



BBC UPDATE

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A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-REFLECTION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH



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Jeremiah 23:29 *“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”*

Psalms 119:2 *“Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, And that seek him with the whole heart.”*

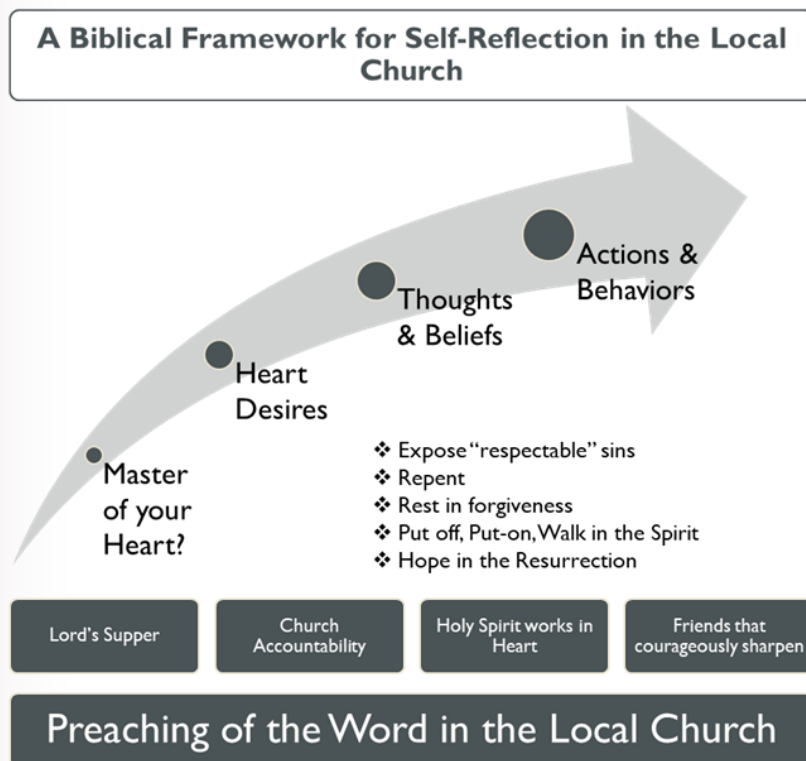
Psalms 119:59 *“I thought on my ways, And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.”*

The deceitful and desperately wicked heart of the old man seeks to avoid exposure at all costs (Gen.3:7-10; Jer.17:9). The born-again believer has an adamic predisposition to hide, cover, and misdirect others from seeing their sin. The Lord warned His disciples not to behave as the Pharisees that covered their wicked hearts with external morality (Mt.23). Elsewhere, James revealed the believer’s predisposition toward self-deception by being a *“hearer of the word, and not a doer”* (Jms.1:23-24). Furthermore, we deceive ourselves into categorizing “cardinal” and/or “respectable” sins (Jms.2:10), which are then compartmentalized in the recesses of the heart from the detection of various realms of community (work → church → family → spouse).

The local church is the *only* institution with Christ as its foundation and head that has the authority to aim the powerful Word of God at the hearts of its members (Eph. 2:20; Col.1:18; I Tim. 3:15). Nevertheless, self-deception can insidiously take over an assembly if the Word of God is not purposely aimed at the hearts of its members each week in the realm of application (CIA = context, interpretation, application). Otherwise, perpetual “hearers” look in the mirror of God’s Word and think “I’m okay” and move forward in deceptive self-righteousness, and become critical of others (Dt. 29:19). The image below depicts a biblical framework for pastors and church members to consider for preaching and self-reflection in the Word of God.

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Don't miss the target when preaching the Word

As the pillar and ground of the truth, the local body of Christ has the responsibility to reprove, rebuke, and exhort in *patience* and *meekness* with the Word of God (II Tim.2:24-26, 4:2). Ultimately, the Lord runs His church and works in hearts; however, great responsibility is given to the angel (pastor) of each church to lead the flock in seeking their first love in their hearts – Christ (Ps.119:2; Rev.2:1-8). Yet, each Pastor and teacher of the Word can fall into the trap of aiming the Word at those outside the assembly and not at the hearts of those within; subsequently, an echo chamber environment can develop that allows “respectable” sins. The battle with this fear of man has always been a struggle for the man of God (Prov.29:25). The LORD exhorted Jeremiah to not fear the disapproving and convicted faces of those that received the message (Jer.1:8, 17; Ezek.2:6; Mt.10:28). The fear of man test forces the man of God to consider a variety of “repercussions” if the Word offends the heart of the hearer (e.g., tithes/finances, being liked, relational friction, verbal, or physical violence). The prophet Micah recognized and rebuked the seemingly safe and profitable ministry of the false prophets that assuaged the unrighteousness of the people with their smooth tongues (Mic.2:6-10, 3:1-11). This framework is meant to aim the application of the Word at the master of ones’ heart, heart desires, thought life, and behaviors. Does your assembly aim the Word of God at the deceitfully wicked hearts of the members?

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Who is the Master of your heart?

Who or what do you seek after at the core of every decision (Ps.119:2)? Who is the master of your heart? Who or what do you serve – sin or Christ (Rom.6:20,22). This is the root question. Christ stated in Matthew 6:24, “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*” Likewise, the first and greatest commandment is to “*love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*” (Mt.22:37-40). If Christ is not the ruling center of one’s minute-by-minute motivation than He is usually replaced by selfish self-will or money.

The Hebrew root word behind “*seek*” in Psalm 119:2 is *darash* (דָּרַשׁ) which means “to carefully or seriously seek or search out” and it is primarily rendered in the KJV as “*seek*” or “*inquire.*” Moses instructed Israel to seek the LORD “*with all thy heart and with all thy soul*” (Dt.4:29). David’s first psalm after the reinstatement of Tabernacle worship in Jerusalem called for the faithful to “*Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually*” (I Chron.16:1). Sadly, but not surprisingly, the wicked heart of man has perpetually sought after sorcery (Is.8:19), idols (Is.19:3), false religion (Amos 5:5), security through unsaved relationships (Ezra 9:12), adultery (II Sam.11:3), mischief (Prov.11:27), vanity (Eccl.1:13), and self-reliance (Zeph.1:6). At the core of idolatry is unbelief in God and His Word, which is manifested by seeking control and comfort through self-reliant efforts and idols.

Key questions to consider in this area:

- How much of your day is motivated to live like Christ (Mt.22:37-40)?
- How much of your day is viewed through the lens of the mind of Christ (I Cor.2:16; Phil.2:5-10)?
- Who or what are you truly seeking (Ps.119:2)?
 - * Living like Christ is manifested through serving others and leading your family in love.
 - * Living for self is characterized by low-grade anger for not getting your way.
- What makes you tick? Christ? Self? Money?

What does your heart desire?

The master of one’s heart is revealed by the things their heart desires. The deceptive nature of the old man’s heart is to lust after the flesh, eyes, and pride of life (Jms.1:13-15; I Jn.2:15-17). The Spirit-filled believer will crucify the old man and yield themselves to Christ (Rom.6:11-16). The above continuum reveals one’s master will drive one’s heart, mind, and behaviors.

- Do you seek the LORD and His Word daily? (Ps.119:2)
- Do you meditate on the Word? (Josh.1:8; Ps.1:2)

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- Are you dependent on the LORD in strength and weakness? (II Cor.12:9-10)
- How self-reliant are you? (Prov.3:5-6)
- Do you focus on serving others before serving yourself? (Mt.22:37-40; Phil.2:5-10)
- Do you meditate and feast on your own selfish desires?
- Do you seek control and comfort in your life through other means than Christ?

What deceptive thoughts and beliefs do you hold onto?

The deceitful heart breeds deceptive thoughts and false-fixed beliefs that are contrary to sound doctrine (Tt.1:9). What lies do you believe that inform your behaviors? What lies persist from your old man baggage? The battle over thoughts is spiritual – Christ-like thoughts versus deceptive thoughts. Paul revealed the connection between an individual’s thoughts and disobedience in II Corinthians 10:3-6. In doing so, he weaves the thoughts of one’s heart into the spiritual battle with the demonic realm (Jer.17:9; Jms.1:13-16). Furthermore, he reveals that spiritual battles of the mind must be met with spiritual weapons that are *“mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds.”* This truth demands that believers discern the hearts and thoughts of man with the Word of God (Heb.4:12); as well, the solution is found in the double-edged sword of the Word.

Most deceptive thoughts are rooted in fear and self-reliance, which pushes one to a sight-based life. The following are some examples of deceptive thoughts believers can face.

- *“I suppose God did not really mean what he said”* (Eve – Gen.3:4)
- *“If I don’t get circumcised on top of repentance, I cannot be saved”* (Gal. 1:7)
- *“If I don’t see the scars in Christ’s hands then He did not die and raise again”* (Thomas – Jn.20:24-29)
- *“My sins are too bad to be forgiven. I brought this on myself and deserve to wallow in shame”* (I Jn.1:9).
- *“I must be perfect in order for God to be pleased with me”* (I Cor.1:25-31)
- *“This problem is too big for God to handle.”*
- *“That person has more influence over my life than God does.”*
- *“My situation is hopeless.”*
- *“I am better off dead than alive.”*

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Your actions and behaviors expose your heart

Matthew 12:35 states, “*A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*” The heart will manifest itself through externalized behavior...at some point. However, all sin brews in the heart for a period of time before it manifests externally (Jms.1:13-15). Christians are often blindsided by sin that seemingly came “out of left field.” That heart sin usually hides in the context of external conformity to communal standards secondary to a fear of man. Furthermore, heart sins often brew in contexts that do not challenge the proud heart of man, but instead reward communal conformity and aim the Word of God at those outside the local church. External conformity to local church

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BBTS 2023 SPRING LECTURE SERIES

WHEN: APRIL 21, 2023

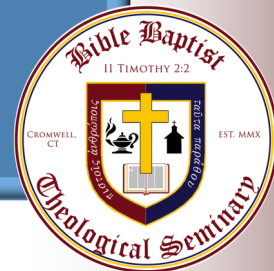
TIME: 9AM—3PM

WHAT: “SPECIAL STUDIES IN THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES”

WHERE: GALILEAN BAPTIST CHURCH
STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT

RSVP: ASAP

**LUNCHEON AND BOOK TABLE
AVAILABLE**



Some topics that will be addressed in the Special Studies in the Johannine Epistles:

- *“The Gnostic Attack upon the Lord Jesus Christ”
 - *The Johannine Comma (I Jn. 5:7-8)
- *“When should corporate prayer not be offered?”
 - *“Gnostic Missionaries”
 - *“How to deal with an Unsaved Pastor”
 - *“How much Gnosticism is in Your Church?”

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communal standards *does not exclusively guarantee* a right heart with God. Yes, submission and obedience are important and necessary for leaders (husbands, men) and dependents (wives and children); however, we must not confuse that with a “*true heart in full assurance of faith*” (Heb.10:22).

A practical action plan

Aim the Word of God in a precise manner at the selfish, deceitful, desperately wicked old man nature of the believer with every message. Help expose the idolatry, unbelief, disobedience, and respectable sins in the believer’s heart. Upon exposure of heart sins, the believer is to confess and repent of those sins; furthermore, they must in faith rest in the forgiveness of their sin (I Jn.1:9, 2:1). After putting off the old man, the believer must engage in the putting on the new man through walking in the Spirit (Eph.4:23-24; Rom.8:1). The Christian will constantly be engaged in spiritual warfare with their own heart and the demonic realm (Rom.7:24; II Cor.4:16). Hence, our ultimate hope is in our resurrected body that will be unmolested by sin in the New Jerusalem through our resurrected Savior Jesus Christ (Job 19:25-26; I Cor.15:50-57).



BBC/BBTS 2023/2024 SCHEDULE

April 21

BBTS Spring Lecture Series

Special Studies in the Johannine Epistles
Galilean Baptist Church
Stafford Springs, CT

May 22-26

Ireland Module
Gospel of Luke and Medical Language
Acts 1-9

June 5-9

Community Baptist Church
Coopersburg, PA
Book of Hebrews

July 24-28

Calvary Independent Baptist Church
Plymouth, NH
The Johannine Epistles

September 25-29

Bible Baptist Church
Nashua, NH
Book of Hebrews

October 22-25

Willow Grove Baptist Church
Waynesburg, PA
Timeless Truths Bible Conference

October 28-29

Calvary Baptist Church
Mannington, WV
TBA

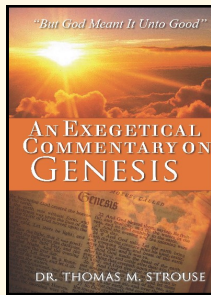
January 1-5, 2024

Ireland Module
TBA

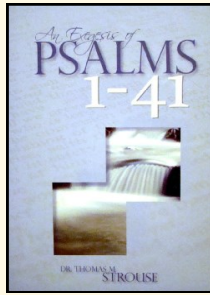
January 15-19, 2024

Fairhaven Baptist College
Chesterton, IN
Module TBA

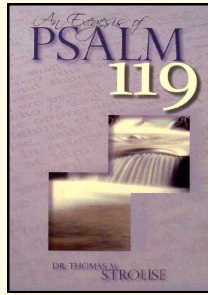
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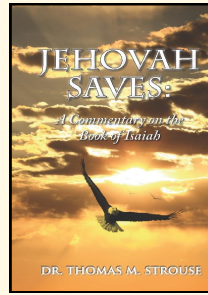
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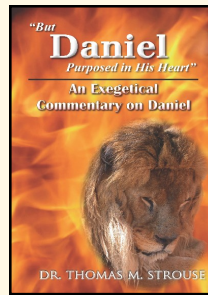
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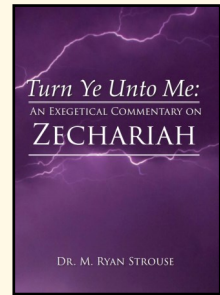
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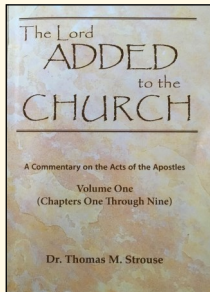
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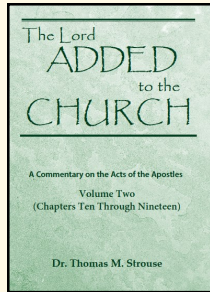
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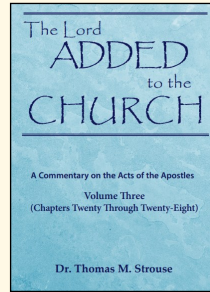
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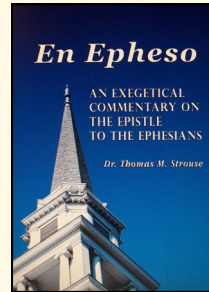
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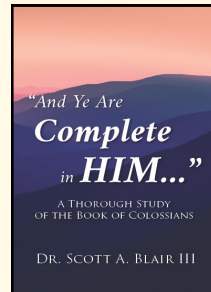
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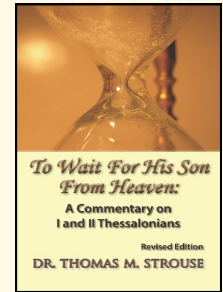
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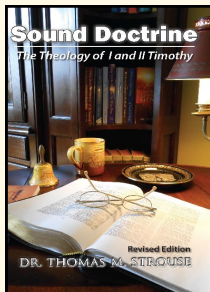
Ephesians
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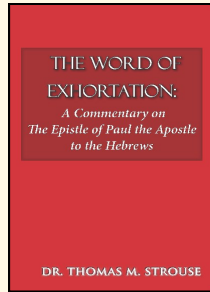
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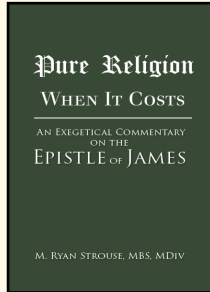
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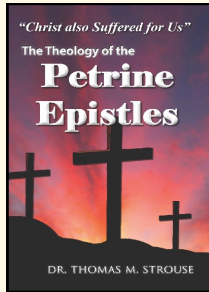
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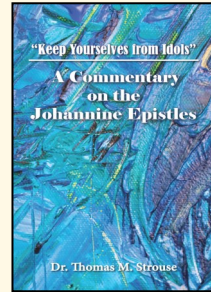
Hebrews
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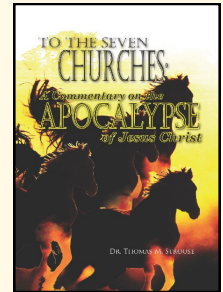
James
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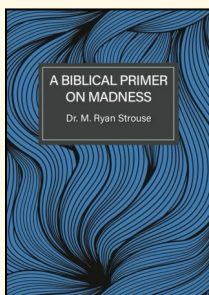
1 & 2 Peter
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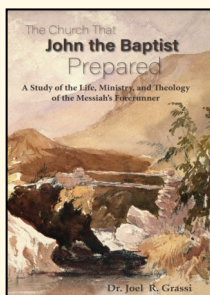
Johannine Epistles
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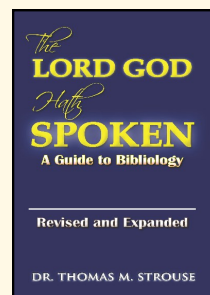
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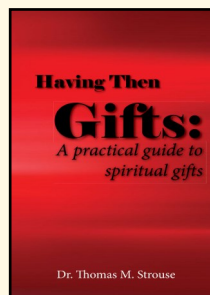
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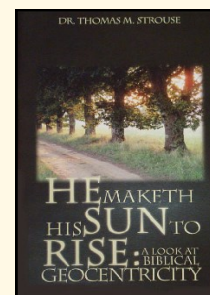
John the Baptist
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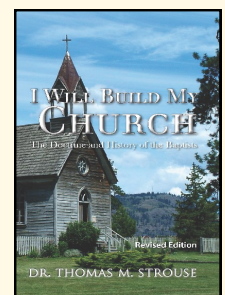
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