

# Weapons Of Our Warfare

2 Corinthians 10:3-5



Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Responsively** 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) **5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

Kansas based Westboro "Baptist" Church has been in the headlines again, this time defending its First Amendment rights in front of the Supreme Court. If you're not familiar with this group it is literally a family affair. The Pastor and Leader of the Church is Fred W. Phelps, and most of its members are related to Phelps. Westboro has gained notoriety by sending it's members to carry protest signs at the funerals of fallen U.S. Soldiers. At a time when our young men and women should be honored, and their grieving relatives should be comforted, these deluded souls feel that it is their God called right to march and mock, carrying signs that proclaim "**Thank God For Dead Soldiers**" and "**Thank God For IEDs**" (the "Improvised Explosive Devices" that killed our brave troops).

The reason that Westboro Baptist is in the news is because Albert Snyder, the father of fallen Marine Lance Corporal Matthew Snyder, sued the "Church" because of the disruption it caused at his son's funeral. A federal court in Baltimore awarded the Snyders \$11 million in damages - and Westboro appealed this ruling on the basis that it violated their First Amendment rights. Hence it is now before the Supreme Court.

I'm going to exercise my "First Amendment" rights right now and say this:

Every time I hear the word "Westboro" followed by the word "Baptist" in the news, it makes my skin crawl. In fact, anytime I hear the word "Baptist" associated with anything that is as loveless and despicable as what these people are doing, it nauseates me. I think it nauseates God, too.

Westboro's position is that God hates homosexuals, and since there are practicing homosexuals in the United States and in the Military God hates the United States and our Military. These deluded people feel that they have been raised up as the hand of God to smack down evil by doing evil. The Lord Jesus Christ never told His followers to "Go into all the world and beat up sinners, then defend your actions before the Supreme Court". Our Great Commission is:

**Matthew 28:19-20** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ...

.... to go, to teach the Gospel, to baptize in the authority of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus said "teach them to observe ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU". What was the primary teaching of Jesus Christ?

**John 13:34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

**It is love.** Not just love of **one another**, though that is important. But Jesus said that we are to **Love our neighbor**. Jesus even corrected the Pharisaical type of love, the same type of love that Westboro is showing the world. He said:

**Matthew 5:43-48** Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Our Lord said "Love our enemies. Bless them. Do good to them. Pray for them". The Christian is distinguished from the non-Christian not by how we dress or where we go or what race we are, but by *how we act toward others*.

We are not called to be the fist of God smiting the earth.

We are called to be the hand of God reaching out in love, offering the Gospel to all who will receive it.

Westboro may call itself a "Baptist Church", but it's not "Baptist". In fact, it's not even a Church. It is a cult that hijacked the name of "Baptist" and "Church". It is a group of people - *maybe* Christian - who have allowed the Devil into their hearts.

God put our noses over our mouths for a reason: to protect us. If food smells rotted, *don't eat it*. God put His Word over our lives for a reason: to protect us. If your actions do not support the love of Christ, *don't do it*.

Satan is using Westboro - just as he has used other alleged Christians from the beginning of human history to hide the Gospel.

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: **4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Any time a Church or a Christian lowers itself to the tactics of the world around it, that Church or that Christian becomes an unwitting dupe of Satan. This is why our text today tells us

**FOCAL** **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: **4** (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty

through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) **5** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

**There Is A War Going On All Around Us,  
And Our Enemy Is Satan**

**ILLUSTRATE** A little boy came into his mother's kitchen and said, "**That was a good fight**". His mother looked at him. His shirt was torn and dirty. His jeans were ripped at the knee. He had a big black eye, and a bloody nose. His mother asked, "**Son, what in the world was good about it?**" He replied, "**I won**".

The Christian is told over and over again in the Scripture to fight for his faith. The stepbrother of our Lord Jesus, Jude, said that we should:

**Jude 3** .... earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

**Word Study** "Earnestly contend" (the Greek *επαγωνιζομαι* pronounced ep-ag-o-nid'-zom-ahee) means "**to struggle for, do battle for**". The Apostle Paul told Timothy:

**1 Timothy 6:12** **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.**

**"Fight the good fight of faith"**. Fight for what you believe in. What did Jude and Paul mean by these *fighting words*? Are we supposed to go get our guns, our knives, our clubs, and do physical battle with those who do not believe as we do? Are we supposed to - as the Muslims believe - enter *jihad* and kill the enemy?

*No, not at all.* The Apostle tells us **"though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh"**. The battle that we are in is a battle for the *mind*, not the *body*. We are in a battle for the *soul*, not the *flesh*. In verse 4 we read:

**"the weapons of our warfare are *not carnal*"**

Our weapons, dear Christian, are not after the flesh. They are not fleshly. Our weapons are *spiritual*. They are of the Spirit of God.

Your weapons are not physical because your enemy is not physical. You are not an army trying to secure physical ground. You are God's Army, trying to secure *spiritual or mental* ground. You are trying to lead others to come to Christ!

**Dr. Charles Stanley** wrote in his book *When The Enemy Strikes* **"Good has a name, and His Name is God. Evil also has a name. His name is Satan or the Devil. The Devil refers to a spiritual being who is the supreme personification of evil"**.

There is a Devil, just as there is a God. God is all powerful, all knowing, the Creator of all things and all beings. The Devil is one of God's creations that - rising

up in free will and in pride - he rebelled against His Maker. Man is made of flesh and blood, but the Devil is not flesh and blood.

Though the Devil is not flesh and blood, he can *manipulate* flesh and blood. It is the devil that whispers evil to man's mind. It is the devil in the congregation of Westboro, directing Fred Phelps and his congregation to hate. Listen Beloved: we do not *have* to follow the Devil - we have free will in the matter. But the Devil does tempt.

When Jesus was led of the Holy Spirit into the wilderness the Bible says that the Devil came to Him at the end of forty days. Notice what the Bible calls Satan:

**Matthew 4:3** And when the Tempter came to {Jesus}, he said, **If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**

**Word Study** He is **"The Tempter"**, PEIRADZO (Greek *Present Active Participle* of πειραζω pronounced pi-rad'-zo), or literally **"The One Who Keeps On Tempting"**.

This is Satan's nature. Having fallen from God's Grace, cast out of Heaven, he is working as hard as he can to destroy God's Creation. It is Satan's desire to destroy you. If you have *not* been saved, Satan wants to do everything he can to keep you from salvation. He wants you to see Christians *fighting over foolish things* so he can whisper in your ear, "There's nothing to this Christ. Look at His people!" He wants to offer you "alternate solutions" to what ails you.

**ILLUSTRATE** I remember watching on one of the Andy Griffith episodes where Aunt Bea - Andy's Aunt - was shaken when a friend of hers passed away. Aunt Bea began to obsess about her own mortality. She was walking home from the store and ran into a man who was selling a "**Indian Miracle Cure**". The man promised her - and all those in the crowd - that if she drank this "Miracle Cure" her zest, vigor, and youth would be restored. Aunt Bea bought two bottles, took them home, and promptly drank half of one of the bottles. Andy came home and found her - in his words - "**a bit tizzly**". As the show progresses we find out that **this "Miracle Cure" salesman is actually selling moonshine - about 85% alcohol.**

When the Tempter comes, he never comes and says "I'm going to tempt you to be an alcoholic, enslaved to drink for the rest of your life".

No, not at all. Satan comes and - through a flesh and blood man - says "Buy my Miracle Cure. You won't feel old any more". When the Tempter comes he never says, "It is my intention to get you hooked on illicit sex in an affair that will destroy your marriage". No, the Devil is much more wily than that. He sets the stage, and entices agents from among humanity to draw you into his diabolical web. The Devil uses people and situations to hurt us.

It was Satan - in the form of a Serpent - that came into the Garden of Eden and enticed Adam and Eve away from God. The Bible says:

**1 Timothy 2:13-14 ... Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.**

**The woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.** Satan deceived Eve by tempting her. He said:

**Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat {of the forbidden fruit}, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.**

The battle begins in the mind! Satan tempted Eve, and enticed her. Once her mind was turned away from God's Word and to Satan's word it took very little for her to eat the forbidden fruit. The Bible says that

**Genesis 3:6 ... when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.**

*The battle begins with the mind!* The enemy knows that if he can get in the mind of man he can entice us to evil and self destruction.

Because Adam followed Satan rather than the Word of God "**by Him sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that all have sinned**" (Romans 5:12). Adam allowed Satan to entice him into disobeying the clear command of Christ. "**By one man's offense death**

reigned" (Romans 5:17). "By one man's transgression many were made sinners" (Romans 5:19). Adam's willingness to heed Satan and disregard God drew all of humanity into the Fall. All are inherently sinners because of one who heeded the ungodly one.

**We wrestle not against flesh and blood.** Satan has stood against the work of God from the beginning.

- **Satan enticed King David to "number" or do a census of Israel's army (1 Chronicles 21:1).** David's willingness to follow Satan rather than glorify God caused the Lord to send *pestilence upon Israel, killing 70,000 men.*

Like the "Wizard of Oz" Satan is the little man behind the curtain and behind the scenes. He casts a giant shadow - but can really do not more than what *you allow him to do through you.*

- **Satan attacked the Lord Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11)** following His forty day fast. Jesus resisted Satan by *quoting the Word of God to him - in context - and offensively.*

- **Satan enticed the people that grew up with Jesus in His hometown of Nazareth to try and cast Him off a cliff (Luke 4:28-30)**

- **Satan sent the Pharisees - a lost and unbelieving religious crowd - to attack every word that our Lord Jesus preached.** Jesus told them:

**John 8:42-44 ..If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. ....**

- **Satan enticed Peter** - one of Christ's faithful Apostles - to try and stop the Lord from going to the Cross.

**Matthew 16:23 {Jesus} turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.**

As Jesus moved closer to the Cross, the Bible says:

**Luke 22:3-6 .... Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. 5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.**

it was **Satan who enticed Judas Iscariot to do what he did**, to betray the Lord with a kiss for 30 pieces of silver.

Satan can do no more among us than we allow him to do. How do we avoid becoming "Westboro" or, God forbid, *something worse?*

## I Must Feed My Soul The Word Of God

**FOCAL** 2 Corinthians 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not **carnal**, BUT mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

**Word Study** The Bible says "the weapons of our warfare are *not carnal*", not SARKIKOS (σαρκικός pronounced sar-kee-kos'), that is, "according to the flesh, fleshly". The power that we have to do battle with Satan is not *our own resources*, but "mighty through God".

**ILLUSTRATE** Years ago there was a fad called "Pet Rocks". Someone got the bright idea of selling "Rocks" as "Pets". Can you believe that people started buying these things? In one sense, though, it makes sense. Owning a "pet" entails "responsibility". If you have a "pet" you are responsible to care for it, to feed it, to clean up after it. "Pet Rocks" are not alive, and therefore do not require feeding. Anything that lives must be fed!

You are not a "Pet Rock". You must be fed *physically* as well as *spiritually*. The Lord has given us His Word. We are to learn His Word. We are to feed our souls with His Word, following His directions. Only with God's Word will we be able to **pull down Satan's strongholds**.

King David was a man who was "after God's own heart". If you read the Psalms - a collection of hymns that David greatly contributed to - you see David *lifting his soul up*

*to God. Rather than being tossed about with feelings which often deceive, David let the Lord train his soul.*

We walk by an *intelligent, God directed FAITH* not by *FEELINGS*. The Deceiver of all ages wants you to be a "Pet Rock". God wants you to rely on the "Rock of Ages", on His Holy Word.

**Psalms 25:1-2** Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. **2** O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

**Psalms 25:20-21** O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. **21** Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

When Satan used his tool of *depression* on David, David pointed his soul away from the dark thoughts and back to God. Listen to these words:

**Psalms 42:5** Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

**Psalms 42:11** Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

When Satan whispered worrisome things into David's ear, that blessed believer commanded his soul. He made himself *sing*, looking up to God.

**Psalms 103:1-3** Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. **2** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: **3** Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

**Psalms 103:22** Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: **bless the LORD, O my soul.**

**Psalms 104:33-35** I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. **34** My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. **35** Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. **Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.**

**ILLUSTRATE** I could go on and on with this, but this should make the point. Dear Christian, you *must feed your soul on the things of God*. You must read His Word. You must apply His Word to your lives. The *average* American Christian spends around 1 hour a week in Church services. Of that 1 hour, usually only 30 minutes deals with the study of and application of the Word of God. Those same Christians will spend between 3 to 5 hours per *day* in front of either television, telephone, or Internet. Is it any wonder that Christians are weak in their faith?

Turn off the "idiot box", the television and turn on to the Good Word of God. Feed your souls, training them in His Word.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** **All scripture is given by**

**inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17** **That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.**

The Scripture is God's Gift to the Christian. It is not a dry Book to be force fed to the unwilling. It **improves, corrects, and instructs us.**

The Scripture leads the **person of God toward maturity, making us able to do good works**. The Word of God *feeds our souls* and gives us direction so that we can stay on track with God in even the darkest, cloudiest moments of our lives.

**ILLUSTRATION** In his book "The Problem of Life With God" author Tommy Nelson wrote illustrated the difference between *feeling* and *fact based faith*:

One time a few friends and I flew to the town of Lake Placid, Florida. The plane was an old "prop job", and in the middle of the flight we got socked in by a wall of clouds. Vertigo came over me, and I didn't know if I was up, down, or sideways. I looked at the man next to me and he was sweating. I said, "**What direction does it feel like we're flying to you?**" He said, "**I don't know, but I think we're upside down**". ...Then I looked at the pilot, an old guy who wore a leather hat with flaps on his head and a big white kerchief around his neck. While I was scared stiff, he was *whistling* and having a good time. I said, "**Don't these clouds make it hard for you to see where we're going?**" He said, "**Oh yeah, when I**

**look out the window, I can't tell anything about where I'm headed". "Why aren't you a little more concerned, then?"** He pointed down at the gauges on the {instrument} panel. **"See this right here? It never lies. we're right here. There's a Delta plane over there and an American plane over there. The ground is down here. I know who's talking to me on the radio; it's Leonard from Fort Myers. I know right where I am"** . pg 125-126

God *never* lies to His people. His Word is sure. If we will not study His Word - getting it into our souls - then we become the Devil's Dupes and Satan's Stooges.

The Devil defeats us easiest when we *do not know where we are*. He whispers, **"Why don't you ...."** and it's always a *bad idea*. We know where we are by learning to think according to the teachings of the Word of God. In order for that to happen, we have to *feed that Word to ourselves on a regular basis*. We may not always understand that Word, but we need to stay near it.

Jesus was teaching His followers one day when He said something that offended the crowd. We read:

**John 6:63-66** <sup>NIV</sup> **The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe.".... "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." 66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.**

A true Disciple of Christ - in comparison with the false follower - knows the value of the Word of God. Many of those who followed Jesus followed not because they believed in Him, but because they wanted something from Him. When Jesus pointed out that some did not believe His Word they departed. Jesus looked at His remaining disciples and asked,

**John 6:67-68 NIV "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.**

### **I Must Live My Life According To God's Word**

**FOCAL 2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

**Word Study** The word translated **"imagination"** is the Greek LOGISMOS (*λογισμος* pronounced log-is-mos'), which in this context means **"a reckoning of man apart from the Word of God"**. Anything that man thinks is right, if it is not in agreement with the Word of God, *it is wrong*. **Cast it down. Toss it into the pit of Hell.** If God's Word does not support the so called wisdom of man, reject it.

If it exalts itself against the One True God and His Word, get away from it. **Treat it** like you were a horse, and the idea is a Cactus Man who wants a ride.

**Beat it** like it is a mosquito who wants a drink on your account. But don't **eat it**, because it will make you spiritually sick.

The Evangelist Leonard Ravenhill said, “**One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it, and believe it. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed. We have adopted the convenient theory that the Bible is a Book to be explained, whereas first and foremost it is a Book to be believed ... and obeyed.**

The Devil is always trying to get us to substitute something else for *doing God's Word*. If you play his game you *will* lose.

History has proven that anytime we give Satan an inch, or he ends up being the whole Ruler! Never give the devil an even a chance.

- Adam and Eve were supposed to be **cultivating the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15)**, while at the same time they were to **rule creation and reproduce (Genesis 1:28)**. Instead of doing this Adam and Eve took time off to *have words with a Serpent rather than do the Word of God*. Look where it got them - and us.

- King David was supposed to be leading his army into battle. Rather than obey the Word of God and do what he was supposed to do, he took time off. The Devil took that opportunity to offer him a glimpse of Bathsheba, Uriah's wife (**2 Samuel 11**). This started this man of God

down a path that led to *adultery, conspiracy, and even murder*.

Do you want peace in your lives, and prosperity in your Church? **Hear the Word of God, and DO it**. Jesus made it clear that ....

**Luke 8:21 ..... My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.**

The Bible says:

**James 1:22-25 .... be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**

Blessing comes from not just **hearing**, but **doing** what God says.

I am so glad you are all here today. I love you, and praise God for you. May I close by asking this last question:

**Have You Done The Three Things That Are Necessary For Your Salvation?**

**A**dmit you are a sinner. We are all sinners in need of the Savior. The Bible says **"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** Romans 3:10,23. Admit that you cannot save yourself. Admit that you need God to intervene for you.

**B**elieve in the Lord Jesus Christ - surrender your life to Him. **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."** John 3:16

**C**onfess publicly that Jesus Christ is your Lord. **"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. .... Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."** Romans 10:9, 13 <sup>(NIV)</sup>  
Jesus said **"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels"**. Luke 9:26 Do that which Jesus has told you to do. Come forward, be baptized, and make public your faith in Him. Then live your life daily under His influence, by His Spirit, feeding on His Word.

May God touch your hearts with His Word!



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Matthew 28:19-20; John 13:34; Matthew 5:43-48; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Our Lord said "Love our enemies. Bless them. Do good to them. Pray for them". The Christian is distinguished from the non-Christian not by how we dress or where we go or what race we are, but by *how we act toward others*.

**There Is A War Going On All Around Us,  
And Our Enemy Is Satan**

Jude 3; 1 Timothy 6:12; Matthew 4:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Genesis 3:5; Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:12; Romans 5:17; Romans 5:19; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:28-30; John 8:42-44; Matthew 16:23; Luke 22:3-6

Word Study "Earnestly contend" (the Greek epagwnizomai pronounced ep-ag-o-nid'-zom-ah-ee) means \_\_\_\_\_

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*Present Active Participle* of πειραζω pronounced pi-rad'-zo), or \_\_\_\_\_

**I Must Feed My Soul The Word Of God**

2 Corinthians 10:4; Psalms 25:1-2; Psalms 25:20-21; Psalms 42:5; Psalms 42:11; Psalms 103:1-3; Psalms 103:22; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 6:63-66; John 6:67-68

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2 Corinthians 10:5; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 1:28; 2 Samuel 11; Luke 8:21; James 1:22-25

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**A**dmit .... **B**elieve .... **C**onfess .....