

## 4: Infatuated

Again, I'd like you to notice seven Bible facts with me. I may repeat some of these facts for you. I do it because they are so important - they bear repeating, for if we can firmly establish them in our thinking now, they will prove to be of tremendous value in the days to come. Notice these seven great Bible facts:

1. Jesus is coming again. Revelation 22:12, "And, behold I come quickly..."
2. Jesus is coming for those who are like Him. 1 John 3:1-3. The third verse says, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
3. One of the features of being like Christ, is to hate iniquity. Hebrews 1:9, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity."
4. This hatred is a promise from Christ. Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This first promise of a Redeemer also contains a promise for man to be able to hate sin. This was a promise to make it possible for man to hate the devil and all of his program. Why did God need to make a promise like this? Simply because at the time of this promise, man had sinned and had become infatuated with the devil. The human race at that moment loved sin. Man would always have loved sin had God not projected hatred into the human heart for Satan. There are still some people who say, "I'll repent whenever I get ready." This is impossible. Man can repent only as God gives him repentance. This is why it's so important to respond at the time one feels the Holy Spirit speak. That's the time to act, for it is only God that gives a man a hatred for sin. It is only God that puts enmity between man and the devil.

5. It is the Holy Spirit that accomplishes this. John 16:8 ". . . and he, (the Holy Spirit) ....will reprove the world of sin...."

You see it is the Holy Spirit that reproves the world of sin. It is He that brings to a person the hatred for sin to the earnest appeal in prayer. This something we can all be very grateful for.

6. He also gives man repentance for sin. Acts 5:31, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

This also is a gift from God. He brings not only a hatred for sin, but He also gives repentance, through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart. How very grateful we ought to be.

7. This is how He does it. Ezekiel 36:26, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

The way God accomplishes this miracle of grace is to give us a new heart. This new heart is made in a way that makes it hate sin. The Holy Spirit in making His entrance into this new heart brings repentance and a complete restoration. Mankind has been given the invitation to accept this wonderful prayer of commitment is when we say, "Lord if it be Your will...." It's simply committing our lives into His will for us. It's placing a request before Him and then asking His will to be done. I use this prayer when I pray for the sick, for I cannot know if that person has fulfilled the conditions for answered prayer in his behalf. But if I am asking for wisdom for myself, I have a right to know - I do know if I have fulfilled the conditions of answered prayer. If I have fulfilled the conditions for answered prayer and I ask for wisdom, for pardon for sin, for healing, or for any request - then I can come to God and claim the promise without saying, "Lord, if it be Your will. . ." No. If I know God would forgive my sins, and I have

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met the conditions, I must not pray "Lord, if it is Your will to forgive my sins..." I know He wants to and if I have made it possible for Him to, by fulfilling the conditions, then I must believe that He will do it. To pray differently is, I'm afraid, sin.

In Romans 14:23 Paul says that what is not of faith is sin. To ask God for forgiveness of sin, if it is His will is a prayer of commitment, and that's no place for that kind of a prayer. I know it is His will to forgive my sins, if I confess them. Here is where I can pray the prayer of reception. You'll remember that the prayer of reception is when we take a promise, and after fulfilling the conditions of answered prayer, we ask God to fulfill this promise for us, individually. Then we claim the promise and believe that He has fulfilled it. We go one step further and thank Him for having answered our prayer, and for my having received it. You see, 'reception' means, 'I have received it.'

I am to take a promise of God for pardon for sin as surely as I've said, "Lord, forgive me..." I am to say, for I have a right to: "Lord, I have received forgiveness...."

Years ago, my brother and I were selling books. He went on one side of the road and I went on the other. He came to a certain home and when he told the man what his business was, the man said, "Well, I'm not interested in your book, but I have a book I'll give you." "Well, thank you a million times," my brother said. At that the man said, "Don't thank me a million times, just thank me once and take it." It wasn't the number of times my brother thanked him, it was whether my brother reached out and received that book, that determined whether or not he would get it.

When we pray a prayer of reception, we're to reach right out and receive what we ask for, when we know He wants us to have it. And we can know that by reading the promises He has given in His Word. We can then say, "Thank you Lord, I have received it." This may take some practise, because we're not used to saying it that way, isn't that right? We're used to asking for something "if it be Your will" when He has already told us it is His will. When we stop to think about that, it seems a little ridiculous, doesn't it? Why yes. Jesus came to save me, so I don't need to ask Him to save me if it is His will. I know before I pray that it is His will. I have a right to put my finger on Matthew 1:21 and ask Him to save me. Then I can claim the fact that He has saved me if I believe what He says. I can then thank Him for having saved me, and that He will continue to save me each day. Salvation is a daily arrangement and commitment to God. We can say, "I'm saved, now" - and believe it with all our heart! Perhaps it might be better to say, "He is saving me, now." You see, then we put Christ in the centre of the picture instead of us. And who we have in the centre makes a difference.

When we talk about eternal life, we can know and say that we have eternal life. It is promised to us. Notice 1 John 2:25, "And this is the promise that he hath given us, even eternal life." Here is where we have the promise of eternal life. Now I can say, "Lord, please give me eternal life." Then I can say, "Lord, I believe You have given me eternal life. I claim it, through Jesus, and I thank You for having given it to me."

Sometimes we are prone, when asked if we are a Christian, to say - "I hope so!" Isn't that something? To hope for something that has been promised us? I have a son. Now suppose someone would come to him and say, "I knew an Elder Glenn Coon. Are you his son?" And he would say, "I hope so..." Why, that would be an insult to both his mother and me, wouldn't it? Let's us quit hoping and say, "He is my Savior. I know He is!" This is receptive prayer.

When we talk about receiving forgiveness for our sins, we need not be in doubt about it if we have met the conditions for answered prayer. We can know, sure and certain that we are free from the weight and penalty of sin. Jesus has promised it to me, and I believe Him, don't you? This makes Christianity a joy. It's a delight now. I don't have to work myself into a frenzy to be saved. All I have to do is to ask,

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believe and claim what God has promised to give me. Oh, how thankful we ought to be for this beautiful arrangement.

What about this request to put enmity between us and that which is not for us. This fits the picture of infatuation. After I had gone through my Gethsemane experience, I determined to share it with all I could. I found such joy in putting my finger on a promise and receiving the answer, after I had asked, and expressed my belief in God for doing what He had promised and then thanking Him for having received it. No wonder it says, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord..." Ever since then I have been telling others of what I found, and believe me, this is fun! This is real joy! And if there is a people who can, and should be enjoying this kind of a real experience, it is a people who have entered into a solemn covenant to obey God. This is our right!

Like Paul, we can say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." We can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. . ." I know that I don't amount to much, but I know that He does, and that if I will let Him, He will make me a worthwhile tool in His hand.

It wasn't long after I decided to share this experience with others, that a young man in our church had become infatuated with one of the young ladies of our church. This man was a married man with two lovely children and a beautiful, devout wife. He was working down at a hospital and became involved with a young nineteen-year-old girl. At first it was just innocent play, but it led to infatuation. They didn't mean to become infatuated, but that's the way it always is. You know how people become infatuated? The innocent tap on the shoulder. The little touch here and there. Some people call it 'puppy love'. If you want to keep from becoming infatuated - hands off and three feet distance - must be the rule.

The bigger part of yielding to temptation is proximity. The nearer you get to temptation, the more sure you are of falling into it and yielding to it. The farther we keep away from temptation, the safer we are. Greater distance, means greater assurance of staying victorious. Some people wonder why they are always falling into temptation. The answer is simple. They got too close to it. Infatuation is just that way. The closer you get to someone you shouldn't be near, the more possible it is for you to become infatuated. The sooner we learn to treat temptation like Jesus did, the sooner we are going to realize victory over it.

When someone comes up to you married ladies and starts to become familiar with you, that's the time to take your leave. Now, of course, if you're both single, that's something else. You might even want to get closer! But if either one is married and this friendship should never be, the sooner you correct it, the happier you will be.

Well, this young man began to play around with this young girl. They became hopelessly infatuated. Now in order to be consistent, he decided that he must divorce his wife. Obviously, he couldn't have two wives, and the wife he wanted was the nineteen-year-old girl.

It has been stated that eighty-five percent of the executives become infatuated with their secretaries. That's an amazingly high percentage, isn't it? Why do you suppose that happens so frequently. Well, I'll tell you. The man leaves home in the morning and his wife hasn't been too pleasant, so he growls at her and he leaves with this attitude in his heart toward his wife. He comes to the office and his well-dressed secretary very pleasantly greets him, "Good morning, Mr. Smith." Now he didn't have any plan to become infatuated with his secretary, but here she was so pleasant and nice. She looked so clean and smelled so good. And the last thing he remembered about his wife was that she looked messy and sleepy and just kind of growled at him just before he left home.

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Of course, at the moment, he didn't stop to think that he was paying his secretary \$100. a week to be sweet. His wife would probably do it for \$85. But his wife is on twenty-four-hour duty, with children to diaper, a house to clean, the dog to feed, and a hundred and one other chores that he expects her to do for nothing. The secretary gets a very good salary and it's much easier for her to be sweet when the boss walks in! But just wait until he marries the secretary, and she has to diaper his children, and she has to wash the clothes and take care of the dogs and all of the household chores - she'll treat him just like his wife treats him now; and he'll treat her the same! His wife loved him when he was young, but the secretary gets him when he's old, and that always adds up to the same score!

Well, this young man was going to divorce his wife and marry this young girl. A couple of the church members went over to see him and immediately began to scold him. You know, the word of the creature cannot begin to put enmity between two people when they're infatuated. It just cannot be done, especially not with scolding. It takes the immutable power of the promise of the Creator to cause people to fall out of love who shouldn't be in love. God said, "I will put enmity...."

When I learned of the situation, I invited another pastor to go with me to visit with this young man. We got to the house and found that he was working in his garden which was in the back of the house. His wife could be seen through the kitchen window doing her work and keeping busy with the children. She was a lovely little soul. We began to visit and I told him why I was there. I assured him I wanted to say nothing that would offend him. I had not come to scold, but I wanted to help him. I told him I knew of a way by which he could have complete deliverance from the infatuation of the girl. He assured me I needn't be afraid of offending him, but he said, "I don't want to break off with this girl."

I was stumped. I wondered what I could do about a man that didn't want to be released from a problem. You can't force a man to stop sinning. Force will never bring enmity between two people who think they're in love. The Creator alone can bring this enmity, and He does it by giving the needy ones a new heart. That's the only way it can ever be accomplished.

I wondered now what I might do and how I might use the 'A,B,C's' and apply it to this situation. I thought of the promise in 1 John 5:16, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life." I wondered if that promise might be of help to me just then.

In the book Testimonies to Ministers, a book written by my favorite author, on pages 18 and 19 it says "...Omnipotence cannot resist their (the churches) plea for the salvation of any tried, tempted member of Christ's body."

I know that any of us can claim the promise of 1 John 5:16 and apply it as it directs us to, and people who shouldn't be in love, will fall out of love. This is what God has promised. But in this case the man didn't want to. Now what should I do? Then the Lord helped me to ask, "Are you willing to be made willing?"

"Yes," he said, "I'm willing to be made willing."

Then I thought of Philippians 2:13, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." I offered a prayer and used the 'A.B.Cs' of prayer. I asked the Lord to make him willing, and He heard me. Then I claimed, believed and thanked God that this man would be willing to sever connections with this young girl. Three minutes later he said, "Yes, I'm willing to quit." Think of it! "But", he said, "She's not willing to quit." I asked him how he could be so sure of that. And then he told me the old story that perhaps most infatuated people have used. He said, "She has told me that if I leave her she would commit suicide." It usually doesn't mean a thing. It just means, 'I pity myself.' A person that threatens suicide is crying for help and is pitying himself. And they want you to pity him too.

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This young man was just sure she would commit suicide and so he felt he just couldn't drop her. "Well," I said, "I have something for you." I told him about the 'A.B.Cs' of prayer and shared with him some of the promises of the Bible. I told him about the fact that the promise contains the thing promised, just like the apple-seed contains an apple tree. We thrilled at the clarity of the promises and I shared with him that if we ask and then believe and claim the promise and return thanks that we have received what the promise promises - God works wonders! I told him about the promise that would help her to fall out of love with him.

"Where is that?" he asked.

"Genesis 3:15;" I said. Look at it! "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." It fit perfectly, and he caught the point! I've found this about the Bible, so many of its promises have a multiple fit. It meant originally, this promise did, that God would put enmity between the human race and the devil. If these people weren't raising the devil, I'd like to know what they were doing! So it fit! I was thrilled that He would do it, and I believed it!

"Oh, I know she won't break up," he said.

"I know she will," I said. "In fact, let's get into the car and go right down and talk to her. I know she'll do it." I was sure of it.

"Oh, I know she won't," he insisted.

"How do you know she won't?" I asked.

"Well, I went down and tried it before. We promised we'd break up, but it doesn't work," he said.

"You promised? Do you know what it is when man promises?" I said. "Why, that's the old covenant. When God promises, this is the New Covenant!"

"Moreover," I said, "you went under the old covenant, but we're going under the new covenant." I assured him that God would be with us and He would not fail us.

"Well, just suppose she won't break up, what then?" he asked.

"Don't you worry about that," I said, "I'll take all the blame for it if it doesn't work out the way I'm sure it will."

"O. K., but I know she won't," he said.

"O. K., I know she will," I said. It scares me now to think how I knew she would. The human will is a delicate instrument - so unpredictable! Since then I've thought if this should not have been a prayer, "... if it be Your will..." But it is God's will that men turn from evil, and God impressed me to be definite and persuasive. There are times like this. Sometimes we must pray the prayer of reception that otherwise might be the prayer of commitment. The conditions at the time and the urgency of the situation determine that, and God knows all of this.

We got into the car and were headed for this young girl's house. On the way I became frightened. "What am I doing," I thought. I had promised this man that the young lady would break up, but I realized the fact that she had a sovereign will. This made me shiver in my shoes just a little. It seems as though the devil got right in the car with us and he began to whisper to me, "How do you know she's going to be willing to break up. This is a pretty big statement you've made," and so on. So I began to pray silently, and I said, "Oh Lord, come to my rescue. You've said, 'Ask', and I've asked. You've said, 'Believe', and I believe. You've said 'Claim', and I'm claiming Your promise. I believe, too, that it's going to work out."

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When we finally got there, they had already gone to bed. The house was dark! And was that young man happy! "Oh, they've gone to bed, we'd better not disturb them," he said. He was sure we would just turn around and go back home. But the Lord impressed me to go through with it.

"Oh no," I said, "They'll wake up." With that I opened the car door and bounded up the walk and climbed those stairs two at a time. I knocked at the door and said to the Lord, "Lord, You've said, 'Knock and it shall be opened'". Yes, this promise fit for this occasion. I asked God to have them hear me. I believed they would and claimed the assurance of the promise.

Just then a rough voice said, "Who's there?" I told him who it was and told him I had come to help straighten things out between his daughter and the young man.

"She's gone to bed," he said.

"She'll wake up!" I said. Right then I prayed, "Lord, You've said, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'" I told the Lord I believed she would wake up, and thanked Him for having woken her.

I could hear him talking to her and asking her if she would be willing to come out and talk to us. She agreed to get dressed and come out. "Thank You, Lord," I said as we waited. Again I was impressed with the fact that these promises are placed here for our every day needs. He wants to answer the prayers of our hearts.

It wasn't long until she had dressed sufficiently to come out and invite us all in. We all sat down, and I didn't know what to say. But I claimed another promise. "If any of you lack wisdom...." James 1:5. I needed lots of wisdom. I asked God to give me the right words to speak so that I would approach her in the right way. This was a delicate situation and I must have the finesse of heaven so as not to provoke any unwanted feelings. I realized I was dealing with the human will. I knew souls were at stake. Before I said anything, I thanked God for wisdom. I had asked, and I knew He had given it to me.

I turned to her with a smile on my face, and with the most suaveness I had ever mustered, I said, "We have come here in the interest of this young man's home. He has a lovely wife and two lovely children, and we wondered if in the interest of his home, you would be willing to break up."

Without a moment's hesitation, she said, "Yes sir." This happened in the Southeast where people are very gracious, and you don't always know that they mean what they say. I wondered if this might be one of those times. But she was so quick in responding that I thought perhaps she meant what she said. I looked over in the direction of the young man as she said, "Yes, sir," and his mouth dropped open. He hadn't expected this. I looked over in the direction of the young preacher and his mouth was open, too. I think they looked at me, and I'm sure my mouth was open, too. She had said 'yes' too quickly. I wondered how she could decide so fast.

Then the young man began to talk. He said, "But I love you."

"Be that as it may," she said, "we're through."

"But I love you very much," he insisted again.

"But we're through," she said, with real definiteness in her voice.

"But I've loved you for a long while," he said again, and it sounded as though his voice was going to crack with emotion.

"Yes, but we're through," she said. There was no question about her state of mind.

There were very few more words spoken that night. The Lord had answered our prayer and there was no question about it in any one's mind. We knelt down right there in that living room and thanked the

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Lord for what He had done, and went home. That couple was broken up at that moment, and broken up for good. God had worked, just as He had promised He would. It happened so quickly that it took me a moment to believe my ears and eyes.

I decided right there that I would tell this story everywhere I went. I've told it in our colleges and in our academies. Over and over when I have invited the young people to write out their questions, invariably someone says, "Tell me how to fall out of love." I always have them turn to the promise in Genesis 3:15.

In one school a young lady told me a story of what had happened in the dormitory after I had related the story of this young couple. She told me how one of the young ladies had set her cap for a married man with two children. She was determined to have this man. Even after she realized that it wasn't right, she couldn't get this man out of her mind. She was just madly in love with him. So she had called a group of girls to her room and they had opened their Bible to Genesis 3:15 and claimed the promise just as she had heard we had done with the young man and the girl. After they prayed together and this young lady had asked God to adjust her affections, and then claimed the promise and returned thanks to God for having corrected her way-ward affections, they got up on their feet and this young lady embraced her friends and declared that she had fallen out of love with the married man.

Now this young lady asked if my wife and I would visit with her. We told her we would, and when we were seated in the office, she said, "Where do I go from here?"

I told her, "Go just as far away from him as you can. Don't go back to him to tell him you're through, because you're a piece of steel going into the mouth of a magnet. Just keep your distance, and you'll be alright. Get the message to him any way you want, but you stay away." She thanked us and told us that's just what she would do.

Our son was at the same school and heard the same series. The next year he came back to the same school and entered his senior year. He believed that girls and books don't mix too well. He had behaved himself very well. But now he was going to graduate and he had been advised that if he was going to enter the ministry, he ought to be getting serious about the girls and find himself a wife. So he started looking around and sent us a diary of his activities. Almost every day we received a letter. For almost two weeks he told us about a girl he had met, and that although he knew she was not the girl for him, he was still infatuated with her. He was very infatuated with her, in fact, and every time he saw her, his heart did a double flip. Now what it was about this young lady that made him so sure she was not for him, I do not know, but as far as he was concerned, he knew that she would not be the one whom the Lord would have him have as his wife.

In a few days we received another letter in which he told of remembering the sermon that I had preached on falling out of love. He told us about his desire to fall out of love and the frustration he was having accomplishing this. He said, "I remembered the promise of Genesis 3:15! I went to my room and opened my Bible and put my finger right on the promise and asked God to put enmity between me and that girl." He went on to tell how he prayed and how he told the Lord he believed He would do it. "I claimed the promise and thanked the Lord that He had accomplished it for me."

"I got up from my knees and found that the Lord really had answered my prayer," he said. "But perhaps it had gone a little too far, for now I hated her!" He went on to say that he didn't want to hate her, but rather that he wanted to love her as a Christian. God had certainly put enmity between those two. But now my son thought of another text that would straighten him out of his mess. He thought of Romans 5:5 which says, ". . . the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts . . ." This made it possible for him to love her as a Christian, but yet not be infatuated with her. This is the power of God in the heart. God still answers prayer and delights in answering them if they can glorify His name.

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I want to tell you, we have a Book. We have a powerful God. And in these closing days of earth's history, we have a right to go to God and claim any one of the 3,573 promises that are to be found in the Bible. We can go home or on our way rejoicing.

Won't you, just now, reach for your Bible and open it to Acts 5:31 and notice that here God has promised to give repentance, "Him hath God exalted. . . to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." God always gives forgiveness when He gives repentance. When God makes me sorry for my sins, it's a sign that He wants to forgive me. No one was ever made repentant that was not forgiven. You might want to repeat this prayer of commitment in the quietness of your room. Place your finger on the promise as you pray:

"Our Father in heaven, we thank Thee for this promise, and we ask Thee that Thou wilt give us repentance. We ask for forgiveness, also. We believe that Thou art doing it in Jesus' name. We claim the answer that we have received it, in Jesus name, Amen.