

Toxic Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, October 16, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us! Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a short space of time. Before we dismiss the children and volunteers...

KEY – Thank you for the kind words, note-cards and gifts for Pastor Appreciation Day. God bless you!

Philippians 1:3–6 (NIV)

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

SETTING THE STAGE

Today I want to introduce a new series using a teaching I have offered at varying seasons in my time as Pastor. Some lessons are so foundational and instructive they need repeating, and since repetition is the best teacher, and since there are always new families in our assembly, please consider the following...

NOTE 1 – Let us begin with the following selection...

James 4:7

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

NOTE 2 – In context, we must realize that James was addressing believers characterized by: **a)** infighting and disunity; **b)** rampant jealousy and unrestrained desires; **c)** prayerlessness and/or prayers motivated by selfish intent; and **d)** a love for the world that rivaled any love for God. Simply put, these disciples were yielding to the devil and carnal desires far more than they were yielding to the Lord. Hence, James' inspired admonition....

James 4:7

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

NOTE 3 – Millennia later this mandate resonates in a timeless and timely manner. When the Church of Christ becomes riddled with waywardness and sin, the call to say NO to the flesh and the devil and YES to God must be proclaimed and obeyed! Those who heed this call shall overcome and know intimacy divine...

James 4:7–8a (Emphasis Mine)

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.**

NOTE 4 – Of course, resisting the devil and submitting to the Lord is one of the hardest things to do in the moment of temptation. We all know the seduction of sin, so we must ready ourselves for battle with our spiritual adversary and our inward inclinations. This message is designed to equip you to fulfill the mandate offered in James 4:7. If you want to say NO to Satan and YES to God, please lend me your ear this day...

A CRITICAL TERM PT. 1

NOTE 1 – This AM I want to introduce you to a term that can help you to resist the wiles of the enemy...

'AHARIT (SLIDE)

NOTE 2 – Veterans of this assembly may recognize this term. Those who have begun to attend since 2015 may be unfamiliar with this word. 'Aharit is an ancient Hebrew term packed with meaning and spiritual principle! Next time you are feeling the urge to sin against God, remember the 'aharit.

NOTE 3 – Of course, to “remember the 'aharit” you must first know what it means...

A CRITICAL TERM PT. 2

In Hebrew, prepositions (i.e., words that deal with direction & orientation) are derived from the human body...

FOR INSTANCE...

ILL 1 – English: “Alta is seated *next to* Elysia.”

ILL 1 – Hebrew: “Alta is *at the hand of* Elysia.”

ILL 2 – English: “I am speaking *in front of* this assembly.”

ILL 2 – Hebrew: “I am speaking *to the face of* this assembly.”

FYI – We do this to a degree when referring to someone as the “head” of the class or at the “head” of the line!

NOTE 1 – The word 'aharit is related to the Hebrew word for “back.” The word literally means “that which comes after; after-effects; or end.” This word is particularly significant in terms of how we perceive situations. The principle is fairly straightforward. Note...

NOTE 2 – From our normal perspective we cannot see the back of one with whom we are speaking. Right now you see my face, yet cannot see my back (i.e., 'aharit). If I were to have a massive stain on my back you would never know it from your point of view. From where you sit everything looks fine, but only because you do not have the full picture! You fail to consider the 'aharit.

NOTE 3 – Scripture utilizes this term to illustrate something about humanity and how we deal with matters of temptation and sin. Namely, we struggle to see the aftermath of our choices! When we are tempted we tend to perceive only the immediate gratification and benefit of yielding, enhanced by Satan. We rarely consider the fallout of our decisions ('aharit) and we pay the price!

QUOTE – As one Bible School professor would often say, “Sin will take you further than wanted to go, keep you longer than you intended to stay, and cost you more than you wanted to pay.” That is, sin has an 'aharit....

KEY – Let us consider a brief passage that utilizes 'aharit and illustrates these principles in kind...

TO THE WORD

Proverbs 16:25

25 There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end [‘aharit] it leads to death.

NOTE 1 – Our limited perspective in life and living hinders us when considering the outflow of our decisions. How often seemingly harmless activities yield toxic, disastrous and deadly outcomes! Of course, Satan will present the gratification associated with sinfulness, yet never the corresponding cost or consequence...

ILL 1 – Satan will tempt you with the elation associated with passing on a word of gossip (i.e., because who doesn’t feel good elevating themselves at the expense of another), but he will never show you the pain of a broken heart, a ruined reputation or a confidence lost.

ILL 2 – Satan will tempt you with the gratification available through pornography, but he will never show you the pain or mistrust developing in the heart of your wife. He will also never show you that the woman or man you are lusting over is a lost sinner in need of the grace of God.

ILL 3 – Satan will tempt you with the pleasures of promiscuity and fornication. After all, everyone is doing it, so it can’t be that bad, right? However, he will never take the time to speak to the sexually transmitted disease, unplanned pregnancy or the void of love that exists the morning after.

ILL 4 – Satan will tempt men, women and children with the escape available through addiction, but never touch upon the brokenness that invariably follows (e.g., the car wreck, jail, loss of marriage and children, poverty, physical ailment, death, etc.). No one intends to become an addict!

NOTE 2 – Satan will NEVER reveal the ‘aharit and we are too short-sighted to pause long enough to consider it!

SINCERELY...

Q1. Do you think Satan was upfront with ADAM and EVE?

Q2. Do you think they would have eaten the fruit knowing the outcome?

Q1. Do you think Satan was upfront with DAVID concerning Bathsheba?

Q2. Do you think David would have pursued her knowing the consequence?

Q1. Do you think Satan was upfront with JUDAS concerning his treachery?

Q2. Do you think he would have ever betrayed Christ knowing the fallout?

NOTE 3 – Let us consider the insights of the following text and remember the ‘aharit...

James 1:14b–15

4 . . . each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

KEY – I would like to take the rest of our time together considering a rather lengthy passage. It is among the most vivid scriptural examples of someone who failed to consider the ‘aharit when tempted to follow their sinful inclinations. Spoiler alert: it does not end well! Let us delve into the 7th chapter of Proverbs...

PROVERBS 7 PT. 1 (THE CALL TO WISDOM)

Proverbs 7:1–5

- 1 My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you.
- 2 Keep my commands and you will live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.
- 3 Bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
- 4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,”
and to insight, “You are my relative.”
- 5 They will keep you from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words.

PROVERBS 7 PT. 2 (THE SETUP)

Proverbs 7:6–9

- 6 At the window of my house
I looked down through the lattice.
- 7 I saw among the simple,
I noticed among the young men,
a youth who had no sense.
- 8 He was going down the street near her corner,
walking along in the direction of her house
- 9 at twilight, as the day was fading,
as the dark of night set in.

PROVERBS 7 PT. 3 (THE SEDUCTION)

Proverbs 7:10–20

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. 11 (She is unruly and defiant,
her feet never stay at home; 12 now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.) 13 She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14 “Today I fulfilled my vows,
and I have food from my fellowship
offering at home. 15 So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you! 16 I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt. 17 I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. 18 Come, let’s drink deeply of love till morning;
let’s enjoy ourselves with love! 19 My husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey. 20 He took his purse filled with money
and will not be home till full moon.” |
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PROVERBS 7 PT. 4 (THE 'AHARIT)

Proverbs 7:21–23

- 21 With persuasive words she led him astray;
 she seduced him with her smooth talk.
 22 All at once he followed her
 like an ox going to the slaughter,
 like a deer stepping into a noose
 23 till an arrow pierces his liver,
 like a bird darting into a snare,
 little knowing it will cost him his life.

PROVERBS 7 PT. 5 (REMEMBER THE 'AHARIT)

Proverbs 7:24–27

- 24 Now then, my sons, listen to me;
 pay attention to what I say.
 25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways
 or stray into her paths.
 26 Many are the victims she has brought down;
 her slain are a mighty throng.
 27 Her house is a highway to the grave,
 leading down to the chambers of death.

SUMMATIONS PT. 1

KEY 1 – Consider how this chapter illustrates the broader truths of Proverbs 16 and James 1...

James 1:14b–15

4 . . . each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Proverbs 16:25

25 There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end [‘aharit] it leads to death.

KEY 2 – Consider how this chapter calls us to remember the ‘aharit and heed the call of James...

James 4:7

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

SUMMATIONS PT. 2

NOTE 1 – Temptation is inevitable! You will be tempted by Satan, who plays upon your inclinations.

NOTE 2 – In that moment you will have a choice to succumb or to resist the devil per the words of James.

NOTE 3 – One tip for those feeling the lure of sin is to pause long enough to consider/remember the ‘aharit.

NOTE 4 – Those who successfully consider the ‘aharit and resist the devil will know victory and intimacy.

NOTE 5 – Those who persist in sin and neglect the ‘aharit will face the fallout of their moral failings.

CONCLUDING ELEMENTS

Thus said, in the weeks to come we will take an extended look at biblical figures who failed to consider the ‘aharit. Scripture is replete with cautionary tales of those who yielded to the devil and to their base instincts in rebellion to God, paying the price in kind. As sin is on the rise in our world, it is time to deal with its presence and operation in the Church of Jesus Christ. As it gets darker out there, it should become brighter and brighter in here!

KEY – Until we meet again...

James 4:7

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Feel free to give either in person or online at www.NewLifeBarre.org.

NOTE 2 – Feel free to participate in our “beyond-Sunday” ministries (MM, WM, CYC, Study).

NOTE 3 – CORI and Background Checks for ALL who serve with the youth and children of this church.

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you
and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.