

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 31

October 2, 2019

We will likely finish up the Nicodemus section tonight. Let me back up and read just a little bit from John 3:19-21.

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

The reason that men love darkness is because their deeds were evil. Shame is what keeps people in the darkness. People will hide in all kinds of ways to avoid facing the shame of their actions. And I ask the question: why is shame the most natural response to sin, or in many cases, the sins of others which invoke in innocent such as in child abuse? I believe it's rooted in this idea, “What will another think of me?”

I want you to follow my logic here as to where this goes. There are certain things that are just in our “common knowledge”. We care what others think of us. Sometimes that may be good to care what others may think of us; otherwise we might now comb our hair in the morning, take a shower, or shave. I shaved very quickly today because I was running late, so don't look too closely at me because I really care what you think; actually, not so much at this hour of the day. (laughter) That was ten or twelve hours ago.

When you start with this idea of, “what will others think of me”, then our most important desire is *to be known*, and *to know*. Again, let that sink in. The most important desire that I believe that human beings have, whether they realize or are conscious of it or not, is that **they want to be known, and they want to know**. Another way of putting that is they **want to be understood, and they want to understand**. It is the core of every relationship. If you think about knowing, it is the core of our relationship with God...to know the Father and to know the Son. Of course, Him knowing us is not a problem.

When we establish a relationship, we say “We get to **know** somebody” and that forms the basis of the relationship. But there are levels of this knowledge. There is the level of knowing *facts* about someone, and then there is the level of really knowing them intimately.

Buffy: God knows everybody even if they are not knowing Him.

Rod: Yes. God knows everybody thoroughly, through and through, whether they are believers or not. God knows us all intimately, but even when we turn to Him, even the relationship with God changes. Now, He knows us on an *intimate* and *reciprocal* basis. There is a change; there is a giving and receiving with God.

Now, again, let this idea sink in about knowing and being known. But if someone really **knows** me, will they still **love** me, or will they **reject** me? So sometimes we don't allow ourselves to be known, or we don't allow ourselves to be known by too many people.

We believe that the more people **know** me, the more opportunity there is to be *loved* by people, but there is also the more opportunity to be *rejected* by people. Sometimes we may limit our exposure to very few people. We may have lots of friends, but then we talk about having ‘really *good* friends’, or ‘*best* friends’... people who **really know** us.

Why do we do that? Why don’t we indiscriminately just have the same “wide open communication with everybody we meet? And you may have run into some people who **do** that. They’re just very open, sometimes to the point that we feel, “Too much information. Give this relationship some time to develop”.

But again, get all this in your head here because *shame is rejection*. And if I’m rejected, that means that I am unworthy. And if I am unworthy, it means my life has no real meaning or purpose; and *if I have no purpose*, then **I might as well not exist**, because, “who cares?”

Now if we think of that idea as relating to the idea of darkness, (remember that God says He throws people into outer darkness where they are separated from Him), it’s usually connected with the idea of “I don’t **know** you”. That doesn’t mean that God doesn’t know everyone thoroughly; it means that we have not established this reciprocal relationship of “knowing and being known”. And so, “You don’t know Me so I’m going to treat you as if I don’t know you, and therefore the only thing I can do is reject you and separate myself from you, and that separation is called “*darkness*”. It’s called “*outer Darkness*”.

God wants us to have a relationship with Him, but in order for us to have a relationship with Him we have to come into the “light”. We may have very few people in our lives with who we think we can be totally honest, totally vulnerable with, but the One individual we need to be the most vulnerable with is God. “Honest to God”; say whatever we need to say to God; without fear of rejection or what He is going to **think** about me, and be able to reveal myself thoroughly to Him.

I believe that ‘that’ is really at the heart of what He is saying here. So Jesus establishes a relationship with us based on “**knowing acceptance**”. **John 17:3** says, “**This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**” We must realize...believe that ‘even though Jesus knows us, He accepts us based on *His own death* which takes away our sin and our shame. So Jesus, through His death, establishes the ability for us to be able to come into the light with no fear, because He has already eliminated the thing that can separate us; and that is our *sin*. He has taken it *away*. When we **accept** that and **believe Him** for that, then there is no reason for us **not** to have that close, personal, relationship with Him because, not only does He already **know** us anyway, but He has already **removed** the *basis* of our shame which is sin.

Satan tries to keep us ‘in the darkness’ and ‘in the shame’ and away from forgiveness. That is his goal ... keep everybody ashamed, because if they are ashamed, they will not come into the light; and if they can’t come into the light, they can’t have a relationship with God. And so, **shame** is a **powerful deterrent** for people becoming Christians.

Brian: The other thing that Satan does is that he keeps us stubborn so we *refuse to admit* our sin; otherwise we would return and be healed. (Isaiah 6:10 and Matthew 13:15)

Rod: Yes. And there **is** stubbornness because you can only resist it for so long. And people do a lot of crazy things in their head. They play a lot of games with this.

Macy: I think there is something interesting in this; that they love stubbornness and shame. They're not loving 'shame' per se, but somehow if they can fake it or tweak it, there is some part of that darkness...there is something that we are "getting out of it"... some kind of pleasure.

Rod: It's not just pleasure. We're getting *protection*. Darkness provides the *protection* from having to be ashamed.

Macy: So we love **that**. Not so much the shame, but we don't **hate** the shame so badly, or the alternative; or we don't **trust** enough to think that the light might be better.

Rod: Right, exactly. There is something in our head that says, "It's better to stay in the darkness; and darkness, again, is a concealment ... it's a place to 'hide'. It's better to stay in the hidden place than to come out into the light, because in the hidden place, I won't have to necessarily suffer what you think about me. (You won't know what you think about me because I don't let you know what's there.) But once you begin to become vulnerable, and to reveal yourself ...

And notice how much of Scripture is about God *revealing* Himself to *us*. In a sense, you could say that God becomes vulnerable. He allows Himself to have that kind of relationship with *everybody*. We limit those most *intimate* relationships to a few people in our lives. God opens Himself up to **every** person who has ever existed, and wants an equally intimate relationship with *every* person; even to the extent that Jesus *died* for every person in order for that to be accomplished. It's inequitable...I mean God has done far more, exceedingly and abundantly *more* to establish the relationship with mankind than we will *ever* do on our part, even in our relationship with Him and our relationship with other people.

So, why would anyone come into the light; why would they *risk* it, unless they thought 'acceptance leading to purpose' was possible? **Our** job is to say, 'if you come into the light, you are going to find *acceptance*'. And you will find acceptance in two ways: you will find acceptance with God, but you are also going to find acceptance with other fellow-redeemed sinners, because what we have in common with each other is that we've all come into the light.

That's why we have problems, sometimes, in the church. The church is *supposed* to be a place where everybody has come into the light, and we live in the light and we're **not** trying to impress anybody and we're **not** about trying to keep anybody in shame. And that doesn't mean we stand up every Sunday and just ... {accept anything – anything goes}.

But we know we're among people who are going to love us *no matter what*. And if we have that kind of environment in the church, we make it easier for people to stay in the light and not revert back into the darkness, or where, in subtle ways, revert back into the darkness where they establish secret sins and have secret lives and then something happens and you say, "Wow. I didn't know that. I didn't see 'that one' coming."

So we should, as agents of God, assist in making it possible for people to be able to come *into the light* where they find acceptance that leads them to regaining their purpose in life.

Hebrews 12:2 says, “let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who **for the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**” In verse 3 it says He did it for a reason. “For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, **so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.** In Romans 10:11 and Psalm 25:3 it says, “Those who trust Him will never be put to shame.”

Not only did Jesus take our **sin**, but as He took that sin, He **despised the shame** of it. When you *despise* something, you *look down on it*. You despise the shame. Jesus *exposed* before the world on a cross as being convicted as a ‘sinner’ to the whole world. He was **physically** exposed, **emotionally** exposed, **spiritually** exposed before the world. He *endured* that, and all the time He is up there, He is *despising* the shame, because He knows that it’s the **shame** that could drive Him off of that cross ... “that I’m ashamed to be seen this way; I’m ashamed for the world to see Me in My most vulnerable position, and He could have, as we sang Sunday, ‘called down 10,000 angels’. If He had done that, He could have covered His own shame and said, “Forget it.” But He *despised* the shame; not only the shame **He** was experiencing, but He despised the shame that keeps **us** in the darkness and causes **us** to come into the light and find our purpose in life.

So those who trust in Him will never be put to shame or will never be disappointed. In other words, if you come into Christ’s light, *Christ’s is not going to shame you*. So people who honestly want to get their lives right with Christ, don’t have anything to fear by coming to them and presuming their lives and sins “*as is*” before Him. And you see that in the ministry of Jesus. You see the people who came out of the darkness. The woman who was caught in Adultery; she didn’t have much choice. She was dragged out of the darkness, and thrown down at Jesus’ feet.

But remember the other “sinful woman” who came to anoint His feet (**Luke 7:36-50**)? She came out of the darkness and into the light of a Pharisee’s house; she wet Jesus’ feet with her tears and anointed His feet with perfume....

She could have stayed in her shame and stayed in the darkness, but she came to the Light. And even though everybody else was thinking “*evil*” of her, but Jesus was the one who despised the shame on her behalf. He is the One who accepted her, and *gave her back her purpose*. It’s a beautiful thought.

Many wicked will become arrogant as **a way to avoid** feeling shame. They will put their sins out for all to see; some will do the very opposite with shame. They will *flaunt* their sin pretending that they’re **not** ashamed, but **proud** of what they do.

Brian: There’s a tattoo that says, “Born Bad”

Rod: “Born Bad”. Yes! Some people will just flaunt it.

Macy: And some will try to capitalize on it. While we are attempting to walk in the light, there are some who will try to make “**us**” feel ashamed by flaunting it.

Rod: Yes ... exactly. There is something wrong with **us** for our sort of looking at them wondering what they are doing. And they show off that **they’re** not doing *anything* wrong. They look at us like, “What’s **your** problem?”

I don’t know. It’s a weird thing where they basically say, “I don’t care what you think about me. And it sounds so good. I kind of grew up with that in the South. I remember a song, ‘**Long Haired Country Boy**’ about “I don’t want what you have; if I can’t get it on my own.” { <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bs4y5si8DGs> } It’s the deal like “I’m my own man and I don’t dare what you think about me” kind of mentality. But I think it’s a *big act*, because there are probably things going on with their lives...if anybody knew about them they would be horrified.

The ‘**arrogant mask**’ will come off some time, now in the face of profound love, or forgiveness. In fact, I believe that’s *really* what the church is called to do. We are called to have this profound love and forgiveness that causes, sometimes, the mask to come off of people who are arrogant, because *they don’t know what to do with that*. When they’re flaunting their sin and we’re repulsed by it, like we whisper, “I can’t believe what they’re doing. Do you see what they’re doing over there?” We have that response, instead of having a response like, “*Do you know how much God loves you? Do you know how important you are to God?*” I don’t think they really know what to **do** with that!

Macy: They need to know how important they are to **us**. We need to show them that *we* love them, and that they have worth to **us** ... and without words, but a *heart* that shows that. We need to **show** that to them how important they are to us because it makes **us** vulnerable; and they’re probably going to reject us, but maybe not. We are trying to overcome the evil with the good ... (I couldn’t hear the rest).

Rod: Well, Jesus did one of two things with people. He either coaxed them out of the darkness into the light by His love, or He drove them deeper into the darkness. He didn’t leave them the same.

Brenda: {Commented on her experience with work ethics at a finance company where “supervisors” wanted her to lie for them when she was younger. You have to let people know in no uncertain terms that you will not lie for them}.

Rod: Yes, and in verse 21, “**But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.**” It talks about truth is living in the reality of what’s real. That’s what the true light is. It’s living in the real truth. And most people may have a double-standard about that.

But this *whole idea* is, “Where does the light emanate from?” It emanates from the face of Jesus. The light comes out of the face of Jesus. So what happens when people **face** Jesus? We talk about these “come to Jesus” moments. If you can get people to look into the face of Jesus ... I mean, we can say a lot of things in the darkness, but if the ‘light shines into the darkness and you have something to say to the face of Jesus...?

Here's Peter in the courtyard and he's denying the Lord three times in the darkness. (See **Luke 22:54-62**). Peter is in darkness, and Jesus walks out into the courtyard and they make eye contact! **Now** Peter is looking into the face of Jesus. What does Peter immediately do? I don't imagine that he kept eye contact for very long. He probably looked down; he felt the **force** of his shame, and he went out and wept bitterly. He thought about just going back into the darkness until Jesus met him on the beach and told him **he still had purpose**. Your purpose is to feed My sheep. Jesus didn't let him *stay* in the shame. The way out of the shame is to remind people that you have a **purpose**. And that purpose will not be fulfilled in the darkness. It can only be fulfilled in the light. So, let Jesus take away your **shame**, and your **sin** that *produces* it, so you can live in the light and you can hold your head up and can honestly say, "That was how I **used to be**, but that isn't **who I am now**. **This** is who I am now. I have a new **identity**!

Will: I've learned that everybody says something that they regret along the way. It may be to one individual, but then you see that individual, you may think they may think badly of me, and I still regret it. Has this ever happened to someone else? (All or most hands went up). How do you get over that and try to be a leader again? You don't know what **they** think about it and they don't know what **you** think about it. That's a hard one to deal with because sometimes their dislike becomes stronger over the years. It sometimes beats me up inside. {I couldn't hear all}

Brenda: There is a scripture that says to behave in such a way that ... {**1 Peter 2:12** "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." Brenda gave us an example she had}. **I have**; and **we have** to make a conscious decision not to treat others badly no matter what. I have made that decision that no matter what they say or do, I will treat her right. We have to go to people and ask forgiveness. Once I try to make something right, if they do not accept it, I've done **my** part and pray that God will take care of **their** part.

Rod: Let's look at about political correctness in Jesus. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night; secretly. Surely these statements of Jesus regarding darkness and light have a particular significance within the circumstance. I believe that Jesus may have had something to say about light and darkness because Nicodemus came to Him at night.

Jesus, in pointing out the truth about why people stay in the darkness, is because their deeds are evil, was certainly *not judgment* which would contradict verse 17, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." Jesus did not come to judge the world. But He **does** point out that their deeds are evil. Pointing out that people's deeds are evil is **not** judgment because if it were, Jesus would certainly not have been able to **do** it, because He didn't **come** into the world to judge or condemn the world, but to **save** the world regarding Christ's mission.

But, what would have been politically correct to tell the teacher of Israel? What would have been the politically correct thing to tell Nicodemus? Nicodemus was a **leader**; a member of the **Sanhedrin**. But He told him that his deeds were evil and that he's using the cover of darkness as a cover-up. He said, "You came to Me by night. You're staying in the darkness because you're deeds are evil." But what is 'evil'? It's a strong word. (4190 - concordance)

Evil is the word “poneros” (πονηρος) and it’s a derivative of ponos (πονος) which means anguish or pain. The root of evil is anguish and pain. Evil is that which is hurtful. Evil harms; it produces anguish and pain. It’s calamity; it’s disease, it’s culpable {negligence}, it’s derelict, it’s mischievous, it’s vicious, it’s malice and it’s guilt. Causing evil to others is malevolent, it’s malignant, and it is wicked.

In **John 7:7** Jesus said, “The world ... hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are **evil**.” But what is Jesus essentially saying? He’s saying, “I’m telling you that what you do *hurts* people!” When Jesus says, “Stop sinning; stop being evil; He’s saying ‘**stop hurting people**’”! It’s not politically correct to point out evil; when the purpose is to save people **from** it and not to condemn people **for** it.

There is a *purpose* here. The purpose **for** pointing out evil is to save people **from** it; both the people who are committing the evil *and* the ones on which they’re committing the evil. They are hurting, not only the people they are being evil to, but they’re hurting themselves in the process.

Why is pointing out that you’re hurting people – why is that condemnation? Why is that judgment? That’s **GOOD** for people to be told that they are hurting people.

Carole: You’re trying to save their souls from death. It’s an act of love to point it out. But it has to be done in a loving way.

Rod: Yes, it has to be done in a loving way and recognizing that when **I** do evil, it’s also hurtful.

A study of this word would be helpful in understanding Jesus’ mind. How did Jesus view and deal with evil that He encountered? At least, in John 3 with Nicodemus, he pointed out that the reason people do not come into the light is because their deeds are evil. Evil, here, is an influence, not separate **from** the person but **within** the person that produces some deviant behavior.

In **Matthew 5:37** Jesus is saying that adding anything more to “yes” or “no” is evil. In other words, He’s saying, “Let your ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’ and anything beyond that is evil.” Why? Well, think about it. The most helpful thing you can do for someone is be straight forward with them and just let your ‘Yes, mean yes’ and your ‘No mean no’. You don’t have to add anything to that because when you start adding things to it, *that’s* when the possibility of hurting them gets involved. You know, when you have to add some type of **expletive** to it or you add some kind of **oath** to it, it’s almost like you’re setting yourself up to say, “I really, really, really mean ‘yes’. Well, if you just mean ‘yes’ when you say ‘yes’, and people get accustomed to your ‘yes’ meaning ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ meaning ‘no’, you will probably hurt a whole lot less people than if you play games with it. (And we’re talking about when you are making promises to people, not “How was your day today”.)

Why is that? It’s because additional talk is a way of *obscuring truth* and *keeping us in the darkness*. We must accept **responsibility** for who we **are** and what we **stand** for is essential for walking in the light as He is in the light. Many words produce darkness.

If someone says, “Are you a Christian?” the answer should be “yes” or “no”. When you say much more than that, you are probably going to create all kinds of confusion. “Well, yes, I’m a Christian, but” Then you start explaining things and before you know it, nobody is going to know what that *means* anymore; what a *Christian* means. Is Jesus Lord? “Yes”. “Yes”, He is!

In **Matthew 5:39**, Jesus says “not to resist him who is evil.” “Resist” is a word that means “to set in opposition to”. It is the word “Anthistemi” (ανθιστημι) meaning to stand against or oppose. In other words, we are not to get into a slapping match with evil or with other people. When I get into a slapping match with Evil I become evil myself! Now I am trying to match evil for evil! *That* is why we turn the other **cheek**... because evil hurts. And we don’t **repay** evil with evil. We don’t hurt somebody **back** because **we’ve** been hurt. That just **perpetuates evil**. We have **other** weapons against evil.

Because we are evil we tend to want to fight with the world’s weapons. But there are more powerful weapons against evil. **John 3:16** says the way **Jesus** and **God** fought evil was **love and salvation**. In **3:21**, the way He fights against evil is with light; which is truth. God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. So Jesus’ focus on evil is concrete.

How do we **talk** about evil? I know that sometimes we have these philosophical discussions about ‘what is evil’? And there is a place for that, I guess. I had that in apologetics. But Jesus talks about evil in very concrete ways. Whoever **does** evil; his **deeds** are evil. It isn’t “**who is** evil”. He’s not talking so much about who **is** evil; but who **does** evil ... who **has** evil **deeds**. This probably includes thoughts. There is **fruit** that *indicates* evil. **That’s** what we want to hide in the darkness. We do not want the **deeds** of evil exposed.

So, what are deeds? The word is “ergo” (εργω). It means to work, or action. It has to do with something done, and it applies to good works or deeds; or works of the Law. Perhaps the work is good or evil merely because the motive is good or evil. Or, it *may* be **inherently** good or evil regardless of the motives. Some things are made evil because our motives are not good, and some things are evil because they are just inherently evil...the motive does not matter. I don’t care how good your motive is. It **is** inherently evil to do certain things, and the Bible usually makes that clear.

In verse 21 he contrasts the evil of deeds with the practice of truths. “**But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.**” Literally, the one doing the truth ... the one who does the truth, is in contrast to the one who does the evil. So, how does one **do truth**? How do we **do truth**; and of course, not do evil. We either **act** on truth or we act on **non-truth**.

Determining the reality of a matter is critical. If I believe the truth is that someone does not like me, this **belief** may determine my actions toward that person. So, how do I do truth? I first have to determine, “what **is** the truth”. And if I conclude a certain truth, then my deeds are going to follow what I believe about that. So, if I don’t think Will *likes* me, and I *really* believe that in my head, that Will doesn’t *like* me, that will determine the way I treat Will.

If Will doesn't like me, I may avoid him...because he doesn't like me anyway. So my deeds become evil because that's what I believe.

Macy: I was just thinking, in that reality, what is the **higher** truth, because we may believe something, but then what is the **higher** truth we believe? "He" may not like me, but God loves him so I have to live my life based on that truth.

Rod: Sure. And the truth may be he doesn't like me. But you're right. That doesn't determine my actions. That doesn't determine what I do. **I do**, what I believe **God** says that I do, because that's the real truth that guides my life. It isn't whether he likes me or not, but what God says to do.

One doing **truth** will take a different view. They will seek to know the **reality** of the matter. Irregardless of whether they are liked or not, they will treat the other person according to truth. Not just the truth that he likes me or doesn't like me, but the truth of what God says about how to treat people who don't like you.

Even if it's true that someone doesn't like me, **that** doesn't determine how I treat him because that is not the truth that I'm living from. I am living off the truth of how God says to treat people who don't like me.

So verse 21 along with Matthew 5:16 are about letting our lights shine so our good works can be seen and God will be glorified. "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Good, loving deeds should be manifested. See, it's the opposite of the evil deeds. The evil deeds are usually hidden in the darkness while the good deeds are supposed to be revealed, brought into the light, or manifested.

The reason that John came baptizing was a signal to reveal the Messiah (**John 1:31**). John 2:11 says, "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His **glory**, and His disciples believed in Him." You see this word "manifested", "revealed" all through the teachings of Jesus.

So, the good deeds we do **because** of the light **or because** of truth, originate in or with God. (Look at verse 21. "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested) **as having been wrought in God**." They originate in God. He is the **source**. **Our** deeds are the **trickling streams**. He is the **headwater**. His work **in** us must be acknowledged as Jesus did. In other words, when you read that **He** is the one who practices the truth; when we come into the light, our work is seen as having been wrought, or revealed, or manifested **in** God. In other words, our good deeds are simply a manifestation of the works of God **in** us and **through** us to other people. That's why God gets the glory for the good deeds; because those deeds are done **through** us, to the world because of our coming into the light. So in 16 verses, Jesus speaks volumes of truth to Nicodemus. It demonstrates how different these two think. Even though Nicodemus is not a secular person, but a teacher of Israel, how could this teacher who has orientated his entire life around the coming Messiah, have such a small understanding of this Messiah?

This demonstrates to me that we must give great earnestness to really seeking to know the mind of Christ. Since Jesus is the truth, and full of truth, it is **essential** to know Him, *not superficially, but intimately*, in order to live in the light where God's work can be made known and *God can be glorified*.

If it is true that the more I know Jesus – the more **intimately** I know Him, the more this revelation becomes a part of the way I think about everything. Living in that truth, what is going to happen is that God can do more **through** my life, and **in** my life, and the more **glory** He will receive as a result of that.

Jean: That reminds me of the many times where I have read throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament about God, but Paul prays that they will have *wisdom, knowledge and understanding of God* (Col. 2:2-3).

Rod: Absolutely.

Jean: It says that so many times and I pray that for my kids every day.

Rod: Absolutely. And again, through that knowledge and through that intimacy with God, it **supernaturally** happens within us, where **fruit** is produced. I mean, you can go out and preach to a tree all day long, but it won't produce fruit. But to see fruit, there has to be something that's going on internally, in that tree that produces that fruit. You can water that tree all day long and put some fertilizer around it, but unless there is something going on internally within that tree, fruit will not be produced. The fruit is produced *because* on an action going on inside of that tree.

How do we get into the stream of that action? It is by getting deeper and deeper and deeper into the mind and heart of God.

Jean: And whatever we do as a Christian, it is **God** working through us and doing it. We resist evil. (But we do not resist an evil person.)

Rod: Well, we **do** resist evil, but as in Matthew 5, we do not resist an evil person. When God speaks to us about resisting evil, He's talking more about us not participating in evil.

But in our **fight** against evil, we don't fight the same way as the world; we don't fight against flesh and blood. We don't get into a 'slapping match' is how I look at it. We lose our way in that. At some point, we think we're doing something really noble in hitting harder than evil does, but at some point we become just as **evil** as the **evil**. We're inflicting as much harm, sometimes on innocent people, in the whole process, as the evil does, so I think we have to be really, **very** careful about how we think about fighting evil.

But yes, we resist it, in a sense, by not becoming a part of it; like if we resist the devil he will flee from us.

Okay, there are a few more notes on Nicodemus and I'll finish them up next week.