***Christian Indebtedness, No.2  
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Romans 8:12-13. Our subject is The Christian's Indebtedness, Segment #2.

As always, the reason for our gathering is basically as an expression of worship. The word "worship" in the old English meant a "worth ship." And people gather in worship to demonstrate the worthiness of God. There's only one way that God's worthiness can be demonstrated and that we can enter into it, and that is when we secure His thinking - when we enter into the mind of God. And that we can only do through the Word of God. So our purpose this morning is to concentrate upon the Word of God, to expand it as always, and thereby to demonstrate the worthiness of God and thereby to honor Him and to worship Him in the highest sense of the word.

If you hear something this morning that you don't approve, that doesn't strike you in an appeal way, in an acceptable way, I do want to remind you that one of the happy things about the Christian life is that it is a life where ultimate answers are given. It is never left in limbo so that there is no definitive answer. Now, someplace down the line, you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and at that point, you will discover who was right and who was wrong. And at that point, you will think back and say, "I knew he was wrong in what he was saying," and you'll be very happy. Or you may say, "Doggone it, he was right," and you will be unhappy. Because if you're wrong, you will suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ. If you are right, you will come out ahead. So it is always comforting to know that we are going to find out who's right and who's wrong. We are going to find out what the answers are, which only, stress this once more, that it behooves us to approach the Word of God as the Word of God as an authority which we must understand to which we must subject ourselves so that there are answers, and the answers that are in the Word of God are the mind of God for which we are held responsible.

In Romans 16:19, the Apostle Paul tells the Christians in the city of Rome that it is his desire for them that they be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. Paul says, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."

What the Apostle Paul is saying here is that it is God's plan for Christian living, as expressed here by Paul, that we know about righteousness by personal experience. Righteousness, because we've done it, but that it is the will of God that we should not know about evil by experience. We should not know evil as a result of having done it. We should know evil as a result of having studied the Word of God in other sources. Evil is the foreign element in the born again person, and so it should not be allowed in the person's life in terms of his experience. We learn about evil, therefore, from the Bible, from outside sources in life. We do not learn about evil by experimentation. There is abroad in the land a concept that everybody should try everything once just to see if they like it, and that's a satanic notion. The Bible says what is righteous you learn by your personal entering into it through experience; what is evil you learn by your reasoning capacity and study but you do not pursue it by experience.

Therefore, as we come to Romans 8, which we are studying this morning, we have found at verse 12 that Christians are told that they are not obliged to practice the evil of the sin nature since they are not enslaved to it. We are not obliged to learn evil by our personal experience. The carnal Christian, we found, Paul says, immediately enters the realm of death. He experiences the spiritual separation of God the Father in terms of broken fellowship and the loss of the filling of the Holy Spirit. And that's a type of death; it's a separation. He may persist in this status of carnality, and he will ultimately experience the divine discipline of physical death. So that once you start on the road of carnality, you've started a death walk, and you've started a death watch, and it's a dangerous condition to be in. The terrible consequences of death for the Christian, of course, is loss of rewards in heaven.

Romans 8 is Paul's explanation of how a Christian can avoid the death consequences of the sin nature. We have come to the middle of verse 13. Let's beginning at Romans 8:12, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors [we are obliged not to the sin nature], to live after [according to, under the authority of] the sin nature. For if we live under the authority of flesh, [that is, the sin nature], ye shall die: [and we pick it up there] but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

The word "but" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the conjunction "de." It introduces a contrast with living in subjection to the sin nature. Instead of living as a slave to the sin nature, there is a different lifestyle to which you are called. "But if." The word "if" is this Greek word "ei," a Greek particle, we call it, and it is introducing a first-class condition in the Greek language which as you know introduces a reality. The Roman Christians are actually viewed as doing this. They are viewed as actually not living in enslavement to the sin nature but living, in fact, in a different way that is living in enslavement through the Holy Spirit, to His guidance. The word "spirit" here is the Greek word "pneuma." This stands here for God the Holy Spirit. The believer who is filled with the Holy Spirit is the believer who is governed by the Holy Spirit. It is the opposite of being governed by the sin nature.

So Paul says, "But, [if in contrast to what he has just said], by means of the Holy Spirit, you do mortify." The word "mortify" looks like this. It's the Greek word "thanatoo." "Thanatoo" actually means "to put to death." What it connotes here is rejection. You do reject something outright. This is present tense in the Greek language which indicates that this is the constant nature of the Christian's response. It is active voice, which indicates that this is to be our choice to reject certain things of the sin nature. And it's indicative mood - a statement of fact. This word is, of course, used in contrast to the previous statement of the sin nature bringing death to the Christian. Here, it's said the Christian is to bring death to something else, and that is to bring death to the deeds.

The word "deeds" is the Greek word "praxis." This is a noun, and it denotes a dueling of some kind. Here it refers to the Christian's personal conduct and specifically and specifically the dueling of his "soma," which stands for "body," the Christian's physical body. As you know, the human body is the agency of the evildoing of the sin nature. If you're going to do things that are wrong, you begin with doing them in your mind and then your mind triggers it into an overt, external expression through your body. So the human body is this agency of evildoing that the sin nature uses. The Holy Spirit rejects the evil expressions of the sin nature for the believer who is yielded to Him.

What the Apostle Paul is saying here in putting to death these expressions of the body is said in another way by him in 1 Corinthians 10:31 when Paul says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do [whatever you're practicing, the word, like the word 'proxis' again], ye do all to the glory of God." So whatever you do with your human body, you are guided by God the Holy Spirit so that what you do is to the glory of God. All efforts to subdue the deeds of the sin nature as expressed through your human body by some form of asceticism, some form of self-crucifixion, some form of hitting on an emotional high, is doomed to failure. It's a delusion. You cannot control the sin nature by your determined will power. It will whip you every time, and you better count on it.

That's what the eighth chapter of Romans is all about. There is a way of beating the sin nature, but it is not just because you decide that you're going to be a good, godly person. You will fall down every time. You will be defeated. "But if [in contrast to living after the sin nature] ye [Christians] through [God] the [Holy] Spirit, do put to death the deeds [the doings] of the [physical] body [the consequences are enormous], ye shall live."

The Greek word is "zao." This is the word for "experiencing life." It refers here to both the spiritual life in fellowship with God the Father and the physical life of the body, both of which you experience here on earth. It is in the future tense, which means at any point in the future, when you reject doing evil. It is, interestingly enough, middle voice. In the Greek language, when you have a word, a verb, which is in the middle voice, it is reflecting back on you. It means it'll be to your benefit. YOU will know what real living is personally. It's indicative, a statement of fact. The daily life of joy and blessing flowing from a life of holiness. Living the life of eternity is what we're talking about within the confines of time.

So for the Christian, there is a living which brings on death, and there is a living which puts to death that which the sin nature is doing. There is a living which brings on death, and there is a putting to death which brings on a fullness of living. The sin nature is linked to death as life is linked to the Spirit of God. So, in spite of what people generally believe today, there are indeed some divine rules for use of the human body beyond your own natural desires. And that's what the Apostle Paul is saying. There is a guideline, there is a restriction for the use of the human body. Christians who live by means of the Holy Spirit will show it by the way they think and by the way they conduct themselves. And that's one of the keenest evidences to us personally and as we see it in others, that their conduct will demonstrate that they are living by means of the Holy Spirit rather than the sin nature.

In Matthew 7, the Lord Jesus put it this way, beginning at verse 15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth bad fruit." But remember it is only the Word of God that can decide whether a thing is good or bad. It is only the Word of God that can tell us that some fruit is good and some fruit is bad. It is not mere human opinion. And when you look out there in the religious realm, you know that the place is full of false prophets, and it is evidenced by the fact that they are producing corrupt fruit, because when we match what they say and what they do against the Word of God, we discover how far off-base they are. So they cannot do anything that is good. It comes, you see, from a true basis of enlightenment in the Spirit of God, or it comes from the basis of the darkness of the sinful nature. Verse 18 says, "A good tree cannot bring forth that fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

One of the all-time great examples of satisfied living, and that is, truly enjoying life at its fullest, is in one of the favorite Psalms, Psalm 23, that all of y'all are so well-acquainted with. The opening verse of Psalm 23 says, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." We have declared here that God is our guide through whom we will lack nothing that we need. Then, verse 2 says, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters."

The image of lying down in green pastures is a very significant one. Usually when you read this, and you know that he is talking about a shepherd with his sheep comparing it to God's people, you normally look at green pastures, and you think that means lots of food. Here he has lots of food. Here we are lying in the midst of all this banquet. That is not the image here, because people who tend sheep tell us that there is something that is always true about a sheep. And that is that he never eats when he's lying down. He can have the most delicious morsel of food just at the tip of his nose, and if he's lying down, he will not eat it. But he will stand up, and then he will bend over, a much harder way to do it, but then he will eat it. He never eats standing up. He never eats lying down.

So when we read in Psalm 23:2, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," you see the image is totally different than what normally might appear just from the words. What he is saying is you are so absolutely filled with abundance, you don't want any more. You're ready to sit down and rest, as if you had a huge meal, and you're satiated. There's nothing more that you could possibly want, so you're ready to lie down and to be at rest. This is a great example of satisfied living, and furthermore, God leads us to those blessings which like a stream of water satisfy our thirst for the good things of life and for the things of righteousness. That is, he makes us content with ourselves. And that's what verse 2 means. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside still waters." I have all that I want to eat. My thirst is satiated. I am at peace with myself. And then verse 3 says, "He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the path of righteousness for His name's sake." So that we are told that having met all of our spiritual need, having satisfied us completely, he is then able to develop our souls and to teach us from the Word of God how to honor His name.

Now, the Apostle Paul has made a very explicit statement of a Christian obligation in Romans 8:13 that there is a life which is described as living real satisfaction. And we are told that we secure that kind of lying down in God's green pastures and by his falling waters, completely satisfied, if we put to death the deeds, and this connotes evil deeds, of the body. Now, the question is, what deeds are we to mortify? What deeds should we set aside? Because, I need not warn you that the woods are full of the self-righteous, arrogant Christian who is out there stalking in the woods seeking to jump on somebody with his own set of deeds that he should mortify. His own set of things that he wants other people to conform to.

If we are going to actually understand what deeds God wants us to put aside, we obviously have to go back to the Bible. And there are several places in the Word of God. We can nearly begin to cover them this morning. We'll just touch on a couple three that explicitly tell us what you should get rid of relative to your human conduct. And when you read it in the Bible, you know that this is a true admonition. Now your immediate reaction is that you are sympathetic to the Word of God, that if God says you should not do something, you should want to seriously consider it, but I can assure you it will not be that easy. The human mind is so devious. The sin nature is so clever that it will very often give us a rationalization for doing the very thing that God says, "Stop doing this." And at the same, we give ourselves the impression that that's what we have done.

**Foolishness**

Let's take a look at one of those lists that periodically, the writers of scripture just throw in and they pile one word after another in fulfillment of what Paul's talking about here when he says "mortify, put to death, the deeds of the body." One such list is in the book of Titus 3. Titus 3, beginning at verse 3. Here, the Apostle Paul in writing to Titus is reviewing some things that once were characteristic of us before we were born again and which therefore should not be characteristic of us now. Number one, he says there was a time when you were foolish. This is one thing that you should put away from your conduct now. The Greek word looks like this: "anoetos." "Anoetos" refers to a mind which is devoid of Bible doctrine, information, and viewpoint, and consequently, it is a mind which lacks understanding. To be foolish means to lack divine viewpoint, understanding.

In Luke 24:25, we have this word used this way. This is on the road to Emmaus. Jesus is speaking to the two disciples who weren't making the connections over what happened in Jerusalem and the Word of God they had been taught. "Then He [Jesus] said unto them, 'O foolish ones ["anoetos" ones] and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Why were they foolish? Why did Jesus call them foolish? Because they did not have spiritual understanding. And why did they not have spiritual understanding? Because they just would not believe what the Word of God had predicted concerning the Messiah and His death. People who are unbelievers obviously lack the divine viewpoint to the Word of God and therefore we can only describe them as ignorant intellectuals. They may be people of high IQ, but if they do not have the understanding of the Word of God, which you can only get from learning doctrine, you are foolish. You lack understanding, and at best, you're an ignorant intellectual.

Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: But he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." Have you ever noticed how people can be doing the dumbest thing imaginable but they think it's absolutely right? A fool is wise in his own eyes. Why? Because he doesn't understand what's going on. But the person who listens to the Word of God, to divine viewpoint, that's a wise person. Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death."

That's what's tragic about being foolish. It'll lead you to death, see. And if you're a Christian, you used to be foolish. You used to have a mind that was devoid of God's viewpoint. Paul says, "Put that away from you." That's one of the deeds of the body that should not characterize you anymore because your mind is part of your body. We Christians therefore should not be ignorant of God's principles of conduct for believers. Failure, you see, to be a serious student of the Bible, which is the case with some of you, failure to be a serious student of the Bible - and by that mean a person who walks out of these services and then continues meditating upon what you have heard and continues your own pursuit of the study of the Word of God as you go through your week - failure to be a serious student of the Bible with the intention of learning the principles of the Word in order to apply them to living will make you a foolish person. So that even if you are in the presence of the Word of God, if you are not a serious student of that Word, you will still end up as a fool.

In Romans 1, we have that condition precisely described. Romans chapter 1, beginning at verse 21, Paul says, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God [you see, in spite of the fact that they had been taught about God], neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Their heart which lacked understanding became dark. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Now that's pretty grim. They went around considering themselves very educated, very much in-the-know, but God says, "You're nothing but ignorant intellectuals. You are fools. You lack understanding."

So the Christian who does not possess true divine viewpoint understanding will have a zeal for the things that the sin nature calls good. But remember: you do not con God, and those things are still rejected by God. In Romans 10:2-3, Paul says, "For I bear them [speaking of the Jewish people] witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge [not according to biblical truth]. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness [a righteousness that comes to you as a gift] and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. So Titus 3:3 says one of the things that a Christian should put away from himself in his personal lifestyle is lacking of understanding of divine viewpoint. He should not be foolish.

**Disobedience**

The second element that he should set aside that he once was, and that is that we once were disobedient. The word "disobedient" looks like this, "apeithés," in the Greek Bible. This refers to a spirit which refuses to be persuaded by the truth. Do you ever meet anybody that says, "Don't try to confuse me with the truth; my mind is already made up. Don't give me the facts; my mind is already made up. Don't confuse me with the truth."

That's what this scripture is saying about. There are some people that refuse to be persuaded by the truth. This word connotes an obstinate rejection of God's laws so that you can be free to indulge what you think. It is a rejection of God's authority and expresses itself in disobedience in legitimate areas of human authority. The disobedient person rejects the authority of his parents. The disobedient person rejects the authority of his teachers. He rejects the authority of his pastor teacher. He rejects the authority of civil government. He rejects the authority of his employer, right down the line. There is a rejection of authority when you are disobedient. This indicates the person really who has a certain contempt and indifference for God's opinions while he is professing great devotion to Him.

Titus 1:16 says, "For they profess that they know God: but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Unto every good work, useless. You don't have to listen to our society talk much today to see how much American society expresses a devotion to God and yet in fact is totally rebellious to Him and to His Word. Human reason is placed as a higher authority above the Bible for reaching decisions for human well-being. Paul says, "Reject the sin nature's appeal to be disobedient."

**Being Deceived**

Titus says a third factor that once characterized you was you once were deceived. The Greek word is "plano." This refers to a quality of life which is lead astray from the truth. Matthew 18:12 puts it this way, "How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray [he's wandered off from the sheepfold]." "And one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that one which is gone astray?" There's a perfect picture of what this word "plano" means; it just means to get completely off-base from reality.

The word is used in Revelation 12:9 of Satan in his work of leading people astray from the Word of God from God's thinking. And this is one of the devil's favorite devices. Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him." There's the concept of deceiving, the same word that describes what Satan does. Satan, remember, uses human beings and human techniques to lead Christians astray from God's thinking.

The advertising that surrounds us which glamorizes products and practices which are destructive to the human body and to social relationships. That's one of Satan's great ways of leading people astray. Now, if you are a Christian, Paul says, in Heaven's name, you ought not to be a sucker for what you see on advertising on TV and read in magazines. You ought not to be deceived by that stuff anymore.

To be able to be led astray by other Christians is to fall into this trap of being deceived, without checking out the truth for yourself. How many Christians make fools of themselves because they see like the human being and say, "Here is my God. When he speaks, I am hearing the truth proclaimed." Now Paul says, "For heaven sakes, grow up! Don't be the kind of a Christian that some con artist can come and tell you something and you swallow it without doing what every Christian is required to do to keep from being deceived, to check it out.

Ephesians 4:14. Paul refers to this same thing when he says, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive." And here you've got the word "plano" again. Do not forget there are plenty of Christians out there who have a cause and they're ready to deceive you if you are not perceptive enough to check it out. It is a shame for a Christian to be able to be deceived by somebody's scuttlebutt, as was the case when he was just a dumb, lost sheep. Once you're a born-again sheep of God, now you're a person of great perception. You're a person of great capacity that you do not have to be carried away by somebody's scuttlebutt.

1 Peter 2:25 says, "For ye were as sheep going astray [that's past-tense]; but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul." No Christian can find any dignity or any comfort in being led astray. So be careful not to fall into the trap of treating the pronouncements of people as if they were the voice of God. It is sad to see Christians who are being led astray from the mind of God because they are subjecting themselves to somebody else's carnal human viewpoint. Paul says, "Reject being led astray. Grow up. Get stable. It should be different."

**Serving Lusts and Pleasures**

And then there's a fourth quality that he puts out that should be put away from us as those who are born-again and should not be characterized by, and that is serving, he says, various lusts and pleasures. Lusts and pleasures. The word "serving" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "douleuo." This word means "to be enslaved to." The word "lusts" is "epithumeo;" it means strong desires. Could be good, could be bad. Here, it's referring to bad ones. Pleasures is the Greek word "adone." "Adone" is a Greek word that refers simply to sensual desires.

So, here you have the picture of Satan's world passing in review in these three words, serving strong desires for sensual evil. You've got Satan's world passing in review. The person who is the glutton. The person who is the rapist. The drug user. The adulterer. The sadist. The sexual pervert. The drunkard. The sports worshipper. The child molester. The pornographer. The x-rated entertainment. The gambler. The murderer. The miser. The filthy talker. The abortionist. And the wolf who wants to put his paws all over you. You've got Satan's world passing in review in these words. Much of modern psychology legitimatizes these lusts and pleasures for the sensual by saying that they are necessary for human fulfillment and human stability. The Bible says, "Wrong!" As a Christian, get rid of these things. May they not be true of your lifestyle. It is the sorted sight to see any of these things still dominating the life of a Christian in spite of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and it is amazing how in some degree, some of these things will keep cropping up.

We have examples of this sort of thing, for example, in Genesis 39, that I think is illustrative. Genesis 39:7-9. Here we have Joseph as the example who put aside the lusts for sensual pleasures apart from his life. "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, 'Lie with me.' But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, 'Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'" What a tremendous statement. There is a classic example of a young man who said, "I'm putting aside the pleasures and the sexual lust patterns from me."

In the case of Moses, we read of him in Hebrews 11:25 that he chose rather to suffer the affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Here, Moses putting apart from him, setting aside from himself these lusts and pleasures.

And then there's this tremendous example of Daniel in the Old Testament. Daniel 1:8, where we read of this same determination made by Daniel, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's food, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." Daniel respectfully refused to defile himself with the pleasures and lustful indulgences that were offered to him. Paul says, "Reject the sin nature's appeal, the evil sensual indulgence and pleasures."

**Malice and Envy**

The fifth in the list in Titus 3:3 is living with malice and envy. Oh, here's something. It is so pitiful when Christians do not get rid of. The word "living" is the word "diago;" it means "passing a life in some way." In 1 Timothy 2:2, it's translated "may lead a certain lifestyle." And the word "malice" is the Greek word "kakia." This word stands for a person who chooses the morally inferior. You know how some people go when they go out to buy things, they go out to purchase something, there's some people that are always cheap. They'll always buy the cheap thing. They won't pay a little more to get something that has quality in it. If it's the same kind of object, they'll settle for the cheap. They're a "kakia" type of mentality. And here refers to picking the morally inferior. It connotes furthermore an element of viciousness when you're crossed, when you're denied what you want. That's interesting about this word. The "kakia" person is ready to hit you with a club. He's vicious. It's expressed in our daily lives in picking associates which do not ennoble us but which degrade us. The worst place it's expressed is when you pick a person for marriage who is spiritually shallow, and then you really know what it is to have chosen a "kakia" type of mentality. The person who does not ennoble who is spiritual shallow will also, you will find, be a vicious person. It is reacting to people who displease us with a viciousness rather than with a kindness and an understanding.

And then the third thing we should not be living with this kind of vicious quality that expresses itself when our desires are denied is the word for "envy." This is a very illuminating word. The Greek word "phthonos." The word "phthonos" is a feeling of displeasure produced by seeing or hearing of the advantage and prosperity of another.

Jealousy is wanting what you see someone else has of an advantage. A position that someone else has, you're jealous of that. A possession that someone else has, you're jealous of that. Now jealousy is bad enough, but the trouble is that the "kakia" type of mentality has a viciousness at the core that degenerates into envy. And the word "phthonos" in the Greek language that notes not only your desire to have what the other person has, but if you can't have it, you want to take it away from him.

Envy is the primary, number one quality that controls all government action nationally today. This one Greek word tells you what the whole United States government is all about and, within some degree, it's trying to fight back from. It has established a society based on envy. "You got it. I want it. I can't have it. I'm going to take it away from you." It is expresses itself on government doing it to people, it now expresses itself more and more on people doing it to one another.

This is the envy that caused Cain to murder Abel. Genesis 4:3-8. When Cain saw that God commended his brother Abel for his godly response, because Cain couldn't have God's commendation, the Bible indicates he became envious and he said, "I'll take that commendation that God gave you by killing you." And he kept his brother from enjoying the commendation of God. This is what caused the brothers of Joseph into slavery. Genesis 37:8, 20, and verse 28. When this boy had such an appeal to his father and was so loved by his father, and when he got through telling him about his dreams which indicated that someplace down the line God was saying that the whole family was going to be in subjection to this boy. What did they do? Because they could not have that kind of a position of announcement from God, they hated him. They wanted to kill him and they sent him off into slavery instead. But what was their motivation? Take it away from him.

Ah, then you think of Korah out in the wilderness with Moses challenging the spiritual leadership and the authority of Moses. Numbers 16:1-3. Read that sometime as Korah comes and says, "Who do you think you are, Moses? The rest of us are just as good. We know just as much about the Bible. Where do you get off that you're going to be the authority, the executive who calls the plays?" Moses said, "Hey, man, listen. I don't like this job anyhow. I want to retire, but it's been put upon me by God. If you've got a question about that, take it to God." And he set up a way for them to verify it, and boy, did God verify it. He opened that earth. He swallowed those dudes and clamped it on them, and all their innards squished out, and all their blood oozed up through the crack, and everybody looked and said, "Yep, you're the leader, Moses. I believes it now. You've made a believer out of me." I love it the way God works. I love it the way He makes things clear sooner or later, and if you can keep your hands off of a situation, He'll make it clear. Boy, He'll come in there, and you'll learn that the battle is the Lord's, and He'll do some jerking out by the hair roots, and He'll establish who's running the team. But it was envy that caused Korah and his associates to do that.

It was envy that caused Saul to want to take the life of David. 1 Samuel 18:5-12, when he saw how the people were responding to David, and how they admired him, Saul said, "I want that admiration, and I can't have it. I'm going to kill you, David, so you can't have it." And furthermore, sadly enough, it was envy that caused David to murder Uriah. 2 Samuel 11:14-17, 26-27. When David could not have Uriah's wife, he decided to kill Uriah so Uriah couldn't enjoy her.

And this was envy that caused the prodigal son's brother to resent the father's welcome when the boy came home again (Luke 15:25-30).

And it is even in the local church. The Apostle Paul, in the book of Philippians, writing through a prison cell, said in Philippians 1:15 that there were some folks out there "indeed preaching Christ even of envy and strife; and some also good will." It says while there are some believers who are doing the Lord's work out of good will, to the Lord's glory, they are not serving people, you know. If you're in the Lord's service and you have not learned that you do not serve people, you're going to get in trouble. You will be disappointed. Always remember you do not minister to people but that you minister to the Lord. You minister to the glory of God, and you are His agent for some people to respond, some people not to respond. But they are not dealing with you; they're dealing with God.

As God had to tell Samuel when they wanted a king, "Samuel, they have not rejected you. They're not dealing with you. You're wrong. They're dealing with Me. You're simply my agent. Samuel, you have never ministered to people. You minister only in behalf of the living God as His representative." So, here, Paul says, these people are coming along. Some people are ministering indeed unto the Lord out of good will, but some of them want to compete with me. They're envious of my reputation, of this position I hold, the status, and they want to tear me down.

And finally, or not finally, but number six: hateful. And so Paul says, I should mention, that I want to add to the previous one that Proverbs 14:30 says that envy causes physical deterioration in a person. You will break down physically. Proverbs says it will rot your bones. And envy comes into the heart of the Christian when he lacks the love which is produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 13:4). So Paul says, "Reject the sin nature's appeal for malice and envy."

**Being Hated**

And then there is hateful. This is this word "stugetos." "Stugetos" means "detestable to others." Odious, being hated. The unsaved are blind to biblical morality and to the principles of conduct, so unsaved people are disgusting. They're offensive. They're repulsive to people who have some character and quality. These are people who lack winsomeness. They're haughty. They're arrogant. Now Christians should project a winsome dignity and a gracious which even your enemies will respect when they see it in you. So Paul says, "Reject the sin nature's ways that make us disgusting to people." And Christians ought to be concerned about being an offense. And that's what this word means, it says, "Just don't make yourself disgusting to other people." And you can do that, you know, in the very process in your seeking to serve God. Instead of exalting the cause of the Lord, you make it look bad.

**Hating Others**

And then, the final one, seven, is hating - not only being hated because you're offensive - but hating others. And this is the word "miseo." Unsaved people even hate their own kind, as well as Christians who expose their evil ways. When detestable human viewpoint type of people have to live in close proximity to one another, it is only natural that they would respond with hatred toward each other. And this is what characterizes the unbeliever: that he hates other people.

Matthew 24:10, the Lord says, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." In the tribulation period, it is going to be a prime characteristic of these people, that they hate each other. Christians, of course, are often hated for being true to God's standard of righteousness in a society which scoffs at that kind of righteous conduct.

In Luke 6:22, the Lord Jesus indicates that "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake." If you are separated from the world because you're standing for godliness, God says, "Good for you." You'll be prospered for that. But how many of us as Christians cringe when the world doesn't want to accept us, and then we begin playing ball with it. We'll play ball with the world if they've got something you want that bad. But God says, "They'll separate you from their company when you stand for My righteousness. Better to stand with Me than with them."

In Luke 6:27, "But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you." 1 Peter 2:17, adds to this, "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King." Christians are hated for being true to God's standard, but they do not return that kind of hatred. They should be free from these mental attitude bitterness, including for those who have treated them unkindly.

In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul puts it this way, and this is no small thing. Hating others, that's how we used to be as unsaved people. Don't do it anymore. And here's a classic passage on that that you would do well to take to heart. Romans 12:17[-21], "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." You can't live peaceably with everybody, not even with all Christians, but the Word of God says, "Don't strike back at them when they do evil to you, and instead, provide them with a picture of integrity so that they will have a hard time as portraying you as evil when they themselves are the ones who are acting evil."

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. The worst thing in the world you can do with the person who is mistreating you is go before God and say, "I'm delivering this person into your hands for your treatment and for your judgment. You will be fair, you will be just, and you will do what's right." "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." That is God's way. The Christian who hates others in the body of Christ is in a spirit of carnality, and he is extremely disoriented, and therefore very untrustworthy.

1 John 2:11 says, "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not where he goeth, because darkness hath blinded his eyes." And it doesn't help for you to say, "Oh no, I don't hate somebody. I just love them. No, I'm." The Bible says when you have that bitterness in your soul, you're blinded. You don't know what I think. You go ahead and associate yourself if you want to with people who are expressing that kind of hatred, and I guarantee you that you'll put yourself in a place where the blind are leading the blind.

I Peter 3 is an informative one as well, beginning at verse 8. 1 Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, and be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but on the contrary, blessing and knowing that ye are called to this, that ye should inherit a blessing. For He that will love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; Let him seek peace, and [downright] pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers: But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." So the Apostle Paul says, "Reject the sin nature's appeal to hate other people."

This is but one of the kinds of things that we should put off from our physical conduct. Summarizing it, Titus 3:3, when Paul says, "Put to death the deeds of the body," he's talking about: being foolish (devoid of divine viewpoint understanding); disobedient to the principles of God's Word; being deceived (being a sucker, being a patsy); serving various lusts and pleasures (intense desires for sensual fulfillment); living in malice and envy (vicious and wanting to destroy what other people have and take it away from them in some way); being an offense because of your conduct and the way they act so that people are offended by you who have a sensitivity to righteousness; and finally, going around with a spirit of mental attitude bitterness, hating others. These do not fit the lifestyle of members of the royal family of God. And if we take them one-by-one and explore them in our lives, we'll take a giant step forward.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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