***The Downward Chain Reaction
of Spiritual Insensitivity
RO143-01***

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Please open your Bibles today to Romans 11:7-10.

The nation's flags once more stand at half-mast. This time, that is in honor of the 37 men of the USS Stark who gave their lives in the service of their country. All of us who have been in the military service know that the prospect of one's own death comes with the territory. Nevertheless, when death strikes, whether in peacetime or wartime service, it is accompanied by great sadness, and by the urgent desire for comfort. President Reagan sought to give such comfort at the memorial service, which was held for the men of the Stark who were killed by the Iraqi government. I listened to the president tell the bereaved families that their men were now in the place of blessing which God had promised to all of us. The president said that the men had died and gone on to a place of no more suffering and no more sorrow. The President told the families that their departed loved ones awaited their arrival, when they would all be together again forever, implying in a state of happiness.

**Born Again**

The hope of a happy future, in the midst of this tragedy, which the president envisioned for the dead sailors and their families, however, can only be true for those who are born again spiritually through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, Who has delivered them from the consequences of their moral guilt before God. Any suggestion that the tragic and senseless sacrifice of the lives of these men in the service of their country will gain for them eternal life in heaven is a false comfort, and a vain hope.

As a matter of fact, that is precisely what the Muslims teach their men – this holy war (this jihad), which has been going on for many years now between the Iraqis and the Iranians, has now sacrificed a million men. The leaders have no compunction about sending these men to their death, because they feel they are doing them a great service and favor, because this has been declared, under the teachings of Muhammad, to be a jihad. This is a holy war. Anybody who dies in this war is dying in the service of God, and will absolutely automatically go to heaven. Many of these young men look forward to the possibility of making certain that their eternity will be in heaven. So, they go to their deaths with great enthusiasm.

This is the problem that was faced in the South Pacific during World War II. The Japanese also had this attitude – that if they were to die on the field of battle, in the service of their emperor, whom they viewed as having descended from the sun-god, they would be ensured a place of blessing in eternity.

However, not the Word of God gives no such false comfort and no such false hope. But the president was offering to these families, in effect, the same thing that the Muslims and the Japanese had been offering to their military people. It's not true. The joy of eternal life in heaven is secured through trusting in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our salvation, and thereby our being regenerated (being born again spiritually) by the work of the Holy Spirit. That is what John 3:16 tells us. That is what John 3:36 makes very clear to us. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:36: "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. And he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." It is through trusting in Christ, Who has paid for our sins, that we secure eternal life. It is not by a personal sacrifice of our own in behalf of our country, or in some other way.

Now the men on the USS Stark, who were born-again believers in Jesus Christ, had thereby been justified by the grace of God. So, they went to heaven. And indeed, they are now in great happiness. The men, however, on board who were not justified before God, and who died without possessing that absolute righteousness are now in Hades, and are now, in fact, in great sorrow. Now, whether their loved ones will ever meet them again depends on the salvation status of their relatives. They may meet these men in happiness, or they may meet these men in suffering, or they may not meet them at all. It depends on the status of each of them in reference to Jesus Christ.

**Calloused Toward God**

Now, our study of Romans 9, 10, and 11 has made it very clear that God has not promised, as the president indicated, eternal life in heaven automatically to every person. The Jews, we have seen, made this mistake. So, they have rejected God's grace gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. John 14:6 says that He is the only way into heaven. And the Jews have rejected this way. John 14:6: "Jesus said unto him, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.'" The very Mosaic Law, in which the Jews do trust – that Law, with its sacrifices, rituals, and laws which were portraying Jesus Christ in saving grace, has become the instrument of Jewish destruction in hell. The negative volition of the Jews toward Jesus Christ and salvation, as an unearned and undeserved grace gift from God, has caused their souls to become calloused toward God. I remind you that that is precisely the Greek word that is used to describe the level of negative volition toward a doctrinal principal – to become calloused (hardened) toward God.

The apostle Paul says, "That the Jews today, like most human beings, do not have eyes to see spiritual things; ears to hear spiritual truths' or, minds which can understand and grasp spiritual reality. Consequently, the calloused soul of the unbeliever places him in spiritual darkness, and makes him a pathetic slave of Satan who is destined for the lake of fire.

**The Downward Chain Reaction of Spiritual Insensitivity**

We closed last time with a brief review of the chain reaction into spiritual insensitivity toward God, which has been outlined for us in Ephesians 4:17-18: "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord: that you henceforth walk not as other gentiles walk, in the vicinity of their mind; having the understanding darkened; being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart." From that passage, we have presented to us a very basic, important piece of information about what happens when you turn your back on the Word of God. You turn your back by not attending a church service, so that you don't get information. You turn your back upon the information you receive, and you refuse to believe it.

1. **Negative Volition**

Step number one in this chain reaction in spiritual sensitivity is negative volition to Bible doctrine in which one has been instructed.

**Faith**

It is faith in the Word of God that has been taught to us that makes able the reality that is not seen. Now, the Bible is very clear about that in the book of Hebrews. It is faith that makes all of the things that God promises to us (that we do not see) available to us. The reality is invisible, but faith exercised in response to a proper authority secures the reality in one's experience.

Faith that there is a place like Hawaii, though no one has never seen it, causes one to board an airplane, and to end up there in reality. It's faith that there are a group of islands out there in the Pacific, 2,400 miles off the western coast of the United States, that causes a person to get on board a plane and say, "I'll go there." If you did not have faith that the islands were there, you would not go there. But it is faith that made the reality.

It is faith in the airplane that caused you to get on it. My faith was somewhat undermined on our flight recently to Hawaii. We had to go by TWA from Dallas to St. Louis, and from St. Louis to Honolulu. When we got to St. Louis, we had a 45-minute to an hour delay, and we were scooting around to the next gate, and getting ready to board. And we're told there was going to be a delay. First, it was an hour; then it was two hours; and, then it was three hours. I looked out the window, and there are all these mechanics working on the airplane engine. They got the cowling off, and they had parts all over the ground. One guy is looking, shaking his head, looking up at this thing. Another one was opening a book and reading it. Now I begin to have something undermined here as to what's going on, because, obviously, they are having to put something together here. And finally, one guy gets up there on that plane to work on it, and he kicks the thing. And he looks down, and he nods his head. That seemed to have resolved it. So, they put all the pieces back, and they say, "OK, we're off to Honolulu."

**That's How God Works**

Now, you had to get on that with some degree of faith, after all that. And about the time we were well underway, and I was sitting there dozing, the stewardess came up and whispered something into my ear, and thought she had said, "We're falling into the sea." And I was halfway up out of my seat when I realized that she had said, "Do you wish coffee or tea?" But it was my lack of faith that was undermining my acceptance of the reality that all was well, and we were on our way. Well, it did turn out well. But the point is that it is faith that gets you the reality. That's how God works.

That's what people don't understand. People think it's their effort; their works; their hustling; and, their goodness that makes it. God says, "No, I don't work that way. I do not work by what you can see. I'm going to tell you something, and I'm going to promise you a reality. And if you believe Me (you've mixed My promise with your faith), and then you rest upon that, you'll find that you'll get the reality." And that's how you get to heaven. God says, "I've done the job. I've covered your problem. And if you will believe this and accept My Son, that reality will become yours as a result of your faith.

**Faith in the Bible**

It is your faith in your doctor's prescription for your illness that results in the reality of good health. If you do not have faith in a prescription, you don't take it, and you don't get the reality of the good health. But, of course, you have made that move based upon your confidence in the authority of the doctor – that he knows what he's talking about. This is as we act in our confidence upon the authority of the Word of God – that we think that the Bible knows what it's talking about. So, when it tells us that we are to believe the principles of doctrine to get the realities that come from those principles, we believe that the Bible is an authority that we can trust to do just exactly that.

So many times in life, we don't see all the end of the line. We don't see what God is doing. We don't understand the track that He's leading us on. But we know that the reality is going to be Romans 8:28, and there is going to come a good: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." So, we're going to stick with the principles of the Word of God, and we're going to believe what God has said, and ultimately we will have the thing that we are pursuing. But of course, it is self-evident that if we don't know the principles of doctrine, we've got nothing to use our faith on. Then our faith goes wild, out into that which is unreliable authority. And that is where we get disappointed.

Those who believe in the authority of the Bible are those who come to the reality of eternal life in heaven as a grace gift through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Those who believe the Bible doctrine of salvation secure eternal life in heaven in their own experience. Faith makes it a reality, and there's no other way to get it. We don't see how God is working in our lives. But as we have had in our extended study of Romans 8:28, we have found that God promises a good. You remember that good was three stages of good. The first stage was eternal life itself; the second stage was growing into the good of spiritual maturity; and, the third stage was growing into the rewards in heaven for our Christian service.

So, faith in the Bible, which we have come to understand, overrides the natural human viewpoint disorientation of the human mind and of our senses, and it leads us on into divine viewpoint reality. And that's the problem we are fighting. We're all tied in to human viewpoint. It is that that we are removing through faith in the Word of God that we learn. That's what makes the difference.

So, negative addition to the doctrines of Scripture (our lack of faith in those things) sets in motion a chain reaction which hardens the soul toward God, and results in the loss of those spiritual realities. It is a bad thing not to know doctrinal principles. It is a worse thing to know them, and to turn your back upon them. The result of doing that is no salvation in eternity in heaven, and no temporal life which can earn rewards in heaven. And don't forget that that is the purpose of your life now. There is no other purpose in your life. The only way you'll honor God is by earning rewards in heaven. That's why the Bible keeps drumming away and emphasizing that. This is not an isolated doctrine. This is the prominent doctrine in Scripture. Rewards is what it's all about. This is the motivation of the Christian life. God says, "Get out there, and serve Me under the guidance of the Spirit of God, in keeping with the principles of the Word of God, because I want to bless you. I want to bless you now. And I want to enrich your eternity all your fondest dreams." There is no spiritual maturity for super-grace living and super-grace blessing if we are negative toward the Word of God.

1. **The Mind is Denied Divine Viewpoint**

Here is point number two in the step downward. Having gone negative to the Word of God, the mind then is denied divine viewpoint principles of Bible doctrine. And that's what we found here in Ephesians 4:17-18: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as are the gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." The word "vanity of the mind" tells us that, because of our indifference to the Word of God, or a negative attitude toward it, our mind is now denied God's point of view.

**A Mental Vacuum**

This results in a mental vacuum which is devoid of divine viewpoint truth. The Bible here, in speaking of the mind, uses the Greek word "nous." The "nous" refers to the perceptive function of the mind; that is, this quality that we call the perceptive mind and the directive mind. The perceptive mind contains information; and, we take actions out of the directive mind. So, what he's talking about here with "nous," he's is telling us that the information side of your mind is completely devoid of God's thinking. You have no spiritual information; and, consequently, that creates a vacuum.

It is the great tragedy of Christianity today that church members are not taught Bible doctrine principles. They are permitted to come into the Christian life with minds full of human viewpoint, and they never get a chance to remove that. Consequently, there is constantly that absorption of the world's point of view, and what the world wants us to do. That is the reason for something that we see in people who go to church, and who deal with us, even in our ministries here in various ways. They may have been church members for many years, in big churches, and prominent churches. And we can't believe how they act. We can't believe how they think, because we attribute to them a frame of reference that is not true. They have a vacuum in their perceptive minds because they don't go to church and get taught the Word of God. They go to church to exchange a lot of their own nonsense among themselves, and mostly the nonsense of the preacher. It is not the good sense of the Word of God that comes to them. That is the great tragedy today. So, the first consequence of going negative to the Word of God is that you now have nothing to guide you in your perceptive mind.

1. **The Understanding is Darkened**

The third step, Paul says, after having a vain, empty mind, is that you have the understanding darkness. This refers to the capacity to think on the basis of divine viewpoint. The mind, Paul says, now is in the condition of a spiritual blackout. When there is this spiritual vacuum in the mind, it draws into it human viewpoint – the doctrines of demons, and the spirit of sensuality. Just remember that everybody believes something about God. Everybody believes something about religious things. Everybody has opinions about God and religion. You do not have nothing in your mind. And when you do not have a mind that is filled with the thoughts of God here, then it sucks in all the things of Satan. And that's what the average person in our society operates on. And he has a darkened mentality.

**Religion**

The mental spiritual blackout, unfortunately, always leads to religion; that is, the concept that man can earn favor with God to get into heaven. The tragedy down in Saragossa, Texas – the tornado that just level that little town was portrayed repeatedly on television yesterday. And there again, we saw the sad sight of the bishop coming up from El Paso, of the Roman Catholic Church, and announcing that he is going to conduct a Mass. He is going to conduct a bloodless sacrifice of Jesus Christ in behalf of the dead. For what purpose? So as to gain some merit for those dead, so that God will take them into heaven. That is spiritually darkened mentality. That smiling bishop, with his cross hanging around his neck, was a spiritually darkened mentality. But you wouldn't know that if you had not been taught this here from the basis of the Word of God.

Those of you who may have seen that immediately understood what that poor bishop's problem was. He has a mind that is darkened on spiritual things, so that he thinks that he can help those who are not already in God's presence. And the decision of their destiny has already been made. But he thinks that if he runs a Mass for them, that they will now, somehow, be relieved of the consequences of their moral guilt.

There were other people in this town, which was obviously heavily Roman Catholic. One lady came up to the church that was devastated. There was nothing left but a couple of statues. One looked like a statue of Christ, and another statue or something else, maybe Mary. And she crossed herself, and then she leaned down and kissed the foot of the statue. What were you seeing? You were seeing the understanding spiritually darkened. Why? Because that poor lady's mind is devoid of Bible doctrine principles. Therefore, she is sucking in the principles of religion. Everybody believes something about God and religion. If you don't get it from the Bible, you're got to get it from the world; from your sin nature; and, from the devil.

1. **Estranged from Godliness**

Point number four of this chain reaction is that when your mind becomes darkened spiritually, you'll become estranged from godliness. Paul says, "Alienated from the life of God through the ignorance in them." The mind under the influence of the unsaved world system; the sin nature; and, Satan now lead us away from all godly qualities. We are estranged from God's eternal life. We are enslaved to the temporal things of life. These are the people, including Christians, who get into this state of mental darkness. And don't forget that Christians can follow this same path. These are the people who pursue happiness in terms of money; in terms of marriage; in terms of sex; in terms of status; in terms of fame; in terms of power; in terms of their job; in terms of their children; in terms of possessions; and, including in terms of religious miracles, as is done so prominently in the charismatic movement. What are they looking for? They're looking for happiness. They're looking for joy. And they're doing it because they are estranged from genuine godliness. They don't know what the real thing is. So, they fall into these temporal pursuits.

All of this is due, Paul says, to the ignorance of doctrine in the mind. They don't know how to act right before God. There is no motivation or capacity to live a godly life. So, they follow the views of Satan's world. Satan hates Bible doctrine Christians. And he seeks to cause disunity among doctrinally oriented Christians. He seeks to get them snarling and biting against one another. And as the Word of God says, "Be careful when you do that. You're going to end up devouring one another, and there's not going to be anything left but the shreds. And nobody will have won anything, because you could not leave it with the Lord."

Satan wants to disrupt Christians who are on track, and who can indeed push back the darkness in the minds of people that he has put there. He does not want to see a congregation that has great potential spiritual impact of informing people how to live the godly life. He wants people to be estranged from that. He wants them to be isolated from that. Therefore, you may be sure that Satan will do everything he can to disrupt; to cause disunity; to peel people off; to undermine; and, to send people out chasing rabbits because they think it's someplace else.

Faith says, "I believe the Bible." Faith says, "I believe God has told me where it's at. Faith makes real what God promises, and nothing else does.

So, Satan is out to undermine the importance of the brain being controlled by the divine viewpoint of doctrine. What Satan wants to promote is the big mouth technique of people talking about their opinions; their feelings; and, their viewpoints. You can have a brain that's filled with God's viewpoint, and therefore, you know how to act, and you have the capacity to be a winner. Or you can have a big mouth that shares with people your own limited understanding, and your own perceptions, and cause yourself to use your life in a way that is wasted, so that someday, you'll be ready to shed a tear at the Judgment Seat of Christ over what might have been.

God's life is expressed in super-grace spiritual maturity, and that comes from the intake of doctrine into a mind that then is illuminated with God's viewpoint, so that a person knows how to be godly.

1. **The Soul is Calloused**

Point number five, we have seen, is that the soul is calloused toward God and His Word. And the apostle Paul says, "Because of the hardness of their heart," in Ephesians 4:18. The mind, under the influence of the unsaved world system; the sin nature within; and, of Satan, now comes to being alienated from God, and then it becomes hard from God. The facets of the soul: the mentality; the emotions; and, the will are all insensitive to what God thinks, and feels, and wants to have done.

**The Heart**

When Paul uses the word "heart" here, he is using the word "kardia." And the word "kardia" now refers here to the mind – the directive function. He's now referring to this action side of the mind. What he is saying is that the soul becomes hardened toward God in doing things God's way, and in having God's viewpoint on a thing; on a person; or, on a situation in life. This means having God's feelings about a situation; a person; or, an objective in life. It means having God's will performed in any certain situation. All that is hardened. And there's no way that a Christian who is in this condition can respond to a way that's going to be a blessing to him and his family, and people around him. There's no way that an unsaved person can do anything else. The soul does not respond to God in any way. This is the final consequence of the lack of faith toward Bible doctrine and the principles of God's truth.

**Past Feeling**

We get to verse 19, and we have the sad picture presented of what the consequences are of this terrible chain reaction. Ephesians 4:19: "Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." A person now, in darkness in his mind, has no doctrinal viewpoint to guide him. Verse 19 says, "Who being past feeling." The first problem is that the person becomes spiritually insensitive. This word looks like this. "Past feeling" it's "apalego." This word means "to become calloused." You are insensitive. That is what he's saying. It connotes a condition of spiritual insensitivity on the facets of the soul. This is in the perfect tense, which indicates that you are in a condition now that was the result of a past action you took of turning your back on the Word of God, minimizing learning the doctrines of Scripture. So, there has been a gradual buildup of spiritual callouses upon the soul, to make you insensitive. It is in the active voice. This word "past feeling" is active voice. That means this is actually true of you. You are spiritually crazy. You think you know what you doing; you think you know what you're feeling; and, you think you know what you're saying, but you don't. You're out of it. And this is a spiritual principle that we cannot deny.

Once a soul is calloused toward God, the person that is beyond all genuine spiritual responses. This is true, I stress again, not only of unbelievers, but of Christians. This Christian may be very active in church work, and still be hardened toward God's mind; toward God's emotions; and, toward God's will. We lose the fear of God under this condition so that we are very self-confident, and we are very self-righteous, and we are very self-assured that we know where we're going, and what it's all about.

**Lasciviousness**

The next downward step, he says, is that they not only are totally insensitive to God, but: "They have given themselves over to lasciviousness." "Given over" is the Greek word "paradidomi." This means "to give over." It connotes abandonment. Now the person comes, as a lifestyle, where he personally decides to abandon himself to something. To what? To lasciviousness. The Greek word "aselgeia." "Aselgeia" means "sensuality" – whatever appeals to your five senses. It connotes, furthermore, more explicitly, an absence of proper sexual restraint. It refers to illicit sex. It refers to promiscuity. It connotes a shameless indulgence in perverted sex. A person with spiritual callouses on his soul is inclined to sexual sins. This is one of the things that will happen to the Christian when he gets spiritually calloused. It will certainly happen to the unbeliever.

So, when you're in this condition of having delivered yourself over (I mean that you have just abandoned yourself to this status in life), along comes the right person that you should marry, and you don't recognize them. Along comes the wrong person, and you get carried away with them, and you get stung for life. Maybe, in the grace of God, He backs off and saves you from your stupidity, by getting some insight into your head from other sources in yourself, if you're fortunate to have people around you who maybe can give you some perception. But you move toward a sexual attraction which is wrong. And basically that's what marriage is all about. Illicit sex neutralizes the soul's capacity then to express itself. It's disoriented, and it's incapable of genuine love.

Now, there's no fun in life which is missed by being sexually pure. You don't miss out on anything. The world says, "Oh, you're missing a lot of fun." But promiscuous people, in the long run, are the people who become the suicides; the potheads; the luscious; and, the people who are bored.

Now, the judgment of God (and make no mistake about it, that it is a judgment of God); the judgment of AIDS; and, the terror which has been heightened this year. I could just hear all over the world that loud sound of the ratchet being drawn up one more notch as the news media shocked the thinking public by saying, "We have two or three nurses who had not been in any situation where they could possibly have acquired AIDS except in caring for AIDS patients. And they have it. And boy, the government is trembling, and sitting on it, because they're telling the news media: "Back off. Back off. Don't say that. Do you realize what will happen if people get that word?" They'll really begin to connect a mosquito bite with a potential devastation to themselves. So, even the politicians are going to be faced with having to say, "Maybe we should set up, out in the West, in our great open spaces, a quarantine center, and start putting these people into that quarantine center, as the ancient Hawaiians and the not-so ancient Hawaiians, as a matter of fact, used to deal finally with leprosy, as it was running rampant upon them. Finally, they put them over on Molokai, and they said, "Let's set up a colony. Let's do the best we can for these people to carry them through this terrible time in their lives. But we must isolate this terribly contagious disease so that we can stop its spread.

Romans 1:18 has laid it out. And who do we think we are, with our darkened minds, that we're going to escape it? "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all godliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness." And you are seeing the wrath of God revealed from heaven in the AIDS plague. It is a judgment of God, and it's coming against all those who are ungodly and unrighteous men – people who sometimes know the truth, but who hold it in contempt. They are negative toward it.

Spiritual callouses on the soul lead to self-betrayal to sexual immorality. And it eliminates the ability to respond to your right mate that God has chosen for you. How nice it is to be able to say, like Joseph, when Potiphar's wife was propositioning him: "How can I do this great sin against Potiphar?" No, no. "How could I do this great sin against Potiphar's wife?" No. "How can I do this great sin against myself?" No. "Against my family." No. How can I do this great sin **against God**, because that is Who sin is always against? And that is what concerns God.

So, the order that we have for many years recommended to young people is really the smart way to do things. You go in three stages: You start dating a person, so that you get to know them spiritually. You keep your hands off of them, and you treat women with respect and with dignity, and you treat them as weaker vessels, and you don't act like a fool. You date, and you learn what this woman (or this man) has offered you spiritually. That's number one. Then when you see that God is leading into a deeper intimacy, you get engaged. And now you get intimate on the level of your soul. You really bare your soul: you bare your mind; you bare your feelings; and, you bare your desires (your will). You are now open in a degree that now is legitimate. It is not proper to be bearing yourself, and opening yourself up before then. You'll have cause to regret it, and you'll get burned if you do that. Finally, when you marry, you go through the third stage of intimacy, and that is the physical intimacy. That's the time for setting in motion all those wonderful human relationships on the physical level that God has designed for people who are married to one another.

The result is, if you follow these three stages of intimacy, in dating, engagement, and marriage – through the three facets of a human being. You start with the spirit; you go to the soul; and, then you go to the body. This is not as our society does it. It goes body, soul, and spirit. Spirit, soul, and body is the order that you'll find in the Word of God. So, this creates an exotic union in godliness and true heavenly union.

**Moral Impurity**

Well, these people have lost it all. They're past feelings. They're not sensitive in anything spiritual. They have given themselves over to working all kinds of sensuality. And then, Paul says, "To work all uncleanness with greediness." The third stage is eagerly pursuing evil. The word "work" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's "ergasia." "Ergasia" means "to make a business of something." To make a business of what? He says, "A business of uncleanness." The word "uncleanness" is this Greek word: "akartarsia." This noun refers to mental or overt moral impurity. These people turn themselves over, as a business, to every kind of moral impurity. Furthermore, they do it in a certain style, because they're so blinded, the Bible says, "With greediness." The word is "pleonexia," which means a frantic pursuit. This is something which they pursue, but they can never be satisfied. They rush after every central indulgence. And this word implies perverted indulgence, as well as illicit indulgence, and they can never get it satisfied.

What more properly describes American society today? Here is a life in contempt of biblical morality with no concern for one's personal well-being or for social approval. That's American society today: contempt of biblical morality, and no concern for one's personal well-being or for social approval.

So, a spiritually calloused soul makes a business of pursuing all moral filth. A Christian is called to be sensitive in his soul toward God, so that he lives in moral purity. It is amazing how I find that there are Christians who never seem to have seen these Scriptures in the Word of God – that God calls us to live in that kind of moral integrity.

Mark 7:21-23, for example: "For from within, out of the heart of man." Do I have to explain to you what the heart of man is? Surely you know now that that's the mind of man. He is saying, "Out of the darkened mentality – out of what you have in your mind." It is either Satan's viewpoint or God's viewpoint. It is either the doctrines of demons or the doctrines of Scripture: "For within, out of the mind of man proceed evil thoughts; adulteries; fornications; murders; thefts; covetousness; wickedness; deceit; lasciviousness (an evil eye); blasphemy; pride; foolishness." All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man. That is the normal characteristic. And that is the thing that God has saved us from, to remove us from that kind of enslavement.

Romans 13:13 reinforces this when it says, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness; not in immorality and wantonness;, not in strife and envying."

I heard an astounding thing on television the other day. They were talking about drinking – drinking wine. And it's all so refined. In certain circles, you have a wine with your meal. And the Bible does not condemn doing that. But it's interesting that there was an amazing study made on breast cancer. And they found that women who will drink one or two glasses of wine with a meal have 60% more chance of getting breast cancer. Who would have thought that such a simple little thing as a little booze in a wine glass could have such potentially dangerous things? But the Word of God clearly condemns going to the excess of drunkenness. But there is a danger even short of that.

Galatians 5:13-16 reinforce that difference: "For brethren, we have been called unto liberty." Now you people understand grace, but don't use your liberty for an occasion to the sin nature. Some of you understand that, because you've done that: "But by love, serve one another." And some of you don't understand that too well. "For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed, one of another. This I say then: walk in the spirit (be spirit-filled people – people under control of the Holy Spirit), and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the sin nature. Now, that's the thing to which we've been called.

**Love**

However, a calloused soul, who is darkened to God's viewpoint or never taught, is never going to be able to do that. You will never be able to act in love. And this is one of the first things that comes out of faith in the Word of God. And I haven't got time today to run this down, but this is an astounding study in itself – for you to follow through and see how faith in the Word of God results in love, and the direction that that love then takes. It is faith in the Word of God that produces love. Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Therefore, we have our major clue that the way we develop God's love ("agape" love – mental attitude love) is through knowing the doctrines of Scripture. Now, if you don't like it, it's OK with me. Don't come and chew me out afterwards. But just accept the fact that that's what I think is what the Word of God says. Clearly, that is what this passage is saying – that those who understand how to have faith in the Word of God are going to fill the basic Law of the Old Testament to love your neighbor as yourself.

The calloused soul is seeking for happiness and sensuality, and he finds only sorrow and shame. All true happiness begins with one's attitude toward Bible doctrines. So, know it, and obey it, or I can assure you that you will blow it. Next time, we shall pursue the return to blessing.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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