

Why Worthiness Interviews Are Not of God

How Good Laws Become Gates—and Why the Church Must End Worthiness Screening

BY DOW

Core line: *The church may witness a covenant; it must not impersonate the final judge of inward worthiness.*

14. A Final Declaration to the Churches — Closes the book with a verdict: interviews should cease, especially for children, and good laws must be returned to sandals.

Introduction — The Fine Line

There is a fine line the church must learn again. A covenant must be witnessed. A soul must not be screened as though Christ had delegated His final court to recurring local interviews. Order is real. Repentance is real. Public harm is real. Yet the modern worthiness interview confuses all three and turns them into a single economy of access, clearance, and inward gatekeeping. More deeply still, it tightens good laws into gates until teachings meant to guide disciples are used to measure whether they may belong, approach, or be trusted.

The church does need some means of teaching the covenant, receiving declarations of faith, and protecting the vulnerable from grave public harm. But none of that requires a recurring regime of worthiness interrogation. The church may witness a covenant without impersonating the final judge of inward worthiness.

Worthiness interviews create a different order. They invite the member to stand not simply before God but before a local gate in which faith, repentance, loyalty, money, sexuality, and belonging are mixed together. What should have remained discipleship becomes clearance. What should have remained stewardship becomes tribute. What should have remained witness becomes a chair in the inner room.

This book therefore does not seek to abolish covenant seriousness. It seeks to condemn the tightening of good laws into gates. It argues that there is no clear scriptural warrant for the modern worthiness-interview regime as such, that the church's present questionnaires rest chiefly in administrative practice rather than canon, and that unless the current prophet will openly canonize and defend the practice from scripture, it should be treated as administrative policy open to abolition.

The line this book draws

The church may ask whether a person believes in Jesus Christ, desires to follow Him, understands the covenant being entered, and is refusing grave public harm. It may not rightly claim the authority to build a recurring inquest into private worthiness, nor to tighten tithing, health wisdom, chastity, and prophetic witness into gates of access, belonging, and dignity.

Declaration is not adjudication. Witness is not surveillance. Confession is not interrogation. Good laws must not be tightened into gates.

Chapter 1 — What Scripture Actually Supports

The scriptural floor

Scripture plainly supports repentance. It supports confession in some real sense. It supports self-examination. It supports church discipline in serious public sin. But that is not the same thing as supporting a recurring worthiness-interview system.

A recurring worthiness-interview system does at least five things at once: it screens access, manages eligibility, assigns legitimacy, supervises conscience, and conditions honesty on institutional consequences. That full bundle is much harder to find in scripture than church culture often assumes.

Repentance and confession are real

The biblical and Restoration record do support confession and repentance. James counsels believers to confess faults one to another. Paul tells the saint to examine himself before partaking. Restoration scripture links repentance with confessing and forsaking sin. None of those ideas are foreign to the gospel.

But their center of gravity matters. Self-examination begins with the person before God. Confession belongs where truth and repair are needed. Serious discipline belongs where public harm, predation, or destructive refusal is real. These texts do not clearly establish a standing culture in which ordinary members are routinely screened for inward worthiness by administrators.

The church's strongest scriptural claims — and their limits

The common justification for worthiness interviews usually rests on two ideas. First, leaders may appeal to the bishop as a judge in Israel. Second, they may appeal to the need to keep the sacrament, ordinances, or temple from being approached lightly. Neither idea, even if granted, automatically creates the modern interview regime.

A judge in Israel need not become a recurring examiner of private inner life. A duty to guard sacred things need not become a broad culture of periodic moral interrogation. The existence of discipline in serious matters does not justify clearance screening in ordinary matters.

What scripture does not clearly model

Scripture does not clearly model recurring one-on-one worthiness screening as a standing expectation for ordinary disciples. It does not clearly model routine leader-led probing into private sexual conduct as the gateway to belonging. It does not clearly model youth being habituated into a life of spiritual clearance by interview.

The church may teach standards. It may call to repentance. It may even discipline in grave cases. But modern worthiness interviewing goes well beyond that scriptural floor.

Working conclusion

Scripture supports repentance, confession, self-examination, and rare discipline. It does not clearly support a recurring worthiness economy. The difference matters because one order directs the soul toward God, while the other trains the soul to seek clearance before men.

Chapter 2 — Administrative Practice Is Not Canon

Where the present regime actually lives

The modern worthiness-interview regime is carried chiefly through handbook, training, and administrative question lists. That fact matters. Administrative texts may organize a church's common life, but they do not become enduring divine law merely because leaders repeat them, enforce them, or grow accustomed to them.

This book therefore distinguishes between what scripture plainly requires and what the modern church has built by policy, procedure, and inherited custom. The issue is not whether leaders have authority to administer. The issue is whether administration has been preached as though it were settled canon when it has never been openly received as such.

Partial scriptural support is not enough to justify the full regime

The church may point to repentance, confession, self-examination, and the bishop's limited judicial role. Yet those things do not by themselves create a recurring worthiness economy. They do not plainly authorize routine loyalty screening, money-compliance gates, periodic inward audits, or the training of children and adults alike into the habit of seeking clearance from administrators before they may approach what is holy.

A few scriptural supports in narrow matters do not justify a much wider system in ordinary matters. The burden of proof remains on the church if it would claim that the whole modern regime—not merely repentance, confession, and rare discipline—is enduringly commanded of God.

The questionnaires themselves reveal the drift

The current baptism and temple questions show the problem. What begins with faith in God and Christ soon widens into institutional loyalty, behavioral compliance, money questions, support for present leaders, and self-assessment of worthiness. That is not merely covenant witness. It is a total-system audit in which conscience, access, legitimacy, and belonging are braided together.

This is why the practice cannot hide behind the language of simple pastoral care. A question set that makes temple approach turn on tithing status, institutional alignment, behavioral screening, and leader-satisfied worthiness is doing more than teaching the gospel. It is building gates.

If the church would bind the saints to it, let it be canonized openly

The church should be honest here. If worthiness interviews are to be treated as enduring divine law rather than administrative practice, then let the current prophet canonize the regime plainly and defend it from scripture plainly. Let the church say openly that recurring worthiness screening, as now practiced, is the command of God for all generations.

But if the church will not do that—if it will not receive the regime into clear canon—then it must stop treating handbook procedure as though it were the settled law of heaven. Administrative practice is open to correction. What has no clear scriptural warrant and no canonized standing must not be preached as untouchable merely because it has become familiar.

Governing line

Administrative practice is not canon. Sermon is not scripture. A handbook is not a commandment merely because leaders enforce it.

Chapter 3 — Repentance Before God vs Eligibility Before Men

Two spiritual orders

Repentance before God and eligibility before men are not the same order, even if they are often spoken of as though they were. Repentance is living movement toward truth: sorrow where there is sin, repair where there is harm, humility before God, and a real turning of the will. Eligibility is administrative: fit or unfit, cleared or uncleared, admitted or delayed.

Eligibility has a place in narrow matters. A community may decide who handles money, who teaches children, or who stands in public trust while grave harm remains unresolved. But when eligibility becomes the dominant language of discipleship, the gospel bends. The member learns not how to repent, but how to present as qualified.

The inward shift from conscience to clearance

A worthiness culture quietly trains a different question. Instead of asking, 'What is true before God, and what repair do I owe?' the member begins to ask, 'What answer keeps me in good standing?' This shift is disastrous because it relocates the drama of repentance from the conscience to the interview room.

Once access to ordinances, callings, temple worship, family peace, or communal legitimacy depends upon leader satisfaction, self-protective adaptation begins. The person may become less honest precisely when honesty is most needed. Shame teaches concealment. Clearance teaches performance.

No one is worthy in the strong sense

The phrase 'worthiness interview' itself already bends theology. In the deepest sense, no disciple approaches Christ because he has achieved worth. Baptism is not a medal for the morally finished. The sacrament is not food for the already whole. The temple is not ultimately sustained by the fiction that mortals can render themselves intrinsically worthy through managed disclosure.

A church may ask whether a person believes, understands, and sincerely desires the covenant. That is serious. But the church should be slower to imply that a local administrator can repeatedly determine inward worthiness in the strong sense.

What repentance actually needs

Repentance needs truth, confession where it is truly owed, and repair where harm has been done. It needs prayer, teaching, rebuke where necessary, and mercy without illusion. It does not need a recurring clearance desk to remain real.

Indeed, repentance is often hindered by the interview system because the person begins to think first about consequences, optics, recommend status, and institutional standing rather than about God, neighbor, harm, and repair.

Governing line

Worthiness interviews are not of God because they replace repentance with clearance, conscience with screening, and Christ with the chair.

Chapter 4 — When Good Laws Become Gates

The problem is not that every good law cherished by the churches is false. The problem is that good laws can be tightened until they function mainly as gates. What once instructed souls in wisdom now measures belonging. What once guarded truth now assigns status. What once directed stewardship toward mercy now screens access. In that tightening the law is not always abolished, but it is bent away from the sandals and toward the chair.

This chapter therefore does not call the church to throw away every standard. It calls the church to loose the screws. The question is not merely whether a teaching is true, but what that teaching has become in the hands of a gate-building institution. A law remains sandals-facing when it teaches, protects, and relieves burden. It becomes a gate when it chiefly sorts the admitted from the withheld, the pure from the ashamed, the loyal from the suspect, and the cleared from the burdened.

The gate-test

A teaching has become a gate when it functions chiefly to sort the acceptable from the suspect, the admitted from the withheld, or the clean from the ashamed. A teaching remains sandals-facing when it helps souls come to Christ in truth, relieves needless burden, protects the vulnerable, disciplines real harm without swallowing conscience, and leaves open a path of repentance that is not built on humiliation.

The church must therefore learn again to ask not only, “Is this law true?” but also, “What has this law become in our hands?” For a true thing can be bent into a false use. A holy thing can be turned into tribute. A wise thing can be turned into theater. A protective thing can be turned into shame-jurisdiction. And when that happens, the evil lies not only in the doctrine named, but in the use made of it.

Four drifts the book will name

First, tithing may drift from surplus stewardship into tribute, especially when money becomes a gate of access or proof of spiritual seriousness rather than a means of burden-lifting mercy.

Second, chastity may drift from truth, consent, fidelity, and repair into shame-screening, moral surveillance, and the quiet theft of jurisdiction over the private soul.

Third, health wisdom may drift from wise bodily stewardship into purity theater, where the sign of conformity matters more than the fruit of honesty, freedom, and care.

Fourth, prophetic leadership may drift from witness under Christ into practical God-proxy logic, where loyalty to the voice in the chair begins to outweigh fruit, burden-lifting, and the direct claims of conscience before God.

What the church must not do

The church must not answer this critique by saying, “Then we shall have no standards.” That is not the claim. The claim is that standards must not be tightened into gates that make the institution resilient while the soul grows afraid, the poor grow burdened, and truth becomes costly. A sandals-facing church may still teach, warn, protect, and discipline in grave matters. It may not turn every good law into a checkpoint of worthiness.

That is why this book condemns worthiness interviews while refusing simple abolitionism. The answer is not lawlessness. The answer is moral rekeying. Tithing, chastity, health wisdom, and prophetic witness must be turned back toward their proper ends: mercy, truth, stewardship, honesty, consent, repair, and burden-bearing

love. Once they are used mainly to control access, prove belonging, or secure institutional obedience, they have already drifted into gate-logic.

Anchor line

Good laws need not be discarded; they must be loosed from the gate and returned to the sandals.

Chapter 5 — Tithing from Surplus to Tribute

A good law tightened into a gate

Few examples reveal the drift more clearly than tithing. A people may rightly be taught to give. A church may rightly ask whether the saints will bear one another's burdens and support the work of mercy. Yet once giving is turned into a gate of worthiness, access, or spiritual dignity, a good law has been tightened into tribute. Then the question ceaseth to be whether the saints love enough to relieve the poor and sustain the work; it becometh whether they have paid the proper sum to stand clear before the institution.

What the revelation saith, and what the regime hath built

The church often sidestepeth the matter by speaking as though the issue were already settled: ten percent of income, asked as a matter of worthiness, and pressed as though no faithful reading could remain. Yet the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 119 speaketh first of surplus property and then of one-tenth of annual increase or interest. Whatever honest disputes men may have over the exact economic meaning, one thing is plain: the modern worthiness regime doth more than merely invite generous stewardship. It hardeneth an administrative interpretation into a spiritual gate.

That is the burden of this chapter. The problem is not only that the present interpretation may overreach the original frame. The deeper corruption is that the church hath joined money to access, temple standing, and public proof of faithfulness. Once that union is made, the law is no longer facing the sandals cleanly. It hath become a measuring rod of tribute.

When the poor are taxed for bread

A sandals-facing law of giving asketh first where the burden is heaviest and how bread may be multiplied without shame. A gate-facing law asketh first whether the sum hath been rendered. Thus the widow, the laborer, the father behind on rent, and the mother counting groceries are all tempted to treat the church as another claimant upon survival. The poor are then taxed for bread and taught to call the taxation faith.

This is why the matter cannot be dismissed as a small quibble over arithmetic. If ten percent of surplus be preached as ten percent of income, and then income-tithe status be made a sign of worthiness, the church hath not merely interpreted a text. It hath tightened the screw upon the poor and sanctified the tightening. It hath taken a law that might have measured generosity and turned it into a gate that measureth eligibility.

Temple access must not be purchased by receipts

The temple should not stand behind a financial receipt. Once a recommend question asketh, 'Are you a full-tithe payer?' the church hath already moved from stewardship to clearance. The saint is no longer simply asked whether he seeketh to use his means honestly before God and in mercy toward others. He is asked whether his financial compliance satisfyeth the gate. This is tribute-language, even when spoken softly.

No house of God should be made to whisper that the poor may approach only after proving sufficient payment. If a church will teach giving, let it teach cheerful stewardship, burden-lifting generosity, and the sharing of abundance. If it will teach sacrifice, let it teach it first to the full storehouses. But let it not make the temple a witness for the wealthy and a trembling test for the strained.

What sandals require

This book doth not call the church to abolish all giving or to despise the old command to consecrate means unto holy uses. It calleth the church to return the law to its sandals purpose. Let giving be free, cheerful, burden-lifting, and honest. Let the wealthy be under heavier account, not lighter. Let the poor not be shamed

for want. Let money cease to function as proof of worthiness. And let no man boast that he hath purchased standing with God by sums rendered into the treasury.

Anchor line

Tithing ceaseth to be holy when it is preached as tribute and used as a gate.

Chapter 6 — Chastity, Health Wisdom, and Prophetic Witness Tightened Too Far

A good law tightened into a gate

The church doth not need to cast away every law in order to escape the worthiness regime. It needeth to stop tightening good laws until they function chiefly as gates. Tithing, chastity, health wisdom, and prophetic witness may all serve the life of the saints when they remain turned toward mercy, honesty, and burden-lifting. But when they are chiefly used to sort, screen, and secure the system, they cease to face the sandals and begin to serve the chair.

Chastity from protection into shame-jurisdiction

The law of chastity was not given so that religious administrators might inherit private jurisdiction over the intimate life. It was given to protect covenant honesty, fidelity, consent, trust, children, bodies, households, and truth. Yet once it is preached mainly through probing, suspicion, coded shame, and worthiness gates, the law is no longer guarding love. It is guarding access. The vulnerable are not made safer by such a turn. They are often made quieter.

When chastity is tightened too far, confession becometh extraction, repentance becometh eligibility management, and private struggle becometh material for gatekeeping. The law then ceaseth to face the sandals and beginneth to serve the chair. This book doth not call the church to despise chastity. It calleth the church to return chastity to truth, consent, non-coercion, fidelity, repair, and protection, and to cease making sexual shame one of the chief currencies of belonging.

Health wisdom from stewardship into purity theater

The same drift appeareth in the Word of Wisdom and in other health teachings. Wisdom for the body is good. Sobriety, restraint, self-command, and freedom from addiction are good. Communities may rightly teach such things. But when those teachings are tightened into a purity theater—where belonging, dignity, and access quietly depend upon visible compliance—the law is no longer serving wisdom. It is serving optics. The clean are taught to perform, the burdened to hide, and the church to mistake managed appearance for healed appetite.

A sandals law of health would ask whether the teaching maketh people safer, freer, more capable of work, tenderness, prayer, and burden-bearing. A gate law of health asketh whether the body can be screened quickly enough to reassure the institution. The first healeth. The second sorts.

Prophetic witness from servant under Christ into God-proxy loyalty logic

The office of prophet is likewise good and needed when it remaineth under Christ. A witness may warn, teach, guide, and even rebuke. Yet when that office is preached in such a way that ordinary saints begin to act as though the prophet standeth as a practical God-proxy whose every administrative preference carrieth divine finality, the screws have been tightened too far. At that point the people no longer test by fruit. They test by proximity to the chair.

This is one reason worthiness interviews become so spiritually dangerous. Once prophetic witness hardeneth into practical God-logic, the local gatekeeper no longer asketh questions as a servant helping the soul toward Christ; he asketh as an extension of the chair. Thus support for leaders, silence before authority, and willingness to submit become confused with faith itself. The interview then ceaseth to be pastoral even in

appearance. It becometh an instrument by which the system asketh whether the soul is sufficiently aligned with the machinery.

What sandals require

A sandals-facing church would teach chastity plainly, yet would ask first where coercion, deceit, abandonment, infidelity, exploitation, and unresolved harm are present. It would teach wisdom for the body, yet would refuse to turn bodily habits into a full belonging economy. It would honor prophets as witnesses, yet would still remember that Christ alone can bear the whole weight of divine perfection without corruption.

Good laws need not be discarded; they must be loosed from the gate and returned to the sandals. Whenever a teaching chiefly serves burden-lifting, truth-telling, protection of the vulnerable, and repair of harm, it still faces the sandals. Whenever it chiefly serves screening, status, fear, loyalty, or the hardening of hierarchy, it hath turned into a gate.

Anchor line

Good laws need not be discarded; they must be loosed from the gate and returned to the sandals.

Chapter 7 — Why Worthiness Interviews for Children Are Not of God

The child is not a gate to be screened

The worthiness interview becometh most plainly corrupt when it turneth itself toward the child. Whatever partial argument may be offered for repentance, confession, or rare judgment in grave public matters, none of those things plainly authorize the recurring probing of children by religious officers as a condition of belonging, advancement, or sacred access. The child is not a project for spiritual screening. The child is a soul to be taught, protected, blessed, and kept safe from the appetite of the chair.

This is why the matter cannot be treated as a mere concern about tone. The issue is jurisdiction. A church hath overreached when it maketh the child sit privately before an adult gatekeeper to answer for inward purity, private struggles, bodily matters, or sexual thoughts. Such a system traineth the young not first to seek Christ, but first to seek clearance. It putteth the chair in the inner room before the conscience hath even learned to stand honestly before God.

Christ received children; He did not interrogate them

The scriptural pattern runneth the other way. Christ receiveth children, blesseth them, setteth them in the midst, and warneth with severity against offending them. He doth not establish a private examination culture around them. He doth not make them disclose hidden weakness to qualify for love. He doth not turn the little one into a case file. The burden of scripture is protective, not invasive. Where the Lord openeth His arms, the chair must not set a desk.

If the churches would teach children chastity, honesty, reverence, and covenant seriousness, let them do so openly, plainly, and without predatory curiosity. Let parents bear their primary stewardship. Let communities teach in the light. Let questions be simple and age-fitting. Let no child learn that sacred belonging requireth private exposure to an adult stranger or superior. That lesson is not of God.

Why sexual probing of minors is especially condemned

The law of chastity may be good. It is over-tightened into evil when leaders use it as license to probe the intimate life of children. Once an adult in religious authority asketh a minor for sexual detail, the thing hath already drifted. Even where no overt predation is intended, the structure itself is disordered. It traineth shame, secrecy, confusion of boundaries, and false submission. It can also prepare the child to distrust his own alarm when authority overstepeth in other places.

This book therefore doth not merely recommend caution. It condemneth closed-door worthiness interviews for children and youth, especially where sexuality, private bodily conduct, or intimate inward matters are placed under examination. The child must be protected from the regime, not adapted to it. A church that cannot distinguish teaching from probing, and pastoral care from invasive screening, hath already lost the sandals and taken up the gate.

What sandals require

A sandals-facing church may teach children the way of Christ, call them to truth, and prepare them for covenant life. It may not make them perform spiritual safety before adult judges. It may ask for simple declarations of faith and desire in the presence of parents or trusted witnesses. It may speak of honesty, kindness, chastity, mercy, and repentance in clean language. But it must not normalize secrecy, interrogation, or a private worthiness economy among the young.

The strongest protection is also the plainest: no closed-door worthiness interrogation of minors; no sexual probing by leaders; no access to sacred things made dependent on private exposure; no confusing of the child's teachability with the chair's right to inspect. When the church refuseth these things, it doth not become lax. It becomes cleaner. It remembereth that the little one is not raw material for administration, but a lamb to be kept from harm.

Anchor line

Christ received children in the light. The chair must not question them in the dark.

Chapter 8 — The Chair in the Inner Room

The deepest corruption of worthiness interviews is not merely that they ask too many questions. It is that they quietly move the seat of spiritual gravity from Christ and conscience to the chair and its clearance. The church beginneth to act as though access to God, access to belonging, and access to sacred things must pass through a recurring human screening of inward fitness. In that moment, the chair entereth the inner room.

From witness to jurisdiction

A church may witness a covenant. It may teach, warn, invite, and in rare grave matters protect the flock from open harm. But worthiness interviews ask for more. They ask the local leader to become an examiner of the hidden life, a manager of shame, and a practical adjudicator of who may approach. The leader is no longer merely witnessing the covenant; he is made to stand between the soul and the ordinance as though his recurring satisfaction were the gate of peace.

This is why the issue cannot be solved by softer tone alone. A gentler interrogation is still an interrogation. A kinder gatekeeper is still a gatekeeper. If the structure requireth recurring clearance before a local authority for access, legitimacy, or belonging, then the chair hath already crossed the threshold of the inward life and claimed a jurisdiction scripture doth not plainly give it.

How the chair enters the soul

It entereth when private struggle becometh interview matter. It entereth when financial obedience becometh temple access. It entereth when a child learneth that spiritual safety dependeth upon answering an adult correctly. It entereth when confession is no longer chiefly toward God and toward the harmed, but toward the officer who holdeth the gate. It entereth whenever a saint beginneth to ask not, "What is true before the Lord?" but, "What must I say or hide in order to remain clear before the institution?"

The result is not deeper holiness, but a divided life. The outer man learneth to perform compliance while the inner man learneth fear, rehearsal, concealment, and dependence. Thus the worthiness regime doth not merely mis-measure the soul; it deformeth the soul by training it to seek official clearance where it should seek light, repentance, repair, and the mercy of Christ.

What sandals require

A sandals-facing church keepeth the chair out of the hidden room as much as may be. It teacheth plainly, protecteth the vulnerable narrowly, and calleth all men to truth before God. It may witness declarations, help build repair, and act in cases of grave public harm. But it refuseth to normalize a standing inquest into inward worthiness. The more a church loveth Christ, the less eager it will be to let administrators sit where conscience should kneel.

Worthiness interviews are therefore not a small pastoral excess. They are a jurisdictional error. They take what should be brought first to God and make it answer first to the chair. They put a human office in the inner room and then call the arrangement safety, order, and discipleship.

Anchor line

When the chair entereth the inner room, repentance is bent toward clearance and conscience is taught to kneel before administration.

Chapter 9 — Why Shame Systems Produce Lying

Worthiness cultures praise honesty in word while making honesty costly in practice. Once access, belonging, temple worship, callings, family peace, or spiritual legitimacy depend upon the right answers, many disciples learn to manage appearance rather than tell the truth. This is not merely a moral weakness in the members; it is a predictable fruit of the regime itself.

When truth becomes expensive

A soul-screening system doth not merely ask whether a thing be true. It asketh whether the truth can be safely spoken without loss. If the answer threateneth shame, delay, exclusion, parental alarm, temple denial, or suspicion, the interview itself hath made truth expensive. A church should not marvel when the saints begin to price their honesty according to consequence.

Thus the regime catechizeth the people in evasion. Some conceal. Some rehearse. Some answer in phrases they have learned will pass. Some overconfess in panic and learn dependence. Others underconfess and learn division within. In every case, the chair becometh a rival audience to conscience.

Why both concealment and overconfession increase

The worthiness system doth not produce simple candor. It produceth two opposite distortions at once. The fearful learn concealment; the scrupulous learn chronic self-exposure. One hideth so as to survive; the other yieldeth more than is owed in hope of relief. Neither fruit resembleth the plain repentance of scripture, wherein truth is told before God, harm is repaired where it hath been done, and the soul is not trained to seek clearance through managerial disclosure.

The interview cannot heal what it trains people to hide

This is why the regime weakens the very truthfulness it claims to defend. Confession becometh a tactic, not a sacrament of truth. Silence becometh a strategy, not a temporary failure of courage. The church then answereth the lying it hath trained with more scrutiny, and the cycle tighteneth: more gates, more fear, more concealment, more theater. A sandals-facing church would not ask first, “How do we extract cleaner answers?” It would ask, “How have we made truth unsafe?” Until that question is faced, reform will remain cosmetic.

Chapter 10 — Why the Church Must End Worthiness Interviews

The church should end worthiness interviews because the burden of proof remaineth unmet. Scripture supporteth repentance, confession, self-examination, and rare discipline in grave matters. It doth not plainly

establish a recurring regime of private clearance interviews by which access, belonging, money, sexuality, and reverence are screened under administrative power.

The burden of proof remaineth unmet

If leaders would bind the saints to this regime as enduring divine law, let them canonize it openly and defend it plainly from scripture. But until they do so, they should cease to preach handbook procedure as though it were the command of God. A practice that liveth chiefly by administration may be amended; a practice that corrupteth good laws into gates should be abolished.

Especially the gates of money, sexuality, and children

The present system especially offendeth where it maketh money a gate, sexuality a jurisdiction, and children an interview field. Tithing should not purchase nearness. Chastity should not justify extraction. Children should not be questioned in the dark so that adults may preserve a theory of purity. These are not small defects in implementation. They are signs that the screws have already been over-tightened.

What must cease

Therefore this book calleth the churches—most pointedly the Church that formalized these things—to cease from recurring worthiness interviews; to cease from closed-door child interviews; to cease from money-as-access gates; to cease from leader-centered clearance logic; and to cease from treating administrative worthiness culture as though it were Christ’s own order.

Anchor line

If the Church will not canonize the regime, let it cease to preach the handbook as though it were the command of God.

Chapter 11 — What Must Replace Worthiness Culture

The replacement must be real, not rhetorical

It is not enough merely to condemn worthiness interviews. The church still needs a way to receive converts, prepare disciples, witness ordinances, and protect the vulnerable. Yet this book does not presume to write the church’s final handbook. It names the moral boundaries that any replacement must honor if it is to remain of God.

Any replacement must preserve agency, refuse interrogation, protect children from invasive questioning, distinguish confession from extraction, distinguish public harm from private struggle, and keep conscience before God. It must not turn money, sexuality, or institutional loyalty into recurring gates of access.

What any replacement must refuse

A church remains in worthiness culture, whatever name it chooses, if it still relies on closed-door probing, recurring clearance interviews, financial compliance as a gate, leader control over private conscience, shame-based belonging, sexual interrogation of minors, or institutional loyalty tests masquerading as discipleship.

A church begins to move back toward the sandals when it teaches plainly, witnesses covenants cleanly, protects the vulnerable narrowly and concretely, and refuses to convert good laws into gates of access or legitimacy.

Where narrow review may still exist

There remains a narrow class of issues where active public danger is present: abuse, predation, fraud, violent coercion, exploitation, or deliberate refusal to cease grave public harm. Review in such cases is not a worthiness economy. It is community protection.

This distinction matters. The church must not use the existence of rare grave danger to justify routine soul-screening of the ordinary disciple.

Witnesses, not gatekeepers

The church should recover the idea of witnesses rather than gatekeepers. A witness may testify that the person understands the covenant, enters willingly, and appears sincere. A gatekeeper claims the right to decide inward legitimacy through periodic questioning. One order serves the gospel; the other tends to impersonate it.

Replacement line

The church may witness a covenant; it must not impersonate the final court of the soul.

Chapter 12 — From Interrogation to Declaration

What follows is offered as a recommended direction, not as a new command. The church should move away from interrogation and toward declaration: let the candidate declare faith, intent, honesty, and willingness before God and witnesses, rather than submit to a moral inquest before a gatekeeper.

Why declaration better fits the gospel

A declaration preserves agency. It lets the candidate say yes before God and witnesses rather than learn to answer correctly under evaluation.

A declaration preserves seriousness. The covenant is still public, weighty, and witnessed; it is simply no longer framed as clearance awarded by the chair.

A declaration preserves conscience. The person remains responsible before God for truthfulness, repentance, repair, and sincerity.

A declaration also gives a cleaner direction for baptism, temple entry, and other covenant thresholds: let the church receive a solemn yes; let it refuse to impersonate the final judge of inward worthiness.

Recommended direction

The church should move toward covenant declarations, witness-based entry, voluntary confession, repair-centered ministry, and narrow safety review only where real public harm is present. It should not recreate worthiness culture under softer branding.

- The witnesses affirm that the person appears to be entering sincerely and without coercion.
- The witnesses do not claim final knowledge of the soul, only sufficient public witness for the covenant to be received.

Safeguards for children and youth

Children and youth should never be subjected to closed-door worthiness interrogation as the price of religious belonging.

Any covenant conversation with a minor should be simple, plain, and parent-present or otherwise fully open.

No adult leader should privately probe a minor's sexual thoughts, practices, or intimate bodily matters under the title of worthiness.

The church may teach chastity and truth. It may not normalize spiritual jurisdiction over the child's private interior life.

Final practical line

A declaration asks for faith, understanding, willingness, and sincerity. It does not ask the chair to play God.

Chapter 13 — What Real Spiritual Oversight Would Look Like

The answer to worthiness culture is not a church without standards, order, or pastoral responsibility. The answer is a church whose oversight is returned to the sandals. Real spiritual oversight teaches, warns, comforts, protects, and helps repair harm. It does not build a recurring regime of clearance, interrogation, and inward gatekeeping.

Oversight should teach in the light

Leaders should teach repentance, covenant, mercy, truth, stewardship, chastity, and holiness plainly before the whole people.

What must be taught openly should not be enforced mainly through secret interviews. A church that relies on hidden questioning to produce visible righteousness has already misplaced its confidence.

Oversight should distinguish weakness from danger

Not every weakness is a public threat. Not every struggle is a disciplinary matter. Not every private sin calls for official intrusion.

Real oversight learns to distinguish between ordinary human weakness, hidden shame, unresolved harm, and active danger. Without that distinction, leaders begin treating every stain as if it were public contamination, and the saints learn to live under fear rather than grace.

Oversight should protect the vulnerable

Where abuse, predation, coercion, fraud, or grave public harm is present, leaders must act. This is one of the real places where oversight matters.

But protection is not the same thing as routine worthiness screening. A church may guard the flock against wolves without training every lamb to bare its conscience on demand.

Oversight should be repair-centered

When harm has been done, the question is not merely whether the sinner feels bad enough or has spoken the right words to the right office. The real questions are: Who was harmed? What truth must be told? What repair is due? What safety must now be established?

An oversight culture centered on repair is much closer to God than one centered on extracting disclosure and then awarding eligibility.

Oversight should leave conscience before God

Leaders may witness, teach, and warn. They may help the sinner tell the truth and the victim find safety. They may help the church discern grave public danger.

They must not attempt to become the final court of inward worthiness. The soul must remain answerable first to God.

Oversight should be open where children are concerned

Any spiritual oversight involving children or youth should be plain, protective, and open to parents or other trusted adults. There should be no closed room in which a child is taught that belonging depends on answering intimate questions correctly.

Children are to be protected, instructed, and blessed. They are not to be spiritually screened in the dark.

Oversight should keep the laws facing the sandals

Tithing should remain a matter of stewardship and mercy, not temple tribute. Chastity should remain a law of truth, fidelity, consent, and repair, not shame-jurisdiction. Health wisdom should remain about bodily stewardship, not purity theater. Prophetic leadership should remain witness under Christ, not God-proxy control.

In every case the same test applies: does the law still lighten burdens and widen exits, or has it become a gate?

Final oversight line

Real spiritual oversight helps the people walk with God. Worthiness culture teaches them to seek clearance from the chair. The first is shepherding. The second is drift.

Chapter 14 — A Final Declaration to the Churches

Let the interviews cease

This book therefore declareth that recurring worthiness interviews are not of God in their modern form. They are not plainly grounded in scripture; they rest chiefly in administrative practice; and they have turned good laws into gates of access, belonging, and clearance. Let the church therefore cease from treating worthiness screening as if it were the commandment of God.

Let the children be spared

Let the children and youth be delivered from closed-room scrutiny. Let no leader question them in secret concerning private bodily matters, sexual shame, or hidden interior stain. Christ received children; He did not place them beneath a worthiness lamp. Teach them in the light. Bless them in the light. Protect them in the light.

Let good laws be loosed from the gate

Let tithing be returned from tribute to stewardship. Let chastity be returned from shame-jurisdiction to truth, fidelity, consent, protection, and repair. Let health wisdom be returned from purity theater to bodily stewardship. Let prophetic leadership be returned from God-proxy loyalty logic to witness under Christ. Good laws need not be discarded; they must be loosed from the gate and returned to the sandals.

Let administrative practice not masquerade as canon

If the church would bind the saints to worthiness interviews as enduring divine law, let it canonize the practice and defend it openly from scripture. If it will not do so, let it cease to preach handbook procedure as if it were the settled voice of God. Administrative practice is not canon. Crisis management is not everlasting command. The chair may not turn its own procedures into scripture by repetition.

Let the soul return to God

The church may teach, warn, witness, protect, and help repair. It may not set itself up as the final court of inward worthiness. Let repentance return to God. Let confession be voluntary and healing rather than extracted for leverage. Let leaders become shepherds again and not gatekeepers of the hidden room. Let the people seek Christ rather than clearance.

Final declaration

Wherefore we call upon the churches to abolish worthiness interviews, especially for children; to cease using money, private moral probing, and loyalty to living leaders as gates of belonging; and to return to covenant, repentance, truth, repair, and burden-lifting love. Let the laws face the sandals again. Let the chair depart from the inner room. Let the people come unto Christ without the burden of recurring spiritual clearance.

This warning standeth beyond one people. Whenever any church, temple, ministry, or religious order turneth good laws into gates, confession into leverage, money into tribute, and reverence into clearance, the same corruption is present. The names may differ, the uniforms may differ, and the procedures may differ; yet the spirit of the thing is one. Therefore let every church that would be of Christ examine itself by this same line.

Let the warning widen

Final line

The church may witness a covenant; it must not impersonate the final judge of inward worthiness.

Appendix — Documentary Evidence from Current Official Question Sets

This appendix is not added to redesign the questionnaires in detail, but to document the drift named in the body of the book. The current baptism and temple question sets show how covenant concerns have been widened into a broader regime of loyalty, money, behavioral screening, and inward worthiness judgment.

Current baptism interview categories

- Faith in God the Father and in Jesus Christ.
- Belief that the Church and gospel were restored through Joseph Smith, together with belief that the current Church President is a prophet of God.
- Repentance framed not only as turning to God, but as a question of whether past sins have been sufficiently resolved before admission.
- Willingness to obey living-gospel standards, including chastity, tithing, the Word of Wisdom, and Sabbath observance.
- Questions about serious crime, probation or parole, and abortion.
- A final question about readiness to make the covenant.

Current temple recommend categories

- Faith in God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the Restoration.
- Sustaining the President of the Church as the only person authorized to exercise all priesthood keys, together with support for general and local leaders.
- Moral cleanliness, obedience to the law of chastity, and broad review of private and public behavior.
- Questions about teaching or promoting ideas contrary to those of the Church.
- Full-tithe status as a gate of access.
- Word of Wisdom compliance.
- Family financial obligations.
- Temple covenant compliance, including garment use.
- Questions about serious sins needing priesthood resolution.
- A final self-assessment of whether one considers oneself worthy to enter the Lord's house.

Why this appendix matters

Taken together, these categories show that the issue is not merely teaching, nor even a narrow pastoral inquiry in grave public harm. The issue is the creation of a standing worthiness economy in which access to ordinances and the temple is conditioned by institutional loyalty, money compliance, behavior screening, and inward moral self-declaration before the chair. That is the drift this book condemns.