


# A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM

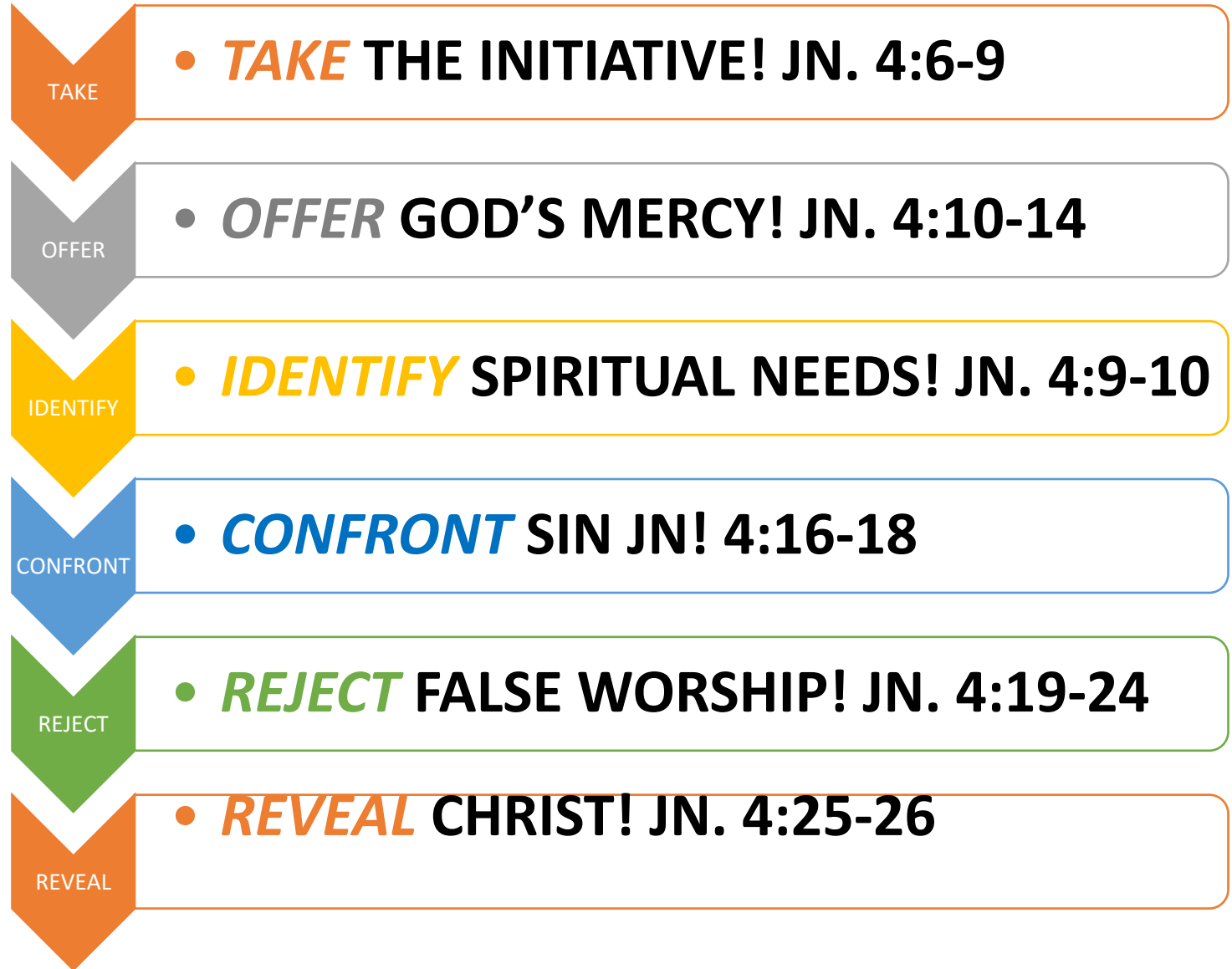


A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's trunk is massive and textured, with roots spreading out across the ground and over the stone structures. The background shows more stone ruins and lush green foliage. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

THE FRUIT OF  
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A  
TREE OF LIFE,  
AND HE WHO IS WISE  
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB

**PRINCIPLES  
FOR  
BIBLICAL  
*EVANGELISM*  
FOUND IN  
JOHN 4, “THE  
WOMAN AT  
THE WELL.”**



# THE HIGH COST OF *REJECTING* GOD *REJECTING* GOD'S RESTRAINTS



- **THE ONLY TRUE HOPE FOR ALL SINNERS IS SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST.** Apart from that, mankind remains **“DEAD IN [HIS] TRESPASSES AND SINS”** (EPH. 2:1). Only through **GOD'S MERCY** and **LOVE** can the spiritually dead **be made alive** with Christ (EPH. 2:4–5). And by God's grace, **HE CONTINUES** to redeem sinners, drawing them to Himself in **REPENTANCE** and **FAITH**.
- But in the wisdom of His divine design, God has also placed **RESTRAINTS** within us and **WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY** to mitigate the effects of man's corruption and **HOLD BACK THE FULL CHAOS** into which the world repeatedly devolves. And when these restraints are carefully maintained, life can be **ENJOYABLE. BUT WHEN THEY'RE ASSAULTED, DIMINISHED, OR DESTROYED, LIFE QUICKLY BECOMES DIFFICULT AND MISERABLE.**

# THE *CONSCIENCE*

- The first restraint is built into the heart of every man—*THE CONSCIENCE*. We know the conscience exists because so many people are full of *GUILT*, *ANXIETY*, *FEAR*, and *DREAD*. *ALL THOSE ISSUES FREQUENTLY POINT BACK TO A CONSCIENCE THAT WON'T BE SILENT*. Why?
- We look to *ROMANS* for the answer. *PAUL* writes, *“FOR THERE IS NO PARTIALITY WITH GOD. FOR ALL WHO HAVE SINNED WITHOUT THE LAW WILL ALSO PERISH WITHOUT THE LAW, AND ALL WHO HAVE SINNED UNDER THE LAW WILL BE JUDGED BY THE LAW; FOR IT IS NOT THE HEARERS OF THE LAW WHO ARE JUST BEFORE GOD, BUT THE DOERS OF THE LAW WILL BE JUSTIFIED”* (ROM. 2:11–13).
- PUT SIMPLY, *ALL SINNERS STAND EQUALLY GUILTY*, REGARDLESS OF THEIR ACCESS TO GOD'S LAW.

- **HOW IS THAT FAIR? PAUL EXPLAINS: “FOR WHEN GENTILES WHO DO NOT HAVE THE LAW DO INSTINCTIVELY THE THINGS OF THE LAW, THESE, NOT HAVING THE LAW, ARE A LAW TO THEMSELVES, IN THAT THEY SHOW THE WORK OF THE LAW WRITTEN IN THEIR HEARTS, THEIR CONSCIENCE BEARING WITNESS AND THEIR THOUGHTS ALTERNATELY ACCUSING OR ELSE DEFENDING THEM” (ROM. 2:14–15).**
- **BUILT INTO EVERY HUMAN IS A MORAL REALITY**—a sense of **RIGHT** and **WRONG. THE CONSCIENCE IS A GIFT FROM GOD.** In the same way that physical pain alerts you to not rest your hand on a hot stove, your conscience cries out to warn you of moral danger—it pleads with you to not do the thing you know you shouldn't do.

- The **CONSCIENCE** isn't a substitute for the law of God, or some means through which He speaks. **RATHER, IT IS ALIGNED TO THE HIGHEST MORAL LAW IT KNOWS.** That means the law of God that is written in every heart—**don't lie, don't steal, don't kill**, and the other basic moral lines common to all people—**CAN BE OVERRULED AND REPLACED.**
- In that regard, the **CONSCIENCE** can be assaulted through **misinformation**. Some people have so twisted and distorted their consciences that they believe the right and moral thing to do is **MURDER UNBORN CHILDREN, ATTACK POLICE OFFICERS**, or wear explosives into a crowded part of town to **KILL AS MANY CIVILIANS AS POSSIBLE. HISTORY SHOWS US JUST HOW SUSCEPTIBLE THE CONSCIENCE IS TO PROPAGANDA AND FALSE TEACHING.**

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- The **CONSCIENCE** is also assaulted through **ABUSE**. Go back to the analogy of the hot stove—if you ignored the painful warnings long enough, not only would you suffer severe physical consequences, but the consistent abuse could also cost you **THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE** the pain altogether.
  - **IF YOU IGNORE YOUR CONSCIENCE LONG ENOUGH, EVENTUALLY THERE WON'T BE ANY ALERT TO IGNORE.**
  - **WHEN YOU REPEATEDLY IGNORE THE INTERNAL WARNINGS AND RETURN TO A PARTICULAR SIN, YOU'RE SEARING YOUR CONSCIENCE AND DESTROYING ITS ABILITY TO FUNCTION PROPERLY.**
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- One of the great costs of removing the Bible from a culture is that **PEOPLE CAN NO LONGER MAKE SENSE OF THE CONSCIENCE—BOTH WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT SHOULD BE INFORMED.** What should be seen as a great gift from God is considered a curse—one that must be silenced or reoriented.
  - Of course, our therapeutic society is quick to tell people not to listen to their consciences in the first place. Psychologists are happy to redirect feelings of guilt and shame somewhere else. ***When that doesn't work, many people turn to drugs and alcohol to drown out a conscience that WON'T SHUT UP.***

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- And when the truth of God's Word is **withheld** and **denied** from the conscience for long enough, you wind up back in (ISA. 5:20), **WITH A CULTURE THAT CALLS GOOD EVIL, AND EVIL GOOD.**

**YOU HAVE A CULTURE LIKE OURS.**

- **BECAUSE MAN'S CONSCIENCE IS SO EASILY CORRUPTED, GOD HAS ALSO INSTITUTED EXTERNAL RESTRAINTS AND AUTHORITIES WITHIN SOCIETY FOR REINING IN THE DESTRUCTIVE CHAOS SIN CREATES.**

# THE FAMILY

- The **FAMILY** is one of those **restraints**. Of course, the Bible instructs Christian parents to raise their children **“IN THE DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD”** (EPH. 6:4). But even unbelieving parents have a restraining influence in the lives of their children.
- In that sense, the family is a **DIVINELY CREATED INSTITUTION** for the formation of restrained sinners, who—through generations of **MORALITY, DISCIPLINE, LOVE, VIRTUE, AND OBEDIENCE**—become a benefit to society and enjoy God’s gifts with gratitude.

- What we've seen in recent years is a comprehensive **ASSAULT** on **GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE FAMILY**, and the subsequent short-circuiting of its restraining effect.
- Between the *feminist movement's* subversion of male leadership, the explosion of *divorce rates*, and the widespread *corruption of gender and sexuality*, there's significant confusion about what actually constitutes a family, let alone how it should function. When you consider the number of children born without both a *mother* and *father* in the home, combined with those who have lost that privilege through divorce, you can see why the family isn't doing much to restrain sin and its effects in society today.

THE **BREAKDOWN** OF THE **FAMILY** SHATTERS **GOD'S DESIGN** FOR ADMINISTERING THE **LOVE, DISCIPLINE, AND DIRECTION** THAT **LITTLE LIVES SO DESPERATELY NEED.**

- Today we see generations of young people who were never taught to **RESPECT** and **SUBMIT** to **AUTHORITY**, or to take **RESPONSIBILITY** for their actions and face the consequences. The Bible tells us, **"HE WHO WITHHOLDS HIS ROD HATES HIS SON, BUT HE WHO LOVES HIM DISCIPLINES HIM DILIGENTLY"** (PROV. 13:24). **PARENTS** are meant to be a threat to unruly, disobedient behavior—they're meant to rein in their children and teach them how to live and function as productive members of society.

**TODAY WE'RE SEEING THE MAYHEM THAT'S UNLEASHED WHEN THE RESTRAINT OF FAMILY FAILS.**

# THE *GOVERNMENT*

- In those instances, God has established a separate authority to restrain sin. We can think of the **CONSCIENCE** as a kind of PERSONAL AUTHORITY, while the **FAMILY** represents PARENTAL AUTHORITY.
- God has likewise established **THE GOVERNMENT** as a SOCIETAL AUTHORITY. The prime role of government is **NOT MATERIAL WELFARE**—rather, as **PAUL** describes, **IT IS DIVINELY APPOINTED TO BEAR THE SWORD.**

***“EVERY PERSON IS TO BE IN SUBJECTION TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES. FOR THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EXCEPT FROM GOD, AND THOSE WHICH EXIST ARE ESTABLISHED BY GOD. THEREFORE, WHOEVER RESISTS AUTHORITY HAS OPPOSED THE ORDINANCE OF GOD; AND THEY WHO HAVE OPPOSED WILL RECEIVE CONDEMNATION UPON THEMSELVES. FOR RULERS ARE NOT A CAUSE OF FEAR FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR, BUT FOR EVIL. DO YOU WANT TO HAVE NO FEAR OF AUTHORITY? DO WHAT IS GOOD AND YOU WILL HAVE PRAISE FROM THE SAME; FOR IT IS A MINISTER OF GOD TO YOU FOR GOOD. BUT IF YOU DO WHAT IS EVIL, BE AFRAID; FOR IT DOES NOT BEAR THE SWORD FOR NOTHING; FOR IT IS A MINISTER OF GOD, AN AVENGER WHO BRINGS WRATH ON THE ONE WHO PRACTICES EVIL.” (ROM. 13:1–4)***

• ***GOD USES IMPERFECT MEANS TO RESTRAIN SIN.*** Nobody's conscience is perfectly informed and always accurate—no family is perfect, either. In the same way, God uses imperfect human governments—and imperfect agents of those governments—to hold back the chaos and corruption of sin. Imperfect though they may be, ***CIVIL AUTHORITIES WERE ORDAINED BY GOD, AND ANYONE WHO OPPOSES THEM OPPOSES HIM.***

• What we see today is a society full of people who were raised without the ***DISCIPLINE, LOVE, and STABILITY*** of a ***FAMILY***; people who have ***SEARED*** or ***SILENCED*** their ***CONSCIENCES*** and reject the notion that they need to submit to any authority.

***WITH CATASTROPHIC FAILURES AT THE PERSONAL AND PARENTAL LEVELS, IT'S LEFT TO THE POLICE TO ESTABLISH SOME ORDER AND SANITY AMIDST THE CHAOS!!!***

- Don't miss the *rhetorical question* in verse 3: **“DO YOU WANT TO HAVE NO FEAR OF AUTHORITY?”** PAUL presumes an affirmative response and answers his own question: **“DO WHAT IS GOOD AND YOU WILL HAVE PRAISE FROM THE SAME; FOR IT IS A MINISTER OF GOD TO YOU FOR GOOD”** (VV. 3–4).
- The point is simply that there is **NO NEED** for us to live *in fear* of the **government's authority**—it's not an inherent threat to those who abide by the law. Instead, it bears the sword and brings the wrath of God **“ON THE ONE WHO PRACTICES EVIL”** (V. 4). Their *resistance* and *rebellion* must be **PUNISHED**. Where the **RESTRAINTS** of **CONSCIENCE** and **FAMILY** might fail, the **GOVERNMENT** represents a unique and potentially **deadly threat** against the *chaos* and *corruption* of *evildoers*. And just like the world's attempts to *destroy the family* and *quiet the conscience*, the calls to *defund and disband the police* **ARE ANOTHER DIRECT ASSAULT ON **GOD'S ORDAINED MEANS OF RESTRAINING SIN****.