

Christian Purity

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Introduction - Fellowship and Friction

[INCOMPLETE !]

THEME: To be pure does not mean not fellowshiping other Christians if not in total and complete agreement on the Christian ethic?

There is a broad and rich Christian ethic. That is, there is no such thing as a 1) universal and 2) detailed Christian standard. Within healthy fellowshiping communities there is a variety of prescriptions for how the Christian should live and be encouraged to live.

Bible believing Christians may inform ourselves through study and sincere and careful observation on "what the Bible says", but 2,000 years of Christian history with all its diversity demonstrates that exhaustively detailing "what the Bible means" in such a way it may be universally received among Bible believers without violating individual conscience is a task better left to One who knows what is within the hearts of men.

Christians, in good conscience, have done all sorts of things throughout history that were at the time in sincere harmony with their ethic as informed by the Holy Scriptures and causing offense to other Christians. The reality we live in is that "all things" are never truly equal and therefore seemingly similar or alike problems can be solved in more than one way by Christians. We must caution ourselves away from the seat of the scornful (Psalm 1:1) and before we presume unrighteousness in a brother, remember how difficult being right in an upside down world really is.

Consider with me a few of these paradoxes of conscience:

After careful prayer and bible study, "Christian A" decided to remove their children from the public school and homeschool their children.	Compare that with "Christian B" who after much consideration as well decided to enroll their child in the local public high school.
There are Christian Vegetarians	There are Christians that enjoy eating animal meat.
There are Christian Vegetarians	There are Christians that enjoy eating animal meat.
There are Christians that wear jewelery of some kind in good conscience.	There are Christians that cannot in good conscience so much as wear a watch or a wedding ring.

There are so many such paradoxes it would be impossible for me to detail them all, but also an exhaustive list is unnecessary and not very useful as I've never met a Christian of any length of time that has not observed one or more of these themselves.

These paradoxes or maybe even contradictions among Believers is part of the human condition. We will wage a futile and not very fruitful conflict so long as the goal on this side of heaven is to universally eliminate all "christian" differences. I say it is part of the human condition because it is not a result of a lack of clarity in God's revelation, but God's revelation in His Word is fully informed on the complexity of the crown of God's creation — humans. The Bible is complex enough for all people of all time.

Do we surrender then? Do we resign to a conclusion that states, "Since there will be differences among Christians for as long as there are Christians on this earth, then unity and fellowship is impossible."?

I think not.

Here's what I think. Despite our differences, the Body of Christ is always a much more effective influence in the earth and a stronger institution within when the dominate theme is cooperation and a Christ-like attitude toward one another. fellowship is not an easy pursuit, but a worthwhile one.

I begin here with the concern of fellowship though our theme is purity because our thoughts concerning fellowship will certainly frame how we talk about purity.

ON ONE SIDE, If I am content to walk alone and to leave others alone, then however I choose to explain to myself what God may require of me is burdened only with inward concerns and matters of personal conscience. Comedian George Carlin put it this way, "Thou shalt keep thy religion to thyself." Many have taken this approach to varied success, but this writing will probably not be very relatable to you. To you friend I say sincerely, "Go with God".

ON THE OTHER SIDE, If I want to be part of the global Christian conversation and participate in such a way as to help steer Believers to the Glory of Christ then I am not content with walking alone, but will pursue means of unifying and edifying the Body. I do not believe that

such fellowship requires "sameness" but it does require an openness that despite our differences we can fellowship the truth we share in common. It also requires a vulnerability that Christ demonstrated (Matthew 9:10,11; 11:19) and servanthood that Paul taught (Galatians 6:1).

Matthew 11:19 — The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Galatians 6:1 — Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2Co 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

I invite you along side me in considering this rich and deep well of the Christian ethic and what it takes to be counted by God as being faithful to his call in Christian purity.

Motivations for Purity

I. Distinctively Christian + Separateness

1 Thessalonians 5:22 — Abstain from all appearance of evil.

a. Sanctification

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

1Th 5:23 ¶ And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Heb 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

a. The "World"

1 John 2:15 — Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

b. Influenced - Desensitized

Matthew 6:22 — The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Lamentations 3:51 — Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.

Psalms 101:3 — I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

- Culture and Its Influence
- Conscience Seared
- Keeping the door to our heart closed to the devil.

Job 31:1 ¶ I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

c. Depart

2 Timothy 2:19 — Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

II. The Christian Ideal

Matthew 5:48 — Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

- God is absolutely true and absolutely holy.

Hebrews 1:9 — Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

a. "Lifting a Standard"

b. The Conversation of the Ages + Movements

Every believer although autonomous and a free moral agent enters into Christ from within some sort of context.

III. Compromise + Backsliding

Luke 9:62 &dmdash; And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

IV. The Impending "End" & Readiness / Being "Right" Before God

Matthew 24:44 — Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Luke 13:27 — But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

Logical Arguments

1. "Should Christians Wear Wedding Rings"

Logical Arguments

a. Negative Arguments

- a) Wedding ring tradition originated in ancient Egypt, the circle was viewed by Egyptians as a symbol of the eternal. b) Symbols can be used as a kind Charm. c) Using charms is witchcraft and non-Christian.
 - rebuttals: a) The motives and symbolism of ancient Egyptians puts no burden upon the modern Christian. My reasons for wearing a wedding ring are different than the reasons of Ancient Egyptians. b) Symbolism is not equal charm or witchcraft. Christians have employed all sorts of symbols in various ways. It is relevant to point out that the Lord gave us the communion table as a symbol.
- a) 1 Peter 3:3 teaches Christians should not wear gold b) Wedding rings are traditionally made of gold.
 - rebuttal: b) Wedding rings are not always made of gold and if we were discussing "wooden" rings then the objection would still remain so this argument is not truly about the kind of material the ring is made of, but the wearing of a ring of any material at all.
- a) Wedding rings are jewelry and b) the problem with wearing Jewelry is that it represents pride (Isaiah 3:16-22) and rebellion against God and his creation (Pro 8:13; Mar 7:22). Pride also demonstrates a love for the world more than for God. (1Jn 2:15; 1Jn 2:16-17) c) A Christian avoid pride. (Proverbs 21:4)
- a) Previous generations of preachers have preached against wearing wedding rings and they were right. b) Who are we to disagree with these men of God and compromise, backslide or let down the standard? (Many churches have compromised the Word of God to a point that they have lost the concept of salvation and that of a sanctified life.)
 - Rebuttal: An argument from precedent is weak as whose to say which generation did get it right? Because somethings said first a certain way is not of itself proof of its truthness. Often times an untruth can gain traction much sooner than a truth.

b. Positive Arguments

- a) Not something worth arguing about.
- a) I personally am not convicted by wearing my wedding ring. b) a clear conscience is enough for christian liberty. (Romans 14; Colossians 2:16)
 - rebuttal: Proverbs 21 explains that "every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth (weights or judges) the hearts". You can justify it as right in your mind now, but can you do so in judgment before the throne of God?
- a) I am married and I wear this ring as token of the covenant and a signal to everyone that "I'm taken."
 - rebuttal: Do you actually need a ring to let others know that you are happily married and not looking for a new partner? If that is all that stands between you and adultery, that ring can slip off very easily when you justify it. (Proverbs: 21:2; 1 Peter 3:3; 1Timothy 2:9; Genesis 35:4; Exo 33:4-6; Isaiah 3:16-22)

Notes

epistemology: philosophical theory of knowledge

There is power in what we see. Warning against defile the mine. Sanctified mind and body. Eve SAW that the fruit was good Achan SAW THE Babylonian garment Gehazi saw David saw besheba

Influence of media: video entertainment.

Prov 4:23 keep yhy heart

Remain steadfast on convictions and standards.

"Proceeding generations were correct"

Conscience shaped by culture ? "Cannot blush"

Words is a good section to work on:

Using word pregnant.

- jokes, humor, innuendo, etc

...

Don't laugh at sin that crucifies Jesus. ...but have pleasure in them that do them ... Regret to laugh at sin

No fellowship of light and darkness.

The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom ... Such where some of you.

A righteous child of God. Clean

Fornicators. Idolators.

The voice of God - conscience - inner voice

You are the temple of the holy Ghost

What were the concerns of purity in the first century church?

- distinctiveness
-

Who has gotten the issue in Christian purity right?

- investigate some different

How to categorize the concerns of purity?

What completes for a heart that wants the things of his? God. What also are the things of God.

"Do not waver" "Do not compromise"

Refrain from being "influenced" by ungodly people.

"I don't know anything at all" but don't watch it.

Sensuality and sex

The standard is to be applied to the heart

Lot vexed his righteous soul.

<https://youtu.be/E3PBwrfrHV8?si=RqmpiexcrC0EdGOj>

Sold out to God "not for sale"

Lykewarmness

<http://www.holiness-preaching.org/> The Holiness Handbook Originally compile January 2006 (updated Oct 2013)

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Does God actually expect Christians to live holy lives? After reading the following scriptures, you can decide.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

I'm saved by grace, so works do not justify my salvation, right?

It is true that we can not justify our salvation by works, but only by the blood of Jesus. It is the free gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Ephesians 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

But Romans 12:1 tells us that after we are saved, that living a holy life is our reasonable service. This means that by doing so, we aren't going above our required duty, but just meeting expectations!

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I think it is an appropriate illustration to compare salvation to working a job. If an employer gives us a position in their company, they will have certain expectations and requirements to keep the job. Requirements such as our attendance at work and performing the duties for which we were hired. If we do not meet these expectations, then we can expect to lose our position. Just like working a job, there are certain reasonable expectations and requirements that go along with maintaining our salvation.

Here are a few of the many scriptures relating to God's expectations of a holy life

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

1John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Can we forfeit our gift of salvation or “backslide”? From the scriptures below, the answer is a definite yes.

Proverbs 14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

1Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

John 6:66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 6:67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

1Timothy 5:15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

James 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Jude 1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 1:23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

Backsliding happens gradually and results in spiritual poverty

Proverbs 24:33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 24:34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelth; and thy want as an armed man.

In the book of Revelations, God warns the end time churches that being lukewarm will not be tolerated

Revelations 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Revelations 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. Rev 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

Peter tells us that returning to sin (backsliding) will result in a worse ending than never having known the Lord.

2 Peter 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

In the last days, the “love of many shall wax cold” or backslide. It doesn’t take too much understanding to know that we are in those days.

Matthew 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Jesus tells of the terrible state of a backslider

Matthew 12:43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 12:44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 12:45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Can a backslider return to the Lord? Yes!

Jeremiah 3:22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Hosea 6:1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

Hosea 6:2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Hosea 14:1 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. 14:2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. 14:3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. 14:4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

Jeremiah 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The Lord Jesus gave us the Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32, which illustrates the return of a wayward son to God.

Some may say that the sixth chapter of Hebrews (see text below) tells that a backslider can not be restored, as it says that it is impossible for the person described "to renew again unto repentance". I think we must remember what the Lord said in Luke (Luke 18:27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.) First we should notice the description is not your average Christian, but a Holy Ghost filled Christian that has tasted of the heavenly gift and the powers (spiritual gifts described - 1 Corinthians 12) of the world to come. If a person grows to the spiritual state described by Paul and backslides, then he or she is likely to become a reprobate (Matthew 12:43) or very hard hearted. I could understand the unlikelihood of this person returning to God. For example, could you imagine a minister with the gift of healing or some other spiritual gift, backsliding and how difficult a recovery would be? This "impossibility" that Paul refers to would not be the Lord's limitation, but the difficulty of the apostate from overcoming the hold of Satan. From the scriptures, we know that there is only one sin that cannot be forgiven, which is blaspheming against the Holy Ghost (Matthew 12:32). I can say that God definitely is a God of second chances, as I have witnessed several backsliders that have returned to the Lord. If nothing else, this scripture should cause Christians to be aware of how serious a lukewarm or backslidden state can become.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 6:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 6:3 And this will we do, if God permit. 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

What is Sin and what are the expectations of a holy life style? Does the Bible define what is expected?

This study doesn't have the lofty goal of providing a complete list of all things that may or may not be sinful acts, but is instead an attempt to list some of the controversial topics for today and scriptures related to these. If we can't provide a bible basis for certain beliefs, then it must be from man's traditions and not from God. This doesn't mean that a topic has to be expressly mentioned by name in scripture but should at minimum be tied to a fundamental Bible principle or doctrine.

Please understand that keeping the commandments of the Lord (being morally good) without being spiritually born again, does not justify your salvation before God. But after a person has become a born again believer, then works of righteousness will follow.

The basis of most Christian and ethical beliefs can be referenced to the Ten Commandments provided on tables of stone.

First Commandment: Exodus 20:1 And God spoke all these words, saying, 20:2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Second Commandment: Exodus 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 20:6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Third Commandment: Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Fourth Commandment: Exodus 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 20:9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: 20:10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Fifth Commandment: Exodus 20:12 Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Six Commandment: Exodus 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

Seventh Commandment: Exodus 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Eighth Commandment: Exodus 20:15 Thou shalt not steal.

Ninth Commandment: Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Tenth Commandment: Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

Jesus identified the two most important of the Ten Commandments. Notice that the other eight commandments fall under these.

Matthew 22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 22:38 This is the first and great commandment. 22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Below I have listed some of the more controversial topics of our time (not necessarily listed in order of importance):

If I didn't mention the areas where you have questions, then I recommend that you go to the Word of God and study to find God's views. If a Church doctrine can't be identified by commandments or fundamental truths of the Bible, then it must not be based on God's desire, but man's desires. In the book of Revelations, we can see what God thinks about adding undue hardships to the Word or ignoring selective verses.

Revelations 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

In the first chapter of Philippians (text below), Paul warns that some ministers preach with envy and strife to add afflictions to the hearer. The principles of Holiness should not be compromised, but they should be presented with God's love and compassion as the Christian experience is one that requires continual spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:2 and 1 Corinthians 3:2 describe new Christians as "newborn babes" that desire the sincere milk of the word). We definitely do not want to add unnecessary afflictions that are based on man made doctrines. As a sinner, would you be most receptive to a sermon presented in anger or with one presented with the Love that God represents? In both methods Paul rejoiced though because the Gospel message was being preached.

Philippians 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 1:16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 1:17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. 1:18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

1Corinthians 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and other habits harmful to our bodies

Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

1 Samuel 1:14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 1:15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

Isaiah 5:11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! 5:22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

Isaiah 28:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

1 Corinthians 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

2 Peter 2:17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest: to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. 2:18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Busybodies or gossiping

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. (One of the ten commandments)

Romans 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 1:30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 1:31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

1 Timothy 5:11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; 5:12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. 5:13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. 5:14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 5:15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

Proverbs 11:12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Gambling

Lottery, betting, raffle tickets, casinos games....

Dictionary definition: Gambling - the act of playing for stakes in the hope of winning (including the payment of a price for a chance to win a prize);

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase.

Proverbs 23:5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. 5:11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? 5:12 The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Gambling, by its nature, is selfish and self-seeking. The gambler seeks personal gain and profit by taking other people's possessions without requiting them. Such is completely contrary to Christian love.

Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

If gambling produces many forms of evil, which it does, this confirms the conclusion that gambling is evil of itself.

Examples of the Fruits of gambling: Poverty, neglect of families, quarreling, and divorce because gamblers often gamble with money the family needs. Drinking and drugs, alcoholism and addiction. Lying because gamblers seek to hide their habit and their losses.

One out of every five homeless people admits that gambling contributed to their poverty. Among the fifty states Nevada, long known for gambling, has the highest rate of divorce and the highest rate of high school dropouts.

Proverbs 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

Gambling preys on the desperation of the poor. The National Gambling Impact Study Commission found that those with incomes less than \$10,000 spend more on lottery tickets than any other income group. High school dropouts spend four times as much as college graduates. Scripture exhorts us to look out for the poor and disadvantaged, and issues strong warnings against taking advantage of their plight.

Lying, Profanity, and using the Lord's name in vain

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Colossians 3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

James 3:9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 3:11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

I find it surprising that people profession to be Christians still use the Lord's name in vain in without considering what they are doing. Do we not realize that this is breaking one of the Ten Commandments? We are to use his name in honor and praise by not as a replacement for our old cursing habits or as symbols of our frustration.

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Proverbs 17:3 The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. 17:4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

Proverbs 6:16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 6:17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 6:18 A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 6:19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Prejudice toward other races or nationalities

Having been raised in the south, I grew up seeing and hearing the derogatory attitudes that many local people had toward people that had different skin color or different national origins. It's encouraging that many of those attitudes have subsided in recent generations, but prejudices still exist on all sides of the "race" spectrum. The Bible is explicit that God does not respect a person because of their nationality or skin color and likewise we should not either. The scripture is also clear that we are not to have hatred or respect of person against others. It goes as far as to call us murderers if we hate someone else. Doesn't viewing ourselves as better than someone else demonstrate the sin of PRIDE in our lives?

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

1John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

1John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

James 2:1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2:2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 2:3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 2:4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

Romans 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

The Occult (Horoscopes, Satanism, witchcraft ...)

Christians should not require much convincing of occult activities being sinful, but on the contrary I have heard about "Christian people" using Ouija Boards or checking their horoscopes. In the Old Testament King Saul sought for a witch after God rejected his sinful ways, but for a Christian to stoop that low is a remarkable failure.

Jeremiah 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. 10:3 For the customs of the people are vain: ...

Deuteronomy 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, 18:11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. 18:12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Under the Mosaic Law, occult activities were punishable by death. Under the New Testament, Jesus cast out the Satanic spirits and brought deliverance.

Leviticus 20:27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

Homosexuality, Gays, Lesbians, and Sodomites

Why has homosexuality become a "normal" way of life in our modern society?

In 1948 Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey produced the "Kinsey Report" which stated that 10 to 47% of Americans were homosexual. Even though the statistics that Kinsey provided in his report were falsely represented, his reports have been credited to starting the homosexual revolution and destroying laws that once outlawed indecent homosexual acts. The "Kinsey Institute" conducted this so called research at Indiana University in Bloomington from the late 1930s to the early 1950s. The irony is that people accepted these statistics as accurate and did not consider the background of the subjects being observed (convicted sex offenders, prisoners, known homosexuals, and even children that were exposed to this type of people).

26% (1,400) of Kinsey's alleged 5,300 white male subjects were already "sex offenders." As far as the data can be established, an additional 25% were incarcerated prisoners; some numbers were big city "pimps," "thieves;" roughly 4% were male prostitutes as well as sundry other criminals; and some hundreds of homosexual activists at various "gay bars" and other sinful places across the country. This group of social outcasts and deviants were then redefined by the Kinsey team as representing your average person. With adequate press and university publicity, people believed what they were told by these respectable scientists, that mass sexual perversion was common nationwide and that our sex education and our laws must be changed to reflect Kinsey's "reality." Legitimate estimates in 2005 show that the actual percentages are likely less than two percent. Of course that is two percent too many.

Is God pleased with this movement? What do the scriptures tell us?

1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Dictionary definition: Effeminate - To make womanish; to unman; to weaken;

The previous verse makes it clear that if a man (or boy) has feminine actions or a woman (or girl) has masculine actions they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Does that mean that "sissy" acting men are living in sin? The lists of activities in the scripture above are stated as those of the unrighteous. People in this state are obviously being influenced by spiritual influences of darkness and need deliverance that only comes from the blood of Jesus. I'm aware of times that feminine acting men (and some were known homosexuals) have prayed through to deliverance and their actions (including voice) immediately became more masculine. The inverse is also true that when these men get spiritually cold that their actions become more feminine.

Leviticus 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

Leviticus 20:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

Dictionary definition: Abomination - Anything associated with the worship of other gods and any behavior that perverts the lifestyle God intended human beings to live. Leviticus 18 contains a list of unlawful behaviors (eg, incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality).

Based on Romans 1st chapter, we find that God "gave them up to uncleanness" because when they knew God, they did not glorify him as God. My opinion is that this is referring to God giving opportunity for Satan to bring a sodomite spirit upon these people that rejected him. This seems evident that demonic spiritual control or influences could be present in a homosexual's life.

We have all heard the attempts at justification stating that homosexuals were born gay and did not choose that lifestyle. Scientists have also searched for genetic differences that could be the origin of homosexual desires, but thus far those efforts have proven futile. I will admit that some families seem to have multiple generations that are entangled in this abominable lifestyle, but is that any difference than the hereditary weaknesses that make us say that "he will be a drunk like his Dad and Grandfather"? All mankind is cursed with sinful tendencies and varying weaknesses to certain temptations and addictions, but does that justify a person's sin? Of course it does not. If a person comes from a family known to have a tendency for certain weaknesses to temptation never gives into (or isn't exposed to) that same temptation, then he/she is never brought under the bondage of them. Even if they do indulge in these sinful actions, Jesus can set them free and make them a "born again believer" with new blood bought tendencies of righteousness! (John 8:36).

Romans 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Homosexuality is also referred to as the sin of sodomy. This reference comes from an account in the Bible of two exceedingly wicked cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, which the Lord destroyed. Sodom was known for its rampant homosexuality. When the Lord sent angels to warn Lot (who lived in Sodom) of his plans to destroy the cities, the wicked men of Sodom asked Lot to send the angels out to them that they may know them. We then see that the angels struck the men with blindness.

Genesis 13:13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

Jude 1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

These scriptures clearly state that these vile affections of men lusting for other men (gay men) or women lusting for other women (lesbians) are not the natural affections God created men and women to possess. We know that God loves all homosexuals, but he hates their deeds because they are sinful. God did not create any human being as a homosexual. They are not born that way, just as drunkards and murderers are not born that way. People become homosexuals because they yield to abnormal acts or lusts. It is through some source that they are influenced by demonic spirits that drives them to their lust. Associating with known homosexuals and viewing sensual videos, pornographic pictures, and visiting strip tease establishments are ways of opening the door to a perverse sodomite spirit.

Can homosexuals be saved? John 3:16 tells us the answer is undeniably yes! It is likely that people delivered from this lifestyle will endure a continuous struggle against the snares of the devil but the keys to overcoming these or any temptation is studying the Bible, dedication to prayer, regular church attendance, and fasting.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Pornography

Pornography opens the door to other sins such as fornication, adultery, child molestation, rape, homosexuality and other related sins. But one does not have to physically commit the sin of adultery to be guilty of adultery in God's eyes. Jesus said even if a man looks at a woman to lust after her in his heart, he is guilty of adultery. Scientific research determined that pornography is an addiction to the neurochemical high (Dopamine, Norepinephrine, Oxytocin, and Serotonin) that occurs in the human brain while viewing sensual images. This is Satan's counterfeit for the neurochemical high that God designed to occur between a husband and wife during intimacy. It has been said that this chemical addiction is more powerful than those experienced by a drug addict. If you give in to the temptations of pornography, you are allowing Satan to rob you of your marital relationship and distort your views of real relationships.

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

How to obtain victory over lust

David and Job made a contract with their eyes that they would not indulge themselves in lustful images. That principle is still essential for people overcoming these same temptations today as well. It's obvious that God gave men a desire for women and women a desire for men, as part of the cycle of procreation and establishment of marriages. The problem occurs when these sensual desires occur outside of the marriage. This principle goes way beyond just pornography and applies to lustful looks and wicked thoughts of people you see in public as well. You should consider the trouble that King David caused for himself (Samuel 11) when he was in the wrong place (likely out of God's will) and gave in to lusting over Bathsheba (another man's wife). David said (Psalms 51) that his "sin was ever before him".

Psalms 101:2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

In the first chapter of James we find that God does not tempt us but this occurs when we are "drawn away of his own lusts". What are we drawn away from? This is referring to being drawn away from the closeness of the Lord. When do Christians fall to temptation? When they are spiritually weak we fall for Satan's temptations. How does a Christian obtain strength over temptations? Our strength comes by drawing closer to God. Verses 16th and 17th explain that every good and perfect gift is from God. That includes the gift of sexual desires in a marriage and it wasn't a mistake, but as we know Satan has attempted to corrupt many Holy gifts into unholy ones.

Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Jas 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Jas 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Jas 1:16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

I'm so glad for God's promises in 1 Corinthians 10, where he said that we would not have temptations that are unique to us individually, but that He was faithful and would not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to withstand.

1Co 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

1 John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Are sins like pornography hidden from God?

Psa 139:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Psa 139:2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Psa 139:3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. Psa 139:4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Psa 139:5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Numbers 32:23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

Rom 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

We only have to look at recent history and how pornography led Ted Bundy to mistreat and murder fifty women. Bundy said he began casually viewing soft-core pornography when he was 12 or 13 years old and gradually became addicted to it. During an interview with Dr. Dobson, he made the following statements: "But slowly throughout the years reading pornography began to become a deadly habit". "My experience with pornography ... is once you become addicted to it, I would keep looking for more potent, more explicit, more graphic kinds of material. Like an addiction, you keep craving something that is harder, something which gives you a greater sense of excitement. Until you reach a point where the pornography only goes so far, you reach that jumping off point where you begin to wonder if maybe actually doing it would give you that which is beyond just reading or looking at it." His religious training and morality initially restrained him from acting out his fantasies, but he confessed that finally, "I couldn't hold back anymore." While committing the murders, Bundy said he felt as if he was possessed by "something ... awful and alien. There is just absolutely no way to describe first the brutal urge to do that kind of thing, and then what happens is once it has been more or less satisfied and recedes, you might say, or spent, that energy level recedes and basically I become myself again." This description describes the conditions of a demonic possessed person that is capable of any hideous crime known to man. The devil has no mercy nor does he have respect of person or God.

It has been stated by researchers that these pornographic images can be "burned" into a person's mind for years, which allows Satan to have an easy target in plaguing people's minds. This presents even more reasons to stay away from such content.

Television and Movies

We learn in Ephesians 2:2 that Satan is the prince of the power of the air. Is it any surprise that he has used television and to a lesser degree radio (across the air ways) to weaken the morality of our country and the world? Television and movie theaters may have seemed harmless enough in the beginning (early 1900s), but even then the Holiness preachers at that time condemned them as sinful. They must have had discernment to what the devil had planned, as we see that it has gradually eroded the convictions of our nation and the world.

Psalms 101:2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

The movie "Gone with the Wind" (released in 1939) is credited (or discredited) as the first movie to have actors using profanity. Many people of that day were appalled by this use of foul language but it only opened the door for Hollywood and the devil to condition the American people by gradually slipping more and more sinfully acts into their broadcasts.

In 1938, at the very dawn of the age of television, news anchorman, E.B. White stated these words: "I believe TV is going to be the test of the modern world, and in this new opportunity to see beyond the range of our vision, we shall discover either a new and unbearable disturbance of the general peace or a saving radiance in the sky. We shall stand or fall by TV, of that I am quite sure."

Well, we have had many decades to put TV to the test, and it has definitely failed miserably. Not only has TV become "an unbearable disturbance," it has become one of Satan's chief devices in his deceitful plot to destroy our churches and our nation's moral culture. Statistics from 2005 indicated that ninety-seven percent of all American homes have at least one TV with most having two or more.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 5:4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (Is watching television "redeeming" the time?)

Some people use the excuse that I only watch the News or Family programs, but from what I hear, the commercials are as full of ungodliness as the programming! Even the results of secular studies prove the negative effects of television on our society (see a few of the many negative findings below. You can also find resources in the library or Internet with more statistics):

(Can you identify any real benefits from television?)

1. Children spend more time learning about life through media than in any other manner. The average child spends approximately 28 hours a week watching television, which is more than they spend in school.
2. The average American child will witness over 200,000 acts of violence on television including 16,000 murders before age 18.
3. A study of population data for various countries showed homicide rates doubling within the 10 to 15 years after the introduction of television, even though television was introduced at different times in each site examined.
4. Studies suggest that higher rates of TV viewing are correlated with increased tobacco usage, alcohol intake and younger onset of sexual activity.
5. Forty-six percent of all television violence identified by the study took place in children's cartoons. Children's programs were least likely to depict the long-term consequences of violence (5%) and they portray violence in a humorous fashion 67% of the time.
6. The average television watcher now sits entranced for 7.2 hours per day.

I dare say that most professing Christians know all the actors and the details of the popular shows and movies, but the same ones would struggle to name the books of the Bible or many of its characters! Where are our hearts and minds? Evidently not in the word of God! What are we teaching our Children by exposing them to this filth? How vile will the broadcasts be for future generations? The next time you find yourself watching a movie or show with profanity and lewdness, ask yourself if you would be ashamed if Jesus came at that time. Would God be pleased with the violence, profanity, homosexuality, nudity, and other sinful acts that are shown through the TV in your home? Would you equally welcome these same people or acts into your home to educate you and your children to their lifestyles? What are you demonstrating to your children and others with the programming that you watch and welcome into your house?

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

You may say that you don't see TV as sin, but the verse above tells us to lay aside every weight and sin. Can it be denied that it is a weight that vexes our souls like Sodom did Lot's (see the verse below)? Even Lot's wife looked back at what she left and was turned to a pillar of salt. Had her soul been vexed to the point that she accepted these wrongs as right? Do you now accept wrong as right?

Dictionary definition : VEXED - Teased; provoked; irritated; troubled; agitated; disquieted; afflicted.

2 Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 2:8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds);

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Isaiah 33:15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

James 1:8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

1 John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

Proverbs 17:3 The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. 17:4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

Honor the Lord with the first fruits of your time and he will bless your ways. Watching television doesn't honor God but does spend our precious time and rob God.

Proverbs 3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. 3:8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. 3:9 Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

2 Timothy 2:16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 2:17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Can watching TV be characterized as “redeeming the time because the days are evil”? I seriously doubt that God thinks so!

Ephesians 5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

The Internet

The “Internet” is a network of computer systems all over the world that is used for business, education, government, research, and entertainment. It's a shame that the Satan has already populated it with so much pornography and ungodly sites. The other dangers involve young and old alike getting involved in “social media sites” (i.e. chat rooms or other conversations) that can lead to divorce, marital problems, and abductions. I recommend that anyone using the Internet should use “Parental Filtering” options to avoid accidental or intentional accessing these sites. Children's use should be monitored and limited to protect them from the dangers that are present. Jesus told us that if our eye offends us to pluck it out, so if we are tempted by the wrong things – then disconnect it!

As the technology of the Internet progresses, it is obvious that content previously only available on Television is becoming more readily available on the Internet. Does an alternative delivery medium (Internet) suddenly make the same sinful video content acceptable? It definitely should not be accepted any more than DVD or old VCR movies being accepted when movie theaters are condemned. What will be your excuse on judgment day for wasting your time viewing things that damage your relationship with the Lord, vs. spending time in God's service?

Mark 9:47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

See the Bible reference verses for Television and Pornography for more discussion.

What types of Music should Christians listening to?

I make an assumption that if you are a Christian, that you know enough fundamental doctrine to understand that Country, Rock, Rap, or other non-Christian music is not pleasing to God. With that in mind, we see that many of the so-called Christian artists are relying on secular styles of music and calling it Gospel. Does God need to copy the devil's styles for his music? I think not. To determine what type of music Christians should listen to, we should go to the scripture. After reading the verses below, you should determine that the purpose of Christian music is to Praise the Lord. Anything short of that goal is not edifying or worthy of our time.

Psalms 9:2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

Psalms 21:13 Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.

Psalms 28:6 Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. 28:7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

Psalms 33:1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. 33:2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. 33:3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

Acts 16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Sadly, much of what goes by the title of Christian Music today is NOT Christian. It does not testify, praise or sing about the Lord Jesus Christ or God the father. In fact, a great deal of it does not even mention the Lord Jesus Christ. Much of today's Christian Music goes out its way to avoid the name of Jesus Christ – or any Christian content whatsoever.

Martin Luther (Christian reformer of the early 1500's) put his views of the state of salvation bluntly: "whoever does not want to sing and speak of it shows that he does not believe it".

According to the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan's goal is to uplift man and not God :

Matthew 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

A Christian's music is sung to the Lord. It is not for the world.

Psalms 40:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. 40:2 He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. 40:3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Psalms 144:9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

Can you even understand the lyrics of some of the contemporary styles of music and do the Country-Gospel lyrics even meet the Bible's criteria of praising he Lord?

1Corinthians 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Psalms 66:1 To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm. Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: 66:2 Sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious.

Hebrews 2:12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

Psalms 149:1 Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. 149:2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. 149:3 Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

What does Lucifer or Satan know about music?

From Ezekiel 28:13 we get a hint that Lucifer was once very involved with the music of heaven. He knows how to use the wrong music against humans.

Eze 28:13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Eze 28:14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Eze 28:15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Men's Hair

1 Corinthians 11:14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

David Lee Roth of the rock group Van Halen (who has songs like "Running with the Devil") says his long hair "is a flag" and "anti-establishment". In other words — REBELLION: "[his long hair] It's a flag. It's Tarzan. I'll always be anti-establishment". (USA Today)

But didn't Jesus have long hair?

The paintings of Christ are simply artists' conceptions and have no Scriptural authorization. At least one historian of Jesus' day described him as being a tall man with short chestnut-colored hair, parted in the middle.

The oldest representations (going back to the first Christian century, found chiefly in the catacombs of Rome) all pictured Him without a beard. All the pictures of Christ down to the beginning of the first century and even later are of this kind. Students of the first century and of Roman history are aware of the fact that the time of Christ was characterized by short hair for men.

Feb. 24, 2004, Associated Press article reports: "Jesus didn't have long hair," said physical anthropologist Joe Zias, who has studied hundreds of skeletons found in archaeological digs in Jerusalem. 'Jewish men back in antiquity did not have long hair.' 'The Jewish texts ridiculed long hair as something Roman or Greek,' said New York University's Lawrence Schiffman" ("Jesus Scholars Find Fault in Gibson's 'Passion'"). However, it wasn't at all typical among even the Greeks and Romans, as plenty of statues and coins from the time attest.

"Along with extensive writings from the period, experts also point to a frieze on Rome's Arch of Titus, erected after Jerusalem was captured in AD 70 to celebrate the victory, which shows Jewish men with short hair taken into captivity".

Women's Hair

1 Corinthians 11:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 11:13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 11:14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 11:16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

In the 16th verse (above) Paul said that there is no reason to argue (contentious) about this topic because the church doesn't have any other custom other than for the women to have long hair! What about you or your church, do you have other customs? If so, it isn't Bible based and should be reprov'd. How long is long? I think that it is long enough for God as long as it's not being trimmed or cut.

Paul went as far as saying if women do not have this covering of long hair, then let her be shorn or shaved. In other words, if you cut it short, you might as well shave it off. Some people have indicated that the term "covering" is referring to a veil or prayer cap, but verse 11:15 clarifies that her hair is her covering.

Dictionary definition: CONTENTIOUS 1. Apt to contend; given to angry debate; quarrelsome; perverse.

2. Relating to contention in law; relating to litigation; having power to decide causes between contending parties; as a court of contentious jurisdiction. 3. Exciting or adapted to provoke contention or disputes; as a contentious subject.

1 Corinthians 11:9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. 1Co 11:10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

Some Bible commentators have interpreted from the 9th verse (above) as "power" representing a veil. Since the 15th verse said that a women's hair is her GLORY, I think the term "Power" is also referring to her long hair. Does the verse continue to tell us that the Angels are offended by women with short hair? I must admit that I can not say with certainty what Paul was referring to with the term "because of the angels", but anyone reading the eleventh chapter with an open mind can determine that women should have long hair.

In conclusion, men should have short hair as a sign that they assume their responsibilities as being made in the image of God and as rulers over their households. Women are to wear long hair to symbolize their submission to husband or father in the case of the unmarried, taking their place with meekness as women surrendered to the will of God and subject to the authority God places over them. How about that for fodder for the women's Liberation movement?

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.

Dictionary definition BRAID or BROID To weave or infold three or more strands to form one.

1 Peter 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

Dictionary definition PLAITING Folding; doubling; braiding. Braiding; intertwining.- hair style formed by braiding or twisting the hair

Paul instructs that a women's hair should not be braided or plaited. It is interesting that some Holiness groups now teach that it is a sin for a woman to have her hair down, versus being up in a bun, braid, or plaited fashion. I agree with Don Rich's statement that I cannot find a commandment in the Bible against a woman wearing her hair down. They do very well to keep the scissors out and live up to the requirements of the Bible without manmade laws being added to their burdens. If you find Bible verses contradictory to this view, please let me know the chapter and verse.

Women and Men's clothing

All through history, the clothing used by men and women have been unique so that there was a clear distinction between the genders. Thousands of years ago both men and women wore types of cloaks or types of robes, but even then there were differences that allowed a person to identify the gender.

Deuteronomy 22:5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Among the Hebrews neither men or women was permitted by Mosaic Law to wear the same form of clothing as was used by the other. A few articles of feminine clothing carried somewhat the name and basic pattern, yet there was always sufficient difference in embossing, embroidery, and needlework so that in appearance the line of demarcation between man & women should be readily detected.

What makes you think that pants are a man's garment?

1. "Breeches" were an article of clothing designed by God for the priests who were all men. The word does not occur very often in scripture, but in every case it's men's apparel (Exodus 28:42, Leviticus 6:10, 16:4). According to the Hebrew lexicon, "breeches" means "trousers that extend to the knee, below the knee, or to the ankles." This would include pants or culottes.
2. Until Hollywood came along, everyone in our modern western culture (including lost people) knew that pants were men's apparel and dresses were women's apparel, and they dressed accordingly. Our culture's acceptance of cross-dressing has resulted largely from the influence of television, the placement of women in the workforce, and the pressures of twentieth century feminism.
3. The universal symbol for designating a men's bathroom is a stick figure wearing a pair of pants. The universal symbol for designating a woman's bathroom is a stick figure wearing a dress. Even our sinful society recognizes that there is a difference in a man's and woman's clothing.
4. Pants are a symbol of authority, as evidenced by the saying "I'm the one who wears the pants in the family." Sadly, most women might as well wear the pants, since they rule their homes anyway!

Cross dressing is one of the devil's clever moves to advance the "women's liberation movement" and to obscure the Biblical distinction between man and woman. "Unisex clothing" began to show up in the factories during WWII when women first started wearing slacks. At the same time: short hair, cigarettes, swearing became acceptable feminine behavior. Down that same path has come to Abortion, Divorce, Single Parent homes, extreme feminism.

Arguments against this doctrine

Some people argue that the principle of unique apparel between the man and woman as established in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 22:5) is not confirmed in the New Testament, thus is not applicable to us today under grace. But if we look at the reference book Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (printed over one hundred years before women wore pants) we see that it cross references Deuteronomy 22:5 to 1 Corinthians 11:3-14. That proves that men that studied the Bible hundreds of years before women wore pants, understood that 1 Corinthians 11 contains the same principle that is stated in Deuteronomy 22:5.

People may also argue that the principle of avoiding mixing certain materials in a garment as shown in Deuteronomy 22:11 should also apply today if verse 22:5 applies. The key to determining if an Old Testament law applies to us today under grace is whether the principle is

repeated in the New Testament or not. In this case the principle of maintaining uniqueness in appearance between a man and woman is well established in the New Testament but that of avoiding mixing certain materials in a garment is not.

But in reality, there are several New Testament verses that confirm that uniqueness must be maintained between sexes. These range from the differences in hair length to the feminine or masculine actions of each. In 1Cor 6:9 we find that effeminate men are not going to inherit the Kingdom of God. How is it that a woman can be accepted when wearing men's clothing (pants) but if a man wears a dress that they are automatically (and correctly I may add) assumed to be homosexuals? Shouldn't the question presented in 1Cor 11:14 "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" also make us ask "Does not even nature itself teach you" that for a woman to wear man's clothing is a shame? As already confirmed by the example of a man wearing a dress, nature does teach us different.

No doubt the acceptance of tearing down the clothing differences between the sexes was initiated by Satan to open the door to the homosexual spirits by weakening the conscience of our modern society. The rebellious nature that allows a woman professing to be a Christian to wear pants can also cause them to be lured deeper toward a lesbian desire. Peter stated that "after this manner in the old time the holy women adorned themselves being in subjection unto their own husbands". Does dressing in equal attire to the husband display that they are under subjection to the man or even to God? The question is how important is it to you to get to heaven? Is rebellion for such a small indulgence of wearing clothing that the Bible prohibits, worth going to Hell?

1 Peter 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 3:5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

Immodest clothing (bathing suites, shorts, short dresses...)

When Adam & Eve had their conscious awaked, the first thing they did was cover themselves. Then God clothed them with animal skins. God's intention since then is for humanity to be properly clothed with modest apparel.

Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Early church doctrine taught that a women's dress or skirt should be below the knee (whether sitting or standing) and that the neckline should not be low. Anything shorter than the knee would not be modest. The length of a dress or skirt should be considered to end where any splits begin.

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.

Modest dress doesn't call attention to the wearer. This is a reason why clothing that exposes your nakedness is immodest. Harlot's were identified by their attire. This indicates the immodest dress is used to draw attention to one's self and to incite lustful attractions.

Proverbs 7:10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtle of heart. 7:11 (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: 7:12 Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

In comparing Babylon to a degraded women, God notes that bare legs and thighs are nakedness.

Isaiah 47:1 Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. 47:2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. 47:3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

Cosmetics or makeup

The real problem with the use of cosmetics is that it represents pride and rebellion against God and his creation.

Pro 6:16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: Pro 6:17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, (see more verses on pride under the jewelry section)

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. 2:10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

The Greek word for modest is kosmious, which means orderly, well-arranged, seemly, or modest. In other words, "modest" refers to clothing that is neat and appropriate for the occasion. The Greek word that is translated shamefacedness is aidos, which means having a sense of shame, modesty, and reverence. The Greek word for sobriety is sophrosuna. This is a person of sound mind, with self-control, of good judgment, and moderate in all that he does.

Early church writings (less than two hundred years after Jesus was born) condemn the use of face painting (see below).

“Those women who wear gold imitate the Egyptians. They occupy themselves with curling their locks. They are busy anointing their cheeks, painting their eyes, dyeing their hair, and practicing the other pernicious arts of luxury. The truth is that they deck the covering of their flesh in order to attract their infatuated lovers”. Clement of Alexandria (circa 195 AD), 2.272.

“Whatever is born is the work of God. So whatever is plastered on, is the devil's work.... How unworthy of the Christian name it is to wear a fictitious face — you on whom simplicity in every form is enjoined! You, to whom lying with the tongue is not lawful, are lying in appearance”. Tertullian (circa 198 AD), 4.21.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Archaeologists have found the earliest evidence of cosmetics (makeup) being used in Egypt dating back to the fourth millennium BC. They found ancient artifacts of eye makeup and objects used for the application of scented unguents. The people of Egypt were typically considered to be wicked and ungodly in the Bible. Leaving Egypt is a symbol of leaving a sinful life.

Revelations 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Exodus 5:2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Wicked women of the bible wore makeup

2 Kings 9:30 And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.

Ezekiel 23:39 For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house. 23:40 And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments.

History tells us that the use of cosmetics began in Egypt to look more like the false gods and goddesses that they worshipped. In various cultures it was typical for the harlots and prostitutes to use cosmetics to draw attention from their potential clientele. Until the 1940s, the use of makeup was considered sin by most Christian churches.

Jewelry

Like the use of cosmetics, the problem with wearing Jewelry is that it represents pride and rebellion against God and his creation.

Pro 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Mar 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: Mar 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Pride also demonstrates a love for the world more than for God.

1Jn 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1Jn 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Evidently it is easy for the modern church to justify themselves in wearing jewelry and makeup as their use demonstrates no conviction for wearing them. Proverbs 21 explains that “every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth (weights or judges) the hearts”. You can justify it as right in your mind now, but can you do so in judgment before the throne of God?

Some people even use the union of marriage as a justification for wearing wedding rings. Do you actually need a ring to let others know that you are happily married and not looking for a new partner? If that is all that stands between you and adultery, that ring can slip off very easily when you justify it.

Pro 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. Pro 21:3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. Pro 21:4 A high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

1 Peter 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. 2:10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Genesis 35:4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

Exo 33:4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. 33:5 For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. 33:6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

Isa 3:16 Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: 3:17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. 3:18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, 3:19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, 3:20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, 3:21 The rings, and nose jewels, 3:22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins,

Definitions: Cauls - a jeweled netting for the hair. Round Tires - round pendent for the neck (moon shaped) .

Mufflers - An ornament worn by women. Wimples - a woman's garment or shawl.

Body Piercing and tattoos

Leviticus 19:28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Should Christians marry non-Christians?

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

1 Corinthians 7:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

If a Christian is already married to a non-Christian

1 Corinthians 7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 7:11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 7:12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 7:13 And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 7:15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 7:16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

Organized Sports

It would be foolish to say that for children or adults to play games at home or with friends would be sinful activities, but what about organized sporting events? By organized sporting events, I'm referring to competitive sports at school, college, professional levels or other league type environments.

Paul acknowledges that bodily exercise has some profit, but that Godliness is profitable unto all things. That doesn't mean that a Christian shouldn't take care of their health at all, but that the spiritual man is much more important to preserve. Often times people that get involved in sports, become obsessed with their physical appearance and abilities to the point that they cut God out.

1Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 1Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

In 2nd Timothy 2:22 we are instructed to flee youthful lusts. No doubt there are many aspects of organized sporting events that present atmospheres designed to appeal to lustful desires. This is demonstrated by things such as the competitive nature of the sport, aggressive environment of the game, uniforms that are not typically designed to be modest, cheerleaders in revealing attire, the fans and their aggressive attitude, and in some venues the alcohol and other worldly activities.

2Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

If our minds are on carnal things such as sports teams and winning against the opposition, how can we be spiritually minded? Speaking from one that was somewhat of a sports fanatic as a youth, I can confirm that those interests have the ability to drag you deeper into a type of addiction for more involvement and often result in personal frustrations when your favorite teams are losing. Romans 8:7 explains that being carnal minded is enmity against God. As Christians we cannot survive spiritually if we work against God's way and entertain the ways of the world. I think it is wise to distance ourselves from organized sporting events and the "weight and sin" that it brings with it.

Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Rom 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 9 that there are corruptible crowns and incorruptible ones. Which one are you running a race to obtain?

1Cor 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 1Cor 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 1Cor 9:26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 1Cor 9:27 But I keepunder my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The scripture in Romans 14:22 is discussing food and drink being considered unclean or clean, but as the verse states, we are much happier if we do not condemn ourselves by what we partake. What type of witness are you to a lost world when you are partaking of the same carnal activities that they do? Case in point: Could a football fanatic seriously seek for the Baptism of the Holy Ghost during the fall football season? I really doubt they would have much spiritual success.

Rom 14:22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

Divorce, Remarriage, and Adultery

We can read in both the New and Old testaments that God hates divorcement, and that he made marriage to be until death.

Malachi 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Mark 10:9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Mat 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so

1Corinthians 7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 7:11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

1Corinthians 7:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

What does God say about adultery?

Exodus 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. (one of the Ten Commandments)

1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

It is evident from many scripture verses, including one of the Ten Commandments that God views adultery as Sin, but what is defined as adultery?

Dictionary definition: ADULTERY, voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband;

Romans 7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 7:3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Mark 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery

1Corinthians 7:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

What if I was in this adulterous state before being saved, doesn't God forgive me of my sins?

Yes the Lord forgives us but can we continue in sin? Does salvation change the fact that one of the spouses already has a living husband or wife? If the sin in question is that of an alcoholic, can he continue drinking alcohol after being saved?

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Doesn't the clause, "except it be for fornication" allow for divorce and remarriage when a spouse is unfaithful.

Matt 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Mat 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Dictionary definition: FORNICATION, The incontinence or lewdness of unmarried persons,

The key to "rightly dividing the word" here is to understand what Fornication means. Since adultery is used several places in the Bible, the use of the word Fornication is not trivial here. If God had meant that unfaithfulness after marriage was grounds for divorce and remarriage, then the word used would have been adultery. Since Fornication is referring to unfaithfulness between unmarried people, how can you have fornication after a marriage is consummated? The answer is, you can't by today's customs, but by the Jewish engagement and marriage ritual, you could.

Example of putting away prior to marriage – Mary & Joseph

Mat 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

The Jewish Marriage of Biblical times has Four Phases

1. matchmaking (or falling in love) 2) betrothal or engagement 3) return of groom & time alone together 4) week of celebrating

In the Jewish customs, a woman was considered bound to the man while they were engaged or “betrothed.” Immorality during this “betrothal” period would then be the only valid reason for a divorce.

The engagement period was usually one-year in duration. This engagement could be broken by a bill of divorce (not just “sorry, changed my mind”) During the year (or so) the husband built a bridal chamber onto his father’s house (a Vanderhaan).

You may say that you have never heard such a thing before, but read the scripture below that is often used in the Christmas season. You will see that Joseph was espoused (engaged) to Mary and finding that she was with child (thus adultery involved) he would “put her away” privately (divorce her). That is the Bible way even if it is contradictory to what most churches preach and teach today.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Mat 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

Even in the Holiness ranks, there is acceptance that a person can be forgiven of adultery and stay in the relationship with the “new” partner without being in sin. The Bible is clear that a marriage is binding as long as both original spouses are living. This is clear in the text below where Jesus stated that the woman at the well had many husbands but the one she was with was not her own.

John 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Look back to the words of Jesus in “Mark 10:11” above and see if he left any loopholes for living in an adulterous state.

Please reference a new study titled “God’s view of Divorce and Remarriage” from our website for a more in-depth discussion of this topic.

The Holy Trinity or Godhead

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:

Genesis 11:6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 11:7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

“Let US make man in OUR image”: Three plural pronouns, (We, Us, Our) used six different times in four different passages: Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8. The unanimous opinion of the early church was that the Father was talking to Jesus.

The Jews consider the verse in Deut 6:4 as one of the most sacred. (Deut 6:4: “Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is Echad”). The Holy Ghost could have used a Hebrew word that represented the numeric or solitary oneness of God (“yachid” or “bad”), but he used the Hebrew word “Echad”. God also used the word “echad” in Genesis 2:24 when indicating that a married man and women become one. It is clear that a married couple still have separate identities and bodies, but they act as one or agree as one.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Genesis 19:24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

Genesis 19:24 "Then Yahweh [on earth in human form] rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh [in spirit form in heaven] out of heaven. Genesis 19:24. In this text Abraham is visited by three individuals, one being Yahweh and the other two angels. Here we have the Son of God on the earth (Jesus) and God in heaven (father) sending down fire from heaven. This incident when Abraham met with Yahweh is what Jesus referred to when he said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56) The unanimous opinion of the church Fathers was that Jesus visited Abraham in Genesis 18 and 19.

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

God the Father says that the Messiah shall come forth from Bethlehem unto himself. Would it not seem strange to state that I will come forth unto myself?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

After reading the following verse, how can a reasonable person think that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one single being or deity?

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 5:23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Would Jesus speak in the "second person" if he and the Father were the same entity?

John 8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 8:55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

John 19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

All three members of the Holy Trinity identified at one time. Jesus was being baptized, the Holy Ghost came in the form of a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 3:22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Jesus refers to his Father being in Heaven while he is on the Earth

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Does one entity or deity need two thrones in heaven?

Revelations 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

Jesus instructs how Christians should be baptized. Would he mention all three members of the Trinity if they were not three separate deities?

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

The Oneness people often assert that the doctrine of the Trinity was created at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. The truth is that early heretics such as Sabellian attempted to corrupt the Church's view on the Godhead by introducing the oneness views. In response to these heretical attacks, the early church fathers gathered to create the Nicene Creed to document the established views already held by the church. There are also many well documented references to the Trinitarian views of the early church from 70 AD through 325 AD.

Warnings of "New revelations" about the Holy Trinity or Godhead:

Another doctrine that Satan has attempted to introduce into the Trinitarian Holiness ranks is that of a "created Christ". This doctrine teaches that Jesus did not exist as an individual being (or Deity) prior to the virgin birth. They falsely base these views on the verses in Isa 53:1 and Isa 63:5 describing the arm of God and preach that the Father sent his right arm to earth to become Christ. This doctrine is probably more dangerous than the classic Oneness view as it truly denies the immortality and Deity of Jesus Christ. Sadly this doctrine has been propagated by those that were at one time well respected and honored in the Pentecostal Holiness ranks. The Apostle Paul made it clear that we should not heed anyone that preaches a Gospel contrary to that presented in the Bible. These confused people also come against the statements of the "Council of Nicea" to argue against the Trinitarian views (like the Oneness) and against God being "uncreated" (immortal) to support their lies.

Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Colossians chapter one, quickly refutes this "created Christ" view as it states that by Him "Jesus" were all things created. How could he have created all things if he didn't exist before the virgin birth?

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

From these scriptures, I think we can fairly state that that the Holy Trinity or Godhead is made up of three distinct entities: God the Father, the Son of God (Jesus), and the Holy Ghost (comforter) with all three being equal, distinct, sharing the same divine nature, and existing from all eternity.

I'm reminded what Jesus said in Mark 12:34 when thinking about how some of the Oneness groups hold close to the standards of Holiness but do not accept the Godhead as the true trinity, but a uni-personal God that takes on different roles at different times. God will be the ultimate judge to determine how much this inaccurate "Oneness" interpretation matters in the end, but it is a fearful thing to fall in the hands of a living God

Mark 12:34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Tithing and offerings

Dictionary definition: TITHE (from Old English teogotha "tenth") is a one-tenth part of something, paid as a voluntary contribution or as a tax or levy, usually to support a Jewish or Christian religious organization. Today, tithes (or tithing) are normally voluntary and paid in cash, checks, or stocks, whereas historically tithes could be paid in kind, such as agricultural products.

Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek (see verses below)

Genesis 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 14:19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Lev 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD.

Numbers 18:20 And the LORD spoke unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 18:21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

1 Corinthians 9:13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward.

God asks if we will rob him in tithes and offerings and instructs us to prove him. He promises a blessing that there is not room enough to receive to those that pay tithes to God. (see verses below)

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 3:9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Holiness must begin in the Heart and produce the Fruits of the Spirit

The majority of the topics discussed thus far are mostly concerning outward manifestations of an inner problem.

The fruit produced by a plant provides an excellent representation of the type of plant it came from. The same is true with the works or spiritual fruits of people. When a person is born again, they become a new creature in Christ and begin bearing fruit of righteousness.

Jesus explains in Matthew 7 that there will be false prophets that look like Holy people on the outside but inwardly they are far from righteous. In the days that we live in, there are opportunities for people to follow the teachings of the Holiness Churches by maintaining the outward appearance standards but never experience the “born again” conversion that produces the fruit of the spirit. It’s a relatively easy task to mimic the dress codes and outward appearance of others because you can physically see the difference. But the actions that are used to evaluate the fruits of the spirit are much easier to hide (at least for a while).

I’m all for maintaining the Holiness standards that we preach and teach, but I’m afraid that sometimes we forget about the importance of the inner man by instead substituting measurements that we can physically see. In reality Holiness is displayed in both the inward and the outward attributes that we manifest.

Mat 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Mat 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Mat 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Mat 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Mat 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Mat 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them

What effect will loving God make in the actions of our life? It will cause us to produce fruit of Holiness in our life.

Rom 6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. Rom 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. Rom 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we were in sin, we produced the fruit of unrighteousness but after being saved we are expected to be free from the bondage of sin and start producing fruits of Holiness. If we claim salvation but do not bear the fruit of righteousness, we are deceived just as James 1:22 explains.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Eph 5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Eph 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Eph 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

Ephesians 5:9 tells us that the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. This selection of scripture continues to instruct us to be filled with the spirit and to keep hymns and spiritual songs in our heart.

Examples of works of the Flesh

Galatians 5 also commands us to walk in the spirit so we do not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Verses 5:19 through 5:21 provide examples of the fruits of unrighteousness.

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians 5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Galatians 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Galatians 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Examples of Fruits of righteousness

In Galatians 5:22 and 5:23 provide examples of the fruits of righteousness.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Galatians 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

A review of the fruit of the spirit is provided below. Since we are known by our fruits, how are you viewed by others (Matthew 7:20)? Do you pass the good fruit test of the Lord? These characteristics will be just as important to God as our visible Holiness attributes when we stand in judgment.

Define: Love - An affection of the mind excited by beauty and worth of any kind, or by the qualities of an object which communicate pleasure. It is opposed to hatred.

Define: Joy - The passion or emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good; that excitement of pleasurable feelings which is caused by success, good fortune, the gratification of desire or some good possessed, or by a rational prospect of possessing what we love or desire; gladness; exultation; exhilaration of spirits. Joy is a delight of the mind, from the consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good.

Define: Peace - In a general sense, a state of quiet or tranquility; freedom from disturbance or agitation; applicable to society, to individuals, or to the temper of the mind.

Define: Longsuffering - Bearing injuries or provocation for a long time; patient; not easily provoked.

Define: Gentleness - Genteel behavior. Softness of manners; mildness of temper; sweetness of disposition; meekness. Kindness; benevolence. Tenderness; mild treatment.

Define: Goodness - The moral qualities which constitute Christian excellence; moral virtue; religion.

Define: Faith - Belief; the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity, without other evidence; the judgment that what another states or testifies is the truth. I have strong faith or no faith in the testimony of a witness, or in what a historian narrates.

Define: Meekness - Softness of temper; mildness; gentleness; forbearance under injuries and provocations.

In an evangelical sense, humility; resignation; submission to the divine will, without murmuring or peevishness; opposed to pride or arrogance.

Define: temperance - Moderation; particularly, habitual moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions; restrained or moderate indulgence; as temperance in eating and drinking; Temperance in eating and drinking is opposed to gluttony and drunkenness, and in other indulgences, to excess. Patience; calmness; sedateness; moderation of passion.

Can we be accounted as Holy without demonstrating the fruits of the spirit? Jesus said that every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast in the fire. If we do not possess these spiritual fruits, then we also will be cast into the fire of hell.

Mat 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Can a person professing Christianity go to heaven with a hateful, provoking, envying attitude toward others? Those are definitely 180 degrees away from the fruits that the Word instructs us to have, and indicate a serious spiritual deficiency. Based on what I read, a person lacking in the attributes of the fruits of the spirit are in as much jeopardy of hell as a person professing Christianity and wearing clothing of the opposite sex.

You might think of a person very active in your church (maybe even a minister) that has a downright hateful attitude toward other people (I'm not talking about preaching the truth and getting on someone's toes). Can they get by God's fruit test because of their position in the church? I'm afraid that they will hear the words "I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity" (Matthew 7:24).

I hate to admit it, but some of the most racist people that I know are church going people. I've overheard people in church services talk disgracefully about another person singing because they have a different color skin. Can they get by with an external Pharisean Holiness shield? Since racism represents variance, emulations, and hatred, what kind of tree is being represented? There definitely aren't any fruits of love, gentleness, goodness, or meekness being represented in these actions.

Can you truly be sanctified and still possess the fruits of unrighteousness (Gal 5:19-21)? Not in a million years!

What does the term "Charity" mean when used in 1 Corinthians chapter 13?

Webster's definition: Charity - In a general sense, love, benevolence, good will; that disposition of heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men to think favorably of their fellow men, and to do them good. In a more particular sense, love, kindness, affection, tenderness, springing from natural relations; as the charities of father, son and brother.

If we speak in tongues; have the gifts of prophecy, understanding, and knowledge; have all faith; give our life for the poor but still lack love (charity) we are nothing before God. If you compare this to the fruits of the spirit discussed above we see the same importance placed on these attributes. If we come up short in charity or love then everything else is in vain.

1Co 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 1Co 13:2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 1Co 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 1Co 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 1Co 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 1Co 13:6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 1Co 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 1Co 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 1Co 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 1Co 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 1Co 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 1Co 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 1Co 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Good advice from the Apostle Paul

Php 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Php 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Closing Remarks

Many churches have compromised the Word of God to a point that they have lost the concept of salvation and that of a sanctified life. This has resulted in many churches becoming no more than a social organization. I hope that some of these simple remarks and scripture references in this document will help you understand what God expects from a Christian. I don't claim to "know it all" but I tried to take some of the current topics and provide a fair evaluation of the scriptures relating to them. The list of topics in this document should not be considered all encompassing, but the sampling of scriptures provided should supply a good foundation for evaluating God's expectations.

Remember that Proverbs 21 explains that "every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth (weights or judges) the hearts". You may feel comfortable justifying your sins now, but can you do so at the judgment seat of God?

The Bible asks in Mark 8:37 "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" but Satan asks what will you take for your soul?

It would be extremely foolish to risk losing your soul to Satan (and burning in Hell for eternity) in exchange for the temporal things of this life.

Pro 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. Pro 21:3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Paul provided guidance in the following verse, to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”. Many people have used this verse as a crutch stating that they will live “their own salvation” the way they think is right. If we instead proceed as Paul explains with the Fear of God that causes us to be cautious or tremble, then we should not err in understanding God’s Word as it applies to our lives.

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 2:16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

2Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

I have found that the keys to maintaining a sanctified Christian life are held in the following four actions. If you get addicted to anything in this world, let be these things:

1. Studying the Bible (not just reading a few verses, but studying to understand it - 2Timothy 2:15)
2. Prayer (not just a simple kid’s bedtime prayer, but one that touches God with faith and spiritual fire - 1Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16). This should become a habitual event to commune with God.
3. Attending Church services regularly (not just when convenient with your schedule - Hebrews 10:25)
4. Fasting (Jesus told us that some answers to prayer only come by Prayer and Fasting - Mark 9:29)

If we are willing to accept God’s direction, this way of Holiness is not complex or unreasonable. Isaiah wrote that it was so simple that a fool shall not err therein. (see the verse below)

Isaiah 35:8 And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

I feel that we are very near the time (likely in this decade) for the catching away of the Church and/or the Great Tribulation (in which ever order God provides) and it is time for God’s church to awake out of sleep and redeem the time. It is time to witness to the lost and lead them to God.

Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

If you find this document useful, feel free to copy or distribute it as you desire.

If you have any questions or comments concerning this commentary, you can email me at holyliving@gmail.com.

My web sites for additional commentaries and information are www.trinity-holiness.com or www.holiness-preaching.com .

May the grace and mercies of God bless and keep you!

Brother S. Evans

Pure Religion

TEXT: James 1:26, 27

James 1:27 — Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

I. Religion: What is it?

John 3:3 — Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

New Birth is invisible, spiritual miracle of the soul and our "religion" is the visible expression of that new life. We are not saved by our religion, we are saved by our SAVIOR! But this is not say we have no "religion".

Sometimes a claim of "no religion" is merely a request for "no accountability".

Religion: our worship of and relationship with God and how those influence our treatment of our fellow man

Acts 26:5 — Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of **our religion** I lived a Pharisee.

Colossians 2:18 — Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and **worshipping** of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

James 1:26 — If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlETH not his tongue, but deceivETH his own heart, **this man's religion** is vain.

James 1:27 — **Pure religion** and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

1. Religion

A. DEFINITIONS: - RELIGION: ceremonial observance:--religion, worshipping (Galatians 1:13,14 Paul a Jew saying: "The Jew's Religion")

- Observances (middle ages english: 'life under monastic vows'):r from Latin religio(n-) 'obligation, bond, reverence'
- Duty
- Ceremony, Worship
- In Acts 25:18, Festus calls Christianity a "religion"; in some roman histories the christians were described as a "cult".

B. A religion by definition Must have 1) Deity and 2) Worshipper.)

- Even those who claim "no religion" have a "religion" of some sort. If nothing else they serve themselves as god to themselves.

C. Religion itself is not the end, it is a means/way to God.

2. Purity (must also be an "impure")

- PURE: of uncertain affinity; clean (literally or figuratively):--clean, clear, pure. (Katharos: Matthew 5:8; 23:26; Luke 11:41; John 13:10,11 <-- Judas' religion?; 1 Timothy 1:5)

1 Timothy 1:5 — Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a **pure** heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: [unfeigned: no hypocrisy]

- One's own "Religion" can be vain.

James 1:26 — If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

- ceremonious in worship (as demonstrative), i. e. pious:--religious.

- "True Christian" "True Church"

II. Religion: How do you get it?

As a Matter of Conscience

Choosing "religion" is not primarily a matter of preference or culture, but primarily a matter of conscience.

Philipians 2:12 — Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

As a Matter of Conscience it is a matter of **THE HEART**

Mt 16:15 — He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

How we answer as to the nature of TRUTH shapes our religious experience more than anything else.

- "What is truth?" concerning: - Who is God? - What does God want? - What does God say about me?

Hebrews 11:6 — But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- Salvation Testimonies

When I was 15 years old I had an encounter with Jesus. In the middle of the night, He came into my room and talked to me. I believe I was in a trance but not sure. I remember waking up going to the bathroom. When I went back to my bed the encounter happened. It radically changed my life forever. He set me free of things that were tormenting me. At an early age, I was very interested in mythology and ancient religions. I thought it was interesting and fun to read. What I didn't know that it was impacting me on a spiritual level. I started to have some very dark encounters and I became very fearful. He showed me His love and kindness in that encounter.

My story has a rocky start, a messy middle but a beautiful ending. I grew up fighting battles on all sides, in the world, in my heart, and at home. My parents went through an absolutely horrendous divorce when I was 3 years old. My mother left my father for another man and we went to live with him very abruptly. That man was my stepfather for the next 22 years. The dysfunction of a broken home plagued my childhood. My parents struggled to co-parent across

all of that pain and my siblings and I got caught in the cross-fire. ----- After my first year of college, I hit a low point and decided to transfer schools under the pretense of going to live with my best friend. In reality, I was trying to run away from myself and believed a “new start” would cure my feelings of restlessness and emptiness. That following summer, I ran into an old friend from high school who was a Christian. He genuinely surprised me with his kindness and Christ-like attitude towards me. This softened my heart and slowly pointed me back to Jesus. (Fun fact: This old friend would eventually become my husband).

- These Answer, "How they were born again?" But not how they got "religion"? right?

John 14:15 — If ye love me, keep my commandments.

III. Religion: How does it work?

It Frames our "World View"

- There is evil, if there is good.
- If evil and good exists, they are in a conflict, they contradict and oppose one another.

Christians recognize the One Who Created all Things, Sent His Son to Die on a Cross and gave to us the Holy Bible as the one and only to be worshipped. All other religion by this definition is "false".

1 John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

1. STATUTES/COMMANDS: a written law that has been formally enacted

1 Jo 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

2. PRECEPTS: refers to a general rule or principle that is intended to guide behavior or thought.

Psalm 119:128

Mt 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, **do good** to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

- Not a blank slate for me to impose my definition, but the expection is that I act in honesty -- INTEGRITY

Ge 20:6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

1Ki 9:4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

It Keeps Us Consistent

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Hebrews 10:25 — Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

- We are not just "making it up as we go along". We are cherry picking ideas that suit or fancy.
- We are walking in communion (not in conflict) with our creator and in simple honesty listening, learning and doing.

It makes us Useful

James 1:27 — **Pure religion** and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

The Well-Ordered Life

Psalms 37:23 — The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

- **ORDERED** — to be erect; to stand straight; to set up, confirm, direct, faithfulness, fashion, fasten, firm, be fitted, be fixed, frame, be meet, ordain, order, perfect, (be, make) ready, right, set (aright, fast, forth), be stable, (e-)stablish, stand

Definition:

A Well-Ordered life is the Whole Man (body, mind, spirit) being rightly aligned with Whole Counsel (truth) of God.

- For example, to judge God is "unfaithful" or "unfit" is out of alignment with Truth. Or. "I love God, and I hate my brother."

ILLUSTRATION: Packing for a successful camping trip. ["Heading in the wrong direction"]

- Some Words to consider when thinking about the Ordering of One's Life:
 - Settings, Calibration, Tuning, Orientation, Alignment ("get headed in the right direction")
- Well-Ordered: In harmony with God and self. (There is a victory in not being at war with yourself.)
- Kicking against the pricks versus acting in submission to God.
- Can a man be WHOLE without God?

I. The Whole Man

1. Body (mechanics - A LITERAL HEART)

- Do I know what God has revealed in the Bible concerning this body?
- Do I manage and consider my body in light of these truths?

Psalm 139:13-16 — For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise thee; for I am **fearfully and wonderfully made**: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

- "covered me": I'm more than just a body, but I am a body.
- "Marvelous are thy works" vs. Romans 9:20 "Why hast thou made me thus?"
- v. 15 "my substance" -- skeleton
- v. 15 "curiously wrought" -- needlework (like the intricate and complex network of veins, nerves, muscles,

tendons, etc.)

> If you were to lay out the vast network of blood vessels from an average child end to end, they would stretch for over 60,000 miles! In an average adult, they would stretch for almost 100,000 miles! (circumference of earth is 25,000 miles)

- Adam was made in the image (phantom, shade, illusion, resemblance, copy) of God.

Genesis 1:27 — So God created man in his own image, **in the image of God** created he him; male and female created he them.

- Neither allow our body to dominate or do we neglect it.

Mt 6:25 ¶ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

- This body is part of God's working and will for my life.

1 Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

- Christ shall change our "vile"(low estate) body into a "glorious" one!

Philippians 3:20,21 — For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

- Needful for the body.

James 2:16 — If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, **be ye warmed and filled**; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are **needful to the body**; what doth it profit?

Romans 12:13 — Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. [present uour body living sacrifice]

2. Mind (intellect, will, understanding - A GUIDED HEART)

- Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams : "Genesis 41:32 - "is established": "prepared of God"
- Exodus 8:26 "It is not meet": "not orderly"

- Do I know what God has revealed in the Bible concerning this mind?
- Do I manage and consider my mind in light of these truths?

Taking care of our physical health looks like: eating right, exercising regularly ("bodily exercise profiteth little" 1 Timothy 4:8) and getting plenty of sleep. But do you know how to take care of your mental health?

- IMAGINATION: Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.
 - God is creative, there was no world, this world existed first in the MIND of God
 - Adam was made in the "Image of God's Holiness" but also in a measure of "God's Intelligence"
 - the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses: -- **VISION**
- The mind is a terrible thing to waste. [affection: phroneo - to exercise the mind]
 - Young and Rubicam AD agency, wrote slogan for "United Negro College Fund" in 1970s. "It was a plea to everybody to reject the prejudices of the past and consider the inner person,"
 - Pr 29:11 ¶ A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

Colossians 3:2 — Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

- A Poor State of Mind, sours our experiences

Genesis 26:34-35 — And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: 35 Which were **a grief of mind** unto Isaac and to Rebekah. [bitterness, "sour"]

Mr 5:15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his **right mind**: and they were afraid.

- Our Mind is not a mystery to God.

Eze 11:5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.

- Be of a teachable mind.

Pr 15:32 ¶ He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

Php 2:5 — Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

- Do not trust our mind implicitly. JUDGMENT, DISCERNMENT

Proverbs 3:5 — Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

3. Soul/Spirit (LIFE) - The Hidden Man of the Heart

What is the Soul/Spirit? What is to be Ordered concerning the Soul?

a. The Value of a Soul

- Even if our Body is "well-ordered" and our Mind "well-ordered", if our SOUL is lost, then ALL IS LOSS.

Matthew 16:26 — For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul{LIFE}? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

- "lose your own soul" Or if receiving "spiritual damage" what could compensate?
- "give in exchange" What ransom would be, could be paid?

Matthew 11:28 — Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

b. WHAT IS THE SOUL in RELATION TO THE BODY? There is the Life of the "Spirit" and the Life of the "Body"

- God is a Spirit and ALL LIFE comes from Him. (John 1:4; Job 1:21; 12:10; Psalm 127:3)

John 4:24 — God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Mt 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for **flesh and blood** hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

We are more than bodies. This body can die and the "life" pass from it, but my Soul will "live eternally".

- The First Death: "separation of the soul and body"
- Those who are in Christ, will live in the eternal presence of God.
- Those are condemned, will suffer not just "The First Death" but also the second death as the first will come to an end itself. NOT ANNIHILATION as the first is replaced by a "SECOND DEATH" - "cast into Lake of Fire" - Eternal Separation from God's mercy. (Matthew 10:28; Revelation 2:11; 20:6; 20:14 [1 Corinthians 15:26]; 21:8)

c. WHAT IS THE SOUL AND SPIRIT? "Soul and Spirit" - "Being Alive (Animated) & Being Alive Immortally"

1 Thessalonians 5:23 — And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:12 — For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [has living power;]

Genesis 2:7 — And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. [living ... person, creature, being]

1 Corinthians 15:45 — And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul [vitality; alive; having animation]; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit [a being having the power to IMPART LIFE].

d. What is to be Ordered concerning the Soul?

- The primary concern of the soul how does it stand in relation to the Holy God?

Ezekiel 18:4 — Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

- "All Souls are Mine" - I Can DEALL WITH ALL as ALL ARE MINE. All Souls under his Jurisdiction; All souls having their source in God; All Souls being subject to God's will.

- "The Soul that Sins" (sins of the body [gluttony], sins of the soul [deny God])

Ezekiel 18:20 — The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

- Sin condemns the soul to "death". Not just separation of the body and soul, but the second death, "eternal separation from the Mercy of God which is the LIGHT OF LIFE."

Romans 6:23 — For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- The Battle is not merely physical but Spiritual.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- Our spirit and Flesh can get out of sync. But our physical body can be strengthened through a healthy "Spirit". Just like with mental health effecting our body, so even the spirit has an effect on the mind and body.

Mark 14:38 — Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

- An emphasis must be laid on the spiritual.

1 Peter 3:1-5 — Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

II. The Whole Counsel of God

Acts 20:27 — For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. [purpose, advise, will; "All that God has determined and revealed concerning the salvation of man."]

- Man is not capable of knowing everything, but He is capable of submitting to what God has revealed.
- Man is not capable of knowing everything, but He can purposefully orientate his life with with the truth He has. **LIVE IN TRUTH**
- instruction, counsel, favor, will, command, precept, statute, conviction and conscience, law, principle, word, direction: plan, purpose