

Transformed Thinking

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Sweeten Life Systems

I have had a lot of misery in my life, most of which was self-induced. Despite its origin I continued for many years to find others to blame for my negative feelings. Many people made me miserable. My parents kept me upset and angry much of my childhood and that condition prevailed far into adulthood. The transition through adolescence was particularly painful.

Not only did my parents bug me so did my older brother. Just mentioning his name today leaves me with a feeling of resentment and terror. It was not physical intimidation or assaults but by being bigger, smarter and stronger than I. I had to follow in his footsteps. No one knew how awful it was to be the little brother.

Maury was three grades ahead of me and I felt inferior. That feeling followed me well into high school and college and haunted me in several jobs. Despite good grades, hard work and many achievements, I did not believe I was really competent and it was Maury's fault.

He was a favorite of the teachers. I wanted to be as good as he but it was not to be. No matter how old and smart I got he was always older and smarter. He made me feel so bad that I lived in continual misery. I had chronic low esteem and a sense that nobody really loved me. I did well in school but that did not help because I just knew that the teachers liked Maury best. (So did my parents.)

Every time I mentioned these indignities to mother she said she was also the younger sister and I had to go on about my business and do the best I could. She did not really understand me. Nobody did.

Besides, I had all those ugly freckles on my face, my arms and back. I couldn't even dress up at Halloween without them giving me away. I tried to cover all of the tell tale marks but it was no use. The witches' costume was too little and my spots showed. Burton Dunbar immediately guessed me. My parents wouldn't even get me a big costume. Why did they torture me?

Maury was tall and handsome with curly dark hair like Dad. He was calm and bright. I was freckled with brownish red hair like Mother. The worst parts of my body were long scrawny limbs that made me look like a scarecrow. No wonder I was hyperactive, loud, anxious and angry. They all made me that way and then blamed me for it. I was a victim of life with no control to change it. I was totally powerless.

Why did all my family, friends and teachers make me feel so bad about myself? Why oh why was everybody out to get me and make me miserable? I was so low that I could

have walked upright under a snake's belly. That made it truly and completely unfair. As long as Maury was older and smarter than I, life was predestined to be a mess and I was doomed to suffer. It was impossible to feel good about myself.

I tried to make people see that I was smart and capable. I fought and showed off in front of the girls by talking loud and riding my bike wildly. Then the teachers started getting on my case. They said, "Why can't you be more like your big brother?" I hated that and fought even more to show them that I was as big and tough as Maury. "Why is everybody always picking on me?"

During elementary school I worked hard to change peoples' minds about me. I took care of my bedfast grand father for several years hoping my parents would affirm me. Nobody but grandma seemed to notice. They kept acting like I was a misfit. I knew their compliments were halfhearted and fake. I decided I needed to do well in school so I tried hard and made straight A's. I became the 8th Grade Valedictorian. Our Principal was so upset with me that he left me off the program as a speaker. He tried to apologize but it was too late.

These feelings persisted long after I got older. I was an adult in physique but not much else. Even getting a doctorate was worthless because nobody in the family affirmed me for it. I wrote a couple of books and sent them to my mother and brothers in hopes they would recognize my brilliance and grown up ways. I longed to hear, "Wow! You really do know a lot." It was an impossible situation. What was wrong with me? I felt awful. I was miserable.

Pogo is here

But there was hope and I finally discovered the answer. As the cartoonist Walt Kelly had Pogo the Possum say, "I have met the enemy and it is me." It was not my brother, parents and teachers. It came to me that I was not a Timex but a cheap imitation that fell apart at a little humidity and a soft shake. It was hard to accept but nevertheless it was true. I had chosen the wrong option! But, what do I do now?

I grew up in a small anti intellectual village in southern Illinois. The people there had many talents and gifts including a love for God and a compulsion to attend church. I was able to hear a lot of good preachers, some of whom could take the hide off a buffalo.

The word of God was taught, exalted and revered. However, one thing we seemed to lack was a way to practically apply the truth that was supposed to set us free. For example, the following passage was preached and memorized but frankly I never learned how to apply it in my life. If truth was going to set me free I had to be able to make it work in my daily life.

Power Thinking

That is when I discovered Power Thinking. God told the Hebrew Children many centuries ago to "Choose life". They failed miserably at it. Many of us Believers still

prefer to choose death over life. A favorite way of dealing death to ourselves is by giving the power over my thinking to others. In fact, misery results when I give the power of my mind to the world, the flesh and the devil.

Pain is inevitable but Misery is optional!

Thankfully, St. Paul has a wonderful remedy and it was developed by the Holy Spirit so it must be good for us. The Bible is a book of Positive Psychology. It helps us focus on the gracious aspects of God and His people. The care and cure of souls has been a major aspect of Christianity for thousands of years. In fact, the founders of modern psychology began with the Bible's teachings but modern theorists have lost their way. The following passage offers insights into Cognitive Psychology, a way to change Stinking Thinking.

Romans 12

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Conformity: Acting to please others rather than what is right

Does a fish know it is wet? Do birds realize they have an amazing gift of flight? Do you and I realize how the world influences us? Do we humans know what motivates us to act and react? Are we aware of how much the world culture presses us into its mold?

I am occasionally struck by the ways we are subtly influenced by society. Our six year-old grand daughter recently came over to play while her mother finished painting and refitting her bathroom with new lights and fixtures. While rummaging in her toy box Lily happened to take a look at the fixtures in our guest bath and commented with great assurance, "Grandma, you need new lights."

Lily is like most of us. Her house is the way things "should" be. It did not take her long to decide that her reality was the only reality. Many of us are living in a pre-Christian reality of the world system. That is our only reality until God shows us the truth. Even then we "See through a glass darkly." We all need counseling or coaching and few of us seek it for that would seem to verify my fear that I am the sickest of all. Thankfully, the Lord promised us a Counselor who would "Teach us all things".

Buddy it's cold outside

I am not going to spend much time criticizing the culture and ideas of this age. I find it fruitless to curse the darkness. That may be the job of others but it is not mine. I do not have the constitution for it. I will not spend much time on the Post Modern flight from truth or the evils of Football half-time shows. I think they are doing what a world without God's truth is supposed to do.

Making Misery Optional

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Evil is bold and evildoers are getting bolder every day. Unless the Spirit enlightens us, we are all going to stay in the dark. My passion is to help people of the light shine more brightly and to penetrate the darkness. Sinful people cannot stand the light. They are aggressive if we refuse to accept the culture's slime.

Think for a moment about Dr. Newdow, the guy who wanted to remove Under God from the pledge of allegiance. He is a fanatic. Who would do anything to stop hearing God's name. The name of the God is a slap in the face to those who love darkness rather than light. However, we need to ignore his Stinking Thinking and love him anyway.

So let's us agree to fire up our candles and penetrate the darkness. In John I: 3. John uses the term *katalambano* to artfully describe the power of Jesus to destroy evil.

¹IN THE beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. ²He was present originally with God. ³All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being. ⁴In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men. ⁵And the Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it [put it out or absorbed it or appropriated it, and is unreceptive to it].

Verse five in the Amplified Bible rounds out the meaning of *katalambano* by using different terms. Jesus shines like the sun so He cannot get the darkness to accept, apprehend or welcome Him. However, when the light is dimmed or turned off the darkness springs immediately back into action.

The darkness of sin is a dense-like miasma of poisonous fog. Even though it is toxic it cannot put out the light of Christ. However, when allowed to reign it deflects His light beams away from us to block the truth. However, the light doesn't destroy the darkness. When the light of Christ penetrates the darkness it literally pushes back the gloom but when the light is absent deep darkness rushes back in. Fog has a thickness of humidity which bounces the light back into itself and tries hard to refute it. This is the spiritual equivalent to a black hole in the solar system that sucks the holy light out of the sight of the righteous.

The co-meanings of darkness are sadness, depression and a lack of energy. Light can metaphorically indicate we are enlightened, light hearted, lit up, and full of lightness. Jesus penetrates gloom and enlivens us as well as enlightens us. He reveals the truth that sets us free and lightens our burdens.

Jesus said, "Come unto me all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest. I am gentle and humble in heart and you shall find rest for your souls. Take my yoke upon you for it is easy and light." Mt. 11:28-30. For the pessimistic, depressed and sad among us this is the kind of good news that brings relief, peace and joy. No wonder people of faith live longer, happier and more fulfilled lives.

It is never safe to look into the future with eyes of fear. Edward Henry Harriman

How do we work on being as bold as lighthouses? How do we go about letting our light shine before others and let them see first hand God's love and freedom? Perhaps the best place to start is by understanding and applying Romans 12:1-2.

- First, Give your whole body and life to God:

The Bible tells us to offer our entire selves to God. It is not just our soul or spirit or some other facet of our being but the whole person that worships Him. Gnosticism is rearing its ugly head again, especially through novels. Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code, says that Jesus was married and had children but Christianity covered it up for the past two thousand years. This is part of the Gnostic heresy that makes a complete split between the body, soul and spirit.

Brown builds on the popularity of what I call, "soft Hinduism". It was introduced into the west about thirty years ago as Americanized version of Zen Buddhism. Eastern religions are based on a denial of the body, mind and emotions and point to pure spirit as the goal of life.

Christianity, however, is Trinitarian in its belief in God and man. We believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and in the human person in body, soul and spirit. Salvation is for the entire person not just for the pure spirit. The Fall affected all three facets of humans so we face problems in every area of life. God is with us as a loving Father, a caring Brother and the guiding Holy Spirit. He offers love, friendship and insight.

Give yourself to God!

It is often said that Satan's greatest lie is that he doesn't exist. Another disabling lie is: "Change is not possible. We are prisoners of our environment, our culture, our biology and our genetic history." This isn't true but it pervades our country. These ideas and conclusions about human nature have been discounted by research but they persist in the minds of the press, TV and many politicians.

The famous Harvard Psychologist B.F. Skinner taught that humans are completely at the mercy of rewards and punishments. He concluded that we cannot choose any course of action ourselves. Skinner said we have no will, no morality and no conscience. If we listen to that we might as well give up. Humans are hopeless, hapless and helpless. If I thought that way I would leave counseling.

Both personal experience and psychological research prove that he was wrong. Biology is not destiny nor is the past predictive of the future. Biology may influence our lives but God alone is the author of life. The past affects the future but only the future is predictive of the future. Some of the most successful people in history suffered greatly. However, they overcame pain, prison and poverty to achieve great things. On the other hand, many born with a silver spoon have made a terrible mess of things.

We can choose. We do have a conscience and we do have a will. Neither poverty nor wealth is a guarantee of success or failure. Faith in God, hope for the future and love of the community brings a passion to learn, a desire to grow and resilience to persevere through the ups and downs of life.

I am often asked if I do not think things are getting worse in our nation. "Don't you believe sin is darker and more virulent than ever?" my answer is, "Sin is not worse. Things are getting better and better and worse and worse." However, I do believe there is less gray than ever. Unbelievers are more willing than before to fight against the light of God but there are more people doing good and godly things than ever. There are more churches shining brightly by helping the poor and sickly than in past years. The contrast between darkness and light seems more glaring.

Think of Saul, Israel's first king, chosen because he was big, strong and beautiful. He stood a head taller than any man in his army. He could play center for UC or Ohio State. But, he had a problem. He was ruled by FEAR. (False Evidence Appearing Real) He was insecure in his abilities and God's call. He couldn't stand up to the People Pressure of his troops. He was big on the outside but empty on the inside. As my Dad would say, "It isn't the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog."

Be Transformed

Second, scripture says we can be transformed or totally changed. The focus is on progress not instant perfection. In fact, the term perfect is best seen as maturity rather than total purity. When we admit we are imperfect does not mean God has lost the battle. Nor does it mean that God's love for us has stopped. It just shows the world why we preach Jesus as the only way to heaven.

Our weakness gives God the Father an opportunity to show His grace, mercy, love and power. Transformed is *metanoia* and means repentance or a change in thinking and actions. Every talk, sermon and relationship needs to focus on repentance, but in a way that directs us to God's compassion and grace not His wrath. Let's face it. Many of us hear the term repent and we immediately think of God's condemnation. We know we are guilty and deserve punishment and that often leads us to FEAR.

Guilt is a forensic term. When a person is guilty a penalty must be paid. This notion is deeply ingrained within the psyche and habits of many Americans. It is foundational to our legal system which comes from the Bible and Ten Commandments. What is missing from our mental map, however, is that Jesus went to the cross to give us forgiveness of that guilt.

This leaves us in a fix because a person needs to have a conscience and be guided to live in a moral and ethical manner as we are guided by that conscience. If after a failure and guilt we have no sense of relief and forgiveness, we end up with a heart of self justification and condemnation. Many of us "feel guilty" despite being forgiven.

Third, we change those negative ideas and feelings by renewal of the mind. We have at our disposal a supernatural action that brings repentance. The Holy Spirit hovers over us to bring forth new life. Sin and guilt clouds our minds and bring confusion. Guilt and shame are spiritual Kryptonite's that keep super men and super women in bondage. Thankfully, God gives us light, clarity, guidance and godliness all of which lead to peace, power and a positive life.

Roman Catholics have a system for confession and forgiveness but few Protestants have a way to deal with failure. Some people actually engage in habitual acts of mental self condemnation to punish themselves harshly. They hope God will stop His punishment if they hurt themselves badly enough. That is a sure cause of misery.

Fellowship is Important

Resisting conformity to the sick world is possible with God's grace and a community of love. We cannot do it by ourselves. The inspiration of the Spirit through fellowship, worship, prayer and meditation can develop a healing process. God showed us in the Bible how to establish healing-growth communities. As Senator Hillary Clinton said, "It takes a village to rear children." She is right on from a biblical point of view.

The importance of group/community support is strongly affirmed throughout the Bible. The church is called a family, a congregation, a sheepfold and a body with many members. In Ephesians 4 St. Paul speaks about the many benefits of working in a harmony that builds itself up in love until perfection is the result.

A psychological experiment was done many years ago to find out if it helps to have support when we have to make a difficult decision. Twenty college students sat in front of a screen on which two lines of different lengths were shown. The first 19 were lab assistants paid to say the short one was longer. They all agreed to lie in order to test how the one stooge would respond to so much pressure from peers.

Imagine what you would do if you saw two lines and instantly knew which was longer. You are confident in your judgment until you hear the others who respond before you. After each stooge picks the short one, you are not so sure. What would you do? Agree with the crowd or take a stand and speak the truth? Well, either is a difficult choice.

- Some agreed with the majority against their better judgment. They knew it was wrong but they conformed to the peer pressure.
- Others spoke honestly but did so with lowered heads and ashen faces. They felt shame and pain but stayed true to themselves.
- Neither was happy. One was sad because he was unable to speak his mind and the other because he spoke up against the crowd.

Later, the experiment was changed ever so slightly. One of the nineteen assistants was instructed to choose the correct line. This one show of support made a remarkable difference to the innocent volunteer. Now the dupe easily and happily spoke up and chose the right ones. His countenance was bright and he never gave in to the peer

pressure. The support of only one person changed the feelings and behavior of every stooge dramatically.

The Bible is correct about peer support. It is a critical component of positive change. As noted in Col 1:27-29:

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect, Teleios, in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Jesus said, "Where two or more are gathered in my name I am there." He always sent the disciples out two by two. He understood group dynamics and the dynamics of change. We need each other if we are to make a difference in the world. We need community. We need mutual support.

Why are mountain climbers tied together? To keep the sane ones from going home

A transformed-mind tells me the truth about myself

- It is truth that sets us free. Lies keep us in bondage.
- Know your position in Christ; your Identity and Inheritance as a child of God.
- All children of God have weaknesses, failings and problems.
- Be honest about yourself and confront your weaknesses, failures and fears
- Confess your failures and failings to God knowing He will forgive you.
- Have some safe friends to whom you can share your faults and receive prayer.
- We cannot feel our way out of thinking but we can think our way out of feelings. The key to long lasting change is a new mind and heart.
- Unfortunately, the world is better at telling lies than the church is at telling the truth. We need to improve our ability to tell the truth that sets people free.

Know and Use you gifts and abilities

- Self Respect is always be linked to behavior
- Be bold in accepting and using your gifts and talents

Summary: This boils down to two principles. Being and Doing, both of which are contained in these passages in Romans 12 and tell us how to live in abundance.

BEING: I know who I am in Christ. I am confident in my personhood as a child of God. This is the core belief that allows us to stop being conformed to the world of petty values and verbal attacks.

Romans 8:14 says, If you are led by the Spirit you are a child of God with all the rights and privileges of the family. Do not think like a slave but like an eldest son.

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DOING: I must know that I have talents, gifts and abilities and can use them with confidence. RO 12 says, If you are in ministry then minister; if you are a prophet then prophesy; teachers need to teach; exhorters must exhort; leaders need to lead. Nike says, "Just do it."

This may not seem like much but it is a key to the abundant life. We are facing a deadly epidemic of emotional distress. It is an epidemic of depression and anxiety. It springs from a lack of balance in these two areas. When people are distressed they cannot serve the Lord with freedom. Either narcissism or yielding to peer pressure will be the result and both fail the test of God's call.

Life is difficult. This is a great truth, one of the greatest truths. It is a great truth because once we truly see it we can transcend it. Once we truly know that life is difficult - once we truly understand and accept it - then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters.

Scott Peck

The ability to act on knowledge is power. Most people in most organizations do not have the ability to act on the knowledge they possess. Michael Schrage

People who understand their Identity and Inheritance in Christ are very secure. Those who are also sure of their talents are like Timex watches. They have resilience that helps them *Take a licking but keep on ticking.*

Some people lack any sense of confidence in their abilities so they are not passionate about serving and taking responsibility to resist the culture. They are fearful to evangelize, serve or minister in His name.

Some accept their talents but have no Christian identity. When Peter denied Jesus he was confident in his abilities and loved to talk about them. However, he was confused about his place in the kingdom. It was not until God spoke to him on the housetop that he could break from the Jewish traditions of his peers.

How does such confidence develop? I left CHPC in 1989 to open a Christ centered psychiatric unit at Emerson Hospital. Over 95% of our patients were born-again believers who were anxious and depressed. Many had drug and alcohol problems as well as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Sexual Dysfunctions, violent anger, etc. Almost every one of them had been abused or abandoned as children. During the treatment we discovered a couple of patterns.

One, although these men and women had experienced God's saving grace and love they had no trusting faith in their new Identity and Inheritance. They lacked any confidence that God was their loving Father. They thought like slaves not children of God. The slightest failure, mistake or sin sent them into a gloomy, oppressive, pessimistic funk

with ruminations that they were bound for hell. Their inner lives were overcome by shame and condemnation.

Second, most had little confidence in their abilities. They had no hope for the future. They are not convinced that they had ever or could ever accomplish anything worthwhile. They never learned resilience; to take a licking but bounce back. Eyore was their patron saint. We taught them how to think like Tigger.

Others had the opposite problem. They believed they were wonderful and special. They had been praised for things that are not praiseworthy. They had been protected from every small or large disappointment. They expect to always be protected from pain and discomfort. So, when problems occurred they couldn't take a stand.

Amazingly, most hadn't played board games like Monopoly, Scrabble or Old Maid. They missed opportunities to develop self-confidence in the face of small adversities. In games children learn about winning and losing. We bought board games for the hospital and scheduled special times to them to play weekly. It was terrific therapy.

It is appropriate to feel badly when we lose. It brings sadness, pain when healthy people are defeated. Those are good feelings to discover and deal with early in life in small ways before the big failures really hit us. Learning to lose and come back stronger is essential to developing self-reliance, resilience and independence. Many people suffer from ADD: Adversity Deprivation Disorder. It is caused by parents and authorities who offer too much protection to the kids at home and school. This kind of over protection results in emotional weakness and a lack of resilience.

The distressed men and women in the Life Way Unit learned only as adults that which they needed to have learned as children. They learned to be gracious winners and resilient losers. They learned from losing and used their insights to play smarter.

A. D. D Adversity Deprivation Disorder

The weekly games quickly made up for their Adversity Deprivation and taught them to Take a licking and keep on ticking. If kids can't compete at baseball, spelling bees or Old Maid how can they stand up to drugs, pornography or attacks on their faith? How can a child who hasn't learned to recover from losing a game of Go Fish bounce back from a loss in business or the death of a family member?

When we fail at tennis, golf, checkers or math we feel badly. *Sadness, disappointment, anger and frustration are normal.* They are designed by God to spur us to improve. Learning from failure helps us accept limitations and shows us how to improve our skills. Consistent winners develop a resilient attitude. They know to persevere through thick and thin. They realize it takes both skill and hard work to make it in this world.

Real life is hard. Competition is real. Many bosses are unfair, harsh, mean and difficult. During my fifth year of teaching I worked for a man who disliked black kids. I could hardly stand being in his school system. I had to stand by helplessly as he bullied and punished the kids I loved. But I had a dilemma. I needed the job. What was I to do? If I went along with his racism I would have to live with evil. However, if I challenged him I would suffer certain persecution. I could “Go along to get along” or speak up and lose my job.

I agonized, worried and fretted. I lost sleep and talked with the other teachers. They warned me not to say anything. Should I be a People Pleaser or a Prophet Pleaser? Should I stand down or stand up? These are real challenges at work and in the world. God’s Spirit gave me the strength to win the battle and did the right thing. At other times my desire for approval or job security prevailed and I chickened out.

Shortly after my confrontation in the Teachers’ Lounge he called me in for a professional conference. The evaluation accused me of many faults all pointing to one fact: I was a poor teacher. It was one of the most devastating things that ever happened to me. I was ashamed and depressed. I felt like a failure in education and life.

Looking back 40 years I can see that this event was a gift from God. It turned out to be wonderful, but I did not see it that way in 1965. His wrath led me to return to college where I changed my career. God led me to enter the Masters’ Program in Student Personnel Counseling. My adversity turned out to be the best thing because it was God’s thing. He used it to move me into counseling.

After graduation Karen and I along with our new baby girl came to the University of Cincinnati. I thrived in an atmosphere of learning and growth. I later joined the staff of a church and used my training to establish a lay equipping center. I thank God for challenging me to speak up back in 1965. However, at that time, group pressure from my colleagues almost caused me to be a People Pleaser and conform to an evil system.

St. Julian of Norwich lived in Europe during the Black Plague, one of the most terrible times in world history. Despite losing many friends and family members he did not give up on God. Instead, he cared for others and turned his frustrations into creativity. One of his poems was sung by the people of that time as an act of faith.

But all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well...God said not, “You shall not be caught in a terrible tempest storm, or that you shall not be travailed or you shall not be diseased,” but he said, “You shall not be overcome.”

It is tempting to become a Rolex Watch person instead of a Timex. A Rolex is expensive, beautiful and fragile. It is not made for hard work. The diamonds are fragile and few want to risk damaging a piece of beautiful jewelry. The Rolex is for Image Management not managing real life. We need more watches and people that, Take a licking...

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Knowledge of BEING: When we forget to whom we belong we cannot stand up to the political winds of change.

In 1929 the Communist Central Committee in the USSR decided to kill Christianity. First, they drafted a secret memo telling all leaders how to sabotage the church. It was a simple plan to promote liberal beliefs through higher criticism of the Bible. They sponsored councils, seminars and church discussions attacking scripture, the supernatural, prominent Christian leaders and conservative theology. They tried to show that Christian leaders were immoral moneygrubbers.

The Bolsheviks wanted believers to doubt the Identity of the Church, God and the Bible. The devil cannot defeat those who have faith; he cannot overcome those who have hope for the future and who love God and neighbor.

Second, they attacked the Church's DOING by passing the infamous Law of 1929: *You say you are not of this world therefore you may have nothing to do with this world. You must stop all personal ministries to the sick, the poor and to children. You may not teach Sunday school, visit the hospital or baptize children.*

They did everything possible to separate the church from its mission and ministry. This was a terrible law but worse yet was the response of the church. They said:

We agree that we should not be involved in anything but prayer and worship. We do not know yet how to pray(so) how dare we try to tell people how to live.

The church had no confidence in its ability to act responsibly. The Bolsheviks succeeded in forcing church leaders to stop its important ministries of helping people in need. One young girl actually defied the Communist Party. Godly parents in a godless Matrix reared little Galina, in a Moscow flat. It was difficult to share the truth about God. The Bible was hidden behind other volumes in the book case and church attendance was avoided lest they end up deported to a gulag again.

Galina studied under Socialist teachers who aggressively promoted their hatred for Christians. How could a young child stand against this kind of tyranny? She found a way. At the age of ten Galina had a hunger for God's word but was afraid to ask her parents for the hidden Bible so she hatched a plot to get the scripture in her own way.

The schools forced the kids to read anti-biblical higher criticism propaganda written by Liberal Socialist "Bible scholars". They always attacked its veracity and authority. In order to accomplish their evil goals the schools had to publish books containing portions of the Bible along with the evaluations of Liberal Critics.

Galina cleverly asked the teacher if she could borrow some of those books to better understand the criticisms of that great and good Comrade Brother. The teacher was ecstatic that such a brilliant child wanted to study why the Bible was wrong. She gave Galina the sacred scriptures and as she read the Bible Jesus came to her. When asked

what she did about all the Liberal Socialist criticisms she replied “Anything that Bolshevik said I knew was wrong so I believed the opposite. I knew he was a liar.”

The prayers of believers around the globe parted the darkness so this little girl could resist the world, the flesh and the devil and find Christ as her Savior. Galina is a doctor and psychiatrist heading our ministry in the former USSR and establishing Renewed Christian Thinking and Addiction Recovery groups all over the nation.

When we know who we are in Christ and what we can do as His child FEAR will disappear. The enemy attacks by shouting about our weaknesses and whispering lies about the loss of God’s love because of our failures. Satan tempted Jesus to leave the Father’s plan and join forces with him. That act affirmed who Jesus was and attacked Him at the same time. Jesus, although hungry and thirsty never lost sight of His eternal purpose and reject the liar’s words.

Remember who you are and resist falling for the lies of Satan. Remember who you are and tell him about it. Remember your destiny is in the Father’s Forever Family.

Shoulds and Oughts Strengthen Our Stinking Thinking

When we fill our minds with shoulds and oughts they cause us to have feelings of anxiety, fear and sadness.

- ∴ Demands that things be different from what they are
- ∴ Cause / effect relationship places demands on oneself
- ∴ Prevents achievement of personal goals
- ∴ Hides personal wants & demands

- ∴ Result is guilt, failure, anger, self-condemnation

Activating Event	Irrational Self-talk (shoulds, musts, demands)	Change into rational statements
My son loses his textbook	<p>He should know better</p> <p>He should have been more careful</p> <p>He should be more responsible</p> <p>I shouldn't have to tell him</p> <p>My wife/husband should have taught him properly</p> <p>If I were a better father he would be perfect</p> <p>I must be better or he will fail</p>	<p>I wish he were more careful and responsible</p> <p>One of these days, he will understand that he only hurts himself</p> <p>I will be glad when he takes care of these things without my help</p> <p>I wish he will remember himself</p> <p>I will coach him and empower him</p> <p>No one is perfect</p> <p>I can trust my son to God's care</p>

The Original Serenity Prayer

Rev Reinhold Niebuhr

God, grant me the serenity to accept
The things I cannot change
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time:

Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace:
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it:

Trusting that you will make all things right
If I surrender to your will:
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with you in the next