



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 7 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 7: Living Like Christ

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Aug 22/23: Dr. Jennings will be doing a spiritual emphasis weekend at Laurelbrook Academy.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

Last week we talked about the yoke, and how we are to be yoked together with Christ and how a yoke is not a harness but an instrument that shares the load between two animals allowing them to work as a team to pull the load.

Kent Johnson, one of our online listeners, sent this quote from the book *The Desire of Ages* page 329:

Take My yoke upon you," Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be co-workers with Him.

The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God...{DA 329.3} (notice she didn't say written on stone)

SABBATH

Memory text: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." John 13:34 NKJV



What does such love look like? Jesus is the revelation of God's love, then what about today, what does such love look like today?

Is there a checklist for love? Why or why not?

No checklist because love does what is best, and what is best differs depending on the need, depending on the situation.

Therefore, love may, in one place turn the other cheek – but in another place not turn the other cheek – any examples?

If a parent has an unruly 6 year old who, when he doesn't get his way, hits his mother, should the mother allow this to go on and simply turn the other cheek?

Our natural hearts do not want to love, we want to be loved, to be admired, to be adored, to be the center, to be the one praised, to be the one comforted, held, caressed, watched over, protected, delivered, hugged, kissed – but we don't naturally want to put ourselves out for another – especially one who has done us wrong.

It is only as we experience God's love, which takes away our fear and insecurity that we can stop seeking to get our selves filled and start loving others. This what Jesus meant to the woman at the well – the water from Him would overflow from her to others, because it is the water of love.

Read second paragraph, "Why, then did Jesus say..."

Why did humans not have a good understanding of God's love before the incarnation of Christ?

- Traditions
- Lies of Satan
- False theologies and theories of God as punishing
- Self-centeredness
- Unwillingness to be healed

What about after the incarnation of Christ? While it is absolutely true Jesus perfectly revealed God's character of love, do you think the predominate view of God taught around the world today is consistent with what Jesus revealed?

When we think of the remnant people of Revelation, they are described as having the testimony of Jesus – which is what? Is it not the same message about the Father that Jesus gave?

Are we giving the same testimony that Jesus gave about His Father, or do we misrepresent God when we present Him as a dictator who imposes rules and must inflict punishment on the wicked?



And if we are not giving the same message, the same testimony, about God that Jesus gave are we the remnant of Revelation?

Will God inflict punishment or forgive?

When Jesus was being murdered He forgave – do we see God revealed there? Is God two-faced? When He returns will He have a different character than Jesus revealed at the cross?

Louis Farrakhan thinks so, in March 2006 he said:

We are living at a time that was described by Jesus in these words: “If those days were not shortened for his elect sake, no flesh would be saved.” We know that we have now entered that period when we witnessed a tsunami killing over 200,000 people in Asia; an earthquake in Pakistan; storms raging throughout America, fire on one side, water on the other, snow, cold, ice in between...

At the townhall meeting in New Orleans, I pointed out the high Black-on-Black crime rates, rebellion against the will and law of God, and the love of partying and acting foolishness that prevails in the city. I asked them if they did not think that Allah (God) would handle the city as He did two ancient cities that lived in rebellion. I told them Allah (God) brought a punishment to America, but He also brought a punishment to Black people, and that punishment is going to spread. There will be many more disasters that we are not prepared for in this country.

This country glories in its cities and skyscrapers, but Allah (God) is going to bring them down. We are going to know that He is God. ..

The Bible says that in His Second Coming, He will have a sword dripping with blood in His hand. He is not coming back to teach. He is coming back to kill the enemies of His teaching and set up a new government.

Is this the god you worship? Many Christians teach God is like this. Would you treat your unruly children like this?

Note how Louis Farrakhan presents the troubles at the end of time coming from God to punish sin. Contrast that with how Ellen White, one of the founders of our church, presents the troubles at the end of time:

I was shown that the judgments of God **would not** come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way;

They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproveth, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will **follow their own course**, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, **if they choose**



their own way, **then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.**

It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of. Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Any Bible text to support this?

Rev 7:1-3:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, **holding back** the four winds of the earth **to prevent** any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels **who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:** ³ “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”

What are the four angels actively doing? Holding back, in order to *prevent* harm. Yet they are described as having power to harm – how? By letting go, of what? Satan and his forces of evil.

And why do they let go? What is the causation of their letting go? The persistent insistence of humans on earth to be out of God's care. Our freewill choices drive God's protective agencies away.

Back to our view of God – is He the source of inflicted punishment or does He forgive? Does God's forgiveness prevent the consequences of persistent rebellion?

In 2007 I was at a speaker's conference in Nashville and for part of the conference we were broken into small groups. One of the members of my small group was Kent Whitaker. In December 2003 he, his wife and two sons Kevin and Bart went out to dinner to celebrate Bart's upcoming graduation from College. They gave Bart a \$4000 Rolex as a graduation gift. Kevin, the younger brother drove home and as they approached the house Bart turned back to the car to get his cell phone. (see addendum at end of notes for full story).¹

As they entered the house a masked gunman shot and killed Kevin, Kent's wife and then as Kent stepped into the doorway, he was shot in the chest but survived. As it turned out Bart had arranged with a long time friend to have his family shot and killed so he could inherit the family money. Bart was arrested and put on trial for murder with the prosecutor seeking the death penalty.

If you were Kent, how would you respond?



Kent publicly forgave his son and publicly asked the prosecutor not to seek the death penalty. But the prosecutor sought the death penalty and Bart was found guilty and sentenced to death. He is still on death row today, where Kent visits him every week.

Does God love us less than Kent loves his son? Is God less forgiving than a human father?

Does this mean all will be saved in the end? Why or why not?

When Christ forgave those who crucified Him, were they now His friends? Why not? Were they then saved? Why not?

Salvation is actually healing, renewal, transformation of the character of the one being saved, not simple forgiveness. Salvation is not about getting God to forgive, as God comes to the situation already having forgiven. It is about getting sinners to trust God and allow Him to heal them.

And our trust is undermined by Satanic views of God taught from most religions of the world, including Christianity, when we present God as a severe judge who is the source of inflicted pain and death to the unrepentant. When we present the sin problem and a legal problem, which ends up in a heavenly court for God to judge we misrepresent God as a dictator, His law like human law, and undermine trust.

Last night Christie and I were going through our hymn book and came across a song entitled, *The Judgment Has Set* page 416. Here are the words:

The judgment has set, the books have been opened;
How shall we stand in that great day,
When every thought, and word, and action,
God, the righteous Judge, shall weigh?

Refrain

*How shall we stand in that great day?
How shall we stand in that great day?
Shall we be found before Him wanting?
Or with our sins all washed away?*

The work is begun with those who are sleeping,
Soon will the living here be tried,
Out of the books of God's remembrance,
His decision to abide.

Refrain



O, how shall we stand that moment of searching,
When all our sins those books reveal?
When from that court, each case decided,
Shall be granted no appeal?

Refrain

On the radio this week I heard a Christian preacher, preaching about the future judgment and how all will stand before the judgment seat of God and have their cases decided. This entire way of thinking is based on a false understanding of God's law and government and thus the character of God is misrepresented. We are not part of the remnant church if we present God like a heavenly dictator.

Tuesday on my way to work I was listening to Christian radio when the host said that sinners cannot stand in the presence of a holy God, but we should be so thankful because when God looks at us he doesn't see our sinfulness but sees the perfect life of His Son, thus He loves us as much as His Son because Jesus died to pay our penalty.

Do you hear the error in this thinking? It could be so beautiful if they simply taught reality – that the Father doesn't see our sinfulness, because we have been renewed by the Spirit to be partakers of the divine nature and it is “no longer I that live but Christ lives in me” and thus God sees Christ when He looks at us because we ARE like Christ in heart, mind and character.

It is unhealed, unrenewed sinners that can't stand, i.e. can't stand to be, in God's presence. But healed sinners will live there forever.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “In spite of...” Why did Christ come to serve and not be served? Because it is the design for life. It was the only course for Him if He wanted to reveal God and cure our condition. It would be like asking, why do you put gasoline and not water in the gas tank of your car? Because it is designed to run on gasoline and if you want it to run then you put gas in it. Likewise, life is designed to run on love, and thus Christ came to be the conduit of God's infinite love flowing back into the species human.

Jesus left the crowds and took time away to recover, rest and rejuvenate, was this an act of selfishness? No, it was living in harmony with the laws upon which life is built to operate. Consider a farmer who gives all his food away and never takes one meal for himself, how many does he feed in the end?

Does a good steward do regular maintenance on their car, home and anything they want to function efficiently? Is it selfish to do so? What about routine maintenance of your body and mind?

Does living God's law of love mean we should always give to those who are hungry?



What about “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”? 2Thes 3:10

Love focuses not merely on the physical, temporal, here and now, but on the eternal, on the character. The physical is a great way to reach people, but if it stops there it is meaningless. The healthcare ministries are pointless if they never lead people to understand God’s design, character, methods and ultimately bring people back to unity with Him.

What does it profit a person to gain the world but lose eternal life. What good does it do to live an extra 10 years as a vegetarian but lose eternal life. But what loss do you have if you die young but have eternal life?

Read last paragraph, “Every act of mercy...” well said!

This love is more than simply emotion, it is full of emotion, but it is also full of understanding, wisdom, comprehension, concern, realism, desire to heal and restore, intent for good, and willingness to suffer to do right.

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

When we think of this we often think of things like:

- running in front of a car to save someone
- or perhaps going to mission field and being stoned or executed
- Or the time of trouble when the righteous will be persecuted
- But what about purposely committing adultery to save someone? Is that an act of love? A Jewish mother in Nazi Germany purposely choosing to commit adultery to get her child on a train out of Germany? Is she sinning or sacrificing self in love? How about if she believes she will be eternally lost for this sin, but willingly sacrifices herself, is willing to never live again to save another. Is this fulfilling what Jesus said, “greater love has no one than to give their life for a friend”?
- what about a soldier who kills others? This was Sgt York, a very religious man who didn’t want to carry arms and didn’t want to kill anyone in WWI, but came to the conclusion he would use arms only to protect and save lives. He ended up the most decorated hero of WWI. Was his willingness to sacrifice self in this way an act of love?

MONDAY

Love you neighbor and the question is “who is my neighbor” Jesus answered that by the story of the Good Samaritan – thoughts? Who is our neighbor?

The lesson answers that basically everyone who needs our help is our neighbor – thoughts?



If you are in a restaurant and see a couple arguing, should you offer to help – they clearly need help, should you offer?

If you see a parent at the grocery store having problems with a child who wants candy and is throwing a fit, should you step up and offer to help?

What about a family member with sickness or injury who needs help – what then?

Where do you draw the line in helping? What does it mean to help? How do you define help?

Does helping mean we do what they ask? Does it mean we do what they want? What does it mean?

When dealing with someone recovering from injury what is more helpful: to do as much as you can for them or as little? Why?

The goal is to help the person recovering recover as much of their autonomy and independence and strength as possible. Therefore, you give as little help as possible, or another way to say it is you require the person to do as much for themselves as they are reasonably able, lest you delay their recovery and even foster their decline.

I had a patient I was consulted to see on the nephrology ward, who had chronic renal failure and was receiving dialysis. She was severely depressed and regressed to the point of not being able to feed herself. Her family was extremely supportive and attentive to her every need. So I transferred her to the psych unit where her family could not stay with her. Within the first 30 minutes on the ward the nurse call light went off and the pt asked the nurse “will you put my glasses on my face” in the most pitiful voice. What would you have done for this terribly sick lady?

Would you have noticed that she had to actually reach over her glasses in order to reach the call light. Noticing this, we, of course, did not do put her glasses on her face for her nor anything else she could do for herself. By the end of the week she was not only up doing all her own dressing, bathing, feeding, but was helping clean up the dining area, putting away dishes etc.

How many saw the movie or read the story *The Miracle Worker*? About Helen Keller – remember the state she was in with Annie Sullivan came? How did Ms. Sullivan treat Helen? Was she helping?

Helping does not mean doing what the other wants, but what is actually helpful, within the boundaries or lines of authority and responsibility one has to another.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read MT 25:31-46, here it is from my paraphrase:



MT 25:31 “When the Son of Man comes again in his unveiled fiery glory, all his angels will be with him and he will sit upon his throne in heavenly splendor. 32 All humanity will come before him and he will separate the healed, those who have partaken the Remedy, from the unhealed, as easily as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. 33 He will put the healed on his right and the unhealed on his left.

MT 25:34 “Then the King will gladly say to those on his right, ‘Come home, you who have been healed by my Father; receive your inheritance, the kingdom of love, designed for you at the creation of the world. 35 For you lived in harmony with my kingdom of love. I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you invited me home. 36 I didn’t have clothing and you gave me clothes. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.’

MT 25:37 “Then the healed, whose hearts are right with God’s kingdom of love, will answer the King and say, ‘Lord, what are you talking about? When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 When were you a stranger to us or without clothes that we needed to clothe you? 39 When did we ever nurse you when sick or visit you in prison?’

MT 25:40 “The King will smile and say, ‘The truth of my kingdom of love is this, whatever love you gave to the least of my family on earth, you gave to me.’

MT 25:41 “Then the King will say to the unhealed, those on his left, whose hearts remain embittered with fear and selfishness, ‘Depart from me you who are terminal, doomed by your condition, go into eternal fire prepared to consume the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you let me starve. I was thirsty and you let me thirst. 43 I was a stranger and you left me on the street. I needed clothes and you gave me none. I was sick and you let me suffer. I was in prison and you let me be abused.’

MT 24:44 “They will be shocked and protest, ‘Lord, it isn’t so. We never mistreated you. When did we fail to feed you, or give you drink, or invite you home, or provide you clothing, or nurse you when sick or help you in prison?’

MT 25:45 “The King will reply, ‘The truth of my kingdom of love is this, whatever you did not do for one of the least of my earthly family, you did not do for me.’

MT 25:46 “Then they will pass away for all eternity, but the healed, those whose hearts are right, will receive eternal life.”

Why is it that when we love any human we love Jesus? How does Jesus’ kingdom work? How is it constructed? What is the design protocol?

Here is a description from the book *Desire of Ages*:



But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is **the glory of our God to give**. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: **through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** {DA 21.2}

Functionally, how does God's kingdom operate? So when we love others, we reconnect the circuit of beneficence and increase the love flowing from God, through Christ, through us, back to Christ and the Father again.

God's kingdom operates on the principle of giving, the more you give the more you receive – consider the garden hose of your home, connected to a municipal source and the fire hydrant on the street. You open the garden hose up full and the fire hydrant up full, which gives away more water? Which receives more to it? And all water eventually runs back to the sea – so the more love we give to others the more love we actually give to God as not only our love goes to God, but so does the people who love in response to our love.

WEDNESDAY

What does it mean to love your enemies? Do you find this hard? What helps?

The more I understand reality, God's design, know God, understand what sin actually does to the sinner, the easier it is to love those who are against me.

Why do we forgive those who mistreat us?

- It is important to understand how sin is transmitted, the pathology and virulence of evil
- When someone does you wrong it plants a seed in your heart/mind, that if it takes root grows into resentment, bitterness, hatred, vengeance, anger etc. and if not rooted out will harden your heart and ultimately make you like them, going around hurting others and infecting others with evil
- The tool God has given us to root out these seeds when transmitted to us, is the tool of forgiveness
- When we forgive who gets changed by that? We do, we root out the anger, bitterness, resentment, hostility and actually develop an attitude of wanting to see the other person enlightened, delivered, healed, transformed into a trustworthy person who loves others more than self. We develop compassion for them rather than hatred toward them.



- Does that mean we can trust them? No, because trust is only safely extended to the trustworthy. To trust the untrustworthy is to live a lie and injury comes from lies.

Read last paragraph, “In order...” How does God reward us for loving our enemies?

Remember the parable of the workers – the landowner went out in the morning and recruited people to work in the field and told them they would receive a full day’s wage, then more at noon, and then more with one hour left in the day. Then paid them last to hire first, and gave everyone the same full day’s pay, but those who worked all day were angry and upset. What do you think of this parable?

Why were they upset? Because they thought their pay was arbitrary, in other words simply determined by the landowner – but the metaphor points to reality and the reality is our reward is eternal life. Whether we come to God early and live our entire lives for Him, or late like the thief on the cross, all get the same reward, eternal life with God.

But what those who worked all day failed to realize is that they had the blessing of industry, accomplishment, purpose, meaning to their lives; they lived with hope, while those not working had none of these and lived in fear and uncertainty. Those who come to God early have peace with God, the joy of His presence in their life, meaning, purpose, industry, advancement in maturity, hope – while those not in active relationship with God have none of these, but live in anxiety, uncertainty, and franticness so even if they come to God before they die and experience eternal life, they cheated themselves of a blessed life on earth.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus’ teachings...” thoughts? It is impossible if we think it is our work to do. It is impossible when we teach a legal religion in which salvation is getting sins paid and pardon stamped by our names. However, when we come back to the truth about God, His kingdom and methods we actually experience change in us, we expect, desire, pursue and choose to move toward a new life in Christ – this is transformational.

When we see others, not as criminals, who justly deserve punishment, but as children of God, dying in a terminal condition, our hearts are aroused with compassion to reach them with God’s Remedy.

Read bottom two paragraphs, “Our daily need...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions.



1 During Son's Trial, Father Describes Scene Of 2003 Family Murders
by Bob Dunn, Feb 26, 2007, 11 55 PM

In opening testimony in the murder trial of Bart Whitaker, the defendant's father, Kent Whitaker, described how he lay on his front porch with a gunshot wound to his chest, knowing other family members had been shot and wondering if any were still alive.

Bart Whitaker, 26, is on trial for his life in the 2003 shooting deaths of his mother, Patricia Whitaker, and younger brother, Kevin Whitaker. Like his wife and younger son, Kent Whitaker also was shot once in the chest as he entered his Sugar Land home that night, but he survived.

Bart Whitaker is accused of plotting with Chris Brashear, 23, Bart's former roommate, and Steven Champagne, 24, to kill Whitaker family members for the inheritance Bart Whitaker stood to gain. Fort Bend County District Attorney John Healey is seeking the death penalty in the case, against Kent Whitaker's wishes.

Testifying under questioning by Assistant Fort Bend County District Attorney Fred Felcman in the opening day of the trial, in 400th District Judge Clifford Vacek's court, Kent Whitaker, a long-time accountant in a family construction business, said he felt for months there was "an equal chance" that Bart was innocent in the shootings. But shortly after his son's arrest in September 2005 "I realized he was guilty."

Also during his testimony, Kent Whitaker described events that led up to the shooting. During that testimony, and throughout opening arguments in the trial, Bart Whitaker, wearing a gray suit, close-cropped hair, and a mustache and goatee, sat completely still, staring at the table in front of him.

It was Dec. 10, 2003, and Kent Whitaker's family was just returning from a Pappadeaux's restaurant where they'd been celebrating what they thought was elder son Bart Whitaker's pending graduation from Sam Houston State University. Patricia Whitaker had picked out a \$4,000 Rolex watch as Bart's present.

Kevin Whitaker was driving the family back to his parents' home on Heron Way. Since Kevin had his keys with him, he was the first to the front door, followed by Patricia and Kent, who testified that Bart told the others he had to go back to the car to retrieve his cell phone.

Killer In The House

"I heard a loud noise" as Kevin opened the front door and entered the house," Kent Whitaker testified. "I didn't recognize it as a gunshot."

He said he saw his wife walk through the doorway. "She said 'Oh, no,' and I heard another loud noise."

Kent Whitaker said he then "stepped forward into the doorway, and that was where I saw the gunman. If I remember correctly, he had on a dark sweater and a ski mask. He did not say anything."

But he fired again, hitting Kent Whitaker in the chest, the bullet traveling into his shoulder, where it broke his humerus – the upper arm bone.

"When I was shot it knocked me backwards, out of view of the front door, on the front porch," Kent Whitaker said. "When I rolled over, I realized my arm was broken...I realized there was a gunman inside."

Incapacitated and without a weapon, he said he called out, trying to get a response from his sons and wife. Instead, "I did hear a fourth shot," Kent Whitaker said. "And I thought to myself, 'my God, he shot all of us.'"

Bart Whitaker, the last family member to enter the home that night, was shot in the arm but, like his father, recovered. Prosecutors believe Brashear was the gunman, and shot Bart Whitaker as part of a ruse designed to make it appear to police that the family had surprised a burglary in progress.

Kent Whitaker testified that he was lying on the ground for perhaps only 20 or 30 seconds when his neighbor, Cliff Stanley, approached. "He said 'hang on, buddy, help's on the way. We called 911.'"

"By that time I had looked down at my chest, and noticed the red stain was spreading," Kent Whitaker said. He recalled Stanley taking off his T-shirt, balling it up and pressing it gently into Whitaker's chest.



Continuum Of Right And Wrong

Later, paramedics and police seemed to “come swarming out.” Kent Whitaker kept asking what had happened to his family, but paramedics wouldn’t tell him. Then, he said, he overheard one police officer asking another “what do you want to do with the DOA?”

“So I did know one of them was dead, but I didn’t know who,” Kent Whitaker testified. Then he heard a paramedic say his wife was going to be flown by helicopter to a hospital “and that made my heart jump with joy.” But then he realized one of his sons had to be dead. And shortly thereafter, his wife died, too.

Kent Whitaker testified that for some time he believed Bart Whitaker was innocent in the shootings. “The police had been telling me for some time that he was a suspect...but he was telling me he was not involved,” Kent Whitaker said of his son, Bart.

“I told him I didn’t know where he was on this continuum of right and wrong, but that I was going to stand with him, and he needed to stand up, too.”

Kent Whitaker hired an attorney and a private investigator on his son’s behalf.

But six months after the murders, aware that Sugar Land Police detectives had been talking regularly to some of his acquaintances, Bart Whitaker disappeared.

Felcman said in opening arguments that police learned Bart had paid a man \$2,500 to smuggle him into Mexico on June 28, 2004. Noting that police weren’t informed of Bart Whitaker’s disappearance until nine days later, Felcman asked Kent Whitaker why.

“We wanted to find him before the authorities did. He had not been told he had to stay in Fort Bend County. He had not been told he was a suspect. As far as I knew, he had every right” to leave the area, Kent Whitaker said, adding that at the time, he still “thought there was an equal chance he was innocent.”

Asked by Felcman if he now believes Bart Whitaker induced Chris Brashear to shoot the family members, Kent Whitaker replied that “the shortage of evidence I have seen” leads him to that conclusion.

Bart Whitaker [was arrested](#) at the Mexico-U.S. border in September 2005, transported to Fort Bend County and incarcerated in the county jail in Richmond.

Kent Whitaker described a visit with him there, with bullet-proof glass separating them.

“He said ‘dad, I’m so sorry. I’m sorry for everything.’ I realized he was guilty, and willing to confess,” Kent Whitaker testified.

Christmas Card For The Prosecutor

Kent Whitaker later said “Bart was trying to confess,” but added that Felcman and Bart Whitaker’s former attorney Dan Cogdell “did not seem to realize” it.

Cogdell was later replaced in the case by current defense attorney Randy McDonald.

Under further questioning by Felcman, Kent Whitaker revealed that in December 2006, while Bart Whitaker was in the Fort Bend County Jail, Bart purchased a Christmas card at the commissary, wrote several sentences on it, and sent it to Felcman.

As he entered the card into evidence, Felcman indicated language in the card had been upsetting to him. He asked Kent Whitaker, “Did the defendant ever tell you why I should concentrate on my family?”

“I see where you are going with this,” Kent Whitaker replied. “He told me he missed his family so much...he just didn’t want anyone to lose sight of that... I can’t see any reason it should have been interpreted any way other than the way it was intended.”

Kent Whitaker also said “a lot of time has passed since these things have happened,” adding that Bart “has confessed his sins to Christ, and accepted him as is lord and savior.”



During the trial Felcman played a recording of a telephone conversation during a call Bart Whitaker placed from the county jail to his father, on Dec. 10, 2005, the second anniversary of the murders.

Bart Whitaker referred to an apparent meeting between his attorneys and Felcman.

“Felcman said there were only two options – death or life without parole,” Bart Whitaker said in the taped conversation.

“When I left Felcman’s office, I felt like there was a very positive mood there,” Kent Whitaker replied. “The other possibility, Bart, is that Healey, the head DA, may be looking to just burn you... He may be listening to the police department.”

Bart was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Below are comments from readers regarding the case

Jonanna Zeagler - Feb 27, 07:44 PM

I think they should question the father further as a suspect as well. Also I think Bart deserves the death penalty.

Cheryl Cox - Feb 27, 10:02 PM

Oh my goodness, you must not know this case or this family to even suggest Kent would have anything to do with this. Bart might deserve the death penalty but I think they should give some weight to the father’s wishes. He lost more here than anyone.

JM - Feb 27, 10:26 PM

He absolutely does NOT deserve the death penalty. Hasn’t his wonderful family suffered enough? Just to lose another child? too much!

concerned.citizen - Feb 28, 12:10 AM

The pain and anguish Bart has caused his family is horrendous. I live in their neighbor and was home the night it happened. The whole neighborhood was terrified for weeks/months. Bart’s evil actions effected many many people....all for money...and the lies and betrayal to his family.....he is a socio-path and must pay for what he did.....

Shannon C. - Feb 28, 02:36 AM

To those who think he doesn’t deserve the death penalty: He was willing to murder his own family for money. What do you think he would do to yours if he thought he could get something out of you?? People like that don’t deserve to breathe the same air that my family does. Or yours for that matter.

someone else - Feb 28, 05:56 AM

Kent Whitaker has already lost his entire family. Giving the defendant life in prison won’t change that.

Sign of the Times - Feb 28, 07:58 AM

If there was ever a crime that warranted the death penalty...this is it. To kill your own mother and brother for money! That is the worst.

Elizabeth - Feb 28, 10:42 AM

I have already said something like this on another article, but I think it’s relevant to this topic: We don’t put to death EVERY murderer. We are only supposed to apply the death penalty under certain circumstances, and this case does NOT meet those specifications. Also, it is inappropriate to traumatize and re-victimize Kent Whitaker by killing his last living child. We are too blood-thirsty in Texas. It needs to stop.

someone else - Feb 28, 05:17 PM

you are wrong.

TexasRose - Feb 28, 05:41 PM

Bart is NOT a child...

John Zeagler - Feb 28, 07:05 PM

It takes a cold hearted, greedy son to sit and eat a meal with his family knowing he had hired someone to kill them in a matter of minutes. If you need someone to throw the switch on this boy, call me, it will make us all safer. We can and should take his life and let God decide about his soul. It’s funny how people like this animal only ask for forgiveness when they get caught. I too, think the father should be investigated further; it’s hard to believe this boy did the things he did prior to this and went completely undetected, or unchecked. Let’s not forget Jim Bakker’s misguided deeds for money.