

02-08-11b Revelation

We're ready now to resume our study and although it may be the case that we're spending a little bit of extra time on the letter to the Ephesians here in Revelation chapter 2, we're going to see that many of the characteristics that we're exploring will lay a foundation for the remaining six letters. The next one of course being the letter to the church at Smyrna, but it never ceases to amaze me how much God can fit into a very few verses and nowhere is that more evident than here in these seven verses at the beginning of chapter 2 of Revelation. There is a great, although it was delivered nearly 2,000 years ago, there's a great message for the contemporary church.

There's a great message for us individually as believers to hear and you'll remember in the introduction we talked about the various views that are taken with regard to these seven letters, whether they are something of a chronology addressing the history of the church down through the ages, that in the first century, in the first generation of the church or two, you had the Ephesian area of strengths and weaknesses and that each subsequent letter addresses a subsequent period in history all the way up to the present so that we would be in the last stages of the final letter. But that's a very difficult view for me to understand or embrace because written history and the history of the church as it has come down to us is very incomplete and it is completely based on human observation and human record-keeping and there are so many believers and so many churches that are never noted in each succeeding generation that are not written of or written about pastors and believers that are completely unknown. We're very familiar with the invisible nature of much of what God does in and through the church and so to say that this is sustained and interpreted from the visible view of the history of the church is sort of almost an oxymoron.

I think rather that these are aspects of not only different areas within any given assembly of believers but also the individuals that constitute a church and it is very much the case that when we look at ourselves we cannot pick any one area and say well I have made a success of my Christian life I have followed the calling and I am on the upward road because look at this one area where I have achieved or done well or been faithful because even when we do well my friend Don Hargrove is teaching through the letter to the Ephesians and he's what I heard earlier this week was out of chapter 4 but he is fond of talking about humility as the fact that as soon as you are convinced that you have it you've lost it and he has an illustration of a church that gave its pastor a button that said he was a hero of humility he was the most humble pastor but as soon as he pinned it on they had to take it away from him and you know as soon as you begin to think oh my I am just a pretty humble individual well you have become arrogant about your humility and you lose it right away so we can't pick any one area and say well my whole standing before God at the judgment seat of Christ is going to I'll carry through with flying colors because I've been very faithful in listening to the word of God or I've been very faithful in prayer I've been faithful as a spouse or a parent or an employee or an employer or any other one area our lives are multi-faceted and when Jesus talks to the church at Ephesus and he says there are some

things that you've done very well in fact he's going to do this for pretty much each of the churches he's going to give them a commendation and point out the things where they have been faithful but he says I have this against you some areas are not so hot some areas are not so good some areas I wish you were hot or cold but you're just you're just lame in this area you're just so so and you'd be better if you were one thing or the other but because you're just indifferent you're going to get spit out well this again I have mentioned before and will no doubt mention again the emphasis that the Word of God places on our responsibility to think on these things to let the Word of God dwell in us richly if you know Paul enjoins in one of his letters let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly what does that mean well it can dwell in us it can be it can repose in our memory we talk about it being a resource in our soul you know there's all kind of ministries that want to send you a resource we've got this great resource if you send us a love gift 2495 will send you this great resource well you can have all the videos and tape libraries and things that you want but the resources that sustain us with divine energy reside in our soul and it's the unvarnished ungarnished Word of God it doesn't need any addition it doesn't need any complimentary or supplementary material the Word of God is completely sufficient to sustain us and to energize us and to lead and guide us in the hands of the Holy Spirit but we've got to look at ourselves as an entirety if the commandant of the Marine Corps surveyed the current status of the hundred and seventy thousand Marines in the Corps and he went down and he said you know our force service and support group or whatever they call it now used to be the FSSG is probably something else they change the acronyms every five or ten years but the service and support people the people that do the beans and the bullets and provide all the logistics for the the fleet the Marine forces the divisions the combat arms artillery and tanks and infantry you've got people that supply them and keep their pay flowing and the mail going and the chow and the bullets and all the rest of it well the commandant of the Marine Corps could look down and say well you know compared to the Air Force and the Army and all these others we have really got logistics down to a fine art look at the smooth flow and the accurate record-keeping which of course he would be dreaming or somebody would have given him a false report but let's just say that they achieved some great standard of achievement in this area but here's the tanks rusting away and the artillery with forty-year-old powder in the shells and the infantry with broken and inadequate and misaligned weapons and all the rest of it he couldn't just pin his evaluation of the Marine Corps on one aspect well we can't do that either and it is a danger to take one thing and lash yourself to that particular mast while the rest of your ship is sinking you say boy look at this sturdy mast I'm binding my look at that mast it's smooth it's strong it's got all of its yards and and everything is good to go here we got our running rigging standing rigging everything is perfect on this mast and meanwhile you're rotting under the waterline well you've got to look at the whole thing you can have a beautiful ship I mean they had a big stir about the Titanic a few years ago when they remade the movie beautiful ship well-designed ship well-appointed ship luxuries from stem to stern and the thing sunk because it had some flaws that didn't become evident until it ran into an iceberg well that's the point here the only way we're going to find our weak areas areas where God through the agency of the Holy Spirit with the sword of the word of God in his hand

can renew us is if we evaluate if we think judge yourself if we would judge ourselves we would not be judged if we don't take the time to evaluate ourselves the evaluation from God is going to come Jesus says that here to the Ephesian church doesn't he says change your mind remember from where you have fallen do the first works or else I will come to you quickly and I will take action that will force you to function differently I will remove your lampstand out of its place he doesn't say I will destroy your lampstand he says your position is going to be shifted you're here with a place of opportunity you're here with a place of potential you've got these labors that you can engage in and these things in which you can persevere but if you don't go back and do the first works and remember the love that needs to be the motivation behind what you're doing I will uproot your church and I'll move it somewhere else I'll give you since you can't meet and fulfill these potentials I'll uproot you and put you somewhere else maybe give you simpler tasks I will move your lampstand out of its place and as I mentioned a lesson or two ago the city of Ephesus had this history as having been located nearer and further from the Artemesian shrine based on conquest and on upheaval and earthquake and silting into the harbor one thing or another Jesus says you know the history of your town well I will uproot and move your church if you don't take advantage of the opportunities you have where you are now there are times when God has given us concrete and identifiable opportunities we have a potential and if we fail that potential if we fail that opportunity God will say well I'll take that opportunity away and give it to others and I'll give you something else I'll move your lampstand to a different place I'll have to use your light for a different purpose as he did with generations in Israel they couldn't be a reflection of his glory in conquest so he made them a reflection of his glory in discipline and in captivity and his grace and his power were manifest in a totally different way because they did not change their minds when called by the prophets when called by the faithful priests who taught the law well I will come to you quickly remove your lampstand from its place unless you change your mind and it reminds them this is not a foregone conclusion this is not graven in the stone of predestination from eternity past I will move your lampstand unless you change your mind change your mind I won't move your lampstand I'll let you continue to fulfill this great potential and seize and lay hold of these opportunities that you currently have but don't this this is sort of the prosperity test in some cases we get prosperous and we forget God well God will say I'll move your lampstand out of the area of prosperity and put it in the area of adversity if that's what it takes to change your mind well why wait for the chastening of the Lord why not respond to the admonition and not have to have the physical discipline that comes as I said we're going to save the Nicolaitans will refer back to this and see when we summarize that how it related in Ephesus but then in verse 7 he who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches how many people are responsible for this message is it just the people in Ephesus are they the only ones with ears this is a reminder that inspired scripture is profitable to all for doctrine for reproof for correction and for instruction and righteousness we can take the words that God spoke to the patriarchs we can take the words that God spoke to early Israel we can take the words that God spoke to latter-day Israel we can take the words that God spoke to Israel in captivity we can take the words that the Lord Jesus spoke to Israel during his earthly ministry we can take the words that the apostles spoke to the first

generation church and they apply to ourselves he that has an ear needs to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches he doesn't say the churches need to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches everybody that has an ear we can profit we can be motivated and instructed and corrected even in what God says to groups in which we are not included this of course is particularly pertinent if you are in the group to which this is addressed if you were in the church at Ephesus and the messenger stood up and said I've just gotten a set of letters from the Apostle John and he says it came from Christ himself and here's the one that's addressed to us and then he stood up on the first day the messenger arrived from John at Patmos came across the sea landed traveled to Ephesus said I've got these letters that the Lord Jesus Christ put into the heart of the Apostle John through vision and there's seven of them and one of them is addressed to us and he stood up in front of the assembled group in someone's home maybe out on their patio on a sunny Sunday morning with the dew still on the plants around the area and the people hushed in anticipation and waited for the messenger here's something fresh remember John used to come and visit here and used to speak personally now he's exiled and he's limited and he can't come but he's written this letter the same sense of excitement that the church has no doubt had when the letters would arrive from the Apostle Paul and so everyone is sitting and even the children are quiet and the man stands up and he says the Lord Jesus Christ spoke these words to us through the Apostle John listen and then here's Jesus speaking these words and he says he who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches and it's a reminder of the agency because the Lord Jesus Christ spoke these words the Apostle John heard them and wrote them down but they are conveyed into the hearts and souls of believers by the ministry of God's Holy Spirit you cannot digest you cannot comprehend and benefit from these words without the ministry of God the Holy Spirit the Spirit speaks in the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ Jesus said I go away I will send you another comforter he will lead you into all truth he will not speak from himself he will take from the things of me and will transmit them to you he is the voice he is the teacher John himself talked about this in his epistles you have no need that any man teach you he doesn't say you don't need a human communicator or you don't need a pastor or a teacher he's saying when it comes to learning the truth that is contained in the words God the Holy Spirit is the teacher a human being cannot inject this into your soul in a transforming way it is you and the Holy Spirit you have to give the Holy Spirit a time and a place to speak with these words and to engage in the act of transformation that goes on in the soul it is not even our dedication to meditate we've talked about that a lot here lately it's so emphasized in the passages we look at but we don't transform ourselves by the act or practice of meditation on God's Word God the Holy Spirit does that work it is a divine act and you can meditate all you want in the same way that you can learn all you want of the Word of God and if you if your soul is not a place where God the Holy Spirit can speak and can teach and can make the application can move that sharp sword through the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow you're still going to end up fruitless he who has an ear that means every believer the carnal mind cannot understand the things of the spirit they are spiritually discerned to have an ear you not only have to be saved you not only have to be a believer but you have to be compliant you have to be compliant you have to

be teachable God the Holy Spirit has to have the freedom to do his work and that is based on our choice our act of will in acknowledging our sins if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me and guess what if he can't hear me I can't hear him either except as the Holy Spirit convicts of sin but in terms of productive learning and growing and applying productive meditation on the Word of God if I regard iniquity in my heart I how can I be in the light and in the darkness at the same time to walk in the light to be in fellowship to have productive communication back and forth with God God the Holy Spirit has to be able to say what he has to say has to be able to speak he who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches then this great promise to him who overcomes I will give now this word overcomes in verse 7 is Nikonti it is from Nikao which means to conquer to win to be the one who wins the battle wins the race wins the prize to the one who overcomes now he doesn't specifically define overcoming in this context as he doesn't say overcome by being faithful and persevering and it is implicit in these letters that if you heed the injunctions if you respond to the correction you are an overcomer to overcome means in the areas of failure you listen and you hear and you change your mind the overcomer is the one who engages in two specific things it is change of mind and it is the obedience of faith same thing you have in Hebrews chapter 6 what is the very foundation change of mind away from dead works works that are not motivated by love can be the same works but they end up being dead what is death in the spiritual sense it is fruitless it may accomplish things that are visible to the human eye but it doesn't reflect the glory of God because it's not done in his name by his power for his glory it's done for some other mix of unhealthy reasons so what does it mean to overcome our working definition of the overcomer is one who performs change of mind change of mind requires humility it's a hard thing to admit you've been wrong it's a hard thing to admit that you haven't been doing what you should have been doing the proud doesn't change his mind people who are proud people who have an arrogance problem and that includes all of us have difficulty acknowledging error and to change your mind and do differently is a very overt acknowledgement of error why would I change my mind and act differently unless I was not functioning correctly the very act of changing our mind and pursuing a different course is an admission of error and we don't like to admit that we're wrong we don't like to do it in conversation we don't like to do it in practice if we do have to do it we want to try to do it in an obscure and invisible way where people don't say whoa I see you finally straighten yourself out we would rather it all be swept under the rug bigger problem with arrogance we have the harder it is for us to admit that we're wrong and all of us I think have been engaged in arguments or discussions where we suddenly realize that the other person is probably right but we fight on just because we don't how often do you hear somebody stop and say after especially when it gets heated and then suddenly right in the midst you ever heard Democrats Republicans or conservatives and liberals or anybody else on TV get into you know frontline or face the nation or any of these others and stop and say boy you know you make a really good point I believe you're right on that I've even though my historic stance for the I got elected on this platform I you've convinced me I think you're right I'm gonna change that just never happens why even when we do come to a sneaking suspicion that maybe we don't we're not as right as we thought we were we'll battle on just because you've got to hold the line

well what is an overcomer we have to be teachable teachability and humility are two sides of the same coin you cannot be teachable if you are not humble you are not humble if you are not teachable and to be teachable means you can grow you can learn something new you can acknowledge that the way you've been functioning the way you've been understanding wasn't complete wasn't right wasn't helpful in some cases to him who overcomes not only do you change your mind and and think again about Hebrews 6 let us go on to maturity not laying again the foundation of change of mind away from dead works we change our mind away from one thing and change it towards something else the biggest problem with people who try to kick an addiction or break a bad habit is that they say I'm going to stop doing that bad thing I have a big gossip problem so I'm going to stop gossiping I've been when gossip starts I'm just going to shut my mouth or whatever you know fill in the blank of some repetitive behavior that's unhealthy we want to stop I'm going to quit eating sugary desserts I'm going to lay off of fats or I'm going to stop shopping every chance I get whatever it may be ok so you have this negative this destructive this bad behavior I'm going to stop that one of the biggest problems with stopping something is if that's all you do is refrain it's like it's like people get the shakes when they stop smoking they say boy I really want a cigarette Jerry Reed had a record he came out with back in the 60s early 70s called another puff and he says you know I'm not going to not going to smoke anymore just whittling my life away coughing nails I'm going to quit then all he can do is sit there as he's not smoking thinking about all the wonderful experiences he's had smoking and and all the things it's doing to him by not in other words change of mind away from dead works and change your mind toward faith in God change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God it's one thing changing your mind away from something bad is only half an action you have to turn from something and turn to something else if you want to kick a bad habit don't just stop the negative behavior and anybody in the secular world will tell you this substitute a positive behavior when you feel like doing this negative thing choose to do this other thing in its place change of mind away from dead works faith toward God to him who overcomes we change our mind away from works of death dead works and actively pursue the obedience of faith you don't stop something and leave a void you stop something and replace what was there with what is proper with what is right that is what it means in a nutshell to be an overcomer we're going to have the great expansion and an explanation of this and illustration of it in each of these letters so to him who overcomes let's say we managed to do this we want to be those who have an ear and hear we see this example in the emphasis of continuing to do the works but it's kind of become a hollow habitual act rather than having the love and we say okay I'm going to spend time in meditation and it's not just my meditation I really want God to be there I want to hear the Spirit I want to apply the Word of God I change my mind and I apply myself to the faith that results and manifests itself in obedience and I do that well to him who overcomes there is a promise and it goes beyond the functional fruitfulness that that will then be ours in Christ this in and of itself results in abiding in the vine I am the vine you're the branches abide in me and you will bear much fruit the fruit of the Spirit the love and joy and peace and patience that are ours through an active faith beyond all of this Jesus says to him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst

of the paradise of God this is a personal promise it is a gift from Christ it is a reward in the military this would be a medal a medal with a ribbon it would be a privilege you enter into a limited category of believers because a lot of us will not do this this can in no way be construed to be an automatic part of salvation because not every believer is an overcomer not every one of us changes our mind not every one of us is going to pursue faith and obedience if we did the injunctions and the exhortations of scripture would be relatively meaningless and people who take that view have to say well it's the catalyst it's it's what activates the faith that God has implanted in you but that is such a specious argument I'm surprised people can speak it without being embarrassed to him who overcomes this is the motivation why should you bother what's the point are we not all saved will we not all walk the streets of gold and glory and wear white and have all these other wonderful things no there are things that are promised to the faithful you look at every area of God's creation past present and future and you will find inequality there are stratifications in the angelic creation there are stratifications in the human race whether you look at the priesthood in Israel whether you look at the various distributions of spiritual gifts in the church Jesus said that there will be great people in the kingdom and there will be least in the kingdom and there will be others who are not even in the kingdom but are looking at it from the outside those are divisions what are they based on they're based on our choices and our priorities and it's a very simple equation to the extent that we prioritize God his word his plan in this life to that extent God will prioritize us in the next Jesus said you confess me before men I will confess you before my father you deny me before men I'll deny you before my father well if you're an unbeliever you won't even be before the father this is talking to and about believers and the confession is not just verbal communication of the gospel of salvation it means how do you live you your life do you live as a light in the world or do you hide your light under a bushel and try to blend in not make waves we have no idea I don't care how much we think we know about what scripture teaches we it is going to be a jaw-dropping astonishing realization when we get to the millennial kingdom in the eternal future to realize how much of our existence in the future depended on the seemingly insignificant decisions that we make day by day by day the decisions that you and I already made this morning why we made them how we made them what we chose and why we chose it is writing future history in the millennial kingdom and in the kingdom of the father mundane things the most trivial insignificant things you can think of are a reflection of our priorities and a reflection of whether or not we're responsive whether we change our mind whether we operate in faith and it is not the importance or triviality of the content and the subject of those decisions it is all about the mechanism in our soul why do we do what we do are we living heartily as under the Lord and not into men are we living to please ourselves you can express selfishness you can express pride you can express all kinds of mental attitude sense in the simplest decisions you can express pride in which tie-tack you choose or which hair ornament you choose or which necklace you decide to wear you can express what's in your soul in the most mundane simple decisions and those are being inscribed we're going to see some fascinating things about the book of life when we come to that section of these letters but let's look at the positive to him who overcomes anytime you see overcomes think change of mind faith

toward God Hebrews 6 choose something other than dead works it's not the works it's whether or not they're dead if they're motivated by love the first love we haven't fallen away from it that's faith that's obedience we make a choice every every area of life to him who overcomes change of mind and faith I will give to eat from the tree of life we've already seen how apropos this is in Ephesus Artemis Diana of the Ephesians this cult that had gone back over a thousand years the tree shrine around which the original city was founded city had moved over toward the harbor had been conquered earthquakes move back move back and forth but they had this I'll tell you something interesting I haven't told you before about Ephesus that shrine was so sacred that you remember in the Old Testament when God set up in Israel the cities of refuge this was not an isolated concept there was what was known as the transliteration English is asylum there was a sacrosanct area around the temple of Artemis in Ephesus that was like a city of refuge and at different times in the in the city's history it became larger or smaller there was a certain perimeter around that shrine into which a criminal could flee and he could not be pursued and the greatest tyrants that ever ruled in Ephesus would not cross that line it was sacrosanct and they feared because they believed in these pagan gods and believed in Artemis they feared to cross that line so this area this asylum area around the shrine to Artemis was historic it went back hundreds of years and in the time of Antony you know after Alexander and the Greek Empire came in and this fell under the Greek hegemony Antony picked certain towns and and favored them in different ways and when he came to Ephesus he doubled the perimeter around the shrine of Artemis he doubled the the diameter of the asylum made it twice as large and this made it so large remember by this time in say 300 BC the city of Ephesus had moved from being right at the foothills and right around that shrine over to the edge of the harbor and so they were two separate things the city was about two miles away from the shrine but when Antony doubled the size of the asylum a portion of it came within the city limits of Ephesus well so what would happen if some guy perpetrated a big crime in Ephesus he'd make a beeline for the perimeter of the asylum and once he got in there couldn't be captured couldn't be detained couldn't be prosecuted so what do you think happened in the neighborhood of Ephesus that fell within the asylum it became the godfather's country it became the mafia headquarters the Center for Organized Crime in Ephesus was in the asylum area and this became so egregious and so bad that they appealed and later on after this got got severe they moved the boundaries back in so that it wouldn't take in a part of the city and they could come after these people and that pertained all the way down until the time of John in circa 90 to 100 AD it's difficult to pinpoint the time but you had Domitian coming in as the as the Emperor in Rome and guess what he expanded the asylum back out to the Antonine limits he doubled the limits again and created this big huge problem so there was this idea of this and there was a wall around it that circumscribed these limits and showed exactly where they were and you could not be prosecuted and this is where all the criminals would go and where crime would come and it was a huge problem in the city and a lot is written about it in in some of the ancient historians Strabo and these other guys wrote a lot about it so there is a great contrast when you talk about the paradise of God that is around the tree of life and when you talk about the paradise or the asylum that is around the tree shrine of Artemis

one is a place where people go because of righteousness the other is a place where people go because they are criminals when you enter and go into the tree of life that is a place of renewal a place of cleansing and a place of righteousness when you go into that in Ephesus it is a place of crime and the origins and the springs of crime come out of this area and it is a source of great persecution and tribulation for people in Ephesus and how could there not be a greater contrast than what Jesus draws here when he says the tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God it sits in the center you have the picture of the tree the river and this enclosure to which certain ones have access well I want to finish a thought that we started with regard to the tree of life and the river of life as we looked at Revelation chapter 21 and 22 and if you'll look at Revelation 21 and we've seen Ezekiel 47 we know that that's talking about the millennial kingdom when he says I think it's in Ezekiel 46 where he talks about I will make a new heaven and a new earth but that is the Hebrew word Kadesh and that means renewed or repaired something that already exists that is refreshed was used of the new moon and many other things this in Revelation chapter 21 verse 1 now John says I saw a new heaven and a new earth we're changing languages here but this is Greek and this word is Kainos it is from Kainos K-E-I-N-O-S and Kainos means new in the sense of its nature new in nature there's another Greek word for new that Neos N-E-O-S means new in time this would have been the word that Solomon would have used there is no new thing under the Sun new in time everything that is as existed before it's not new in time but Kainos means new in nature it suggests something that is wonderful something that is fresh and unspoiled and is like nothing that has gone before so that's what we have here this is not the recreation or the restoration of the world that you find in the millennial kingdom this is in fact what Peter talks about in his epistle the heavens and the earth will go away the elements will melt with a fervent heat and then you have the new heavens and the new earth that's what's being spoken of here so I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away there's any doubt Ezekiel 47 doesn't say they've passed away in fact you get the same marches you get the same sea but the river flows out and freshens them they used to be salt and the river comes and restores the very same sea it's the Mediterranean Sea comes out goes through the Arabah comes out and freshens it here the olds have passed away there's no more sea at all clearly in Ezekiel you have the river of life running out and going through the desert and emptying into the sea here there is no sea I John saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God this is not the Jerusalem of Mount Zion this is a new Jerusalem kinos prepared as a bride adorned for her husband tabernacle of God is with man he will dwell with them they shall be his people God himself will be with them and be their God God will wipe away every tear from their eyes there shall be no more death nor sorrow nor crying notice these are not descriptions of the millennial kingdom in which there can be death in which there can be sorrow in which there can be crying these conditions of every tear being wiped away pertain in the future kingdom of the father no more pain because the former things have passed away then he sat on the throne he who sat on the throne said behold I make all things new he said right for these words are true and faithful he said it is done I am the Alpha and Omega the beginning in the end now look I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to whom to him who thirsts

over what Jesus said hold that him who thirsts come to the waters he now look at verse 7 he who overcomes very same word from the car oh he who overcomes shall inherit all things and I will be his God and he shall be my son but the cowardly the unfaithful the abominable murderers remember the spiritual definition of murder how can you murder someone in the spiritual sense to hate them you can assassinate them with your tongue you can assassinate them with your attitude in the same way you can commit adultery in your heart you can commit murder in your heart you can expunge someone just as surely as if you shot them murderers sexually immoral this word translated sexually immoral there in verse 5 has the idea of covenant breaking of unfaithfulness in the sense of having made a promise I said 5 I mean 8 verse 8 there where he talks about the pornoise pornoia is promise breaking this is not honoring your vows adultery in the physical sense is a breaking of one's promise spiritual adultery in the old testament and in the new has the idea of having committed yourself to God and then going back on that commitment on that promise that dedication pornoise pharmacoise this is sorcery and pharmacy has the idea of chemicals how much has chemical dependency in even in Christian circles come in today you've got all the Christian counselors and so on if you substitute not to say I mean all of us benefit from medicines and some of us need medicines and it's a wonderful thing what is this talking about when it says pharmacoise when it becomes a substitute for faith when it becomes instead of God's word and God's spirit remember all things in moderation there are people you know food is a necessary of life but if you become dependent on food for your happiness you know they have all these hugely 600 pound people that get on Oprah and so forth and food becomes their coping mechanism well you've taken something healthy something proper something useful something helpful and you've perverted it into something awful well all of these things are taking something proper sex is something that God designed within the bounds of marriage it's one of the greatest things there is but people take it and abuse it and take it out of context and make it do things it wasn't supposed to do and engage in it when they're not supposed to and it becomes a form of faithlessness and promise breaking and selfishness and abuse of other people all of these can be explained in those terms so pharmacoise idolatry us idolaters what is idolatry covetousness you get focused on things there are people who where are we supposed to get our security it's in our relationship with God there are people who get their security from their possessions or their bank account or their standing that's idolatry Paul says covetousness is idolatry you don't have to set up a graven image you don't have to bow before a stone anything you look to for things that rightfully for