



DEAN WELCH – TEACHER

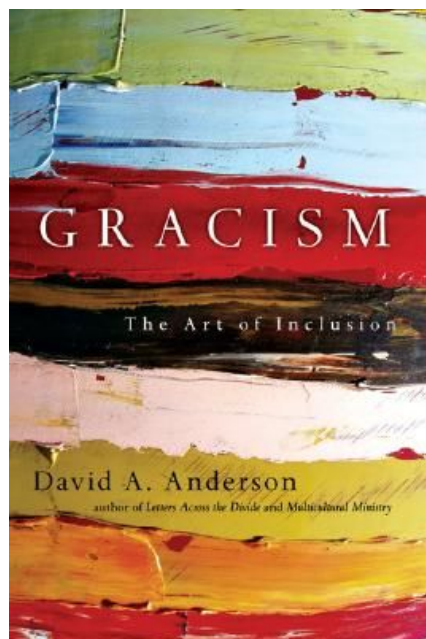
ON YOUR 6 BOSS...

I'VE GOT YOU COVERED

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

JULY 26, 2009

LESSON #2 FROM THE *MASTER WORKS* SERIES STUDY OF:



ON YOUR "6" BOSS...

WEEK #2 — I'VE GOT YOU COVERED ("SPECIAL MODESTY")

A truck driver stopped at an all-night restaurant in Broken Bow, Nebraska. The waitress had just served him when three swaggering, leather-jacketed motorcyclists – of the Hell's Angels type – entered and rushed up to him, apparently trying to pick a fight. One grabbed the hamburger off his plate; another took a handful of his French fries; and the third picked up his coffee and began to drink it. The trucker did not respond as one might expect. Instead, he calmly rose, picked up his check, walked to the front of the room, put the check and his money on the cash register, and went out the door. The waitress followed him to put the money in the cash drawer and stood watching out the door as the big truck drove away into the night. When she returned, one of the bikers said to her, "Well, he's not much of a man, is he?" She replied, "I can't answer that, but he's not much of a truck driver. He just backed over three motorcycles out in the parking lot."

Although that little story may express one the *weak* responds to the stronger, it clearly is not the desired solution for most of us as we continue with Week Two of our study from David Anderson's book, GRACISM. So, how does the *weaker* protect himself or herself in today's society?

One of the top television shows today is well-known for its many little sayings—like the one used in our lesson title on the board this morning! Does anyone know the name of the show? NCIS—Naval Criminal Investigative Service. What does the phrase "*on your 6 boss*" mean? [*I'VE GOT YOU COVERED; I'VE GOT YOUR BACK; I'M BACKING YOU UP; I'LL BE THERE*] Did you know that the phrase comes from the old pilot system in which directions correspond to hours on the clock, where 12 o'clock is forward and 6 o'clock is behind. So, anyone behind you is "on your six." And that's exactly what we're talking about this week as we continue, covering those believers who may appear *weaker* in the body. **But, just how do we, as believers, cover the weaker or unprotected**

members within the body of Christ? Let's begin by turning to our foundational scripture verses for this week's study from **1 CORINTHIANS 12: 23-24 (NIV)**: *²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are **UNPRESENTABLE** are treated with special **MODESTY**, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it...*

You will recall that last week, in Session One, we talked about extending grace to those who may be considered as "less honorable" in appearance because of race, class or culture. We are to treat them with "special honor". This has been a tough study for most of us, but the Spirit has a plan for us through this study and is in the process of changing some hearts. We can be reminded of God's Plan for us in a former memory, **JEREMIAH 29:11 (NKJV)**: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* Dr. Anderson has taken the very familiar verses in 1 Corinthians 12—dealing generally with spiritual gifts—and extended it to a new level to help us our transform negative thoughts or actions based on race, class or culture over into something positive through the use of God's grace. Thus, **GRACISM**.

Let me clarify something from the very start of this discussion this morning. I'd be remiss if I didn't say something about this study and about the author's use of 1 Corinthians. Although the MasterWork series is one of my favorite series to teach, I have struggled with this week's lesson in that I don't think the text says what the author says it says. Don't misunderstand me, however, because I think what he says is true—that we ought to treat people who are disadvantaged with special honor. We ought to go out of our way to help and encourage those that the world has discouraged and put down. I think that's true. But, I don't think **THAT** is what 1 Corinthians 12 is saying. 1 Corinthians 12 is about spiritual gifts. So as we go through this lesson today about extending grace and covering others with special modesty,

we may deal more with the *spiritual gifts* aspects than with what Anderson says this means. When there is a conflict between what God's Word says and what our study materials **want** it to say, we follow God's Word.

This week, as I mentioned, we're talking about less honorable, or *weaker*, gifts and how we as members of the body of Christ are to extend God's grace and protection to them. Look for a moment at what Paul says back in **1 CORINTHIANS 12: 21-22 (NIV)**:
*²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be **weaker** are indispensable,*

Eyes and ears and hands and feet are nice, but you can live without eyes, ears, hands, and feet. Even the members that are showy, external, and strong, you can live without. But there are **WEAK members that you can't live without – they are more **VITAL**.** In verse 22, Paul talks about the members of the body that are *more feeble* or weaker. These verses are obviously written as a metaphor and we move deeper into the body with each verse. Notice that verse 21 deals with hands and feet and eyes and ears (the **OUTWARD**), but verse 22 takes us deeper into the less showy, the less obvious, the less out-front, the less comely, the less prominent members. They are *weaker*, or more feeble in some translations, but they are necessary.

Let's name some parts of the **PHYSICAL BODY that may seem to be weaker, but are, in fact, indispensable?** ... I believe that Paul is speaking of organs here. They are the internal organs of the body – the lungs, the stomach, the liver, the kidneys, and all the other organs. These internal organs are completely hidden from view, yet they are vital and essential to sustaining life. So, in this sense they are weaker. The only protection afforded them is from the other parts of the body.

I love watching football and can't wait for the new college football season to begin next month. As I think about the new football season, I'm reminded about what you always notice when you see football players: the tremendous padding that they wear. I remember the days when my son used to put all that on, but it isn't just a question of padding. They work out with weights, weights, and more weights. They exercise too. Why? So that their physical bodies on the outside are strong, and the muscle is tense and tight. So that, when they are hit with blow after blow after blow, it doesn't mess them up on the inside. They strengthen the outward members to protect the weaker members, which have no protection other than that which is afforded on the outside.

In these verses, Paul is saying, *"There are some members who are so **FEEBLE** that they are totally dependent on the protection of some of the **OTHER MEMBERS**. They are not intended to be out front."* You wouldn't live very long if you went around with your lungs hanging outside of you. They would not be able to handle the environment.

OK, now let's translate what Paul is saying about the body over into our discussion on gifts. Look again at **verse 23**: *"and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with **special modesty...**"* **Now, tell me some spiritual gifts that may seem to be weaker, but are indispensable to the body of Christ? ...**

Let me give you an example of what I mean by a spiritual gift that at first blush appears weaker. I think it can be seen in the life of the person who has a gift for encouragement. I read about a couple who lost their five-year old son several years ago. For years afterwards, that couple would receive two cards a year from a friend in their church—one on the child's birthday, and one on the anniversary of his death. The couple had also heard hundreds of very fine Sunday School lessons in their church from a gifted teacher. But, if they were to choose only one ministry of

*the body of Christ to receive, which do you think they would choose: hundreds of fine Sunday School lessons or two cards a year? I think they would choose two cards a year. **Those hidden, behind the scenes MINISTRIES are really what makes the CHURCH the church.** If you have a similar ministry, may I encourage you this morning of its importance and value in God's Kingdom.*

You'll notice I have placed several pictures up this morning—each showing a particular type of individual. Looking at the four pictures. **[CHARLTON HESTON, THE MARLBORO MAN, DON KNOTTS, & TWIGGY]** **Which ones would be most admired in today's society? Why? What's wrong with identifying with Don Knotts or Twigg? What do most people really see in the pictures of Charlton Heston or the Marlboro Man?** We see rugged, strong, powerful-looking, confident, take-charge men who can probably do anything. They don't need any help! The picture of Charlton Heston is from his role in **Ben Hur**, in which he is said to have features chiseled in stone. He's all man, right? Also, I remember the Marlboro billboards years ago and seeing the Marlboro man. One man, all alone on a horse, out in the middle of nowhere. It's rugged individualism.

We **HONOR** people who go across the Atlantic in a dinghy, or who make amazing solo flights, or who climb Mount Everest. We have this mentality that says rugged individualism is the stuff that separates the men from the boys. The scientist who walks out of his laboratory after ten years and says, "Eureka!" and receives a prize for what he has discovered. There is something that appeals to us; there is something about the fact of doing something all alone, all by yourself, with nobody else, that says, "I have conquered everything. I don't need anyone else. I'm independent; I'm self-sufficient." That appeals to us. Why does that appeal to us? Just what's the big deal? **[WE ARE DEPRAVED]**

You say, "What do you mean?" God wants us to have a tremendous sense of dependency. God wants us to be a family. Do you remember when Cain had killed his brother Abel, God said

to him, *"Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?"* Ever since the Fall, man has rebelled against the thought of responsibility for other people. We have definitely wanted to be independent of any responsibility. If you call, that is one of the reasons that God, in the Old Testament, made an individual who sinned carry a weight of responsibility that hit a whole family, such as in the case of Achan, because God was getting a message across, and that message was, "Yes, you are your brother's keeper. Yes, you are dependent on other people. No, I don't want rugged individualism."

As we spend more time in this study about extending God's grace to the less fortunate, the more feeble, the weaker members of the body, **I believe that Satan, in response, has built into the heart of man this concept of INDEPENDENCE, this concept of needing NOTHING and nobody, as being the epitome of life. But, the fact of the matter is that this is the very opposite of what God wants.** The philosophy of today is, "Do your own thing." The music of today is, "I did it my way." All of this echoes the same philosophy that is echoed by the ideals pictured by the Marlboro Man or Ben Hur. You don't need anyone or anything; you are sufficient. It is Invictus, "I am the captain of my fate and the master of my soul." Recall the scripture in **PROVERBS 3:5 (NIV)** which says, *⁵"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.* Don't forget, it's all about **HIM!**

It's been a long time since I've thought about Aesop's Fables, but I came across one this week that rings true with what we're talking about this morning. It's called **"The Members and the Body."** *One day it occurred to the members of the body that they were doing all the work and that the belly was having all the food. So they held a meeting and after a long discussion decided to strike work until the belly consented to take its proper share of the work. So for a day or two the hands refused to take the food, the mouth refused to receive it and the teeth had no work to do. But after a day or two members began to find that they themselves were not in very active condition. The hands could*

hardly move, the mouth was all parched and dry, while the legs were unable to support the rest. Thus they found that even the belly in its dull quiet way was doing necessary work for the body and that all must work together or the body would go to pieces.

Listen to the words of a powerful verse that remind us the **HOW TO** in our apparent dilemma of how to actually put into practice extending grace to the *weaker* members: **PHILIPPIANS 4:13 (NASB)** says, *"I can do all things through **HIM** who strengthens me."* **WEAKER** members are necessary and so often we simply overlook them as not necessary! If I took the watch off my arm, handed it to you and asked you, "What do you see?" You'd say, "A gold case, a white face, and two hands." But, suppose I opened the back of my watch and repeated the question. You'd say, "I see many tiny wheels." Now, what would happen if I took one of the *little wheels* out of the watch? Sure, this watch would be useless. See, without every part—even the ones you can hardly see—the body won't perform its function correctly and may not even work.

In our modern society, do we protect the "weak" and "more feeble"? Do you think that philosophy has made its way into the church today? Unfortunately, we even tend to translate it a little bit into our theology. We think that we, because we have Christ, are sufficient and we, because we have the Holy Spirit, are sufficient, and we really don't need anyone else. We have missed the point altogether. Since we don't live communally, as they did in the Old Testament when they lived in tribes, or as they did in the New Testament when they lived in the father's house, and since our independence, we have continuously fostered that same attitude, even as Christians. So, in the backlash of all of this, the church today struggles to try and regain the concept that the church is **ONE BODY** with many **MEMBERS**. And that we have a tremendous responsibility for dependency on each other.

Let's look back again at our scripture in **1 CORINTHIANS 12: 23 (NIV)**: *²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat*

*with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with **special modesty**...* That's a very interesting verse, so watch what happens here. History tells us that the Corinthians had failed to be kind, considerate, and protective of those who did not have the gift of prophecy, or the gift of languages, or the gift of healing, the **OUT-FRONT GIFTS**. They had failed to be kind, to be considerate, to protect the weaker ones, according to verse 22. So, in **verse 23** Paul says, "Don't you realize that even a human body compensates for its less *comely*, or unpresentable, members?"

"*Uncomely*" in the King James means ugly, that's about the best definition of it—unpresentable in the NIV. The Greek word used here for means "**INDECENT**". In other words, our indecent parts have more abundant comeliness. He says that it is a normal human reaction to cover the private or indecent parts of the human body, not just for the sake of adornment, but for the sake of modesty with even a greater amount of effort. To show you how far away we have gone from what is normally human, just look at our society today, when those parts of the human body which mankind has long known to be private, and which ought to be covered with honor so that they can be held in modesty, are now exploited. That just shows how far our depravity has gone.

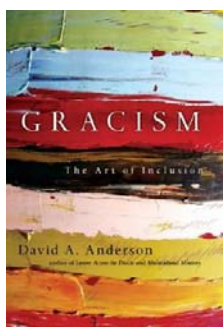
The point is this: the behind-the-scenes part of the body gets the special effort and attention and devotion. Paul is saying, "It is not the place for the highbrow parts of the body to say, 'I don't need you.' That part of the body ought to say, 'I know that I am the only protection you have (sort of like the quarterback in our earlier football analogy). I want to care for you and bestow more honor on you. And the more you need that honor, the more I want to give you that honor.' **Instead of running around with the attitude of spiritual, rugged individualism, we really should be busy making sure that we stop to **HONOR** the people who don't normally receive the honor.**" That's what he's saying.

That is the kind of love that Paul talks about in I Corinthians 13. It isn't running around with a sense of spiritual independence, but constantly acknowledging your gratitude for those parts of the church of Jesus Christ that maybe don't receive all the glamor and appeal and press. But they are there, and they are vital. They need us to love them, protect them, and honor them.

So it goes both ways. God doesn't want people who are those parts sitting in the corner thinking they are nothing, and He doesn't want the other people thinking they are everything, but rather passing the honor around where it belongs. John MacArthur, quoting Dr. Robert Thomas, says, *"It is a distorted sense of values when a Christian, well known because of his well received speaking gift, looks disparagingly at other Christians who possess no such gift. This is direct contradiction of the principle of self-concern that characterizes any body. It is far more consistent with the principle of self-preservation that members possessing greater beauty and functional ability devote themselves tirelessly to the well-being of those not so well equipped."*

That is a beautiful statement, and that is essentially what Paul is saying. Instead of thinking ourselves sufficient and independent, it is up to us to reach out and minister to those less fortunate, the less honorable, and we are to extend God's grace to those who appear *weaker* because of their race, class or culture. That is the kind of thing Paul wants and God requires from members of the body. We ought to recognize the necessity of this because God sees a beautiful equality in the body.

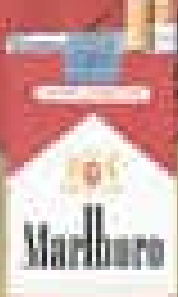
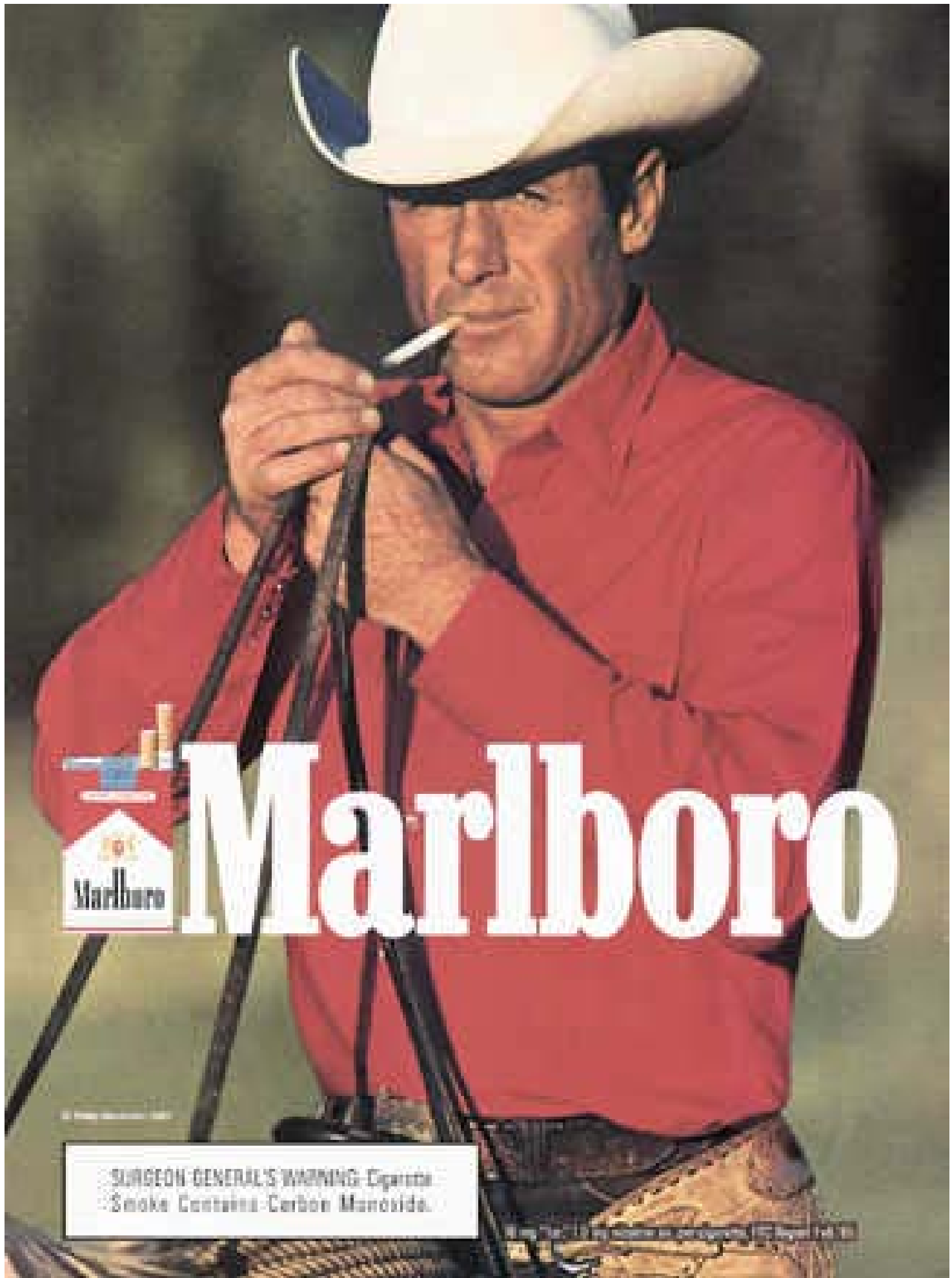
Let's pray!



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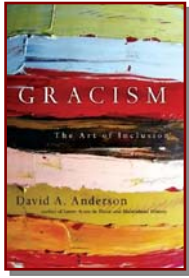


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SESSION TWO — JULY 26, 2009

ON YOUR 6 BOSS...

I'VE GOT YOU COVERED

1. **1 Corinthians 12: 23-24 (NIV):** *“And the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are _____ are treated with special _____, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it...”*
2. Eyes and ears and hands and feet are nice, but you can live without eyes, ears, hands, and feet. Even the members that are showy, external, and strong, you can live without. But there are _____ members that you can't live without – they are more _____.
3. Paul, in **1 Corinthians 12: 22**, is saying, “There are some members who are so _____ that they are totally dependent on the protection of some of the _____ . They are not intended to be out front.”
4. Those hidden, behind the scenes _____ are really what makes the _____ the church.
5. Satan has built into the heart of man this concept of _____, this concept of needing _____ and nobody, as being the epitome of life. But, the fact of the matter is that this is the very opposite of what God wants. **Proverbs 3:5 (NIV)** says, *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and _____ not on your own understanding.”*
6. **Philippians 4:13 (NASB)** says, “I can do all things through _____ who strengthens me.” _____ members are necessary and so often we simply overlook them as not necessary!
7. Basically, Paul is saying: “Instead of running around with the attitude of spiritual, rugged individualism, we really should be busy making sure that we stop to _____ the people who don't normally receive the honor.”