:26-27 -- To carry out this incredible commission, God has chosen the weak of the world in order to confound the wise. He did not ordain that this Work be accomplished by an elite cadre of shrewd, worldly-wise intellectuals or businessmen. It is being done, rather, by a Church which God describes in Revelation 3:8 as having but "little strength."

Zechariah 4:6 -- God has willed that this Work be accomplished by His Spirit! It is going to be done by a Spirit-filled, zealous, dedicated, loyal, wholeheartedly OBEDIENT group which He calls the "Philadelphia" Era of His Church. If we are going to have the faith and the Spirit of God which we need in order to accomplish the gigantic job ahead of us now, we as a Church must begin to put God and God's Work FIRST in our lives!

God will not use dull, blunt instruments to accomplish His Work. He is going to use "sharp threshing instruments" (Isa. 41:15) who will humble themselves before Him and obey Him wholeheartedly, relying on HIS Spirit and power to carry it out!

II. GOD'S GRACE TURNED INTO LICENSE

What does all this have to do with the subject of law and grace? Everything!

Leviticus 19:2 -- Those of us who God is going to use to finish His Work must be holy -- we must obey God in all things!

Isaiah 52:11 -- As the servants of the Holy Living God we must be spiritually clean! We must be clean in our thoughts, our motives and our attitudes.

I John 2:1-2 -- We should be striving with all our might NOT TO SIN -- not to break God's law! Then, if due to our weakness as physical human beings, we yield to temptation and sin, God in His tremendous mercy and love for us has given His Son as the propitiation for those sins -- He gave His life to pay the penalty in our stead -- IF we are really broken up and repent of those sins and set ourselves never to repeat that sin again.

But as incredible as it sounds, God's people have been turning this grace -- this unmerited, undeserved, fantastically generous gift of mercy and forgiveness by God into LICENSE to disobey!

Ecclesiastes 8:11 -- You need to understand this basic principle of how your human nature works! Your heart really is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9). Since God does not punish us immediately for our sins, we subconsciously -- without realizing it at all -- equate lack of immediate punishment with lack of penalty. Unless we understand how our minds operate in this regard, we will be lulled into a sense of complacency toward sin in our lives.

Romans 2:4-6 -- God often gives us a space of time in which to repent, but paradoxically, the longer we persist in a sin -- whether it be breaking the letter of the law or the spirit of the law -- the less our conscience bothers us. We tend to consider -- again, without consciously thinking it out -- that God's mercy and longsuffering is tacit approval of what we are doing (Ps. 50:16-23)! Whenever we allow our human nature to deceive us in this way, we are, in effect, turning God's grace -- His mercy -- into license ! Any who do this and kid themselves that they are "doing all right" will come to see that God wasn't overlooking or "winking at" their sins at all (Verses 5 and 6)! They can be sure their sins will find them out (Num. 32:23)!

We are in the home stretch of this Work, yet the Church is often hindered by disloyalty, competition and striving, lethargy, carelessness and sin. Some in God's Church are blind to the great, powerful, magnificent God we serve. Some of those we thought were leaders in the Church are so blind they have robbed God!

Romans 13:11-14 -- God is not going to continue to take contempt, carelessness and disrespect! It is time for us as a Church to wake up! This Work has turned the corner! God is now cleaning away the dross for the grand, smash climax of His Work. He wants only those who are totally committed, striving with all their being for perfection and righteousness in order to be like He is and to qualify to be His instruments to warn this world!

III. PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE

Psalms 50:3-5 -- We are not our own! When we were baptized, we made a covenant with God that we would give our entire lives to Him, but many in God's Church do not keep that covenant. They begin -- often gradually -- to reclaim possession of the self they had given to God. They begin to put physical things ahead of God and His Work, and they become careless in the way that they obey God.

Romans 12:1-2 -- This is not an idle hint -- this is a command! We can do no less if we are to be a part of the Philadelphia Era of God's Church

which will finish this Work. This means that in practice -- not just in theory -- we must put God and His Work first!

Malachi 1:13-14 -- God wants no part of this type of sacrifice. He doesn't want sleepy-time prayers after you've spent the entire day pursuing your own personal physical interests. This is a type of spiritual sop to mollify your own sense of guilt for not having put Him first. Neither does God want a half-hearted, disinterested approach to Bible study while you really get worked up about a football game or some other physical activity that is just so much vanity in comparison. He doesn't want what you have left for an offering after you've first made provision for material things you want but don't really need. He wants the very best of you in every way -- your time, your loyalty, your dedication, your zeal and your wholehearted obedience!

IV. STOP COMPROMISING With SIN!

Set yourself to stop compromising with sin! Our carnal minds deceive us in many ways to get us to compromise with what we know to do. After living with our human nature for so many years, we have become accustomed to our vanity, our competition, envying and jealousies. Our carnal way of thinking becomes "comfortable," and if we don't have our guard up, we can begin to tolerate and permit a "little bit" of sin in our thoughts.

God doesn't consider any sin a little thing or a light matter! What if Jesus Christ had indulged His vanity "just a little," or what if He lost His temper or got in a wrong attitude toward another person just once? God hates sin. He hates character that compromises with sin! Don't permit yourself the privilege -- the license -- to take a second look at a shapely girl in a tight mini-skirt. Don't permit yourself to harbor -- even for a few seconds -- thoughts of jealousy and competition or thoughts of self-exaltation.

Are you one that compromises because you look to other people for a standard? Paul said, "Follow me even as I follow Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). He described those who "compare themselves among themselves" as not being wise (II Cor. 10:12). God's law defines sin -- not someone else's example! Learn to weigh examples by God's law and God's Word, and if they stack up, then follow them, but not before!

Romans 14:23 -- If you even think or suspect that something may be sin -- if you cannot do it in faith -- it IS sin! Adopt the approach of fleeing from sin rather than hanging around and seeing how close you can get to it without actually sinning!

Acts 5:1-8 -- Two people dropped dead as a result of sinning against the

great, all-powerful, almighty Creator God of this universe. Those apostles and disciples got the point that sin was a serious matter, and they realized that when one sins, he is dealing with the very power of Almighty God! Do you comprehend the enormity of sin -- how the great God looks at it? Do you tremble in awe of that power and fear to transgress His law? Begin to take seriously this matter of compromising with sin! Resolve to never do it again!

V. OBEDIENCE IS TOWARD GOD

Psalms 51:4 -- David recognized the enormity of sin, and he also recognized that sin is against God. In the same way, obedience must be toward God. It is a matter of our attitude.

I Samuel 16:7 -- God looks on the heart! He is concerned not only with what we do, but also our attitude in doing it.

Some people in God's Church obey God, not because they stand in awe of God and are trying to impress Him, but because they want to impress others. They are more concerned about what others think about them than what God thinks!

These people pray, for example, because they are afraid the minister will ask them if they have been praying. They study in order to avoid the embarrassment of someone else finding out that they don't! It doesn't embarrass them for God to know they don't study or pray, but it embarrasses them if other people know! This kind of an attitude is an abomination to God! He doesn't accept this kind of obedience!

Psalms 89:6-7 -- He wants sincere, wholehearted obedience which is directed toward Him in a right kind of fear and reverence!

Isaiah 40:15-18, 26 -- Do you comprehend the greatness and power of the God we are worshipping? Are you truly much more concerned about what He thinks about you and your sins than about what any human being or group of human beings on this earth think? Be honest with yourself, and if YOU are falling short, repent before God of this attitude, and beseech Him to help you fear and reverence Him as you should!

VI. STRIVE TO BECOME PERFECT

When Jesus Christ said, "Become you therefore perfect" (Matt. 5:48), He meant for us to take the admonition seriously -- as seriously as any other straightforward command in the Bible! This is the challenge that we as human beings have been given -- to become, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, PERFECT. This is a full-time occupation that we should be zealously

working at every day!

II Corinthians 10:5 -- We must accept the full responsibility for our thoughts and bring them into captivity to the obedience of Christ! This is a struggle -- a real daily battle -- and if you are not battling, you are not bringing your thoughts into captivity!

We are often too quick to excuse ourselves because we are "human." God wants you to develop an attitude of never excusing any little bit of sin because you are human! We have God's Spirit which can overcome human nature -- no matter how rotten you may think yours is! There are only a few ways in which all human beings are created equal. One is that we all have the capacity to become God. Another is that we all have the same amount of human nature to overcome.

Don't use I Corinthians 1:26 or Revelation 3:8, which refer to our physical strength and power, as an excuse for not overcoming. It is the one who overcomes who will be in God's Kingdom (Rev. 3:21)! To overcome means to conquer, subdue, defeat, overthrow, surmount. This is precisely what we must do with human nature. Those who will enter God's Kingdom are the ones who get past -- who overcome -- weaknesses, faults and sins -- not those who know the arguments about God's Way and God's Word but don't obey.

God wants us to wholeheartedly accept the challenge of becoming perfect. He wants us to cry out, "Father in heaven, I want to be like You are! Help me to overcome this nature I have!" He wants us to cry out to Him fervently for more of His Holy Spirit, and He wants to give it to us as much as a Father wants to give his hungry son bread (Luke 11:11-13)!

VII. DRAW NEAR TO GOD THROUGH OBEDIENCE

Isaiah 59:1-2 -- In order for us to finish this Work, God must hear our prayers as individuals and as a Church. The reason many in God's Church are not healed today -- is often because their sins have cut them off from God!

I John 3:21-22 -- Our prayers will be answered if we examine ourselves and begin to obey! We will have confidence that He will hear!

James 4:8 -- This is an absolute promise. If we will repent of our sins and begin to obey God zealously, wholeheartedly and sincerely, God will draw nigh to us -- as individuals and as a Church. He will hear our prayers and we will be precision instruments He can use in giving this world their final warning.

John 15:2 -- God is purging those who are producing to bring forth more

fruit, and He is casting out those who refuse to change! God WILL finish this Work! It is just a question of who He will use. He will use a loyal, dedicated, wholeheartedly obedient group of people who are looking to Him for the power of His Spirit. If God is going to use you, you are going to have to make up your mind to stop compromising -- to stop turning the precious grace of God into license to disobey. You are going to have to obey -- IN Everything!

Matthew 25:21 -- Will you be a part of this Philadelphia-Era Work when it finishes? Will you be among those who have deeply repented of taking sin lightly and have set yourself to attain perfection? If so, you will be one to whom God says after this Work is finished -- WELL DONE, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord!