***Confidence of the Religious Person, No. 2
RO15-01***

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Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans 2:17-20. Our topic is "The Confidence of the Religious Person." This is the second segment.

**Religion vs. Relationship**

There is one thing that is very characteristic about the devil, and that is that he is constantly deceiving people into involving themselves in religion in place of a relationship with a loving God. This, of course, is part of his plan in the era of the angelic warfare in which we live. It is Satan's plan to get people involved in religion rather than a relationship based upon their union with Jesus Christ. This technique was, of course, used by Satan from the very dawn of human history. The very first thing we discover when Cain and Abel, the first two brothers who faced each other on the question of relationship to God was that one of the brothers, Cain, had gone for religion, while the other brother, Abel, had gone for a relationship to God. In that confrontation, we have a little capsule picture of what always happens through the centuries when religion and relationship confront one another. The result is always that religion rises up in rage and in anger and in indignation, in a desire to destroy a relationship with God. So, Satan, in that case, caused Cain to take the life of his brother Abel, and thus for religion to stand up and to destroy a relationship to God, supposedly.

For this reason, religious people are very self-righteous. And because they are self-righteous, they are very hard to lead to salvation. This is something like trying to explain modern medical practices to a witch doctor who has had fantastic success in his dealing with illnesses with the spirit world and with his voodoo stuff. And along comes some 20th-century medical practitioner to update him. And that's the condition you have. The witch doctor looks down his nose at the medical man, and considers him very crude and unsophisticated.

That's what you actually have with religious people. Religious people are involved and going to church. Religious people are involved in reading their Bibles. Religious people are involved in talking about the Bible. Religious people are involved in giving their money to church and to charity operations and organizations. They do all the things that society respects as being good things. Consequently, they view themselves as standing in very great favor with God. It is inconceivable to them for somebody to say to them, "You're going to hell. If you die today, your soul will spend eternity in the lake the fire. You have religion, and you have human good pouring out from your sin nature, but you don't have a relationship with the living God." It is very hard to get that across to a religious person.

This is the category of human being that we are now studying in this portion of the book of Romans. In Romans 2:17, the apostle Paul has said that, "If you are called a Jew, and rest in the Law, and make your boast of God." Here he is speaking to the unsaved religious Jew. He is using the religious Jew as an example of this category of unsaved people who are religious, and who are under the condemnation of God. The religious Jew, here in this particular passage, relies for salvation on the fact that he belongs to a special people that God has chosen. Well, it was true. He did belong to a special earthly people. He depended upon that for salvation. That's what religion does.

This religious Jew, this first also tells us, relied for salvation on the fact that he possessed the spiritually illuminating law of Moses. Well, as we found last week, the Law of Moses was a very tremendous expression of the righteousness of God. It was very illuminating as to what God expects of people. Yet the very possession of it was equated by the religious Jew to salvation. Nothing could have been further from the truth. That's like the person who thinks he's going to square things with God by going out at Christmastime and buying the most expensive Bible he can find. Now he has a very beautiful Bible to put up on his dresser, and to have by his bedside, and surely God must be pleased with that.

This verse also tells us that the religious Jew relied for salvation on the fact that he knew the true God, and that also is true. You remember that this first part of this passage, Romans 2:17-20 that we are looking at, is the condition part of the sentence. It's all one long condition with a series of things strung together that indeed are true. It started off with the word "If" in verse 17, but it's a first-class condition "if," meaning this is true about you. So, it is true that the Jew knew the real God. He really did know who the God was that was out there that was, in truth, the Creator of heaven and earth. He was not like the heathen Greeks and Romans who worshiped all their kooky characters on Mount Olympus, who were a figment of their imagination, but behind whom was indeed some spirit, demonic personality representing that God.

So, on these three accounts, the Jew relied for salvation on a false basis, though these things were true that he said about himself. He did belong to a special people. He did have the spiritually illuminating Law of Moses. He did know the true God. But none of these things constituted salvation. They were religion, but they were not a relationship to God.

So, Paul is seeking to establish, from Romans 2:17 through Romans 3:20, that the religious unbeliever is just as condemned to the lake of fire as is the immoral or the moral unbeliever. There's no difference between them.

So, we now pick up the record at verse 18, where again Paul because the ground of the confidence of the religious person: "And knows His will and approves the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law." The word "and" is our old friend, the Greek word "kai." Throughout this conditional part of this sentence, running from verses 17-20, the word "kai" reappears, and it simply indicates the next in the series. It's the hooking word that hooks together the various individual statements that constitute what this religious Jew was counting on to make it to heaven on.

"And knows." The word "knows" "ginosko." "Ginosko" means "to comprehend something." It is in the present tense here in the Greek, which means a continual understanding. It is active, which indicates that it was a personal possession of the Jew – a certain knowledge that he has here. And it is indicative. It was a statement of fact.

Now the thing that this Jew could say that he knew was "the will of God." The word "will" is the Greek word "thelema." "Thelema" means "a determined resolve." Here it refers to the sovereign will of God – to the divine purpose of God. The Jew actually knew what God wanted done. In the Greek, it is *the* will. It has the definite article. Therefore, that makes it specific. Here it is talking about the Jew knowing a specific will of God. This is referring to that which was expressed in the Old Testament Scriptures.

If you read the Old Testament, you would very definitely understand what the sovereign God had in mind for humanity: how he wanted people to live; how he wanted them to act; what morals he wanted them to observe; and, what he was like. It revealed a great deal about God Himself. Furthermore, he took humanity into His confidence, and told the Jew where history was going, and what God planned to do in the future. There were the prophetic portions of the Word of God.

So, the Jew had access through the Old Testament to the views and the purposes of God. Obviously, this gave you a very superior knowledge when it came to spiritual things. Consequently, the Jew looked with contempt on all the religious mythology of the Greeks and the Romans. As he moved among these people, he knew that he understood what was pleasing to God, and what was the sovereign will and purpose of God. Also, he knew that those pagans around them did not know it.

However, the possession of this superior knowledge, which indeed he did have concerning what was the will of God, was not the thing that made him acceptable to God, any more than the pagans who lacked it. And that's what the religious Jews did not understand – that he was no better off, though he knew the will of God, than the pagan who he did not know the will of God.

The same thing is true of the religious unbeliever today. He prides himself on belonging, for example, to the true church. Have you ever spoken to someone about his soul that was obviously a pagan (an unbeliever), but who was a church member, and find that person counter your invitation to receive the gospel with, "Well, I belong to the true church? I belong to the mother church. You don't belong to the church. Therefore, I know that I'm right and you're wrong." That's religion. That's what the Jew counted on. I know what God wants. I belong to the right church. I belong to the right people. I'm belonging to a group that has the right religious practices.

There are many churches that are confident that their religious practices are what is the will of God, and that pleases them. Therefore, anybody who is not performing these particular rituals is not pleasing to God. In our day, where Satan is trying to bring religious groups together, he's beginning to soften that concept of "I belong to the true church. You don't. You're out." There was a time when the Roman Catholic Church used to call all the rest of us "heretics." After John 23rd got through with Vatican II, a new term has come out, and you are no longer called "heretics" by Roman Catholics. You are now called "separated brethren." I know that makes you feel a lot better. It certainly made my day when I discovered that they have changed their attitude toward us. But what does that mean? It doesn't mean a thing. It's just a religious group trying to accommodate itself in order to draw within its fold those who have not pledged loyalty to that particular church group.

So, the first thing that verse 18 tells us concerning the religious person is that he is confident that he knows what pleases God, and what God wants done. And yet, he's on his way to hell.

The second thing it says is, "And approves the things that are more excellent;" that is, he has a keen sense of moral discernment. Again, the word "kai" hooks up this statement in line with all the others in this conditional part of the sentence. The word "approves" is "dokimazo." "Dokimazo" is a word that means to test something for the purpose of being able to prove a thing in order to show that it is genuine. Sometimes you have something in a way of jewelry that's made out of gold. You're wondering whether it is pure gold or half gold and half brass, or something else, maybe with copper mixed into it. So, you test it. You're confidence that it is pure gold, and you have it tested in order to demonstrate what you know to be the case – that it is gold. Somebody else says, "I don't think it's pure gold." You say, "Yes, it is. And here it is. You may put it to a test." And you know that it will be approved as pure gold.

That is what the religious Jew is doing. He had a keen sense of moral discernment, and therefore, he could put to the test what he considered right and wrong. And if he said this was pleasing to God, he knew from the Word of God that it was pleasing to God. If he says, "This is wrong," he knew from the Word of God that God says, "This is wrong." So, he did have a sense of moral discernment – mental acceptance on the part of the religious Jew of what the Bible had said.

It refers to these as: "The things that are more excellent." That's really just one word in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "diaphero." "Diaphero" originally meant "to differ." Later on, it came to be used in the sense of deferring to one's personal advantage. You differed from someone to your advantage. You differed from something to your advantage. The result was that this word came to mean simply "to be worth more than, or to be superior." So, you can translate that with the idea of things that are more excellent; things that are superior; or, things that are worth more. Or we might say in our language today: "Things that really matter." This is one thing that the religious Jew could say about himself. He had access to information because of his background as a Jew; his rearing under the Jewish system in the synagogue; and, his access to the Old Testament Scripture. He knew the things that really matter.

For example, the Jews were far superior to the pagans in their moral discernment. They knew what was morally right and what was morally wrong. They knew the things that really mattered. They learned from God that when they were obedient to God's moral standard, they were blessed. And when they violated the moral standard, they were cursed by losing their freedom. He would not approve the immoralities of the pagan and Romans societies. He was one who knew the things that mattered, and He approved the things that were more excellent. Therefore, when you talked to a Jew, you could say, "He stands for good things." And you respected the Jew for the good things that he stood for.

However, this didn't take him to heaven. Isn't that terrible? Here was a man that stands for good things – that approves them and champions them. Yet he's not going to heaven.

Another point that verse 18 tells us is that the Jew was instructed. This is why he approved the things that were more excellent. It was because he was instructed. The word "instructed" is "katecheo." This word refers to word-of-mouth instruction. That's the way the Jews were taught. They didn't learn the Bible from reading it. They learned it from being instructed in the synagogue. They came and they sat and they listened to a teacher (to a rabbi). It is present tense, which means that they had constant access to information of doctrine. It is passive, which means that they sat there and they listened as teachers instructed them. It is participle, which is a principal stated. They were "being instructed out of." That's the Greek word "ek," which gives us the source of the Jews' instruction that enabled him to discern the more excellent things, and that was the Law (the "nomos"). This, of course, refers to the Law of Moses because actually in the Greek it is "*the* Law." Anytime you have this definite article, that indicates a specific thing, not just a quality or a general thing. So, it is referred to the specific Law of Moses.

From his childhood, the Jewish boy and girl had to attend synagogue, and they had to learn the Word of God. Therefore, he was indoctrinated in morals. He was indoctrinated in the practices of the Jews. He was indoctrinated in their holy days. He was indoctrinated in all that was prescribed in the Law. This gave them a monumental advantage of Bible instruction, but it caused the religious, unbelieving Jew to assume that, because he had this instruction, that gave him a basis (a frame of reference) for judging what was of more value and what was more excellent, he made the mistake of thinking that this indicated that he was saved.

You have the same condition with those of you who are religious unbelievers today. You are religious people because you happened to take your first breath in a home that attended church, and in a home that had perhaps godly parents – parents who were understanding in the Word of God. So, this is what you've been reared in. All of your life, you're been reared on religious influences and under biblical influences. Consequently, you have grown to maturity in that religious climate. Yet you have never established a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. All you have is plane unadulterated religion. You are in the same category as this Jew who was reared in the construction of the Word of God, and indeed received it, and could recite the verses back to the instructor, and you could even name the passages. But you yourself have never personally committed yourself to God's mercy for a provision for your sins. You were still trying to make it on your own by what you could perform in your own capacities, and that's legalism. And God says that that will destroy you for all eternity.

So, this religious Jew, because of this instruction that he had, viewed himself as related to God in eternal life, but he was not.

Another factor here is that he was instructed out of the Law. His background was able to give him a discernment of what was more excellent, and what was right and wrong, and what pleased God. Now it says that he was also instructed out of the Law. Here the word "and" is this little Greek word "te." "Te" here is a little different kind of "and." It is actually stronger than our word "kai" that we've been using. It is stronger in that it points back and says that what is now following is closely attached to what has just been said. He just said, "And approves the things that are more excellent," and then very closely attached to that, he really tells us why the Jew could know what was more excellent in spiritual matters by being instructed out of the Law. That's the thing that gave him that capacity of being out of the Law.

Consequent to this kind of capacity, verse 19 then says, "And are confident that you yourself are a guide." Here the religious, Jewish believers is a guide to those in spiritual darkness. The little word "te" ties itself back to verse 18 – the Jew who approved better things because he was instructed out of the Law, viewed himself, therefore, very confidently. After all, he knew the Bible. Obviously, he could give guidance to those who were in spiritual darkness.

The word "confident" is the Greek word "peitho." This is the advantage of divine viewpoint of the Old Testament, which the Jew had, and it created in him a sense of capacity to advise others concerning the things of God. It is perfect tense, which means that you get something in the past, and then it continues on to the present and goes on forever. So, the Jew, once he had learned the Word of God, he possessed that word. This gave him a confidence that he knew how to advise people. This confidence went right on into adulthood with him. It is active. This confidence was his personal attitude. It is indicative. It's a statement of fact. The confidence was very much in himself, because the Greek has the word "seautou," and "seautou" is what we call a reflexive pronoun; that is, it refers back to the speaker. "You yourself" is the way we would say it. It's an emphatic word, stressing that the Jew himself didn't have any doubt whatsoever that if you needed some information on religious matters, he could give it to you. He could explain this to you.

"And are confident that you yourself are a guide. The word "are" is the Greek word "eimi." Ii is present tense. He always thought that he was capable. It is active. He does the spiritual guiding. And this one is infinitive, meaning that it was the purpose of the Jew to guide other people. He viewed it as his calling to guide all the religious ignoramuses that surrounded him in the Greco-Roman world. Therefore, he saw himself as a "hodegos." A "hodegos" means "a leader along a path."

If you've ever played the childhood game of "follow the leader," the person who's first in line was called the "hodegos." Whatever he did, everybody else did after him. Therefore, he (this Jewish religious person), because of his advantages, viewed himself as someone who was capable of leading other people into divine viewpoint. The specific kind of people that he had in mind was those who were "tuphlos," which is blind. That is, they lacked sight. Here it means they had no ability to understand spiritual things.

**The Blind Leading the Blind**

This time there is no definite article. It's just "blind ones." These are people who have the quality such as are spiritually blind. Now, religious people who are unbelievers are actually themselves spiritually blind. But because they are religious, and because of their religious activities, they think they have spiritual insight. Therefore, Paul says, "You are confused on your relationship to God, and it is shown by the very fact that you have no hesitancy of trying to advise other people on spiritual things." What you have is the blind leading the blind.

In the natural realm, his is disastrous. If you are blind person walking along the edge of the chasm of the Grand Canyon, the one thing you better not have as your guide is another blind person, or you're going to both take a fast trip down to the bottom of the canyon one mile down. It's disastrous in the human realm. But in the spiritual realm, it has eternal repercussions. The disaster is much greater. Yet, any time a religious person tries to lead someone in spiritual darkness, this is exactly what happens.

This can also happen to a Christian. If you are a believer, but you are untaught in the Word of God, then you two have scales upon your eyes. But because you are a religious person in your doctrinal ignorance, or your negative attitude toward doctrine; and, because you have information, like the Jew, you come up feeling qualified to lead people.

One of our last letters that we sent out was concerning the series of four tapes on Dr. Nolan's book, on the analysis of the healers, and the charismatic movement, and the genuineness of that healing movement. As you know, all he did was check the results. And like he said, the evidence is there in the testing of the product. The result was that he found that the healers do not indeed heal.

One of the letters that we got back, in response to the letter that we sent out, was apparently to a charismatic, and I thought it might be interesting to read the note that he wrote me at the bottom. He says, "I do not want any tapes from people who are spiritually blind. I have personally known a woman healed of lung cancer through prayer. Have some faith, and believe God for a miracle."

Now this man believes that he is spiritually enlightened. He believes that he has spiritual eyes that see things that the rest of us blind do-dos do not see. I noticed that he is protecting his eyesight by very carefully saying, "Don't send me any tapes. I don't want to hear what those tapes say. I don't want to hear what Dr. Nolan says." The interesting thing is that several letters like this (several rebuffs) all carry the same theme: "How can you be so blind? I know a lady that had this, and this is now what she has. I know someone in Indonesia that was dead, and now he's alive." I mean they are just his way out and kooky as you can get. The confidence just exudes from the page. Some of them say, "I'm going to pray for you, that God will open your eyes."

This is exactly what we're talking about here. Paul says, "You stupid, idiotic, dumbbell Jews. You know the Word of God. You are confident that you have spiritual insights, and yet you are blind trying to lead the blind." And the Bible says that when that happens, you both will end up in the ditch. Religious people have so little Bible doctrines stored in their human spirits that they are really incapable of having good spiritual eyesight. But they don't know it. They don't realize that because they lack doctrinal instruction, the one thing they don't have is good spiritual eyesight. Therefore, they are ready to call others blind. They are ready to attack those who really do that good spiritual eyesight, and say that you are arrogant and you are wrong because you do not stumble after their blindness.

So, verse 19 declares to us that one of the errors of the religious unbeliever is that he considers himself a guide to those in spiritual darkness.

Another point made in verse 19 is that the religious unbeliever considers himself a divine viewpoint light to those who are in human viewpoint darkness. He says, "A light of them who are in darkness." The Greek word for "light" is the word "phos." Here it is used of spiritual enlightenment to the mind. Obviously, light is of no value whatsoever to eyes that are blind. The same thing is true of the enlightenment of Bible doctrine to unbelievers. Bible doctrine will not go anywhere with unbelievers. They have blindness in their eyes so they cannot see spiritual things.

You can't go anywhere with an unbeliever, with any truth except only one. The only truth that God the Holy Spirit says that he will make clear to the minds of unbelievers (He will enable their blind eyes to see) is the truth concerning the gospel. That is the only thing that God the Holy Spirit will reveal to the mind of unbelievers. If you try to talk about anything else spiritually with unbelievers, you're wasting your time, and you are mudding up the waters and clouding the issue.

So, this religious unbeliever lacks a living human spirit. He lacks the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is necessary for Him to be able to be a spiritual light. This, again, is the blind leading the blind. He views himself, however, as a light to them who are in the sphere of darkness ("skotos"). "Skotos" here means "unenlightenment." It means the human viewpoint that is in the old sin nature. The religious unbeliever really thinks that he has God's viewpoint. Why? Because he practices certain religious functions. He has certain religious activities that he's engaged in, and he equates those with understanding spiritual things.

How are you going to lead into divine viewpoint light a person who is filled with spiritual darkness, but who thinks he is a lighthouse for God? That's what the religious unbeliever is. He thinks he is a lighthouse for God, and yet he is full of nothing but darkness. A lighthouse is a very important thing. A lighthouse preserves ships from floundering in shallow water, and from being dashed to pieces on hazardous underwater rocks. There's nothing that could be more disastrous than for a lighthouse keeper, who is responsible for turning that light on at dusk every day, to think that the light is on, and to think that he sits there in his lighthouse with the light shooting out its beam and its warning to the ships which are approaching, and for that light not to be on. The results of those who are dependent upon that lighthouse is nothing but disaster.

The religious unbeliever is full of darkness. He actually thinks that he is putting out a beam of light to guide people in spiritual things. Yet he himself is nothing but darkness. So, how in the world can you help a person who is full of darkness, who thinks that he's full of light? That's why it's hard to speak to the religious unbeliever.

Well, verse 20 caps it all off. It say one more thing in this conditional part of the sentence. It tells us that the religious unbeliever used himself as an instructor of the foolish. The word "instructor" in Greek is "paideutes." This is an interesting word because the word "paideutes" means something more than teacher. It means "a teacher who disciplines." This is the kind of teachers we want in a Christian school. When we get with teachers in a Christian school who can't discipline, we have a lot of disorder. We don't want just teachers. We want "paideutes" – people who can teach, and who can discipline through their teaching. The idea of chastening, which is in this word, can be seen in Luke 23:16 and in Luke 23:22, where the verb form of this word is used, and you can see how it's used as "chastening."

**Spiritually Insane**

The religious unbeliever actually thinks that he is qualified to be a teacher to ramrod (to discipline) others into spiritual enlightenment – people that he calls the "aphron." The "aphron" are the foolish. The word literally means "without reason." It indicates a lack of mental sanity. When a person is crazy, you say, "He's 'aphron.'" Here he uses this word which was commonly used in the physical realm for people who were mentally deranged. And he uses it in the spiritual sense. These people are spiritually insane, and that is what characterizes, Paul says, the thinking of religious unbelievers. Their spiritually nuts.

The religious unbeliever is lacking in spiritual sanity, and he's not aware of it. But that's characteristic of insanity. People who are crazy don't think they're crazy. People who are crazy think they're the only ones that have got any sense around the place. That is characteristic of insanity. And this is no place seen more clearly than in spiritual insanity, because it is the spiritually insane unbeliever, and the spiritually insane believer as well, who are the ones who are most unaware of their own condition.

So, the ideas of Greek and Roman mythology were utterly inane to the religious Jew. There was no question about it. He was an unbeliever himself, but what they said was "spiritual insanity." He did not realize that he himself, as an instructor of these insane people, was also spiritually insane.

Furthermore, he saw himself as "a teacher of babes." Here's the other word for teacher: "didaskalos." He was the instructor. And the word for "babes" is "nepios" in Greek. And that literally means "those who can't speak." It literally means "without the power of speech." It connotes a little child. So, the idea here is immaturity in a most extreme way: shallow; gullible; and, uninformed. And that's how the Jew viewed all the people around him – just unsophisticated spiritual infants. And this unbelieving Jew considered himself not only a person who was able to be a "paideutes" – to discipline, and to be a Drill Instructor to ramrod people into spiritual understanding, but he also viewed himself as a very capable, effective teacher in the Word, and he probably could have taught you quite a few things about the Bible.

It is not uncommon to find some pretty good Bible teachers who are on their way to the lake of fire, who can teach you a great deal about the Bible. But they themselves have not grasped the spiritual phenomena: "An instructor of the foolish; a teacher of babes, has the form of knowledge and of the truth of the Law." The world "has" is "echo." "Echo" is present. It is his constant possession. It is active. It is personally held by the Jews. It is participle – a principle stated.

What did he have? It says, "He had a form of something." That is "morphosis." "Morphosis" is the word that has to do with outer semblance, like we have in the word "metamorphosis." A worm spins a cocoon. He experiences a metamorphosis, and he gets an outward change. That's what we mean, and he comes out as a butterfly in time.

So, this refers to the outward semblance. These people had an outward semblance of knowledge. The religious Jew had the external appearance of being very knowledgeable in divine viewpoint. This is just like many unbelievers, who happen to know something about the Bible, are very impressive when they talk about the Bible. And you say, "Boy, this person really knows something." The knowledge that he had is the word "gnosis." "Gnosis" can be explained by examining a chart of the mind. The mind has a perceptive side, and it has a directive side. "Gnosis" is what you get in your learning side of the mind (the perceptive side of the mind). This person is referring here to having a claim upon knowledge of the Old Testament. And he gave the impression of being knowledgeable. But what he had here was under the judgment of negative volition. He really had a knowledge that he rejected. Oh, he knew it, but he rejected it. This, again, has the definite article. It is *the* knowledge, so that it is referring to the specific knowledge of the Mosaic Law.

Then he uses the word "kai" for the last time ("and" once more), stringing together the last thing here in this series of conditional parts of the sentence: "And truth." And the word "truth" is the "aletheia." He had a grasp upon knowledge and of the truth; that is, the reality of the matter. Again, it is "*the* truth," referring to the truth of divine viewpoint in the Mosaic Law. He only had the appearance of truth from the Law. Specifically, it says, "The truth which in ('en') the law ('nomos' again);" that is, the Mosaic Law. Again, it is *the* Law (the specific Law) – a reference to the Bible as the source of information. The Jew had this, and yet he missed what God was telling him.

So, what Paul is pointing out in verses 17-20, is that the religious unbeliever has many specific advantages that he has listed for us. He does indeed possess a Bible knowledge of the truth, but he utterly lacks the substance. He only has the outward form of knowledge, but he really does know what it's all about.

What the unbelieving religious Jew, in fact, possessed was religion. That's all. And that is worthless before God. Religion actually sees apostasy and human good as superior qualities. Apostasy and religion are expressed in various ways today. For example, they're expressed in brotherly love. You hear a great deal of talk about brotherly love. That's apostasy. You hear about socialism; distributing the wealth; and, equating the wealth. That kind of socialistic redistribution is religion because religion wants to do good things for people. Religion wants to make life better for people. Therefore, we have unrestrained welfare. We have internationalism. Our Secretary of State just recently told the Latin American countries that we can no longer make decisions in the United States as a nation in itself. We must only make decisions in terms of, and in coordination with, all the other countries of the world. So, we are talking about disarmament. We are seeking now to eliminate family controls.

The state of Texas is going to bring schools, such as our Christian academy, under its control – rules and regulations that will govern private Christian schools. And here is just one little sample of the kind of thing that religiously oriented people produce in their blindness. These people actually think that they're lighthouses. One of the communications I received this week, concerning one of the regulations, is going to say this, concerning the discipline which a school may exercise over its pupils. It says, "Children shall not be subject to cruel or harsh treatment, including shaking, striking, or spanking."

The thing about this that's pathetic is that the Word of God says that when a child misbehaves, one of the things you should do is to train him. And you train him by spanking. I doubt that they can really put this law into effect, but what somebody is not going to challenge is as an infringement of religious freedom, because the Word of God says, not only spank him, but leave some black and blue marks on him, if necessary, to break his rebellious will. It says, "You will not kill him, but you will save his soul from destruction." We have madmen who in public office, who are absorbed with religion and with the concepts of religion, that make the very Word of God to be wrong, and their human viewpoint thinking to be right.

Do you see what Paul is talking about? That's the inverted thinking of the religious person. Religion assumes that its standards are the same that God approves, where in fact it's really in opposition. Religion assumes that reason and the human senses can lead people to what God thinks. Religious people seek to impose their conclusions on God, and that's what we have here. The state of Texas is going to teach God how to deal with children. Well, I just hope God is listening, and that He really lets him have it. Unfortunately, there are going to be a lot of kids whose lives will be destroyed if regulations like this go into effect.

You stand here and you shake your head, and you say, "I just can't believe it. We have this kind of absolute inanity such that when parents send their children to a school like ours that says, "If you send your child to this school, and we think that, at a certain point, his misconduct deserves a spanking, that's what he'll get. And that's not brutalizing him. It's not injuring him. It is simply doing that which the Word of God says will save his soul from destruction." Yet, what is the purpose of bringing schools under state control and regulations? In order to preserve the well-being of children? And these religious people, because they are filled with darkness, come out with exactly the opposite of what God says will preserve the well-being of a child. This is a splendid example of what Paul is talking about here in terms of the religious Jew who thought he was such a spiritual lighthouse, and he was nothing but darkness.

We trust that today the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior. We trust that if you have walked in here, and all that you've had in your life to lean on is religion, that you've caught a faint glimmer of how dangerous that is, because religion will take you not to heaven, but to hell. Heaven is a place for those who are related to the people of God through the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you will receive Him as your personal Savior; abandon your religion; and, turn to the relationship in Him, you will be saved. We urge you to do that.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

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