

Old Paths for a New Year

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An ambulance was rushing a woman in labor to the hospital when it slipped off the icy Michigan road. A four-wheel drive truck attempted to pull the ambulance out of the ditch but could not get any traction on the ice. An Amish man driving two horses saw the predicament and hitched his team up to the ambulance and successfully pulled it out of the ditch. In this case, the old-fashioned method of a team of horses succeeded when the newer methods failed.

In this study we are going to talk about the old paths we are to follow and stay committed to as a Christian. They are the old or ancient paths which deal with our relationship with God and responsibility before God, our commitment and consecration to the ways of God.



Jeremiah 6:16 states:

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

I remember walking down an old path one day that led to a good fishing hole in a pond. I was looking for a place to fish and I happened to notice a pathway that led to a deep section of the pond which was a good fishing spot. Evidently this was a path that was well known for it was trampled down. Many people walked on this path. There were very few weeds growing in the pathway. You could tell that this path had been there for many years. It was well traveled. At the end of the path there was a good fishing hole and I did catch some nice fish on this day. This is not a fish story – it's a true story! I was glad that I walked down this path for at the end of the path was a good day of fishing.

At the beginning of this New Year God has some old paths that He wants us to walk. They are not the modern paths of cultural relativism, pragmatism, existentialism, or modernism but the old paths of consecration, holiness, Fundamentalism, righteousness, and commitment to God. We should be deeply interested in God's pathway for our lives – the ancient or old paths! The word "old" (olawm) speaks of something that has continuous existence, perpetuity, and therefore is something ancient and antiquated that never changes. It's these ancient roads that we need to talk about at the beginning of the New Year.

If we are going to walk in the right direction this New Year, we need to get on the right paths. Wrong paths lead to a defeated and dismal life and eventually our demise. Right paths lead to peace and joy and victory. This is why we need the "Old Paths for a New Year."

Many people identify old with being old fashioned and following outmoded ways that are no longer relevant to our lives today. They somehow think that if you follow old ways that you will be out-of-date and not be able to cope with the 21st century living. Furthermore, they claim that you won't be able to win people to Christ unless you change and adopt the new ways.

We must understand that when God asks us to walk upon the old paths, He is not asking us to live like they did during the days of "Little House on the Prairie." Nor is He asking us to live some kind of ascetic life (Col. 2:20-21). What He is talking about is living by His ancient commands which remain constant, sure, and unchanging. The old paths are the paths which never

change. They never become outdated. They are the old paths of righteousness, holiness, commitment, and love toward God. We must remember that we can live in a contemporary world without abandoning the old paths.

- ✓ Will you walk God's paths or the path that someone else wants you to walk?
- ✓ Are you ready to follow God's way for your life instead of the world's way?
- ✓ Have you gotten off the well-trodden and beaten path?
- ✓ Are you ready to make a new commitment to walk the righteous path that God has put before you?

If you are walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, you'll make spiritual progress in your Christian life. Since truth does not change (truth is not flexible), the old paths which God has ordained for us to walk should never be abandoned for contemporary paths (new ways that contradict the old paths). God's commands and principles do not change even when our culture changes. Yes, God's commands and principles are old, but they are still relevant and up to date for our lives today. They are timeless truths.

In this study we are going to drive home one primary truth. God challenges us to follow the old ways.

This challenge is brought out in three ways.

I. The command is given – “Thus saith the LORD”

“Thus saith the Lord!” is as wise and high as we can get. We need more of them in our Christian life. God commands us to keep walking on the right paths in life – the old paths which God's saints have followed for centuries. God has a direction that He wants us to walk this New Year and He calls this specific direction “the old paths where is the good way” (verse 16). This means they are good for our Christian life, and we should follow them. God's way is always the “good, and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

These ancient paths are not the “good way” simply because they are old but because it is the right way. It’s God’s way! The old paths are not about being old-fashioned (outmoded) but Bible-fashioned or obedient to God’s ways which never change and stand the test of time. Yes, the good way is God’s way! And the good way is the good life! Following God’s ways, the old ways, results in finding great blessing, enrichment, and fulfillment in life.

The old paths are not just for old people as many assume today in the church. They often say, “You are old-fashioned.” Again, it’s not about being old fashioned; it’s about being obedient to God’s timeless commands which are or the saints of all the ages. Apparently, God approves of the old paths since He commands us to walk in them. “Thus saith the Lord.” In reality, this is a command given to all God’s people for all time. The old paths are God’s tried, true, and trodden ways. They should be part of our personal lives and church ministry.

Without the old paths we follow the new paths and lose sight of what God wants in our personal lives and church ministry. The modern church of today wants new things, new music, new preaching, and new methods which often do not align with God’s old path of consecration and holiness. But God is calling us back to the old paths of Bible separation and consecration to His ways. God sometimes brings us to the crossroads of life and asks us, “Which way do you want to go in life? On which path do you want to walk?” Which direction do you want to go this New Year?

Remember that every other road that is outside of God’s old-trodden path leads to a dead end. At the end of your path is misery and woe when we keep making wrong decisions. When we avoid God’s path for our lives we will discover hardship, difficulty, and sadness.

Proverbs 13:15

“Good understanding giveth favour: but the way (path) of transgressors is hard.”

The Hebrew for “hard” (aythawn) refers to something constant and permanent. It was used of the continual flow of a river – something that never changes. Proverbs 13:15 refers to how the transgressor becomes stuck in his ways and remains on the same course of life. In other words, the sinner becomes calloused to God’s ways. As a result, the ongoing conduct of the wicked results in them becoming entrenched in their selfish ways or sinful paths of life to the point that they find it difficult to turn from these paths of sin. Over time the sinner becomes calloused toward God’s path and is trapped on his own way which brings him to a place of spiritual ruin and misery.

If you play around with sin and rebellion too long it becomes harder to get rid of it.

R. B. Ouellette

“When you have a choice between doing right and doing wrong, the only good time to do right is right away. It gets harder the longer you wait.”

If you stay on the wrong path long enough, it gets more difficult to remove yourself from the path of wickedness. But sadly, this path of rebellion against God leads to defeat, misery, and woe! It will stifle your spiritual growth and life.

This is illustrated in Proverbs 14:12:

“There is a way (a path) which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.”

Our path of self-will and sin may seem right to us. But it’s a path that scorns God and refuses spiritual guidance from others. Our selfish and sinful path always leads to a bad end. Under the law, certain penalties actually resulted in physical death. But the reality is that our selfish and sinful ways or paths bring death to everything in our lives – death to our personal relationship or walk with God, death to our marriage relationship, death to our spiritual growth, and death to true friendships.

God’s Word acts as a light and lamp (Ps. 119:105) helps us to see the end of the wrong paths so that we can avoid them. As a Christian, we must stay on

the old paths since the worldly and carnal paths that we walk will lead to misery and ruin.

God has made it very simple. We have made it complicated and difficult. Keep life simple! Keep it simple for this New Year. Just stay on the right path! This is God's command!

"Thus saith the Lord." Here is the problem. We want to walk on our own self-made path instead of God's paths and the direction He wants to take us in life. We want to do our own thing and have our own fling in life instead of taking the God-ordained path that He wants to walk.

"Thus saith the LORD." God is commanding us (not requesting) to walk in the old paths (His paths) instead of our own selfish paths and ways. He wants us to get on His road and off our road of carnality and self-will!

"Thus saith the Lord." There is no replacement for a good old-fashioned "Thus saith the LORD." What God says He means and what God wants is still best for our lives. Let us never forget this!

"Thus saith the Lord." God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me! Who do we think we are anyway? We have no right to run our own lives the way we see fit! Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." If we are going to follow Him, we need to get on the old paths or the tried-and-true ways of obedience and sanctification and stay there.

Were you ever driving on the back roads, and you got so turned around and twisted that you had no idea where you were going? Sometime this happens to us spiritually. We are traveling on our own private road in life and we become so twisted and turned around that we have no idea where we are anymore with the Lord.

II. The course is stated

At this point, I want to zoom in on what the old paths are referring to in the context of Jeremiah's writings.

There is a threefold course to follow.

a. We examine the old paths

What are the old paths? Can we define them according to Jeremiah's writings? We must look back to Jeremiah chapter 2 so we can determine what paths Jeremiah was referencing in chapter 6. Jeremiah 6:16 says we must ask for the "old paths." Generally speaking, they were the paths God had outlined in the Old Covenant regarding Israel's relationship with God and her responsibility before God. The same is true for us today as God's people. Our relationship with God and responsibility before God is what is most important in life. In other words, we will stay on the path He has ordained for our lives if we remain in love with God and loyal to His ways.

In Jeremiah chapter two he talks about the original paths or ways that God's people used to walk. Jeremiah the prophet is summoning the people back to these old paths and ways. They are the same old, ancient, and original paths that God wants us to walk today.

Jeremiah 2:1-3

"Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land [that was] not sown. Israel *was* holiness unto the LORD, *and* the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD."

In essence, God is saying, "I remember how you used to be! Now come back to me again and walk in the same manner you previously did when you were in love with Me and obeyed me. This is a sad commentary for it reveals how Israel used to live and how she used to conduct herself before God. It reveals the days when Israel walked with God. God is looking in retrospect at the way it used to be for His people.

Sometimes I hear Christians say, "I used to live a better life. I used to go to church regularly. I used to be more dedicated to the things of God. I used to be more separated in my Christian living. I used to toe the line." This is

what God was talking about. "I remember." In other words, He remembered when the people used to be in love with God and loyal to His ways. But they had gotten off the old paths and began walking on a new and divergent path of disobedience and indifference to God.

It seems likely that the old or ancient paths mentioned in Jeremiah 6 are the old paths that Jeremiah was referring to in chapter 2. They are they are the same paths we need to walk today.

Someone said:

"The Lessons of history teach us - if they teach us anything - that no one learns the lessons history teaches us."

I hope we can learn the lessons that Israel did not learn, so we don't repeat them in our own personal lives.

In Jeremiah 2 God explains the old paths. He explains what they were and how Israel needed to once again start walking upon these ancient paths.

The old paths can be summarized in two ways.

➤ **The ancient path of loving God.**

The expression "the kindness of thy youth" speaks of Israel's initial love, devotion, and zeal for the Lord. The word "kindness" (sometimes translated as lovingkindness, mercy, goodness) carries the meaning of possessing a gracious spirit toward God, loving acts of compassion extended to Him, and faithfulness expressed to God through worship, praise, reverence, and service rendered unto Him.

It speaks of possessing a deep desire and longing (a loving compassion) for God in our lives that is manifested through worship and praise, an eagerness to honor God, an attitude of loving respect before God, and wanting to please the Lord in everything we do, just like a child or young person ("youth") would want to please his parents and make them happy. The "youth" days of Israel were evidenced when she was very young in her relationship with God during her courtship days out of Egypt (Ex. 14:31; 15:1, 20) and then her covenant relationship with Him at Sinai (Ezek. 16:8).

The days of “youth” could be likened to the courtship days of our Christian experience. These were the days of newness and excitement when we were first saved. We came to know a new Friend in God. It was such a joyous time. It was the days of our initial faith and fellowship with God. During these early days of courting God Israel was known to manifest a very kind and gracious spirit toward God, a longing and desire to express loving compassion toward God, so much so that God comments about their loving acts of compassion and deep reverence that were expressed to Him during those early days, labeling it as the “the kindness of thy youth.”

Here is an amazing revelation: God has a heart. God has feelings (Eph. 4:30). He is not some kind of God way out in outer space who does not possess deep feelings and emotions. God’s heart can apparently be uplifted when our acts of kindness and compassions are expressed toward Him.

Hebrews 13:21 says that God wants to:

“Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

God is pleased and His heart is touched, moved, and stirred when we express to Him “the kindness of our youth” – when we go back to our early days of salvation and simply open our hearts to Him with freshness, zeal, compassion, wonder, worship, and service that is free from all hypocrisy and deadness.

I was talking to a man in the grocery store. He was looking through some books. His bacon and milk were sitting beside him. The man told me he was saved out of alcohol, pornography, and all the other idols that control people’s lives today. He then shared with me that he was saved seven years ago and while talking to me I could sense that he was overflowing with gratitude, zeal, appreciation, love for the Lord, and wonder and amazement because of what the Lord did for Him. His zeal ignited a flame in my heart. The “kindness (loving devotion) of his youth” struck a chord in my heart.

God wants our true worship, our genuine hearts, our praise, our loving compassion, our deep reverence, and adoration. He does not want us to lose the expressions of loving compassion we once had in our young Christian lives. Yes, we all grow older, but we should never grow cold toward the Lord. Don't turn into Jack Frost!

We barely move our lips when we sing the hymns. We can't even come to church and support the preaching of God's Word. We don't really give to God's ministry. We must be coaxed to come to church and coaxed to worship God. We don't have devotions and pray. We are cold. We are insensitive. Maybe you have grown cold and have lost the "kindness of your youth" days with God. You have lost the wonder of it all!

"O the wonder of it all the wonder of it all
Just to think that God loves me
O the wonder of it all the wonder of it all
Just to think that God loves me."

God's heart is touched with our youthful and loving expressions directed toward Him in our living, worship, and service. God wants to know that we really care about Him, that we really love Him, and that we really want to worship, reverence, and serve Him.

Do I have any youth left in my heart? Have we lost our days of youth? Have you gotten off this old path – the ancient path of loving God? Have we lost the wonder of compassion for God? Many today don't come to church with a consuming compassion for the Lord. Instead, they attend church for consumerism.

If necessary, our prayer should be to return to our days of youthfulness, when we embraced God joyfully, served Him out of love, and worshipped Him openly and freely without worldly distractions.

"When in the spring, the flowers are blooming bright and fair,
After the grey of winter's gone.
Once again the lark begins his tuning,
Back in the meadows of my heart.
Lord, to my heart bring back the springtime."

Take away the cold and dark of sin.
And, Oh refill me now, sweet Holy Spirit:
May I warm and tender be again.”

Jeremiah 2:2 goes on to speak of “the love of thine espousals.”

This is linked with “the kindness of thy kindness.” The concept of “espousals” speaks of the bridal love (a caring and loving relationship) that Israel had with God when she was officially betrothed to Him at Sinai. It speaks of those days when she first began to follow the Lord in the desert. This is what we might call the honeymoon love that Israel had with God. Israel expressed a deep love toward Jehovah and wanted to constantly please Him with her life. This is the way it was on her honeymoon with God.

This expression (the love of thy espousals) speaks again of our first love for God. God must capture our hearts again! We are to love Him dearly and intently. For Israel, the honeymoon was over! Israel had left her first love. Her love for the Lord had been extinguished by the world’s pressures and powerful lusts. The love and joy of walking with God was lost. What a great loss it is when we no longer have love for God burning in our hearts.

In Revelation 2:2-4 God chides the church of Ephesus:

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”

This church had right doctrine but a dying love for God! They were still sound in doctrine and active in service, but the true motive in all their worship and service was missing. This busy, separated, and sacrificing church really suffered from “heart trouble”—they had abandoned their first love! They labored for the Lord, were patient, and separated from false apostles (Rev. 2:2). This was all well and good. But the problem was none of this was motivated by love. What we do for the Lord is important, but so is why we do it!

The Lord is teaching us that we might need to get back on the old path of loving Him, of expressing a youthful and tender love toward Him again, a honeymoon love, to once again be filled with excitement and zeal in serving Him and living for Him.

“O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!
Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?
What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.”

Is the honeymoon over in your relationship with God? Do you really love God today? Have you lost the wonder of loving Him? Are you earnest and eager to have devotions with God? Are we concerned when we don't show interest toward Him and when we don't fellowship with Him? Some of you might be living in a daze! You are just existing – not living the Christian life!

If you are not careful, you will become a musty, dusty, Christian. You can lose your love for the Lord. The remedy for this is to repent.

Revelation 2:5

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent (*metanoēō* – “*the change one's mind for the better, to think differently about a matter*), and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

If we are going to get back on the right path (the old path of loving God) then we are going to need to repent of our sin which is separating us from our fellowship, communion, and love for God. We need to be in love with

God if our life is going to experience the “good way” and the good life. Some Christians are as dead as a dodo bird!

I remember attending a Christian school program. A choir of young people were singing. They were the older ones in the school. As they sang, I could tell some of the young people were in a spiritual daze. They stood there like cement blocks and hardly moved their lips. They looked like fish who trying to sin. I know we are all wired differently and have different personalities, but we need to become alive to God again. The reason we are so “out of it” is because we are not in love with God. We have lost “the kindness of our youth” days and the “love of our espousals.”

Jesus taught in Mark 12:30:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.”

“How long has it been, since you talked to the Lord,
And told Him your heart's hidden secrets?
How long since you prayed,
How long since you stayed,
On your knees 'til the light shone through?

How long has it been since you knelt by your bed,
And prayed to the Lord up in Heaven?
How long since you knew,
That He'd answer you,
And would keep you the long night through?

How long has it been since you woke with the dawn,
And felt that the day's worth the living?
Can you call Him your friend,
How long has it been,
Since you knew that He cared for you?

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Since you knew that He cared for you?"

➤ **The ancient path of loyalty to God**

Our of love flows loyalty to God. Whatever happened to loyalty? We are loyal to so many other things in our everyday living such as our jobs, sports, and hobbies, but what about our loyalty to God? Are we dedicated to holy living? Are we consecrated to God and His ways? We need to ask ourselves these types of questions so we can make sure we are walking the old path of loyalty to God.

How can we define loyalty to God?

1. Through Commitment

Jeremiah 2:2 says, "when thou wentest after me." This speaks of commitment and loyalty. When you love someone, you go after them, seek them out, and are ready to commit yourself to them. Don't tell me that you love God when you are not willing to do what you know He wants you to do. You don't really love God when you are lazy, dormant, and unwilling to live for Him, give to Him, and serve Him.

Men, when you love a woman and you know that you want to marry, you go after her, find her, and devote yourself to her. Then, in your marriage, you want to serve her and give yourself to her. I remember courting or dating my fiancée. I wanted to marry her, so I took the initiative to go after her. Men, this is the way it works. Don't expect the woman to come after you – you go after her. The woman is to be the responder. Abraham's servant went to find a bride for Isaac.

Song of Solomon 1:2

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love *is* better than wine."

Song of Solomon 1:4

“The king has brought me into his chambers.”

Song of Songs 2:4

“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me *was* love.”

The man is in charge of seeking out the woman before and after marriage. Men, you must go get her! This is not only portrayed in the creation order, but it is the way it should be in the Christian life. We are to go after God, seek Him, serve Him, consecrate ourselves to Him and His ways (“when thou wentest after me”).

1 Chronicles 22:19

“Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.”

Ezra 7:10

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

Psalms 27:8

“*When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”

I never beg people to be faithful to God. I will encourage them to follow God and His will for their lives but unless you love Him and really want to go after Him and seek Him, it's to no avail. Loyalty to God flows out of a love for God. If you practice loyalty without love you will fall into the trap of legalism – rules without a relationship with God.

I can set firecrackers off beside you, cherry bombs, stand on my head, do anything and everything that I could think of to impress you, but it still won't stir your heart to become a committed Christian to God and His

ways. Why? It's because only love for God will stir your heart and motivate you to live for Him. It takes love (a love for God) to make your Christian life real and fulfilling.

Bringing this into the realm of the New Testament perspective,

Romans 7:6 reminds us: "**But now** (since we are saved!) **we are delivered from the law** (*the old condemning and enslaving relationship under law and legalism in our unsaved and unregenerate state*), **that being dead** (*spiritually dead*) **wherein we were held** (*under the penalty and power of sin*); **that we** (who are now saved by grace) **should serve in newness of spirit** (GRACE RELATIONSHIP - *as a result of the New Covenant work taking place in our hearts, we can now serve and live for Jesus Christ out of newfound love, gratitude and joy generated by the Holy Spirit, instead of the fear of being condemned and judged by God's legal code and standard, and we can also by the Spirit's divine enablement or power live victoriously over sin, experiencing a newfound freedom and liberty from sin's bondage*), **and not in the oldness of the letter**" (LEGAL RELATIONSHIP - *the old unloving, insensitive, enslaving, legalistic, powerless, condemning and futile relationship we had with the law in our unsaved state*).

"Run, John, run, the law commands
But gives us neither feet nor hands,
Far better news the gospel brings:
It bids us fly and gives us wings!"

This means we are to serve God out of a loving heart that is stirred by the Holy Spirit. It's a new attitude which says, "I want to – not I must do." If you love God, you will go out after Him and seek Him and follow Him and you will say, "I want to follow you because I love You. I want to sing for you and serve You with the gifts you have given to me because I love You."

"I will serve Thee because I love Thee
You have given life to me
I was nothing before You found me
You have given life to me.
Heartaches, broken pieces

Ruined lives are why You died on Calvary
Your touch was what I longed for
You have given life to me.”

Psalm 18:1-2

“I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

Loyalty and commitment flow out of love! When we express dedication to God’s ways and purpose, when walk the old path of loyalty to God, we demonstrate that we really love Him.

Have you honestly been pursuing the Lord’s will for your life? Are you really committed to Him? I sometimes wonder what happened to commitment. In the days of old the prayer meetings were filled. People did not have to be coaxed to attend Church and join a church. They did it happily because they loved God and wanted to serve Him.

The Bible says in Jeremiah 2:2, “when thou wentest after me.” Sadly, this is in the past tense. Some of you can look back and remember the days when you were more committed to the Lord, His word, and His House. You can look back and recall how you used to follow the Lord and do what you knew was right. At one time you were more committed to Him, you followed Him in a much more dedicated way. You used to have daily devotions with the Lord. You used to attend church faithfully. But much of this is in the past. Many Christians have lost a sense of loyalty to God. They are loyal to many other things and place these things before the Lord. They put God on the backburner, and some are even backslidden in their Christian life.

Maybe you have gotten off the old path of loyalty to God. Perhaps you are not as loyal and committed to God as you once were. It may be that you no longer give to the Lord’s work or serve Him as you once did. You may no longer be using your gifts for the Lord. You put your gifts and God on the shelf.



Are you ready to go after Him again? During His earthly ministry Jesus said, “Follow me.” Are you ready to wake up, wise up, and rise up to follow Him? We stand at the crossroads (“stand ye in the ways” – Jer. 6:16) and need to come to the place of decision today. Life is a choice. Loyalty to God and loving God is a choice. Serving God and

living for Jesus is a choice. What will you do with Jesus? You cannot be neutral!

William Booth was greatly stirred by the needs of the poor of London and realized that most churches were doing nothing to reach the “undesirables” — drunkards, morphine addicts, prostitutes, and the poor. He set out to reach them with what he called the 3 S’s: soup, soap and salvation. Thousands were saved among those that most churches had no interest in reaching. Booth gave his life for the cause of reaching others.

In his 1880’s, Booth’s work began to be hindered by blindness. He briefly lost his sight and then recovered it, but later he lost his vision permanently. His son Bramwell came to bring him the bad news that he would never see again. Booth replied, “God must know best, Bramwell. I have done what I could for God and the people with my eyes. Now I shall do what I can for God and the people without my eyes.”

This is loyalty to God! Loyalty to the end!

“O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend;

I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,

Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my Guide.

Oh, let me feel Thee near me;
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;

My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.”

I was looking at some bloggers who commented after hearing this refreshing song of loyalty to God.

Rosemary from Nigeria wrote:

“Suddenly I found myself reciting the first line of the first stanza of this amazing, refreshing hymn, had to search for it. Could feel the amazing love of the Father to His child very closely as I reaffirmed my commitment to serve Him forever. Thank you, Jesus!!”

- ✓ Have you lost your first love for the Lord?
- ✓ Is the honeymoon over?
- ✓ How loyal to God have you been?
- ✓ How long has it been since you met with the Lord in devotions and prayer?
- ✓ Is your heart really dedicated to God?
- ✓ Have you lost the wonder of it all?

If so, you must get back on the old paths of love and loyalty to God. You might need to start walking on this ancient path once again which has been the tried-and-true path for all of God’s saints down through the centuries.

Addressing a national seminar of Southern Baptist leaders, George Gallup said, "We find there is very little difference in ethical behavior between churchgoers and those who are not active religious ...The levels of lying,

cheating, and stealing are remarkable similar in both groups. Eight out of ten Americans consider themselves Christians, Gallup said, yet only about half of them could identify the person who gave the Sermon on the Mount, and fewer still could recall five of the Ten Commandments. Only two in ten said they would be willing to suffer for their faith.

Of course, many in this survey were not even Christians. But those who are Christians can reflect the world and carnality in their lives by embracing the path of the culture instead of walking on God's ancient paths of consecration and holiness to God.

There is another way we can be loyal to God.

➤ **Through consecration**

Another important area of loyalty is seen in the people's consecration and holiness to God. Jeremiah 2:3 explains it in this way: "Israel was holiness unto the LORD." Again, this is in the past tense. Israel (God's covenant people) had lost their holy separation and purity. Israel had given in to the ways of the world in which she lived. The people's hearts and lives were overtaken by carnal living instead of spiritual living.

Israel was set apart by God to be a holy nation to the Lord (Exodus 19:6; 22:31). Just as the "firstfruits" of the harvest belonged to God (Lev. 23:9-14), so Israel had been chosen as the nation to belong to the Lord and be used for His holy purposes. God wants us to be holy (set-apart) or consecrated to Him in the way that we live and by the service that we do for Him. We are to be consecrated to God in our living and service. God wants all of us! He wants every part of our lives from head to toe.

Holiness stands for consecration to God. It is that which is sacred, set apart for God, and consecrated to Him. In every age God has called His people to be set apart for His holy purposes, ways, and service. Our bodies and life belong to God. We are called upon to set them apart for God, using them for His holy purposes and service. True holiness is the great need of the hour.

Leviticus 11:44 reveals this about holiness:

“For *I am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for *I am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

In other words, we are to emulate the character and crowing attribute of God which is holiness. It's here we discover that holiness means separation from defilement (“neither shall ye defile yourselves”). Whatever God has deemed defiling, He has called us to separate from it and not allow it to make our lives impure. We are to set apart for God alone and His holy purposes.

1 Peter 1:16 quotes Leviticus 11:44:

“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

The New Testament Greek word for holiness is “hagios” which means sacred, consecrated, morally blameless and pure. Although there were some legal defilements under the Mosaic Law which do not apply to us today, the principle of holiness never changes. It's God's call for consecration from all spiritual defilement that keeps us from being pure and consecrated to His holy ways and purposes.

Holiness is a command to be kept, a course to be followed, and a commitment that needs to be made in our personal lives.

1 John 1:7

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.”

Light is metaphor for holiness and when we walk in the light, we are seeking to walk in the light of God's purity and holiness. We want to consecrate ourselves, both our body (the outward) and spirit (the inward) to God and His ways.

Today many Christians are running from the light instead of walking in the light. God's holiness demands a response from our lives.

2 Corinthians 7:1

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh (*the outward fleshly body – eyes, ears, every part of our body*) and spirit (*the inward spirit – evil thoughts, a stubborn will, emotional rebellion*), perfecting (*maturing and reaching the goal*) holiness in the fear of God.”

Our loyalty to God consists of living a holy life that emulates or portrays God’s own holiness. This is the old path that God wants us to remain on in these days of sinful compromise and spiritual decline.

What areas of consecration do you need to work on in this New Year? What about your character, such as your humility, kindness, patience, love? What about your level of commitment to the Lord, your music, your attitudes, your friends, your TV and computer habits, amusements, your church attendance, your giving to the Lord’s work, your dress, your time of service rendered unto God?

Jeremiah 2:3 once again states, “Israel was holiness unto the LORD.” Again, this is in the past tense and is referring to how Israel used to walk and reflect God’s holiness in their lives. But it was no longer the case. She had We sometimes say, “Oh, I used to walk differently. I used to not drink, gamble, live this way, or do this.” What you are saying is that “I was holiness unto the LORD” in the past. But now I’ve changed. This is the tragedy of compromise!

Kyle Yates puts it like this:

“The honeymoon is over. God reminds rebellious Israel of the fervor and the warmth and the purity of the love streams in the early days. She was desperately in love with her Lover and the tender love made life full of music and joy and hope. She was pure and clean and holy. No disloyalty or unclean thought marred the beauty of her devotion. But now the picture is heart-rending. God’s heart is crushed with grief and disappointment. Israel now is living in open sin. She is unfaithful to the covenant vows. Other gods have stolen her affection. She has ceased to love Yahweh and her conduct is shameful in the extreme.”

Maybe this is a picture of your life at the beginning of this New Year? As we begin a New Year, we must take a long look at our lives and see where we have been and where we are going and what we are going to do with our lives? God wants us to be holiness unto Him! He wants us to consecrate our hearts and lives to Him afresh and anew.

Two theological students were walking along a street in the White Chapel district of London, a section where old and used clothing was sold. One student said, "What a fitting illustration these used clothing make!," as he pointed to a suit of clothes hanging on a rack by a window. The sign read: SLIGHTLY SOILED--GREATLY REDUCED IN PRICE.

"That's it exactly," he continued. "In our Christian lives we sometimes become soiled by gazing at a vulgar picture, reading a coarse book, or allowing ourselves a little indulgence in dishonest or lustful thoughts; and so when the time comes for our character to be appraised, we are greatly reduced in value. Our purity, our strength is gone. We are just part and parcel of the general, shopworn stock of the world."

The old paths are clearly defined for us. We are commanded to walk the old paths that refer to loving God and being loyal to God. We are to have a deep compassion for God, commitment to God, and consecration to God. Have you gotten off the old paths? Maybe you are walking on your own selfish path today or you might be following the path of someone else. Perhaps you are following the path of least resistance. Maybe you are following the popular cultural path. Let me assure you that these are not God's paths. They are the paths of rebellion and neglect.

This New Year you stand at the crossroads, and you will make a decision which road marker to follow. One road marker reads, "My path" and the other "The old paths." The way you turn and the road you follow will have a profound impact in your life in the coming year and on into eternity.

Psalm 23:3 says:

"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

God does not lead us down the wrong paths. We take ourselves there by neglecting His Word and following the world, the flesh, and the devil. So, first we must examine the paths God wants us to walk.

b. We choose the right paths

As a Christians, we are to be obedient to what God wants us to do. We are to walk on the old paths that God has outlined for us. This brings us back to our main verse.

Jeremiah 6:16

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

Walking on the old paths involves a choice. Living the Christian life is a choice. Several words bring this out.

1. Standing (“stand ye in the ways”)

The imagery is that we are standing at a crossroad. The word “ways” (roads) is metaphorically speaking of choosing one’s course of life. The imagery here is coming to a crossroad and deciding what direction you want to take in your life. This means that each one of us must pause at the crossroad of our lives and make the choice to take the right road and stay the course! We should be willing to remain on “hold the ground” and not waver.



When we stand at the crossroads we see where we are heading and where our path will end up. God commanded His people to compare the many “ways” or paths in which God’s people could walk and then choose the righteous paths to walk. We are called upon at this New Year to pause and consider our ways and then choose the righteous paths, the tried-and-true

ways, and follow the clear road markers the saints have followed for centuries.

The children of Israel (southern kingdom) were at a point where they needed to stop, pause, reflect upon their lives, and decide which road they were going to travel. They are pictured as pausing in life or standing “in the ways” (at the crossroads of life) needing to make a decision. They had gone into idolatry because they were covetous and as a result they were facing the impending judgment of God (Jer. 6:13; 5:23). They certainly needed to pause and reflect upon their covetous ways and condition in life.

The Bible says that you are covetous in life when you want your own way instead of God’s way. Because of Israel’s revolting and rebellion the empire of Babylon was going to overtake them (Jer. 5:15). Babylon was destined to overtake them if they did not get on the right paths. In a similar way, trouble and heartache will overtake our lives when we don’t remain on the right paths.

At the beginning of the New Year, we are to “stand in the ways” (stand at the crossroads of our lives). Jeremiah pictures us standing at the crossroads of life and we must make the right decisions regarding which paths we will travel – the right paths or the wrong paths – God’s ways or our ways – God’s choices or our choices.

This is not some kind of New Year’s resolutions where you decide to drink slim fast for one meal a day. It’s a decision to change the course of your life. If you start moving in the wrong direction, on the wrong path, and don’t catch yourself, you will be sorry in the end. There is only heartache and bitterness at the end of your path or road. The decisions we make at the “ways” (crossroads) will have a profound affect on the way we live and what we do in the New Year.

Living right is a choice! Doing right is a choice. Following God’s will is a choice. Your paths (new paths) are the paths of rebellion and wickedness. God’s paths (the old paths) are the paths of obedience and righteousness. You stand at the crossroads!

Exodus 32:26 reveals:

“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.”

God is looking for someone to come down from the right mountain and who is willing to stand at the right gate and give out the right message.

Are you on the Lord's side?

“Who is on the Lord's side?
Who will serve the King?
Who will be His helpers,
Other lives to bring?
Who will leave the world's side?
Who will face the foe?
Who is on the Lord's side?
Who for Him will go?”

Like Moses, we must be willing and ready to stay the course even when others are not!

You may say, “I have my reasons for doing what I'm doing. I have my ways and I know what I'm doing.” Listen friend, your ways and reasons are nothing but excuses that will cause you to reject God's paths and ways for your life. If we are going to make the right choice and walk in the old paths we must pause in life and stand at the crossroads of life, remember God's truth, make the right decisions, and stay the course.

September 5, 1755, 3 P.M. would remain etched in the minds of hundreds of thousands for centuries. The Acadians, a peaceful group of people of French origin living in the New World, refused to take sides as the British and the French fought for dominionship over what we now call Nova Scotia, Canada.

Once the British claimed victory, the fact that the Acadians had remained neutral was a thorn in their sides, and on September 5, 1755 Great Britain's

resolutions towards the Acadians came to fruition. 418 men and boys aged ten years or older were ordered to meet at the parish church. There it was declared that all Acadians would be deported.

Forced to leave their homes behind, Acadian families were split up, placed on different ships, and taken to different destinations. Husbands were separated from their wives and children from their parents, and in order to completely discourage the people from ever returning to their homeland, their homes, barns, mills and anything else of value were burned to the ground.

The Acadian deportation of Atlantic Canada took the British 9 years. These unfortunately people, whose only crime was that of remaining neutral throughout a war, were sent to away places like American colonies, Europe, West Indies and even the Falkland islands, and there, they were also received with hostility.

Here is the point. You cannot remain “neutral” like the Acadians. You must choose one path over the other. If you think you can straddle both paths it won’t work. You will be burned in the end. Neutral you cannot be! You must always be on Lord’s path and side.

Walking on the right path involves a choice. The Bible says, “stand ye in the ways.” Take the time to pause at the crossroads of our lives and make the decision to stay on the right course.

2. Seeing (“and see”)

Seeing has to do with examining ourselves, where we are headed in life, and then examining God’s righteous paths for our lives, the way in which He wants us to walk. Do you see what is happening to your life? Do you see where you are at in life?

When we take time to pause and stand at the crossroads of life we need to “see” or observe and examine ourselves and the paths that God wants us to walk. We must see ourselves for what we truly are and examine God’s holy path and way for our lives.

We need to take a long look at ourselves and “see” or observe where we are heading and where we will end up if we stay on the same path. What do you see when you look at yourself? You say, I see a man with less hair and more wrinkles. I’m not talking about this. We need to examine our spiritual life and see where we are headed.

1 Corinthians 11:28

“But let a man examine himself.”

God wants us to take a long look at ourselves from a spiritual standpoint and see our sin as sin in His holy eyes and realize that our sin and wickedness breaks the heart of God. Our problem is this. We don’t want to see ourselves for what we really are! We want to avoid our true self. Sin tries to deceive us and keep us in its powerful hold. We need to stand in the ways and see our sinfulness for what it really is in God’s eyes. If we don’t see our utter wickedness and folly, we will not step on to the old paths (right paths) that God has for our lives.

Someone once said:

“They turn aside from old-time religion and forgot the old paths, the good paths, the victories, the pit from which they were dug, and the blood in which they were washed.”

Proverbs 24:21

“My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change.”

This is not talking about change for the better but change for the worse. We cannot give in to change that will soil us. Change (worldly change) is what takes down our personal lives and church ministries.

Proverbs 21:2

“Every way (path) of a man *is* right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.”

Friend, we need to see ourselves for what we really are! We must allow God to break through all our numbness and dumbness if we are going to get on the right path.

We must also “see” (examine) God’s paths as the only wise and right paths to walk. They are the “paths of righteousness (Psalm. 23:3). This where I want to walk. This is where I want to be. The paths of worldliness will lead you into carnality and misery. They will catch up with you eventually!

Today the church today wants to walk in paths of pragmatism (instead of the old paths). They don’t care about God’s holy or righteous path for church life and ministry. The so-called experts and gurus of the modern church growth movement of today are saying, “If it works, use it.”

Dr. Lee Robertson was once asked:

“Where does a good church start to go bad? He answered without hesitation, “It starts with the music.”

When a rock style of music starts in the church it brings in its own dress code and its own philosophy. If you have contemporary music, you will bring in contemporary listeners and they will bring their contemporary lifestyle and force it upon the church. Here is the real question we must ask: “Is it holy? Is it God’s path? Is it God’s way?”

Walking on the old paths involves a choice.

3. Seeking (“ask for the old paths”)

There are not many people asking for the old paths anymore! When we “ask for the old paths” we are ready to commit ourselves to them or follow them. When a person decides to ask for the old paths, they are seeking to do what is right and are committed to following God’s way instead of their own way. They are willing to go all the way with the Lord and make an absolute commitment to Him and His holy path for their lives.

The problem with our lives is that we are seeking the wrong things and don’t come to the place where we will ask for the old paths. We would rather ask, “Can I fit in with the culture?” Will my friends like me? Can I be a hit with everyone else? Will this bring people into the church? We need to stop asking the wrong questions and start asking the right question – will this honor God, please Him, and will this consecrate my life to God. What

are you seeking in life? What do you really want in life? Is it the praise of men or the praise of God?

The phrase “ask for the old paths” is sometimes used and misunderstood by those people who oppose all changes in the church and who want to maintain something that is sterile, boring, and status quo. For instance, one person told me that we are not conservative enough because we have instruments in our church. Well, if they would read the Word of God, they would discover that God’s people always used instruments in God’s House (Ps. 150:4). Furthermore, being holy and consecrated to God has nothing to do with instruments. It’s how you use the instruments that makes the difference.

The “old paths” do not refer to living without pianos, electricity, light bulbs, cars, and modern conveniences. These are “ascetic paths” – not old paths. It’s not necessarily the good old days but the good old ways that we must follow.

The old Youth for Christ slogan says:

“Geared to the times but anchored to the Rock.”

Here is the point. When you ask for the old paths of faithfulness, commitment, holiness, and righteousness you are seeking the right ways and are ready to live out the kind of life that is pleasing to God. You are ready to seek His face and do what is right. The church today is not seeking God’s “ancient paths” of righteousness but the new paths that lead to unrighteousness and ungodliness.

Let me ask you some direct questions today. Are you willing to seek the ancient paths? Are you willing to follow the old paths of faithfulness to God, commitment to Him, consecration to Him and His Word, and His House? Are you ready to seek God’s righteous and holy way for your life? Are you ready to get back on the ancient paths and the old paths that will count for time and eternity?

Our desire should be that of the Psalmist.

Psalm 25:4

“Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.”

Psalm 17:5

“Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.”

We must stay the course my friend and we must commit ourselves to doing what is right. By God’s grace and power, we can stay on the ancient or the old paths that God has called us to walk and finish well.

2 Timothy 4:7-8

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

I don’t want to go down a new road! I don’t want to break away from God’s path and follow some divergent path that leads to a dead end in some back alley.

Psalm 119:128

“Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; and I hate every false way.”

Let’s state it in a simple fashion. We must hate the wrong paths and stick to the right paths if our life is going to really be pleasing to God. If you stay on the ancient or old paths you cannot go wrong! Stick to the old road markers! This is why we are called upon to “hold fast” to doing right, living right, being right, and believing right (Rev. 2:25; 3:3; 3:11).

Dr. Bob Jones used to say, “Do right!”

4. Submission – “and walk therein”

Walking speaks of submitting to God’s rule over your life. Walking involves a personal choice to rise up and take the right course of action in life.

Jesus said in Luke 9:23

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

It’s one thing to identify and admit where you have gone wrong but it’s another thing to start walking on the right way and moving in the right direction. We must put our feet to God’s path.

It has been said:

“Some people talk the walk while others walk the talk.”

Galatians 5:25 brings us into the New Testament: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Walking the righteous course is a daily decision. It involves determination and stamina that comes from the Lord. By God’s power and grace, we can live right and remain on the right course. We don’t have to waiver back and forth. We don’t need a daily reminder of the stock market; we need a daily walk with God.

Have you been walking on a crooked path?

Proverbs 2:15 warns us about the crooked path:

“Whose ways *are* crooked, and *they* froward (*turn away, depart*) in their paths.”

Proverbs 2:20 instructs us to follow the right path:

“That thou mayest walk in the way of good *men*, and keep the paths of the righteous.”

On which path have you been walking? If you are living your own stubborn or rebellious life and neglecting God’s will for your life, then you can’t possibly be traveling upon the old paths (ancient paths) of faithfulness, commitment, and holiness. God wants us to stay on the ancient paths and not stumble from the old paths of loving God and being loyal to Him. He wants us to do what is right! This is a wakeup call to all of us today. We must see ourselves for what we really are and then make the decision to walk upon the old paths. We don’t need New Year’s resolutions; we need a daily walk with God.

So, in our outline we have seen the importance of examining the old paths and choosing the right paths in life. When we do this, we will enjoy the good paths.

c. We experience the good paths (“where is the good way”)

1 Samuel 12:23 also talks about “the good and the right way.” This is the way we should want to walk. The ancient paths of love and loyalty to God are said to be the “the good and the right way.” Loving and being loyal to God are good for your life! Nothing could be better for you.

God’s way is still the “good way” and it is the best way! If you are following a bad way, get on the good way! These are the paths or ways that God accepts, and they are the ways that bring lasting fulfillment and blessing into our lives.

Romans 12:2

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Nothing can be better for your life then following the will of God. Why wouldn’t you want the good way? When something is good, we should want to do it, bask in it, and enjoy it.

The best candy bar is a Heath Bar. The best Dairy Queen blizzard is a Heath Bar Blizzard! I know when something is good. In the same way, we need to know what is good and right for our lives. The old paths are the good paths that lead to blessing and joy in life.

What a blessing it is to get on the right paths and stay on the right paths! Nothing can be better for us. The old paths are the good paths! They are also the good life for the Bible says, “and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16). Why wouldn’t you want this? If you want to find true rest, peace, and fulfillment in your life then you must learn to follow God’s way instead of your own way. If your life is torn apart and you are frazzled, then

get on the “old paths” and you will find peace for your soul again. Walking the right paths brings blessed peace into our hearts and lives.).

Some of you are chasing after soap bubbles that pop when you reach out to grab them. There is nothing in this world that satisfies! It’s empty!

Ecclesiastes 1:2

“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity.”

All is soap bubbles! Dear friend, there is nothing but emptiness and unrest in the things of this world. The world has nothing to offer us. The modern paths end in misery and woe. But God’s ancient paths of love and loyalty or consecration to Him bring peace into your heart and life. Beloved, you must begin walking the old paths and live for Him without reservation. You must put your hand to the plow and not look back (Luke 9:62).

Sometimes we wonder why our lives are so messed up and disorderly. Often, it’s because we choose our own paths in life instead of God’s tried and true paths which have been given to God’s saints throughout the generations – the paths of simple love and devotion to God.

Hebrews 12:13 reminds us to “make straight paths for your feet” which means to clear out the path before us and get rid of those obstacles that are causing us to stumble. There comes a time when we must clean out the debris in front of our lives and start walking God’s way instead of your own way!

III. The calamity is witnessed

Jeremiah 6:16 ends with shocking words: “We will not walk therein.”

Jeremiah 6:17 is also shocking – “But they said, We will not hearken.”

Instead of choosing the good and peaceful path the people chose the worldly path. God’s people are stubborn and disobedient! They want their own path. They don’t want to walk the right path in life.

Jeremiah 5:31 takes it a step further:

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”

“We will not hearken,” “We will not walk therein” and “we love to have it so.” I call this “Burger King Christianity” – Have it your way! In other words, they are glorying in their carnality and departure from God’s ancient paths, doing their own thing, and loving it at the same time.

These are the words of those who don’t want to walk the old paths anymore of commitment and consecration to God. You may not express yourself in this direct way, but no matter what you say, you are still really saying the same thing. I don’t want your ways God. I want my own ways instead. I want to do my own thing and go my own way. If you don’t want commitment, these are really your final words. This is your final answer!

The people not only rejected God’s way, but they also loved to follow their rebellious path! There comes a time when truth is replaced by error and the people love the unrighteous path instead of the godly path! They love their sin! They love to have it their own way instead of God’s way.

2 Timothy 4:4

“And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The same may be true in your life. You may be walking on your own path and forgetting about God’s will and way for your life. And you may be loving it! But in the end, you will pay for how you live – “and what will ye do in the end thereof?” (Jer. 5:31). Nobody wants to look at the end!! Sin always has a consequence attached to it. You can be sure that your sin will always find you out.

Remember the old saying? Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.

What is the problem with much of the church today? We are no longer shocked by sin! This is why we walk upon our own sinful path in life. We can sit in a church service and listen to dance music and the devil's music and no longer be shocked over sin. We can dress immodest and no longer be shocked by it.

I was watching the news the other day and in a newsclip there were men in skimpy bathing suits jumping off a bridge to celebrate the New Year. You can't even watch the news anymore without being barraged with degrading pictures. We are no longer shocked with immodesty in this nation and in the church.

We can curse and no longer be shocked over sin. We become numb to sin. We can gossip about brother Hawkins and no longer be shocked over our own sin of gossip. We can neglect our devotions with God and live independent of God and no longer be shocked over our sin or prayerlessness and failure to meet with God. We can watch degrading and lustful things on TV or the Internet and no longer be shocked over sin. We can boycott church and give all kinds of excuses for doing it and no longer be shocked over our sinfulness and neglect of God's House. We can live with anger and bitterness and give excuses for living the way that we do. We are no longer shocked over our sins. If we are not careful, we can become numb to our condition and cannot diagnose ourselves as being spiritual flawed.

Dear Christian friends, we must stand in the ways or at the crossroads of life and examine our wayward path and God's righteous path and then make a decision what we are going to do with our lives.

We must stop playing around with sin and start yielding to God and walking the "old paths" of faithfulness, holiness, and righteousness.

Jeremiah 18:15

"Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient (*everlasting, perpetual*) paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up."

Please note that the idolatry and heathen practices of paganism caused the people to stumble from the “ancient paths” or the paths of antiquity pertaining to the righteousness, holiness, and commitment that God required of the people. Paganism and worldliness will cause you to stumble and divert you from the truth path.

God’s paths are ancient! And they span the ages! And yet the church today wants to step off these paths and create new paths to suit their 21st century living. Many Christians don’t want the old landmarks (Prov. 23:10) that God has established for church life and ministry (Acts 2:42).

What is your decision as you stand at the threshold of this New Year? What will it be? Many today are not willing to really walk in the old paths anymore. Yes, you can have your way but remember in the end the Lord will give you leanness of soul, as He did the children of Israel, when He left them eat the quail.

Psalm 106:15

“And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.”

The Lord still chastens those whom He loves (Heb. 12:6-7). This has always been true. Your path is the difficult path, and as we have seen, the way of the transgressor is still hard (Prov. 13:15).

At the beginning of this New Year, you need to reevaluate where you are at in life and what paths you are walking. Some of you are walking on a dangerously precarious path that in the end will only lead to misery, heartache, and sorrow. Satan tries to place some roses along the path of rebellion to make it appear that it is the good way and the right way but when you take the turn in the road you will find out that there is only an uphill journey that is full of great difficulty, misery, and regret.

We need to get on the old paths and stay there! Why? It’s because the highways of the world never lead you to the right place and they always result in vanity and emptiness.

Jeremiah 6:16

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls ...”

God wants us to choose the right paths. You only live once. Life only goes around once, so you had better start to make wise decisions and right choices. Don't fall for new things which do not have their roots in God's ancient commands.

Harry Ironside used to say:

“If it's new, it's not true, and if it's true, it's not new.”

