***Lights in the World - PH53-01  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:17***

This is the last in our series of Philippians 2:14-16, which is part of our advanced Bible Doctrine study. We have paused for several sessions on explaining what the apostle Paul means by people being blameless, which in the Greek means to be morally clean. So we have explained the subject of morality via Exodus 20:1-17. We have come to the final moral principle, the tenth moral principle in Exodus 20 which declares against coveting something or someone to which we have no right. Coveting is an intense desire, but it's a desire which could be good or bad. You can covet good things, and then that's a fine thing to do. Or you can covet a bad thing, and then it's an evil thing to do. Covetousness is sinful or not, according to the object of the intense desire.

It is not wrong, for example, to desire to possess something that you see someone else possessing. Covetousness is seeking to fulfill what legitimately is not available to you. The word "covet," for that reason, carries the idea of gaining something to which we have no right–to gain this by fraud; by coercion; or, by deception. Exodus 20:17 says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house." The word "neighbor's house" here, we pointed out, means the entire household–the people and its possessions.

**Forms of Covetousness**

So now I want to look at the forms of covetousness with you because it has some very subtle ways that we ourselves can be guilty of.

**Material Things**

First of all, is the desire in the form of material things. That's one that's readily evident. We can easily understand that, particularly in the form of money. 1 Timothy 6:10 gives us a basic principle concerning the hazards of this kind of a desire. This verse is often misquoted. It says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

I have stood on this campus for almost 25 years come next May, and I have seen people who have gone far in the Christian life, who have also reverted in their Christian life; fallen into reversionism; and, have destroyed themselves because of this very thing. They began coveting material things. When they didn't have much, this was not much of a problem. But, lo and behold, as God began to prosper them materially, they got a taste for material things, and it took a root in their hearts, and they were not able to control it. So they became so obsessed with material things that covetousness easily moved in, and they destroyed themselves and their effectiveness in the Lord's work. It is the *love* of money. It is not the possession of money which is the root of all evil. So don't quote this passage as is so often ignorantly done that money is the root of all evil. The root of evil is this love of money.

In the old sin nature, there is a strong side which expresses itself in human good. There is a weak side which expresses itself in sins. These two form together, and they form a stream called evil. Anything that comes from the old sin nature is evil. The love of money is the root of this stream of evil which flows from within us. The desire for money, for legitimate reasons, therefore, is not evil. But it does take a developed spiritual maturity structure in your soul to know that when you want money, it is for legitimate reasons, and not for illegitimate reasons. It is always easy for you to come up with a lot of nice reasons to be rich.

In California, a man sat across a lunch table from me and said, "What would you do if you had $500,000 in your work?" I don't know if he was making promises or what. I hope so. But that was a startling question. I began thinking, "What would I do if I had $500,000?" The first thing I thought was that I'd have a chocolate malt. Then I was trying to think, "What would I do with $500,000?" I'm not used to dealing with sums that big. It took me a little time to think over what I thought I would do about it.

Usually the first answer you give is, "Well, I'd help the missionaries." Good. That's one point for you. What else would you do? You try to make your points with God. Well, it isn't wrong to desire to have money available for the Lord's work; for missionary enterprises; and, anything else. That is a legitimate thing. However, it is often a cover up for an evil desire to have things which is within our soul, and we're simply covering what we really want. A spiritual maturity structure in your soul will enable you to have a desire for money for legitimate causes in a right way.

You may see something, therefore, that another person has. If you can afford to buy it, with the Lord permitting you, it's not wrong to do it. Coveting what is not available to possess is what is evil. You're too poor to buy it. So you take it. For this reason we have the Lord's warning in Luke 12:5. "The Lord said, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.'" A man's life is not the abundance of what he possesses.

**Dishonesty**

For this reason, there are certain results that stem from this kind of covetousness from material things. One is dishonesty. Regarding dishonesty in business, a person becomes more concerned with his financial gains than he does with a fair deal to a customer. If you've been at the dishonest end of some business man's dealings with you, you know how despicable this expression of material covetousness is. The demand for more, without giving thought to the consequences of the natural resources, is part of what is plaguing our society today. God has given us natural resources. It is covetousness which has ignored how we have often used those things, and how we have squandered them and destroyed them, and not replaced them when we could.

We use methods which can be legal, but which are morally wrong–the fine print of the contract. This is a regular dishonest practice. More people discover that the insurance policy they bought doesn't actually cover what they thought it was going to cover because the fine print expressed a covetousness on the part of the insurance company. The insurance company calls it good business. The Bible says it's plain unadulterated covetousness. The conman always plays upon this quality and others. The conman knows how covetous people are and therefore he plays upon it.

When I was a teenager, there was a man down the street from us who ran a dry cleaning establishment. He was visited one day by a man who came and said, "I have a machine here which turns $1 bills into $5 bills." He said, "You have a machine like that? Show me that machine." So he got the machine; he put a one dollar bill in it; he cranked the handle; and, lo and behold, a brand new $5 bill came out the other end. He said, "Let me see that." He put a $1 bill; he turned the handle; and, he cranked out a $5 bill on the other end. He said, "A man could get rich like this."

He said, "Right, and I'm willing to sell it to you because I don't want to fool with it anymore. I don't like turning the handle." He said, "How much do you want for it?" The man said, "$5,000." He looked the machine over; shook it; and said, "What is this? Some kind of a trick?" He kept putting $1 bills in and $5 bills came out. He said, "I have other customers who want these. It's $5,000 if you want one. So he paid him $5,000. Then it finally came to the time where he put a $1 bill in and cranked it, and no more $5 bills came out, because it was a very tricky machine. Would you believe it? This guy bought it. He actually bought it, and then called police. That is the conman's game–to find somebody who is covetous, because covetous people are dumb people. They will do stupid things because their freedom is restricted even in themselves because of the quality of covetousness.

**Exploitation**

The material type of covetousness also leads to exploitation. Workers are used unmercifully. James 5:1-6 express God's condemnation of those who use workers; do not pay them properly; and, treat them unfairly in the process of their services. People are manipulated with words so that they bring themselves into destruction, not only of their bodies, but of their souls.

Many products are on the market which are better than what are popularly used, but some major lobby group gets on the job, and they bring some kind of adverse report against some product; some item; some practice; or, some procedure which is infinitely superior to what this big corporation promotes. Because they have the money and the capacity to lobby, they can exploit people with secondary inferior products, and can maintain the illusion that what they have is better, while something else is infinitely superior. This happens all the time. There is always someone that you can take advantage of–someone, because of his own covetousness, that you can exploit for your own basic advantage.

The basic cause of all exploitation is wanting to make money out of someone else at the expense of that person's welfare. Many people are led into drug addiction, prostitution and other things because someone is exploiting these human beings because of their own covetousness.

**Status**

It also leads to the expression of material things for social status. This is a very tempting one to us as believers. It's the seeking of a power base. The desire for prominence is an expression of covetousness. The scribes, the Pharisees, and even the twelve disciples of Jesus coveted this kind of power-based prominence. They were all guilty of jockeying for positions of power. The same thing happens in local churches. We have Christians who become covetous for status relationships. So there are certain people that arise in the church that are so-called "key people." God does not work upon the basis of heroes, celebrities, prominent people, and stars in the Christian life.

Every now and then you'll hear some great evangelist or some prominent spiritual leader come up with the concept that if he were pastor of a church, that he would pick out two or three key men, and he would spend all of his time working with them. The truth of the matter is that two or three key men are just exactly what the devil wants you to do so that you can start having some stars in the local church in order to get areas of focus for people to associate with these status people within your work. There are no stars. There are only sheep who need to be taught and who need to be guided to use their spiritual gifts. The Lord God does not work through stars. The only celebrity in the Christian life is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you ever forget that, you're going to get your eyes on men, and you're going to be sadly disappointed. This is a way of exploitation.

Our visible status symbols, of course, are there for us to rise above others. So we want it in cars. We seek it in houses we live in; the toys that we have; the boats; the airplanes; the clothes; and, the prominent friends we have. All of these are expressions of covetousness.

**Security**

Material covetousness (maybe this is the worst of all) leads to a false sense of security. I think we can best exemplify this by reading Luke 12:16-21 about the parable of the rich fool: "He spoke a parable unto them saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plenty fully, and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do because I have no place to bestow my crops? He said, This will I do. I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul you have much goods laid up for many years. Take your ease. Eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you. Then whose shall these things be which you have provided. So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'" If you become covetous to the extent that you think that you have security because of what you possess materially, what you want to realize is that you are making yourself a poor man in heaven.

What people do with their Christian lives will directly determine what they receive in rewards when they stand before Jesus Christ. Security on this earth does not mean that you have blessing with God in heaven. This rich man thought that because he had security, and he coveted that thing, that somehow when he got to heaven, he was going to be spiritually enriched. If there is any place that a poverty program would be welcome, it will be in heaven. I'll tell you. That is because there are going to be millions of Christian up there who are going to get the shock of their lives when they stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and they see some simpleton believer who got his soul hooked into doctrine, so he knew how to function with his spiritual gifts and really serve the Lord so that he was changing the records in heaven, and here is somebody who may have been very prominent, and he ends up as a pauper while this poor nobody is fantastically enriched with rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Covetousness will destroy your eternal wealth. Don't forget it. That's why this is a dangerous moral principle to violate.

**Coveting People**

Not only is covetousness in the form of desire for material things, it is also in the form of desire for people. We don't have to pursue that far. It is coveting somebody else's wife or somebody else's husband. It is coveting somebody else's employees. It is coveting somebody else's church members. It is coveting somebody else's friends. There is nobody so mean and low like someone who begins maneuvering to take away someone else's friends from them.

**Idolatry**

There is also the expression of idolatry. Colossians 3:5 tells us that covetousness is idolatry. An intense desire replaces God in your thinking and in your love. Your mind, instead of being preoccupied with the Lord Jesus Christ, will be preoccupied with something or some person. So check your obsessions today, Christians, and you will find your God. Check what it is that you are a fan of, and you will find your God. Whatever it is that you're a fanatic for, therein lies your God.

**The Welfare State**

Then we'll include this one, which will shatter the cockles of the hearts of some of you, perhaps. That is a controlled economy, or the welfare state. It may not have occurred to you to connect covetousness with this very common practice. The Word of God condemns taking by force what is not rightfully yours. It condemns any agency or any person to take from one individual what he has rightly and properly earned, and give it to someone who does not deserve it.

Governments, as you well know, organize covetousness into a system. Thus socialism; communism; the welfare state; even rugged individualism; fascism; national socialism, such as we had in Germany under Hitler; The New Deal; the war on poverty; and, the new frontier are all expressions of covetousness. They are all basically human good evil pouring from the old sin nature thinking of men who have the darkened minds that Romans 1 describes, and who think that they are coming up with something that is good for people. The welfare economy means to take from some and to give to others–to take from the productive and to give to the unproductive. So it is not too hard to see that socialism, communism, and liberalism regularly violate the principle of the tenth commandment.

Perhaps I can best illustrate this to you by reading a fable that will get across to you, I think, the way that covetousness finds expression on the government level. Here's the fable:

"After the war of the Almonds, the land of Kulumar was the richest and most powerful of all. Its fields were bountiful and its granaries were full. Its flocks were fat and sleek. The Kulumese were proud and productive. They worked, and they rejoiced in the highest standard of living known.

"'Sire, the Generous' surveyed all this plenty and said, 'Surely a country as rich as Kulumar should provide food and housing and garments for our less fortunate. I will ask the lawmakers to levy a tax on the workers to provide this.' And the lawmakers, each of whom hoped one day to become sire, levied the taxes.

"They then said, 'Let there also be free circuses for those who do not work. And let there be soft hassocks and free food and wines for those who watch the circuses.' The lawmakers levied more taxes.

"When the workers of Kulumar heard of the free circuses, the soft hassocks, and the food and wines, and then figured their now monstrous taxes, they said, 'That is for us.' The farmers left the fields; the shepherds abandoned their flocks; the weavers lay down their shuttles; and, the blacksmiths cooled their forges. All the Kulumese were watching the free circuses.

"Plenty turned to scarcity. No longer was there abundant food. Garments were hard to come by. The Kulumese did not even have camel chips to heat their tents. Prices rose and rose, and the lawmakers raised taxes again and again. It was the only thing they knew how to do.

"Misery and gloom replaced joy and pride. And 'Sire the Generous' who was well intentioned, went to the wise man of the mountain and said, 'Wise one, I have tried to give the good life to my people, but they no longer want to work. Food and goods are scarce. Prices are outrageous. Taxes are even more so. Give me a solution.' And the wise man of the mountain replied in Kulumese, 'TANSTAAFL,' which means, 'There ain't no such thing as a free lunch.'"

"TANSTAAFL." Now, that's the principle, believe it or not, of the United States government. If somebody would like to send a message to Congress, I suggest that there it is. "TANSTAAFL" is the keyword. That's the winning word. "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch."

So legalizing covetousness does not make it any the less sinful. It's just organized lawlessness under the coercion of the state, and morality under those conditions will generally decline. You might say, "Well, why does the government do this?" Obviously, Russia is rushing over here to buy up our food as fast as she can because no socialist or communist country has ever been able to feed its people. That's a historically well-known fact. So in desperation, they have to look someplace else, and find some idiots who will feed the enemy in order for business–motivated, again, by covetousness.

A businessman who is not motivated by covetousness would be able to override that inclination, and would be able to apply divine viewpoint principles, and would not be ready to help out the enemy who is determined to destroy us. This is justified under the term of "special privilege." You could go to a congressman and say, "Well, why do you do this?" He would say, "Because we don't believe that democracy can allow anybody to have special privilege.

Now, the most special privileged group in this nation, I would like to suggest to you, is the group who is on welfare. The welfare recipients are the most special privileged group that this nation has ever seen. As you know, New York has been storming the doors of Congress to save its economic disaster (the bankruptcy) because of its monstrous welfare rolls. It wants the federal government to take over the handouts of New York, and to have all of you, everywhere in this nation, help pay for that welfare program–the result of a human viewpoint operation in New York.

The more a government tries to make the incompetent; the lazy; and, the unsuccessful equal with the enterprising and the capable, the greater element of coercion you have to introduce into a society, and the greater injustice you have to introduce. When one group who is not productive is covetous for the production of those who are, then the only way you can bring the two together is by interjecting coercion and the force and power of the state to bring about the exchange from one to the other.

The special privilege has not been eliminated in socialist countries. Obviously, Russia and China have more coercion; more radical injustice; and, more special privilege than they ever had before. For this reason, those who are covetous despise the statement of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 25:29 where the Lord says, "For unto everyone that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance. But from him that has not shall be taken away, even that which he has." Translated, that says that the productive one who has will have even more, and the unproductive; the lazy; and, the incompetent who doesn't have will have even less than he has. You can see that covetous lawmakers seeking the appeal and the plaudits of the mobs are not going to appreciate that verse.

One of the other things I notice is that governments, who are promoting covetousness in the legalized form, are also anti-family. They don't want parent-earned wealth to go to the children in the family. It is not unusual (it happens regularly) for a congressman or a senator to suggest that we pass a law that a man's wealth cannot be passed on to his children beyond a certain level. That is, what he has beyond a certain level goes to the state, so that his children constantly have to make their own way, and so that the wealth of the nation can constantly be distributed evenly upon everyone. Well, of course, if that were done, it would not take very long for men who had the capabilities of making great wealth to figure out ways to make just enough wealth so that they leave nothing behind them. So the nation and everybody would be the poor.

However, the Bible is family oriented. It directs that the parent's possessions are to pass on to one's own children, and not to the state. Governments are responsible in this world for preserving equal opportunity and free enterprise. They are not responsible for redistributing wealth. The special privilege of family is always going to exist. This is a right thing. It is proper for a parent to decide what he's going to do with what he leaves behind him relative to his children.

You remember the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. There was the complaint of the early workers, as Jesus told the story. They worked all day, and then they discovered that the people who came the last hour of the day got paid the same as they who had worked all day. They objected strenuously to the owner of the vineyard for this kind of an arrangement. You remember the principle that Jesus Christ laid down which gives us the guideline for the special privilege freedom that we have relative to our possessions. It's in Matthew 20:15 where the Lord said, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with own? Is your eye evil because I am good?" Jesus showed that the owner of the vineyard had the perfect right to pay the people who worked for one hour the same amount as those who work for eight hours, if he chose to do it, and it was nobody's business. Nobody, or no government agency, had the right to come along and tell him, "You can't have that kind of a wage scale. You can't have that kind of a payment arrangement." It is the right to give special privilege to those whom you choose to give it. That's a basic factor of freedom.

**The Origins of Covetousness**

Let's look at the origins of covetousness. This might help us to avoid something that plagues us constantly. One of the origins of covetousness is that something we do not have would make us happy. Something we do not now have, which, if we had it, would make us happy. All of life, from childhood to old age, proves this to be a delusion. What we find as we go through life is that some momentary pleasure we have, over acquiring something that we thought would make us happy if we had it, soon passes, and we want something else. This is very clearly evident in children. Children at Christmastime are very excited about some toy you will give them. They will just play with that. This is something they've wanted. They're just so delighted when you give it to them. But by the time the end of Christmas Day has come, they've lost interest in it, and they have some other desire.

As you get older, we still have that same childlike characteristic, but it's more sophisticated and it's more refined. The things that you want are more complicated. But the same fallacy is involved here. It is not true that something we don't have would make us happy. Covetousness becomes sophisticated and expensive, but it is never satisfies.

A second source is the idea that things in themselves can provide happiness–that some material possessions will make you happy. To a certain extent, this is true. To have food; to have water; to have shelter; to have clothing; and, to have human companionship, that does make us happy. The details of life regarding things we need are secondary to our relationship to God. The details of life can never produce lasting happiness. Hebrews 13:5-6, therefore say, "Let your manner of life be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'"

Your children should know these verses. This will help them to keep from violating the tenth moral principle against covetousness, under the delusion that if they have some material thing, they will find happiness once they possess that thing. The lack of material things, as a matter of fact, is more likely to make you happy. The man who doesn't have a lawn mower to keep repaired is much happier than the one who has one. I can guarantee you that, for one thing, for example.

As a matter of fact, perhaps I can illustrate this with another fable. This is the fable of the melancholy king. This king was unhappy, and he went to many counselors and he said, "How can I be happy?" And they gave him all kinds of advice. Finally, one man said to him, "King, I'll tell you how you can be happy. If you can find a happy man and wear his shirt, you'll be happy. So he sent the word out throughout his kingdom, "Find a happy man and get his shirt for me so I may wear it and be happy." They checked and couldn't find him. Finally, they found a happy man. He was a bum, a hobo, wandering along the road, but a genuinely happy man. Unfortunately, he had no shirt. So the happiest people often are those who have no shirt. People who are all tied up and on edge become happy when they've lost their shirt, as a matter of fact, in some situation. They can finally learn to relax. So Western civilization is obviously more prosperous than it has ever been before. But we are more neurotic and more psychotic than we've ever been before.

There is another source of covetousness, and that is that we think that some person is the key to our happiness. This is often centered, of course, on the forbidden person. Taking the forbidden person at the moment seems to produce a happiness. But when you take a forbidden person, you will find that in time it turns to ashes. And happiness is not to be found in that way.

This is particularly applicable in marriage, and incidentally, before and after marriage. There are certain people which are forbidden to you before you're married. That is because, under the arrangement of God, there is in the world a right man for a right woman. There is no other combination for ultimate happiness. That's it. Anybody else, and there are many people in the world–all around, other men, and other women, all of these are forbidden people. If you marry one of them, you have married a forbidden person. You will come to that by covetousness of one kind or another. You will covet certain things in a woman. You will covet certain things in a man. You will lead yourself into associating for life in misery because you've got the wrong person.

So covetousness is a very, very hazardous game to play. It can express itself in the most subtle ways that you don't anticipate. I must say that, should you have made through covetousness the wrong move, don't ever forget that the grace of God is capable of correcting wrong moves. If you get yourself into a relationship of real affection with the Lord Jesus Christ, and real subjection to the Word of God so that it is really functioning, then you will find that He reweaves the patterns of our lives, and He brings blessing even where our covetousness has led us to make wrong moves. That's true in any aspect of the failures of covetousness.

However, divorce breeds on this delusion that happiness is found in a person. So if I'm unhappy with this person, I'll find happiness if I get with another person. Don't ever fall for that mistake. You will rue it for the rest of your life, and perhaps for all eternity. That is the most inane backwoods idea. It is one of the signals of how dark is our society, that the suggestion is even entertain, or that the notion is even thought realistic. Getting your eyes on people instead of on the Lord for happiness is a certain road to misery.

Well, the consequences of covetousness are stealing; sexual immorality; murder; deceit; and, idolatry.

Let's finish our series with the answer of the solution for covetousness, because that is the thing that it's all about. Every person has two relationships in life. He has an "I / it" relationship, and he also has an "I / thou" relationship. The "I / it" relationship is a relationship to things. The "I thou" relationship is a relationship to people. When you base your life upon an "I / it" relationship, you come to covetousness. "I / it" will end up in covetousness every time. But the "I / thou" relationship will end up in contentment. However, to arrive at this contentment begins with an "I / thou" relationship to God. Then it goes to an "I / thou" relationship to your spouse, and then it goes to an "I / thou" relationship to your friends–to other people. It is important that you recognize that you cannot have a position of contentment or a freedom from covetousness until you first have a proper relationship to God. Then you can have a proper relationship to everybody else. Contentment with yourself and with others follows upon contentment with God.

So, we have the principle in Matthew 6:33, "Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Seeking the kingdom of God first means that you are seeking an "I / thou" relationship, first of all, with God. I don't have to explain to this crowd that the only way you're going to establish an "I / thou" relationship of contentment with God is through developing a spiritual maturity structure in your soul.

**The Pentagon of a Spiritual Maturity Structure**

This spiritual maturity structure is in the form of a pentagon which has a grace orientation toward life. It has a mastery of the details of life. Your eating; your clothes; your drinking; and, your living quarters are all secondary to your relationship with God. You also have a relaxed mental attitude. The "agape" type love (a mental attitude love) is involved in being spiritually mature. You have the capacity to love. The emotional expressions of love can only be developed by a spiritually mature Christian. Then you have inner happiness, which is not dependent upon people, circumstances, or things. That can only arise in the life of a spiritually mature person. You become spiritually mature by the intake of doctrine. That is the way you establish a relationship with God that is free of covetousness.

So the result of contentment with God will be respect for yourself and will be mental attitude love for others. That defeats covetousness. Only doctrine can give us that control over this evil (the evil of covetousness) and make us content. It gives us all the facets that we need to be contented people.

**Love**

The fulfillment, therefore, of these ten moral principles which we've been studying, not only the fulfillment of this one on covetousness, but all the rest of them, are summed up in what Jesus Christ calls His new commandment. For example, in John 13:34, we read, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you, that we also love one another." Now, that is the new commandment. This is the keyword. This is, therefore, the area upon which Satan zeros in tremendously.

There is more distortion on the concept of love than perhaps any other biblical fact. What is poured out generally as love is something that makes God want to recoil and vomit. The book of Revelation describes His reaction to the Laodicean Christians and their fake sugary sentimentality love, which is not the result of the Word of God functioning in their lives, but is simply the result of taking a course on public relations, and then putting people on. The new commandment that he talks about is the "agape" love. That's the Greek word here. That means mental attitude love. There is no emotional factor involved in this. This is the word that the Bible uses when God says, "Love your enemies." You can have that kind of a mental attitude, though you may not have an emotional attachment to your enemies.

The mental attitude love to characterize believers is the same thing that characterized Jesus Christ. In John 15:12, we read, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." This love was the new commandment. In 1 John 2:7, we have another reference to this: "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning." John reminds them that the commandment they have, which is new, is really old. It is the commandment to love one another. 2 John 5: "And now I beseech you lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto you, but that which we heard from the beginning, that we love one another.

This is what the Bible refers to as the Law of Christ. It is the commandment to permit "agape" mental attitude love of God to flow through us by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Here's the way Paul puts it in Romans 5:5: "And hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given unto us." The "agape" love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by God the Holy Spirit. This is what James 1:25 calls the law of liberty: "But whosoever looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deeds." This is the law of liberty, the law of loving one another. James 2:12: "So speak and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

This factor of love is a big thing. It is not wrong that people make a great deal of it. The problem is that they don't understand what it is. So they come up with a human viewpoint substitute for the fantastic thing that God, the Holy Spirit is ready to pour into us. Remember that this is the container of your soul–this pentagon of spiritual maturity–into which the grace of God comes pouring, and out of which then it overflows in super abundance. Until you have this built in your soul, God cannot pour His grace into you, and you cannot become a grace expressing Christian. You cannot, above all, become a believer who knows how to love. That's why women should not marry men who are not steeped in doctrine and functioning on it.

This new commandment is in contrast to the external commandments. The external commandment was the Ten Commandments. This is internal now. This is what comes from within us as the result of the enablement of God the Holy Spirit. The Mosaic Law demanded love (Luke 10:27). But the law of Christ is love (1 John 4:7).

So Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment. You've had these external Ten Commandments. I give you a new commandment." The point of His saying that is that, in this new commandment, all of these externals are fulfilled. Notice that Romans 13:8-10 put it this way: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another. For he that loves another has fulfilled the law." This kind of love fulfills the external law. "For this, thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; and, thou shalt not covet. If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love works no ill to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

So if you want to obey these ten moral principles, begin with Jesus' new commandment, "agape" love. And you'll only get "agape" love when you develop this in your soul. So stop going around telling us how you love people and how you love Jesus, and singing about it, because you don't. Until you have taken the Word of God into your soul on a functioning basis, and it is stored within your human spirit, you haven't even made the first step toward what is genuine love. But once you get that, then you enter a fantastic relationship with God; with your husband or wife; with the friends you have; with the people you deal with; and, your neighbors. That's when living really begins. Only those who have entered into this kind of love know what it's all about. Unfortunately, it's talked about mostly by people who are ignorant of it. Galatians, 5:14 says, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, thou shalt love thy neighbor (with "agape" love) as thyself."

**The Ten Commandments**

1. There is no room for other gods if you love Jehovah Elohim with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.
2. No idle images would be substituted as an object of worship if you have "agape" love for God.
3. There will be no blasphemous taking of God's name in vain by those who love him.
4. There is no neglect of the corporate day of worship of God if we love him.
5. Love for our parents will bring our obedience and honor to them.
6. There'll be no murder against those we love. We do not murder those who we love.
7. There is no illicit sex where genuine love is functioning.
8. There is no theft from those we love. We don't take things from people if we love them.
9. There is no false testimony against the neighbor we love.
10. There is no coveting by one who loves and finds fulfillment in the things of God.

May God help us to be lights in this world as Paul has called upon us to be by demonstrating these ten moral principles in our lives as the result of the love of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, functioning within our souls.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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