***The Christian Priesthood - PH93-01
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:14-19***

The apostle Paul, in the agonies of four years of Roman imprisonment, found a great joy in the Philippian church that he had founded. The particular occasion of the writing of Philippians, which we have been studying, has been a special offering which they sent to him from Philippi to his prison cell in Rome. As he gets to the end of this book, which deals basically with the subject of happiness, he points out that one of the key features in anybody's happiness is how he handles his money – how a person is related to material things. It can be a source of great happiness, or it can be a source of great misery. Most people in the world are aware of the fact that material things are there and that they are attractive, but most people in the world do not know how to relate themselves to material things and not destroy themselves in the process, and not bring a lot of grief into their life – not to stab themselves through, the Bible says, with many sorrows.

The apostle Paul said there is a way to be happy, and money is part of that happiness. So he has been pointing out that Christians are actually privileged to use their money as a sacrifice. It is one of the Christian priest's sacrifices – the sacrifice of substance, or the sacrifice of his money. Paul said that this was, in God's sight, a fragrant aroma of sacrifice comparable to the Old Testament order of fragrant aroma sacrifices.

Consequently, we have been studying this matter of priesthood and the matter of sacrifices. We have looked at the Old Testament order of things in order to get that as a frame of reference background. Now we are coming down to where we are going to see what the Word of God has to say concerning the sacrifices that we as believers are expected to bring.

If you, at this moment, cannot say, "Oh, yes, I know that there are these sacrifices," and you can rattle them off, I can tell you right now that you are not fulfilling your life as a believer. You're not fulfilling your role because you at least need to know these sacrifices to begin with if you're going to be able to fulfill them. Now maybe you are doing them, and you're lucking out, so to speak, and inadvertently doing them, but there are very definitive responsibilities that are laid upon us.

**Priests**

We have found that a system of human priesthood became necessary after Adam sinned in Eden. After that time, man had direct access to God. Now he had the condition of a holy God on one side, and a sinful man, who could not come into that holy presence, on the other side. Therefore, a sinner separated from the holy God needed some means of re-approaching that God. A priest acts as a representative in such a situation. He is the mediator between a holy God and a sinful individual.

However, a priest has to have a basis of approaching God which has divine approval. Our approach to God must be the way God says we approach Him. People are forever coming up with their own ideas on how God will accept us, and how we may approach Him. One of the silliest remarks a person can make in a negative reaction to something that they may have heard taught is to say, "Well, I don't believe that God would do that. I don't believe that God would treat us like that." Nobody really cares what you believe. Nobody cares what you think, including God. The issue is what God thinks and what God has said. Don't ever make such a foolish remark as to say, "I don't believe that God would do this," but say, "The Bible says that God would not do this. The Lord has indicated in the Word of God that this is how He would act and He would not act according to this." Anytime you hear a person say, "Well, I don't believe God would do that or act like that," you can just about be absolutely sure that you're hearing an expression of negative volition response to something that the Word of God teaches.

So a priest has to have a basis of approaching God that has divine approval. It has to be that God says, "Okay. I am holy, and I will not violate My absolute justice and absolute righteousness. You may come into My presence on this basis." Then you come into that presence, or you suffer the consequences.

**The History of Priesthood**

Earlier in Philippians, we have studied the sad biblical examples of people who operated on their own opinions as to how they would deal with God; how they would approach God; and, the consequences in their lives. The basic ministry of a priest in his approach to God is to offer sacrifices. These sacrifices symbolically reconcile the sinner to God. In patriarchal times, the male head of each family was the priest for his household. The father in the family did it for his family. Later, the Aaronic priesthood was established after the exodus from Egyptian slavery. This was part of the Mosaic Law system, and it was given to the Jews by God on Mount Sinai, so it was again God's way of approach to Him. Moses did not invent this way of approach.

These priests in the Aaronic order were limited to the male descendants of Aaron himself, of the tribe of Levi. There were no female priests. There were always male. All that is going on in the Episcopalian church today, for example, with the induction of female priests into the priesthood is a travesty upon a travesty. It's a travesty to have a priesthood separated from the common people. To have a clergy and laity is a travesty today as it is. There is no such thing as human priests who go between you and God. Then when you make females doing it, you've reached the epitome.

The Aaronic priesthood were all males. These priests were inducted into office by means of a ritual of consecration. Only God can consecrate. We may dedicate, but only God can consecrate. Consecration indicates a divine setting aside – a holy act on the part of God. It is not possible for people to consecrate themselves. That means that they were committed by God to a holy life.

The ministrations of the Aaronic priesthood at the tabernacle were constantly repeated because nothing that the priest was able to do could meet the demands of God's justice and righteousness against the sinner. In other words, there was no final sacrifice. So the priest was always on his feet; he never sat down; and, and he was always repeating the rituals; the sacrifices; and, the procedures. There was never any arriving at a settled peace.

Furthermore, they lacked a high priest who was qualified to be able to approach God, and to reconcile the two once and for all. The mediator in such a case had to be God and man in one person. Because Aaron was merely man, and all of his descendants were merely men, there was no way to bring God and man together. It had to be a mediator who was one of both sides. He had to be both God and man. That finally was fulfilled, as we are going to be made aware this Christmas season, in the person of Jesus Christ.

**The Melchizedek Priesthood**

There was another priesthood in Scripture apart from the Aaronic priesthood. That was the Melchizedek priesthood. This one was produced by God. It was brought into being because it was able to solve the problem of human sin. Melchizedek was a gentile priest of God whose priesthood was distinct from the Aaronic order. Melchizedek is presented in Scripture in such a way as to connote an eternal order of priests so that he would typify Jesus Christ. We have no genealogy; no record of his birth; no record of his family line; and, no record of his death. The Bible speaks of him in that way to connote that idea of eternity.

Abram met Melchizedek following a great victory which Abram had experienced in battle. When he met Melchizedek, he recognized him as God's priest, and bowed in subjection to the Melchizedek priesthood, and Melchizedek blessed Abram, thus signifying that he was superior to Abram. Abram was subordinate to him.

In God's sight, this superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood, demonstrated in this way, also indicated that all the family of Aaron and all the priests of Levites (which were to be born from Abram) were also in subordination to the Melchizedek priesthood. So the Aaronic priesthood is a temporary, inferior priesthood to the eternal Melchizedek priesthood. We have found that Jesus Christ is the final High Priest of the Melchizedek order. Jesus Christ was a God-man. Therefore, He could be a true mediator between God and sinner. Jesus Christ was personally (as a man) sinless. Therefore, He could die for the sins of other people. He was spiritually alive, and that's what it took to pay the price of sin. You had to have someone who could die spiritually, not just someone who'd be willing to die for you, but someone who could die spiritually, and give his life spiritually (his spiritual life) for the sins of the world, as well as the physical death. Therefore, this qualified Jesus to be Savior. He was sinless.

He is also eternal, so he is a High Priest forever. He never dies, so He never has to be replaced. So the work of Christ is so complete that He is seated now at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. So Jesus Christ of the Melchizedek order has fulfilled all of the types which were pictured in the Aaronic order. Since the work for personal salvation of the sinner is complete, the mediator, Jesus Christ, of the Melchizedek priesthood is seated.

So today we do not require animal sacrifices. We do not require that something be done to hold back the wrath of God. All of these animal sacrifices and all of these priestly functions were simply holding back the wrath of God in one way or another. There's nothing that needs to be done in the way of a sacrifice to hold back God's wrath. It's all been done. Therefore, there is no such thing as a sacrifice today. If you were to bring an animal sacrifice, it would be a travesty and an insult to God. If you were to suggest that you have a bloodless sacrifice, that would be a travesty and an insult to God.

That's what every Roman Catholic Church service does, as you know. Upon that altar there is the sacrifice of what is called the mass. The sacrifice of the mass is through the symbolic forms of the bread and the wine to sacrifice Christ again. They literally mean that they are crucifying Jesus Christ on that altar again. Once that bread has been consecrated in the priest's ritual, and transformed into the body of Christ, that bread is forever the body of Christ. And the priest will even risk his life to protect that piece of bread from anything happening to it until it has been eaten by someone in the process of eating the body of Christ.

So all of this travesty about sacrifices is horrendous, and God is offended by every suggestion that there is a sacrifice necessary today relative to covering our sins. There is no sacrifice necessary to provide a covering for our sins. There are our sacrifices, but for a different purpose.

**We are Priests**

You and I, as believers in the church age, are priests. As we look into the Word of God, we discover that the Bible very definitely and very clearly has declared that Christians, in this age of the church, are priests. For that reason, in 1 Peter, 2:9, we read, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." We found in this passage that the foundation of the Christian priesthood is Jesus Christ as God's resurrected living stone. We Christians are also declared, because we are united to Him, to be living stones, and we are built on Jesus Christ, the living rock, into a holy priesthood. Since Jesus Christ is of the order of Melchizedek, obviously our priesthood is also of that order. There are none of us who are of the Aaronic order. You had to be born of the tribe of Levi to be in the Aaronic priesthood, and we are not. But we are born into the gentile priesthood of Melchizedek.

So every believer in the church age is a priest – both male and female. In the church age, you do have female priests who do a different thing than the female priests that are being appointed in denominations today in order to intercede between God and man relative to our sins. In the church age, men and women both, as believers, are priests of God. But there is one distinct important difference, and that is that the priest in the church age represents only himself. You do not intercede for anyone else but yourself. You do not represent anyone else before God. So there is no such thing as clergy and laity today. There was in the Old Testament. Indeed, there were priests and there were non-priests, but that is not true today.

**Full-time Service**

Every Christian today is in full-time Christian service. We just have different kinds of service, and every one of us is in full-time Christian service. There is no clergy in full-time service and laity in part-time service. That's why it is important that you understand that you are a priest, and what you're supposed to do as a priest. If you do not, you will squander your life. If you do not, you will enter heaven, and the loss of reward to you will be gigantic, and it will be forever. You can go to heaven with the rewards that God has prepared for you, or you can go to heaven and lose every one of them. That's a doctrine in itself. We're not going to pursue that here. You can get prior studies on that if you don't understand that.

**Christian Priesthood**

Today, we're looking at the Christian priesthood, bringing it down to ourselves.

**The Nature of Christian Priesthood**

First of all, we'll look at the nature Christian priesthood. We see in 1 Peter 2:9 that Christians were called a royal priesthood. Christians belong to the royal family of God. God is the King of the universe. You are a prince or a princess in His family. So Christians, as priests, are royal priests, and we are after the pattern of the king priest Melchizedek that we read of previously in the Scriptures. Christian priests display the fact that they are royalty by how they act.

If you are born into a royal family here on earth, you are trained from childhood to act like royalty. You are not expected to act like some common urchin of the streets. You were taught how to act as a real person should act. You are taught to act in terms of being a prince or princess. You are taught certain procedures; certain protocols; certain forms; and, certain attitudes. Most of all, you are given certain concepts concerning your mission in life because you have been born into a royal family, and you are destined someday to be a reigning monarch. So it is important that you recognize, first of all, that as royalty, you are not to be preoccupied with yourself.

**Magnanimity**

The thing that is to characterize royalty on earth is magnanimity – the concern for the welfare of one's subjects. Royalty is magnanimous. Royalty is to be characterized by graciousness. Royalty is to be characterized by concern for others. Royalty, therefore, is to act with dignity. Royalty is not to be complaining; murmuring; being impatient; lamenting; badgering; or, fault-finding. If any of those things rings a bell with you, you haven't been acting like a member of the royal family, but you've been acting like the common trash out in the streets, and it's time to change. People who are in the royal family of God do not go around complaining; murmuring; being impatient; lamenting; badgering; and, fault-finding.

One of the saddest things I hear said from time to time by believers is to say, "That person is so negative." This is another quality that is not characteristic of royalty. It's a shame for anybody to ever describe a royal son or daughter of the Melchizedek priesthood as being negative. There are some people that are absolutely negative no matter what, because they've forgotten who they are, and they cheapen their royal position. There is nothing more gross than a royal priest of God who hinders people in their access to the Word of God. Anytime Satan is able to use any one of us to do anything to hinder the access to the Word of God that people need, then we have insulted our King (our God), and Satan has had a great victory, and we have degraded our royal position. We do not act as the royal priests of God when we hinder the access of people to the Word of God. Satan is always selfishly trying to do one thing or another to hinder the proclamation of doctrine.

So we have churches filled with Christians who are squabbling over trivia. I cannot believe what people in churches will squabble over. I cannot believe the battles they will fight that are not worth winning. But I know right away that these people think they are going to live forever. Every time you get up in the morning, sooner or later, you're going to look at yourself in the mirror. I would suggest you remind yourself that 100 years from now, you aren't going to be here looking in that mirror. Make yourself a note right now. Every time you get up in the morning, look yourself in the mirror and say, "Good morning, nobody 100 years from now. Have a good day." It might help you not to be fretting over trivia – things that are not going to make any difference 100 years from now. It might help to get your head screwed on straight and get some perspective into your understanding as to what is important to fight.

How many wars have been lost because of generals who played the fool in the field, and who fought battles they weren't winning? Any good military organization teaches its men that there are some battles that are not worth fighting because they are not worth winning. The cost of winning them is so disastrous that you lose the war for having won the battle. Any good military organization teaches its men that there is a time not to seek to win a battle that is not worth winning. You and I ought to pray every day that God would give us discernment, as members of royalty, to know what battles are worth fighting, and what battles are simply a draining of our capacity, and after we have won them, have simply had such a fallout and such a destructive effect within our own ranks that we are weakened for the war that we're supposed to be fighting.

We're in a war. We're in an angelic conflict. Satan is not easing up. The thing he loves to do most of all is to get Christians fighting battles that simply dissipate their capacities. He gets people knocked out of operation, and then he sits back and has a big belly laugh over the stupidity of people who are supposed to be the royalty of God.

You are a priest of God. A priest is supposed to open doors of access to divine viewpoint to people, not slam it shut in their faces. If you act like royalty, it will help you open doors. If you act like royalty, you will not be acting under the powers of the old sin nature that degrade our royal position. The proper use of a Christian's priesthood will not only solve your problems personally as a priest, but it will create a body of divine good that God has intended for you to create. You have a body of divine good production. That is the reason He ever let you take that first breath. Your life is to produce that divine good. If you use your priesthood in the right way, you will produce that divine good, and you will not be hindering the production of divine good.

**The Privacy of the Priesthood**

There is one word that is very important. You've heard it, and we should understand to associate this word with priesthood. That is the word "privacy." The personal priesthood of you as a royal child of God in the Melchizedek Order is a matter of privacy. Since the believer priest of the church age represents only himself before God, his priesthood, in the nature of the case, is a private matter between himself and God. If your priesthood consists of only two people, you and God, in the nature of the case, it is private. Right at the beginning it should be clearly evident that if your priesthood consists of only two people, you and God, it has to be private.

Privacy means not having to account to anyone else other than God for what you, as a believer, do with the divine viewpoint information He gives you. Even if you are negative to the teaching of the Word of God, it is no one else's business. That is why God has ordained and provided the organization of the local church to gather in these public meetings for instruction in the Word of God.

Some of you are very positive believers. Some of you are comparatively new in our midst. Those of you who are positive, and those of you who are on the new side, look around a congregation like this, and you have the feeling that everybody is very positive to the Word of God. That's one of the things you'll observe, and you'll tell me how it's really nice to be around a group of people that are really open to the Word of God. But I'm here to tell you that within even a congregation like ours, there are streaks of negative volition response to the Word of God. There are resistances to what is taught from the Word of God. And that's perfectly all right. That is the privilege of your priesthood. Because we teach in a group, that is private.

I don't know whether you are being negative. You don't know whether the person next to you is being negative. Generally you don't. Sometimes they start vibrating enough that you know that something is happening, but generally you don't know. Sometimes you'll notice that the pupils in their eyeballs begin to dilate, and you know that you're getting to them, but otherwise you don't. It's private. Nobody knows. That's the way it's supposed to be. What you do with the instruction of the Word of God is between you and the Lord alone. That's the nature of the priesthood of the church age.

Privacy means not having to give an account to anyone other than the Lord as to how you live your life as a Christian. Even if you are squandering your life as a Christian (and plenty of Christians are), it is no one else's business. You do not have to give an account to anyone else for the fact that you are squandering your life. That's true even if you go spiritually insane and start chasing off into the charismatic movement; start chasing off unto a deeper life; start running off into all kinds of retreats; start getting up for early morning breakfast; or, any number of things that you can do in order to find further advancement in the Word of God. That's your business. You can go ahead and exhaust yourself; squander yourself; dissipate yourself; and, waste yourself as a believer. Privacy of the priesthood means you don't have to account to me or to anyone else.

Privacy means that one Christian has no right to impose his preferences on another in spiritual matters. Privacy means that no Christian has the right to impose upon you the preferences in spiritual matters. If you want to go to a church that has stained glass windows; that burns candles; and, that has great antiphonal singing by the choirs as your method of worshiping God, that's alright. Whole churches are built (the very structure and the very architecture of the church) such that you can walk in and you can almost tell what kind of a service is conducted in the church by just the architecture. I don't know what you can say about this gym here. I guess that tells you something. But a church building that is deliberately built for worship: you can tell a lot about what goes on in that building. I can just by looking at the architecture. I know how much liturgy there is; how much is ceremony; how much is robe wearing; how much is a ritualistic procedure; and, how much is giving you the impression that you've been to church.

Somebody some time ago suggested that from now on, every time that a window gets knocked out here in the gym (which happens occasionally), we replace it with a colored pane of glass so that the auditorium would look a little more churchy. You'd feel like you had been to church. That's really what a lot of this architecture does. It's to give you the feeling that you have been to church. If that's your preference, that is okay. Just go ahead and go to a church like that. If that's the preference of your priesthood, it is perfectly alright for you to do that.

I don't care how you want to worship at home. If you want to sit down, and you want to read the Bible in front of a picture of a girlish looking Jesus Christ with His long hair, that's alright. A lot of people do. They pray in front of a picture like that. You can go ahead and light candles in front of it. That is the privacy of your priesthood. So no one has any right to come in and say, "What kind of a nut are you? Are you burning candles in front of a picture?"

It's private. It's only you and God. If you feel comfortable before the Lord worshiping in that way, then it's your privilege to do so. It's no one else's right to impose their preferences upon you.

The same thing is true at Christmastime. You're going to hear a lot of talk here at the Christmas season about the evils of Christmas. I know that there is a lot of evil associated with Christmas, and that the world has it all botched up and all balled up. But I also know that believers who understand the Word of God, and who can enter into the joy and the arrival of God's unspeakable gift, can enjoy all of the accouterments of Christmas season without debasing it with the Santa Claus business, and can appreciate even the giving of gifts as being truly significant of commemoration of God's unspeakable gifts, and can enjoy the whole holiday season as an expression of praise and glory to God in the highest.

Yet you're going to hear preachers coming down hard because people enjoy the relaxation, the joy, and the happiness of the holiday season, and the world distorts it. If you can commemorate Christmas as into the Lord, then no one else has the right to tell you that you can't do it. You are a priest of God. If you like to have a Christmas tree in your home, and somebody else says, "Well, Christmas trees are an idol," to you it's not an idol. If it's an idol to him, he better not have one.

If December 25th bothers you because it used to be a Roman pagan holiday, the Saturnalia, and was later adopted as the commemorative day of the birth of Christ, then find yourself some other day and use it. But if December 25th doesn't bother you, then it is your privilege as a priest of God to commemorate that day, and to be happy to celebrate the fact that into the stream of human history and into the stream of humanity broke in the God-man, Jesus Christ – whatever day it is. It is the fact of the event that we celebrate. That's why December 25th is not a holy day. It is simply a day that we have set aside. That kind of thing (just on and on) is the privacy of you living your life as a believer without somebody imposing their preferences on you.

The old sin nature in the Christian has a long nose. If you've never observed that before, the old sin nature in the Christian has a terrifically long nose that's just dying to poke itself into the business of other believers. We have a lot of Christians who have long noses rooting around in the lives of other people. When they do, it's an absolute indication of personal arrogance and carnality. You don't root around in the lives of other believers. The Bible doctrine principle is to let each of us live our lives as unto the Lord, and to let other people do the same.

The privacy of the priesthood is a marvelous provision of the grace of God that gives leeway for the different human temperaments to express themselves in the local church. In this auditorium, we have sanguines; we have cholerics; we have melancholies; and, we have phlegmatics. We have them with varying degrees of having flushed out their weaknesses and enhanced the strengths of those temperaments. It is the goal of the Christian life to flush out the weaknesses of your particular temperament, and to enhance the strengths of that temperament.

These temperaments in a local church are at different stages of development. They're at different stages of neutralizing their weaknesses. Wouldn't it be a tragedy if one temperament were allowed to dominate all the other temperaments in the Lord's work? Wouldn't it be a tragedy if someone came up and said, "Preachers should only be a certain temperament? Sunday school teachers should only be on a certain kind of person. A youth leader can only have a certain temperament." And other temperaments were wiped out. Privacy of the priesthood does not permit you to pass judgment upon the Lord's use of anybody else's temperament. It is up to the Lord, and to the Lord alone. You cannot eliminate somebody else. There is no more idiotic statement than to declare that a certain temperament type is what God uses in certain areas of His work. That is not true. A preacher can be any one of these four temperaments. A Christian worker can be any one of these temperaments. God's people are all of these temperaments, and each of them are engaged in every kind of Christian service activity. One does not dominate.

So privacy gives leeway for this. Privacy also enables a Christian to work out his legalistic hangups and his immaturities without knocking himself out of the Lord's service. It gives you time to grow up. Some of you have immaturities that none of the rest of us know about. God knows about it. Some of you have hangups that none of the rest of us know about. You've never publicly declared them. You have things about you that only God knows – things that shouldn't bug you. There are weaknesses and immaturities that you should not have. Well, privacy keeps you from having to make a fool of yourself publicly. It enables you to develop the strength and to develop the maturity to be able to overcome your hangups. Because people do not root into your business and force these things out of you, you can go on to better days in the Lord's work.

Respect for privacy of the Christian priesthood preserves a believer from sowing discord among the brethren and among the congregation. Privacy of the priesthood, when you recognize it, will prevent you from trying to create sides for a cause. You will recognize that each life deals with each matter privately as unto the Lord.

Now, having come down that hard on the feature of privacy in the Christian's priesthood, let me qualify it with this. Privacy of the priesthood does not mean that we, as a local church organization, cannot stipulate standards and procedures for those who are associated with this work. We do and we should. As a local church organization, we expect certain standards of our members. We expect certain commitments to certain doctrines. If you cannot commit yourself and if you cannot accept those doctrines, then don't be a member of this church. Find yourself a church that has the doctrines to which you can commit yourself.

Incidentally, God does not move Christians around from church to church. When God brings you into a church; settles you into a ministry; and, brings you into a church fellowship, He does not move you someplace else because you get unhappy. Please remember that when the Lord leads you to your right church and your right pastor-teacher, it is almost inevitable that it is a lifetime relationship. It's the same thing as marriage. When you come to a local church, you are marrying a relationship that God has brought you into. Unless that local church suddenly went completely spiritually berserk itself and went apostate, then you have a condition that God does not allow you to drift out any more than you do in marriage.

Some people think that in marriage, if they don't love each other anymore, they should have a divorce. They think if they can't keep from fighting, they should have a divorce; or, if they can't agree. There are any number of things that cause them to think they should have a divorce. But the Bible never gives any justification for any of those things anywhere down the line. Marriage is permanent. When you release yourself to a local church, and God has related you, then that is permanent. Now, when you go off your rocker, you think it's not permanent, and you go drifting out.

So the Word of God says that a local church organization stands for certain things. When you relate yourself to it, it's a permanent relationship. It would be very unusual for God to be moving you off from it. The organization has a right to make those standards, just like schools have a right to establish standards. If students don't like it, they get out of that school; open their own school; or, find another school. They don't invade the president's office and take over and say, "We're going to impose certain requirements upon you."

Privacy of the priesthood does not cover violations of local church standards and procedures. When a person does, then the local church leadership is in order to act upon that. Privacy does not mean tolerating sin in the local church body. Privacy does not mean tolerating negative attitudes toward a divine viewpoint in a local church body. Privacy does not mean tolerating faithlessness in service – not taking care of your personal spiritual responsibilities and duties within a local organization of the church. Privacy never means you can come and go as you please without giving account. The Bible is very clear. The church at Corinth was an example that the local church organization should have come down hard on the priesthood of a couple of people who were living in immorality, and who were refusing to do anything about it, though it was known. You can't come down on what you don't know, but what you know they must take action upon.

Privacy does not mean that one Christian cannot admonish or exhort another Christian who needs to be warned. It is perfectly in order for you to go to another believer and say, "I want to give you some advice. I think you should know this. I am speaking to you as a brother or sister in Christ. I've observed. I think you're acting in a way that's dangerous. I think you're acting without considering the consequences of what you're doing. And I want to warn you that this is out of line with the Word of God." It is perfectly right to exhort. It's perfectly right to encourage, also, as well as to admonish. It does not mean that you must ignore what God lays upon your heart in concern for other believers. But it does mean that once you have admonished the person, you leave it with the Lord. It does mean that once you have declared what you think; once you have given your warning; and, once you have made your statement, you then leave it with the Lord. You then resort to faith rest to allow God to deal with that particular individual.

There are a lot of misconceptions on privacy within the priesthood. It is a very precious thing that we have. You should not violate other people's privacy, and they should not violate yours. But privacy does not mean lack of responsibility. Privacy does not mean that a parent cannot look into the lives of their children. Please remember that too. Your children do not have privacy of priesthood. When they are grown, then they become private. But while they are under your care and your authority, it is your business to know what your kids are doing; what they're saying; what they're thinking; and, how they're spending their time, their money, and everything else. You had better make it your business. They are not their own priests. You are their priest – the family priest that functions in that respect.

So this is where the Lord has led you as part of the Melchizedek priesthood, and as part of a relationship that is absolutely unique in the history of mankind.

Now, this priesthood has certain functions. In the next session, we're going to be looking at these functions in greater detail. These are the basic functions that keep your priesthood operational. You are a priest, and maybe you say, "Well, I don't feel that I really have been operating much as a priest." Part of the reason is because you don't know what a priest is supposed to do. A priest is supposed to do more than make sacrifices. That's part of it. There are other functions that are critical to your priesthood. If you perform those functions, then you're going to be a priest who is building up a divine good creation which God will then reward you for in heaven. So next time, we'll begin with the functions of the priesthood that keep it working. Then we'll start looking at the series of priestly sacrifices which the living God expects you to offer. If ever you have attended a Bible study, the next one is the one to attend. Don't miss it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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