

With biblical support for each thesis

A MODERN

Ninety-Five Theses

*A Call to Repentance, Integrity,
and Renewal in the Church*



Ben Adarkwa Dwamena, MD

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Preface

Reformation Day — October 31

Out of love for Jesus Christ and concern for the witness of his church, these propositions are offered for prayer, examination, and discussion. They begin with those who write and affirm them. Reform requires more than identifying another person's failures; it requires surrendering our own.

READING THE BIBLICAL SUPPORT. Each thesis is followed by references, selected Scripture quotations, and an explanation. Some passages directly teach the principle stated; others inform a contemporary application, including financial audits, safeguarding procedures, and artificial intelligence. Such procedures are not themselves explicit biblical commands. The quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), whose text is in the public domain. Read the full passages in context. Ellipses indicate abbreviated quotations; verse ranges identify the verses reproduced. The BSB capitalizes pronouns referring to God; the explanations follow ordinary usage.

Introduction

The Context

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, an Augustinian friar and professor at Wittenberg, sent Archbishop Albert of Mainz ninety-five theses for academic debate. Tradition holds that he also posted them on the Castle Church door, although historians debate that account. Written in Latin, the theses circulated rapidly in print; German translations followed.

The immediate controversy concerned indulgences: remissions of temporal punishment for sins already forgiven. Johann Tetzel promoted a campaign whose proceeds supported both the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica and Albert's ecclesiastical debts. Luther challenged the preaching that encouraged people to trust payments rather than sincere repentance. His first thesis called the whole Christian life to repentance. The fuller Reformation teaching on grace, faith, Christ, and Scripture developed through the controversy that followed.

These modern theses borrow Luther's form without claiming his historical role. Their concerns include the marketing of spiritual favor, resistance to accountability, and technology that spreads claims faster than people can examine them. The comparison invites self-examination: grace cannot be bought, leaders answer to Christ, and reform begins with our own repentance.

The eleven parts move from grace and repentance to renewal. Read them with an open Bible, examine the cited passages in context, and test the proposed applications. These propositions invite prayer and discussion; they do not replace Scripture or settle every question they raise.

PART I

Grace and Repentance

Theses 1–10

1 When Jesus calls us to follow him, he calls us into a life of repentance, faith, and love.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 9:23; John 13:34–35.

MATTHEW 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

MARK 1:15 “The time is fulfilled,” He said, “and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the gospel!”

LUKE 9:23 Then Jesus said to all of them, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

JOHN 13:34–35 A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.

Jesus calls people to repent, believe, follow him daily, and love one another.

2 The church belongs to Jesus Christ; its leaders are stewards accountable to him.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 5:2–4.

MATTHEW 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

COLOSSIANS 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have preeminence.

1 PETER 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is among you, watching over them not out of compulsion, but because it is God's will; not out of greed, but out of eagerness...

Christ heads the church, and its shepherds answer to him.

3 Every generation must examine its traditions, ambitions, and practices in the light of the gospel.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Mark 7:8–13; Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

MARK 7:8 You have disregarded the commandment of God to keep the tradition of men.

ACTS 17:11 Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:21 But test all things. Hold fast to what is good.

Traditions must not displace God's word; teaching and practice require examination.

4 Repentance must reach the institution as surely as it reaches the individual.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Revelation 2:1–5; 3:14–19.

REVELATION 2:4–5 But I have this against you: You have abandoned your first love. Therefore, keep in mind how far you have fallen. Repent and perform the deeds you did at first. But if you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Christ addresses congregations collectively and calls them to repent of their shared failures.

5 We are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; no payment, performance, or human connection can purchase God's favor.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Romans 3:23–24; Ephesians 2:8–9; Acts 8:18–23.

ROMANS 3:23–24 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

ACTS 8:20 But Peter replied, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!”

Salvation is God's gift, received through faith in Christ, and attempts to purchase spiritual power receive a sharp rebuke.

6 Faith receives grace with empty hands and learns to serve with open hands.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Titus 3:4–8; Matthew 10:8; 1 Peter 4:10.

TITUS 3:5 He saved us, not by the righteous deeds we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of new birth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

MATTHEW 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

1 PETER 4:10 As good stewards of the manifold grace of God, each of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve one another.

God's undeserved kindness equips believers to serve others freely.

7 Good works are the fruit of salvation and must never become its price.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Ephesians 2:8–10; James 2:14–18.

EPHESIANS 2:8–10 For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life.

JAMES 2:17 So too, faith by itself, if it does not result in action, is dead.

Salvation is received through faith, and living faith expresses itself in action.

8 Forgiveness bears fruit in a changed life; it does not excuse continuing harm.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Romans 6:1–4; Luke 19:8–10.

ROMANS 6:1–2 What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase? Certainly not! How can we who died to sin live in it any longer?

LUKE 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, half of my possessions I give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will repay it fourfold.”

Grace calls people away from continuing sin and toward concrete repair.

9 Spiritual maturity becomes visible in love, patience, honesty, and self-control.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Galatians 5:22–23; Ephesians 4:15; James 3:13–18.

GALATIANS 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

EPHESIANS 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ Himself, who is the head.

Spiritual growth appears in character, truthful love, and peaceable wisdom.

10 Reform begins when we allow the truth we proclaim to judge the lives we lead.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 7:3–5; Romans 2:21–23; James 1:22–25.

MATTHEW 7:5 You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

ROMANS 2:21 You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

JAMES 1:22 Be doers of the word, and not hearers only. Otherwise, you are deceiving yourselves.

Those who teach must first submit themselves to the truth they teach.

PART II

Scripture and Discernment

Theses 11–20

11 Scripture must be read carefully, in context, with prayer and humility.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Nehemiah 8:8; Psalm 119:18; Luke 24:27;

2 Timothy 2:15.

NEHEMIAH 8:8 So they read from the Book of the Law of God, explaining it and giving insight, so that the people could understand what was being read.

PSALM 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15 Make every effort to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman who accurately handles the word of truth.

Scripture requires explanation and faithful handling, with individual passages understood within God's larger revelation.

12 A verse detached from its context can become an instrument of manipulation.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 4:5–7; 2 Peter 3:15–16.

MATTHEW 4:6–7 “If You are the Son of God,” he said, “throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command His angels concerning You, and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’” Jesus replied, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

2 PETER 3:16 He writes this way in all his letters, speaking in them about such matters. Some parts of his letters are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Scripture can be quoted deceptively or distorted destructively.

13 No preacher’s interpretation is beyond examination; Scripture remains the final authority over every teacher and tradition.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 14:29; Galatians 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

ACTS 17:11 Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true.

GALATIANS 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be under a curse!

2 TIMOTHY 3:16–17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

Religious authority does not exempt a message from testing against the Scriptures God has breathed out.

14 Christians should be equipped to understand Scripture, ask questions, and exercise discernment.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Ephesians 4:11–14; Hebrews 5:14.

EPHESIANS 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed about by the waves and carried around by every wind of teaching and by the clever cunning of men in their deceitful scheming.

HEBREWS 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained their senses to distinguish good from evil.

Ministry should develop mature believers who can distinguish truth from error.

15 Difficult questions deserve patient engagement.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT John 20:24–29; Jude 22; Acts 18:24–26.

JOHN 20:27 Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe.”

JUDE 22 And indeed, have mercy on those who doubt...

Doubt and incomplete understanding can be met with mercy and careful instruction.

16 Claims of revelation must be tested; confidence and charisma do not establish divine authority.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Deuteronomy 13:1–4; Matthew 7:15–23; 1 John 4:1.

DEUTERONOMY 13:3 You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. For the LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

MATTHEW 7:15 Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

1 JOHN 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Impressive claims and extraordinary signs do not establish faithfulness to God.

17 No prophecy should shield its speaker from correction or demand unquestioning obedience.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 1 Corinthians 14:29–33; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:20–21 Do not treat prophecies with contempt, but test all things. Hold fast to what is good.

Prophetic speech is to be weighed and tested; it does not override responsible judgment.

18 The name of God must never be used to silence legitimate scrutiny.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Jeremiah 7:4–11; 23:25–32; 26:8–16; Acts 4:18–20.

JEREMIAH 7:4 Do not trust in deceptive words, chanting: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’

JEREMIAH 26:8 And as soon as he had finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests and prophets and all the people seized him, shouting, “You must surely die!”

ACTS 4:19–20 But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than God. For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Religious language and claims of divine authority cannot legitimize deception or injustice, and Scripture honors those who refused to be silenced.

19 Christian teaching should distinguish biblical conviction from cultural preference and personal opinion.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Mark 7:6–8; 1 Corinthians 7:10–12, 25;
Romans 14:1–6.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:12 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If a brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:25 Now about virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

ROMANS 14:5 One person regards a certain day above the others, while someone else considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

Paul distinguishes the Lord's teaching from apostolic judgment; both belong to inspired Scripture. Teachers today must distinguish Scripture from their own opinions.

20 Knowledge of Scripture should deepen our love for the people Scripture calls us to serve.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 22:37–40; 1 Corinthians 8:1–3.

MATTHEW 22:37–39 Jesus declared, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

Knowledge fulfills its purpose when governed by love for God and neighbor.

PART III

Money

Theses 21–30

21 No donation can purchase healing, prosperity, or divine favor; giving must never be sold as a guarantee of blessing.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Isaiah 55:1; 2 Kings 5:15–16; Acts 8:18–23.

ISAIAH 55:1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you without money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost!”

2 KINGS 5:16 But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will not accept it.” And although Naaman urged him to accept it, he refused.

God’s gifts cannot be reduced to commercial transactions; Elisha refused payment for a healing God had given.

22 An offering must never be demanded as the condition for receiving prayer.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 10:8; James 5:14–16.

MATTHEW 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

JAMES 5:14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Jesus commands freely given ministry, and James directs the church to pray for the sick without imposing a financial condition.

23 Giving should be free, informed, and proportionate to one's means.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 2 Corinthians 8:12–13; 9:5–7.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you beforehand and make arrangements for the bountiful gift you had promised. This way, your gift will be prepared generously and not begrudgingly.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving is accepted according to one's means and should be considered in advance and given without compulsion.

24 A person in poverty must never be shamed for giving little or nothing.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Mark 12:38–44; 2 Corinthians 8:12–13.

MARK 12:40 They defraud widows of their houses, and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will receive greater condemnation.

MARK 12:43–44 Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more than all the others into the treasury. For they all contributed out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

2 CORINTHIANS 8:13 It is not our intention that others may be relieved while you are burdened, but that there may be equality.

Jesus honors a poor widow while condemning religious exploitation; Paul rejects giving that relieves others by crushing the giver.

25 Appeals for money must tell the truth about its intended use.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 2 Corinthians 8:20–21; Ephesians 4:25.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:21 For we are taking great care to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men.

EPHESIANS 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one another.

Financial administration must be honorable, and fundraising must reflect truthful speech.

26 Church finances should be documented, independently reviewed, and reported clearly to the congregation.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 2 Corinthians 8:18–21; Proverbs 15:22.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:19–21 More than that, this brother was chosen by the churches to accompany us with the offering—the gracious gift we administer to honor the Lord Himself and to show our eagerness to help. We hope to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this generous gift. For we are taking great care to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men.

PROVERBS 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Shared oversight and publicly honorable administration point toward independent review and clear reporting.

27 Leaders must disclose financial conflicts and submit related transactions to independent oversight.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Exodus 23:8; Proverbs 11:1; 2 Corinthians 8:20–21.

EXODUS 23:8 Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous.

PROVERBS 11:1 Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but an accurate weight is His delight.

Impartiality and honest stewardship support disclosure and independent oversight of conflicted transactions.

28 Money entrusted to ministry must never become a leader's private treasury.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT John 12:4–6; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Peter 5:2.

JOHN 12:6 Judas did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to take from what was put into it.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:2 Now it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

1 PETER 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is among you, watching over them not out of compulsion, but because it is God's will; not out of greed, but out of eagerness...

Scripture condemns theft from entrusted funds and ministry motivated by dishonest gain.

29 A church's budget should reveal meaningful care for the people it professes to love.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Acts 4:32–35; James 2:15–17; 1 John 3:17–18.

ACTS 4:34–35 There were no needy ones among them, because those who owned lands or houses would sell their property, bring the proceeds from the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet for distribution to anyone as he had need.

1 JOHN 3:17–18 If anyone with earthly possessions sees his brother in need, but withholds his compassion from him, how can the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us love not in word and speech, but in action and truth.

Material provision gives practical expression to professed love.

30 The gospel offers hope in poverty and suffering; it does not guarantee wealth or bodily health.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Luke 9:58; John 16:33; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; Philippians 4:11–13.

LUKE 9:58 Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.”

JOHN 16:33 I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me.

Faithful disciples may experience poverty, affliction, and continuing weakness.

PART IV

Leadership and Safeguarding

Theses 31–40

31 Christian leadership carries a greater duty of accountability.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Luke 12:48; James 3:1.

LUKE 12:48 But the one who unknowingly does things worthy of punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from him who has been entrusted with much, even more will be demanded.

JAMES 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Greater responsibility brings stricter judgment.

32 Ordination gives no person ownership of another's conscience.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 Peter 5:2–3; Romans 14:10–12.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are fellow workers with you for your joy, because it is by faith that you stand firm.

1 PETER 5:3 Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

ROMANS 14:12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Leaders serve faith without domination, and believers remain personally accountable to God.

33 A title cannot substitute for character, competence, or faithful service.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9.

1 TIMOTHY 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...

TITUS 1:9 He must hold firmly to the faithful word as it was taught, so that he can encourage others by sound teaching and refute those who contradict it.

Leadership qualifications emphasize character, sound teaching, and responsible conduct.

34 Leaders should welcome structures capable of correcting and, when necessary, removing them.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Galatians 2:11–14; 1 Timothy 5:19–21.

GALATIANS 2:11 When Cephas came to Antioch, however, I opposed him to his face, because he stood to be condemned.

1 TIMOTHY 5:20–21 But those who persist in sin should be rebuked in front of everyone, so that the others will stand in fear of sin. I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels to maintain these principles without bias, and to do nothing out of partiality.

Even prominent leaders may require public correction and impartial discipline.

35 No leader should investigate an allegation against himself or herself.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Deuteronomy 16:19; Proverbs 18:17; 1 Timothy 5:21.

DEUTERONOMY 16:19 Do not deny justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

PROVERBS 18:17 The first to state his case seems right until another comes and cross-examines him.

Impartial judgment and careful examination support independent investigation. This is an application of biblical principles, rather than a prescribed investigative procedure.

36 Sexual exploitation, financial misconduct, and coercion must never be concealed to protect a ministry's reputation.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Ephesians 5:11–13; 1 Timothy 5:20–21; Ezekiel 34:2–10.

EPHESIANS 5:11 Have no fellowship with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

EZEKIEL 34:4 You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bound up the injured, brought back the strays, or searched for the lost. Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty.

Protecting leaders while exposing others to harm contradicts faithful shepherding.

37 Credible allegations require impartial investigation, care for those affected, and appropriate reporting to lawful authorities.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Deuteronomy 19:15–19; Psalm 82:3–4; Romans 13:1–4.

DEUTERONOMY 19:15 A lone witness is not sufficient to establish any wrongdoing or sin against a man, regardless of what offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

PSALM 82:3–4 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; uphold the rights of the afflicted and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; save them from the hand of the wicked.

Careful inquiry, protection of vulnerable people, and respect for civil justice belong together. This ancient rule of evidence must not become a reason to dismiss a lone complainant or delay protective action and appropriate reporting.

38 Forgiveness does not cancel safeguarding, restitution, or the consequences of wrongdoing.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Leviticus 6:1–5; Luke 19:8; Romans 13:4.

LEVITICUS 6:4–5 Once he has sinned and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or the deposit entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, or anything else about which he has sworn falsely. He must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value, and pay it to the owner on the day he acknowledges his guilt.

ROMANS 13:4 For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not carry the sword in vain. He is God's servant, an agent of retribution to the wrongdoer.

Confession and forgiveness can coexist with restitution and lawful consequences.

39 Restoration to Christian fellowship does not automatically entail restoration to leadership.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 3:2–7; Titus 1:7–9.

GALATIANS 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him with a spirit of gentleness. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

1 TIMOTHY 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...

A person may receive restorative care while failing to meet the qualifications for leadership.

40 A church demonstrates integrity by protecting the vulnerable when doing so is costly.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Proverbs 24:11–12; Isaiah 1:17; John 10:11–13.

PROVERBS 24:11 Rescue those being led away to death, and restrain those stumbling toward the slaughter.

ISAIAH 1:17 Learn to do right; seek justice and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless and plead the case of the widow.

JOHN 10:12 The hired hand is not the shepherd, and the sheep are not his own. When he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf pounces on them and scatters the flock.

Faithful care defends those at risk rather than abandoning them when protection becomes costly.

PART V

Human Dignity

Theses 41–50

41 Every person bears God’s image and must be treated with dignity.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Genesis 1:26–27; James 3:9–10.

GENESIS 1:27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

JAMES 3:9 With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness.

Human dignity rests in creation in God’s likeness.

42 Children require safeguarding policies, safe reporting channels, and adults who act when concerns arise.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 18:5–6, 10; Proverbs 31:8–9.

MATTHEW 18:6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

MATTHEW 18:10 See that you do not look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven.

PROVERBS 31:8 Open your mouth for those with no voice, for the cause of all the dispossessed.

Jesus' concern for children and the duty to defend the vulnerable ground modern safeguarding practices.

43 Survivors of abuse must be heard without being pressured into silence or premature reconciliation.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 2 Samuel 13:20; James 1:19; Psalm 82:3–4;

Ephesians 5:11.

2 SAMUEL 13:20 Her brother Absalom said to her, “Has your brother Amnon been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take this thing to heart.” So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in the house of her brother Absalom.

JAMES 1:19 My beloved brothers, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger...

PSALM 82:3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; uphold the rights of the afflicted and oppressed.

Listening, defending the harmed, and exposing wrongdoing oppose enforced silence; Tamar's story shows the desolation such silence leaves.

44 Marriage teaching must never be used to compel someone to remain in immediate danger.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Psalm 82:4; Proverbs 22:3; Colossians 3:19.

PSALM 82:4 Rescue the weak and needy; save them from the hand of the wicked.

PROVERBS 22:3 The prudent see danger and take cover, but the simple keep going and suffer the consequences.

COLOSSIANS 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Protection from danger and the prohibition of marital harshness support immediate safety. These texts do not settle every question about separation or divorce.

45 Women's gifts, learning, and service must be recognized, and women must be safe from harassment and exploitation.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Genesis 1:27; Luke 10:39; Acts 2:17–18;

Romans 16:1–7; 1 Timothy 5:2.

LUKE 10:39 She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to His message.

ACTS 2:17–18 In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on My menservants and maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

ROMANS 16:1–2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. Welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her with anything she may need from you. For she has been a great help to many people, including me.

1 TIMOTHY 5:1–2 Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as to a father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Women share God-given dignity, learn as disciples, and participate in ministry; they must be treated with purity and respect. Christians differ on some leadership roles.

46 Disability must never be treated as evidence of deficient faith or personal wrongdoing.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT John 9:1–3; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.

JOHN 9:2–3 And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God would be displayed in him.”

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me.

Disability and continuing bodily weakness cannot automatically be attributed to personal sin or inadequate faith.

47 Accessibility belongs in the church’s buildings, communication, worship, and budget.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Leviticus 19:14; Luke 14:12–14; 1 Corinthians 12:22–26.

LEVITICUS 19:14 You must not curse the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the LORD.

LUKE 14:13–14 But when you host a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind, and you will be blessed. Since they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable...

Removing barriers and honoring members who are easily excluded support practical accessibility.

48 People living with mental illness deserve compassionate companionship and appropriate professional care.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 1 Kings 19:4–8; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Galatians 6:2; Luke 10:33–35.

1 KINGS 19:5 Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, to admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.

GALATIANS 6:2 Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Elijah’s despair was met first with rest and food. Patient support and practical care ground this application; these passages do not describe modern psychiatric treatment.

49 Prayer and responsible medical treatment can be received together with gratitude.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT James 5:14–16; Luke 10:34; Colossians 4:14; 1 Timothy 5:23.

JAMES 5:14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

LUKE 10:34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

COLOSSIANS 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas send you greetings.

Scripture commends prayer alongside practical treatment of bodily needs.

50 Christian community should make room for grief that lasts longer than others expect.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Genesis 37:35; Psalm 13:1–2; John 11:33–36; Romans 12:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

GENESIS 37:35 All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said. “I will go down to Sheol mourning for my son.” So his father wept for him.

PSALM 13:1 How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?

JOHN 11:35 Jesus wept.

ROMANS 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who are without hope.

Scripture gives lasting grief a voice; Christian hope permits mourning, and love accompanies those who grieve.

PART VI

Worship

Theses 51–60

51 Worship should direct attention toward God and form people for faithful living.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT John 4:23–24; Romans 12:1–2; Amos 5:21–24.

JOHN 4:23–24 But a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such as these to worship Him. God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

AMOS 5:23–24 Take away from Me the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Worship concerns truthful devotion and transformed conduct, including justice.

52 Musical excellence serves worship best when the congregation can participate.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Psalm 33:3; 1 Corinthians 14:15–17, 26; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.

PSALM 33:3 Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:15 What then shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

COLOSSIANS 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Skill serves worship, and congregational song should be intelligible enough for all to join, for mutual instruction and the building up of the church.

53 Attendance, applause, and online reach are incomplete measures of spiritual health.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 7:21–23; Revelation 3:1–2.

MATTHEW 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

REVELATION 3:1 “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of the One who holds the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation for being alive, yet you are dead.”

Visible success and a strong reputation can conceal spiritual failure.

54 Emotional intensity in worship requires discernment; powerful feelings alone cannot establish truth.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:21 But test all things. Hold fast to what is good.

1 JOHN 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Spiritual claims must be tested; emotional intensity cannot serve as its own verification.

55 Quiet faithfulness deserves encouragement even when it produces no public spectacle.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 6:1–6; 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12.

MATTHEW 6:1 “Be careful not to perform your righteous acts before men to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

1 THESSALONIANS 4:11 And to aspire to live quietly, to attend to your own matters, and to work with your own hands, as we instructed you.

God values faithful service that receives little public attention.

56 Testimonies must be truthful, freely offered, and shared with informed consent.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Exodus 20:16; Zechariah 8:16; Philippians 2:4.

EXODUS 20:16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

ZECHARIAH 8:16 These are the things you must do: Speak truth to one another, render true and sound judgments in your gates...

PHILIPPIANS 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Truthfulness directly supports accurate testimony; informed consent applies respect for another person’s interests and dignity.

57 Claims of healing must never be fabricated, exaggerated, or insulated from responsible examination.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Exodus 20:16; Acts 3:7–10, 16; 4:14–16;

1 Thessalonians 5:21.

ACTS 3:16 By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know has been made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him that has given him this complete healing in your presence.

ACTS 4:16 “What shall we do with these men?” they asked. “It is clear to everyone living in Jerusalem that a remarkable miracle has occurred through them, and we cannot deny it.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:21 But test all things. Hold fast to what is good.

Truthfulness and testing prohibit fabricated claims. In Acts even opponents conceded a healing they could see for themselves.

58 Those who remain ill must never be blamed for the outcome of prayer.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT John 9:1–3; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10;

Philippians 2:25–27; 2 Timothy 4:20.

2 TIMOTHY 4:20 Erastus has remained at Corinth, and Trophimus I left sick in Miletus.

PHILIPPIANS 2:27 He was sick indeed, nearly unto death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

JOHN 9:3 Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God would be displayed in him.”

Scripture records suffering and continuing illness among faithful people.

59 The Lord's Table should move us toward repentance, reconciliation, and care for one another.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 5:23–24; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17; 11:20–22, 27–29.

MATTHEW 5:23–24 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:17 Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:21–22 For as you eat, each of you goes ahead without sharing his meal. While one remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have your own homes in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What can I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? No, I will not!

Jesus calls worshipers to pursue reconciliation. Communion expresses shared belonging and condemns practices that humiliate poorer members.

60 Worship continues in the way we conduct our work, spend our money, and treat our neighbors.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Romans 12:1; Colossians 3:17, 23; Hebrews 13:15–16.

COLOSSIANS 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

HEBREWS 13:16 And do not neglect to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Work, generosity, and daily conduct belong to our offering to God.

PART VII

Politics

Theses 61–70

61 No political party, nation, or leader can claim the church's unconditional allegiance.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Acts 5:29; Philippians 3:20; Revelation 13:1–8.

ACTS 5:29 But Peter and the other apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than men.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...

Ultimate allegiance belongs to God, and political power can demand loyalty it has no right to receive.

62 Christians must examine the conduct of leaders they support as honestly as they examine their opponents.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Leviticus 19:15; Proverbs 24:23–25; James 2:1–9.

LEVITICUS 19:15 You must not pervert justice; you must not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the rich; you are to judge your neighbor fairly.

JAMES 2:1 My brothers, as you hold out your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, do not show favoritism.

Justice forbids favoritism, including favoritism toward those we support.

63 Patriotism must leave room for truth, repentance, and the dignity of other peoples.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Daniel 9:4–19; Acts 17:26; Philippians 3:20.

DANIEL 9:5 We have sinned and done wrong. We have acted wickedly and rebelled. We have turned away from Your commandments and ordinances.

ACTS 17:26 From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands.

Love for one's people can include confession of national wrongs and recognition of humanity's shared origin.

64 The pulpit is no marketplace for political favors.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Exodus 23:8; Micah 3:11; 1 Peter 5:2.

MICAH 3:11 Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets practice divination for money. Yet they lean upon the LORD, saying, "Is not the LORD among us? No disaster can come upon us."

EXODUS 23:8 Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous.

Condemnations of bribery and paid religious judgments apply to exchanging spiritual influence for political benefit.

65 Public prayer must not provide religious cover for corruption or cruelty.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Isaiah 1:15–17; Micah 3:9–12.

ISAIAH 1:15–17 When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you multiply your prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash and cleanse yourselves. Remove your evil deeds from My sight. Stop doing evil! Learn to do right; seek justice and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless and plead the case of the widow.

Religious observance does not excuse oppression, corruption, or violence.

66 Christians in public office owe the public honesty, competence, and fair dealing.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Exodus 18:21; Daniel 6:4; Romans 13:3–4.

EXODUS 18:21 Furthermore, select capable men from among the people—God-fearing, trustworthy men who are averse to dishonest gain. Appoint them over the people as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

DANIEL 6:4 Thus the administrators and satraps sought a charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no charge or corruption, because he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him.

Public responsibility requires integrity, trustworthiness, and service to the common good.

67 Bribery remains wrong when those receiving its benefits include a church or ministry.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Deuteronomy 16:19; 23:18; Proverbs 17:23; Romans 3:8.

DEUTERONOMY 23:18 You must not bring the wages of a prostitute, whether female or male, into the house of the LORD your God to fulfill any vow, because both are detestable to the LORD your God.

PROVERBS 17:23 A wicked man takes a covert bribe to subvert the course of justice.

ROMANS 3:8 Why not say, as some slanderously claim that we say, “Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is deserved!

Scripture condemns corrupt gain and rejects doing evil to achieve good. A worthy recipient does not make bribery just.

68 Ethnic prejudice and racial superiority contradict the dignity of people made in God’s image.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Acts 10:34–35; 17:26; Galatians 3:28; James 2:1–9.

ACTS 10:34–35 Then Peter began to speak: “I now truly understand that God does not show favoritism, but welcomes those from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.”

GALATIANS 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

God shows no ethnic favoritism, and Christians must reject partiality.

69 Churches should help neighbors address injustice through truthful, peaceful, and accountable means.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; Romans 12:17–21.

MICAH 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

ROMANS 12:17–18 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Carefully consider what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible on your part, live at peace with everyone.

Justice, mercy, and refusal of personal vengeance should shape public action.

70 Our treatment of strangers, migrants, prisoners, and marginalized people tests the credibility of our witness.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Leviticus 19:33–34; Deuteronomy 10:18–19; Matthew 25:35–40; Hebrews 13:3.

LEVITICUS 19:34 You must treat the foreigner living among you as native-born and love him as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

DEUTERONOMY 10:18–19 He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and He loves the foreigner, giving him food and clothing. So you also must love the foreigner, since you yourselves were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

MATTHEW 25:35–36 For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.

HEBREWS 13:3 Remember those in prison as if you were bound with them, and those who are mistreated as if you were suffering with them.

Scripture commands care for strangers and prisoners. Christians differ over the precise scope of “the least of these” in Matthew 25; the broader duty is clear elsewhere.

PART VIII

Mission and Unity

Theses 71–80

71 Mission requires listening to the people we hope to serve.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT James 1:19; Acts 17:22–28; 1 Corinthians 9:19–23.

JAMES 1:19 My beloved brothers, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger...

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

Respectful attention to people and their setting informs faithful communication.

72 Material assistance must never be made conditional on religious conversion.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Luke 6:35; 10:33–37; 2 Corinthians 4:2.

LUKE 6:35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:2 Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not practice deceit, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by open proclamation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Generosity without expected return and ministry without manipulation support unconditional assistance.

73 The gospel must never be used to justify cultural contempt or domination.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Mark 10:42–45; Acts 15:19–20; Revelation 7:9.

MARK 10:42–44 So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their superiors exercise authority over them. But it shall not be this way among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all."

REVELATION 7:9 After this I looked and saw a multitude too large to count, from every nation and tribe and people and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.

Christian service rejects domination and anticipates a redeemed people of many nations and languages.

74 Local churches should develop local leadership and respect the knowledge of their communities.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:2.

ACTS 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church, praying and fasting as they entrusted them to the Lord, in whom they had believed.

2 TIMOTHY 2:2 And the things that you have heard me say among many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be qualified to teach others as well.

Mission includes establishing leaders and entrusting ministry to others, and humility respects what local communities already know.

75 Christian unity requires truthfulness about our differences and charity toward one another.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Ephesians 4:1–6, 15; Romans 14:1–6.

EPHESIANS 4:2–3 With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, and with diligence to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ Himself, who is the head.

Christians pursue unity through humility and truthful love while addressing real differences.

76 Serious disagreement does not give us permission to misrepresent another person's beliefs.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Proverbs 18:13; Colossians 3:9; James 1:19.

PROVERBS 18:13 He who answers a matter before he hears it—this is folly and disgrace to him.

COLOSSIANS 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices...

JAMES 1:19 My beloved brothers, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger...

Disagreement never licenses false witness or careless listening.

77 Defending Christian doctrine must never become an excuse for humiliation or cruelty.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 2 Timothy 2:24–25; 1 Peter 3:15–16.

2 TIMOTHY 2:24–25 And a servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, and forbearing. He must gently reprove those who oppose him, in the hope that God may grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.

1 PETER 3:15–16 But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give a defense to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you. But respond with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who slander you may be put to shame by your good behavior in Christ.

Christian correction and defense of faith require gentleness and respect.

78 Cooperation in service can build trust across divisions without concealing conviction.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Mark 9:38–40; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:15.

MARK 9:39–40 “Do not stop him,” Jesus replied. “For no one who performs a miracle in My name can turn around and speak evil of Me. For whoever is not against us is for us.”

ROMANS 12:18 If it is possible on your part, live at peace with everyone.

Openness to others’ good work, peaceable conduct, and truthful love support principled cooperation.

79 Care for creation belongs to responsible stewardship and love for our neighbors.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Genesis 2:15; Psalm 24:1; Revelation 11:18.

GENESIS 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.

PSALM 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein.

The earth belongs to God, and human stewardship entails responsibility for its care.

80 The church must attend to both immediate suffering and the conditions that perpetuate it.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Isaiah 58:6–10; Amos 5:11–15; James 2:15–17.

ISAIAH 58:6–7 Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and tear off every yoke? Isn't it to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your home, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

AMOS 5:15 Hate evil and love good; establish justice in the gate. Perhaps the LORD, the God of Hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Scripture joins material assistance with opposition to oppressive practices.

PART IX

The Digital World and AI

Theses 81–88

81 The command to bear truthful witness applies to every message we post or forward.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 12:36–37; Proverbs 12:22.

MATTHEW 12:36–37 But I tell you that men will give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.

PROVERBS 12:22 Lying lips are detestable to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.

Digital communication falls under the same duty of truthful witness as speech; every careless word is accountable.

82 Christians should verify claims before circulating them, especially when those claims provoke fear or anger.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Proverbs 14:15; 18:13, 17; James 1:19–20.

PROVERBS 14:15 The simple man believes every word, but the prudent man watches his steps.

PROVERBS 18:13 He who answers a matter before he hears it—this is folly and disgrace to him.

JAMES 1:19–20 My beloved brothers, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for man's anger does not bring about the righteousness that God desires.

Prudence examines claims before responding, especially when anger encourages haste.

83 Digital popularity creates no exemption from moral accountability.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Luke 12:2–3, 48.

LUKE 12:2–3 There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. What you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the housetops.

What is whispered in private may be proclaimed from the housetops; greater reach increases responsibility rather than diminishing it.

84 Artificial intelligence must not be used to fabricate testimonies, evidence, or divine messages.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Exodus 20:16; Jeremiah 23:25–32; 2 Corinthians 4:2.

JEREMIAH 23:32 “Indeed,” declares the LORD, “I am against those who prophesy false dreams and retell them to lead My people astray with their reckless lies. It was not I who sent them or commanded them, and they are of no benefit at all to these people,” declares the LORD.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:2 Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not practice deceit, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by open proclamation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

These prohibitions of false witness, invented divine messages, and deception apply to AI-generated material.

85 Significant use of artificial intelligence in ministry should be disclosed whenever it bears on authorship or trust.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Ephesians 4:25; 2 Corinthians 8:21.

EPHESIANS 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one another.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:21 For we are taking great care to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men.

Transparency is an application of truthful dealing; Scripture does not prescribe a universal AI disclosure rule.

86 Confidential pastoral information must be protected when using digital services and tools.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Proverbs 11:13; 25:9–10.

PROVERBS 11:13 A gossip reveals a secret, but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence.

PROVERBS 25:9 Argue your case with your neighbor without betraying another's confidence...

The duty to protect entrusted information extends to the services used to store or process it.

87 Images and stories of people in distress must never be exploited for attention or fundraising.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 6:1–4; Philippians 2:3–4; James 2:1–4.

MATTHEW 6:1–2 “Be careful not to perform your righteous acts before men to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. Truly I tell you, they already have their full reward.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty pride, but in humility consider others more important than yourselves.

Humble generosity and respect for others oppose turning vulnerable people into instruments of promotion.

88 Online ministry should help people find sustained relationships, practical care, and accountable community.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Acts 2:42–47; Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 John 3:18.

ACTS 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

HEBREWS 10:24–25 And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Christian fellowship involves continuing encouragement and practical care; online ministry should serve those ends.

PART X

Rest

Theses 89–90

89 Sabbath rest reminds us that neither our worth nor God’s work depends on our constant activity.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Exodus 20:8–11; Deuteronomy 5:12–15; Psalm 127:1–2; Mark 2:27.

PSALM 127:1–2 Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain; unless the LORD protects the city, its watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for bread to eat—for He gives sleep to His beloved.

EXODUS 20:9–10 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God, on which you must not do any work—neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant or livestock, nor the foreigner within your gates.

MARK 2:27 Then Jesus declared, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

Sabbath establishes the goodness of rest and limits on labor; God gives sleep to his beloved. Christians differ on its precise observance.

90 Churches must care for exhausted leaders and volunteers before their distress becomes a crisis.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Mark 6:30–32; Exodus 18:17–23; Galatians 6:2.

MARK 6:31 And He said to them, “Come with Me privately to a solitary place, and let us rest for a while.” For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

EXODUS 18:18 Surely you and these people with you will wear yourselves out, because the task is too heavy for you. You cannot handle it alone.

Rest, shared responsibility, and mutual care address unsustainable ministry burdens.

PART XI

Renewal

Theses 91–95

91 Every call for reform must include the willingness of reformers to receive correction.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 7:3–5; Galatians 6:1; James 3:17.

MATTHEW 7:5 You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

GALATIANS 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him with a spirit of gentleness. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

JAMES 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, accommodating, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere.

Self-examination, gentleness, and willingness to listen belong to faithful correction.

92 Where harm has occurred, confession should name it clearly and lead to repair wherever repair is possible.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Numbers 5:5–7; Proverbs 28:13; Luke 19:8.

PROVERBS 28:13 He who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy.

LUKE 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, half of my possessions I give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will repay it fourfold.”

Genuine repentance acknowledges wrongdoing, abandons it, and makes restitution where possible.

93 Renewal should be assessed through lasting changes in conduct, relationships, and institutional practice.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Matthew 3:8; 7:16–20; James 3:17–18.

MATTHEW 3:8 Produce fruit, then, in keeping with repentance.

MATTHEW 7:16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

Claims of repentance and wisdom should be examined through their enduring effects.

94 The church's hope rests in the risen Christ, who calls his people to faithful witness.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT 1 Corinthians 15:14–20; 1 Peter 1:3; Acts 1:8.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 PETER 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...

ACTS 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Christ's resurrection grounds Christian hope and the church's continuing witness.

95 Let us therefore return daily to Jesus Christ, receiving his grace and following him in truth, justice, mercy, and love.

BIBLICAL SUPPORT Hebrews 4:14–16; John 15:4–12; Micah 6:8.

HEBREWS 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

JOHN 15:5 I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing.

MICAH 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

Believers draw near for mercy, abide in Christ, and walk in justice, kindness, and humility.

Closing Prayer

Lord of the church, search us, forgive us, and renew us.

*Give us courage to confess what is wrong, wisdom to
repair what we can, and faithfulness to follow wherever
you lead.*

AMEN.

About the Author

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