



February 2024

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

Perhaps as never before seen in the history of planet earth, we in our advanced, so-called “first world” of 2024 are a culture that worships at the altar of numbers and measurements. If something or someone can be studied, measured, analyzed, weighed and tested then the presupposition is that scientific analysis can improve something or someone. One of the central beliefs of our Western world is that improvement, advancement, gain, and development can be achieved by improving numbers and data that measure progress and growth. This, I believe, is part of the **tyranny of numbers!**

In our society and culture productivity, higher yields, longer life (of things and people) is esteemed, valued and believed to be of worth, so the quest of methodically counting marbles or beans continues! But the numbers gods are tyrants—they show no mercy, they acknowledge little if any grace and they have no tolerance for love and forgiveness. Produce or perish—do more, become better or else!

The scorecard value in determining a successful life measures our accomplishments or lack thereof by money, education, health, possessions and prestige. But **keeping score of human progress is a false spiritual value!**

This false value invades Christendom in many ways—here are two primary ways: 1) via the assumption that God loves us more as and when we please him more, as and when we do more stuff and perform more spiritual tasks—2) via threats that are given for what are perceived as failures to perform, such as the completely bogus, manipulative and abusive threats of eternal conscious torment in an ever-burning hell fire for those who fail to measure up.

Contrast those two examples of the false values and **the tyranny of numbers**:

1) The cross of Christ teaches us that we can never measure up to God, we can never gain and maintain his love on the basis of our performance—Jesus alone has done all that needs to be done for us. The cross demonstrates and reveals the love of God and that he now loves us as much as he ever has or ever will, and ...

2) The resurrection of Christ demonstrates that no power, no threat of violence, no hatred, no abuse has the final say about those whom God loves. The resurrection is the victory of love over hate, of peace over violence, of hope over despair.

The cross and the resurrection empty the fear of death of its power and grip. The cross and the resurrection prove that bigger and better, more power, more money, more authority—the greatest weapons in the arsenal of human power—and all the numbers gods of scientific analysis have no ultimate power over us at all. ***The cross and the resurrection vanquish the presumed powers of numbers.***

Still, even with this eternal hope, this boundless faith and the eternal love and grace of God we can fall prey to a metrics-based life—our age (too old or too young), our weight (too much or not enough—usually too much!), how many hours we are sleeping, how many calories we are

consuming and burning... how much we are praying... how hard we are working and striving to overcome... **the tyranny of numbers** god never quits.

Many years ago missionaries were dispatched from North America and European countries, going to lands where fewer people knew of Jesus Christ, preaching the gospel. Their supporters and their employers wanted reports—how are things going? Are you making converts? So at many meetings on foreign soil, after a spell-binding sermon to those who had never heard of Jesus, sometimes accompanied by threat of eternal conscious torment for those who didn't "sign on the dotted line," the preacher would ask those in attendance to raise a hand if they wished to be "converted."

The hands were counted and dutifully reported back to the missionaries' home base or headquarters office. This accounting was assumed, in many quarters for many years, to be adequate proof that the missionaries were doing their jobs and that the funds being spent on "overseas" missions were not in vain. But does a show of hands accurately demonstrate conversion, repentance, change and acceptance of Christ over the long haul?

Modern business methodology continues with these assumptions, as spreadsheets attempt to measure and tabulate data and therefore demonstrate success or failure. But numbers can be manipulated! The sum total of a business endeavor cannot be computed by a calculator. There are too many intangible issues involved.

God's grace is not completely at war with numbers and data—it's just that God's grace is in a league of its own! God's grace is different and infinitely superior to numbers and data.

Numbers can bring forth death—in fact they often do. The power of grace is in the cross and resurrection—the cross and the resurrection are counter-intuitive to the tyranny of numbers and the gods of data and calculation.

God cannot be calculated or measured. God's love cannot be measured. God's grace is endless, it is lavish beyond our wildest imagination.

Measuring and weighing and counting can become counterproductive, beyond that even harmful to the soul, when we apply scientific, mathematical methods in vain attempts to measure the unmeasurable and quantify the unquantifiable.

How can one measure and quantify the love of their parents and the warmth of a family home? Can a dollar amount be attached to this life experience? How can one count how important their true friends are to them?

What is the love of a parent, a spouse or a child worth—what yardstick will give us a definite answer?

And, of course, *what is the love, mercy, forgiveness and grace of God worth—how can we ever begin to attach a spiritual price tag to what God has done, is doing and will forever do for us?*

Living a metrics-driven spiritual life, always trying to count and measure, brings no love or joy.

In today's North American world of Christendom, people find themselves inexorably measuring their progress, their growth and their relationship with God by stuff. Christendom has a "stuff-filled" fixation.

Consider all the barnacles on the boat of Christendom—as it is weighed down with religious

stuff. The “good ship” of churchianity is either sinking or has already sunk, but many church-goers don’t yet realize it. The capsized ship popularly known as “Christianity” is overloaded with creeds, doctrines, dogmas, rituals, denominational stances, holy water, special clothing for religious professionals, dances, music, processions, observances, special feast days, prayer books, worship bulletins, stained glass and sadly, in some cases, corrupted by politics.

One of the most pernicious sins that thrives within Christendom is pervasive—it is the toxic, deadly and false notion that, given enough good deeds on the part of any human, God will owe us. God’s love cannot be gained or lost. It is a gift to be accepted or rejected, but no effort on our part can earn or deserve it.

The ditches into which we can fall when we try to keep score with how God feels about us are numerous—here are **three dangerous, misleading and treacherous C’s for Christ-followers:**

- 1) We attempt to keep score with God by **comparing** ourselves with others.
- 2) We attempt to keep score with God by **competing** with ourselves and with others.
- 3) We attempt to keep score with God by **climbing** humanly constructed religious ladders of success, accomplishments and congregational achievement.

Distressing as it is to admit, many people perceive God as a grey-bearded old man sitting on his throne in heaven, peering down at this earth, and continuously, with the help of angels, writing down all our sins and transgressions on one side of his ledger and all our good deeds on the other. Judgement Day, many think, is when the final totals are tallied, and if our good deeds outweigh the bad, we will be welcomed into heaven. If not... well, we are headed “downstairs.”

My friends, may we celebrate the endless, matchless, boundary-less, completely unsearchable and beyond human comprehension and calculation love, mercy and grace of God! Thanks for allowing us to be of service, and thanks, as always, for your wonderful financial support of this ministry.

Your brother in Christ,

Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. We share this note of thanks from a friend in Indiana—and **THANK YOU** for your part in supporting the work of CWR/PTM.

The daily online audio messages from PTM are great! I haven't missed one since retiring a year ago. How glad I am to be part of such a great work. PTM is truly making a difference in people's lives. Keep up the good work!

CWR/PTM Prayer List—February 2024

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

I need two surgeries to remove cataracts from both of my eyes. Please keep me in your prayers!—Canada

My sister has a mass next to her thyroid gland. She is a widow and her only son (age 46) died in 2020.—Tennessee

I have pain in my left wrist that won't go away. Please pray for healing and relief from the pain.—Louisiana

Please pray for my friend who was admitted to emergency due to an irritated and enlarged kidney. He is also dehydrated and hasn't been able to keep food down.—Thailand

Please pray for me—I have lost a lot of blood. Even after a blood transfusion my hemoglobin is still quite low.—California

Please pray for all who suffered losses due to recent violence, warfare, floods and hurricanes.—Florida

Please keep my wife in your prayers, as she is dealing with heart problems.—Oklahoma

We need to find a double-wide trailer in our area. Please pray for God's blessing in our search.—Maine

I am struggling with kidney and liver issues, and I would appreciate your prayers.—Kansas

Please pray—I'm having an MRI soon to determine if I have prostate cancer. I appreciate your prayers.—California

Please pray for all those suffering the consequences of recent disasters, both man-made and natural.—Ohio

Pray for all of us who are elderly, that God will give us the physical and spiritual strength we need.—Arizona

My son is dealing with depression over many regrets about the way he has lived his life. He knows he needs to fully embrace God's forgiveness. Thank you in advance for your prayers for him.—Texas

I am having trouble with my nerves and I struggle with depression. Please keep me in your prayers.—Louisiana

Please pray for our teens. I need help understanding how difficult the world they face is, compared to the world I knew as a teen. I need to focus on compassion and understanding. Thanks for the prayers!—Tennessee

Please pray for my friend who had a stroke, and for another friend who has terminal cancer.—Oregon

We have many family issues—our adult children are dealing with major problems. Pray for them and for us.—Georgia

My family and I are dealing with long-term depression (like PTSD) because of the spiritual abuse we experienced over 30 years ago. Please pray for us.—South Carolina

As a single mom, I had no idea when my daughter married that she would deal with the kind of abuse I once did. Please pray that her husband would grow up and mature.—Nebraska

Please pray for all those who grieve the loss of a loved one. I still grieve my own loss, and thought I would have overcome it by now. Grief just doesn't go away!—New York

Please pray for my husband and me to have more compassion with each other, and pray for reconciliation.—California

I thank PTM for the many prayers offered for me and my family following the death of my husband. We appreciate deeply your care and concern.—Texas

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.