***Abhor what is Evil
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Please turn once more to Romans 12:9-12 on the subject of "Christian Conduct."

The popular song says that: "What the world needs is love, sweet love." And that is a true statement. But people on their own, we have found, are totally incapable of expressing the kind of love that the world really needs. The Bible identifies real love as a mental attitude of goodwill, of sacrificial concern, rather than just an emotional expression. This mental attitude love is only produced in a human being by God the Holy Spirit, as that person is born again and Spirit-filled. The Bible tells us that this kind of mental attitude "agape" love is a gift from God. It is described as the fruit of the Spirit. The world of unbelievers, therefore, can only produce a sentimental emotion from the human good of the old sin nature, and they call it love.

The apostle Paul has declared and Romans 12 that it is the will of God for Christians to exercise mental attitude "agape" love toward all people. And that's what we have observed here in verse 9. The claim of loving people is to be without hypocritical pretense, he says. It is not to be just talk. Only the Christian, who lives by the divine viewpoint of Scripture, and who is filled by the Holy Spirit, because his sins are confessed to God the Father – only he will be free from mental attitude sins such as jealousy; envy; bitterness; resentment; vindictiveness; hatred; grudge-holding; and, lusts of various kinds. Only he will be free of all of those things so that he can have mental attitude love. All of the crime, and all of the violence, and all of the deceit in our society is produced by a lack of mental attitude love.

Yes, it's true. What the world needs is love, sweet love. But it's the kind of love that can only come from God. With that kind of love, things are different. The quality of mental attitude love is demonstrated by the Lord Jesus Christ toward mankind in such places, for example, as Matthew 9:36, where we read, concerning Jesus: "But when He saw the multitudes, He was viewed with compassion on them (mental attitude goodwill, and concern, and sacrifice) because they were faint, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherds." When the Lord Jesus looked out upon the masses of humanity who were outside of the family of God, His heart went out to them as the result of His mental attitude of compassion for them.

In Matthew 14:14, we read, "And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them. And He heal the sick." The word "compassion," which is thrown around in the political world so freely today is indeed a biblical word. But it is not the word that the politicians use. The word "compassion" in Scripture refers to this quality of mental attitude love, which is indeed rare in a politician, because it's tough to find one that's born again in the first place, and it's tougher to find one who is filled with the Spirit in the second place.

However, the compassion of Jesus Christ was a very genuine response of His thinking toward these people. And indeed, I read this to remind us that this is the pattern that should be true of our thinking. We should look out upon the masses of lost humanity, and there should be a mental attitude compassion for them in the fact that they have no one pointing them on the road to eternal life.

One more Scripture: Mark 6:34 says, "And Jesus, when He came out, saw many people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things." And this Scripture tells us that the response of Jesus Christ, in His mental attitude compassion for these people, was to teach them something. And the teaching that they needed were the doctrinal principles of the Word of God, because this would cause them to be related to how God has created us, and how society works in all of its personal relationships. This would enable these people to become self-sustaining human beings; honoring to God; honoring to themselves; and, a blessing to mankind. The compassion that comes from the political realm of our society generally degrades people; makes them wards of the state; tears down their personal self-respect; and, causes them to be useless human beings to themselves and everybody around them.

There's a great difference when you understand what the word "love" means in terms of what God means when He speaks of it. And indeed, if we could have a mass of human beings (and it's going to have to be the Christians) who pour out this kind of love toward the masses of human beings, then this world is going to have some dramatic changes. And more specifically, American society is going to be turned around, back in the direction of blessings instead of on the course of self-destruction that it is on now, upon which all the political leaders on the horizon are recommending more ideas and more programs to ensure that self-destruction. Yet, it is all under the idea that they are expressing compassion for the human race.

**Abhor what is Evil**

Mental attitude love in the Christian will express itself in a godly attitude toward what is good and toward what is evil. So, today, we begin to look at the latter part of Romans 12:9, which first of all says, "Abhor that which is evil." If you have mental attitude, love, it will be a natural thing that you will abhor what is evil. The word "abhor" is the Greek word "apostugeo." "Apostugeo" means "to turn away from something with abhorrence or with disgust." It connotes turning away from something because you are just inherently repelled and disgusted by it. It is not a natural feeling. The truth of the matter is that it is not natural for us, in our sin, to turn from evil. People by nature love to go for what is degraded and vile and filthy and low. I mean, they just have a natural attraction for it.

This abhorrence in the Greek language is in the present tense, which means it is to be a constant reaction of revulsion. It is in active voice, which means it is to be the personal chosen reaction of you as a believer. By implication, it is a command. The first three letters of the word, "apo," is a preposition which intensifies this word. It is saying to really be revolted (deeply revolted) by this which is evil. It's the sort of thing that you read about in 2 Peter 2:22, which talks about a dog throwing up, and then going back and eating what he threw up. When you read that passage, you get the feeling of what this word "apostugeo" means. The thing that we are to be so revolted against is evil. This is a significant word. It is the Greek word "poneros." "Poneros" means "wicked." And in the Greek Bible, it is "the wicked thing."

This Greek word connotes a wickedness in its influence and in its effects. The influence and the effects of this word (of this kind of evil) is destructive. This word is selected to stress the fact that God says, "Don't do the things that are going to hurt you. Don't do the kind of evil things, not just because they're evil. There's another description that means 'evil inherently,' but this is an evil that has terrible destructive effects. If you do this, it will have potentially enormous consequences that you may live with for the rest of your life.

So, the exhortation here is not simply to look at something as being a bad thing, but to see it as an act of evil with destructive effects. This idea is expressed by the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, when he says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." And the word "appearance" means "the external forms." Abstain from all the external forms of evil. Don't participate in those things which externally are evil, and which are evil of such a nature that they really are destructive on your life.

So, the question, first of all, is: what is the nature of evil that Paul is referring to here? The sin of Adam and Eve, as you know, changed the human race from total compatibility with God's absolute righteousness to total depravity. Adam and Eve were wonderful people. They were completely compatible with God in everything they did. It was an unimaginable relationship. But when they sinned, it not only affected their relationship with God, but it did something to them internally. It affected their bodies. It changed the genetic structure of their bodies, and it entered in a factor into their genetics which had not been there before; namely, a sin nature. This genetic structure contaminated the bodies of Adam and Eve so that, as Romans 5:12 tells us, sin entered the human race: "Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." The genetic effect brought death upon everybody.

The sin nature is a powerful propensity to evil, and it has a powerful desire to violate God's moral code. That is the character of the sin nature. It wants to violate God's moral code above everything else. What are you hearing in society today? You're hearing all of this effort to resist the moral code of God, and to come up with a code that people agree that they are willing to live by.

**Man is by Nature Evil**

In Romans 7:18, we read, "For I know," Paul says, "that in me (that is, in my flesh – in my human capacity) dwells no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Paul says, "I want to do what is good, but all I do is find that I can't do the good. For the good which I would, I do not; but, the evil which I would not do, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but the sin nature that dwells in me." And Paul made the connection. He said, "I know what, in my will, in the reasoning of my soul, what I want to do. I know that it is not good to do this which is self-destructive. But I do it." And he says, "And I think about it, and say, 'Why do I do this stuff that's so self-destructive?'" And then he concludes, "I'm not the one that's doing it. It's the evil nature of sin within me." And what he is saying is that there is a great, terrible consequence to him that controls him. Man is by nature evil.

**Society Says that People are Good by Nature**

This again is resisted in our society. Our society says, "No, people are good by nature." You remember that was Rousseau's idea. Man is good by nature, but he's contaminated by society, and by the organization and institutions of society. So, Rousseau, imagined that the primitive savage was the most perfect, wonderful human being on the face of the earth, because nobody was there to contaminate him, except he found that the primitive savage was just as brutal as the cultured, educated savage anywhere in the world.

**The Sin Nature**

The Bible is very clear. You and I, by nature, have a propensity to do what is evil. We are strongly attracted toward that.

Psalms 51:5 says, "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." What does that mean? It means that your mother conceived you, and when she did, she gave you a sin nature.

Psalm 58:3 says, "The wicked are estranged from the womb, and go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Those of you who have small children, you will notice that, early on, you discover this evidence that they have been born with a nature that leads them astray from God, and that very early on, they will try to deceive you. They will proceed to tell you lies.

Ephesians 2:3 reinforces that: "Among whom also we all had our manner of life in time past, in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others." It is the natural propensity to do evil.

Romans 3:12 reinforces that again: "They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that does good – no, not one." Nobody in the human race, by nature, seeks what is right.

Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

**We are, by Nature, Sinful**

1 John 1:8 is one more to add to that. We are, by nature, sinful: "If we say that we have no sin (singular – sin nature) we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And yet, countless numbers of theologians and people portray this idea that we are a people that does not have a propensity toward sinning.

So, we have a nature of sin. . . . We can draw a diamond-shaped diagram. You may think of it in terms of this, first of all. The Bible says that there are certain things that are true about your sin nature. One of them is that it has a tendency toward lasciviousness. Lasciviousness means the indulgence of sensual, lustful characteristics.

For example, Ephesians 4:19 tells us: "Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness (sensual indulgence of an evil kind), to work all uncleanness with greediness."

Also, Jude 4 describes this quality of the sin nature when it says, "For there are certain men who crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" – turning God's freedom in grace into license to do evil, and denying the only Lord God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Lasciviousness**

So, there is some kind of a characteristic quality in us by nature that has a tendency toward lasciviousness – toward sensual evil. And what this does is project an image of wickedness (of moral abandonment). This kind of a person is very self-indulgent. He is a vile person, and he gives full freedom to all the weaknesses of his old sin nature, and offends people. People with any sense of propriety, decency, or morality are offended by this quality in the old sin nature. Now in some people, this is very prominent and very strong. This is a characteristic such that you just look at the person, and you just see that this is a very licentious type of character.

**Asceticism**

On the other side, there is the capacity of the sin nature to project a good image. There is this trend toward asceticism. We have this indicated, for example, in Colossians 2:20-23: "Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordnances: don't touch; don't taste; and, don't handle, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men? These things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship (not worship by means of the Word of God, but by means of your own self-will) and humility and neglecting of the body, not in an honor to the satisfying of the flesh." These are people who will pursue some kind of self-crucifixion. They want to work on self-denial. They want to beat their bodies. They want to do like Martin Luther did – to find God through punishing his body, which was the agency of sin, until they walked in one day and found him lying on the floor of his cell near death, because of how he had physically beaten himself in order to try to atone for his sins. And yet, after he recovered from his near brush with death, he was no closer to satisfaction and peace in his heart, relative to the facing God, than he was before he had started beating up on his own body.

**Legalism**

Hebrews 6:1 reiterates this concept of asceticism when it says, "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God." This is the legalists. This is the person who believes that he can approach God by certain things that he does do, and he doesn't do. He has a long list of do's and don’ts. And he believes that if he follows this, that he will become the person that God will take into heaven. And the sin nature projects, in this way, a holy image of self-crucifixion, and, in fact, a position of morality.

**Moral Unbelievers**

It is out of this tendency of the sin nature that people who are going to the lake of fire become the most highly moral people – often better than Christians. And this is confusing. How can unbelievers be so moral? It is because they have a sin nature quality that tends toward projecting a good image (a good front), and they go for morality.

**Wickedness or Self-Denial**

So, the result here is that this is the reformer in society. This is the do-gooder who's trying to gain God's favor. He's a legalist. He impresses people, but he does not impress God. So, there are two things about sin nature that the Bible tells us. Some people have sin natures that just go toward wickedness. Some people have sin natures that just go toward self-denial. Neither one changes the person's relationship with God in any way.

However, there is something else about the sin nature that the Bible reveals. And that is that the sin nature also has an area of weakness. There is a lack of strength in the sin nature in some respects. As a result of this area of weakness, the sin nature spews out all kinds of personal acts of evil. We have this indicated, for example, in Mark 7:21: "For from within, out of the heart (that is, out of the mind) of men proceed evil thoughts." And now he lists a series of overt evil actions. And where did they come from? They came from your mind. They came from the fact that there is a weakness in your sin nature that gravitates toward these external sins: "Evil thoughts; adultery; fornications; murders; thefts; covetousness; wickedness; deceit; lasciviousness; an evil eye; blasphemy; pride; and, foolishness." All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

So, the Bible tells us there is a weakness in the sin nature that results in the capacity to do great evil. This evil is of two kinds. It all begins, first of all, in the mind. James 1:14-15 teach us that: "But everyone is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust." The lust comes from where? From the lust of the sin nature, and he is enticed: "And when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin. And sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." First there is the lust that goes up to the mind. It's an attractive consideration. Then from thinking about it, you put yourself in the position where you can execute an evil appeal from the sin nature. And when you have opportunity of execution, the next step is to make what was internal an external act of sin. So, sins are not only mental, but they are also overt. James 3:5 points this out when it says, "Even so, the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things; behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles." Here is the tongue, which is conveying mental sins into external expressions.

So, you have an area of weakness in your sin nature. It is the source of all the individual acts of sin that you perform, and it has a series of lusts that it wants satisfied. It has a lust for praise; it has a lust for power; it has a lust for status; it has a lust for money; it has a lust for illicit sex; and, it has a lust for having what other people have. All of the things that the Bible condemns are to be found in the sin nature. You don't just invent those on your own. You were born with this in your genetic structure, and it just spews out of you as you give it opportunity. For the unbeliever there is no control. He can act moral, and he can cover it up, and he can act refined, but there is within him this weakness. And suddenly, you will discover that this evil is there within this person, and he is engaging in his individual acts of sin.

Unfortunately, this is true of Christians too, because when you come into the Christian life, you take this sin nature with you. So, this area of weakness is there. The difference is that this is part of what Jesus died on the cross to break the back of for us. 1 Peter 2:24, therefore, tells us, "Who His Own Self bore our sins in His Own Body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should live unto righteousness, by Whose stripes you are healed." It was Christ who died to pay for this which comes from the sin nature, so that we don't have to be enslaved to it any longer.

However, there's another side, and that is that the old sin nature is characterized by strength. And out of that strength side, the sin nature produces all kinds of good works – human good works. Isaiah 64:6 indicates that when it says, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses (our good works, from the sin nature) our as filthy rags. And we all do fade as the leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. There is in our society the impression that if you do good works, they must come from God. No. Satan is the primary promoter of good works in the human race, because he wants to create his own millennium on this earth. But those are *human* good products, all entirely on your own. You don't need God; you don't need the Spirit of God; and, you don't need to be born again to produce good works. Our society is full of unbelievers who are doing this kind of good works. Why? Because there is a stimulation of strength in the sin nature that wants people to do these good works. And people do respond.

The problem is that none of these works have any merit with God because they are all the product of the sin nature, and therefore, they are tainted by this evil. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness (human good) which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." We are not saved by our human good. We're saved by the divine good of Christ on the cross.

**The Pharisee and the Publican**

We add to this Luke 18:9-12: "And He spoke this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others (trusting in the products of their own sin nature)." And then you have the story of the two men, the Pharisee and the publican, who went up to pray in the temple. The Pharisee was praising himself because he was so confident and arrogant from his sin nature because of all the moral good things he was doing. The publican was condemning himself because he knew what he was, and that he had no ground to approach God for anything. Instead, he looked to God to give him the solution.

So, what you have and Luke 18:9-12 is a splendid example of the Pharisee who is announcing all of his human good. And God made it very clear that the publican, who recognized that he was a sinner, and cast himself upon the mercy of God's salvation, went home justified. The Pharisee was still on his way to the lake of fire as much as he was before he did one single good thing.

This, again, is part of the problem of the sin nature which Jesus Christ solved in His death on the cross. In Colossians 2:16-17, Paul says, "For by Him (Jesus Christ), were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth (visible and invisible), whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers (spirit beings); all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." He is the power (the authority).

Now notice Colossians 2:16-17, which says, "Let no man, therefore, judge you in food, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or of the new moon, or of a Sabbath day, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ." Christ for all these human efforts, and all these ritual observances. They don't mean anything anymore. They were representative of what He had to do for our human good.

Colossians 2:20-22 says, "Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances (ritualistic codes of good conduct): do not touch; do not taste; and, do not handle, which all are to perish with the using after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Why are you still pursuing this kind of human good to make it with God?

**Abhor what is Evil**

So, my point in all this is to show you that you can put on a good front, or you can put on a wicked front. It depends upon what kind of sin nature you have. And all of you can think of people in your experience, both Christian and non-Christian, who are just always inclined to be wicked – to put on a bad front – if they're not doing something, then to give you the appearance of evil; while other people, that you know are living like the devil, are always putting on a good front, and always acting like they were godly people. But there's also this wickedness, this evil in the form of not only sins within us, but there is the strength that produces human good. And my point is that when Paul says, "Abhor that which is evil," he is talking specifically about those acts of sin, and also about the acts of human good. And that blows people out of the water.

They say, "What? Are you telling me that God is not impressed by these acts of human goods that feed people; that clothe people; that give them shelter; and, that help them through their times of trouble?" If you are producing that out of your sin nature, as an unbeliever, which is the only way you can produce it as an unbeliever, it means nothing with God. Yes, it does help people. But if you think it has any value with God, and, in fact, any long-range value with society, you're wrong. Human good never helps society. It relieve a pressure point at the moment. But in the long run, experience demonstrates clearly that human good only makes things worse for the people who receive that human good. So, you have people who are standing up and proudly proclaiming human good as if they were messiahs and spokesmen for the living God.

Paul says, "Human good and sins are evils. All divine good works are the product in the believer by the Holy Spirit." For this they will receive rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The unsaved cannot produce any divine good works whatsoever.

**Mother Teresa**

So, what am I saying? Are you trying to tell me that here is Mother Teresa? She produces an enormous number of good works. I listened to a commentator on TV asking Dr. Patterson at First Baptist Church in Dallas, who was exploiting this very point – that out of the nature of man, there come these good actions that people place merit upon, but which God does not hold in esteem, because they are the product of the sin nature. And this man interviewing said, "Do you mean to tell me, Dr. Patterson, that here you are, and here are the things that you do, and you are going to heaven, even with your wrong things that you may do, and which you admit you do, but here is Mother Teresa, who does infinitely more than you and I, and all of us put together, in helping human beings, and her compassion is without limit – are you telling me that it's possible for her to do all those good things and still not go to heaven?"

Now what are you going to say? Have you ever been on television? There's an eye, and that's the lens. And they tell you, "Look above the lens. When that red light on, it's transmitting." So, you stand there. And I had to do this. The light comes on, and you're standing there, and then the red light comes on, and you grin. And you can't look on the side because on television, right away, they know you're looking on the side. And then they give you the signal, . . . and you find it difficult to say anything sensible. And that's nerve racking.

Now here's this lens on you, and all these thousands of people in the metroplex are waiting for your answer: "Where are you going to send good old Roman Catholic Mother Teresa?" And Patterson looked at the lens; gulped; and, said, "The Bible says that if she is not trusting in Christ alone for salvation, her good words will never take them into heaven." I applauded." I spoke to him, and said, "Here, here," because that's what the Word of God says. Your human good is repulsive and disgusting to God. It is like the dog's vomit. That's how God responds to all of your human good – the product of your sin nature.

Now it's OK with me if you don't want to believe that. And it's OK with me if that offends you, and you get distressed, and you strike out against it. But you must be fair to observe that I have taken you through a series of Scriptures that have declared that your righteousnesses, in God's eyes, are as filthy rags. The only thing that God values, blesses, and rewards is the divine good of absolute righteousness that He puts within us. It is the absolute righteousness that He puts within us, and the divine good that flows from it. Your sincerity; your desire to help the human race; and, your dedication are nothing with God. All that can flow from the sin nature. It is what *He* raises within you.

Of course, fundamentalist biblical Christianity, for ages, has been characterized by this outflow of divine good – Christians moved by the Spirit of God into missionary endeavors; into producing hospitals; into creating orphanages; and, into dealing with the human needs of people physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. Fundamentalist Christians have always been in the forefront of that. They have been moved by the Spirit of God. And it is the Johnny-come-lately and the evolutionary humanists who are trying to elbow their way in, because people appreciate and respect those who do things like that, and they know that they can gain esteem by helping human needs. But they don't understand that they're coming at it out of the sin nature human good, and that what they do is not going to help people. It will give you a stomach full of food, but it will not enable you to use that stomach full of food to glorify God. It will enable you to go out and commit crimes. It will enable you to do that which is evil, because now you have the capacity and the freedom to do it, because someone else has propped you up in your sin nature control.

This is something that is hard for the world ever to understand. And it is sad when we Christians do not grasp the fact that human good evil is completely rejected by God.

**Human Good for the Believer**

So, what happens when you and I, as Christians, are guilty of human good evil? This is evil that we have stimulated from our own sin nature. God the Holy Spirit is not leading us to do it. He is not guiding us to do it. It is things we are doing. We think it's a good thing. We think we should do it, but it's human good evil. What's going to happen to it? Yes, you are going to stand with that before the Judgment Seat of Christ. And 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 tell us that God is going to burn it up. It's going to turn to ashes. And Christians who walk in with this enormous lifetime in compassionate human good evil are going to stand there stripped, shocked, and disappointed before Christ on that Judgment Seat, as their good goes to no place. The compassion works of socialism that are promoted in our society come from the sin nature. And because they come from the sin nature, they are evil in God's sight.

**Human Good for the Unbeliever**

For the unbeliever, his human good is all he's got. So, he goes out into eternity, and someday he stands before the great white throne judgment. What's the consequence going to be for him? Does God keep a record? Oh, you bet. God keeps a record of all of your evil. God keeps a record of all of your sins that you have committed as an unbeliever. God keeps a record of all of your human good as an unbeliever. Wait a minute. Is that logical? If He keeps a record of all the unbeliever's sins, for what purpose does He do that? Well, because what kind of punishment you get depends on the volume of your evil. The Bible says that the greater your sins, the greater your punishment will be. And then he keeps the record of your human good. You might say, "Do you mean that every human good I give is evil in the sight of God? So, I'm piling that up on the side of my punishment?" You bet you are. Now isn't that shocking? Here I am serving humanity. Here I am reaching out in compassion. Here I am calling for good things. And there's a God up in heaven who is keeping a record, and listing all of my human good on the side of the evil that I'm bringing, and for which I will be punished for all eternity?

**The Two Books of Life**

For the Christian, that will not be held against you. Your punishment will be the fact that that part of your life is brought up and wasted. For the unbeliever, the books will be opened, and he will stand there, waiting to claim some justice from God for his salvation on the basis of these things he has done. Revelation 20:11-15 say, "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead (these are now the unsaved dead, at the end of the millennium here), small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life."

There are two books. There's a set of books which records all of a person's evil in the form of sins and human good. There's another book which records the names of those who are going to heaven. Their name is in the book of life. So, these books are opened: "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." The Dead (the unsaved dead) are going to be judged according to their works. Would you like to face God on the basis of your works, really? There are plenty of people, and there are whole denominations that tell people: "Deal with God on the basis of your works. Go out into eternity, and let him look at your works, and add them up. Are you ready to say that you've done enough? Are you ready to say that what you've done is acceptable to God? The Bible makes it clear that if you are an unbeliever, you are operating out of your sin nature, and that is not acceptable to God.

Verse 13 says, "The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them, and were judged, every one according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The book of life is a book in which every newborn baby's name is inscribed. This book of life, because of the unlimited atonement of Jesus Christ, gives that baby an opportunity to come into eternal life. It gives that baby an opportunity to have his name retained in the book of life, and transferred over to the Lamb's book of life. These are two different books. The Lamb's book of life contains the names of those who are born again. At the point that an unbeliever dies, an angel comes with an eraser, and he wipes that person's name out of the book of life. That person no longer has opportunity to get access to eternal life. The book of life gives you your access to eternal life. But unless, through Christ, your name is transferred into the Lamb's book of life, you are doomed.

So, you stand there. Your name is erased. You've got nothing but your good works and your human good, and your sins against you. There is no hope. The conflict is between God's good and Satan's good. And the apostle Paul is calling upon us to recognize that out of this sin nature, nothing good can come. You and I, as Christians, take the old sin nature intact into the Christian life. Its authority over our lives is broken by Christ on the cross. Therefore, we learn in Romans 6:6 and Romans 6:12-14 that the sin nature no longer can dominate and rule over us. Therefore, we are not to respond to the sin nature. We are to have a deep revulsion toward all human good and toward all acts of sins.

Also, please remember, if you don't like what you're hearing today, on the basis of the authority of the Word of God, that someday we are going to find out who's right and who's wrong. And you must be prepared, as I would tell any unbeliever who rejects the grace way of salvation – it is only fair to tell that person that he must be prepared to pay the enormity of the price of being wrong. You better be sure that you haven't given the back of your hand to a message from God the Holy Spirit as the result of what He has recorded in this book. Why would you waste your life? Why would you squander it in human good toward which God has the revulsion that a human being has for the dog's vomit? Why would you think that this is something that you may offer, and that God would respond to?

For you and I who fall into that sin, there is the restoration of 1 John 1:9, and the turning back into functioning on God's divine good production. In 1 John 1:8 that, we read earlier, we have declared to us that we all have a sin nature. 1 John 1:8 says, "If we say that we have no sin nature, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:10, says that, "If we say that we have not sinned (acts of individual sin), we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us." Here are two verses in close proximity. One says, "You have a sin nature." The other says, "You will perform acts of evil" – evil in the form of human good, and evil in the form of individual sins. And interestingly enough, sandwiched between those two verses is 1 John 1:9, the way back for the Christian who has a sin nature, and who indeed performs the evil of human good and sins on occasion.

You and I cannot clean up the old sin nature by God's standards. The Bible says that it's incorrigible. Jeremiah 13:23 says that our sin nature is beyond correction. It is incorrigible. We cannot make the thing right. It is desperately wicked. You cannot put a sheepskin on a pig, and change the pig. He is still what he is, by all of his characteristics.

So, all that is produced by an unbeliever, and by the carnal Christian, comes from the old sin nature, and it comes out of his strong side with his human good, and it comes out of the weak side with his sins, and the whole thing expresses itself in an aesthetic picture or in a lasciviousness impression.

However, 1 Samuel 16:7 tells us that God does not look on the outside. He looks on the inside. What God is interested in is what motivated what you are doing. If it is God the Holy Spirit, He'll never forget it, and you will have eternal reward. If it's your sin nature, He'll never forget it, and you will have eternal loss.

Now the Bible takes occasions in the book of Proverbs to be very explicit on what God really hates above all else. And I think it would be helpful, if we want to avoid what is sin; what is wicked; and, what is evil, as Paul is admonishing us, I'd like at least to know what God hates worst of all. And God the Holy Spirit has come to our assistance, because there are seven things that God says that if you do these seven things, you have entered under the realm of what I hate with all of My capacity, as the omniscient God, above all else.

So, it might be smart, if you are going to be the sloppy type of character in your Christian life, at least to get these seven things in mind and say, "I won't do the worst. These bring me the greatest loss, and the greatest combination. And we shall look at those next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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