

Our Core Business

John O. Reid (1930-2016)

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The term "core business" is one that is used by the world to identify where their business efforts should be placed. When a company steps outside of that arena, their efforts, rather than being concentrated, are dispersed and become much less effective and productive.

I would like to give you three examples of this today. We are going to be talking about our core business.

A friend of mine has a friend who made plastic bathtubs for doll houses. Not a very impressive business, yet he was successful. He decided to go into the canoe business. This was a business that was pretty competitive, but it had glamour to it. He lost everything because he stepped outside of his core.

Crown Zellerbach was another situation. It was a very successful corporation. They sold paper supplies to almost every restaurant, hospital, school system, college, hotel, summer camp, etc., all across the United States. They sold paper plates, paper towels, toilet tissue, hot cups, carry-out containers, and napkins of all sizes. The size of their business was gigantic.

Some began to reason that if they were to get into the restaurant supply business and supply frozen items, canned products, shortening and oil, cutlery, aluminum products, china, silverware, and all of the other millions of products that the restaurant industry uses, they could capture many more dollars worth of business.

Thus, they started a new company called Zellerbach Food Service. I was friends with those who formed the new company, and soon I was selling them hundreds of thousands of pounds of products.

As time went on, the new company became recognized as a success in the industry. But after several years, the company began to wonder if they had made the right decision by deviating from their core business. Their core business had been to own hundreds of thousands of acres of trees, to plant trees, and to harvest them. They owned huge pulp mills and printing plants to produce the paper products that the industry needed and wanted.

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The company, with the new buyers, had to look far a field to plan for those items needed in their Food Services Division. In regards to shortening and oil, they now had to consider crop conditions. Shrimp and other sea food items had to be contracted out into the future, not to mention canned fruits, vegetables, and frozen foods, and many china patterns and silverware and things that restaurants used.

In short, their food service business, though very successful, was far different than their core business, which they fully knew and understood. So, to the surprise of the industry, they sold off the successful food service division and returned to doing what they understood best—their core.

The third example is one that those who lived in Pasadena or the Los Angeles area may remember. At one time the Worldwide Church of God decided to go into grocery business. Far from their core, or commission, they decided to open a food store for those around the Pasadena campus. They sold five gallon containers of raw honey, butter, bread, healthy cheeses, and as many healthy food products that they could find. I believe that they also sold vitamins, toys and a few games.

The question that had to be asked, and I think it is a good question, is one that we can apply to ourselves. What did this take away from the core mission of the church? It took a full time minister (I think it was Al Portune, Jr., as I recall) to keep inventories, make up weekly orders, oversee the cash, and balance the books. In doing this, he had to give up proper Bible study and sermon preparation, visiting the flock, and possibly it dipped into his own Bible study and prayer at the same time.

Indeed, the motivation had seemed right—better products at honest prices for the brethren—but in the end, it was a deviation from the core, or calling of the church, and it failed.

As I was laying around after my accident feeling very sorry for myself, I started to consider what our core business, as those called by God the Father, truly ought to be. It occurred to me that God the Father has a core business, as does Jesus Christ, as do we. I felt that it might be helpful for us to consider an outline. This is not the full core. Do not misunderstand me. Just what is the core of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and what is our core, that we might not be moved from it?

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the

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image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

The central purpose, or core business, of our Father in Heaven is to create a family, and you are part of that family.

The scope of what God the Father had to do, in working through Jesus Christ, was awesome. Out of the entire universe, He had to create an environment to place His creation in. This had to have the right climate, food, gravity, water, plants, animals, insects, ocean life, and beauty—the absolute epitome of perfection in every way. All this was done that His purpose, His core (mankind), might have the very best.

Genesis 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

The first thing that God had to do, through Jesus Christ, was to set up an environment for mankind to live in.

John 6:44-45 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me."

We are specifically called by God the Father, and we are taught by Him.

In my early years in the church, I never heard about the Father; everything was about Jesus Christ. The Father was an individual that I just did not know much about. He was in the background, and I was surprised to find out just how much God the Father did. I think that we all realize that we were called by God the Father, but I am not sure how many of us really realize that He teaches each of us individually and personally.

Logic should dictate that God would not call us, and then not work with us. The future that He holds in store for us, the future of assisting in the helping of billions of people to become a part of the God family, truly requires that we be taught here and now.

Just as a sculptor shapes a stone or some other material into the finished product he desires, God did not just call us randomly, wondering what He would do with us when we are changed into spirit. He called each of us with a specific purpose, or office, in

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mind. I know many times that we do not feel like we are worth much, but God thinks we are worth a great deal.

Matthew 20:20-23 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

It is up to God to decide who will sit on Jesus' right hand or left.

Ezekiel 37:21-25 Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever."

This has been planned by God the Father. He does not do these things randomly. David had been groomed to rule over all of Israel. What about Joseph, Abraham, Isaac, Paul, and all of the prophets who served God? Has God planned a place for them? Has He planned a place for you? You bet!

It is the Father alone who determines when the time is correct to conclude this age, and

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the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. That is also part of God the Father's core purpose.

If we stop to consider that we are being shaped by God in the trials and tests that we go through (just as Christ was, and all that have gone before us), we might understand what all of mankind has to suffer, and the difficulty of overcoming.

I Corinthians 10:13-14 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry

In other words, the same temptations that faced Jesus Christ (those in the preceding verses in chapter 10) and those of this world, face us. It is up to us to be strengthened by overcoming the pulls of this world that we were a part of. These temptations that we must overcome are what the Father uses to sculpt us into the end result that He wishes to achieve in us. We do not always have the same temptations; we are all tempted by different things. What God wants from us is our persistence in staying faithful to our calling during these temptations. This, together with overcoming, will build the absolute character that God wants us to have. It is the same thing that Jesus Christ did, as we will see.

Romans 5:3-5 states:

Romans 5:3-5 But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience and patience character, and character hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.

That is something else that was part of God the Father's core. He was to give us His Spirit so that we might be able to understand and comprehend what the world cannot understand. In all of this, we are being shaped into the character and the person that God wants for each of us.

James 1:1-4 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith

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produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

The trials being referred to in verses 1-4 are not the alluring temptations and trials of this world. This is talking about the trials that we face daily: illness, job loss, difficulty in paying bills, persecution. It is our persistence in our calling that develops the character that God wants us to have.

James 1:12-18 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures

I have known people in the church who feel that God is really out to get them, giving them trial after trial, or He is tempting them to do this or that. God does not do this.

This word "temptation" is used in a general sense. It could be a difficult physical life, or temptations of the world, or anything that will work to pull us away from our calling. Being tested and overcoming reflects the great love and persistence that God wants to see in us.

In verse 13, he says that we are not going to be deceived in this area, thinking that God may be the source of our being tempted in evil. That is never the case.

Verses 14 and 15 remind us that we are tempted by our own wrong lusts, and if we follow these lusts, they could very well lead to death.

In verses 16 and 17, he states that we are not to be deceived in this area, thinking that God might be the source of our being tempted with evil. That is never the case. The reason is that every good gift, and only good gifts, comes down from God for our well being. This is how much the Father loves us and really wants us to succeed.

In verse 18, James states that God the Father has begotten us and has brought us forth from this world of sin, and He has done it with the Word of truth. And He has set us apart as the first in His future family. We will see how this frustrates Satan. We are going to look at his core purpose as well.

I Corinthians 1:26-31 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

You begin to see why it is absolutely essential that we be trained and have God teach us. We have been called to confound the world. This requires much training in the areas that will help us do our jobs.

I Corinthians 6:2-3 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

We must learn to do what God wants us to do and to put God's word into practice in our life. It is absolutely essential.

With this future in front of us, can we possibly think that we are not being shaped by God the Father? He sees it as being absolutely essential. Paul exclaims in Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Thus, God the Father is working in our lives individually to perfect us, and bring us into His Kingdom and family. He does this through teaching He inspires us to receive, and the experiences and the trials that we go through.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

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who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

He has blessed us with the truth that this world does not have. He has revealed to us salvation, justification, sanctification, and the future that He has in store for us. In short, He reveals heavenly things to His church that this world cannot comprehend. I think that sometimes we tend to think that we are just going along like other churches, but this is really special.

Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

God the Father has done this. The word "us" shows that this is not referring to nations or peoples, but individuals that God had planned to work with at this end time. And the word "foundation" shows that God planned this before He began the physical creation. And He did this not that we should just understand, but that we individually should become holy! This is what our calling is about.

Ephesians 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will

In verse five, we see that He predetermined to adopt us, and He did this with excitement and great pleasure. He was excited about you being called.

Because of our being chosen and adopted as family and being accepted, we should be filled with praise for Him, and with more than that. We should desire to obey and please God with every fiber of our being.

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Because of calling us individually, we have redemption through the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Put more plainly, we have the forgiveness of sin, and the permanent consequences sin produces.

Ephesians 1:8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

Because of His specific calling, a great part of His core purpose is to give wisdom pertaining to salvation, and prudence, which is the proper application of that wisdom.

Ephesians 1:9-10 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

God the Father has taken care to reveal to us what has been hidden from this world. I have been in the church for forty two years, and I think that sometimes one can take it for granted. We come here every week, and we hear sermons every week. But to the world, they do not understand it. In the fullness of times, all "things" or every aspect of the creation on earth and in heaven will be reconciled unto Jesus Christ through His blood. He has done this that we may have the truth.

Ephesians 1:11-12 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Because of the Father's core purpose we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined of the Father who works all things after His counsel and understanding. We should reflect the glory of His wonderful plan as those who first trusted in Jesus Christ. This is how much God the Father is involved with all of the brethren, wherever they may be, around the world.

For His core purpose for mankind, He had to take a very devastating step that would give them the opportunity to become members of the God family. The Father had to offer the most precious thing that He could ever offer, and that was His Son, Jesus Christ.

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

This was part of the Father's core purpose as well.

In Genesis 1:26-27 God states, "Let us make man in our image." He meant far more than just the physical shape of God. God's core business, as far as we are concerned, is to produce a family, and as it states in James 1:18, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

Jesus Christ had a core purpose as well. Jesus came to reveal the Father to us, and also many more things. God the Father would instruct Jesus Christ what He wanted done, and Jesus Christ would do it.

John 14:1-9 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Luke 7:11-17 Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

This shows you the nature, and the heart, of Jesus Christ. He knew what this widow was going through, and He knew what her future was going to be. This shows what God

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the Father would have done had He been here, and Jesus Christ came to reveal Him doing just that.

John 12:47 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

This was part of Jesus Christ's core. For Jesus to become our High Priest, He had to fully understand all that we go through in being human, and of continually being confronted by Satan and his demons.

Hebrews 2:6-8 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

Why did God do this? Because He has a wonderful future in store for man in the World Tomorrow.

Hebrews 2:9-10 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

That is going to be our job as well.

Hebrews 2:11-18 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me." Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise

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shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

In verse 9, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone." Here we see the pattern that is set for us. Jesus lived His earthly life correctly before His Father, and for us this is a perfect example. He is crowned with glory and honor.

The apostle Paul tells us that we will receive the same reward as we go through this life suffering, learning and overcoming. He says in II Timothy 4:7-8, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the 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."

Jesus' purpose, or core work, was to live a perfect life and to accept the sins of mankind in His death.

Verse 17 tells us that He might be merciful, that He might be afflicted with a feeling of our infirmities, and that by partaking of our nature, with all its weaknesses and afflictions, He might know how to be a compassionate Priest toward the poor and the afflicted, and He might be faithful in all that relates to being a High Priest, in mercy and in judgment, and make a propitiation for our lives.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

I do not think that we have any idea of the intensity of the temptations that Jesus had to face. You can take our worst trials and multiply them by whatever number you want, and

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I do not think that we can begin to touch what He went through, that He might understand every facet of what people have to go through in this world.

Again, in verse 14, Jesus shows us the progression as it should be. Jesus held fast to His core purpose, fulfilling the purpose that God the Father set forth for Him to accomplish, and has gone to sit beside His Father. Thus, we can see our path if we are faithful to this calling. We are to be faithful to this calling, and faithful in our overcoming, and we too will have a reward in the World Tomorrow.

John 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

Part of Jesus' mission, was to open the eyes of those whom God the Father had called to the salvation process, and to close the eyes of those who thought themselves to be so righteous and so perfect. The effect of His preaching was to encourage those that the Father called. To the majority of the scribes and Pharisees, it would exasperate them, causing their pride and opposition to Him to confirm that they were wrong. There is an old saying that is so true: Unrighteousness cannot stand to be around righteousness. It just cannot stand it. The scribes and Pharisees, for the most part, could not stand that.

Acts 3:19-26 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

Matthew 1:21 states that Jesus shall save His people from their sins.

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Quoting from the Personal article by John W. Ritenbaugh on page 8 in the July *Forerunner* magazine: John 14:18-23, "God's purpose includes more than just atoning for our sins through Christ's blood. God's purpose includes the work of Jesus Christ as our High Priest, perfecting our character by means of living in us through His Spirit."

As Head of the church, Jesus Christ inspires us and corrects us, and He gives us gifts to fulfill our responsibilities, and He labors to create in us a clean heart, purified and in the character image of the Father.

II Corinthians 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

That is what is taking place in our lives, in the instruction in your Bible study, and in all that Jesus Christ is doing in you.

Finally, the overall purpose, which I think has been mentioned already:

I Corinthians 15:24-28 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

This is part of Jesus Christ's core, to put down all rule and all authority and power. He has to bring the creation totally in order, and then He gives it to God the Father.

In Matthew 4, we read of Satan's attack on Jesus Christ, and I think that we can learn a lesson from this:

Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He

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answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Satan wanted Jesus Christ to deviate from His core, and that is what the whole attack was about. Satan came to Jesus, not so much to challenge the fact that He was the Son of God, but asserting that he had the power and right to satisfy His hunger or needs.

This clearly shows that this first temptation was no simple incitement to use improper means of making bread, or an attempt to perform a miracle to prove to Himself that He was really God's Son. It was a temptation to use His Sonship in a way inconsistent with His God-ordained calling.

In other words, Satan's aim was to talk Jesus into using the powers that He possessed, in a fashion that did not fit the purpose of His being here on this earth. His core purpose for being on this earth was to be the perfect mediator and sacrifice, that He might save mankind. Satan's attack was designed to have Jesus respond to him just a little.

The final temptation listed here when Satan, the father of liars, offered Jesus the opportunity to not have to go through the agony of torture and the stake, but to immediately have control over the world. In short, Satan was trying to tempt Jesus to deviate from His Father's plan, which was His core, and to have Jesus listen to him, even just a little.

We all have to come to understand that Satan's temptations are not just to cause us to break this or that law, or to quit fighting wrong pulls. Indeed, we all should fight to not break God's law, or give in to wrong pulls and lusts. Satan's desire is to pull us from the purpose that God called us for: to be faithful, to grow, to overcome, and to be in the Kingdom of God. That is what Satan is after, and to accomplish this, the first thing he

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wants us to do is just to have us listen to him, even a little bit.

Jesus immediately saw through all of the tempting, not just the three listed here, but that Satan wanted Him to become yoked with him. Jesus understood that there can be no communion of light with darkness at all, and we have to understand that as well.

Satan's core purpose is that he hates us, and he wants us all dead. Disobedience to God is what Satan longs to produce in God's creation. This is what Satan longs to produce in God's creation to thwart all that God is doing. Satan has hated God and His way of living. Early on, Mr. Armstrong has stated that the reason for all the crater-filled planets is the tremendous battle that took place as Satan tried to take over God's position as ruler of the universe.

What would Satan do to us if he could?

Luke 22:31-32 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

I Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Satan does not roar, brethren. Lions may roar after the kill, but beforehand they are stealthy.

Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places

This is what we have to be careful of. Satan does things quietly. When he went to Adam and Eve, he said, "Did God say that you should not eat of this tree?" He did not roar. He did not shout. He just posed the question. When he went to Ananias and Sapphira, he put in their heart that they could appear righteous by still giving some, and keeping their property. It caused their death.

Today, we have on the Internet the wrong things to view, if we choose to do that. That is not roaring, that is a subtle thing. We have charge cards where we can charge ourselves into oblivion and then are not able to pay them off, and then have that on our minds pulling at us. This is the type of work that Satan does. He does not come at you head on. This is why we need to put on the whole armor of God. This is why we need to study, pray, and do all of these things that we might stand.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Satan, with all of his schemes, all of his planning, everything that he had done, felt that he could easily destroy what God was doing. But, you see, we have a core purpose, and these people that he is referring to here stuck to it, and it enraged Satan terribly.

Thus, his core business is to destroy us by every possible means, and to bring about that destruction he just wants us to listen to him if only.....just a little.

How about our core purpose?

Luke 10: 25-27 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

That is the beginning of the core business that we have.

There have been many groupings of words put forth to explain the phrase, "Thou shall love the Lord." One grouping expresses our acting vehemently or intensely. "Love is always active." In other words, what you love you want to be near. From another point of view, "To love is for one to be completely at rest, or to be intensely satisfied with the one that he loves, and he does not want anything else to love." Still another is, "One who eagerly and vigorously holds fast to that which is the object of his love." And lastly, "One who rests, because that which a man loves intensely he rests in, with fixed admiration and contemplation. So that genuine love changes not, but always abides steadily attached to that which is loved."

This is reflected by putting God first in everything one does. One is ready to give up, do, or suffer anything, in order to please and glorify God. This is part of our core. This is what it means to love God with one's whole heart.

To love God with one's soul is to endure all difficulties, persecutions even to death, rather than dishonor God. Loving God with one's strength, also means the spending of one's body and strength and abilities in his service to God. This would include the physical setting aside of time daily to pray and study, plus meditating on God's word with periodic fasting.

Commentators state, "loving God with all one's mind" is to apply that mind to only know God, His will, and His truths. This sounds so restrictive to only know God when there is so much in the world. This on the surface sounds limiting, and yet just the opposite is true. It is the opportunity to really put into practice God's mind working in us. We must take God's word and apply it into the life that we have. We must apply it in business, in education, and living with the family.

Hebrews 6:1-2 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

It is this "going on to perfection," learning how to apply God's Word, that makes you useful to God. This makes you ready for the World Tomorrow. We must understand how to use God's Word.

The second great commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. How do we do this?

Psalms 15:1-5 (NIV) "Lord, whom may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellow man, who despises a vile man, but honors those who fear the Lord, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe from the innocent. He who does these things shall never be shaken.

It is stated in the *Soncino Commentary*, that this Psalm is the most popular Psalm next to the 23rd Psalm, and it incorporates, or summarizes all 613 commandments of the Pentateuch, meaning by this, that their moral purpose is here crystallized.

Psalm 15:1-5 (Living Bible) "Lord, who may go and find refuge and shelter in your tabernacle up on your holy hill? Anyone who leads a blameless life and is truly sincere. Anyone who refuses to slanders others, does not listen to gossip, never harms his neighbor, speaks out against sin, criticizes those committing it, commends the faithful followers of the Lord, keeps a promise even if it ruins him, does not crush his debtors with high interest rates, and refuses to testify against the innocent despite the bribes offered him, such a man shall stand forever!"

This is how we love our neighbor. We know that we are to keep the commandments.

Matthew 19:17 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

One of our core purposes is the keep the commandments.

Revelation 14:1-5, 12 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus

They believe God and have the same faith as Jesus had.

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Why does Satan hate us with every fiber of his being? Because we work at our core business, and the result is that we have the opportunity to become members of the very God Family, and he cannot stand it.

We realize that the reason that we have been called is stated in Jesus Christ's final prayer in John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

The core purpose of our being called is to become like God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

This is part of the core that we have to be involved with. Our purpose, in having been given this wonderful calling, is to respond by working to arrive at complete unity in the holding of the truth, and confidence in our Father and our Lord and King Jesus Christ.

John 17:20-23 I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

The phrase, "that they all may be made perfect," means that we might grow into a complete person. *Barnes' Notes* says: "He does not refer to the doctrine of sinless perfection, but to the state of manhood, as compared with that of childhood, a state of vigor, wisdom, when the full growth should be attained." This is what we are part of. We are to know, follow, put into practice, and imitate everything that God does.

We have one more purpose, and I will briefly touch on this. How important are we to this world? We are to be the salt and the light to the earth.

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Matthew 5:13-16 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

As Jesus Christ states in Matthew 24, "but for the elect sake there should be no flesh saved alive." That is how important you are, brethren.

We are to let our light shine to the world around us, not by going door to door telling people about God, but by the way we conduct ourselves in living our daily lives. Our homes should be neat and clean, and our cars should be as clean as possible. Our children should be raised, as was mentioned today, in politeness. You can take them into a restaurant, and people marvel that they sit there and do not bang the silverware on the glass. We have had people ask us how we do it. When I tell them, they say they cannot do it that way.

We are to be honest in our work ethic and in business dealings with all that we come in contact with (family included). Those that we come into contact with are going to see a difference in us. Every core produces something, either good or bad.

I am going to take a poll here. Back in the 1930's (when I was a child) we used to eat apples. We would have the apple core left over, and we would shout, "Apple core, Baltimore, who's your friend." Then somebody would say, "Eddie" or "Billy," and then we would throw the core at him. Did anybody ever do that?

Just as the core, designed by God, in fruit was destined to produce much more of the same kind of fruit, the core that He has given us to adhere to, is destined to produce the same thing.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Jeremiah 30:18-22 Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob's tents, And have mercy on his dwelling places; The city shall be built upon its own mound, And the palace shall remain according to

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its own plan. Then out of them shall proceed thanksgiving And the voice of those who make merry; I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as before, And their congregation shall be established before Me; And I will punish all who oppress them. Their nobles shall be from among them, And their governor shall come from their midst; Then I will cause him to draw near, And he shall approach Me; For who is this who pledged his heart to approach Me?' says the LORD. 'You shall be My people, And I will be your God.'"

Jeremiah 50:4-6 "In those days and in that time," says the LORD, "The children of Israel shall come, They and the children of Judah together; With continual weeping they shall come, And seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, With their faces toward it, saying, 'Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant That will not be forgotten.' My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; They have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; They have forgotten their resting place."

Jeremiah 3:14-15 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Staying true to the core work that we have been given to accomplish will bring us to the most wonderful and fulfilling future that we could ever imagine.

I Peter 2:1-10 (N.E.B) Then away with all malice and deceit, away with all pretence and jealousy, and recrimination of every kind! Like the new born infants you are, you must crave pure milk (spiritual milk, I mean), so that you may thrive upon it to your soul's health. Surely you have tasted that the Lord is good. So come to Him, our Living Stone—the Stone rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God. Come and let yourselves be built, as living stones, into a spiritual temple; become a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands written: I lay in Zion a choice corner-stone of great worth. The man who has faith in it will not be put to shame. The great worth of which it speaks is for you who have faith. For those who have no faith, the Stone which the builders rejected has become not only the Corner Stone, but is also a stone

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to trip over, a rock to stumble against. They fall when they disbelieve the Word. Such was their appointed lot. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God for His own, to proclaim the triumphs of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. You are now the people of God, who once were not His people; outside His mercy once, you have now received His mercy.

What a wonderful blessing that we have been given. We have been taken from being the weak, base, and foolish of the world, and have been given the opportunity, through adhering to the core purpose God has set before us, to become the very royal priesthood of God. Therefore let us not let down, but strive to claim this absolutely marvelous future that God has set before us.