

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)



Lessons on

Immorality

NINTH ANNUAL
SEEK THE OLD PATHS LECTURESHIP

July 24-28, 1994

THEME:
IMMORALITY

Editor:
Garland M. Robinson

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FORWARD

This book contains the lesson outlines of the **Ninth Annual “Seek The Old Paths” Lectureship** which was held at the East Corinth Church of Christ July 24-28, 1994. Outline books have been printed every year except the first year. They are: 2nd (1987) — “The Mission of the Church” (out of print), 3rd (1988) — “Christ Is Our Perfect Example” (out of print), 4th, 1989 — “Old Testament Questions With New Testament Applications,” 5th, 1990 — “New Testament Questions,” 6th, 1991 — “Lessons From the Time of the Judges,” 7th, 1992 — “Most Needed Lessons For Today,” and 8th, 1993 — “Preaching Needed For the Nineties.” The seventh, eighth and ninth books were presented free by the church at East Corinth.

The theme for this year, **IMMORALITY**, was chosen because of the ever present and ever growing immoral conditions in the world around us. So few care little about morality and righteousness. People’s lifestyle and passion is to indulge in every sort of behavior to please their own sensual imagination. Where once people “knew” certain things were wrong but participated in them anyway, now, the number is growing who have no sense or morality and honestly believe there is nothing wrong in their sinful behavior. This lectureship and book seeks to teach and remind all who come into contact with it of the teaching of God’s Holy Word — the Bible — God’s standard of morality. Unless men conform to its teaching, they will continue in their downward plunge into an everlasting devil’s hell (Matt. 25:41).

May God’s faithful servants fight the good fight of faith, uphold righteousness and plead for the Lord’s way. As Paul stood before Felix, “*he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come*” (Acts 24:25). The result was that Felix trembled. Our prayer and goal is that people today will likewise tremble and then act upon this knowledge to obey the gospel of Christ. All must **believe** (John 8:24), **repent** (Luke 13:3,5), **confess** (Matt. 10:32-33) and be **baptized** for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Biblical Overview Of Immorality	
<i>Ronnie Turner</i>	5
Idolatry, Materialism, Selfishness	
<i>Jimmy W. Bates</i>	7
Evil Companions	
<i>Wade Webster</i>	10
Situation Ethics: A New Morality	
<i>Ed Casteel</i>	13
Witchcraft	
<i>Richard Carlson</i>	18
Bribery	
<i>Douglas Hoff</i>	21
Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco	
<i>Joe W. Nichols</i>	24
Hatred, Jealousy, Strife, Envy: “Works Of The Flesh”	
<i>Randy Kea</i>	28
Lying, Deceit And Dishonesty	
<i>Jerry Joseph</i>	31
The New Digression And Change #1	
<i>Wayne Coats</i>	35
The New Digression and Change #2	
<i>Wayne Coats</i>	37
An Amalgamation and Fellowshiping With Denominations	
<i>Wayne Coats</i>	39
A Pot Pourri of Notes On Digression	
<i>Wayne Coats</i>	40
Nakedness	
<i>Gilbert Gough</i>	42
Living Soberly, Righteously, Godly In The Midst Of Immorality	
<i>Charles Blair</i>	48
Gambling: “A Corrupting Yeast”	
<i>Thomas W. Larkin</i>	50
Evolution	
<i>Terry Joe Kee</i>	55
Elders Providing Moral Leadership Through Overseeing The Flock	
<i>Eddy Craft</i>	59

Preachers Providing Moral Leadership Through Preaching And Teaching The Word	
<i>Wayne Cox</i>	63
Lasciviousness — Dancing	
<i>Virgil L. Hale</i>	66
There Is An Absolute Standard Of Morality	
<i>Charles A. Pledge</i>	69
Fornication, Parking And Petting	
<i>Terry Joe Kee</i>	72
Parents Providing Moral Leadership And Training In The Home	
<i>Virgil L. Hale</i>	75
Capital Punishment	
<i>Dan Sikes</i>	78
Adultery	
<i>Eddy Craft</i>	86
Murder, Euthanasia And Abortion	
<i>Mark Bass</i>	89
Sodomy/Homosexuality: Such Were Some Of You	
<i>Windell Fikes</i>	97
Repent Or Perish	
<i>Kenneth Burleson</i>	100
Church Discipline Of The Immoral	
<i>Charles W. Leonard</i>	102
Racism	
<i>Kenneth Burleson</i>	105
Pornography	
<i>Darrell E. Beard</i>	108
Suicide And Assisted Suicide	
<i>Charles Blair</i>	114
Profanity	
<i>Daniel H. Coe, Sr.</i>	116
Medical Ethics	
<i>Richard Guill</i>	119
Suffering Persecution Because Of Righteous Living	
<i>Garland M. Robinson</i>	123
Refuse The Evil And Choose The Good	
<i>Sidney White</i>	126

A Biblical Overview Of Immorality

Ronnie Turner

1. Several thoughts come to mind when considering “A Biblical Overview of Immorality.”
 - a. It readily reminds one of the immorality that is seen today.
 - b. It clearly shows the demand for such a study.
 - c. It surely should lead the immoral to repentance.
2. The objective in this study will be to go through both the Old and New Testaments and find instances of immoral behavior where corruption and immorality hurt and even destroyed those who were involved in it. This lesson will also show where immorality leads.
3. The following points will be discussed — Immorality: its description, its damage, its destination.

DISCUSSION:

I. IMMORALITY: ITS DESCRIPTION.

A. A Biblical overview will describe immorality from A-Z.

1. Adultery, Backbiting, Covetousness, Drunkenness, Extortion, Fornication, Greediness, Homosexuality, Immodesty, Jealousy, Killing, Lying, Murmuring, Negligence, Obscenity, Pride, Quagmiring, Rebelliousness, Selfishness, Thievery, Unbelief, Viciousness, Worldliness, X-Rated behavior, Yielding to Temptation, Zealousness in an evil cause.
2. Sadly, much more could be mentioned (Deut. 27:14-26; Rom. 1:21-32; I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5; II Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 21:8).

B. Descriptions of Biblical examples of immorality provide us with much needed lessons.

1. Immorality in the garden of Eden shows Satan’s cunningness (Gen. 3:1-6; II Cor. 11:3).
2. Immorality during Noah’s day teaches that if we do not think properly, we will not live properly (Gen. 6:5; Matt. 12:34-35).
3. Immorality during the time of Sodom and Gommorha shows just how vile one can become (Gen. 19:1-9).
4. Immorality during the wilderness wanderings shows the hardening affects of sin (Heb. 3:7-11).
5. Immorality during the days of the Judges shows that man cannot follow his own standard of right and wrong (Judges 17:6; Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 10:23).
6. Immorality during the days of Isaiah shows many will despise God no matter how good He is to them (Isaiah 5:4; Rom. 2:4).
7. Immorality during the days of Herod the Great demonstrates how vicious one can become (Matt. 2:3-18; II Tim. 3:3).
8. Immorality during the Jew’s Passover shows how many make the worst choices (Acts 3:14-15).

9. Immorality during the days of the Corinthians teaches that sinners have no excuse — **THEY CAN CHANGE** (I Cor. 6:11).
- C. What advantage does one gain through studying Biblical descriptions of immorality?
 1. One can be admonished (I Cor. 10:6, 11).
 2. One can learn (Rom. 15:4).
 3. One can know for sure what sin is (I John 3:4).
 4. One can know that **ALL SIN** is sin (no “little” sins—Rev. 21:8).
 5. One can see God’s indignation toward immorality (Rom. 11:22; Heb. 10:31).
 6. One can see the hardening affects of sin (Eph. 4:19; I Tim. 4:1).
 7. One can see that immorality will never compare with morality (Psalm 1).

II. IMMORALITY: ITS DAMAGE.

- A. It is amazing that so many “toy” with immorality as if it is innocent or harmless.
 1. Paul spoke of those who had pleasure in those who commit it (Rom. 1:32).
 2. Some attempted to abuse God’s grace and continue in sin (Rom. 6:1).
 3. Peter spoke of those who could not cease from sin (II Peter 2:14).
- B. It is certain that those who play with sin have not considered the damage it does.
 1. Immorality damages one’s ability to keep the family strong.
 - a. Eli’s sons present a good example of this very thing (I Sam. 2:12; 3:13).
 - b. Malachi witnessed families torn asunder by divorce (Mal. 2:11-16).
 2. Immorality damages one’s ability to influence others.
 - a. Who could the hypocritical Jews influence for good (Matt. 23)?
 - b. Who could the lukewarm Laodiceans influence for good (Rev. 3:14-17)?
 3. Immorality damages one’s ability to help others.
 - a. Who could the drunken priests and prophets of Isaiah’s day help (Isaiah 28:7-8)?
 - b. Who could the spiritually immature Christians of Paul’s day help (Heb. 5:12)?
 4. Immorality damages one physically, emotionally, economically, and spiritually.
 - a. Physically: Consider the damage done to the body by smoking, drinking, and homosexuality.
 - b. Emotionally: The love affair with sin is soon over and man is left with heartache, worry and woes.

- c. Economically: The covetous man and the gambler soon finds himself in debt and out of money.
- d. **THE WORST DAMAGE DONE BY IMMORALITY IS THE DAMAGE DONE TO ONE'S SOUL.**

III. **IMMORALITY: ITS DESTINATION.**

- A. Unfortunately, many who travel the road of unrighteousness fail to consider where the road leads.
- B. Immorality leads to Hell.
 - 1. The New Testament writers appealed to Old Testament examples to show that the immoral will not escape from God.
 - a. Peter used the examples of the angels that fell, the ungodly world during the days of Noah and the vile sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah (II Peter 2:4-6).
 - b. Paul used the example of the children of Israel who fell in the wilderness (I Cor. 10:5-6).
 - 2. Is immorality worth giving up heaven for eternal damnation?
 - a. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:21).
 - b. The immoral will be recipients of the wrath of God (Col. 3:6).
 - c. The immoral will have their part in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The Bible's detailed description of immorality will help us to stay away from evil.
- 2. The damage that immorality is known to cause should keep us far away from it.
- 3. The destruction to which immorality leads should lead all mankind to flee from the wrath to come.

Idolatry, Materialism, Selfishness

Jimmy W. Bates

- 1. We live in an idolatrous, materialistic, self-centered, self-serving society.
 - a. Rom. 1:18-32 describes the world in which we live.
 - b. Cf. I Peter 4:3; II Peter 3:3
- 2. The church today is being greatly influenced by various forms of idolatry.
- 3. Our study will center on the subject of idolatry with a look at *Materialism* and *Selfishness* as forms of idolatry.

DISCUSSION:**I. WHAT IS IDOLATRY?**

- A. Definition:
 - 1. Idolatry: "Worship of idols."
 - 2. Idol: "an image of a god, used as an object or instrument of worship...any object of ardent or excessive devotion or admiration" (Webster).
- B. Idolatry is supreme devotion and worship given to something or someone other than the God of heaven.
 - 1. God demands and deserves our supreme loyalty, devotion and worship.
 - 2. That which occupies first place in our lives and reigns supreme in the place of God becomes our idol. Worship and devotion rendered to that idol is idolatry.
- C. Paganistic Idolatry of heathen nations in Bible times involved the worship of various false gods through graven images, etc.
 - 1. Isa. 44:9-20; Acts 17:22,23; 19:23-28
 - 2. Immorality was often associated with this form of idolatry as the idolater became enslaved to the depraved ideas his idols represented (Cf. Gal. 4:8,9).
- D. Idolatry takes on many forms, from worshipping false gods through graven images, to worshipping money, power, material things, pleasure, another person, jobs, hobby, sports, etc. anything that one places before God in his life. (Cf. Col. 3:5).

II. IDOLS FORMED IN THE MIND.

- A. Idolatry involves the sin of the mind against God (Rom. 1:21-23,28).
- B. One form of idolatry is the act of taking the true and living God and in one's mind changing him into a god one is more pleased with and then worshipping and serving that which is made in the mind, rather the true God of the Bible!
 - 1. People have always been more pleased with their own gods.
 - 2. The God of heaven is not popular, neither is his Son, nor his Kingdom/Church, nor his way.
 - 3. Thus the development of this form of Idolatry.
- C. Some popular gods/idols people have formed in their minds include:
 - 1. A god who changes his mind.
 - 2. A god who is not so strict or narrow as to require complete obedience.
 - 3. A god who will accept any kind or degree of worship and service rendered to him.
 - 4. A god who forgets.
 - 5. A god who thinks just like man does.
- D. These gods are not real, they're just idols in the mind!

III. THE IDOLATRY OF MATERIALISM.

- A. Extreme materialism denies the reality of God and the validity of religion. It is, “the philosophical doctrine that matter is the only reality and that everything in the world, including thought, will, and feeling, can be explained only in terms of matter...” Webster.
- B. Practical materialism is, “a doctrine, theory, or principle according to which the only or the highest values or objectives of living lie in material well-being and pleasure and in the furtherance of material progress; a preoccupation with or tendency to seek after or stress material things rather than intellectual or spiritual things.” Webster.
 - 1. Many today, even in the church, will not accept materialism in theory, but have adopted it in practice by making the pursuit of material gain and pleasure their god!
 - 2. A form of materialism is “covetousness which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5; Cf. Luke 12:15).
- C. Consider these warnings: Amos 6:1-6; Cf. Deut. 8:10-17; Matt. 6:19-34; Matt. 19:16-20; Luke 12:16-21; I John 2:15-17; Cf. James 4:4; I Tim. 6:6-11, 17-19.
- D. Luke 8:4-15
 - 1. v.14 — cares, riches, pleasures
 - 2. These are not necessarily wrong within themselves.
 - 3. But when these come before God, they become idols!
- E. “We are just pilgrims passing through this world but many have fallen in love with the camp-ground” — Gus Nichols.
- F. Matt. 16:26

IV. SELFISHNESS — THE WORSHIP OF SELF.

- A. Selfish — “too much concerned with one’s own welfare or interests and having little or no concern for others; self-centered.” Webster.
- B. We must be concerned with others: Matt. 22:37-40; Cf. Matt. 7:12; Rom. 12:10; Cf. Phil. 2:3; Luke 10:30-37.
- C. Luke 16:19-31 — The end result of selfishness.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Idolatry in one form or another has always been a great temptation to God’s people.
 - a. The Israelites were constantly influenced by the idolatrous nations around them.
 - b. The Lord’s church is being influenced today by the idolatrous world in which it exists.
 - c. We must remain keenly aware of the various forms of idolatry and keep ourselves from idols!
- 2. The idolater will miss heaven and lose his soul in hell: Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8.

Evil Companions

Wade Webster

1. Genesis 2 reveals man's need for companionship (Gen. 2:18).
2. Man not only needs companionship, he needs the right companionship.
3. In this lesson we will study the subject of "evil companions."
4. As we study this subject, we should consider five things.

DISCUSSION:

I. WE SHOULD CONSIDER SOME PASSAGES.

- A. Anytime we consider a Bible subject, we should look for passages which deal with that subject.
 1. Our first concern should always be, "what saith the Scripture?" (Rom. 4:3; 11:2; Gal. 4:30).
 2. Errors often result from a lack of Bible knowledge (Matt. 21:42; 22:29; Mark 12:24).
 3. Jesus expects for us to search the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11).
- B. On the subject of "evil companions" we find many passages.
 1. There are 3 passages which specifically use the words "companion" or "companionships" in this way.
 - a. Prov. 13:20 *"...a companion of fools shall be destroyed."*
 - b. Prov. 28:7 *"...he that is a companion of riotous [men] shameth his father."*
 - c. I Cor. 15:33 *"...evil companionships corrupt good morals."*
 2. Passages which deal with this same subject:
 - a. O. T. passages (Ex. 23:2; Psa. 1:1; Prov. 1:15-16; 4:14-15; 5:8; 9:6; 14:7; 22:24).
 - b. N. T. passages (Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:9,11; 10:20; II Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 5:11; II Thess. 3:14; I Tim. 6:5; Rev. 18:4).

II. WE SHOULD CONSIDER SOME PEOPLE.

- A. Anytime that we are studying a Bible subject, we should look for Biblical examples.
 1. The things that were written aforetime were written for our learning (Rom. 15:4).
 2. By learning from the example of others, we can avoid many mistakes (I Cor. 10:6-11).
- B. The Bible is filled with examples of those who became involved in evil companionships.
 1. The sons of God (Gen. 6:1-2).
 - a. The sons of God (the descendants of Seth) met the daughters of men (the descendants of Cain).
 - b. This companionship brought about the flood (Gen. 6).
 2. Lot (Gen. 13:12; 19:14).

- a. Lot chose the beautiful plain of Sodom and pitched his tent in that direction (Gen. 13:11-12; Gen. 19).
- b. Sodom vexed Lot's soul (II Peter 2:7-8).
- c. Few stories are more tragic than that of Lot and his family.
 - 1) He left at least two of his daughters in Sodom (Gen. 19:14).
 - 2) He lost his wife to the hold of Sodom (Gen. 19:26; Luke 17:32).
 - 3) He got his daughters out of Sodom but he couldn't get Sodom out of his daughters (Gen. 19:30-38).
3. Balaam (Num. 22).
 - a. At first, Balaam does what the Lord wants him to do (Num. 22:12-13, 18).
 - b. With time, Balaam's association with the Moabites softened him (Num. 22:22).
4. Solomon (I Kings 11:1-4).
 - a. Solomon loved many strange women (Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, Hittites).
 - b. They caused Solomon to sin (I Kings 11:3-4; Neh. 13:26).
5. The children of Israel.
 - a. God commanded them to separate from the heathen (Deut. 20:17-18; Josh. 23:7-8).
 - b. They developed a companionship with heathen neighbors.
 - 1) They served their idols (Judges 2:2; 3:6; Num. 25:2).
 - 2) They married them (Judges 3:6; 6:31; Ezra 9:1-2; 10:11; Neh. 13:23-26).
 - 3) They sought to be like them (I Sam. 8:20).
6. The prodigal son (Luke 15:13, 30).
 - a. He foolishly left home for the far country (15:13).
 - b. In the far country, he got in with the wrong group (15:13, 30).
7. Peter (John 18:25; Gal. 2:12-13).
 - a. He found himself warming around the fire of the enemy (John 18:25). There, he denied the Lord three times.
 - b. He found himself aligning with the enemy (Gal. 2:12-13). He gave in to the Judiazers.
- C. The Bible is filled with examples of those who resisted evil companionships.
 1. Abraham guarded Isaac against marrying a woman from the Canaanites (Gen. 24:3-4). Isaac did the same for Jacob (Gen. 28:1).
 2. When Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to commit adultery with her, Joseph "*got him out*" (Gen. 39:10-12).
 3. David carefully guarded his associates.
 - a. He would not sit or walk with the wicked (Psalm 26:4-5).
 - b. He would not "*know a wicked person*" (Psalm 101:4; cf. 119:115; 139:19).

- c. He was a friend of those who feared God and kept his commandments (Psalm 119:63).
4. Jeremiah resisted those who were evil.
 - a. He would not side with those who mocked God (Jer. 15:17).
 - b. He had rather be alone than with those who were wrong (Jer. 15:17).
5. Some of the Israelites guarded themselves against evil companionships (Neh. 10:28).

III. WE SHOULD CONSIDER SOME PROBLEMS.

- A. As we study a Bible subject, we should be concerned with the end result of the thing that we are studying.
 1. As human beings, we are often unable to see the end of the choices that we make (Prov. 14:12).
 2. It is possible to be deceived (I Cor. 15:33; Prov. 7:21-23).
- B. The Bible points out a number of problems that can come from evil companionships.
 1. You may share their destruction (Prov. 13:20; Ex. 34:12; Num. 16:26-27; I Sam. 15:6; II Chron. 19:2).
 2. You may learn their works (Psalm 106:35; Prov. 22:25).
 3. You may have your heart turned away (I Kings 11:2).
 4. You may marry one of them (Ex. 34:16; Judges 3:6; I Kings 11:1).
 5. You may become God's enemy (James 4:4; II Tim. 4:10).

IV. WE SHOULD CONSIDER SOME PRINCIPLES.

- A. The Bible contains a number of principles which help us to determine what God wants us to do.
 1. The Bible is not just a book of "thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots."
 2. The Bible is also a book of basic principles.
- B. Many Bible principles are violated by evil companionships.
 1. The principle of "*putting away the evil*" (Judges 20:13; I Sam. 22:18-19).
 2. The principle of not partaking in "*other men's sins*" (Eph. 5:7; I Tim. 5:22; II John 10-11; I Cor. 10:21).
 3. The principle of guarding one's influence (Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:16).
 4. The principle of fleeing from evil (I Cor. 10:14; I Cor. 6:18; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22).
 5. The principle of putting off the old manner of life (Eph. 4:22; Lev. 20:24).
 6. The principle of withdrawing from those who walk disorderly (I Tim. 6:5; II Thess. 3:6; II Tim. 3:5; I Cor. 5:7).
 7. The principle of abstaining from "*all appearance of evil*" (I Thess. 5:22).
 8. The principle of agreement (Amos 3:3).

9. The principle of making no provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14).
10. The principle of abhorring the evil (Rom. 12:9; I Peter 3:11).

V. WE SHOULD CONSIDER SOME PRAYERS.

- A. A great deal can be learned from studying the prayers of the Bible. We can learn how to pray and for what to pray.
- B. Several Bible prayers teach us something about evil companionships.
 1. In the Old Testament, Jabez prayed that God would keep him from evil (I Chron. 4:10).
 2. The model prayer (Matt. 6:9-15).
 - a. "*Lead us not into temptation....*" (Matt. 6:13).
 - b. "*...Deliver us from evil...*" (Matt. 6:13).
 - c. How could Jesus teach His disciples to pray this and approve of "*evil companionships*?"
 3. While in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord told his disciples to pray that they "*enter not into temptation*" (Matt. 26:41; Luke 22:40, 46).
 4. The Lord's prayer (John 17).
 - a. He prayed that God might "*keep them from the evil*" (John 17:15).
 - b. How could Jesus pray that God would "*keep them from the evil*" and yet approve of them having "*evil companions*?"

CONCLUSION:

1. Certainly, God has left us without excuse on this subject. The passages, people, problems, principles, and prayers provide us with all that we need to avoid "*evil companionships*."
2. May we select our companions from God's children and not from Satan's servants.
3. Our companions can either help us go to heaven or keep us from it. What are your companions doing?

Situation Ethics: A New Morality

Ed Casteel

1. Our study for this occasion will deal with the idea of how people live personally and how they treat their fellow man.
 - a. Ethics is the study of human actions in respect to their being right or wrong in connection with moral duties or obligations. (*Webster's 3rd*

New International Dictionary).

- b. Situational Ethics is the belief that a standard set of principles or laws are merely arbitrary and can be set aside at any time whenever human judgment decides that is desirable.
 - 1) "The basic idea from which situation ethics comes is that there is no absolute standard of right or wrong. A thing only becomes right or wrong according to the environment or situation in which it takes place. What this sort of philosophy does is to make human judgment the ultimate, universal and infallible guide." (*Is There a Universal Code of Ethics*, p. 266).
 - 2) To those who will advocate situational ethics, human judgment becomes the final and ultimate authority. "We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experiences. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanctions. Ethics stems from human needs and interest" (Duane McCampbell, "The Source and Influence of Religious Humanism", *Firm Foundation*, XCVIII, Dec. 1981, p. 48-50).
2. What we are studying in this lesson is:
 - a. How are we to make moral decisions?
 - b. What are the results and consequences of Situational Ethics?
 - c. What can and must the church do to combat the philosophy of Situational Ethics?

DISCUSSION:

I. HOW DO WE MAKE MORAL DECISIONS?

- A. Legalistic Rule—This would suggest there is a set standard of right or wrong, and would suggest that all people are expected to comply with that standard.
 1. The Bible is that moral standard for the world. Even though some do not believe it, and some choose not to follow it, the Bible is still that moral standard.
 2. Matthew 28:18, Jesus said that he had all authority.
 - a. He delegated authority to the apostles and prophets to reveal his will unto man (Matt. 18:18).
 - b. Paul declared that God's will, "*hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit*" (Eph. 3:5).
 - c. Those inspired men wrote the inspired book—The Bible—to be our final guide.
 - 1) The Bible is the "*perfect law of liberty*" (James 1:25).
 - 2) "*Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven*" (Psalm 119:89).
 3. In opposition to the legalistic rule Joseph Fletcher says, "protestantism is losing out due to its rigidity, its insistence on moral rules" (p.19). He says...
 - a. To cry for Bible authority is to be a legalist.
 - b. To say something is right or wrong because the Bible teaches

so is to be a legalist.

4. In "The Humanist," Morris B. Storer observed that humanists have some fundamental principles by which to live. Principle number three says, "there are no absolutes" (Jan./Feb., p. 31).

B. Antinomianism –

1. "When entering the decision making situation armed with no principles or maxims whatsoever, to say nothing of rules...one must rely upon the situation of itself then and there, to provide its ethical solution."
2. How can a person enter a situation without even the knowledge of past successes or past failures.
3. This robs man of any moral sense at all.

C. Situationalism –

1. The situationist enters into every decision-making situation fully armed with the ethical maxims of his community and its heritage, and he treats them with respect as illuminators of his problems. Just the same, he is prepared in any situation to compromise them or set them aside in the situation if love seems better served by doing so.
 - a. We have man back to doing the loving thing. What might be the loving thing for one might not be the loving thing for another.
 - b. Humanists say our society should be a tolerant one. The ethics that humanists set forth is one of self-gratification (*Humanist Manifesto*, p. 18).
 - c. He knows what the community teaches, he knows what is considered right or wrong, but he can set all this aside if that best suits him in this situation.
2. "The situationist follows a moral law or violates it according to love's needs...His decisions are hypothetical, not categorical, only the command to love is categorically good. 'Owe no man anything, except to love one another' (Rom. 13:8)" (Fletcher, p.26).
3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed, "principles are only tools in God's hand, soon to be thrown away as unserviceable." (as quoted by Fletcher, p.28).

II. RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FOLLOWING SITUATIONAL ETHICS IN MAKING MORAL DECISIONS.

- A. In the book, *A Church Without a God*, by Ernest Harrison, a priest in the Anglican church of Canada, wrote, "the moralist does not accept at all the notion that there are moral standards which are revealed by God. He does not believe that God laid down laws which are for all men, at all times, under all circumstances. He is, therefore, a relativist."
 1. According to this philosophy, no moral decision can be made in

advance. "One should not commit himself to a code of morality which says that some things are always right and other things are always wrong, but that each moral decision should be made in light of the specific situation on the basis of love alone."

2. Let's observe this principle in certain situations of life.
- B. Is it ever right or proper to take the life of another human being?
 1. The legalist would say no, "*thou shalt not kill*" (Ex. 20:13; Rom. 13:9).
 2. The follower of the situation ethics philosophy could say yes. "Abortion" becomes right if the mother is unable to properly care for her baby, or it will interfere with her life style.
 3. "Mercy killing" becomes justified because this person has lost his usefulness to society. Their body is wrenched in pain by cancer. The loving thing is to allow them to die with dignity.
 - a. "Some day we may praise people who met death on their own terms—at the time, the place and the manner they decided upon..." (Herbert A. Toone, "Suicide: Is It Auto-euthanasia?" *The Humanist*, (July/Aug. 1979, p.45).
 - b. "Dr. Death" would agree with this philosophy.
 4. The Menendez brothers would agree with this philosophy. They were abused by their parents, therefore, they have the right to kill their parents. This killing becomes the "loving thing" to do.
- C. Is sexual relations outside of marriage ever right?
 1. The legalist would say no (Heb. 13:4). The legalist would say that all sex outside of marriage is sinful (Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:9).
 2. John A. T. Robertson stated, "nothing can of itself be labeled as wrong. Sex relations before marriage or divorce may be wrong ninety-nine cases, or even one hundred cases, out of one hundred, but are not intrinsically so, for the only intrinsic evil is lack of love" (quoted by Rubel Shelly, *Young People Make Moral Decisions*, p. 6).
 3. The young man says to his sweetheart, "if you really love me, make love to me." He is just trying to get her to do the loving thing.
 4. If a man starts flirting with a woman at work and eventually falls out of love with his wife and in love with his work associate, it becomes right for him to divorce his wife and marry the new love of his life; because that would be the loving thing to do.
 - a. What about love for his wife and children?
 - b. Would not the loving thing for his wife be for him to be faithful to her and for him to be faithful to his marriage vow?
- D. Consider the Homosexual life style.
 1. The legalist would say that such is an abomination. (Consider Sodom and Gomorrah; Romans 1)
 2. In the Tupelo, Miss., paper in February, 1994, a religious writer spoke to condone his denominational preacher friend who has

AIDS, and to criticize all who would condemn him. After all, his friend was a homosexual of no fault of his own, rather he was abused by an uncle. His situation of abuse justified his homosexual life style.

- E. Is stealing and cheating always wrong?
 - 1. The legalist would say yes, it is always wrong.
 - 2. The situationalist would say it could be under certain conditions.
 - a. A man has the responsibility of providing for his family. He is out of work and now is out of money and out of food. According to this philosophy it would be right for him to steal to provide food for his family.
 - b. During the L. A. riots justification was found, by some, because these people had been mistreated, and justice did not go to please them. Just because a person grows up in an under privileged neighborhood or is a member of a minority group is not justification for criminal conduct.
 - c. Consider the football player that if he fails the class will be forced off the team. The teacher has left the room, he can copy the paper of his neighbor. The championship game is coming up and he is the star.
- F. Is drinking alcohol ever right?
 - 1. The legalist would say no, the Bible speaks against it (Prov. 23:31; Gal. 5:19ff; etc.).
 - 2. In the book *Is There a Universal Code of Ethics*, Rod Rutherford points out that even some missionaries have tolerated the drinking of alcohol because that was the custom of the land. The practices of society do not determine right from wrong.
- G. Let me suggest some areas in which we are seeing this same approach practiced in the church today.
 - 1. Using women as translators in foreign fields. Though the Bible says it is wrong for women to teach over the man (I Tim. 2:12), some have used women because they have said no man was available to do the work, and if we do not use her the work will not be done. Does the end result justify the means used?
 - 2. The denominations have built their Family Life Centers and as a result have increased their attendance. The situation is this: our attendance is down, a Family Life Center would bring people in, should we build or not?
 - 3. All the gimmicks of the dead bus programs were nothing more than situational ethics.

III. WHAT CAN AND MUST THE CHURCH DO TO PREVENT THE FLOOD OF SITUATIONAL ETHICS.

- A. We must teach the danger of conformity (Rom. 12:1-2).
 - 1. We are in the world but the church is not of the world (John 17:15).

2. "The church is in the world to influence the world for good (Matt. 5:13-16), but when the world gets into the church it is in great danger" (Hugh Fulford, "The church and Morality," *Living Soberly, Righteously and Godly*, p. 83).
- B. The church can maintain its purity and be a proper example to the rest of the world (I Cor. 5:6; Matt. 5:13-16).
- C. The church can and must take a firm stand against all evil.
 1. The church of the Lord in every community should be known for its stand against liquor, pornography, sexual permissiveness, and every other form of vice.
 2. We can preach these truths but we also have to be ready to live by this same standard (II Cor. 3:2).
- D. Preach the gospel through every possible and available means and avenue.
 1. Only as people start serving Christ will the immorality in our society cease.
 2. I Corinthians 6:9-11.

CONCLUSION:

1. It is true that situations change, but the truth remains the same.
2. Our attitude, and the attitude we must impress on others is simply this: what God says is right, is right; what God says is wrong, is wrong. When we follow that standard, we will always be right before God.

Witchcraft

Richard Carlson

1. Witchcraft is condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. I Sam. 15:23; II Chron. 33:6; Ex. 22:18; Micah 5:12; Gal. 5:19-21; I Thess. 5:22; Acts 8:9; Acts 19:19
2. General definitions of terms to be discussed.
 - a. WITCHCRAFT: The accomplishment of some purpose through the help of supernatural means, particularly through subordinated spirits with which alliance is made.
 - b. OCCULT: That which is hidden, mysterious, and supernatural.
 - c. SATANISM: (Satan worship) The recognition of the devil as superior to God and worshipping him as the spiritual source of one's authority.

DISCUSSION:**I. WHAT IS INVOLVED AND HOW ARE THESE THREE TERMS RELATED?****A. Witchcraft.**

1. Belief in spirits and in the possibility of entering into association with the spirits, e.g. Communicating with the dead.
2. Witchcraft is the practice of occultism.
3. Sorcery. Power is allegedly gained from the aid or contact of evil spirits for the purpose of gaining hidden knowledge.
 - a. Acts 8:9 Simon the Sorcerer.

B. Occult.

1. Communication methods include ouija boards, trance, E.S.P., reincarnation, yoga, astrology, tarot cards and witchcraft.
2. The goal of occultism is control.
3. It's tools cannot save (Acts 3:4-12).
4. The occult will always find an excellent breeding ground when people are generally ignorant of the Bible.
 - a. Young people are especially turning to the occult. There are thousands of "self-made" teenage witches.
 - b. Movies (Rosemary's Baby; The Exorcist), books, music, games (Dungeon and Dragons), etc. arouse their curiosity.

C. Satanism.

1. Satan worship includes praying to him, bargaining with him, and following the practices as described in Satanic worship.
 - a. Matt. 4 and Luke 4—Temptations of Christ.
2. The church of Satan was founded by Anton Zandor LaVey. He is also the author of the Satanic Bible, which on some college campuses outsells the Bible.
 - a. LaVey is considered the "high priest" of the church of Satan.
 - b. According to LaVey the Satanic age began in 1966 "when God was proclaimed dead."
3. Basically, Satanism is the end result of practicing witchcraft and involvement with the occult.

II. NINE SATANIC STATEMENTS AS TAKEN FROM THE SATANIC BIBLE BY ANTON ZANDOR LAVEY.

- A. Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence!
- B. Satan represents vital existence instead of spiritual pipe dreams!
- C. Satan represents undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit!
- D. Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it instead of love wasted on ingrates!
- E. Satan represents responsibility to the responsible instead of concern for physic vampires!
- F. Satan represents vengeance instead of turning the other cheek!
- G. Satan represents man as just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all fours, who, because of his

“divine spiritual and intellectual development,” has become the most vicious animal of all.

- H. Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental or emotional gratification.
- I. Satan has been the best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years.

III. WHAT TYPE OF IMMORAL PRACTICES ARE INVOLVED?

- A. Drugs, alcohol, etc.
 - 1. Young people experiment with witchcraft and it often eventually leads to the abuse of drugs.
 - 2. Evidence has been found of drained blood from sacrificed animals which has been mixed with LSD and drank by occult members.
- B. Murder/Suicide.
 - 1. Three young boys in West Memphis, Arkansas recently murdered. It is believed that it can be traced to Satan worship.
- C. Human and Animal Sacrifices.
 - 1. One man reportedly killed a man and ate his heart. Human knuckles were found in the suspects pockets.
 - 2. Members are sometimes forced to help skin or decapitate a living animal or human. They are then told that if they report anything about the cult, the same will happen to him or his family.
 - 3. Members will sometimes send the victims objects such as a decapitated doll, a bouquet of color coded carnations, a death mask, dead bird, black feathers or notes written in the Satanic alphabet, just as a reminder of what could happen to them if they tell.
 - 4. It is believed that many of today's missing children are taken to be offered as sacrifices to Satan.
 - 5. Halloween is marked by Satanists as a special holiday for human sacrifices to Satan.
 - a. It is marked on the Satanic ritual calendar.
 - b. The epidemic of harmful substances such as razor blades in apples, poison in candy, etc. is no accident. They are planned by Satanists.
 - c. Children injured by these “treats” are considered sacrifices to Satan.
- D. They involve themselves in dancing to weird music and swaying to the throb of drums.
- E. They engage themselves in all types of sexual immorality.
 - 1. The sexual freedom league came into prominence during the hippie age of the 1960's. The hippies developed a “free sex” culture.
 - 2. Illicit and perverted sex are strongly encouraged.
- F. God is openly mocked.

1. Human decency are decried and spat upon.
2. God is cursed and the cross is displayed upside down.
- G. Weddings are performed by sorcerers and pronounced conceived in hell.
 1. The one performing the ceremony wears devil horns.
 2. A nude girl with long red hair reclines on a purple velvet robe atop a mantlepiece. This symbolizes earthly pleasure.
 3. No marriage license is obtained.

CONCLUSION:

1. There is a major cause for concern, especially among our young people.
2. Witchcraft, the occult, and Satanism is a repudiation of God, Christ, the Scriptures and all that is holy.
3. Eph. 5:11
4. To be involved in the worship of Satan or any form of witchcraft is to be involved in worldliness (Col. 2:20-22).

Bribery

Douglas Hoff

1. It seems the wicked often prosper while Christians suffer for doing what is right.
2. God's children should never be envious of the wicked when it appears they are "getting away with murder."
3. One immoral practice that sinners employ to avoid punishment in this life is bribery.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS BRIBERY?

- A. Bribery can be defined by examining the word's usage in the Bible.
 1. There are only six passages that specifically use the word bribe, bribes or bribery.
 - a. These passages are: I Sam. 8:3; 12:3; Job 15:34; Psalm 26:10; Isaiah 33:15 and Amos 5:12.
 - b. Amos 5:12 gives a fairly comprehensive description: "...they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right."
 - c. Other passages refer to the same practice but use the words reward or gift (e.g., Deut. 16:19).

2. Webster's dictionary defines bribery thus:
 - a. The act or practice of giving, offering or taking rewards for corrupt practices.
 - b. The act of paying or receiving a reward for a false judgment or testimony or for the performance of that which is known to be illegal or unjust.
 - c. The word bribery applies both to the one who gives and the one who receives the bribe, but especially to the giver.
- B. Bribery is an act of unrighteousness.
 1. This practice violates the principle of Matthew 7:12.
 2. Thus it is sinful since "*all unrighteousness is sin*" (I John 5:17).

II. WHY SHOULD WE STUDY THIS SUBJECT?

- A. It is an old problem that does not go away.
 1. Samuel's sons engaged in this practice (I Sam. 8:1-5; 12:1-5).
 2. Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness (II Peter 2:15; cf. Num. 22-24).
 3. There were unjust judges during Jesus' lifetime (Luke 18:1-7).
 4. Moses was advised to choose just judges to rule the people; they had to be men that feared God and hated covetousness (Ex. 18:20-22).
 5. False witnesses were used to justify killing Stephen.
 - a. Here, a righteous man was wrongfully deprived of his life by men who hated the truth (Acts 6:11-13).
 - b. The unbelieving Jews suborned the false witnesses.
 - c. Suborned means to bring about through bribery or other illegal methods.
- B. Bribery affects many people.
 1. It is a sin for the one giving and the one receiving the bribe.
 2. In many cases there will be a third party involved who is victimized.
 - a. The third party may be a person or a corporation involved in a trial.
 - b. In the Old Testament the poor and disadvantaged were often the ones whose rights were trampled (e.g., the poor, widows and orphans).
 - c. See Amos 5:12 and Isaiah 1:23.
 3. Society as a whole is victimized by every occurrence of bribery.
 - a. When reports of crooked judges, policemen or politicians come out, the average citizen loses confidence in the government.
 - b. People lose hope and become discouraged when they feel they have no hope of obtaining justice.
- C. Saints and sinners need to be warned to avoid this sin.
 1. Some members of the church at Corinth had been guilty of similar sins like stealing and extortion but they were told that

such sins would keep them out of heaven (I Cor. 6:9-10).

2. Paul reasoned with Felix (a non-Christian) of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come (Acts 24:24-26).
 - a. Felix was hoping for a bribe from Paul to let him out of prison early.
 - b. The apostle, though wrongly imprisoned, did not stoop to bribery since such is unrighteous.

III. WHAT CAUSED ONE TO COMMIT BRIBERY?

- A. Some people love money (I Tim. 6:10).
 1. These are the ones who have weak or non-existent convictions regarding morals.
 2. They are willing to do almost anything to get an extra dollar even if it hurts someone else.
 3. As long as the price is right, they will commit their sin.
- B. Others do not love the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12).
- C. The Psalmist David said the wicked have no fear of God (Psalm 35:11; 36:1).
 1. They may disbelieve the Bible when it mentions hell as the place of torment for the wicked in eternity.
 2. Though they fear not God they may wish to avoid any punishment in this life and so try to bribe a judge or jury to avoid indictment.

IV. THE BIBLE CONDEMNS BRIBERY IN ALL ITS FORMS.

- A. The Mosaic Law showed bribery was wrong (Deut. 19:15-21).
 1. God's legislation had safeguards to prevent injustice brought about by false witnesses.
 2. The false witness was to be punished with whatever his victim would have suffered: life for life, and eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.
 3. The false witness was not to be allowed to get off without punishment.
- B. The Psalms condemn bribery.
 1. One who takes a reward against the innocent shall not abide with the Lord (Psalm 15:1,5).
 2. The evildoers shall be cut down (Psalm 37:1-2).
- C. God's hatred of bribes is revealed in Proverbs 6:16-19.

V. JESUS WAS AFFECTED BY BRIBERY.

- A. Judas' betrayal of Jesus can be considered bribery in the broad sense of the word (see Webster's definition above).
 1. Judas clearly had a love of money (John 12:4-6).
 2. He went with his hand held out looking for the bribe payment (Matt. 26:59-61).
- B. During the Jewish trial before Caiaphas, two false witnesses were

sought (Matt. 26:59-61).

1. According to the Jewish law two witnesses were needed to put a man to death (Deut. 17:6-7).
2. The two witnesses had to agree in all the essential details; otherwise, there could be no conviction.
3. The Bible states these two witnesses were false.
 - a. The very fact that the chief priests, elders and the whole council sought out two *false* witnesses indicates that they were probably bribed.
 - b. Even though their testimony did not agree, Jesus was put to death (Mark 14:56-59).
 - c. Jesus was deprived justice by corrupt rulers (Isaiah 53:8).
- C. The guards who had watched the tomb of Jesus were bribed.
 1. They were paid large sums of money in an attempt to cover up the truth of the matter (Matt. 28:11-15).
 2. The truth of the resurrection was too embarrassing for the unbelieving Jews.
 3. Their efforts were in vain since the truth can not be covered up.

CONCLUSION:

1. The cure for bribery is repentance (II Cor. 7:10).
2. Repentance begins with a fear of the Lord.
3. On the Judgment Day no one will be able to bribe the Judge of all the earth to avoid punishment.
4. His judgments will be righteous (Acts 17:31; II Tim. 4:8).
5. All who thought they got away with something will find out too late they were wrong.
6. II Tim. 2:19 teaches the Lord knows his own; they are the ones that depart from iniquity; and, bribery is certainly iniquity.

Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco

Joe W. Nichols

1. The subject of "Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco" is relevant.
2. 4 million acres of U.S. farm land in production of these menaces.
3. Grain for production of Alcohol alone — feed 20 million people.
4. Education and Religion second to these Multi-B. industries.
5. It is estimated that our government spends \$4 for every \$1 of tax revenues collected from Alcohol and Tobacco.

6. Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics 1993 Annual Report reveals:
 - a. 62% of drug cases involved cocaine; 27% Marijuana; 12% both.
 - b. 23% increase in drug cases.
 - c. 59% involved black males; 24% white males; 8% white females; 7½% black females.
 - d. Cocaine seizures up 17%; processed Marijuana up 153%; plant Marijuana down 56%.
7. National Counsel on Alcoholism, Drug Abuse; National Cancer Society and the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA — Feb. 23, 1994 issue) give the following statistics:
 - a. Alcohol is number one health problem: 100 million adults drink; 10 million children drink; 1.2 billion spent on advertisement; 100 billion spent by consumer; 120 billion non-productivity cost to nation; 205,000 die annually alcohol-related; 11 million alcoholics in U.S.; 7.2 million added heavy drinkers; 1/2 of the 50,000 deaths in car accidents alcohol-related; 1 of 10 deaths overall alcohol-related; 35% of teens surveyed — over 5 drinks in 2 week period; 75% men drink, 60% women drink (3 gal. pure alcohol per person per year); 20% of all Americans directly affected by alcohol.
 - b. Drug Abuse a growing industry: 70-90 billion industry; 30 million drug abusers; 5.5 American High School seniors use Marijuana (25% 12-17; 64% 18-25 experimented); cost nation 60 billion annually.
 - c. Tobacco industry protected by inserted clauses in every piece of legislation governing human consumption and environmental protection. 46 million smokers in U.S. (2.2 million teens; 17% H. S. students smoke). 400,000 deaths in U.S. annually due to smoking, 40,000 die of second-hand smoke (1/2 of both to heart disease); 3,000 children take up smoking each day; 2 billion a year spent in advertising (in 60's women targeted; 90's made appealing to children). Re-constituted tobacco can contain up to 70% nicotine (20% is normal); Carbon Monoxide in tobacco reduces oxygen in blood, alters platelets necessary to blood clotting and contributes to high cholesterol with a high LDL level; 50% less chance of heart attack survival; chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Smokeless tobacco advertisement banned in U.S. in 1988 largely due to outbreak of oral cancer.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHY SO MUCH EVIL IN THE WORLD?

- A. Born into a world given over to sin.
 1. I John 5:19 "*world lieth in the evil one.*"
 - a. Devil originated and introduced sin into world.
 - b. John 8:44-45
 2. I Peter 1:18 "*vain manner of life handed down...*"
 3. Children born free of sin (Ezek. 18:20; Matt. 18:3, 19:14); sin learned and practiced.
- B. Sin the product of the heart.

1. Matt. 15:19-20 *“For out of the heart cometh forth: evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings.....”*
2. Sin results from evil lusts (James 1:13-15).
 - a. I John 2:15 — three basic lusts (flesh, eyes, pride).
3. Paul included *“drunkenness,” “revellings,”* and *“such like”* in his list of Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5:21).

II. MOST ABUSE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO BEGIN OUT OF REBELLION OR FEAR OF REJECTION.

- A. New Beer commercials project drinking as necessary to social pleasure.
 1. Must drink to have a good time is a false illusion. (test)
 2. Portrayed as a sign of maturity; actually otherwise.
 3. Alcoholism: 70 of 100 alcoholics started drinking as teenagers; 1 of 15 drinkers potential alcoholics.
- B. Drinking and smoking lead to drug abuse.
 1. Drugs (Marijuana, included) are desired for pleasure.
 2. Teenagers experimenting with drinking and smoking usually continue into drug abuses.
 - a. By age 20 over 50% have experimented with drugs.
- C. Ask a “smoker,” “dipper,” or “chewer” when and why they started using tobacco (Nicotine).
 1. The number one answer is “rebellion against authority; the desire for tobacco pleasure was not the objective.”
 2. Most High School drop-outs smoke (especially women; a woman’s body absorbs 20 to 30% more Nicotine than men; by year 2,000 women smokers equal men (present ratio 52/34).
 3. Many tobacco users progress into Marijuana and Cocaine use.
 4. Marijuana and Cocaine users often turn to crime and may sell their bodies in order to support their habit.
 5. Over 50% of those incarcerated credit drug abuses.

III. HARM TO SELF AND OTHERS SHOULD DETER ANY CHRISTIAN FROM USING ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS OR TOBACCO.

- A. On any given day 30 to 40% of hospital patients are alcohol-related; 12% of national health expenditures by adults are alcohol-related; 20% spent for hospital care alcohol-related; 60% aggravated assaults, 40% forcible rapes, 50% traffic fatalities, 65% domestic violence, 33% reported child abuse, 50% drowning, 66% job performance problems, 33% suicides, alcohol-related. Alcoholism reduces life expectancy by 12 years.
- B. Smoking reduces life expectancy 7 seconds per cigarette (estimated).
 1. The Marlboro Man Is Dead, by Steven Clark Goad (The Blythe Banner).
 2. By year 2,000 smoking banned in military.
 3. Surgeon General’s new war against tobacco industry.

- C. Marijuana and Crack Cocaine use are against the law; they represent a more advanced form of drug abuse from Alcohol and Nicotine. Both alter the senses and make the user dangerous to himself and those around him.
 - 1. Polluted Marijuana claims many lives each year.
 - 2. Crack Cocaine is 3 times as hard to kick than powder form (cooked with water and baking soda and dried into rocks; 1 oz. into 250 vials results in more profit for pushers).
 - 3. There is about an 80% rehabilitation of drug abusers; however relapse is common.
- D. It is estimated that there are 205,000 deaths annually due to Alcohol; 6,000 deaths annually due to Drug Abuse and 400,000 deaths annually due to Tobacco use.
 - 1. Heart, liver, lung disease, HIV virus.
 - 2. Innocent slaughtered in the streets and on the highways.
 - 3. Battered wives and abused and neglected children.
 - 4. Second-hand smoke pollution affecting the innocent.
 - 5. Nicotine and drug addictions passed on to fetuses.

IV. ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO ARE SIMPLY INSTRUMENTS OF SIN.

- A. *"God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions"* (Eccl. 7:29).
 - 1. If a practice harms self or others, it is sin (Rom. 14:13b, 21; I Cor. 6:19-20; cf. Isaiah 28:7; Prov. 28:7).
 - 2. If it destroys the Christian's image or influence, it is sin (I Cor. 10:1-6; I Tim. 4:12; I Peter 2:21; cf. Rom. 13:14; Rom. 15:1-3).
- B. Christians are a *"Light"* and *"Temple"* of God.
 - 1. *"Ye are the light of the world"* (Matt. 5:14-16).
 - a. *"City on a hill," "lamp on a stand."*
 - b. *"Light shine...see your good works...glorify your Father."*
 - 2. Body of Christ; Temple of God (I Cor. 12:12-27, 3:16, 17).
 - 3. *"Ye also as spiritual stones are built up a spiritual house..."* (I Peter 2:5).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Alcohol, Prohibited Drugs and Tobacco are tools of the Devil used in destroying health, home, nation, church and soul.
- 2. World poverty, majority of health problems, crimes and human abuses largely eliminated by abstinence.
- 3. Abuse of Alcohol, Prohibited Drugs, and Tobacco can affect our spiritual standing with God (Prov. 13:15).

Hatred, Jealousy, Strife, Envy “Works Of The Flesh”

Randy Kea

1. The specific sins of hatred, jealousy, strife and envy are listed by the Apostle Paul in the midst of a catalog of seventeen sins in Galatians 5:19-21 identified as the works of the flesh.
2. These sins and the other works of the flesh are contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.
3. The immediate context of these passages is Galatians 5:13—6:10.
4. All references are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **THE ATTRIBUTES AND CHARACTERISTICS KNOWN AS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT SHOULD BE A PART OF THE LIFE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN.**
 - A. We must “sow” to the Spirit, “walk” in the Spirit, and be “led” of the Spirit to produce the “fruit” of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 18, 22, 23, 25; 6:7-9).
 - B. The fruit of the Spirit is produced when we are led by the word of God which is the “*sword of the Spirit*” (Luke 8:11-15; John 15:1-10; Col. 1:3-6; Eph. 6:17).
- II. **THE WORKS OF THE FLESH ARE OF THIS PRESENT WORLD. I John 2:15-17; Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13.**
 - A. When people serve sin, self, and Satan, they produce the works of the flesh.
 - B. We must “crucify,” “put to death” (ASV), and “put off” the flesh and the world (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Col. 3:5, 9, 10).
 - C. People who engage in works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21).
- III. **HATRED, JEALOUSY, STRIFE AND ENVY ARE GRIEVOUS SINS.**
 - A. Hatred is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).
 1. The Greek word for hatred in Galatians 5:20 is *echthra* and *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says the word is from the adjective *echthros* translated “enemy” and is the opposite of agape love (pp. 371-372).
 2. This word for hatred (*echthra*) is also translated “enmity” in Luke 23:12; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:15-16; James 4:4.
 3. *The New Englishman’s Greek Concordance and Lexicon* defines the word as “hostility” (p. 363).
 4. Another word translated “hate” is *miseo*. This is the word generally used in the New Testament (37 times).
 - a. Vine’s says this word refers to “malicious feelings towards

- others" (p. 538).
- b. Thayer defines it as "detest" (p. 415).
 5. The Old Testament condemns hatred (Lev. 19:17).
 6. Hate produces tragic consequences.
 - a. Hate produced envy and the desire for murder in connection with Joseph (Gen. 37:4, 5, 8, 11, 20).
 - b. Because of hate, Absalom had Amnon killed (II Sam. 13:21-29).
 - c. Because of hate, Cain slew Abel (Gen. 4:1-11; I John 3:10-13).
 - d. Hatred crucified Jesus (John 15:18-25).
 7. Hate always harms the one who hates.
 8. Hate will close heaven's door (I John 3:15).
 9. There are some things we should hate (Rev. 2:6; Heb. 1:9; Psalm 119:104; Prov. 13:5; 28:16).
 - B. Jealousy is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).
 1. The American Standard Version translates the word "emulations" in the King James as "jealousies."
 2. This word occurs 17 times in the New Testament.
 3. It is used in two senses.
 - a. It is used in a good sense meaning zeal, ardor in embracing, pursuing and defending anything (Thayer, p. 271; II Cor. 11:2; Col. 4:13).
 - b. It is used in a bad sense meaning an envious and contentious rivalry (Thayer, p. 271; Acts 5:17; 13:45; Gal. 5:20).
 4. This is sometimes manifested in the church.
 - a. There can be jealousy among elders.
 - b. There can be rivalry among preachers.
 - c. Even congregations can develop jealousies.
 - C. Strife is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).
 1. This word is found seven times in the New Testament and is also translated contentious (Rom. 2:8) and contention (Phil. 1:16).
 2. Thayer defines it as meaning "a courting distinction, a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts" (Thayer, p. 249).
 3. In the American Standard Version the King James word "variance" in Galatians 5:20 is rendered "strife" (contention, wrangling), (Thayer, p. 249).
 4. Vine's says of this word that it "denotes ambition, self seeking, rivalry, self-will being an underlying idea." He comments further, "faction is the fruit of jealousy" (Vine's, p. 408).
 - D. Envy is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:21).
 1. The word translated envy in Galatians 5:21 is found nine times in the New Testament.
 2. According to Vine's it means "feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others"

(Vine's, p. 377).

3. Envy is a result of not retaining God in our lives (Rom. 1:28-29).
4. Jesus was crucified because of envy (Mark 15:10).
5. Envy unchecked in King Saul resulted in his malicious pursuit to kill David (I Sam. 18:8ff).
6. Christians must lay aside envy as they grow to Christian maturity (I Peter 2:1-2).

IV. THERE ARE FALSE CHARGES OF HATRED AND STRIFE BEING MADE AGAINST SOUND BRETHREN TODAY.

- A. Sound brethren are sometimes accused of being unloving.
 1. Love is essential (I Peter 1:22; 4:8).
 2. One can be firm and uncompromising without being mean-spirited and ill tempered.
- B. Sound brethren are sometimes accused of not having the spirit of Christ.
 1. Jesus' love is infinite (I John 3:16).
 2. Jesus exposed false doctrine (Matt. 7:15; 16:6-12).
- C. Sound brethren are sometimes accused of causing unscriptural division.
 1. Not all division is caused by the introduction of false doctrine and/or a factious spirit. (See definition of strife). (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11).
- D. Sound brethren are sometimes accused of being unkind and unloving by not practicing Matthew 18:15-18 when false doctrine is publicly propagated.
 1. Matthew 18 does not apply to a situation where error is publicly taught (Gal. 2:1-14).
- E. Sound brethren are sometimes accused of being hateful and judgmental in violation of Matthew 7:1ff.
 1. Matthew 7:1 condemns hypocritical judging.
 2. The warning against false teachers is in the same context (Matt. 7:15; John 7:24).

V. THE BIBLE HAS THE CURE AND ANSWER FOR HATRED, JEALOUSY, STRIFE AND ENVY.

- A. We must love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:29-30).
- B. We must love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:8-14).
- C. We must seek first the kingdom and set our affections on things above (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-4).
- D. We must practice the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12).
- E. We must practice Bible love (I Cor. 13).
- F. We must deny ourselves (Matt. 16:24).
- G. We must busy ourselves in the Lord's kingdom, and then these sinful thoughts and actions will not develop (I Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14; 3:1).

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us put off the old man and put on the new man (Col. 3:9-10).
2. Let us incorporate the fruit of the Spirit into our lives.
3. Let us renounce the works of the flesh.

Lying, Deceit And Dishonesty

Jerry Joseph

1. Description of the times in which we live.
 - a. Ingratitude toward God is abundant.
 - b. Ignorance of God's Word is affirmed.
 - c. Indifference is all-around.
 - d. Immorality is being accepted, advocated and admired by the masses.
 - 1) This is seen in the display of attitudes, actions, associations, activities and even in the attire that is worn.
 - 2) This is seen in the defense that some make of immorality.
 - 3) This is seen in how some want to define immorality.
2. Deciding what is moral and immoral is not left up to man.
 - a. God has decided.
 - b. God has declared such in his Word (Gal. 5:19-21; I Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 1:21-32; I Tim. 1:9-10).
3. Displaying of lying, deceit and dishonesty is certainly immoral.
4. Defining the terms: "lying," "deceit" and "dishonesty."
 - a. Lying (lie): "a falsehood," "speaking falsely," "to deceive" (Vine's).
 - b. Deceit (deceitful, deceive): "that which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence..."; "to beguile"; "to lure"; "to ensnare"; "to corrupt"; "to deceive, by leading into error, to seduce." (Vine's)
 - c. Dishonesty: "shame" (Vine's); "implies a willful perversion of truth in order to deceive" (Webster's Dictionary).
5. Definitely, there is a connection between lying, deceit and dishonesty. When you find one (lying, deceit or dishonesty), mark it down, the other two will be present also.
6. Design of this study is to look at lying, deceit and dishonesty from the standpoint of its **reality, results, our response to it and the remedy for it.**

DISCUSSION:

- I. **REALITY OF LYING, DECEIT, AND DISHONESTY.**
 - A. Demonstrated in times past (Rom. 15:4).

1. The Devil lied and deceived Eve in the beginning (Gen. 3:1-5, 13; I Tim. 2:13-14). He is a liar and murderer (John 8:44).
 2. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lied (Gen. 12:10-20; 26:6-11; 27:18-35).
 3. Joseph's brothers were deceptive (Gen. 37:23-36).
 4. The old prophet lied to the man of God (I Kings 13:14-19).
 5. Gehazi lied to try to hide his sin (II Kings 5:20-27).
 6. Peter lied (Matt. 26:69-75).
 7. Ananias and Sapphira lied concerning their giving (Acts 5:1-11).
- B. Demonstrated today.
1. Lying, deception and dishonesty is possible today (Col. 3:9; Prov. 12:22; 19:9; I Peter 3:10; James 1:26; II Peter 2:1-3; II Tim. 3:13; Gal. 6:7; II Cor. 4:2).
 2. Lying, deception and dishonesty is prevalent and a problem of great proportion as we think about our responsibilities to the Son of God, to the Scripture, to saints, to sinners and to self.
 3. Lying, deception and dishonesty can be presented in many different ways.
 - a. Stealing (Rom. 13:9; Eph. 4:28).
 - b. Slander (Psa. 101:5; II Tim. 3:1-5).
 - c. Stating a falsehood (Prov. 19:5, 9).
 - d. Stating the truth in such a manner that a false impression is left. We can state words that are true, yet at the same time be lying, if such words are stated to deceive, to leave a false impression.
 - e. Saying we have fellowship with God, while walking in darkness (I John 1:6).
 - f. Saying we have no sin and cannot sin (I John 1:8-10; 2:1-3; James 5:19-20).
 - g. Saying we know God and yet, we do not keep his commands (I John 2:3-4).
 - h. Saying we love God and at the same time we hate our brother (I John 4:20-21).
 - i. Searching the Scripture for the purpose of "nailing someone's hide to the wall." This is a mishandling of the Word of God.
 - j. Selling items that are defective while giving the impression that such items are in perfect condition.
 - k. Supporting false doctrine while at the same time claiming to have a love for the Truth (II John 9-11).
 - l. Shade the actions or words of an individual to make them appear to be something that they are not (Rom. 13:10; Matt. 5:11).
 - m. Shout long and loud certain promises as a candidate for public office, but having no intention, if elected, to keep those promises.
 - n. Showing concern outwardly for the misfortune of another, but inwardly rejoicing.

- o. Shower someone with flattering words (Prov. 29:5).
- p. Speaking smooth words (Prov. 5:3-5; Isa. 5:20; 30:10).
- q. Saying the preacher has been fired because it is “just time for a change” when in actuality, he is fired because of the Truth he proclaimed.
- r. Stating that it is wrong to oppose false doctrine and anyone that does so is wrong.
- s. Saying that we stand ready to defend what we believe, but then when questioned, refuse to answer (Jude 3; I Peter 3:15).
- t. Saying that those who reprove and rebuke false doctrine just have a “bad attitude” (II Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:15).
- u. Saying that the church must practice discipline, then refusing to exercise such when it is demanded (I Cor. 5; Rom. 16:17-18; II Thess. 3:6).
- v. Speak out against denominationalism, then participate with them in so-called “Community-Wide Services.”
- w. Secure whatever we want in life, then say, “we don’t have any money to give to the Lord.”
- x. Speak in such a way, that whatever is said, can be taken in any way that the hearer desires. Then when one objects to what was said, we say, “you just misunderstood me.”
- y. Saying we are not prejudice toward others, but then object to preaching the Gospel in certain areas (James 2:1-13).
- z. Speaking anything that is contrary to sound doctrine (I Tim. 1:10). When one preachers such he is not truthful. Notice some ways:
 - 1) By preaching false doctrine (John 17:17).
 - 2) By not preaching the “whole truth” (Acts 20:27).
 - 3) By preaching a compromising gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).
 - 4) By preaching only what people want to hear instead of what they need (II Tim. 4:2-4).
 - 5) By preaching that it is unkind and unloving to oppose things taught and practiced without Bible authority (Col. 3:17).
 - 6) By preaching that it is wrong to make a judgment about another’s life and teaching (John 7:24).
 - 7) By preaching that one can divorce and remarry for whatever reason and still be acceptable to God (Matt. 19:3-9).
 - 8) By preaching that one translation of the Bible is as good as another (Rev. 22:18-19).
 - 9) By preaching that women have the right to do anything in the church that man can do (I Tim. 2:12-14).
 - 10) By preaching everything we do is worship (John 4:24; Matt. 15:8-9).

- 11) By preaching mechanical instruments of music in worship are in the realm of opinion and not faith (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
- 12) By preaching that solos and special group singing are enjoined upon us by the Scripture (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
- 13) By preaching one does not have to understand the purpose of baptism in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16).
- 14) By preaching man does not contribute “one whit” to his own salvation (Matt. 7:21; Acts 2:37-42).
- 15) By preaching that it really doesn’t matter what you believe, teach and practice as long as you are sincere and love God (Col. 3:17).

II. RESULTS OF LYING, DECEIT, AND DISHONESTY.

A. Destructive to our minds, morals and marriages.

1. Crime is rampant.
2. Conscience is rejected (I Tim. 4:2).
3. Convictions are replaced with compromise (Isa. 5:20).
4. Commitments in marriage are cast-off (Matt. 19:3-9).
5. Courage in living the Christian life is replaced with cowardice (I Cor. 16:13).
6. Changing the things of God to make things convenient for man. Some are just interested in a convenient religion (I Kings 12:28-33).

B. Disobedience to God (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25; Prov. 6:16-19; 12:22; 20:23; 21:6; 26:28; Eph. 4:29; I Tim. 1:10; Rom. 1:21-32; II Cor. 11:13-14; Col. 3:22-25).

C. Destroys our hope for Heaven (Matt. 7:21-23; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15).

III. RESPONSE TO LYING, DECEIT, AND DISHONESTY.

A. We must not **Delight** in such, but **Despise** it (I John 2:15-17; Rev. 22:15; Rom. 12:9).

B. We must not **Dignify** such, but **Denounce** it (II Tim. 4:2-4; Eph. 5:11).

C. We must not **Demonstrate** such in our lives, but **Depart** from it (I Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:11).

D. We must not **Develop** such in our lives, but it must be **Destroyed** (I Thess. 5:22; Eph. 4:29).

IV. REMEDY FOR LYING, DECEIT AND DISHONESTY.

A. Proper attitudes (Phil. 4:8; Prov. 4:23; 23:7).

B. Personal examination (II Cor. 13:5; I Tim. 4:16).

C. Prayer (I Thess. 5:17; Col. 4:2).

D. Powerful faith in God and his Word (Prov. 3:5-8)

E. Put away sinful advice (Psalm 1:1-2).

- F. Participate only in those things that are right (Prov. 4:14-19).
- G. "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17).
- H. Presence of God (Psalms 139:7-12; Acts 17:22-32).
- I. Prepare every day to be more like Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:5; I Peter 2:21-23)
- J. Put our priorities in the right place (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 1:21).
- K. Pay attention to our associations (I Cor. 15:33).
- L. Precepts of God (Psalm 119:11; John 8:32; 12:48).

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us seek to have a love for the truth.
2. Let us strive to live the truth.
3. Let us stay with the truth.
4. Let us speak the truth.
5. So that, we will not be guilt of **Lying, Deceit and Dishonesty.**

The New Digression And Change #1

Wayne Coats

1. Change is the New Creed of liberals.
2. No word is as captivating as CHANGE. It has the appeal of "Color Back, Hadacol and a face lift," for the old, and is a nice word for "REVOLT" among a certain segment of the young folks.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DIGRESSIVES SPEAK OF "THE AGENTS OF CHANGE."

- A. What are some of these liberals saying?
 1. **Lynn Anderson:** "God is renewing us and changing us. Fresh winds are blowing."
 2. **Jim Hackney:** "Our brotherhood is headed in such an encouraging direction right now."
 3. **Randy Mayeux:** "This is an era of great change in churches of Christ."
 4. **Max Lucado:** "There are fresh winds blowing in the church of Christ."
 5. **Mac Lynn:** "There's a good breeze blowing across the brotherhood today."
- B. What are they seeking to change? — The Bible, the church, the plan of salvation, the worship.

II. THE LIBERAL DIGRESSIVES WANT TO CHANGE THE BIBLE.

- A. The array of New Bibles: Calvinism's NIV, Modern Speech Efforts.
- B. The new coping from the Old Digressives.
 - 1. In 1882 Isaac Errett wrote, "We are compelled to decide against the infallible, verbal, accuracy of the Scriptures."
 - 2. In 1903 J. H. Garrison wrote, "It follows that truth adopted at one time and to one condition of the church and of the world, does not meet the demands of a different time and a different state of the Church."
 - 3. Rubel Shelly and others are copying the old Modernists.
 - 4. Tippens of Abilene: "Truth is always captured in a dynamic temporality, not in a static substantiality...The New hermeneutics radically undermines our faith in a single unitary meaning of texts...Literary texts are capable of different senses."
 - 5. Isaac Errett wrote in 1883: "Any assertion of infallibility as belonging to the inspired scriptures must be subject to the limitations growing out of the imperfections of human language and the uncertainties and perils ever attend and upon materials placed in human custody...."
- C. The Liberals want to "Dechristianize" the Bible.
 - 1. A Jubilee speaker suggests getting rid of old words. We must not use "Christianeze."
 - 2. Sweet Publications materials degrades "Christianeze" language.
- D. Shelly has arranged scripture into areas of importance: First Order Truths, Second Order Truths, Third Order Truths.

III. DIGRESSIVES WILL SALVAGE ENOUGH SCRIPTURE TO KEEP THEM DRAWING A CHECK.

- A. "Giving" is plain language. It isn't subject to many meanings. It is a "first order truth."
- B. Change Bible words but not "Giving."
 - 1. The illiteracy of liberalism and digression needs to be exposed for what it is. It is a system of fraud, fakery, and foolishness borrowed and fed to spiritual ignoramuses.

IV. WE DARE NOT TAMPER WITH THE BIBLE.

- A. Scripture inspired: II Tim. 2:15; I Cor. 2:13; Eph. 3:4; II Tim. 3:16-17
- B. We will be judged by it: I John 12:48; Rev. 20:12,15.

The New Digression and Change #2

Wayne Coats

1. Once the Modernists get the Bible to read their way, the floodgates are open!
2. They are not agreed as to what must be changed.
3. The composite view is to change everything.

DISCUSSION:

I. DIGRESSION SEEKS TO CHANGE THE PLAN OF SALVATION.

- A. "Pattern Religion" is ridiculed.
 1. If we reject pattern principles, much of the Bible is nonsense.
 2. Consider some words which convey patterns: way, rule, obey, worship. Some words are kept by liberals, but only those which they like.
- B. Pattern salvation changes as preachers change.
 1. Grace alone.
 - a. **Max Tarbet:** "We have almost missed one of the greatest principles in scripture, salvation by God's grace only. Somehow we must swallow individual personal pride and rely upon God only, by his grace only, for salvation only."
 - b. Salvation is not by any one thing alone!
 2. Faith alone.
 - a. **Jim Woodroof:** "All the pieces were finally in place, and place was there found for all nations and generations to come to God through FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE (Acts 10:43) with no addenda or amendments attached thereto." (Caps mine—W.C.)
 - 1) The sentence above is too far below most people's ability to understand.
 - 2) The above sentence leaves no room whatsoever for discussion and debate.
 3. Nothing Alone.
 - a. **Rubel Shelly:** "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that human salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation."
 - 1) This deep, dark saying will be misunderstood by "red-necks."
 - 2) God called, spirit filled, heaven sent, illuminated saints can achieve to the level of comprehension of apparent contradictions. Conservative brethren cannot.

II. WHICH LIBERAL CHURCH SHOULD WE JOIN?

- A. Preachers should join the church which has the heavy Judas bag.
 1. The fool notion of "Unity in Diversity" means they can proclaim

fables as fact and fact as fables.

2. The hearers of liberal proclaimers are too dense, demented and stupid to assess the difference. They are the offspring of Catholics who simply "Pay and Pray." It is stupid when one refuses to reason.
- B. Members should join "The Community Church" which has as its only claim to religiosity, the term "Church."
 1. Like Noah's ark, The Community Church has, "an animal of each kind." Noah's ark did have clean animals, however.
 2. The Holiness Sect, best describes the new Community Church, except the Holiness people do claim to believe the Bible.

III. THE LIBERAL DIGRESSIVES WILL CHANGE THE WORSHIP.

- A. The new fad that, "All we do is worship," is popular.
 1. Why this almost sudden bit of news?
 - a. It helps to eliminate any plan of God.
 - b. It allows liberals to do as they please.
 2. From whence, this new digression?
 - a. As in all liberalism, it is a copy-cat idea.
 - b. It originates in the carnal impulses.
- B. Worship as, "An Encounter With God."
 1. What is a liberal Encounter?
 - a. **W. Kilpatrick**: "...it is a new concept — utilizing personal faith experiences."
 - b. This is Pentecostal testifying concealed in new terms.
 2. **Shelly** thinks worship is where "the church encounters God."
 3. **Jack Reese** of ACU: "Worship is a way to allow us to encounter a holy God."
 4. The 1994 Lipscomb Lectures had several encounter classes.
 5. Some acts of worship as listed by ACU professors are: chanting, hearing, sharing, kneeling, bowing, testifying, trembling, eating, standing, baptism, (etc. — ad nauseam W.C).

IV. WE CAN KNOW ALL GOD WANTS US TO KNOW ABOUT WORSHIP:

- A. Who to worship, How to worship, When to worship congregationally.
- B. We must, "...*resist the devil*..." (James 4:7).

An Amalgamation and Fellowshiping With Denominations

Wayne Coats

1. No person can show where God has ever allowed his people to fellowship error.
2. The lines must be kept separate and distinct.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE OLD DIGRESSIVES AND NEW DIGRESSIVES! FELLOWSHIP AND BIDDING GOD-SPEED TO FALSE TEACHERS.

A. **Rubel Shelly.**

1. At digressive church encampment "in Ohio."
2. Bulletin from Shelly's church: "All who have been born again of water and the Spirit are children of God, no matter what their denominational entanglements. They are members of a church that transcends geography, ethnic boundaries, and theological diversity."
3. The Tennessee Association of Churches: Meeting at McKendree Methodist Church. "**Rubel Shelly** of Woodmont Hills Church of Christ will speak. Music will be provided by the Fifth Jubilee Singers of Fisk University."
4. Kentucky Christian College: "Kentucky Christian College is pleased to announce that Dr. **Rubel Shelly** of Nashville, Tennessee, will be our Sensibaugh-Hayden lecturer next week."
5. Baptist Sunday School Board Lecturer: (Lovelines) "Dr. Peter Wagner...will conduct the seminar. "I hope to participate in the seminar and invite you to be there as well." (**Rubel Shelly**)
6. New Life Christian Church: Columbia, TN featuring **Rubel Shelly**. "Worship Led By The New Life Praise Band."
7. Gallatin, TN. Premillennial Church: "...a series of lessons presented by **Rubel Shelly** of the Woodmont Hills Church in Nashville."
8. Life Fellowship Ministries: Pentecostal. "**Steve Flatt** of the Madison Church of Christ will speak at Life Fellowship for the evening service. This is part of a series to promote unity among Christians."
9. Christ United Methodist Church: "...**Max Lucado** is going to be in our church for a special service on Thursday, April 14...."
10. St. John Neumann Catholic Church: "**Max Lucado**: Getting to know Jesus personally."
11. Woodmont Hills post Easter service. **Rubel Shelly** featured speaker.
12. Donelson Presbyterian Revival, **Walt Leaver**, Rev. Dan Mosley,

Warner Durnell, Millard Reed, Ron Carrier, speakers.

13. **Joe VanDyke** and North Wood United Methodist Church. "The Church of Christ is not on a journey by itself..."
14. Richardson East and Central Christian Church. "...We will join with the First Christian Church in a special service of praise and thanksgiving.... We invite our brothers and sisters of Central Christian Church, Community Christian Church to join in our adoration and praise."
15. Antioch Church Bulletin: "...The combined choruses of the Antioch, Donelson, and Woodmont Hills congregations will perform at 8:15 p.m. in the auditorium..."
16. Antioch Church Bulletin: "An opportunity to experience Bethlehem as it was at the time of Jesus birth, Sunday, Dec. 15 from 1:00-7:30 p.m. at Woodmont Christian Church...."

II. MEN OF CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY WILL NOT LEAD THE CHURCH OF CHRIST INTO DENOMINATIONALISM.

- A. Digression appears full-grown when liberals start their Community Church.
 1. Look at the records of liberals.
 2. One might as well turn church houses into Brothels.
- B. Community Churches are havens for rebels, misfits, half-wits and frolicking freaks. "Have fun for Jesus" is the rule. More sex, more freedom, less stress.

III. GOD HAS ONLY, "A PECULIAR PEOPLE."

- A. Peculiar in belonging to God (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; 26:18; I Peter 2:9; Psalm 135:4; Titus 2:14).
- B. Peculiar in separation (Gen. 25:23; Heb. 7:26; II Cor. 6:17; Matt. 13:41).
- C. Peculiar in identification (Lev. 20:23; Dan. 2:44; John 18:36).

CONCLUSION:

1. Ephesians 5:11 is still in the Bible.

A Pot Pourri of Notes On Digression

Wayne Coats

1. The way for the forces of evil to succeed is for men of truth to keep quiet.

2. Far too many brethren are too late in their opposition to error. The usual course is, "Wait and see."

DISCUSSION:

I. CONDITIONS EXIST EXACTLY AS THEY WERE BEFORE THE DIVISION IN 1906.

A. Notice some statements:

1. In 1890 Gospel Advocate: "The new theology has been spreading with an alarming rapidity during the last ten years. A mutual admiration society has been formed in Missouri and when one member of the society would make a bold rationalistic statement, the other members would applaud. Their very pompous actions would seem to say, 'we are the only advanced thinkers.' This society cannot brook (tolerate, gmr) opposition."
2. In 1879, F. G. Allen wrote: "Some of our preachers are so vague, sometimes they are months trying to get the people to understand what they meant and what they didn't mean. There is no necessity for this. What the Bible clearly teaches on any subject may be so presented that the people will understand it — cannot help but understand it."
3. In 1873 Joseph Franklin wrote: "I steadfastly believe that the current innovations might have been kept out, or might be put out, if preachers were not afraid to attack them...presently the respectable denomination — 'The Disciples Church' will receive the right hand of fellowship as an "evangelical church."
4. In 1909, J. D. Tant wrote: "Where we made our mistake is, we did not commence marking them soon enough, and then did not avoid them enough after the marking was done."

II. AS BEFORE, DIGRESSION AND DEPARTURES DISSEMINATED THROUGH THE SCHOOLS.

A. Some histories: Bethany, College of the Bible.

B. Some modern conditions: Pepperdine, A.C.U., Harding, Freed-Hardeman, Lipscomb.

III. THE NEW DIGRESSION SEEKS TO CHANGE.

A. The role of women in worship. Read statements, give examples.

B. Worship into a "Contemporary Event."

1. Some churches dividing the services.
2. The liberals will take over and the old traditionalists will be run out.

IV. WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

A. We can pray (I Thess. 5:17; I Tim. 2:8; II Cor. 1:11).

B. We can become informed: Subscribe to papers, Attend sound services, Support faithful congregations, Refuse to help liberals, Help

distribute sound papers.

C. Act like a soldier instead of a sissy (Eph. 6:10ff).

Nakedness

Gilbert Gough

1. All you need to do is open your eyes.
 - a. You can hardly watch any TV program, even sports events, without seeing bodies that wear a minimum of clothing.
 - b. Magazines, movies, covers of books — the human body is used to sell everything from milk products to automobiles.
 - c. You cannot drive down the street or go into a shopping mall without realizing that America in general no longer has a sense of modesty.
2. This concerns us about our country for it is part and parcel of the general decline in moral standards.
 - a. But what concerns us most is that many members of the church are going along with the trend and even trying to justify it.
 - b. It is common to hear church members use old clichés about it all being a matter of the attitudes of the times, that there are no standards to go by — showing either they have not studied the Bible or they do not care what the Bible says.
3. We are talking about the covering of the body God gave us, so let us start with modest apparel.

DISCUSSION:

I. MODEST APPAREL (I Tim. 2:9-15)

A. I Tim. 2:9 “...*that women adorn themselves in modest apparel...*”

1. Examine the context.
 - a. Here Paul is discussing the relationship of men and women and their distinctive roles — in worship, in the home.
 - b. In this passage men and women do have special roles to fulfill in God’s plan, and true happiness and contentment are found only in obeying God’s plan.
2. In this context women are to “*adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.*” What is this “modest apparel?”
 - a. The Greek word that means basically what we mean by modest today is not the word translated “modest” in the KJV, but the word translated “*shamefacedness.*”

- b. The Greek word translated “*modest*” in the KJV is a word that means “orderly, fitting, or proper.”
 - c. But the word translated “*shamefacedness*” means “with modesty, with propriety.”
 - d. The word modest today, in some of its definitions, carries the concepts of the word translated shamefacedness: “Restrained by a sense of propriety or humility... characterized by reserve, propriety, or purity.”
- 3. The main thing to understand is there is such a thing as “modest dress,” and, therefore, there is such a thing as “immodest dress.”
- 4. Listening to some, you would reach the conclusion there is no such thing as immodest dress.
 - a. “It is all a matter of custom...or society...or opinion...or personal judgment,” they say; “there are no standards.”
 - b. Thus, according to their reasoning, if one is living in a society where near-nudity is the norm, that is modest.
 - c. So, we stress there is such a thing as immodest dress or there is no point to the passage.
- B. Next, note the phrase “immodest dress” takes in a variety of dress styles.
 - 1. In the context, Paul is concerned about over-dressing, ostentatious in dress and appearance.
 - 2. I Peter 3:1-6 is a related passage.
 - a. In the passage Peter does not give an absolute prohibition against styling the hair or wearing jewelry; else there is a ban against wearing clothing for he says “*or of putting on apparel.*”
 - b. Rather he, like Paul, is talking about dressing in a gaudy fashion.
 - c. There have been those who view the worship hour as an opportunity to display their finery.
 - 3. This then is the immediate emphasis of the word modest, but the principle involved means more than just overdressing.
 - 4. The word also can help indicate what is immodest.
 - a. Immodest clothing can be too tight...or, too low...or, too thin...or, too revealing...or, too short...or, too little...
 - b. Too, anything that calls attention to oneself in the wrong way.
- C. The Bible says much about clothing and its purposes.
 - 1. Its original purpose was to cover nakedness.
 - 2. It can also provide warmth, and, within proper boundaries, can even be decorative.
 - 3. But both Paul and Peter want us to understand something very important about our clothing: **Our outward clothing should be representative of the inner heart.**
 - 4. Of course it may not. We may wear immodest clothing because of ignorance or because we do not think about the impression we leave.

5. But the world is taking a good look at us and the world is drawing its own conclusions.
6. Paul and Peter are telling us not to leave any wrong conclusions by the way we dress.
7. How we adorn ourselves is based on principles established back in the beginning of God's dealings with man.

II. BACK TO THE GARDEN OF EDEN. I Tim. 2:13,14 *"For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."*

1. Gen. 2 and 3, what principles relate to the matter of human adornment—specifically clothing?
 2. God created Adam and Eve: He made their bodies.
- A. God placed the man and woman in a beautiful garden that he had prepared.
1. *"...They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed"* (2:25). The words *"naked...and were not ashamed"* are vital.
 - a. They suggest that at a later point they would be naked and ashamed.
 - b. Throughout the Bible, nakedness is usually connected with things not being what they ought—usually nakedness is connected with shame.
 2. Of course, at the time Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed, they were in a **state of innocence**.
 3. Since the time of their sin, that state has not existed, except in small children and the mentally incompetent.
- B. But then Adam and Eve sinned. Yielding to temptation, Eve became dissatisfied with God's plan and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — and gave also to Adam and he ate.
- C. Having now gained illicitly a knowledge of what is right and wrong, Adam and Eve suddenly realized that nudity is wrong (3:7).
1. *"They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons"* (3:7).
 2. An apron is not much of a covering and usually only covers the front part of a person.
- D. At this point the presence of God came into the garden, and Adam and Eve tried to hide (Gen. 3:9-11).
1. God knew where Adam was, but called out, *"Where art thou?"*
 2. Adam came trembling into the presence of God and said, *"I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."*
 3. Even though Adam had on his girdle of fig leaves, he still knew that this was inadequate, that he was still naked.
 4. Note that God did not deny that Adam was still naked, rather he asked, *"Who told thee that thou wast naked?"*
- E. Adam and Eve made their futile excuses, but there was no accept-

able excuse for disobeying.

1. Then, just before they were driven out into a hostile world, the record says, "*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and clothed them*" (Gen. 3:21).
2. "*Coats*" in the KJV is often translated "clothing."
3. The Hebrew word is just the word for "covering."
4. They had covered the loin area, but they were still naked: Now God covered them fully.

F. Many lessons may be learned from Adam and Eve.

III. NAKEDNESS IS SHAMEFUL AND SINFUL.

A. There are exceptions.

1. One is in the marital relationship (I Cor. 7:4; Heb. 13:4).
2. Another obvious exception is for medical purposes.

B. But in the normal day-to-day circumstances of life, nakedness is not right — as with Adam and Eve.

C. Passages where nakedness (includes nudity) is not right.

1. Gen. 9:21-27, the sad story of Noah getting drunk and lying naked.
2. Ex. 32:25, the people of God made themselves naked with their worship of the golden calf.
3. Lev. 18:6-19, nakedness is mentioned again and again in connection with sexual sins.
4. Luke 8:26, 27, the man possessed by demons who was naked.
 - a. He had "*devils long time, and ware no clothes.*"
 - b. After he was healed, he was "*clothed, and in his right mind*" (Luke 8:35).
5. Death by crucifixion is always spoken of as a shameful thing (Gal. 3:13; Heb. 12:2), and it is generally agreed that part of the shame was that the victim's clothing was stripped from him (Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34).
6. Rev. 16:15 ties together nakedness and shame, Rev. 17:16 implies the same.

D. Look at Exodus 28:42, 43, typical of these passages.

1. As Moses told the priests how they should conduct themselves, especially when they were offering sacrifices, Moses said... "*thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness.*"
2. Linen breeches were similar to slacks that covered the loins to the thigh, or from the waist to past the knees.
3. Part of the body exposed, God called nakedness.
4. Here's our first point: **Nakedness is wrong.**

E. Every argument made to justify the wearing of inadequate clothing will also justify nudity if carried to its logical conclusion.

1. *Argument:* Society and customs decree that shorts are acceptable clothing.

Logical Conclusion: If society decreed that nudity was acceptable,

it would be.

2. *Argument:* It is cooler to wear shorts.

Logical Conclusion: It would be even cooler to wear nothing.

3. *Argument:* It saves a lot of time to just put on shorts and a brief top.

Logical Conclusion: It would save even more time to wear nothing at all.

IV. INADEQUATE CLOTHING, IN GOD'S SIGHT, IS THE SAME AS NAKEDNESS.

1. Remember, Adam knew he and Eve were *nude* when they sinned and made fig-leaf girdles (Gen. 3:7)
 2. Remember, Adam knew he and Eve were *naked* even when they were wearing fig-leaf girdles (Gen. 3:10).
 3. God acknowledged they were naked, and because they had on inadequate clothing, God covered them with coats of skin (Gen. 3:21).
- A. Again this truth (that inadequate clothing is equal to nakedness) is found throughout the Bible.
1. When people in need are spoken of as being "naked" as in Matt. 25:36, the consensus is that these folks were not totally without clothing, but rather had inadequate clothing.
 2. Considering this truth, it is worthwhile to note that inadequate clothing can actually be more seductive than no clothing at all.
 3. But this brings up the question, if we apply this principle to the subject to immodest apparel, what is inadequate? **OR** "How short is short?"
 - a. Obviously, the Bible does not contain a built-in tape measure, nor does it contain statements like, "A garment can be two inches above the knee and no higher."
 - b. But it is wrong to say the Bible contains no guidelines at all.
- B. We have already seen some of these guidelines.
1. Adam's and Eve's loin coverings were insufficient.
 2. The priests had to wear linen "*britches*" to cover their loins and thighs, in addition to their robes
 3. There are other indications to be found: II Sam. 10:4; I Chron. 19:4; Isa. 20:4; Jer. 13:22.
 4. These verses tell us that part of the shame of being a slave was to wear cut-off garments.
 5. Good taste forbids my describing these garments, but they have a close resemblance to a mini-skirt.
 6. To be forced to wear such indicated that one was no longer free, that one was in bondage.
- C. **BUT**, the most important guideline is: **Our clothing should be a reflection of the Christian heart.**
1. Look at the modern fashion today with bare legs, bare middles,

- bare backs; we are talking about shorts, halters, swimming suits.
2. Be a good example to those around you; those who have not risen above the things of the flesh and who are still bothered by the *"lusts of the flesh"* (I John 2:15, 16).
- D. God made man where he is stirred by the female form.
1. In marriage, this is marvelous and right.
 2. But when unholy and unlawful desires are aroused, we have a misuse of this characteristic of man.
 3. Good sisters, there are some biblical principles you need to take to heart.
 - a. Matt. 5:28 says that it is a sin for a man to lust after a woman in his heart.
 - b. But II John 11 says that if one encourages sin, one becomes a partaker in that sin.
 - c. If the way you dress encourages a man to sin, you are as guilty as he.
 - d. I know you cannot always keep men from having wrong thoughts, regardless of how you dress.
 - e. There are some filthy-minded people out there. But if you have done all you can do—to dress and act modestly—then God asks no more.
 - f. Good brothers, modern swimsuits worn by men, tight trousers, open shirts, can by no stretch of the imagination be called modest.
 4. Therefore, inadequate clothing is the same as nakedness in God's sight and, therefore, if self-imposed is as sinful as nakedness itself.

CONCLUSION:

1. Encourage all, especially the young ladies and their mothers and fathers, to concentrate on accumulating a Christian wardrobe and be dressed to be "chaste" (C-H-A-S-T-E), not chased (C-H-A-S-E-D) (Titus 2:5).
2. Make sure that what you wear reflects Christian values.
3. Let me encourage all Christian parents to train their children in the right way in this matter as in all others (Prov. 22:6).
 - a. Sometimes parents wonder why it is so hard to get their teenage daughters to wear dresses instead of shorts, when those young ladies have been allowed to wear shorts from the time they were small children.
 - b. Parents often say, "When my child is no longer a child then is soon enough to get them out of shorts." Two problems with this:
 - 1) First, parents are generally the last to recognize their young girl is no longer a child.
 - 2) Second, that child has been trained in a certain way from infancy, and will generally resist any effort to change that training.

Living Soberly, Righteously, Godly In The Midst Of Immorality

Charles Blair

As Christians we are living in “enemy territory.”

1. Every child of God must recognize the nature of the warfare we are engaged in each day.
 - a. The battle is not against flesh and blood.
 - b. It is against spiritual wickedness (Eph. 6:12).
2. Satan offered to Christ the kingdoms of this world.
 - a. He could not have offered what he did not have.
 - b. Our warfare consists of rejecting the way of Satan and following Christ.
3. To engage in this battle requires courage and determination to fight the enemy.
 - a. There can be no room for cowardice type behavior as we press the battle (Rev. 3:15; Matt. 6:24; 25:25).
4. Our plan of action which can lead to victory must be arrived at by searching the scriptures.
 - a. The two-fold attack must be rejection of Satan but also a willingness to follow God (James 4:7-8).
 - b. Knowing how to press the battle is a key which will lead us to victory (I Cor. 15:57; Rom 8:37; I John 5:4).
5. In this lesson we want to consider the evil in the world; our response to it and then focus on the right way to live according to God's word.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF SIN INTO OUR WORLD, EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED.**
 - A. Physical death has been passed to us all (Rom. 5:12; Heb. 9:27).
 - B. Our world (universe) is likewise winding down (Rom. 8:22; Psalm 102:25-26).
 - C. The suffering of humanity is due to sin and its consequences (Rev. 21:4).
 - D. The immoral and ungodly lives which some live is due to a rejection of God's will and forsaking of His way (I John 3:4; Gen. 6:12; Isa. 53:6).
- II. **WHAT SHOULD THE RESPONSE OF THE CHRISTIAN BE AS HE LOOKS AT THE WORLD AND SEES THE AFFECT OF SIN ALL AROUND?**
 - A. The Christian must have a knowledge of what is right and wrong (James 4:17; Rom. 14:23; 14:5).
 - B. It is the voice of the Christian which should be raised in opposition to that which is immoral (Matt. 14:3-4; I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21).

- C. The “voice” must be raised regardless of who is doing the wrong (III John 9; I Tim. 5:19-20).

III. THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US IS TO NOT ONLY CONDEMN THE EVIL BUT TO ALSO LIVE RIGHTEOUS LIVES BEFORE THE WORLD.

- A. Righteous living is a journey whose first step is a decision to follow the Lord regardless of the consequences (Matt. 16:24; John 6:68; Luke 9:59-62).
- B. When we follow the Lord, our hearts should be filled with the truth, that the Lord is right and His way is right (Psalm 100:3-5; John 10:27; 15:5).

IV. LET US NOW LOOK AT WHAT THE WORDS “SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY” AND SEE THEIR MEANINGS.

- A. The word “*soberly*” means of a sound mind. It carries the idea of an individual who is thinking “right” (I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 4:8).
- B. “*Righteously*” is the conduct of one who follows God. He has been justified and his life is a reflection of that justification (Rom. 5:1).
- C. The word “*godly*” refers to pious behavior.

V. THE CHRISTIAN BY CONDUCT AND BY CHOICE SHOWS THE WORLD WHERE HE STANDS IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

- A. He is concerned with the “perception” of the world around him (I Thess. 5:22; Matt. 5:13).
 - 1. He does not “choose” to leave the wrong impression (Rom. 14:21).
- B. Bad things may be said about the Christian but his life should show there is no evidence of ungodliness (Matt. 5:11; I Peter 2:15).

VI. AS WE STRIVE TO LIVE FOR GOD WE WILL FACE TEMPTATIONS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.

- A. The proper attitude in the face of temptation is one of joy (James 1:2). The reason for the joy is we know what the end product is.
- B. A second attitude is confidence because we know others have walked the same road and have been victorious through God (Heb. 12:1; I Cor. 10:13; Heb. 13:6).
- C. Thirdly, we are never alone in our trials (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. As we make our journey through this life we will touch the lives of others either for good or evil.
 - a. As servants of God may we strive to bring the world to Christ by lives we live and the truth we teach.
 - b. It is not easy to be a Christian in the midst of a sinful world but we

- left “easy” when we took up the cross.
c. Matthew 11:28-30.

Gambling: “A Corrupting Yeast”

Thomas W. Larkin

1. Quotations worthy of consideration concerning gambling.
 - a. “Gambling is a **corrupting yeast** that contaminates the loaf from core to crust” (Dr. David L. McKenna, Chairman of the Governor’s Ad Hoc Committee on Gambling for the State of Washington, quoted in “*A Corrupting Yeast*,” by Phillip Morrison, *Gospel Advocate*, June 29, 1978).
 - b. “Gambling is a vicious evil. It corrupts our youth and blights the lives of adults. It becomes the spring board of other crimes—embezzlement, robbery, even murder.” J. Edgar Hoover.
 - c. “Gambling is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief.” George Washington.
 - d. “Keep flax from fire, youth from gambling.” Benjamin Franklin.
 - e. Each one of these quotations suggests the common theme of the evil and corrupting influence of gambling.
2. Consider a **Definition** of terms: Gambling can be defined as “to play games of chance for money or some other stake; to bet or to wager.” Gambling involves taking a created risk with wagers and stakes in games of chance in order to gain some advantage.
3. Consider some **Dangers** that we must face in a discussion of this topic.
 - a. One danger is seen in the lack of teaching on and lack of understanding of this subject.
 - 1) One may hear the complaint, “But the Bible does not say, ‘Thou shalt not gamble!’”
 - 2) While it is true that the Bible does not specifically condemn gambling in the way mentioned above, it does nonetheless condemn this activity.
 - 3) It is important to understand that the Bible teaches by means of principles that must be understood and applied to our lives.
 - 4) If we fail to understand how the Bible teaches, then we will find ourselves unable to determine the sinfulness of such things.
 - b. A second danger is that of compromise with the world.
 - 1) We must understand that, for the most part, the world does not consider “recreational” gambling to be sinful.

- 2) Also, many Christians see nothing wrong with such things as raffles and purchasing lottery tickets.
- 3) We must be careful not to determine whether an activity is sinful on the basis of public opinion.
- 4) Of course, there are those in the church who have so compromised with the god of this world that they see nothing wrong with frequenting casinos and dog tracks, and participating in games of chance; but instead, refer to such as "good, clean fun."
- c. A third danger is the supposed good that comes from certain types of gambling.
 - 1) One of the arguments used in an attempt to justify certain types of gambling is that the money goes for a good cause.
 - 2) Those who would condemn such activities as poker or shooting craps, might nonetheless buy a raffle ticket since the money goes for a good cause.
 - 3) Some seek to justify the betting that goes on at the dog and horse tracks on the basis that some of the proceeds go to the state's educational system.
 - 4) It is imperative that we understand this point: If the principles of the Bible condemn the practice of gambling, then it is wrong even if the money does go for a good cause.
4. Consider a **Description** of this lesson.
 - a. We will first of all notice that gambling *Arises from certain Attitudes*.
 - b. We will next notice that gambling is *Demonstrated in certain Deeds*.
 - c. We will finally notice that gambling will always *Reap certain Results*.

DISCUSSION:

I. GAMBLING WILL ARISE OUT OF CERTAIN ATTITUDES.

- A. No activity takes place in a vacuum. The things that we do arise out of certain motives and attitudes. Consider the attitudes out of which the gambling will arise.
- B. An attitude of heart out of which gambling arises is **MATERIALISM**.
 1. A materialistic man will allow the physical to take precedence over the spiritual, the temporal over the eternal.
 2. Materialism has always been a basic problem to mankind.
 - a. Eve—Gen.s 3:6
 - b. Esau—Gen. 25:29-34; Heb. 12:16
 - c. Israel after being freed from Egyptian bondage—Deut. 8:3.
 3. But the Bible says that we are to "*seek those things that are above...Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth*" (Col. 3:1-2).
 4. Jesus warned, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart*

be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

C. A second attitude of heart out of which gambling arises is **COVETOUSNESS**.

1. One who is covetous has fixed his desire upon a certain object; hence, he longs for and lusts after it; this word is used particularly in reference to material things.
2. A covetous man has allowed material things to supplant God's rightful place in his heart.
3. For this reason, the Bible identifies covetousness as idolatry (Col. 3:5).
4. The Bible places the covetous man in the same category as fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, revilers and extortioners (I Cor. 6:9-10).
5. The decision to participate in gambling arises from that covetous desire to have more and more material things.
6. **NOTE:** Possessing "things" is not sinful, neither is the desire to have things sinful; but allowing things to become our "god" is sinful.

D. A third attitude of heart out of which gambling arises is **SELFISHNESS**.

1. One who has allowed material things to take precedence over spiritual, and who has fixed his desire on such objects, will turn inward and think of self before others.
2. One who participates in gambling is concerned with what he will get out of it—but not the effect that activity will have on others!
3. Yet, the Bible tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39).
4. The Bible says, "*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law*" (Rom. 13:10).
5. One cannot observe the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12) while maintaining those attitudes out of which gambling will arise.

E. **NOTE:** Even those of us who do not gamble can be guilty of these very attitudes—and be just as guilty as the compulsive gambler!

II. GAMBLING IS DEMONSTRATED IN CERTAIN DEEDS.

- A. Once we identify the attitudes out of which such an activity as gambling will arise, we then need to determine what gambling is.
- B. Consider in our definition that gambling is not just taking a risk—rather it involves taking *a created risk in a game of chance*.
 1. Sometimes in an effort to defend the practice of gambling, someone will suggest that "all of life is a risk."
 2. But, people can and do take risks without gambling—The farmer risks losing his seed to the elements when he plants his crops; The business man risks losing his capital when he starts a business; The investor risks losing his money when he invests.
 3. Even though some risk is involved, this is not gambling.

4. The farmer is producing food for himself and others; the business man is providing a living for himself and goods and/or services for the community; the investor is providing capital for the expansion of business while he secures income for himself.
 5. Even though some risk is involved in these activities, they do not depend upon the fact that many will lose so that a few may profit; yet, this very thing is involved in every single form of gambling.
 6. Gambling is not just risk taking, but it involves creating risks for the purpose of indulging in games of chance.
- C. When the definition is clearly understood, then it becomes clear what is and is not gambling.
1. Most in the church would agree that such things as poker, the roulette wheel, and betting on dog or horse races are sinful. (Notice the word *most*, for even some in the church would deny the sinfulness of these things).
 2. But consider some other activities that will fit the definition of gambling.
 - a. All of us are familiar with raffles that are used to support schools, fire departments, etc., and with the lotteries upon which some states have staked their financial well-being.
 - b. But do these activities not fall under the definition of gambling given above? Are they not created risks in order to gain some advantage for the one who participates?
 3. When we put away the quibbles given in favor of such activities ("But it's for a good cause:" "It's only a form of entertainment:" "Where does the Bible condemn it?") we can see such activities as raffles and lotteries are forms of gambling just as much as poker, the roulette wheel and betting on dog and horse races.

III. GAMBLING REAPS CERTAIN RESULTS.

- A. Remember that all of the quotations at the beginning of this study recognize the corrupting influence of gambling.
1. Because it has a corrupting influence, gambling can be expected to give rise to serious consequences.
 2. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know them by their fruits*" (Matt. 7:16-19).
 3. Gambling was referred to as a "door and a window" into all sorts of ungodly behavior by the Puritans in Colonial America. (John M. Findlay, *People of Chance*: New York, 1986, p. 18).
 4. Please note that gambling is not sinful simply because it gives rise to harmful things—gambling is sinful because it violates those principles that are taught within the pages of God's word.
 5. But that such things do result from gambling ought to serve as a warning to spiritually-minded people.
- B. First of all, gambling can result in a loss of one's influence for good.
1. In his book, *The Compleat Gamester*, Charles Cotton, while

- arguing against immoderation in gambling, said, "If you lose not your estate, you will certainly lose your credit and good name, than which there is nothing better." (quoted in Findlay)
2. A Christian is warned to carefully guard his influence.
 - a. *"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"* (Prov. 22:1).
 - b. We *"are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid"* (Matt. 5:16).
 - c. *"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"* (Rom. 14:7).
 - C. Secondly, gambling can lead to indifference to spiritual things.
 1. If one has a materialistic outlook toward life, and is covetous of that which he does not have, then it is inevitable that spiritual things will not be able to hold his attention.
 2. Judas suffered from the heart, problems of such things as materialism and covetousness and, as a result, failed to learn from the lessons taught by our Lord (cf. John 12:1-8; John 13:1-17).
 3. Demas forsook Paul's company *"having loved this present world"* (II Tim. 4:10).
 - D. But most importantly, gambling can cause one to fail to fulfill the obligations of faithful stewardship.
 1. That we are stewards of God cannot be denied.
 2. All things are owned by God (cf. Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12; Haggai 2:8; Job 41:11).
 3. God expects us to serve as faithful and wise stewards.
 - a. *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"* (I Peter 4:10).
 - b. *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (I Cor. 4:2).
 4. "No one has the right to abuse the goodness of God and to foolishly risk that which is rightfully His by the evil practice of gambling" (Wayne Jackson, "Gambling," *The Spiritual Sword*, July, 1978, p. 35).

CONCLUSION:

1. Gambling has been characterized as "a sure way to get nothing for something" (Wilson Mizner).
2. Gambling is not wrong because it might cause someone to lose all his money; gambling is wrong because it arises out of attitudes of heart that are not in harmony with the will of God.
3. Gambling reveals a character flaw that results from a failure to allow one's life to be guided by and molded by the principles of God's word.
4. If one changes those attitudes discussed in this lesson, he will cease from the sinful practice of gambling, and will be spared these harmful results.

Evolution

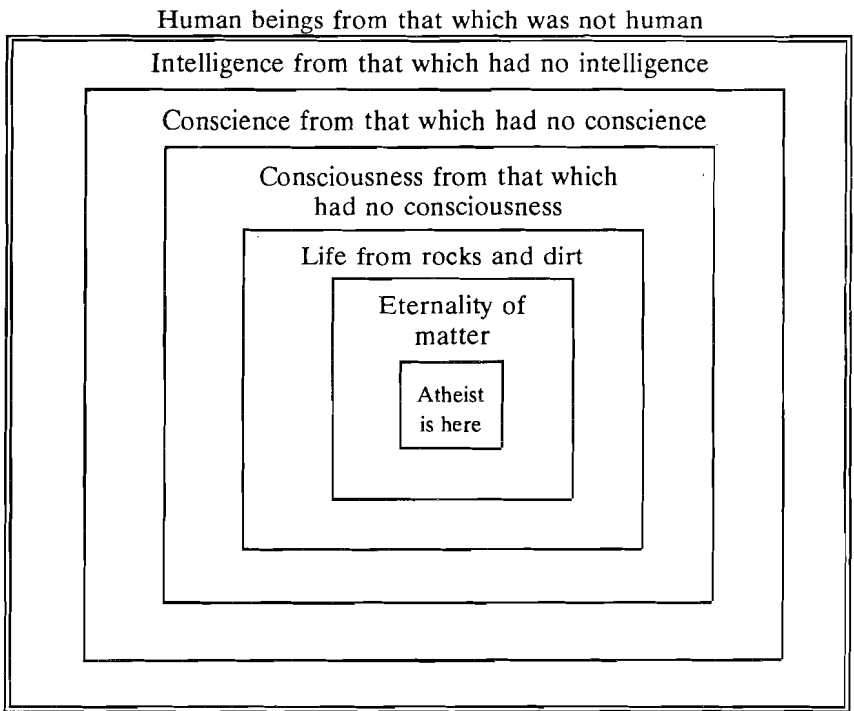
Terry Joe Kee

1. Anyone who accepts the inspiration of the Bible has no trouble answering the question, "Where did I come from?" (Gen. 1:1, 2, 11, 20, 24, 27; Ex. 20:11).
2. But what of someone who does not believe the Bible?
 - a. The only reason someone will believe in creation rather than evolution is if creation is more rational than evolution.
3. Why do men accept evolution?
 - a. Many do so without ever asking any questions of origin.
 - b. Many believe evolution because they have been taught that all well-educated people believe in evolution.
 - c. Many believe in evolution because they deny that there is a God in heaven and have no other alternative—man either originated from dead matter or from the Living God, there is no third choice.
4. Evolution is not something new!
 - a. Thales of Miletus, Anaximander, Epicurus and Empedocles were all evolutionists who lived before Christ.
 - b. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) believed that man was the product of gradual transition to higher life forms.
 - c. During the Renaissance there were Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant and others who began formulating what is modern evolution.
 - d. The two most influential men in the evolutionary movement were Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829) and his disciple Charles Darwin (1809-1882).
 - e. Perhaps the most influential book ever written was *The Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin—not because of its accuracy, but what it has done to the thinking of man.
5. Modern science textbooks used in our schools almost without exception teach evolution as a fact, even though it has never been more than a theory.
6. There are seven questions every evolutionist must be asked:
 - a. Can you **prove** the theory of evolution?
 - b. Can you **prove** spontaneous generation?
 - c. Can you produce an example of evolution, with each step proven with living or dead testimony that is indisputable?
 - d. Do you believe in the transmutation of species? Can you produce an example, living or dead, of one form of life growing into a "higher form" of life?
 - e. Can you produce one example of the theory of "adaption" or "development"—the survival of the fittest theory—that will prove conclusively that one species changed into another environment?
 - f. Is it a scientifically established fact that life springs from pre-existent life?

- g. Is it scientifically true that all things must have a point of beginning?
7. The evolutionist is deep within prison walls and cannot escape even over the first wall of his prison:

THE ATHEIST'S PRISON WALLS

The atheist finds himself in this prison. In order to come out he must prove each of these positions. If he fails in any point his theory fails. The atheist cannot pass through even one of these walls. Therefore, the theory is a total failure!



DISCUSSION:

- I. **EVOLUTIONARY ARGUMENTS MADE TO TRY AND PROVE THEIR THEORY.**
 - A. The survival of the fittest argues that most species produce far more offsprings than can possibly survive to maturity and therefore there is inevitably a struggle where only the "fittest" will survive and they in turn will pass on their "fitness" to their descendants.
 - B. The argument from mutations suggests that mutations are the sudden attempts for alteration within species.

- C. Evolution argues that the universe is building up, but to do so they must deny the first and second laws of thermodynamics.
- D. They argue from similarity of structure.
- E. They argue from vestigial organs (those parts of an organism for which no function has been demonstrated).
- F. They argue from embryology that in the nine month development of a baby the evolutionary process is recapitulated.
- G. They argue from geology and paleontology which must without a doubt be their strongest argument, but maybe we should remember:
 - 1. Piltdown Man made from a jaw and tooth which were later found to be canine and a hoax.
 - 2. Or, Nebraska Man made from a tooth, but later discovered to be the tooth of a pig. They then argue it was a “prehistoric pig.”
 - 3. How about old, Neanderthal Man, built from a few fragments and pieces of skull which could have easily been built into a chimp or philosopher?
 - 4. Heidelberg Man built from a lower jaw which had most of its teeth.
 - 5. African Man made from skull fragments, some of which were monkey fragments, 40 teeth and pieces of 4 skulls, 2 jawbones and some hand bones. Keep in mind these were found in the midst of some tools of an advanced civilization of only a few thousand years old, but the fragments were millions of years old!

II. WHERE IS EVOLUTION CARRYING THE WORLD?

- A. Christianity has always lifted man up and carried him to higher plains than he had travelled before.
- B. The theory of evolution is not lifting man up and pointing him above, but it looks down to animals and leads him to behave like his “so-called” ancestors.
- C. What are the results of believing the theory of evolution?
 - 1. First of all, this theory leads to a total lack of respect for authority.
 - a. If fact and proof do not matter, as per this theory, why do we need fact or proof for anything?
 - b. The attitude toward truth inherent in this theory opens the door for all false teaching and doctrine being promoted today!
 - c. Further, if man is no more than an animal, how can anyone make rules by which he must live? Who has the right to determine right and wrong? Should not every man be a law to himself?
 - d. If we apply Darwin’s theory of the “survival of the fittest” goodness will be determined by the strongest and mightiest among us.
 - 2. Evolution results in total atheism—theistic evolution is a misno-

mer.

- a. Such an one is a fool (Psalm 14:1).
- b. Both Karl Marx and Adolph Hitler were atheistic evolutionists. What did they do to improve their nations?
3. Evolution leads to all kinds of immorality and wickedness.
 - a. If man is only animal, who can condemn multiple mates?
 - b. Who should deny a mother the right to kill her baby by abortion?
 - c. Who should condemn a child for killing a parent by euthanasia?
 - d. Who can punish a murderer, if man is no more than a rabbit or deer?
4. Evolution believes that military might should be used to bring about human progress.
 - a. Adolph Hitler said, "The whole of nature is a continuous struggle between strength and weakness and the eternal victory of the strong over the weak."
 - b. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche said, "Man should be educated for war and woman for the procreation of the warrior."
5. Evolution leads men from freedom and truth.
 - a. Freedom and truth are inseparable.
 - b. The further we drift from truth, the further we will drift from freedom.
 - c. This is what happened to Germany in World War II.
6. Evolution retards any real progress.
 - a. Evolution is hard at work to promote its different philosophies.
 - b. To ignore the truth of the facts concerning our origin, retards true science.
7. Evolution devalues the worth of woman.
 - a. Charles Darwin, just before marrying his cousin Emma Wedgwood, said the advantage of marriage was "constant companion, (friend in old age) who will feel interested in one, object to be beloved and played with—better than a dog anyhow—home and someone to take care of the house." *Impact*, March 1994, Institute of Creation Research, El Cajon, California.
 - b. Steven Jay Gould said in *The Mismeasure of Man*, 1981, "...the most intelligent races...are a large number of women whose brains are closer in size to those of gorillas than to the most developed male brains. This inferiority is so obvious that no one can contest it for a moment; only its degree is worth discussion...Women...represent the most inferior forms of human evolution and...are closer to children and savages than to an adult, civilized man. They excel in fickleness, inconsistency, absence of thought and logic, and incapacity to

reason. Without a doubt there exist some distinguished women, very superior to the average man, but they are as exceptional as the birth of any monstrosity, as, for example, of a gorilla with two heads; consequently, we may neglect them entirely.”

- c. In this age, one would think all women would deny evolution simply on this one ground, but that would involve submission to the teaching of God concerning women.
- d. A woman's choice is between accepting being the product of God and accepting her role as described by God, or accepting evolution and believing herself to be nothing more than an inferior barbarian.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. There is not one good thing an evolutionist can name which has resulted from the belief that man is nothing more than a highly developed beast or animal.
- 2. To accept this doctrine is to lead man to the lowest of levels and leads him to roam about without regard for one's person or property.

Elders Providing Moral Leadership Through Overseeing The Flock

Eddy Craft

Thesis: The role Elders play in making sure the congregation is tended.

- 1. If there is anything that is needed in the Lord's Church today it is moral leadership provided by Elders. The only way this can be done is by a proper overseeing of the flock.
- 2. A lack of leadership has caused a great deal of problems for the Lord's people throughout the years.
- 3. In this lesson we will pay a great deal of attention to the lead statement or thesis.

DISCUSSION:

I. DEFINITION OF THE THESIS:

- A. Role—A function assumed by someone as an advisory role.
- B. Play—To act in a specified way, to put into or keep in action.
- C. Sure—Secure; safe. That which will not fail as a sure method. That

which can be relied upon; trust worthy.

- D. Congregation—The local church. The Elders are over the local congregation. The local church is autonomous with her Elders overseeing her work.
- E. Tended—I Peter 5:2, “*Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*” (ASV). One who watches over and provides for the welfare of the church. The role of the shepherd was always tending, feeding and guarding the sheep.

II. THE DESPICABLE, DEPLORABLE CONDITION OF A FLOCK NOT TENDED:

- A. One of the most familiar figures used in the Bible is that of the shepherd and the sheep. There were many great Bible characters that were shepherds.
- B. Jeremiah pointed out the horrible condition of sheep that are not being tended. Jeremiah 23:1-2, “*Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! ... ²Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings....*” This same principle is true today when the Elders fail to tend the flock which is the church.
- C. Christ spoke of sheep without a leader, Matthew 9:36, “*...when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*”
 - 1. The Bible points out very plainly the condition of God’s people without a leader. I Kings 22:17, “*...I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd....*”
 - 2. In facing death, Moses’ thoughts turned toward Israel and who would lead them: Num. 27:15-17, “*...¹⁶Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, ¹⁷Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.*”
 - 3. When God’s people don’t have proper leadership as in the figure of the sheep they are:
 - a. Alone—none to seek the strays,
 - b. No power or protector,
 - c. No comforter,
 - d. No provider,
 - e. Vulnerable—ready prey,
 - f. No direction.
 - 4. The preceding should help to see the seriousness of the Church without leadership.

III. THE ROLE ELDERS PLAY IN MAKING SURE THE CONGREGATION IS TENDED:

- A. I hope the following list will be of help to those in positions of leadership in making sure the congregation is tended:
1. Make sure the talents of the members are being used.
 2. Be sure discipline is being practiced.
 3. See to the personal needs of the members.
 4. The Elders should meet on a regular basis.
 5. Make sure the Bible School literature is sound (so many times false doctrine creeps in through literature).
 6. The Elders need to make sure there is a good curriculum.
 7. The Elders need the respect of the congregation.
 8. The Elders need to be able to work together.
 9. Elders need to be aware of what is going on in the brotherhood.
 10. Elders need to make sure the preaching in their local congregation is balanced (there must be a proper diet from the pulpit).
 11. Elders need to deal with the problems of the congregation (don't sweep them under the rug).
 12. Elders need to know that they can delegate tasks but can't delegate responsibility.
 13. *All* Elders are over *all* the work *all* the time.
 14. Elders should not be power hungry men.
 15. Elders must seek God's will above their own.
 16. Elders need to be peace makers not trouble makers.
 17. Elders need to keep the congregation well informed (secrecy breeds suspicion; suspicion breeds disunity).
 18. Elders need to first take heed unto themselves (Acts 20:28).
 19. Elders must not be Lords over God's heritage (I Peter 5:3).
 20. Elders need to be good listeners (James 1:19).
 21. Elders must not be partial (James 2:1)
- B. These are a few of the principles that we as Elders of the church in Elizabethton practice.
- C. Elders of the Lord's Church can learn a lot about shepherding from Jesus the chief Shepherd. John 10:14, "*I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*" I Peter 2:25, "*For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*" The Psalmist said, "*The Lord is my shepherd*" (Psalm 23:1). Everyone needs a pattern or model. God gave Moses a pattern for the building of the tabernacle. The word is translated "*print*" (John 20:25), "*figure*" (Rom. 5:14), "*form*" (Rom. 6:17), "*ensample*" (I Thess. 1:7; 3:9), "*pattern*" (Heb. 8:5). Elders are to be ensamples, or patterns but they too need an example and have one in Jesus Christ.

IV. IN MAKING SURE THAT THE CONGREGATION IS TENDED ELDERS MUST NOT:

- A. Let their emotions rule. When the emotions rule, things like envy, anger, etc. add to the problem rather than being a solution.
- B. Spread rumors. Definition: unverified information of uncertain origin, usually spread by word of mouth. (Make sure that what you say is the truth). Prov. 18:21, "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue:....*" Prov. 18:8, "*The words of a talebearer are as wounds....*" Prov. 26:20, "*Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.*"
- C. Engage in wrong doing (even if others are). Prov. 26:4, "*Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.*" There are some things that a Christian just can't do, it matters not who is doing them. We must not render evil for evil.

V. IN MAKING SURE THAT THE CONGREGATION IS TENDED ELDERS MUST CLEAR UP MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ELDERSHIP:

- A. That the office is outdated: Eph. 4:11, "*and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets;...and some, pastors and teachers;*"
- B. That once an Elder always an Elder: Acts 20:28-31, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock... ²⁹For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. ³¹Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*"
- C. That Elders are to make and loose law, Deut. 4:2, "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it....*" Prov. 30:6, "*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*" Rev. 22:18-19, "*...If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ¹⁹And 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.*"
- D. That an Elder's only authority is his example, Heb. 13:7, "*Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*" Heb. 13:17, "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*"
- E. That a woman can be an Elder, I Tim. 3:2, "*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife....*" Titus 1:6, "*If any be blameless, the husband of one wife....*"
- F. That Elders are to rule over all the congregations in a city, Titus 1:5, "*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order*

the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” Acts 14:23, “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.”

CONCLUSION:

1. We are facing a great problem in the Church today from the lack of proper leadership, and let us work hard to turn this around, it may be slow, but we can do it.
2. Elders, we need to take our work seriously and must be willing to; know the flock, teach the flock, lead the flock, watch over the flock and help the flock. When we do this, we will begin to see many of our problems in the Church begin to dissipate.
3. While Elders have a great responsibility to do the preceding, the Church also must: submit to her Elders, support her Elders and strengthen her Elders in their work. May God help us to do His work in the most effective ways we can.

Preachers Providing Moral Leadership Through Preaching And Teaching The Word

Wayne Cox

1. The subject of morality/immorality is indeed appropriate and timely for our day.
 - a. Many are the causes of immorality.
 - b. Tragic are the consequences both now and in the hereafter.
2. Morality and ethical considerations must always be viewed and discussed in light of God and scripture, for apart from God, there can be no morality, no right or wrong.
3. What a tremendous privilege it is to be a gospel preacher, and what great responsibilities he has to influence society for the better by preaching and living the Word!

DISCUSSION:

I. THE NEED FOR MORALITY.

A. A review of the past.

1. The days of Noah (Gen. 6:5).
2. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-19).

3. The period of the judges.
4. The waywardness of Israel as a whole resulting from their insatiable desire to be like the nations around them.
- B. A survey of the present.
 1. Ours is an amoral society—i.e. a society minus morals.
 2. Such is evident due to:
 - a. The lack of respect for human life.
 - b. The loss of self-worth.
 - c. The disregard for the well-being of others.
 - d. Selfishness, egotism.
 3. The demise is brought about and furthered by atheism, humanism, situation ethics, values clarification, evolution, etc.
- C. A glimpse of the future.
 1. If the present trend continues, what lies ahead? How depraved can man become? What is the solution?
 2. If attitudes toward morality could be changed, moral actions would also be radically transformed.

II. THE VALUE OF THE WORD.

- A. Its purpose is to save souls.
 1. It saves (I Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16; Acts 11:14).
 2. It cleanses (John 15:3).
 3. It sanctifies (John 17:17).
 4. It purifies (I Peter 1:22).
 5. It converts (Psalm 19:7).
 6. It gives life (Phil. 2:16).
 7. It reconciles (II Cor. 5:19).
 8. It is to be preached (II Tim. 4:2).
 - a. This verse sets forth: The messenger—preacher, the method—preaching, the message—the Word.
 - b. Preaching the Word consists of reproving, rebuking, and exhorting out of love for the sinner and out of hatred for sin.
 9. Since man is lost because of sin, he must hear the saving message of the gospel. That gospel is communicated through preaching. It is through this avenue that God is allowed to speak.
- B. It has the power to change lives (Heb. 4:12).
 1. It gives light and understanding (Psalm 119:130).
 2. It is a lamp (Psalm 119:105).
 3. It judges (John 12:48).
 4. The transformed lives of those in the first century testify of the ability of the Word to change (Acts 2, 8, 16).
 5. When one speaks as the “*oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11), he is delivering that which has the ability to soften the hardened heart, penetrate the stubborn mind and humble the proud spirit.
 6. Guy N. Wood’s interesting observation:

“The two most powerful influences in the world during the first

century were the preacher and his message" (I Cor. 1:18-21). The proclamation of the gospel in the early days of Christianity exerted a greater influence than the combined armies of mankind. The Imperial Roman Empire, invincible and unconquerable by force of arms, yielded to the armies of the Lord, and her impregnable legions fell one by one before the onslaughts of the soldiers of the cross. Bound by the "the cords of the gospel" it "sought to destroy," that mighty empire lives in history as an example of the futility of resisting those who take their orders from the Lord." (Questions and Answers, Vol. I, p. 323).

- C. It promotes purity.
 1. There is a close correlation between the powerful preaching of the Word and the morals of people who heed it.
 2. D. M. Lloyd Jones: "Is it not clear, as you take a bird's-eye view of Church history, that the decadent periods and eras in the history of the Church have always been those periods when preaching had declined?"
 3. "The low level of Christian living is due, more than anything else, to the low level of Christian preaching."
 4. When one preaches God's Word:
 - a. He preaches purity, for God's Word is pure (Psalm 12:6; 119:140).
 - b. He preaches purity, for God in His Word calls for such (I Tim. 4:12; 5:22).
 - c. He "comforts the afflicted, and afflicts the comfortable."
 5. We are in desperate need for more purity today, in a world, for the most part, not characterized by such, and powerful preaching promotes purity!

III. THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.

- A. Obviously, every Christian needs to pave the way for better moral living, but this lesson deals primarily with the preacher. How can he help our sinful society?
- B. Everyone exerts an influence either for good or bad.
 1. The negative influence of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5, 23).
 2. Past scandals in the religious world.
 3. Clarence McCartney: "If sin is in the pastor's [preacher's] life, it follows him up the pulpit stairs."
 4. "Practice what you preach"; "I'd rather see a sermon..."
 5. Areas of trouble for preachers: silver, self, sloth, sex.
- C. The need for positive influence and example (Josh. 24:14-24; Ezra 7:10).
 1. Jesus—Acts 1:1
 2. Paul. Three adverbs sum up his life: "*holily*," "*justly*," "*unblamable*" (I Thess. 2:10).
- D. Our responsibility.

1. Matt. 5:13-16; I Tim. 4:12
2. The preacher must be an individual with integrity.

CONCLUSION:

1. Man, made in the image of God, has the power of choice, the freedom of volition. Unfortunately, he has often chosen to veer from the path of morality.
2. "*God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions*" (Eccl. 7:29).
3. May we be a powerful moral force and help change our decadent world into a decent one!

Lasciviousness — Dancing

Virgil L. Hale

1. All moral questions must be answered by God's standard, not man's.
 - a. Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-17; James 4:4; I John 2:15; II Tim. 3:16-17).
2. Our thinking is extremely important (Prov. 23:7; Rom. 12:1-2).
 - a. Paul talks about (ASV) "*the mind of the flesh*" and "*the mind of the Spirit*" (Rom. 8:6). (KJV) "*carnally minded*" and "*spiritually minded*."
 - 1) One brings "death"—the other "life and peace."
 - b. The fleshly mind causes one to practice the "*works of the flesh*" (Gal. 5:19-21).

DISCUSSION:

I. DANCING IS A WORK OF THE FLESH.

A. *Aseigeia*—lasciviousness.

1. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary:
 - a. Wanton; lewd; lustful. Tending to produce lewd emotions.
2. Webster's New World Dictionary:
 - a. Characterized by or expressing lust or lewdness; wanton. Tending to excite lustful desires.
3. Joseph Henry Thayer:
 - a. Filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.
4. These definitions also fit "petting."

B. A very prominent sin.

1. Why the flood came (Gen. 6:5; 12).
2. Note: (Eph. 4:19; I Peter 4:3-4; Jude 4; II Peter 2:18-19).

3. Christians cannot be a part of such (Rom. 6:1-2; I John 3:7-10; I Peter 2:11).
4. Pornography (books and movies); many other books and movies; immodest dress, etc. all fit into the same category.
- C. Christians are to walk as Christ walked (I John 2:3-6; I Peter 2:21).
- D. Those guilty must repent (II Cor. 12:21).
 1. If will not repent—no part of the kingdom (Gal. 5:21).
- E. Another word *Komos*—"revellings"—listed as a "*work of the flesh*" (Gal. 5:21).
 1. "A letting loose, a jovial festivity, with music and dancing."
 - a. Basic meaning—excessive feasting and carousing.
- F. "*And such like*"—not limited to these. Anything then or in the future that fits into the same categories, condemned.

II. OTHER FACTS TO CONSIDER ABOUT DANCING.

- A. Any temptation which affords a risk to the Christian should be avoided.
 1. Christians should not arouse emotions which cannot be honorably fulfilled.
 2. Dr. E. R. Sonners said: "It is not safe to subject even the strongest men and women to the subtle temptation of the dance."
 3. Could we say that dancing makes one a stronger Christian?
 - a. To be honest, doesn't it weaken one's spirituality?
 - b. How many people have been won to Christ on the dance floor?
 4. Some say, "I am not affected by dancing. It doesn't bother me."

Note: (I Cor. 10:12).
- B. Dancing is wrong, whether "supervised" or unsupervised.
 1. We cannot supervise thoughts (I Thess. 5:22; II Tim. 2:22).
 2. This is not an atmosphere where Christians should be.
 3. It leads to other sinful practices.
- C. The movie "Footloose" tried to use the Bible to justify the dance. Such cannot be done.
- D. Christians are responsible for their influence on others (Rom. 14:7; 13).
- E. Christians are God's called out people (II Cor. 6:17-18), called by the gospel (II Thess. 2:14).
- F. Christians are "saints"—set apart from the world—are not of this world (John 17:16; 18:36).
- G. Are not to see how close to sin we can come without being affected. Are to "*abhor that which is evil*" (Rom. 12:9); and "*Abstain from all appearance of evil*" (I Thess. 5:22).
 1. Would it be safe for an alcoholic to park every day in front of the saloon?
 2. Christians are not to conform to the world (Rom. 12:2).

- a. The world (sin) spots. Note: (James 1:27; Eph. 5:25-29).
- H. Must not only have no part in, must also condemn (Eph. 5:11).

III. WHAT AUTHORITIES HAVE SAID ABOUT DANCING.

- A. **AUTHUR MURRAY**: "The difference between wrestling and dancing is that, in wrestling, some holds are barred."
- B. **J. EDGAR HOOVER**: "Most juvenile crime had its inception in the dance hall, either public or private."
- C. **THE MATRON OF A HOME FOR FALLEN GIRLS**: "Seven tenths of the girls received here have fallen through dancing and its influence."
- D. **MRS. T. A. FAULKNER** in her book **FROM THE BALLROOM TO HELL**: "163 girls out of 200 attributed their downfall from moral purity to dancing."
- E. **DR. FRANK RICHARDSON**, speaking before the Homeopathic Medical Association of New Jersey said: "Dance halls are the modern nurseries of the divorce courts, training shops of prostitution and graduating schools of infamy and vice."
- F. **CHIEF OF POLICE, NEW YORK CITY**: "Seventy-five percent of the abandoned girls of this city were ruined by dancing."
- G. **DR. A. C. DIXON**: "The modern dance is the fine art of covering with music, indelicate, immodest and oftentimes indecent attitudes and postures between men and women. It is too bad for reformation. Its only remedy is extermination."
- H. **T. A. VOGNER**, former supervisor of the Dancing Academy of Los Angeles and former president of the Dancing Master's Association of the Pacific Coast: "No woman can waltz well and waltz virtuously."
- I. **PROF. WILLIAM H. HOLMES**, an honest former dancing master: "I have found the ballroom an avenue of destruction to multitudes. This is a truth burned into the hearts of thousands of downcast fathers and brokenhearted mothers."
- J. **PROF. J. LOUIS GUYON**, an owner and operator of one of Chicago's largest dance halls, in speaking before the World's Purity Federation Congress: "We are all men. We know the natural desires of youth. We know that sex is the strongest impulse implanted in the human race. You can picture the effect on a boy or girl of eighteen or twenty, when this hunger is keenest, when knowledge and experience are lacking in formation of judgment, of one of these dances which call for close abdominal contact and frequently brings the cheeks together and entwine the limbs. Yet you find thousands of boys and girls dancing this way every day who do not realize they are doing anything out of the way ...There is left but one reason for the popularity of the dance, and that is sex appeal. I hasten to assure you I do not believe the dancers are always conscious that this is the reason they enjoy this position and the steps that go with it.

But this lack of consciousness is merely an added factor of danger ... When you are told that youth of both sexes can...survive this experience without mental, moral or physical pollution, you know the teller lies...If you can believe youth is the same after this experience as before, then God help your child or your charge, for you are not mentally fit for your responsibility. If you do not believe I have correctly described the modern dances and their effects, you either have not seen them performed or you are wilfully blind to their true nature.” (THE CARNIVAL OF DEATH)

CONCLUSION:

1. I could give many more statements. These are not given to prove my point that dancing is wrong, this has been done with God’s word. However, these people were not preachers, or elders in the Lord’s church, nor even Christians, but they were honest enough to tell the truth. However, many in the church are not willing to admit that such dangers even exist.
2. Some say that they want their children to have poise, and so they send them to dancing school. May God help us to open our eyes, for our own sake, and that of our children.

There Is An Absolute Standard Of Morality

Charles A. Pledge

1. Many in the world believe only in a subjective standard of morality.
 - a. Conscience is held by many as the standard.
 - b. Others believe feelings are the supreme appeal. If it feels right and good, do it we are told.
 - c. Some believe that societal norm is the standard of conduct. If most in society agree it is permissible, do it.
 - d. Still others view civil law as the standard of conduct. This is not too different from societal norm.
 - e. Individual intelligence, or fleshly wisdom, is considered by many as the acceptable standard of conduct. If it works for me it is acceptable.
2. All of these are subjective, changeable standards that can’t function with equal justice for all people.
 - a. All subjective standards will eventually work to the detriment of

someone.

- b. More important is that the wisdom of the world always stands at counter purposes with God's will and the good of mankind in general.

DISCUSSION:

I. SOME REASONS FOR EXPECTING AN ABSOLUTE MORAL STANDARD.

- A. The **love** of God demands that he provide us with an absolute standard of morality.
 - 1. The results of no standard are many.
 - a. Chaos with everyone claiming a different standard.
 - b. Confusion would reign with no one knowing what to do in moral actions.
 - c. Every sort of harmful action would result with the best interests of people in general ignored and/or suppressed.
 - 2. God always acts in the best interests of his creatures because he loves them.
 - a. This is seen in his providential arrangement where even birds and plants are provided with necessities (Matt. 6:26-29).
 - b. Jesus argues from the lesser to the greater in Matt. 6:30.
 - c. God's love clearly demonstrates he will do all necessary to provide all needed for our best interests (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
- B. The **wisdom** of God demands that he provide man with an absolute standard of morality.
 - 1. Man, unaided by divine revelation can never provide a proper standard of conduct (Jer. 10:23).
 - a. Prov. 29:18 the word "vision" from Hebrew word meaning revelation, or heavenly vision.
 - b. Man is limited by his own experience but divine revelation surpasses that (Psalm 119:96).
 - 2. The wisdom of God was involved in the creation of man (Gen. 1:26-27).
 - a. This creation is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14-16).
 - b. God knew perfectly all of man's needs and how to completely provide for those needs by revelation.
- C. The **justice** of God demands that he provide man with an absolute moral standard.
 - 1. God will judge the world in righteousness (Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; 14:12; II Cor. 5:10).
 - 2. Justice demands that God inform man of all aspects of judgment, including how to live in order to be saved from condemnation in that judgment.
 - 3. God is absolutely just in all ways. The death of Jesus declares this fact (Rom. 3:25-26).

4. We are taught that the standard of judgment for our age is the word of Christ (John 12:48).
- D. The **holiness** of God demands that he provide man with an absolute standard of morality.
 1. Old and New Testaments alike declare the holiness of God.
 - a. Lev. 11:44 The holiness of God was the basis for his demanding their holiness.
 - b. I Peter 1:16 Again, explanation for the basis of holiness of Christians (I Peter 1:13-15).
 2. This is one overriding reason for discipline within the church.
 3. This is a foremost reason every saint should diligently strive for holiness (Heb. 12:14).

II. WHAT IS THIS ABSOLUTE STANDARD OF MORALITY GOD PROVIDES ALL MEN?

- A. First, we must recognize God himself is the source of all that is good.
 1. Truth, love, mercy, goodness of all kinds, originate with and emanate forth from God.
 2. This is the argument Jesus made against the young ruler in Matt. 19:17.
 - a. The ruler called Jesus good master, or teacher.
 - b. The ruler did not believe all Jesus claimed about himself.
 - c. Therefore, since only God is good, and the ruler didn't believe Jesus was God in the flesh, he could not correctly call Jesus good.
- B. Only in the revelation of God to man, can man find the absolute standard of morality God has given.
 1. John 14:9; Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15
 2. This revelation first in form of person, then the person in the word.
 - a. Heb. 1:1-2; John 17:8
 - b. Full expression of Jesus in our life when our life reflects the gospel of Christ (Gal. 2:20).
 3. The Word of Christ, the NT, is the final authority of God's standard of morality.
 - a. This is the word that reveals the light of Jesus (II Cor. 4:3-4).
 - b. This is the word that reveals to man the nature of God into which all must grow (Rom. 8:29).
 - c. This is the word that we look into, conform unto and grow into the nature of Jesus (II Cor. 3:17-18; James 1:25).

III. MAN'S PROPER RESPONSE TO GOD'S STANDARD OF MORALITY.

- A. Yielding, submissive obedience unto it (Rom. 6:16-18).
- B. Urging it upon others (II Cor. 5:10-11).

- C. Standing fast in it (Eph. 6:13), and rebuking all deviation from it (Eph. 5:11).
- D. Patient waiting for the final measurement by the standard; final judgment (Rom. 1:18).

Fornication, Parking And Petting

Terry Joe Kee

1. What is fornication?
 - a. J. H. Thayer: "illicit sexual intercourse in general...used metaphorically of the worship of idols...to prostitute one's body to the lust of another...to give one's self to unlawful sexual intercourse." (p.532).
 - b. W. E. Vine: "illicit sexual intercourse...it stands for, or includes adultery" (Vol. II, page 125).
 - c. Guy N. Woods: "fornication is any kind of wrong-doing involving sexual acts" (*Questions and Answers Open Forum*, pp.154,155).
 - d. Adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery. Fornication is a much broader term and includes all illicit sexual intercourse from adultery, to incest, to sodomy, to bestiality, to every other sexual perversion under heaven.
2. The word "fornication" is found four times in the Old Testament all of which refer to spiritual fornication (II Chron. 21:11; Isa. 23:17; Ezek 16:26,29). The same word is translated numerous times in the Old Testament as "Harlot," "Harlot's" or "Harlots."
3. "Fornication" is referred to thirty-two times in the New Testament. Commonly, these references are to physical fornication (i.e. Matt. 19:9), although several do refer to those who spiritually prostitute themselves (i.e. Rev. 19:2).

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PROBLEM OF FORNICATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

- A. "Newsweek" magazine, January 20, 1992, stated that teenage pregnancy is rising at a yearly rate of 8.4 percent.
- B. "Parents" magazine, March, 1992: studies show that 50% of all teenage girls and 60% of all teenage boys are sexually active today.
 1. These reports correspond to recent public school classes on "sex education" with some schools distributing condoms to their students to promote "safe sex."
 2. Schools are allowed to teach children in elementary grades how

to have “safe sex,” but cannot teach them the importance of abstinence, because we would be making moral judgments against their intended behavior.

3. Immorality can be encouraged, but not morality.
4. Recently, a denominational group had 103,000 youths taking a pledge of abstinence, but national attention was not given to those young people.
- C. “Newsweek” magazine, May 4, 1992: 40% of out-of-wedlock fathers are now accepting responsibility for their actions.
- D. Incest is a terrible sin, but it receives sympathy when Woody Allen and his former wife’s adopted daughter Soon Yi Farrow Previn for months are openly portrayed as lovers.
- E. Homosexuality (sodomy) is being argued by “authorities” as genetically determined behavior.
 1. Simon LeVay, Neuroscientist at Salk Institute in La Jolla, California examined the brains of 41 cadavers, 19 of whom were homosexual males, and determined that a “tiny area believed to control sexual activity appears to be smaller in Homosexuals.” “Newsweek,” February 24, 1992
 2. Psychologist Michael Bailey of Northwestern University and psychiatrist Richard Pillard of Boston University studied identical twins and found that if one is “gay” (a sodomite), it is almost three times more likely that the other one will be gay, compared to the rate of fraternal twins. They stated their findings “emerged with almost startling clarity...with some exceptions.” “Newsweek,” February 24, 1992
- F. Fornication is a major problem in the U.S. that is considered “glorified behavior” for which one is not responsible.
 1. Those held up to our youth as role models have their live-in lovers. What does this teach our youth?
 2. Movie, music, sports and TV celebrities glory in and celebrate the births of their children born out-of-wedlock. Country music star Wynonna Judd, when announcing her pregnancy, was asked if she intended to marry now and responded, “First things first.”

II. BIBLE WARNINGS AGAINST FORNICATION.

- A. The Bible condemns every kind of fornication.
 1. The Israelites were warned not to be engaged in the practices of the heathen nations around them.
 2. They were warned against incest with a mother, step-mother, step-sister, granddaughter, half-sister, aunt, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, step-daughter, step-granddaughter, mother-in-law, etc. (Lev. 18).
 3. Bestiality is also condemned (Lev. 18:23).
 4. Sodomy is condemned (Lev. 18:22).
 5. These common practices of heathen nations were the reason God

- gives for driving the heathen out of the land (Lev. 18:24-30).
- B. The New testament abounds with passages condemning fornication of every kind.
 - 1. Incest is condemned (I Cor. 5).
 - 2. Adultery is condemned (Rom. 13:9).
 - 3. Homosexuality and lesbianism are condemned. These were heathen practices (Rom. 1:18-32).
 - 4. All whoremongering is classed as lawlessness (Heb. 13:4; I Tim. 1:9,10).
 - C. Fornicators cannot enter the kingdom.
 - 1. It is listed among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19).
 - 2. Fornication had been practiced among the Corinthians (I Cor. 6:9,10).
 - 3. One cannot enter the kingdom continuing in these sins (Gal. 5:19-21; I Cor. 6:9-11).
 - 4. Such sins must be "*mortified*" (Col. 3:5-7).
 - D. Those who will repent and forsake their fornication can be forgiven.
 - 1. The incestuous man in Corinth was forgiven when he repented (I Cor. 5; II Cor. 2).
 - 2. The Corinthians, through their obedience to the gospel, had forsaken their fornication. Their fornication is mentioned in the past tense—"such were some of you" (I Cor. 6:11).
 - 3. Paul calls for men to "*flee fornication*" (I Cor. 6).

III. DANGER SIGNS TO WATCH FOR AND AVOID. Proverbs 5; 7

- A. Solomon is warning his son against strange women.
- B. These warnings are still good advice to keep us from fornication.
 - 1. Watch out for her speech (Prov. 5:3,4; 7:5).
 - a. It is seductive—inviting (Prov. 7:21).
 - b. It is smooth—flattering (cf. Prov. 6:24; Rom. 16:17,18).
 - c. Its end is bitter (Prov. 5:4; Eccl. 7:26).
 - d. It is as sharp as a two-edged sword—deadly.
 - 2. Know upon whom she preys (II Cor. 2:11).
 - a. The simple—those easily persuaded.
 - b. Those who do not guard their company—"among the youths" (Prov. 7:7; I Cor. 15:33).
 - c. Those who are idle—passing time on the streets (Prov. 7:8).
 - d. Those who are children of the darkness and love to go out in the night (Prov. 7:9).
 - 3. Watch out for one's dress—the attire of an harlot.
 - a. Much can be learned about one by their dress (I Tim. 2:10; I Pet. 3:1ff).
 - b. Outward dress or lack thereof tells much about the inner person.
 - c. She sets herself as pleasant to the eye, the touch, and the smell (Prov. 7:16).

4. She lies about her intentions.
 - a. She calls out as one seeking peace and is morally upright (Prov. 7:14).
 - b. She stalks her prey, but makes him believe providence or fate brought them together (Prov. 7:15).
 - c. She portrays herself as intent on love, but really only desires to fulfill her lusts (Prov. 7:18).
 - d. She is unfaithful in all her dealings (Prov. 7:19,20).
5. Her intent is to carry you to the slaughter (Prov. 7:22,23).
 - a. She will rob you of your morality.
 - b. She will kill in you your purity and uprightness (I Tim. 5:22).
- C. How can I keep myself from fornication?
 1. Remember the instruction of your heavenly Father (Prov. 5:7).
 2. Keep away from seductive ones, remove yourself far from them (Prov. 5:8; I Cor. 6:18).
 3. “*Abstain from all appearance of evil*” (Prov. 5:8; I Thess. 5:22).
- D. Why do some get themselves into these situations?
 1. They hate instruction (Prov. 5:12).
 2. They refuse correction (Prov. 5:12).
 3. They refuse to apply the teaching of God (Prov. 5:13).
 4. Just because one sits in the assembly does not mean he will keep himself pure (Prov. 5:14).

CONCLUSION:

1. God has authorized only one way to fulfill the fleshly desires we have—Marriage.
 - a. Only in marriage is the bed undefiled (Heb. 13:4).
 - b. Every bed co-habitated in outside marriage is condemned and those who so engage are lost (Gal. 5:19-21; I Cor. 6:9,10).
2. If one will seek to rob you of your purity through fornication, he has no respect for you now, nor will he have if he marries you!

Parents Providing Moral Leadership And Training In The Home

Virgil L. Hale

1. Home is one of the sweetest and most used words in our vocabulary.
 - a. Song: “Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”

2. There are far more *houses* than real *homes* in America and the world.
 - a. The poet has said, "It takes a heap a living in a house to make a home."
3. One cause of the fall of the Roman Empire was the deterioration of the home.
 - b. J. Edgar Hoover blamed parents for the juvenile delinquency in America.
 - c. The home is the foundation upon which society rests.

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD HAS ALWAYS EXPECTED PARENTS TO TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN PROPERLY.

- A. Please note God's evaluation of Abraham (Gen. 18:19).
- B. Under the law of Moses, parents were required to teach their children (Deut. 4:9-10; 6:6-9; 11:18-25).
- C. Being in a place of leadership did not exempt them.
 1. Eli (I Sam. 3:13).
 - a. This shows that he could have done something—he could have made a difference.
 2. Samuel (I Sam. 8:3; 5).
 - a. Evidently he did not learn from the mistakes of Eli.
 3. David had many problems with his children.
 4. It is possible to get so involved in the lives and problems of others, that we fail our own family. These men did!
- D. There are also good examples of parents in the Bible
 1. Jochebed—mother of Moses.
 2. Mary—mother of Jesus.
 3. Lois and Eunice—grandmother and mother of Timothy.
 - a. Note what Paul could say about Timothy (Phil. 2:19-23).

II. PARENTS TODAY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REARING AND TRAINING OF THEIR CHILDREN.

- A. God did not give this responsibility to the elders, nor the preacher, nor the Bible school teachers.
 1. Parents must accept this God-given responsibility.
 - a. Children are like clay—must be molded in right way.
 - b. A child's mind is blank at birth, and it will be filled with something. We must see that it is filled with right things.
 2. Elders have their responsibility before and after being appointed.
 - a. Note the qualifications (I Tim. 3:4-5; Titus 1:6).
 - b. So do preachers, teachers and all other Christians.
- B. A home must be God-centered.
 1. In far too many homes, God has been crowded out.
- C. A home must have a head.
 1. The husband is to be that head (Eph. 5:22-24).
 - a. He is not to be a tyrant, but he is the head.

2. Far too many husbands turn this responsibility over to the wife—but not with God's approval.
 - a. Many wives then turn it over to the children. Is there any wonder that homes are in trouble?
3. Some men are more concerned with their jobs or fishing or golf than they are their families. This is sad, but true.
- D. A home must have a keeper.
 1. This is the wife's place (Titus 2:4-5).
 2. Animals need their mother but for a short time.
 - a. Children need them at least 18 to 20 years. In fact, for as long as they live.
 3. Women would do well to read Proverbs 31 regularly.
 4. The chairman of a large religious body's ladies society made the following statement some years ago.
 - a. "Modern homes do not require the mother's full time.
 - b. Modern children are not at home much anyway—so why should the mothers be?"
- E. Children are a blessing to the home, and God has a plan for them as well as He does father and mother.
 1. Eph. 6:1-3; Prov. 23:22
 2. Many children are not willing to care for their parents when they are old. They forget who cared for them when they were too little to care for themselves. Please note I Tim. 5:4,8.
- F. Worldliness has taken over our society.
 1. Gambling, cursing, drinking, immodesty, dancing, etc. is the norm of the day.
 2. This makes the job of parenting much harder, but not impossible. We must do our very best, and ask God's help.

III. HOW TO RAISE A DELINQUENT.

- A. The police department of Houston, Texas gives the parents of all juveniles who run afoul of the law's twelve rules.
 1. Begin in infancy to give the child everything he wants. In this way, he will grow up believing the world owes him a living.
 2. When he picks up "bad" words, or "dirty" words, laugh at him. That will make him think he is "cute." He will run off and pick up other words that are worse.
 3. Never give him any spiritual training until he's 21 and then let him decide for himself. By the same logic, never teach him the English language. Maybe, when he is old enough, he may learn to speak Bantu.
 4. Praise him in his presence to all the neighbors, show how much smarter he is than their children.
 5. Avoid the use of the word "wrong." It may develop in the child a "guilt complex." This will prepare him to believe that when he is punished later for stealing cars, or assaulting women, that

society is “against him” and that he is being persecuted.

6. Pick up after him: his shoes, books and clothes. Do everything for him, so that he will be experienced in throwing burdens on others.
 7. Let him read anything he wants. Have no concern whatsoever for what goes into his mind. Provide him with Lily cups for his lips, but let his brain drink out of any dirty container for words and ideas.
 8. Quarrel frequently in the presence of your children. In this way they will be prepared for broken homes later.
 9. Give him all the spending money he wants; never let him earn his own.
 10. Satisfy every craving of the child for food, drink, and everything that has to do with the sense of taste, touch. Gratify his desires.
 11. Take his part against the policeman, teacher and neighbors. They are all “prejudiced” against him.
 12. When he gets into real trouble, always defend yourself and say: “I never could do anything with him.”
- B. I have had the above for a number of years, but it speaks loudly to the subject under consideration.
1. We all need to learn the lessons that it teaches.

CONCLUSION:

1. Being a parent is a great responsibility, but it can be a rewarding experience.
2. Rest assured, your children are going to be trained by someone.
 - a. It can be the dope peddler; the one who sells pornographic literature; the gambler; the bootlegger, etc. or it can be you.
 - b. It can even be the promoter of false doctrine.
 - c. With your children’s soul at stake—who do you want to train them? The choice is yours!

Capital Punishment

Dan Sikes

1. Rom. 13:1-4
2. Most people are alarmed by the dramatic surge of violent crime and the seeming ineffectiveness of our judicial system to do anything to stem the tide of growing anarchy, lawlessness and civil insurrection.

- a. Murders, Drive-by shootings, Kids carrying guns—
- b. Armed robberies, Drugs, Sexual assaults—
- 3. Politicians under pressure to “do something” have:
 - a. Made crime and violence a campaign issue promising to:
 - 1) Appoint judges tough on crime.
 - 2) Enforce existing laws more stringently.
 - 3) Demand extended sentences for repeat offenders—“Three strikes and your out.”
 - 4) Serving 75% of terms before parole.
 - b. Passed the “Brady Bill” requiring a mandatory waiting period for purchasing handguns—police check crime records.
 - c. Outlawing the sale of assault type weapons.
 - d. Implemented trade-off programs designed to get people to turn in their guns.
 - e. Promised to increase number of police on the street.
- 4. The problem with many of these “band-aid” solutions is:
 - a. Violent criminals don’t abide by gun and other laws.
 - b. Criminals know that even though they receive maximum sentence, they will only serve a fraction of the time.
 - c. Overcrowding of Federal and State prisons has forced judges to plea-bargain and reduce sentences.
 - d. Police frustrated because perpetrators released on technicalities.
 - e. Violent offenders have been made the “victims of society” and are protected by the constitution while the real victims receive little or no protection.
 - f. Idea of responsibility and accountability negated.
 - 1) Menendez brothers. (Hung jury said “not responsible”)
 - 2) Lorainna Bobbitt (Her husband drove her to it).
 - 3) Dirty politicians (Re-elected in spite of crimes).
 - g. Instead of determining guilt or innocence, juries become amateur psycho-analysts (Decisions based on “how do you feel” instead of “what do you think”).
- 5. Because of humanistic and modernistic philosophies of our day, the God ordained role of civil government as “*the minister of God for good...and a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*” (Rom. 13:4) has been effectively reduced.
- 6. Many Christians and others, though realizing something drastic must be done, hedge at the thought of imposing capital punishment (death penalty), believing it is inconsistent with Biblical teaching and Christian principles.
 - a. “*Thou shalt not kill...*” (Ex. 20:13).
 - b. “*Love thy neighbor as thyself...*” (Rom. 13:9).
 - c. “*...Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*” (Rom. 12:19).
- 7. In our lesson, we want to show that capital punishment is not immoral, unethical, or in violation of Christian principles, but has always been and

continues to be a part of God's design. We will examine:

- a. Capital punishment in each Biblical dispensation.
- b. God's design for capital punishment.
- c. Answer objections that are often raised by opponents.

DISCUSSION:

I. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN EACH BIBLE DISPENSATION.

A. Capital punishment during the Old Testament.

1. Under Patriarchy.

a. Before the flood.

- 1) Cain's punishment (Gen. 4:8-15).
- 2) Very little revealed about life and laws under this early period, but God had given laws/punishments (Gen 2-3).
 - a) We don't read about God's law regarding sacrifices, but Heb. 11:4 says "*by faith*" (Rom 10:17).
 - b) Apparent that God's law made murder a crime punishable by death.
 - c) Seems at this point, punishment may have been administered directly by God.
 - d) For some unknown reason, God stayed Cain's deserved execution marking him as a warning to those who might subsequently kill him.
 - e) Exception proving the rule.

b. After the flood.

- 1) Mankind became exceedingly wicked and violent (Gen. 6:5; 11-12).
- 2) God did not intend for such wickedness and violence to go unchecked.
- 3) Genesis 9:5-6
- 4) Some argue this passage carries no weight because of its simplicity.
 - a) No distinction between involuntary manslaughter and willful, premeditated murder.
 - b) No mention of civil governments, courts, trial, or due process.
- 5) These arguments do not nullify the force of the passage.
 - a) God mandated a general principle regarding murder similar to universal law of marriage (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:1-9). Also:
 - Gen. 8:22 — Seasons as part of God's continual natural order recognized.
 - Gen. 9:2 — Basic relation of dread of man by animals.
 - Gen. 9:3 — Eating of meats.
 - Gen. 9:11 — No more ruin of earth by flood.
 - Gen. 9:6 — Reason for exacting death penalty

(created in God's image) is same for all ages and times.

- b) For first time, God delegated death penalty into the hands of men.
- c) Since God dealt directly with heads of families during patriarchy, apparently they enforced penalty.
 - Reasonable, conscientious men.
 - Recognizing implications and limitations.
 - Often received divine guidance and instruction.
- d) Later under nationalistic system of Mosaic law, specific rules given regarding due process, asylum and mitigating circumstances such as accidental death and justifiable homicide.

2. Under Mosaic Law.

- a. Capital punishment integral part of divine statutes.
- b. Certain crimes worthy of death (Deut 21:22).
 - 1) Murder (Ex. 21:12; Num. 35:30).
 - 2) Perjury where another's life endangered (Deut. 19:16-21).
 - 3) Smiting, cursing, disobeying, rebelling against parents (Ex. 21:15; 17; Deut. 21:18-20).
 - 4) Kidnapping (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7).
 - 5) Adultery, incest, bestiality (Lev. 20:10-21).
 - 6) Witchcraft or sorcery (Ex. 22:18).
 - 7) Idolatry (Ex. 22:20; Deut. 17:2-6).
 - 8) Defiling the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14-15).
 - 9) Forcible rape (Deut. 22:25-27).
 - 10) Civil disobedience (Deut. 17:12-13).
- c. We are not suggesting that all of these offenses should be punishable by death today.
 - 1) Certain conditions peculiar only to the Israelites made some of these crimes especially heinous.
 - 2) The purity of the people for the purpose of preserving the bloodline of Christ was necessary.
 - 3) The **general principle** of capital punishment in certain cases, especially murder, is established consistently from beginning to end.
- d. Forms of execution included:
 - 1) Stoning with stones (Lev. 20:2).
 - 2) Edge of the sword (Deut. 13:15).
 - 3) Burning with fire (Lev. 21:9).
 - 4) Hanging from tree (Deut. 21:22).

B. Capital punishment in the New Testament.

- 1. Jesus endorsed the principle of capital punishment prescribed under the Old Law.
 - a. Matt. 5:21 *"Ye have heard that it was said...Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment...."*

- b. “Judgement” refers to death sentence imposed on murderers by Jewish courts (Deut. 16:18; II Chro. 19:5).
 - c. In Matt. 5:22, Jesus didn’t nullify the authority of the civil courts, but appealed to the higher authority of God’s ultimate *death penalty—HELL!*
- 2. Jesus’ statement to Peter when he cut off Malchus’ ear implies Jesus recognition of civil authority to impose death by the sword for murder (Matt. 26:52).
- 3. In Jesus’ trial before Pilate, Christ conceded the governor’s official power to have him crucified, but reminded Pilate of the supreme source from which it was derived (John 19:10-11).
- 4. In Paul’s defense before Fustus, he said, *“For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die...”* (Acts 25:11).
 - a. Paul acknowledged “crimes worthy of death.”
 - b. Did so with divine guidance in both manner and content (Matt. 10:16-20).
- 5. Rom. 13:1-4, Paul establishes Divine right given to civil authority to execute evildoers.
 - a. The “sword” symbolic of death penalty.
 - b. Moreover, when they impose it, they are acting as *“ministers of God”* and *“revengers to execute”* God’s wrath.
 - c. Not suggesting there aren’t abuses, but God who ordains has power to remove them through providential power.
 - d. Dan. 2:21 *“And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings...”*
- 6. I Peter 2:13-14, Peter echoes the sentiments of Paul in Rom. 13.
 - a. I Peter 2:13 *“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.”*
 - b. “Punishment” is from same Greek root as “avenger” in Rom. 13:4.
- C. These passages clearly establish capital punishment as ordained and authorized by God from the beginning.
 - 1. Neither Jesus nor the apostles annulled capital punishment, but instead, acknowledged it.
 - 2. No Biblical reason to think it is not to continue today.

II. GOD’S DESIGN AND PURPOSE FOR IMPOSING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

- A. Capital punishment is established to satisfy justice.
 - 1. The idea of “justice” demands a fixed, unchanging moral standard of right and wrong.
 - 2. That standard comes from God who is the epitome and essence of justice.

- a. Deut. 32:4 *“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”*
- b. Psalm 89:14 *“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne...”*
3. Utilitarians, humanists and liberal thinkers of our day have worked hard to detach justice from the context of its religious roots.
4. Their theory says that because all human laws vary regarding place and time, therefore they must be considered purely relative and changeable.
5. Thus, according to their theory, justice to one person is revenge to another.
 - a. Retribution in the theological and judicial sense is the proper satisfaction or payment for one’s actions in accordance with the law.
 - 1) Ancient figure of Justice and her scales—a restoring of equilibrium.
 - 2) No element of vindictiveness.
 - 3) Proper, legitimate and moral concept.
 - 4) God will take retribution against those that don’t obey the gospel (II Thess. 1:7-9), but isn’t immoral in so doing.
 - 5) The civil government is charged with similar responsibility in dealing with the *“lawless and disobedient”* (I Tim. 1:9).
 - b. Revenge implies malice, anger and resentment motivating one to return blow for blow.
 - 1) Israel was forbidden to extract personal or private revenge, but *“love neighbor as thyself”* (Lev. 19:18).
 - 2) Christians are also restricted from *“resisting evil”* with force (Matt. 5:39) or personally avenging wrongs inflicted upon them motivated by hate, resentment, or impulse to get even (Rom. 12:19).
 - 3) Revenge is *subjective* punishment while retribution is *objective*.
 - c. Civil authorities have a divine directive to implement capital punishment as a means of imposing the demands of justice on evildoers.
- B. Capital punishment is designed to be a deterrent.
 1. Many argue that the death penalty does not deter murderers, rapists and other violent offenders.
 2. Statistics are often presented that seem to show no deterrent effect of capital punishment.
 - a. Often these statistics include a wide range of homicides such as involuntary manslaughter, thus making statistics loose force.
 - b. Others are statistics that poll convicted murderers or rapists

rather than those who actually refrained from violence because of death penalty.

3. Also, the threat of the death penalty may not be effective because of inconsistent and haphazard way it is administered (years of litigation, media coverage, emotional appeals, public opinion).
4. Brother Wayne Jackson observes that under the Mosaic Law, the death penalty was effective as a deterrent for the following reasons:
 - a. Greatly stressed from childhood to adulthood (Duet. 6:6-7).
 - b. Administered fairly and consistently (Num. 35:30).
 - c. Administered without unnecessary delay (Ecc. 8:11).
 - d. Public execution drove home consequences of capital offenses (Deut. 13:11; 17:13; 21:21).
 - e. "To suggest that the death sentence does not deter crime is in effect, to suggest that *no punishment* can deter crime. The utter folly of such a position is easily demonstrated" (*Moral Issues*, Ed. Thomas Eaves, Gospel Light Pub., 1978 p.17).

III. ANSWER TO ARGUMENTS AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

- A. *Argument 1*—Gen. 9:6 is under the Old Testament and is not in force today since Christ came to fulfil the Law (to appeal to Old Testament passages would be to impose every ordinance of the Law today).
 1. Gen. 6:9 was not a part of the Mosaic Law, but was given to Noah after the flood, antedating the Law.
 2. Like God's law for marriage (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:9), Gen. 6:9 is a universal principle applicable to men of all times.
 3. Jesus not only fulfilled the Law of Moses in the sense of bringing it to perfection and fully revealing the truth, but *satisfied its demands for justice* by offering himself as substitutionary payment for the sins of all men (Heb. 5:8-9; 9:11-10:25; I Peter 2:24; I Tim. 2:6; I John 2:2).
- B. *Argument 2*—The Bible teaches "*Thou Shalt not kill*" and capital punishment is "legalized killing."
 1. Ex. 20:13 Literally "*Thou shalt do no murder...*"
 2. Implies cold-blooded, pre-mediation with malice.
 3. The death penalty is not motivated by malice, but is imposed as an objective means of imposing *justice*.
 4. There is a great deal of difference in cold-blooded murder and enforcing the death penalty to protect the innocent, law abiding citizen.
 5. It's clear the same law that said "*Thou shalt not kill*" also demanded the death penalty for commission of some crimes (Num. 35:30; Ex. 21:12).
- C. *Argument 3*—Capital punishment violates Christian principles of non-retaliation and non-violence.

1. Matt. 5:38-39, Rom. 12:19 and related passages are to individual Christians not to civil governments.
2. Civil governments given Divine right to impose the death penalty as a means of maintaining order in a world rebellious to Him (Rom. 13:1-4; I Tim. 1:9).
- D. *Argument 4*—Jesus' refusal to punish the woman taken in adultery proves he abrogated capital punishment.
 1. The Law of Moses demanded that **both** parties caught in adultery be put to death (Deut. 22:22), while only the woman was brought and charged in John 8:4.
 2. Also, according to Deut. 17:7, the witnesses of said crime were to be first to administer punishment.
 3. Obviously, those who brought her were either guilty themselves, had not witnessed the crime, or both.
- E. *Argument 5*—The death penalty by taking life, ends any future opportunity for repentance and salvation.
 1. On the contrary, certainty of death may move criminal *toward* repentance and salvation (II Cor. 7:10).
 2. The laxity of penal system in imposing just punishment leading to repentance, may be partly responsible for high percent of repeat offenders.
 3. Rehabilitation demands a sense that punishment is deserved and remorse (penitent thief, Luke. 23:41).
- F. *Argument 6*—Inequitable administration of death penalty on poor and minorities and possible execution of innocent argues against capital punishment.
 1. The same can be said about imprisonment!
 2. Abuses and failures don't nullify the basic need for law and punishment.

CONCLUSION:

1. Prov. 14:34 "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*"
2. Psalm 9:17 "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*"
3. Christ offers salvation, even to the vilest criminal through the Gospel (II Thess. 2:14).

Adultery

Eddy Craft

1. In this lesson we will notice that hardly anybody thinks adultery is real anymore. Adultery has become generally accepted in our society and as a result of this our work as preachers and elders has become harder.
2. I will also point out that adultery can be lived in and that if one persists in it, they will lose their soul.
3. One of the reasons why our society has such a loose attitude about adultery is because our preachers have stopped preaching on divorce and remarriage. Divorce is a sin against:
 - a. The marriage vows (Matt. 5:37).
 - b. Your mate (Matt. 5:32; I Cor. 7:5).
 - c. Nation (Psalm 9:17).
 - d. Children (Eph. 6:4).
 - e. The leadership (I Tim. 3:2).
 - f. God's Word (Matt. 19:9; 5:32).
 - g. The Church (Matt. 5:16).
 - h. Self (I Cor. 7:11-12).
4. There are many passages in the Bible that point out the sin of adultery:
 - a. Exodus 20:14 "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*"
 - b. Matt. 5:28 "*...That whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committeth adultery with her already in his heart.*"
 - c. Matt. 19:9 "*...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 doeth commit adultery.*"
 - d. Rom. 2:22; James 4:4

DISCUSSION:

I. DEFINITION OF ADULTERY.

- A. From the above Scripture texts we can see this commandment is a many faceted subject, requiring extensive study and an open mind to receive the truth learned.
- B. Meanings of the terms *adultery* and *fornication*.
 1. (*naaph*, adultery): "Lit. commit adultery: usu. of man, always with the wife of another" (BDB).
 2. (*moichao*, adultery): "To have unlawful intercourse with another's wife, to commit adultery with" (Thayer). "Sexual intercourse between a married person and another not the spouse" (Webster).
 3. (*zanah*, fornication): "To commit fornication, be a harlot" (BDB).
 4. (*porneia*, fornication): "Fornication, prop. of illicit sexual intercourse in general" (Thayer). "Voluntary sexual intercourse between unmarried persons" (Webster).

- C. We are thus able to see that adultery is a violation of the marriage vows, fornication is a sexual sin that would include adultery, sexual union between the unmarried, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, or any other sexual perversion.
- D. Other usages are figurative, such as lust in the heart before or without the physical act (Matt. 5:28), or the violation of our vows of faithfulness to God (Rom. 7:1-4; James 4:4).
- E. Much has been spoken and written concerning the meaning of the word "fornication." Special escape features are advanced by some who would enter upon a long tedious questioning and dispute of the word. One such view centers around the technical differences between fornication and adultery. By present day definition fornication means, "illicit sexual intercourse on the part of the *unmarried* person." Whereas, adultery is reasoned as "illicit sexual intercourse on the part of *married* persons." The obvious intention here is to force the idea that there is no reason for divorce and remarriage on any ground except that of sexual promiscuity which took place before marriage.
- F. While these technical definitions are acceptable, the writers of the Bible do not always use these terms so differently. If the young man in the Corinthian letter had taken his father's wife in unlawful marriage as is generally accepted, Paul would have used the term "adultery" rather than "fornication," if he endorsed a technical difference in the meaning of these terms (I Cor. 5). In the New Testament, fornication is a broader term than adultery, and includes other forms of uncleanness.

II. HOW IS ADULTERY COMMITTED:

- A. Adultery is an act of sexual intercourse with one other than a mate.
 - 1. This sin is of such magnitude that Jesus would allow divorce and remarriage to the innocent party (Matt. 19:9).
 - 2. This is exactly what Jesus taught in the sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:31-32).
- B. Adultery can also be committed in the heart (Matt. 5:28). This would also be true of an unmarried person.

III. CAN ONE LIVE IN ADULTERY.

- A. Some have contended that it is never correct to speak of a person as "*living in adultery*," because this, in fact, is an impossibility.
 - 1. They assert that adultery can be "committed" but not "lived in."
 - 2. Those who hold this view ordinarily go on to argue that only the first unlawful intercourse was adultery; after that the persons involved are considered married in God's sight. Hence, though one can "commit" adultery, he cannot "live" in adultery.
- B. The Bible nowhere teaches that fornication constitutes marriage; yet that is just what the preceding theory affirms.

1. The Bible clearly teaches we can “live” in sin. Rom. 6:1-2 says we can live in sin or else why would he encourage the Romans not to live any longer in it.
2. Col. 3:5-7, Paul speaks of the time when certain ones to whom he was writing “lived in these things” — referring back to the “fornication” and other sins listed two verses earlier.

IV. CAN ADULTERY BE FORGIVEN?

- A. There is no sin that cannot be forgiven, if the sinner is willing to repent. Adultery is indeed a serious sin, but adultery, like any other sin, can be forgiven.
- B. Jesus forgave the woman taken in adultery in John 8:3-11.
 1. Many of those who made up the New Testament Church had committed adultery (I Cor. 6:9-11; Col. 3:5-7), therefore we have Bible proof that one can be forgiven of adultery if he will repent.
 2. It doesn't matter what sin one commits, they can be washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 6:11).
- C. Forgiveness does not give one a license to sin.
 1. If he is guilty of adultery he cannot go back and commit that sin again.
 2. If he is forgiven of stealing, he is not allowed to steal again.
 3. If a man is forgiven for drinking, he is not allowed to drink again.
 4. If a man is forgiven of homosexuality, he cannot get involved in another homosexual relationship.

CONCLUSION:

1. We live in an age that differs sharply from the time that once frowned on the matter of adultery. Gradually, liberal thought has practically given “status” to this great threat to harmony in the home.
2. I am well aware of the fact that our contact with prospective converts to Christ very often involves heart breaking marital situations. Do not think for one moment that it is any harder to deal with this complex problem in our society than it was during the personal ministry of Christ when He was confronted by the question that could involve His popularity with the Jews. The loose morals of His time and ours has made it more difficult for gospel preachers. The only hope that the world has is the gospel and don't underestimate its power in converting the lost (Rom. 1:16).
3. Brethren we must take a strong stand against adultery because those who engage in such without repentance cannot enter into the Kingdom of God and thus will be lost in a Christless grave and a devils hell in all eternity (Gal. 5:19-21; Matt. 25:46).
4. Christianity demands that marriage be considered honorable in all respects. When the home loses its sacredness then we are in trouble.

Murder, Euthanasia And Abortion

Mark Bass

1. It's sad that topics such as these should even need to be dealt with in the Lord's church.
 - a. Sadly, however, we are reaping the bitter fruits of a generation of church members raised on "warm and fuzzy" sermons designed to make people feel good.
 - b. Many in the church have never been exposed to book, chapter and verse "Bible" preaching designed to "*reprove and rebuke*."
2. We are not going to spend a great deal of time on the topic of murder; the bulk of our study will deal with abortion with some coverage of Euthanasia.
 - a. The sin of murder is one almost as old as humanity.
 - b. The problems of abortion and Euthanasia are still in their infancy in comparison.

DISCUSSION:

I. MURDER.

- A. Surprisingly the word "murder" occurs only nine times in the Bible (the term "murders" occurs four times).
- B. Just what is murder?
 1. According to Webster's, murder is "the crime of unlawfully killing a person especially with malice aforethought."
 2. According to Thayer, it means "to kill, slay, murder."
- C. One does not have to read very far in Genesis to find record of the first murder (Gen. 4:1-8).
 1. In a fit of jealousy, Cain killed his brother Abel.
 2. Since that time, the shedding of blood has become a very common thing.
- D. Murder is wrong for several reasons:
 1. Man was/is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26).
 - a. To willfully take a human life is to destroy that which was created in the image of God.
 - b. When Cain killed his brother Abel, God punished him (Gen. 4:9-15).
 2. Murder is clearly forbidden in the scriptures:
 - a. Murderers were to be put to death under the law of Moses (Num. 35:16-18,21).
 - b. In Matt. 19:18 Jesus said, "*thou shalt do no murder*."
 - c. "*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*" (I John 3:15).
 - d. In Romans 13:9 Paul said, "*thou shalt not kill*."
 - e. These passages (and others) make it very clear that murder is not something to be taken lightly.

II. EUTHANASIA.

- A. Because of space limitations, we will only be able to touch the “hem of the garment” of this complex issue.
- B. Euthanasia is a compound word derived from the Greek *eu* meaning “well,” and *thanatos* meaning “death.”
 - 1. As used by the ancient Greeks it simply meant to die with peace and dignity.
 - 2. Over the years the word has evolved to include many other things.
- C. A great deal has been written and said in regard to euthanasia.
 - 1. The actions of Dr. Jack Kevorkian have done much to bring the subject to national attention.
 - 2. Phrases such as “death with dignity” and “the right to die,” and other emotionally charged terms designed to cloud the issue are frequently thrown around.
- D. Basically there are two types of Euthanasia:
 - 1. **Voluntary.**
 - a. A patient is dying a slow, painful death.
 - b. They ask for assistance in speeding up the process (assisted suicide).
 - 2. **Involuntary.**
 - a. This is to cause the death of one who is not able to ask for help in dying.
 - b. This would include little babies and those in a comatose state.
- E. What should the Christian’s response be to Euthanasia?
 - 1. I certainly do not claim to have all the answers for every situation.
 - 2. Life is a gift from God (Gen. 2:7).
 - a. As such, it must not be treated lightly or destroyed.
 - b. Those who want help in ending their earthly existence are wrong. Those who do so, are murderers (I John 3:15).
 - c. Those who would help or assist another take his/her life are wrong.
 - d. It is not man’s place or right to decide who is ready to die and when.
 - 3. Yes, physical suffering is bad, yet it helps us to learn humility, and enables us to comfort others.
 - a. We are assured that we will not be tempted above and beyond our ability to endure (I Cor. 10:13).
 - b. In most cases doctors can prescribe “pain killers” to help.
 - c. Study the book of Job, if there ever was an individual with a “right to die” (and a reason), it was Job.
- F. Allow me to make several observations:
 - 1. I do not believe it is wrong for a terminally ill individual to decline life support.
 - 2. I do not believe it is wrong to take a family member off of life

support when doctors say they are brain dead.

- a. *"The body without the spirit is dead"* (James 2:26).
 - b. The Bible equates the spirit or the soul with the reasoning part of man.
 - c. That being the case, when the brain ceases to function, the soul or the spirit is no longer present.
 - d. For all intents and purposes that individual is dead.
3. This whole issue of euthanasia has come about as a result of the cheapening of human life.
 - a. Abortion, murder (actually they are one in the same), are all results of the loss of respect for human life.
 - b. When people understand and respect the sanctity of human life we will not have these questions regarding euthanasia.

III. ABORTION.

A. A brief history:

1. January 22, 1973 was one of the blackest days in the 200+ year history of the United States.
 - a. On that day (known as "Black Monday") our U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the killing of an unborn baby is an act protected by the constitution of the United States.
 - b. In that Landmark decision the Court decided that the unborn child is not a "person" in any meaningful or "whole" sense, and therefore, is not protected by the fourteenth Amendment.
2. "According to the U.S. Supreme Court, the word 'person' does not include the unborn, therefore, they can be legally killed without penalty."
 - a. Any woman who wants to terminate her pregnancy before the 24th week of the pregnancy may do so.
 - b. There are over 1.5 million abortions each year...that works out to be 4,200 abortions a day, 177 an hour, 3 a minute or 1 every 20 seconds.
 - c. Think about it, one out of every three pregnancies in our country ends in abortion.
3. Since this ungodly ruling was handed down some twenty years ago, more babies have been killed than service men in all American wars combined.
 - a. Pharaoh's extermination of Hebrew boys was but a ripple on the ocean of time.
 - b. Herod's slaughter of the babies of Bethlehem would not equal one modern abortion clinic's daily quota.
4. I realize that the subject of abortion is a very emotional one.
 - a. Many charges, questions and allegations have been brought up regarding the subject.
 - b. But all of these questions are moot until we answer one basic question: **"Is that which is growing inside the mother's womb**

a human life?"

- B. Ultimately it comes down to the question, "Is the unborn child a living human being?"
1. From "cover to cover" the Bible teaches that human life is a sacred gift from our Maker.
 - a. Acts 17:25 "*he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.*"
 - b. As Creator and sustainer of life, God alone has the right to take a human life. Gen. 50:15-19.
 - 1) The exception to this is given by Paul in Romans 13.
 - 2) This text deals with the subject of capital punishment.
 2. Exodus 21:22 "*If men strive, and hurt a woman with child...and if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.*"
 - a. This one passage should be sufficient to settle the question once and for all.
 - b. If God felt this way about accidental abortion, imagine how he must view the mother who intentionally and wilfully aborts her child!
 3. God told Jeremiah, "*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations*" (Jer. 1:5).
 - a. Question: How could God have known Jeremiah before he was born, if the unborn fetus is not a living human being?
 - b. It doesn't sound like he was just a piece of "fetal tissue?"
 4. Psalm 51:5: "*Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*"
 - a. David was still David even prior to his birth.
 - b. He was still David (although unnamed by his parents), known of God, even in his mother's womb.
 - c. Does that sound like David was a lifeless piece of flesh in his mother's womb?
 5. Prov. 6:17, seven things that are an abomination to God.
 - a. One of these is "*hands that shed innocent blood.*"
 - b. Consider our Lord's evaluation of little children in Matt. 18:3: "*...except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"
 6. Rom. 1:31, those "*without natural affection*" are strongly denounced.
 - a. These words translate the Greek word *astorgos*. It means without "love of kindred" (Thayer).
 - b. Without doubt, a mother that can deliberately kill the innocent child in her womb is lacking normal motherly affection.
 7. In Luke 1 we find Mary, the mother of Jesus going to visit her cousin Elisabeth, who was also with child.

- a. Luke 1:40-41, “...when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, **the babe leaped in her womb.**”
 - 1) Was unborn John a living human being or merely a part of Elisabeth’s body?
 - 2) Just what was it that “leaped in her womb?”
- b. What if Elisabeth had decided she wanted a career rather than a baby and had opted for an abortion?
- c. We might mention that the word “babe” comes from the Greek word *brephos*.
- d. *Brephos* is used in reference to the unborn child (Luke 1:41), as well as an infant (Luke 2:12; II Tim. 3:15).
- e. Thayer’s Greek English Lexico: “an unborn child, embryo, fetus; a newborn child, an infant, a babe.”
- f. So we see that inspiration makes no distinction between the unborn fetus and the infant or young child.
- 8. Matt. 1:18: “**Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise...his mother Mary...was found with child....**”
 - a. He did not say (as do advocates of abortion) that she was with fetal tissue, potential life, or some blob of protoplasm.
 - b. Again I ask, what if Mary had wanted an abortion?
 - 1) She could have argued that she and Joseph were young and needed time together without children.
 - 2) Besides, this child was a bit premature (in the eyes of the world).
 - 3) Think of the embarrassment she could have saved herself.
 - 4) We should be thankful that God did not choose to send “his only begotten” in our generation, he might have been aborted long before the scribes and Pharisees could crucify him!
 - 5) Perhaps that is a bit sarcastic, but we need to give it some serious thought.
- 9. But lest anyone accuse us of having a Bible bias, let’s further consider the question “Is the unborn child a living human being?” from a scientific viewpoint?
 - a. Over twenty years ago the first International Conference on Abortion was held in Washington, D.C.
 - b. It brought together the leading minds in the fields of medicine, law, ethics, and social science. They met for several days.
 - c. The first question the medical group discussed was, ‘When does life begin?’
 - d. This medical group was composed of biochemists, professors of obstetrics and gynecology, geneticists, etc.
 - e. They unanimously concluded: “The majority of our group could find no point in time between the union of sperm and egg, or at least the blastocyst stage, and the birth of the infant

at which point we could say this was not a human life...**the changes occurring between implantation, a six-weeks embryo, a six months fetus, a one-week old child, or a mature adult are merely states of development and maturation.**"

10. To those who still believe that the unborn child is nothing more than a lifeless piece of flesh consider the following medical facts:
 - f. At age six weeks, human brain activity can be recorded on the electroencephalogram (EKG) and movement can be detected. At 18 days the human heart begins to beat.
 - g. Think back to high school biology; "both the sperm and ovum have life; they come together to create a new life."
 - h. Therefore, it is not unreasonable nor incorrect to say that life begins at conception.
 11. In recent years, some have argued that the fetus does not have a spirit or soul until it breaths at birth. Therefore abortion is not wrong.
 - a. If this be true, the fetus is actually dead according to James 2:26.
 - b. Furthermore, if the fetus does not have a soul or spirit until it takes its first breath, and the first breath is taken outside the womb, why not wait and perform the abortion outside the womb, rather than risk the mother's life by performing an abortion.
- C. Arguments in defence of abortion:
1. Some abortionists argue that it is cheaper to abort unwanted babies than support them on welfare after birth.
 - a. I can't argue with this fact! Admittedly, dead babies are cheaper than live ones.
 - b. But if we really want to economize, why not kill all babies with birth defects or severe handicaps? Think of the savings!
 - c. At the same time, why not have all Social Security recipients "put to sleep?"
 - 1) Think of the millions we could save.
 - 2) We could pay off the national debt in no time.
 - d. It doesn't take an Einstein to see the absurdity of such reasoning (?).
 - e. When we consider what Hitler did to the Jews, we cringe and shudder in horror and dismay.
 - 1) Countless millions murdered in Nazi gas chambers.
 - 2) But what about the millions of innocent babes being killed in their mother's wombs?
 - 3) What is the difference?
 - a) The honest observer must admit there is none.
 - b) Murder is still murder—even if it is called abortion.
 2. Others contend that abortions are often needed because of incest and/or rape.

- a. This emotional argument is frequently heard, and yet studies show that pregnancy from rape is virtually unheard of.
 - b. One reports states that "a study of 3,500 cases of rape in Minneapolis showed that not one single case of pregnancy occurred."
 - c. So, this argument is quickly deflated by the facts.
 - d. But even if a woman is pregnant as the result of rape or incest, does this give her the right to destroy another life?
 - 1) Since when do two wrongs make a right?
 - e. Those who use this warped logic should ask themselves, "In the case of rape or incest, who is at fault? who should be punished?"
 - 1) That unborn child did nothing to deserve death.
 - 2) Punishment should be dealt to the child molesters.
 - f. Before leaving this point of abortion in cases of rape or incest we might mention that "less than one percent of our annual million and a half abortions are for hardship cases such as rape, deformity, incest and threat to the mother's life."
3. It is argued that "abortion is the mother's right."
- a. Much has been said and written about "the mother's choice." (It's her body, she should be free to decide what she will do.)
 - b. But what about that little baby's "rights?"
 - c. Actually the woman does have the right to control her own body—but the baby is not her body!
 - d. A mother is simply a steward; a steward intrusted with a precious life.
 - 1) She carries it and provides for it until it is capable of living outside the womb.
 - 2) So, the life she carries is not hers to take!
 - e. If a woman has the constitutional right to remove or destroy an unwanted child in her womb, why doesn't she have the right to remove or destroy an unwanted three year old child?
 - 1) Both are living, breathing, feeling, functioning human beings.
 - 2) The only difference lies in the degree of development.
4. It is argued that abortion should be legal because "they're going to do it anyway."
- a. Using this same logic why not legalize prostitution and drugs because "they're going to do it anyway!"
 - b. Think of the savings in law enforcement, if we would just legalize most crimes!
 - 1) Why not legalize rape and incest? They're going to do it anyway.
 - 2) While we're at it, why not legalize robbery and extortion? People have always done it and always will.
 - 3) It doesn't take long to see the absurdity of such reasoning

(If we dare call it reasoning).

- c. So, those who attempt to justify abortion on these feeble grounds must look for another horse to ride!
- 5. The question sometimes raised, "Can we kill the unborn child if the mother's life is threatened?"
 - a. There was a time in medical history when this choice had to be made.
 - 1) However, it was not a matter of killing one to save the other. It was saving one and losing the other.
 - 2) There was never any intention of taking a life (the child's or the mother's).
 - b. Again I emphasize this is not a dilemma that we face today.
 - c. Hear the words of Dr. R. J. Hefferman: "Anyone who performs a therapeutic abortion (for physical disease) is either ignorant of modern methods of treating the complications of pregnancy, or is unwilling to take the time to use them."
- 6. In reality, abortion is only the stem of a far greater problem in the world and in the church—immorality.
 - a. Sadly enough some 70% of all abortions are performed on unwed mothers. We must teach and encourage young people to honor the principles of sexual morality taught by Jesus.
 - b. Virtuous young couples who abstain from sexual activity until marriage are never faced with a decision about abortion!
- D. The Christian's response:
 - 1. Man cannot legalize sin and make it right in the sight of God. (We cannot make lawful what God has declared unlawful).
 - 2. As Christians, we need to do everything within our power (lawful) to reverse this murderous mandate of the Supreme Court.
 - a. This is much more than a political issue, it is a moral issue!
 - b. If we don't stop it, who will?
 - c. For too long, we have sat back and let denominational groups (like Operation Rescue) do most of the work.
 - d. Beloved, we need to get involved—those little babies have a right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

CONCLUSION:

- 1. All three of these problems stem from a lack of respect for the sanctity of life.
- 2. Until we restore that respect for life, these problems (and others) will continue to grow.

Sodomy/Homosexuality: Such Were Some Of You

Windell Fikes

1. Sodomy is men having sex with men (Gen. 19:5).
2. Sodomy, known as homosexuality, is named from the sinful practices of the men of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1-29).
3. Homosexuality is defined in the New Testament as literally "men in bed with men" (I Cor. 6:9).
4. Lesbianism (women having sex with women) is also a sexual perversion and its practice is condemned in the Bible (Rom. 1:26-27).
5. Sodomy, homosexuality, lesbianism, are all perversions and sins that can be forgiven (I Cor. 6:11).

DISCUSSION:

- I. **MEN ARE NOT BORN SODOMITES/HOMOSEXUALS!**
 - A. The Sodomites/Homosexuals were both young men and old men (Gen. 19:4).
 - B. They came from every quarter, that is, every place in town (Gen. 19:4).
 - C. They wanted to "have sex," "to know" the men who came to Lot's house (Gen. 19:15).
 - D. Lot calls the practice of Sodomy "wickedness," "*brethren do not so wickedly*" (Gen. 19:7).
 - E. Homosexuals/Sodomites "*burned in their lust one toward another*," that is, men lusted for men (Rom. 1:27).
 - F. They left the *natural* use of the woman (Rom. 1:27).
- II. **MEN AND WOMEN CHOOSE TO PRACTICE THESE EVILS.**
 - A. The wicked men of Sodom wanted to "*know*" the men, i.e. have sexual intercourse with the men—but refused the women (Gen. 19:4, 8, 11).
 - B. Women "*changed the natural use into that which is against nature*" (Rom. 1:26).
 - C. To "*know*" — have sexual intercourse, in the husband and wife relationship is good and right and honorable.
 1. Adam "*knew*" his wife (Gen. 4:1).
 2. She (Eve) conceived and bare Cain.
 3. Joseph "*knew*" not Mary—until Jesus was born (Matt. 1:25).
 - a. Later he "*knew*" Mary because Jesus had brothers and sisters (Mark 6:3).
 - b. The marriage bed (sexual intercourse) between husbands and wives is honorable in God's sight (Heb. 13:4).
 - D. Sodomites, homosexuals, and lesbians are themselves, changing, by

their own selfish, lustful, vile passions and perversions, men want men and women burn for women—and has nothing to do with birth genes, etc.

III. THESE PERVERTED PRACTICES ARE CLEARLY DEFINED IN THE BIBLE AND CONDEMNED.

- A. Sodom, Sodomites, Sodomy—was men having sex with men—it was wicked, it was sinful and against Jehovah God.
 1. Gen. 13:13; 18:23; 19:4, 5, 13, 15, 24, 25, 29.
 2. Sodomite, Deut. 23:17.
- B. This perversion was known as “*an abomination*” (Lev. 18:22; 20:13).
- C. Jude calls the Sodomites/homosexuals fornicators (Jude 7).
 1. Fornication was reason for divorce (Matt. 19:4-9). The innocent party could remarry.
 - a. God’s marriage law was for male and female (Matt. 19:4).
 - b. Men who marry men, or men who have any sexual relations with other men commit fornication.
 - c. Women who marry other women, or have any sexual relations with other women commit fornication.
 2. The sin of sodomy, homosexuality and lesbianism is included in the definition of fornication in Biblical usage.
 - a. “*Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them...given themselves over to fornication*” (Jude 7).
 - b. Fornication (*porneia*) defined: “of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse” (Arndt & Gingrich, p.699).
 - c. It includes such sins as prostitution, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, and such like (*Dictionary of N. T. Theology*, I, p.497-501) via tract: *Homosexuality*—by Wayne Jackson.
- D. Sodomy/Homosexuality is condemned in the Old Testament.
 1. Wickedness, so wickedly, Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown and destroyed by God because of their wickedness (Gen. 19:7, 24-29).
 2. Sodomy is condemned because it is an abomination (Lev. 18:22; 20:13).
 - a. Put to death—“*And if a man lie with mankind, as with woman kind, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death...*” (Lev. 20:13).
 - b. Women with women and beast will be punished by death (Lev. 20:16).
- E. Sodomy and homosexuality is condemned in the New Testament.
 1. Those effeminate and abusers of themselves with men—cannot inherit the kingdom of God, that is, go to heaven (I Cor. 6:9).
 2. Unpenitent homosexuals and lesbians will “*suffering the punishment of eternal fire*” (Jude 7).
 3. “*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example*

to those that should live ungodly” (II Peter 2:6).

IV. OTHER BIBLE NAMES AND TERMS FOR SODOMITES AND HOMOSEXUALS.

- A. Vile passions (Rom. 1:26).
- B. Against nature—perversion (Rom. 1:26).
- C. Strange flesh (Jude 7).
- D. Lust (Rom. 1:27).
 - 1. Males burned with lust for males.
 - 2. Females burned with lust for females.
- E. Unseemliness (Rom. 1:27).
- F. Dishonor (Rom. 1:24).
- G. Ungodly (II Peter 2:6).

V. STREET NAMES AND TERMS FOR THESE PERVERSIONS.

- A. Homos, Gays, Queers, Fags, Queer nation.
- B. Drag Queens, Gay pride, the boys, etc.

VI. STREET NAMES FOR THE PERVERTED ACTS OF HOMOSEXUALS.

- A. Homoerotica, water sports, golden showers, douches, enemas.
- B. Rimming, fisting, gerbil shooting, etc.

VII. CONSEQUENCES OF THIS LASCIVIOUS LIFE STYLE OF HOMOSEXUALS.

- A. Aids
- B. All sorts of diseases.
- C. Death to those who practice such things (Rom. 1:32).
- D. Consenters and “condoners” or “go-along-withers” — condemned likewise (Rom. 1:32).

VIII. SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU BUT YOU WERE:

- A. Washed (I Cor. 6:11).
- B. Sanctified (v. 11).
- C. Justified (v. 11)

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Can be forgiven—on the basis of repentance and obedience to the gospel (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38).
- 2. All those who repent and turn to God are welcome—yea invited into the kingdom. Whosoever will, let him come (Rev. 22:17).
- 3. You can too!!!

Repent Or Perish

Kenneth Burleson

1. One of the most difficult, if not *the* most difficult, command for one to obey is “repentance.”
2. The reason being: it challenges the will power of the individual. Does he have the will power to give up sin?
3. The importance of repentance can be seen in the fact that all have sinned and one cannot be saved without it.
4. Our text is Luke 13:3,5.

DISCUSSION:

I. REPENTANCE DEFINED — NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE.

A. Negative.

1. It is not just being afraid. James 2:19; Acts 24:25; Acts 16:29-34.
2. It is not just simply conviction. Conviction is “awareness of sin in one’s life,” but not repentance. In other words, one is made aware of sin in his life when he is convicted. To prove the point, look at the following examples: The Pentecostians, after they were convicted, were told to repent (Acts 2:37,38).
3. Repentance is not merely a reformation of life.
 - a. Reformation of life must take place when one repents.
 - b. Reformation is the result of repentance and not repentance itself.
 - c. This means that one who is a drunkard before repentance, will not be a drunkard after repentance.
A penitent thief will quit stealing.
A penitent adulterer will quit committing adultery.
 - d. One may quit drinking because of health problems, one may quit stealing because he got caught but this is not repentance.
 - e. Therefore, true reformation is a fruit of repentance. Matt. 3:8.
4. Repentance is not just being sorry
 - a. Judas was sorrowful but did not repent (Matt. 27:3).
 - b. A criminal may be sorrowful; sorrowful that he was caught. This is not repentance because he, more than likely, will be a criminal again when released from prison.

B. Positive.

1. The following passages will help us see the true nature of Biblical repentance.
 - a. Matt. 12:41; Jonah 3:10; “*turning from evil.*”
 - b. Matt. 21:29 Repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change of life.
 - c. Luke 15:11-24 The Prodigal son made an about face, and went home.

2. Therefore repentance is the change of mind brought about by godly sorrow resulting in a change of life.

II. WHAT INFLUENCES OR BRINGS ABOUT TRUE REPENTANCE?

- A. "*Godly sorrow*." II Cor. 7:9-10 Sorrow after a godly manner.
 1. It is God-like. A sorrow that has respect to God. It is a sorrow which results from sin (Luke 15:18; 18:13; Psalm 51:4).
 2. It is God-wrought. It is a sorrow brought about by the word of God (Rom. 1:16).
 - a. Peter is an example (Luke 22:61,62; Matt. 26:74,75).
 - b. David is another example (II Sam. 12:1-13).
 3. It leads God-ward: "...*It worketh repentance unto salvation*...." II Cor. 7:10. It is a sorrow that brings about a change of will and results in a changed life.
- B. The goodness of God (Rom. 2:4).
 1. The goodness of parents has often led children out of the pig pen of sin.
 2. Likewise the goodness of God motivates people to repentance.
 3. The Lord's look motivated Peter to the remembrance of the words of the Lord and to repentance (Luke 22:61,62).
 4. The conviction of sin.
 - a. When one comes to the knowledge of sin and realizes he is guilty and if he really abhors sin, it will bring about repentance.
 - b. The people in Acts 2 were convicted of sin (vs.36,37,38).
 - c. The only way to convict people of sin is by the word of God (II Tim. 3:16,17; Titus 1:9; Acts 2:37).
 - d. One must come to himself as the Prodigal son before he will repent (Luke 15:17).
- C. A realization of the judgment to come (Acts 17:30, 31; II Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:46).

III. GOD COMMANDS REPENTANCE.

- A. The alien sinner is commanded to repent (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18).
- B. The erring child of God is required to repent (Acts 8:22; Rev. 2:5,16,21; 3:3,19).

IV. SALVATION IS OUT OF THE REACH OF ONE WHO REFUSES TO REPENT.

- A. It is necessary for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- B. Our sins will not be blotted out before repentance (Acts 3:19).
- C. We will perish if fail to repent (Luke 13:3,5; II Peter 3:9).
- D. The erring child of God will be lost, if he does not repent. Children of God sin, therefore, they must repent (I John 1:8-10; 2:1,2; Acts 8:22).

E. Therefore, no repentance, no salvation.

V. REPENTANCE IS TAUGHT THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE.

- A. Ezekiel preached repentance (Ezek. 14:6; 18:31,32).
- B. Jonah preached repentance (Matt. 12:41; Jonah 3:10).
- C. Repentance was preached by John the baptist (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4).
- D. Jesus preached the necessity of repentance (Matt. 4:17; Luke 13:3,5).
- E. Peter taught that all must repent (Acts 2:38; 3:19).
- F. Paul preached repentance (Acts 17:30; 20:21; 26:20).
- G. John preached repentance. Five of the seven churches of Asia were called upon to repent.
 - 1. Rev. 2:5, the church at Ephesus.
 - 2. Rev. 2:16, the church at Pergamos.
 - 3. Rev. 2:21, the church at Thyatira.
 - 4. Rev. 3:3, the church at Sardis.
 - 5. Rev. 3:19, the church at Laodicea.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. If you need to repent, do it today. Choose to do it today (Josh. 24:15).
- 2. Today is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6:2).
- 3. Don't become hardened (Heb. 6:1-6; II Peter 2:14).
- 4. Please do not continue to reject the opportunities you have to repent. It is possible to use them up and be lost eternally.

Church Discipline Of The Immoral

Charles W. Leonard

- 1. Discipline is needed in every realm of life and also in the church.
- 2. There are two kinds of discipline: instructive and corrective.
- 3. Discipline was practiced in the early church and must also be practiced today.
- 4. A congregation that will not practice church discipline has no right to exist (Rev. 2:5).

DISCUSSION:

I. WHY SHOULD DISCIPLINE BE PRACTICED IN THE CHURCH?

- A. God has always disciplined or punished those who sinned.
 - 1. Adam and Eve were punished for disobedience (Gen. 3:22-24).
 - 2. The people of Noah's day were punished (Gen. 7:21).

3. Lot's wife was punished (Gen. 19:26).
4. Moses was punished (Num. 20:12).
5. Israel was punished (Joshua 7:1-13).
6. Some in the early church were punished (Acts 5:1-11).
- B. Discipline is a command of God (II Thess. 3:6; John 14:15).
- C. We are instructed to put away sin and have no fellowship with it (I Cor. 5:5-13; Eph. 5:11; II Cor. 6:14-18).
- D. Sin will cause the church to lose its battle against Satan (Joshua 7:8).
- E. Through discipline, we mark those who cause division or walk disorderly (Rom. 16:17).

II. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

- A. Not to get rid of someone we dislike (Rom. 12:19).
- B. Not to say that one cannot be saved.
- C. To maintain the purity of the church (Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:25-27).
- D. To save the church (I Cor. 5:6-7).
- E. To shame the sinner (II Thess. 3:14).
- F. To save the sinner (I Cor. 5:5; James 5:20).
- G. To teach all that Christians must live upright lives (Matt. 5:13-16; Titus 2:11-12; I Cor. 9:27).

III. WHO SHOULD THE CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

- A. One who sins against a brother and will not repent (Matt. 18:15-18).
- B. Those who are immoral in their conduct (I Cor. 5:11-13; Matt. 19:9).
- C. The disorderly—out of step with the Lord (II Thess. 3:6).
- D. Those who are busybodies (II Thess. 3:11).
- E. All who insist on living in sin (Gal. 5:19-21).
- F. Those who cause division (Rom. 16:17).
- G. Those who corrupt the doctrine (II John 9-11; Rom. 16:17).
- H. Those who are unfaithful to God (Rev. 2:10).

IV. WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL COURSE TO PURSUE IN CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE?

- A. It should not be done with partiality (I Tim. 5:21; Rom. 2:11; James 2:1; 3:17).
- B. We should pray for those in sin (James 5:16).
- C. Every effort should be made to restore them (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- D. We should admonish (warn) those in sin (I Thess. 5:14).
- E. We should follow the steps outlined in the Bible in corrective discipline (Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:15-18; I Tim. 5:20; Gal. 2:14).
- F. After every effort has failed, we should withdraw fellowship (II Thess. 3:6; I Cor. 5:4-13).
- G. The withdrawing of fellowship should be made public (I Cor. 5:4).
- H. Withdrawal of fellowship should be supported by all the church.

V. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM?

- A. We should love them as brethren (John 13:34-35).
- B. We should avoid the withdrawn (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10).
- C. We should refuse to keep company with them (I Cor. 5:11; II Thess. 3:14).
- D. We should not eat a common meal with them (I Cor. 5:11).
- E. We are to put them away (I Cor. 5:13).
- F. When the withdrawal takes place, we should consider them as a Gentile or Publican (Matt. 18:17).
- G. We should continue to admonish the withdrawn as brethren (II Thess. 3:15; I Thess. 5:14).

VI. WHY DON'T WE PRACTICE CHURCH DISCIPLINE TODAY AS WE SHOULD?

- A. Too few have seen church discipline practiced.
- B. Our own lives have become too corrupt to attempt to correct someone else (Matt. 7:3-5; I Tim. 1:15).
- C. We lack the moral courage to stand for the Lord (Eph. 6:10).
- D. We are afraid of what the church will do (Matt. 10:28).
- E. We don't want to get involved (Matt. 6:33).
- F. We are afraid our family will be disciplined (Matt. 10:37).
- G. A lack of faith in God's plan (Isa. 55:8-9).
- H. There is a lack of love for God and our brethren (Heb. 12:5-11; John 13:34-35).

VII. HOW DO MANY TRY TO GET AROUND CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

- A. By suggesting that it is wrong to judge (Matt. 7:1-12; I Cor. 5:12; John 7:24).
- B. By implying it will split the church, hurt feelings and run people off (II Thess. 3:14; Acts 5:1-14; II Cor. 5:7-8).
- C. By suggesting that church discipline has been abused in the past.
- D. By suggesting there is no New Testament authority for church discipline.
- E. By misapplying the parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43).
- F. By suggesting the individual has withdrawn from the church.
- G. By indicating the Lord adds and we cannot take away.
- H. By raising the question, "What will the world think?" (Gal. 1:10).

VIII. WHO HAS A RESPONSIBILITY IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

- A. The preacher is to preach the truth and encourage the people to act (I Cor. 9:16).
- B. The elders are to lead, feed, rule and guard the flock (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2; Titus 1:9-11).
- C. All members also have a responsibility (Gal. 6:1; Heb. 13:7,17).

CONCLUSION:

1. Christ purchased the church with his blood and desires to keep it pure.
2. As Christians, we should help maintain it's purity.
3. Heaven is prepared for us if we are willing to prepare and help others to prepare.

Racism

Kenneth Burleson

1. I realize this is a very touchy subject.
2. It is a subject that causes emotions to run very high.
3. Racism is wrong, no matter on whose part it may be.
4. No particular race has the monopoly on it.
5. Racism is totally unchristian.
6. It is a subject that must be dealt with.
7. I am concerned that it is getting out of hand at a very rapid pace.

DISCUSSION:**I. RACISM DEFINED.**

- A. "Any program or practice of racial discrimination, segregation, persecution, and domination, based on racialism." (Webster's New World Dictionary; Second College Edition, p.1170.)
- B. "The belief that a particular race, especially one's own, is superior to other races." (The World Book Dictionary, p.1718.)
- C. "Discrimination or prejudice against a race or races based on this belief." (The World Book Dictionary, p.1718.)
- D. "A political or social policy or system against a race or races based on this belief." (The World Book Dictionary, p.1718.)

II. GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

- A. He regardeth not persons (Deut. 10:17).
- B. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34,35; Rom. 2:6,11; Col. 3:25; I Peter 1:17).
- C. God accepteth no man's person (Gal. 2:6).
- D. If one does the will of God, whether bond or free, he will receive his reward.
- E. The impartiality of God can be seen in his dealing with Biblical characters.
 1. Those in leadership positions and some of them were rich.

- a. Moses, because he did not glorify God was not permitted to enter the promised land, though he had been a leader of God's people.
- b. David did not escape punishment for his sins, though he was king.
- c. The sins of Peter were not tolerated, though he was an apostle.
- d. The rich man in Luke 16:19-31.
- 2. Those who were not leaders and not as financially fortunate as others.
 - a. Lazarus was poor but received an eternal reward (Luke 16:19-31).
 - b. The widow who gave two mites did not go unnoticed (Mark 12:41-43).
 - c. Dorcas was remembered (Acts 9:36-41).
- F. God brought Jew and Gentile together in one body (Eph. 2:14-16).
- G. Therefore, God punishes the wicked no matter how high or low they may be in society. He rewards the faithful no matter what their status may be in society.

III. CHRISTIANS MUST NOT BE A RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

- A. If God is no respecter of persons, and He is not, neither can we be and be pleasing to Him.
- B. James, by inspiration, taught against it.
 - 1. Not to have respect of persons, 2:1
 - 2. Not to respect the rich over the poor, 2:2,3
 - 3. If one is partial he becomes a judge of evil thoughts, 2:4.
 - 4. The rich oppress you and blaspheme the worthy name by which ye are called, 2:5-7.
 - 5. We are to love neighbor as self, 2:8; Matt. 22:37-40.
 - 6. If ye have respect of persons, you commit sin, 2:9.
- C. Paul rebuked Peter, Gal. 2:11,12.
- D. We are all one in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3:26-29.
- E. Race should not be a factor, we are all human beings, and if faithful servants of the Lord, fellow heirs of the promise.

IV. MANY PEOPLE HAVE A MISCONCEPTION AS TO WHAT "RACISM" REALLY IS. UNDER THIS POINT THE DISCUSSION WILL CENTER ON WHAT RACISM IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT.

- A. Racism is not:
 - 1. When a police officer makes an arrest of an individual of another race.
 - 2. When one is hired for a particular job based solely on qualifications.
 - 3. When police officers search in a neighborhood dominated by a particular race when the victim says the attackers were of that

particular race. This happened in Florida and they were accused of racism.

4. Just because one marries one of his or her own race.

B. Racism is:

1. When one is attacked and burned almost beyond recognition because he is of a certain race. (as in Florida)
2. When a county commissioner publicly threatens trouble if one of a certain race is not hired to be jailer. (as in Pensacola.)
3. When one states that he will not vote for an individual because of his race.
4. When the government puts into place programs, and finances them, that just benefits one race.
5. Penalizing one race for things that happened 140 years ago.
6. Having tax payers in Florida pay for something that happened 70 years ago.
7. When the government allows solicitation of funds for black colleges and universities but there cannot be white colleges and universities.
8. Cannot have white Miss America Pageant but can have black. (I am opposed to the Miss America Pageant anyway, because of dress and the exploitation of women.)
9. When one is hired for a job solely based on race.
10. When points are added to Civil Service test for minorities so they may get a job that another one may get if based on their score. Think, when this is done, are they not saying that minorities are not capable of scoring high enough on the test so they add points to it? According to the definition of "racism" as given by "The World Book Dictionary," this is racism—racism toward the minorities.
11. When one boards a train with intent to murder people of two particular races.
12. When one is not permitted to serve as an elder in local congregations because of his race.
13. When an individual puts all people of Alabama and Mississippi in the same category as being prejudice and racist, is a racist himself.
14. Black Bible Chronicles — why is the King James Bible not sufficient for black and white?
15. Our present Surgeon General, Elders, stated, "obviously our Medicaid system had to be developed by a white, male slave owner."
16. When one member of one race determines to murder those of another race because of their race.
17. When Employers do not pay certain Employees a fair salary because they are of another race.

CONCLUSION:

1. Racism is sin no matter which race is guilty.
2. Maybe this lesson will help people understand what Racism really is.
3. My friends, there would be no such thing as racism if everybody followed the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12).
4. Christians cannot be racists and be pleasing to God.
5. May we all treat people the way God would have us to do.

Pornography

Darrell E. Beard

1. The Bible places an emphasis upon the inward man—the mind, heart, or motives. What one shows by his words or actions is but an expression of what he is on the inside, and what one is on the inside is the result of the things he has allowed to stay in his mind to the point of shaping his character.
 - a. The Old Testament states the principle, “*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*” (Prov. 23:7).
 - b. Jesus showed in Matthew 15:18-20a that man is defiled by what comes out of his heart in the form of evil thinking and ungodly conduct such as murder, adultery, fornication, etc.
2. Man is affected by what he sees, reads and hears in life. If it is evil, it will influence him to be evil. If he feeds upon mental and moral “garbage,” his life will be “trashy.” What pollutes and degrades us is bound to defile others to some extent. Therefore, that which defiles needs to be: (1) identified and exposed, (2) personally rejected, and (3) opposed in society.
3. We have been asked to discuss PORNOGRAPHY. This word has been formed by combining two Greek words meaning immorality and writing. Pornography, therefore, is the writing or picturing of sexual immorality.
4. In this study, we shall: (1) look at Bible principles affecting pornography, (2) notice the problem of pornography in today’s society, and (3) discuss what Christians should do about pornography.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **BIBLE STUDY ON SOME PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN PORNOGRAPHY.**
 - A. A look at the Bible words from which “pornography” comes will be helpful.

1. The words from which the “porno” part of pornography comes:
 - a. The noun *porneia* means prostitution, unlawful sexual intercourse, and is usually translated “fornication” in the KJV. God’s will is that saints be absolutely innocent of this sin (Eph. 5:3-5; I Thess. 4:3-5).
 - b. The verb *porneuo* means to prostitute, to practice sexual immorality. Practicing this ungodly act causes one to sin against his/her own body (I Cor. 6:18).
 - c. The nouns *o pornos* (masculine) and *o porne* (feminine) refer to a prostitute, a harlot, a fornicator, who practices sexual immorality. God will judge such people (Heb. 13:4, “*whoremongers*” in KJV and “*fornicators*” in ASV).
2. The words from which the “graphy” part of pornography comes:
 - a. The noun *graphe* refers to a writing or a thing written. The verb *grapho* means to write something down, to record.
 - b. The word itself tells us nothing about the nature or content of the writing. It can be good or bad. The word is most frequently used in the Bible to refer to “Scripture.” It is sometimes combined with adjectives to make expressions such as “holy scriptures” (Rom. 1:2).
 - c. In English, “graphy” is frequently used to a writing about or a study of a certain thing, or a certain kind of writing (examples: photography, geography, calligraphy). It is sad indeed that porno-graphy had to come together to describe sexually explicit material produced to arouse one to immoral thoughts and tempt to sexual misconduct.
- B. The Bible commands to abstain from lustful thoughts which can (and often do) lead to an immoral act. Pornography certainly is a major player in this process.
 1. Jesus taught in Matt. 5:27-29 against the looking upon a woman for the purpose of entertaining lustful thoughts of her. This is *porneia* of the heart. One must deny to his eye the opportunity to cause falling into lust in this way. Could anyone successfully deny that pornography involves the very principle Jesus condemned here?
 2. Peter described some dangerous people among the saints who “*walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness,*” who “*count it pleasure to riot in the day time,*” who, “*having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin*” (II Peter 2:10, 13-14). What a good description of one who is addicted to pornography!
 3. David looked upon Bathsheba while she was washing herself. His desire was aroused to the point that he inquired about her identity, sent for her, and committed adultery with her (II Sam. 11:1-4). Pornography is an even greater danger because it is not a mere chance, an accidental occasion, but a temptation readily available.

4. “Lasciviousness” is a work of the flesh as much as overt fornication (Gal. 5:19-21). This word carries with it the idea of unbridled lust, licentious desires, sensuality, and wantonness. Pornography is intended to sexually arouse and is therefore lascivious.

II. THE PROBLEM OF PORNOGRAPHY IN TODAY’S SOCIETY.

- A. Pornography is found in every media of public communication.
 1. Books, magazines, movies, TV programs, music, videos, etc. can be (and often are) used for that which is good and helpful. They can educate, provide innocent entertainment and otherwise contribute to the public good.
 2. Unfortunately, they have been defiled by pornography. Pornography is big business with revenues of over \$10 billion per year.
- B. There are four categories of pornography:
 1. *Soft porn*, which includes near nudity or full nudity and the implication or description of sexual acts. This includes “racy” novels, “girlie” magazines such as Playboy, R-rated movies, many TV programs and music videos, etc.
 2. *Hard core pornography*, which is an ugly, blatant, and shocking presentation of sex. It includes X-rated videos, extremely dirty and vulgar magazines such as Penthouse, pictures showing sex acts, and some things which pass for “art.”
 3. *Violent pornography*, which shows sex acts accompanied by violence, brutalization, abuse, rape, etc. of women. The message that frequently comes across is that women secretly enjoy such treatment.
 4. *Child pornography*, which features things such as films or pictures of children under 16 in pornographic poses.
- C. Our legal system has had difficulty dealing with pornography.
 1. The U. S. Supreme Court said in a June 1973 brief that material is considered obscene and illegal if it meets three conditions:
 - a. If the average person, applying contemporary community standards finds that the work appeals to prurient or lustful interest in sex, and
 - b. is presented in an offensive way, and
 - c. if, taken as a whole, lacks literary, political or scientific value.
 2. This definition of obscenity is just “fuzzy” enough that sharp lawyers and other defenders can frequently keep pornographers out of trouble and in business.
 - a. Associate Justice Potter Stewart said in 1964: “I can’t define pornography, but I know it when I see it.”
 - b. It is sometimes hard to get a handle on what the “contemporary community standards” which would define obscenity are.
 - c. Pornographers try to say that their product does not appeal to “prurient or lustful interest in sex” and that it does have

“serious literary value.”

- d. Pornographers argue for their “First Amendment right of free speech.”
 - e. The president of a major bookstore chain said, “We do not sell obscene material. Everything sold in our store (such as Playboy and Penthouse) is legally protected by the constitution.”
- D. There are many people who have a stake in defending pornography. Many want to sell it and many others want to read, watch, or listen to it. Thus, a number of things have been said in efforts to uphold pornography. Let’s look at some defenses of pornography and make a few comments on them:
- 1. “It doesn’t harm anyone. In fact, it provides a good emotional and sexual outlet for sexual desire.”
 - a. There is simply too much information available today to successfully contend that pornography does not harm anybody. Notice in the next section the connection between pornography and things such as rape, child abuse, dysfunctional families, sex killings, immoral conduct, etc.
 - b. Pornography is not an outlet for sexual desire. It creates desire and demands an outlet. This is somewhat like saying that reading about food and seeing a film about a Thanksgiving feast is an outlet for hunger. No, it merely intensifies hunger and creates greater desire for an outlet—getting some food.
 - 2. “Pornography is protected by the First Amendment right of free speech. I don’t believe in censorship.”
 - a. Obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment. Surely our forefathers did not have pornography in mind when they wrote the First Amendment.
 - b. There never has been such a thing as unlimited, free speech in this country. Speech has always been limited to that which does not injure, endanger, slander, defile, etc.
 - c. “Censorship” is made to appear to be an evil word, preventing the free-flowing expressions of ideas and ideals. Yet, we have always recognized the need to limit the exposure of material so that which is immoral, seditious, or otherwise dangerous is not allowed to do its harm.
 - 3. “You’re just trying to impose your standards on others. Some people enjoy pornography, and you should not infringe on their rights. If you don’t like it, you don’t have to read or watch it.”
 - a. Rather than trying to impose our standards on others, we are trying to prevent the pornographer from pushing his standards on us, on innocent children, and others who can be injured by pornography.
 - b. Yes, some people enjoy pornography, but their “enjoyment”

very often contributes to the harming of others. Some people enjoy rape, abusing drugs, committing adultery, and other things, but they have no “right” to do so.

- c. The implication is that all guidelines and restrictions of public actions should be removed. Yes, if you don’t like illegal drugs, you don’t have to take them. But, that’s not the point. Drugs cause great harm in society and there must be restrictions and prohibitions placed on them for the common weal (well-being).
4. “You should have an open mind about pornography.”
 - a. Yes, we should have a mind open to fair and honest evaluation about the right or wrong of a thing. This fair open-minded investigation should then lead to appropriate action.
 - b. We should have an open mind, but not a dirty mind, defiled and polluted by pornography.
 - c. An open mind is desirable, but not an open sewer. Open sewers should be closed for the good of everybody.
- E. Pornography is having an effect upon our society today. Many studies reveal a connection between pornography and:
 1. A decline in the moral standards and conduct of our country. Pornography is compelling. It virtually demands an acting out.
 - a. It corrupts young minds. Youth often become obsessed with pornography. Many get their moral standards from this source. These standards are then applied to their moral conduct, their family life, and other relationships.
 - b. Pornography has been shown to have a damaging effect upon marriage relationships, frequently making husbands and wives disappointed and dissatisfied because the sexual performance of their spouses do not reach the erotic highs they see in pornography.
 - c. Pornography distorts sex from its healthy, pleasurable, and God-given purposes. It has taken something God intended to be pure, beautiful, and satisfying and turned it into something lurid, illicit, and vile. It exploits and dehumanizes women especially, making them mere sex objects and playthings. Studies reveal that pornography tends to make men trivialize rape and to lose respect for women.
 2. Crime, violence, rape, sex murders, etc.
 - a. In recent years, there have been numerous studies showing that pornography contributes to all kinds of crime and violence.
 - b. Many “act out” scenes from pornography.
 - c. Herbert Case, one-time chief of police for the Detroit police department said there was never a case of sex murder in the history of his department where the killer was not an avid reader of lewd magazines.

- d. It helps support the underworld which is deeply involved in this multi-billion dollar business.
- e. It promotes sex abuse of women and children. Again, many scientific studies confirm this.

III. WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY?

- A. We, in the Lord's church should teach a positive, pure standard of morality—that which is based on the word of God. We should teach others to love and appreciate the clean and beautiful in life.
 1. Parents should teach their children about sexual morality. Sex education is not the business of the school or the government.
 2. Our Bible classes, sermons, literature, and other efforts of the local church should show brethren and others a life of morality based upon respect for and responsibility to God.
- B. We must teach and preach against pornography and other immoral practices. Preachers should “dust off” those old sermons against dancing, mixed swimming, immodest garments, young people “petting” on dates (or whatever they call it now), and sexual immorality.
 1. Eph. 5:11-12 says to have no fellowship with shameful deeds.
 2. Paul teaches the local church must not tolerate fornication in its midst (I Cor. 5:9-13).
- C. We must take appropriate action against pornography and other lustful, immoral conduct. Not only are we to have no fellowship with the “*unfruitful works of darkness*,” but we are to “*reprove*” them. We must object to, speak out against, and try to do away with pornography in our community (Eph. 5:11-12).
 1. We must be sure that we are clear of this trash ourselves. What kind of magazines do you subscribe to? What kind of books are in your shelves? What kinds of TV programs do you watch? What kinds of movies do you go to? If necessary, start by canceling subscriptions, burning books, changing TV-watching patterns, etc.
 2. Christian parents need to work with their children. They need to know what they read, the movies they go to, the music they listen to, etc. Investigate, talk to them, and insist that none be pornographic.
 3. Christians should oppose pornography in their grocery and drug stores. Show offensive magazines, etc. to the manager and kindly ask him to remove them from his counter because they are contrary to the decent standards of our community.
 4. Write letters to the editor, companies that sponsor pornography, refuse to buy from them, inform others about the issues.
 5. Support legal actions when they are brought against pornography and pornographers.

CONCLUSION:

1. We do not enjoy focusing on the dirty, shameful, and sinful things of life. However, it is necessary to oppose and rid ourselves of the ungodly things before we can live godly lives.
2. We desire to create a clean and wholesome environment in the local church and in our Christian homes so people can develop an appreciation and love for that which is holy and clean.
3. We desire to live pure and godly lives on earth so that we can live in eternity a life of perfect holiness with redeemed of the ages.

Suicide And Assisted Suicide

Charles Blair

1. The Bible consistently holds up the principle of the value of life. All attempts at the preservation of life comes from the value we place on life.
2. If you will tell me your view of death, then I can show you how you live your life.
3. There are no doubt many causes for people to take their own life. These causes are affected by how one views death itself.
 - a. Is death the end of everything?
 - b. Is there no judgement to come for my actions?
 - c. Will death cause the pain to cease?
4. In this study we shall consider some of the “causes.”
 - a. We shall hold these “causes” up to the light of truth itself and see if they can be justified.
5. We shall also look at the different types of suicide.
 - a. Accidental suicide where the person really did not mean to do it but was crying for help.
 - b. Premeditated suicide wherein the individual plant it out with no intention of surviving.
6. The consequences of suicide according to scripture.
7. In the last section of our study we want to place some warnings to each of us to avoid this end.

DISCUSSION:**I. LIFE HAS AS IT'S ORIGIN, GOD HIMSELF.**

- A. Man's existence on this earth came about because of God.
 1. Genesis 1:26
 2. Genesis 2:7

- B. Man's continued existence is due to the power of God.
 - 1. Acts 17:28
 - 2. II Peter 3:5-7
- C. The creation speaks of the existence of God.
 - 1. Rom. 1:20
 - 2. There is really no reason for anyone to not know of the existence of God.
- D. However without revelation man cannot know "who" that God is.
 - 1. Eph. 3:3
 - 2. I Cor. 2:12-13

II. THE TASK OF EACH PERSON IS TO BRING GOD INTO HIS LIFE BY ADHERING TO HIS WORD AND DEVELOPING TRUST IN GOD.

- A. The Word of God calls for us to be obedient.
 - 1. Acts 5:29
 - 2. Heb. 5:9
 - 3. I John 5:3
- B. The Christian's life is based on the fact, God can be trusted.
 - 1. Heb. 6:18
 - 2. Titus 1:2
 - 3. II Peter 1:4
 - 4. Rom. 8:24
- C. A loss of faith does not imply one has become an atheist. What it shows is a person has quit trusting God.
 - 1. Heb. 3:12
 - 2. John 12:42
 - 3. II Peter 1:9
- D. As long as one continues to obey and trust God, life will be affected by those actions.
 - 1. Suicide becomes an option when God has been removed.
 - 2. The greatest insulation against suicide is the presence of God in the life of the individual.

III. THE BIBLE SHOWS US EXAMPLES OF SUICIDE FOR US TO LEARN ABOUT IT. IN THESE EXAMPLES THE LIGHT OF TRUTH MUST SHINE THROUGH.

- A. The case of the death of king Saul shows us how some think.
 - 1. I Chron. 10:3-5
 - a. Saul in this last battle was wounded by the archers.
 - b. Saul believed there was no escape and that the Philistines would come and abuse him more.
 - c. He called on his armour-bearer to kill him.
 - d. When the soldier refused, then Saul fell on his own sword and killed himself.
 - e. At this point, Saul knew God had left him.
 - 2. Saul had been in rebellion to God. The two key areas of his

rebellion had been in the matter of the Amalekites and his turning to the witch of Endor.

Profanity

Daniel H. Coe, Sr.

1. Profanity is a subject too often forgotten by preachers today, yet it is a subject about which the Bible has much to say.
2. Understanding just exactly what profanity is, is important and must be clearly understood.
 - a. Old Testament usages of the word "profane."
 - 1) *Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies*: p.329: "To penetrate or to stab, to open, violate or dissolve." "The staining of that which is beautiful and glorious."
 - 2) *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*: "To pollute, to prostitute, defile, wound."
 - b. New Testament usages.
 - 1) *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*: "Permitted to be trodden, To cross the threshold."
 - 2) *Strong's*: "Crossing the doorway into wickedness."
 - 3) *Thayer Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*: "Lawful to be trodden—unhallowed, ungodly." Matt. 5:13, to cast that which is holy under foot of man is to esteem man above God (cf. Rom. 1:25).
 - 4) *Webster*: "To desecrate, violate, pollute, blaspheme."

DISCUSSION:

I. THE SUBJECT OF PROFANITY IS OFTEN NEGLECTED, BUT THE BIBLE HAS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT IT.

A. What the Old Testament says.

1. "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" (Ex. 20:7).
2. "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:12).
3. "...Every one that sweareth shall be cut off..." (Zech. 5:3).

B. What the New Testament says.

1. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne...But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:34,37).

2. *"...Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"* (Matt. 12:36-37).
3. *"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not"* (Rom. 12:14).
4. *"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be"* (James 3:10).
5. *"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth"* (Col. 3:8).

II. WHAT CAUSES ONE TO USE PROFANITY?

A. Wrong group of peers.

1. *"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners"* (I Cor. 15:33).
2. *"...Neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment"* (Ex. 23:2).

B. Poor vocabulary.

1. *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Psalm 119:11).
2. *"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"* (Psalm 40:8).

C. False sense of dignity.

1. *"Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man"* (Matt. 15:11).
2. *"Unto the pure all things pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled"* (Titus 1:15).
3. *"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"* (Eph. 4:29).
4. *"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath"* (Eph. 4:26).

III. BY-WORDS, EUPHEMISMS AND EVIL GESTURES.

A. One is being profane when he uses sacred things irreverently and in a blasphemous manner.

B. By-Words, What are we really saying?

1. My Lord/Lordy—My God.
2. Golly—God (see Webster).
3. Gosh—God (see Webster).
4. For goodness sake and goodness gracious—Webster says this refers to the goodness and grace of God.
5. My heavens—Flippant use of God's dwelling.
6. Darn—Means damn (see Funk and Wagnell).
7. Dickens, what the dickens?—Means devil (see Webster).

8. Holy cow—Devotion to idol worship (i.e., Egypt).
9. Heck—means Hell.
10. Gee/Gee Whiz/Gee-miny—Reference to Jesus Christ.
11. Righteous—Right with God.
12. What the hay—Means what the hell.
13. What the deuce—What the devil.
14. Da-gone, Dog-gone—Homage to the Canaanite god Dagon.
15. Tee-ed off/P.O.ed, etc.—See I Sam. 22:24.
16. Jesus! Jesus Christ, Christ—using his name in vain!
- C. Evil gestures are profanity.
 1. Evil gesturing with the finger.
 2. "...*The putting forth of the finger and speaking vanity*" (Isa. 58:9).
 - a. *The Book of Isaiah*, by Edward J. Young. "Sending" (or) putting "forth the finger was...a gesture of contempt."
 - b. Putting forth of the finger signifies immoral sexual conduct and behavior.
 - c. Putting forth of the finger toward God is the ultimate of evil.
 3. Indecent "body language" is profanity.
 - a. Dancing is profane in God's eyes.
 - b. Bodily gestures which induce illicit sexual intent is an abomination to God.
- D. What does one really say when he uses by-words, euphemisms, and evil gestures?
 1. Gosh darn you—God damn you.
 2. The heck with you—To hell with you.

IV. THE BIBLICAL INDICTMENTS AGAINST PROFANITY.

- A. Profanity is a sin against God.
- B. Swearing destroys man's reverence of God.
- C. Profanity causes one to be unfit to worship God.
- D. Use of profanity creates a bad example (James 4:17).
- E. Profanity is a sin against society.
- F. Profanity dishonors one's parents (Eph. 6:1-2).
- G. Profanity destroys one's soul.
- H. Good never comes from it (Judges 17:6).
- I. Profanity causes the brethren to stumble and fall.
- J. Demands repentance (Acts 8:18).

CONCLUSION:

1. Profanity, regardless of which definition applies, always produces sin.
2. The Bible condemns it.
3. One must separate himself from that which causes it (I Cor. 6:14-17).
4. By-words, euphemisms, and profane gestures warrant no place in a Christian's life.
5. Careful consideration of what one says is a serious matter. We must always taste our words before spitting them out.

6. Biblical indictments against profanity warrant our consideration and repentance where and when necessary.

Medical Ethics

Richard Guill

1. Human knowledge has increased more in the last fifty years than in all the precious centuries combined!
 - a. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the field of medical science and technology.
 - b. What the next 10, 20, or 50 years may bring staggers the imagination.
2. Corresponding to this explosion in such knowledge, there has been a continual drifting farther and farther away from God.
 - a. Many evidences could be produced of increasing attempts to cut us off from the moral, ethical and spiritual standards of God found in his Word.
 - b. There is a desperate need for God's people to take the Bible, study and learn its wonderful truths, apply them to every aspect of our lives, and teach them to others.
 - c. If the Bible does not speak directly to these complex issues (and with many of them it does not), it will address them through the great principles found therein (II Tim. 3:16-17) is still true!
3. This lesson will deal with medical ethics.
 - a. I am not an expert in this field, nor in any other.
 - b. I certainly don't know all the answers—I don't even know all the questions!
 - c. I do propose to outline some of the medical ethics problems facing us and to offer some Biblical principles which will help us decide whether these things are good and acceptable, or evil and dangerous and unacceptable.
 - d. This lesson will be divided into four main points:
 - 1) Five great Biblical principles.
 - 2) Medical ethics before and during conception.
 - 3) Medical ethics and the child in the womb.
 - 4) Medical ethics from birth to death.

DISCUSSION:

I. FIVE GREAT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES.

- A. Human life is precious and not to be capriciously destroyed.

1. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man (Gen. 9:6).
2. Thou shalt not kill (Ex. 20:13). YET, God did not forbid all killing...He commanded capital punishment for some sins and made a difference between killing men accidentally or with malice and intent (Ex.21:12-17).
- B. Human life must begin at conception: the union of a woman's egg with a man's sperm creates a new life...left alone and with normal circumstances...a human being is born nine months later. God's Word calls that which is conceived a child...*And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren* (Luke 1:36) (It was a "son" in the womb).
- C. The development of the child in the womb is a work of God (Jer. 1:5; Eccl. 11:5; Psalm 139:13-16).
 1. Even the handicapped are beings God has made and as such are valuable and to be respected (Ex. 4:11).
- D. God authorizes the conception of children by a husband and wife in marriage and the conception of children between any two others is sinful and the child is illegitimate (I Cor. 7:14). (Actually, the parents are illegitimate, not the child)
- E. Human life ends with the separation of the spirit or soul from the body (James 2:26; Gen. 35:18).
 1. The Bible speaks of "*the breath of life*" (Gen. 2:7; 6:17), and also of the life of the flesh "*which is the blood thereof*" (Gen. 9:6).
 2. Show the connection between breath, blood and the brain: use to determine when one is dead.

II. MEDICAL ETHICS BEFORE AND DURING CONCEPTION.

- A. Contraception...nothing wrong with the principle...but the method must be one which prevents conception rather than one which destroys a new life already begun.
- B. Sterilization...no objection provided it is voluntary rather than being forced upon one.
- C. Genetic Screening...permissible only if used to detect some genetic defect which might cause problems for a child and is done BEFORE the conception takes place. Once conceived, one has no right to terminate it.
- D. Artificial insemination...there are three types: AIH which uses the husband's sperm. AIHD which uses a combination of the husband's sperm and donor sperm; AID which uses donor sperm exclusively.
 1. Creation of "sperm banks" is a result. Genetic properties of the donor can be evaluated and then "chosen by the prospective recipient."
 2. The prospect of "kinship breeding" is possible...(one man who was the "donor father" of 33 children warned his own naturally

- born children not to marry anyone from Washington, D.C.
3. No basic problem with AIH form; but “no” to the other two.
 - a. God’s design is for the husband’s sperm to unite with his wife’s egg to form a new life carrying characteristics of both. That child is “legitimate” (I Cor. 7:14).
 - b. Any child conceived by a woman with sperm other than her husband’s produces an illegitimate child and the act is sinful whether the method is natural or artificial.
 - E. In Vitro fertilization involves a few more “options”:
 1. The egg may be harvested from the woman, or a donated egg may be used...(Now egg banks as well as sperm banks).
 2. The sperm may be the husband’s, or donated sperm.
 3. The possibility of the embryo being neither from the wife’s egg nor her husband’s sperm.
 4. “Lesbian couples” and single women use this to have children.
 5. Possibilities exist of “genetically altering” this fertilized ovum before its implantation.
 6. The ethical problems with this procedure ought to be obvious:
 - a. Using an egg or the sperm from someone other than your married partner poses the same problems as AIHD and AID.
 - b. Unmarried people, and “lesbian couples,” cannot produce children without violation of God’s law.
 - c. Destroying the “other” fertilized eggs is abortion.
 - d. Genetically altering the fertilized ovum seeks to make man the “architect” of babies—THAT’S GOD’S WORK—and man is not smart enough to know how such alterations will affect the baby or future generations.
 - e. Medical ethicist, Paul Ramsey, “The decisive moral verdict must be that we cannot rightfully get to know how to do this without conducting unethical experiments upon the unborn who must be the ‘mishaps’ (the dead and retarded ones) through whom we learn how” (Fabricated Man, p. 113).

III. MEDICAL ETHICS AND THE CHILD IN THE WOMB.

- A. Amniocentesis involves inserting a needle, collecting some amniotic fluid, and inspecting fetal cells to check for more than 70 diseases and also determine the sex of the infant.
 1. If these tests reveal the prospect of a “defective child,” there are four options available:
 - a. Allow the child to be born.
 - b. Abort the child.
 - c. Attempt genetic surgery on the child.
 - d. Or a fetal blood transfusion.
 2. I think this procedure must be ruled out...at least for now.
 - a. Genetic surgery is very rare and very limited with the possibility of death or deformity very great.

- b. Fetal blood transfusions offer little success also; Both of these procedures are experimentation upon the fetus.
 - c. Abortion is automatically ruled out as murdering a baby!
 - d. If you are going to keep the baby anyway, why the test?
- B. Selective elimination....where multiple conceptions occur.
 - 1. Early tests reveal four or more babies but the mother is deemed as being unable to have them all, or doesn't want to.
 - 2. A needle is inserted into some of them and they are injected with a solution which kills them. They are allowed to remain and the mother's body "re-absorbs" them.
 - 3. Abortion? Who can choose which ones live and which die?

IV. MEDICAL ETHICS IN PROCEDURES FROM BIRTH TO DEATH.

- A. The harvesting and transplanting of human organs:
 - 1. There are three basic kinds: from a living donor but not essential to the donors life; from those who are dead; from others still alive but which must die when their organ or organs are removed.
 - 2. Of these, there should be no ethical problems with those who are living and donating a non-essential organ, or from those who are clearly dead.
 - 3. There is a problem of taking an organ from one not yet dead and thus causing their death. This sometimes happens with accident victims who are pronounced "dead," or "brain-dead" but who are really not so. This also occurs in some fetuses aborted alive, or babies born malformed.
 - 4. The Biblical principle is: Life is sacred and to be preserved where possible. Do nothing to destroy innocent human life.
 - 5. A POSSIBLE EXCEPTION: If a person as an act of love offered an organ to another that they might live even though knowing that its donation would bring their death. JESUS said, *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13).
- B. Euthanasia...both "negative" and "positive" classifications.
 - 1. With certain newborn children who are defective or malformed, a course called "passive care or treatment" is employed. It involves withholding care and feeding and allowing the baby to die.
 - a. Typical is Joan Hodgman, University of California School of Medicine... "If we have a baby that I know is malformed beyond hope, I make no attempt to preserve life."
 - 2. With the old and terminally ill there are such issues as "mercy killings," assisted suicide, withholding care or removing care that initiates death of a patient.
 - 3. Typical of changing attitudes about such things in the medical community is this quotation from Dr. Robert Williams of

Washington State Medical School... “There are various levels at which one can consider the indication for euthanasia: (a) a group of individuals who will soon be encountering death; (b) a group with such severe mental damage as to be unable to express proper judgment with respect to termination of life; and (c) a group with varying degrees of cognizance, but with disabilities so incapacitating and so common as to produce great hardship on society” (Our role in the Generation, Modification, and Termination of Life, J.A.M.A.).

4. To initiate any action, or withhold any care, which would aid in or produce death which would not otherwise occur without such actions is sinful...it is murder!
5. **HOWEVER**, there are some injuries and sicknesses which are certain to bring death. With certain procedures “life” can be sustained for a while longer. The removal of such procedures, or the withholding of such extraordinary care, and allowing death to come naturally **IS NOT WRONG**.

CONCLUSION:

1. For 2,000 years the “Judeo-Christian” ethic of the value of human life has prevailed over Western civilization, but, while this old ethic has not been totally rejected, it is gradually being replaced with a new one.
2. Influential voices are declaring that all life is not worth living; that some would be better off dead; that society can no longer afford to let some keep on living; and that the world is being threatened by too many people who are “unproductive” and that hard decisions must be made.
3. The most powerful voice of all, **GOD’S VOICE**, must be heard! Preachers, preach on these issues! Elders, insist on it! Christians, learn this, live this, teach it to others!

Suffering Persecution Because Of Righteous Living

Garland M. Robinson

1. The Bible demands the Lord’s people live a godly, moral, righteous, upright life (Titus 2:11-12).
 - a. Though we live “in the world” we must not live “as the world” and partake of its evil and immorality.

- b. Psalm 51:10; Rom. 12:1-2; 13:12-14; II Cor. 5:17; 6:14-18; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:2-3; 4:17-32; 5:1-16; Col. 1:21-22; 3:5-15; I Thess. 4:1-12; 5:22; II Tim. 3:10-12; James 1:27; I Peter 1:14-15; 4:2-5; II Peter 2:20-22; I John 2:15-17; 5:21
2. In order to so live, God's people must have **conviction**.
 - a. Conviction is "*a fixed or strong belief.*" Conviction means that we are convinced—completely converted.
 - b. We are willing to serve God regardless of how much it costs or what it involves!
 - c. Each one must "count the cost" and be willing to pay whatever price is demanded (Luke 14:26-33).

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD REVEALS WE CAN EXPECT TO SUFFER PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUS LIVING.

- A. To the Lord's disciples: "*the world hateth you*" (John 15:18-19; 17:14; I John 3:13).
- B. To all Christians:
 1. II Tim 3:12 "*all that will live godly...shall suffer persecution.*"
 2. Matt. 5:10-12 "*for so persecuted they the prophets....*"
 3. I Peter 4:1 "*he that hath suffered in the flesh...*"
 4. I Peter 2:19-20 "*...do well, and suffer for it...*"
 5. Psalm 34:19 "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous....*"
 6. Acts 14:22 "*...we must through much tribulation...*"
 7. Matt. 10:16-39; Mark 10:38-41; Luke 6:20-36; John 16:1-4,33; II Cor. 6:4-8; I Thess. 3:3-4; I Peter 3:14; 4:12-19; 5:8-10; Rev. 1:9; 6:10; 7:14; Psalm 37:12-15

II. THE PROPHETS OF OLD WERE PERSECUTED.

- A. **Noah.** Gen. 6:5-8; jeers, ridicule, scorn and mockings
- B. **Lot.** Gen. 13:10-11; 19; Luke 17:28-32; II Peter 2:7-9;
- C. **Moses.** Heb. 11:25
- D. **Daniel** in the den of lions. Dan. 6
- E. **Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah** (Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego) and the fiery furnace. Dan. 3
- F. **Jeremiah** put in stocks and in a dungeon (Jer. 20:1-3; 38:6-13).
- G. Heb. 11:32-40 — stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, tortured, trial of cruel mockings, scourgings, bonds and imprisonment, stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword: wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth (cf. Matt. 23:29-37).

III. BRETHREN OF THE EARLY CHURCH WERE PERSECUTED.

- A. **Peter and John** (Acts 4:2-3,17-18,21,29; 5:17-40; 12:3-4).

- B. **Stephen** (Acts 7:54-60).
- C. **James** (Acts 12:1-2).
- D. **Paul**.
 1. He once persecuted the church himself (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 22:4-5,19-20; 26:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; I Tim. 1:13).
 2. Later became the persecuted (Acts 9:16,21,23-25; 13:50; 14:5, 19; 16:19-40; 17:13-14; 18:12-17; 19:8-9,23-41; 20:23-24; 21:13, 30-34; 22:22-25; 23:10-15; 25:3; II Cor. 11:23-27).
- E. **Jason** and certain brethren (Acts 17:5-9).
- F. Tradition holds that all the apostles met with a violent death with the exception of John who was exiled on the Isle of Patmos.

IV. CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE BEEN PERSECUTED.

- A. **Polycarp**: "For eighty and six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" After being threatened with wild beasts and fire he said, "You threaten with the fire that burns for a time, and is quickly quenched, for you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgment to come and in everlasting punishment." He was then bound and burned.
- B. Christians were sewed up in skins of animals while wild dogs tore them apart. Others were dressed in clothes made stiff with wax, set on poles and then set afire to light the night. Some were made to walk, with feet already wounded, over thorns, nails, sharp shells, etc. Some were scourged until their inner flesh and veins lay bare, being tortured and with the utmost excruciating pain, were destroyed by the most cruel means. Some were beheaded while others had their brains dashed out with clubs or their bodies pressed to death between great weights. Some were tied between horses and pulled apart. The wild and sordid imagination of such cruel and sadistic persecutors will receive their just reward in an eternal hell (Matt. 25:41,46).
- C. *Fox's Book of Martyrs* is a history of the lives, sufferings and deaths of the early Christians and Protestant reformers.

V. GOD'S PEOPLE MUST REMAIN FAITHFUL IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION.

- A. We, also, can expect to be persecuted.
 1. It may be as mild as a snide remark or being the brunt of a joke.
 2. Or, it may be more severe, our property may be vandalized or even we ourselves or our family being hurt or killed.
- B. Religious freedom is being threatened in America. The day is drawing closer that saints of God may very well be fined or spend time in jail because of righteous living and upholding God's Word.
 1. To preach on adultery, abortion, homosexuality — most of the

lessons in this book — is very unpopular and may very well lead to physical persecution.

2. Brethren, stand fast in the faith (II Thess. 2:15), do not compromise (Acts 5:29), preach it from the housetops (II Tim. 4:2), let come what may!
- C. Regardless of the circumstances, be faithful!
 1. Matt. 10:22 *"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."*
 2. Rev. 2:10 *"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."*

CONCLUSION:

1. Will you weather the trial, the storm, the persecution?
2. Are you bearing your cross daily?
3. *"Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution!"*

Refuse The Evil And Choose The Good

Joshua 24:15; I Kings 18:21

Sidney White

1. Man was created as and continues to be a creature of choice.
 - a. Efforts are made to place the blame for our failings on someone or something else. That is nothing new (cf. Gen. 3:12-13).
 - b. We must accept responsibilities for our own actions (Ezek. 18:4, 20).
2. No one can refuse to choose.
 - a. Man can choose to do good.
 - b. If man fails to choose good, he has automatically chosen to do evil.
3. Consider some Biblical principles that show us that we must choose.

DISCUSSION:

I. CONSIDER A NUMBER OF VERSES WHICH SHOW THE "MUST" OF CHOOSING!

- A. Deut. 30:15—Moses reminds his generation of the two alternatives that God has placed before them.
 1. Life and good.
 2. Death and evil.
 3. cf. verses 16-20 for further explanation.

- B. Joshua 24:15—Joshua, in reminding his generation of the past, places before them two alternatives.
 - 1. Fear the Lord and serve Him (v.14).
 - 2. Choose to serve other gods (v.15).
- C. I Kings 18:21—Elijah, standing against the 450 prophets of Baal, presents a question that calls for choice.
 - 1. If the Lord be God, follow Him.
 - 2. If Baal be God, follow him.
 - 3. Sufficient, abundant evidence was given (vs.22-39).
- D. Matthew 7:13-14—Jesus presents a choice.
 - 1. There is a choice of two gates and we must choose to enter one or the other.
 - 2. There are two ways in which to walk and we must make a choice.
- E. Matthew 7:24-27—These verses further show that man must make choices.

II. MANY BIBLICAL EXAMPLES COULD BE GIVEN OF PEOPLE WHO MADE CHOICES.

- A. Consider some who made wrong choices.
 - 1. Eve—Gen. 3:6-7; she chose to follow the advice of Satan.
 - 2. Cain—Gen. 4:3,5; he chose to worship as it pleased him, not God.
 - 3. Noah's descendants—Gen. 11:4; they chose to ignore an earlier command to replenish the earth.
 - 4. Nadab and Abihu—Lev. 10:1; they chose to offer "*strange*" fire.
- B. Consider some examples of those who made right choices.
 - 1. Noah—Gen. 6:8; Noah chose to build the ark to the saving of his own family.
 - 2. Joseph—Gen. 39:7-10; Joseph chose not to yield to the seductive advances of Potiphar's wife.
 - 3. Paul—Acts 9 & 22; Paul chose to promote the faith he once destroyed.

III. THERE ARE SOME CHOICES THAT THE ALIEN SINNER MUST MAKE.

- A. One must decide to follow the pleasures of this world or the way of God (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).
- B. One must decide to accept the false teachings of men or the inspired word of God.
 - 1. Will the alien accept faith only as a most wholesome doctrine or faith coupled with obedience? (James 2:24; Acts 2:38).
 - 2. Will the alien accept the idea of sincerity alone, or the need to follow the pattern given by God? (Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46).
 - 3. Will the alien accept the idea that one church is as good as another or that the Lord built only one church? (Matt. 1:18).
 - 4. This list could be expanded many times over.

IV. THERE ARE SOME CHOICES THAT CHRISTIANS MUST MAKE TO HAVE THE HOPE OF LIFE ETERNAL.

- A. The Christian must choose to assemble or to forsake the assembling (Heb. 10:25).
- B. The Christian must choose to keep the temple of God (the body) or to destroy it (I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19,20).
- C. The Christian must choose to worship in Spirit and in truth or to worship regardless of attitude and pattern (John 4:23-24).
- D. The Christian must choose to be benevolent or selfish (James 1:27; Gal. 6:10).
- E. The Christian must choose to be hot or cold (Rev. 3:15-16).
- F. The Christian must choose to study and be faithful or be sinfully ignorant (II Tim. 2:14).
- G. The same principle is true with regard to moral issues, as discussed within the framework of this lectureship.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. In every choice there is no such thing as indecision.
- 2. Whenever we are faced with the choice of good or evil, there is never a middle ground nor neutral position.
- 3. The choice is ours to make and we cannot blame birth, society, environment, peer pressure nor anything else for our sins.
- 4. There is reward or punishment depending on the choices we make (Matt. 25:31-46).

