***Cling to that which is Good
RO159-01***

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Please open your Bibles once more to Romans 12:9-12. Our subject is "Christian Conduct."

Bible doctrine should produce godly conduct in the life of a believer. This, however, is not always the case, because the believer retains his sin nature with all of its lust patterns constantly enticing him to do evil. It is inevitable, therefore, that a Christian, on occasion, will yield to the enticements of the sin nature, and he will perform acts of evil in thought and deed. For such occasions, however, God has provided the spiritual technique of restoration to fellowship with God the Father, through a private confession of our sins to the Father, and His restoration of us to His fellowship; His blessing; and, His service. That doctrinal principle is based upon 1 John 1:9, which tells us that if we Christians do confess our sins to the Father, He will forgive, and He will restore.

A sinning Christian, of course, has not lost his eternal fellowship with God, but only his day-by-day temporal fellowship. Being born again into the family of God is spiritually irreversible.

**Love**

Here in the 12th chapter of Romans, the apostle Paul has proceeded now to give us some specific guidelines for Christian conduct. And immediately, he points out that the fundamental quality guiding all Christian conduct is a mental attitude love toward all mankind. The reason for this is that the Christian who, through the knowledge of the Word of God and the provision of God the Holy Spirit, has mental attitude love. That Christian finds that most of the problems, and human conflicts, that he may come across will be resolved.

We have this taught us, for example, in 1 Peter 4:8: "And above all things, have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins." The Christian who has indeed the strong mental attitude love, that God the Holy Spirit can give him, is a Christian who knows how to deal with other people in their frailties as well as his own, and to take it in stride, and to maintain an attitude of peace and Christian godliness. Love is the thing that carries us through.

So, it is no surprise that Paul puts that as number one when he wants to talk about how Christians should act. In the Old Testament, in the book of Proverbs (this great book of wisdom), God's wisdom states the same thing in Proverbs 10:12, where we read, "Hatred stores up strifes, but love covers all sins." When you treat people from the frame of reference of mental attitude love, the treatment comes out one way. When you treat them from a frame of reference where that love is lacking, you will respond in a totally different way.

So, the apostle Paul says that when we talk about Christian conduct, the first thing to remember is that we are to develop the capacity through the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, of having mental attitude goodwill toward all mankind. Such love will be genuine because it is produced by God the Holy Spirit in the believers, as part of what Galatians 5:22 calls "the fruit of the Spirit."

**Abhor that which is Evil**

Furthermore, the apostle Paul, in Romans 12:9, says that the individual believer is to be repulsed by all moral evil. So, Paul says, "Abhor that which is evil." Evil, we have found, is made up of acts of sin, and also acts of human good works, both of which are the product of the old sin nature, and both of which are looked upon as evil by God.

**Seven Things that God Hates**

Now it is clear that God hates all sin. But the Bible takes the trouble to point out to us that God hates some sins in particular. We have directed your attention to Proverbs 6:17-19, which give us this bit of divine viewpoint wisdom of the sins that God hates worst of all. And he lists seven of them. Number one is haughty lips which convey a spirit of pride. God hates proud, arrogant attitudes. Secondly, God particularly hates lies that people who tell. He hates a lying tongue. Furthermore, God particularly hates murder. He hates hands that commit murder. Number four: Proverbs tells us that God in particular hates a mind which plots evil acts. He also tells us (number five) that God hates feet that run to do what is evil – feet that carry a person into evil situations. Number six that God particularly hates those who bear false witness – those who misrepresent the facts about other people. And, finally, the number seven thing that God particularly hates is the sin of one who sows discord among believers.

**Sexual Sins**

You cannot help notice, as all of us do when we ponder these seven things, that sexual sins are notably left out of this list of what God hates most. However, that does not for one moment suggest that illicit and perverted sex is not sin with God, because we must make it clear that the Bible indeed says that illicit and perverted sex is very much a matter of sin with God. So, the code given to the Jewish people for their moral guidance, which we call the ten commandments, in Exodus 20:14, makes this clear when it says, "Thou shall not commit adultery," which covers all the areas of illicit sins.

When we come to the moral guidelines for the royal family of God, the church, we have this same principle reiterated to us in Ephesians 5:3, which says, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as is proper among saints." Christians should not, indeed, be guilty of illicit sex or perverted sex. It should not be named among us.

Now people categorize sexual sins as scandalous, and as the most scandalous sins. Sin has virtually, in our society, been equated with sexual sins. Sin has virtually been equated with illicit sex. Yet when we look at the things that Proverbs 6 tells us that God hates most of all, that particular sin is not included. It is sin, but it is not something more scandalous than all the other sin that people commit. Sin is sin with God. But seven are singled out as most despicable in terms of the holy character of God.

**Sinful TV Evangelists on Television News Shows**

It is false religion and false teachers of religion who classify sins as good or bad; who classify sins as forgivable or unforgivable; and, who classify sins as trivial or scandalous. The unbelieving world, unfortunately, with the help of TV preachers, likes to suggest that Christians claim to be free from sinning. So, Christians are constantly made the butt of jokes and of ridicule because they do demonstrate, sooner or later, that they are not sinless people – that indeed Christians do sin. The recent public confessions of TV preacher entertainers to scandalous sexual sins has in itself suggested to the watching world that Christians are claiming that they are sinless, as indeed these public confessions imply that up to this point, these individuals were sinless. That is why they have not been standing up and making public television confessions of sins; that up this point, they have been the paragons of virtue; that now they have stumbled at this point; and, until this point only.

However, Proverbs 6 has taught us that God hates mental attitude sins more than overt sins. As you run your eye over these things that God hates the most (these seven sins), you will see that they fall into the category basically of mental attitudes. Now no one is free from mental attitude sins, including TV preachers. These are not just the sins they confess publicly, periodically, that they consider to be the scandalous type. They have all been guilty of mental attitude sins. And the attitude of possessing senselessness is revealed by these TV preachers who are willing to go on public television and discuss, before unbelievers, the sins of other preachers, and the sins of other believers. And that's what it comes down to. And we have had this sorry sight of some individuals in the public eye caught in scandalous evil sins, and which the general public, in contrast to God's point of view, makes the epitome of the worst kinds of sins, because they deal in the sex area. And here we find other Christians willing to go on public television to discuss the sins of other believers before a sinful world.

It is important that we put this into focus because we are getting hit with it so constantly. And I would point out to you that 1 John 2:16 gives us the triple whammy of what constitutes sin in the categories with God. 1 John 2:16 points out: "For all that is in the world (this system that Satan has organized that we live in – that surrounds us) is the lusts of the flesh; the lusts of the eyes; and, the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Every sin falls into one of those three categories. They fall into the category of the lusts of the flesh (the sin nature); the lusts of the eyes; and, the pride of life.

We must indeed point out that, while some of these preachers who are pontificating about the evil of other public figures on television in the religious broadcasting world – while these who have not been taught in sin, and while those who are unwilling to admit their own mental attitude sins, have perhaps not been guilty of the lusts of the flesh or the lusts of the eyes, but they have clearly demonstrated that they're guilty of the pride of life. They cannot wait to get on a Koppel programs. They cannot wait to get on "Firing Line." They cannot wait to be invited to be in the public eye of millions of people on television while they discuss sinning brethren before the unbelievers of the world. That, folks, is the pride of life.

When you see these famous preachers, whose names you know, and I don't have to reiterate them to you, just realize that they ought to finish the program and say, "Now I must make my public confession (if this is the way we do it) for the fact that I am here because it tickles my flattery that you ask me, of all the preachers, to stand up here and discuss these matters publicly – to discuss the sins of other believers. I just love to be in the public eye. I love to hear my name go out over the airwaves. I love to see my name in print. I love to hear my name falling off the sacred lips of Phil Donahue."

A recent Ted Koppel program on TV evangelists . . . was very instructive. It's a program that should be run for a segment and stopped. And then they should say, "Now Christians, analyze what you just heard. And you may test your own divine viewpoint; your own understanding of the Word of God; and, your own understanding of how our God of grace works. And you will be appalled at the ignorance of seven of the most prominent television preacher entertainers in this country, practically all of whom you know."

On this Ted Koppel program on TV, in a large church, these seven men were brought together to discuss the sins of other believers. There was one man, Reverend E. V. Hill, a Black minister, who is a super man who has great spiritual discernment. He's the pastor of the Mount Zion Baptist church in Los Angeles. Koppel turned to him and said, "Reverend Hill, now, if you should sin." And Hill is a funny guy. I mean, he is a funny guy. They had a clip of him before, preaching to his congregation. And he's a fiery pulpit-pounder type. And he's there preaching away. And he says, "And if anybody says that they do not sin, they're a liar – and a big one."

Now what he was telling us was indeed that he understands the sin nature, and yes, we have doctrine to guide us, and Paul's listing for us in Romans 12 of what kind of people we Christians should be. But we have a nature that's going to make us trip up. And we better face and admit that to the sinning world so that we do not put ourselves in a fool's position, as so many of our TV leaders have done for us.

So, the moment that Koppel said to Reverend Hill, "If you should sin," Hill said, "Now wait a minute. It's not *if*. It's *when* I sin." And then he proceeded to make it clear that he was a sinner. He proceeded to make it clear that this whole panel of TV evangelists here were all sinners. And you know what? It irritated Koppel. Koppel said, "Well, you know, you're just demeaning and making light of this when you say we're all sinners." Because what has Koppel been doing? These foolish TV preachers have been giving Koppel some wonderful programs, because they've been willing, because of their own pride-of-life sin, to come up and discuss the sins of other believers, which is a private matter within us in the Christian community, and is not the matter of the public world to have any discussion or any insight into.

Koppel was clearly irritated by that. But I was amused to hear Reverend Hill point out that he is a sinner, whatever Koppel likes to think about that. And he says, "And I know what to do with my sin. I make confession, and I deal with it between me and God." And then, because the guy has a comedian streak in him, he said, "And after seeing what's happened to Bakker and Swaggart, I want to keep my sin between me and God – private. Well, what was he saying? He was saying 1 John 1:9 in a way that even these TV preachers could understand. So, at least one man up there knew how the God of grace really works.

However, there was another one, all of you whose name you would know if I were to say it, and I don't want to put it on tape. If you want to come up afterward, I'll tell you. Don't bowl me over. But there was one that who keeps doing this thing pontifically with his hands, I notice. I've got to get some style like that – folding his hands under his chin. . . . Anyhow, be that as it may, that's "Techniques 101" at seminary. They teach you that – what to do with your hands. When I first started preaching, I didn't know what to do with my hands. I'd hold them here in front of me, and then I'd put them behind me, and then I'd laid them out. I just didn't know what to do with my hands. But anyhow, you learn that eventually. . . .

What Hill was stressing was that there was grace, and our God forgives. You've bruised yourself, and you've bruised other people. And maybe the people that you minister to may say, "We think that we cannot continue our relationship because the sin was of such a nature that we need to get different leadership, and so on. But that's not to say that that individual does not go on in his own ministry with God.

Anyhow, there was this one well-known TV preacher, who was folding his hands under his chin, and he made a very great and impassioned speech to the fact that when the preacher sins, he can no longer preach, providing it's a scandalous sin. It's OK if he beats his wife, or if he's picked up drunk, but not so if the sins are of a scandalous nature – these sexual sins of a scandalous type. And he went on to say how the church would vote him out in such a case. He failed to say that the church might say, "No, we understand grace, and that is a sin, and that is terrible, but we will continue listening to your restored instruction. It is the congregation of God's people who make these decisions, not public television, or Ted Koppel, or the news media.

So, this preacher was taken to task by another well-known preacher in our area. He said, "No, no, we preach hope to people. God restores His grace, and puts us back on our feet, and He puts us on our way. And we cannot say that there is hope for you in the congregation if there is not hope for the person who carries the burden of the teaching ministry responsibility." So, they had a little fracas there for a while. And I suspect that this preacher was pontificating like that because he doesn't think that mental attitude sins are bad, because if he was really saying, "That's it," then he must say that there is no difference in sins with God. There is scandalous sitting in public eyes. Some are worse than others, as people see them, but God says that your mental attitude sins are the worst kind, because all the terrible things come from within your mind, and therefore you better not be standing up in that pulpit and preaching, because you have been guilty of that mental attitude sin. At least we want to hear you get up on Koppel's program and confess it to us.

You can see the inconsistency of this – the lack of logic, and the absolute arrogance that is amazing. I saw one lady who stood up in that program. She was sharp, and she pointed out this verse that I indicated to you: 1 John 2:16. And she told those guys sitting up there, and she was implying that the very fact you're sitting here on public television discussing this issue with the unbelieving world demonstrates that, while you may not be guilty of the pride of the lusts of the flesh or the lust of the eyes, you men are certainly guilty of the pride of life. And she made them squirm. And she was absolutely right, and absolutely on target.

One of those pontifical preachers got up and said that she had given them a demagogic response, which was his way of saying that you have touched a raw end nerve. The lady didn't give anything demagogic. She stood there with the Bible, and read this Scripture. She was quoting from the Word of God. Isn't that interesting – that here is a powerful preacher on television (a very smooth kind of sweetness-and-light, and right away I knew I didn't like him), but there was, this sweetness-and-light character. And here he is, calling this woman "demagogic" ("playing God" is what he was saying, because she was quoting Scripture.

I'm telling you, boy, it was an education. I sat there stunned, listening. Now I see what is the problem with us in the Christian community? How on earth can we hope for the general run of Christians to know better when these are the voices that are the powerful voices on TV that everybody says, "Here is God speaking to us?" And they're the biggest dumbbells when it comes to doctrine that you can imagine?

Unfortunately, in this fracas of what God does in forgiving the preacher's sin over against anybody else's, not one of the seven TV preachers refuted this arrogant man's falsehood that there was no hope for the sinning preacher to continue in his ministry. Not one of these seven preachers brought up the murderer, Moses, who became the greatest of God's prophets. Not one of them brought up the murderer and adulterer David, who was described by the Creator God as the man after God's own heart. Moses did not resign his position, and God did not remove David from the kingship. 25 years followed – the greatest years of David's ministry, and even out of that very sinful relationship came the union with Bathsheba that brought forth Solomon, the greatest of the kings.

Do you see how God works – this God of grace, over against these human idiots with their human viewpoint, pontificating. It's no wonder that the watching world indeed sees the biblical Christians as a bunch of arrogant clowns when the preachers are so disoriented to the grace; to the forgiveness; and, to the hope of God. I was really saddened that when this powerful, pontificating preacher came down, saying that there is no forgiveness, that he intimidated all the other six. They all backed off from him. Not one of them charged right back in even though they were feebly saying, "No, you're wrong. We disagree."

**False Religion**

This is religion. And it is religion parading as Christianity, which is Satan's device for belittling godliness and justifying evil. It is religion that we're listening to, not biblical Christianity. For this reason, God hates false religion in general. God hates religion (false religion) because of its false morality. He hates it because of its false basis of salvation. He hates it because of its false government concepts. And the Word of God makes it clear that one religion is not just as good as another religion with God. When you get into religion, you've gotten into what people think. And that's what we hear on that program. These people were conveying their religious viewpoints to us, not the biblical viewpoint. But God says that one religion is not just as good as the next. One religion God loves; and, the rest, He gates. Isaiah 1:12-15 put it this way. "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto Me. The new moons and Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies I cannot bear. It is iniquity. Even the solemn meeting." Now this is religion and its ritualistic procedures.

Verse 14: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates. They are a trouble unto Me. I am weary of bearing them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you. Yea, when you make your prayers, I will not here. Your hands are full of blood." Now God could not have graciously made it clearer to the people of Israel that He has a way to be approached. He has given them a religious system, and it's right. Everyone else, and every other system is man-made, and it's wrong. So, God hates a religion of mere rituals that lack spiritual reality.

In Mark 7:6-7, we have this pointed out to us: "He answered and said to them, 'Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. However, in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And at the heart of the commandments of men is the legalistic system – that man, by his merit, gains favor with God. That is the most violated truth of Scripture. And you will see it on our presentation tonight that presents it as the doctrine of the grace of God. These men spend millions, and speak to millions. It's amazing. Yet they are perverters, by and large, of the grace of God. And they demean the grace of our God because of their own lack of insight into what the Word of God really teaches. They are not men of doctrine.

In 2 Timothy 3:5, we read, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it. From such a turn away." What is it that we biblical Christians want? To shove our religion down other people's throats? No. We biblical Christians want everyone to have the freedom to go to hell in his own way. And we want everybody to have the freedom to go to heaven in God's way. That's what we biblical Christians want. We want freedom on either side because that's what God has said He has given you in your volition to make your choice. God is going to severely judge, one day, believers and unbelievers who teach false doctrine, and the TV preacher entertainers. And you have to connect the words. They're not preachers; they're entertainers: the TV preacher entertainers. You can't be on TV and not be an entertainer. TV is an entertainment tool. When you sit down and look at TV, you expect to be entertained. If you don't, you turn to another channel. These TV preacher entertainers are in the forefront of passing on misconceptions of doctrine concerning how God works. But it's an easy road to travel – a spiritual compromise to get along, and to prosper in the religious world. Well, you'll get loyalty of men when you do that, but you'll not get the loyalty of God.

This is why morality and the Bible is so important to us as Americans. Our whole political system is based upon the Word of God. The Constitution of the United States is dependent upon a society which is governed by biblical morality. The Constitution of the United States cannot work if you get a vast majority of Americans who will not obey the biblical principles of morality. Then our society becomes a jungle, and the Constitution cannot control everybody. It is because we have been a biblical people that the Constitution has been able to preserve our freedoms. But the Constitution today is being ignored by these evil men who are bent on pursuing the evil of human good through systems like socialism under the guise of doing good things for mankind. The Constitution itself is being used to enslave the American people to government instead of being used to restrain government from enslaving the people. Christians resist evil in our nation when they proclaim the moral code of God. And our government cannot survive without that moral basis. This is what preserves our constitutional republic and all of its freedoms. This is what opposes the evolutionary humanists who are promoting democracy in the welfare state, which always leads to tyranny and slavery.

Satan always wants to look like God, and so he's always going around doing these human good things that people without a knowledge of the Word of God are always victimized by. A politician will stand up, and he'll proclaim some wonderful things that people need, that will be such a good thing for human beings, even though our Constitution forbids government doing those things. Yet people without doctrine will say, "Hey, that's wonderful, let's do it," and not realizing that, in the process, they destroy their own freedom. 2 Corinthians 11:14 tells us about the devil: "No marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." That is who we are following when we follow a system that is not based upon the grace and the morality of the Word of God.

1 John 5:19 tells us that all of the world that we live in is immersed in Satan, and that everything in this world, as we have learned, is basically the lusts of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; and the pride of life.

**The Signs and Wonders Movement**

We have, of course, in the religious realm, the freedom-destroyers in the miracle-seeking crowd. They, too, are tools of Satan who are pursuing human good objectives. There's a new movement. I'm sure you've heard about it if you've attended our training sessions in the adult group. It's called "Signs and Wonders." Dallas seminary has recently had to dismiss three professors (would you believe it?) who were getting into the Signs and Wonders, which is a variation of the charismatic movement. It's a variation of the charismatic movement because it is people who are pursuing the same miracles, and tongues, and everything else that the charismatics pursue, but people who are coming at it from a great knowledge of the Bible itself. So, they are really powerful opponents. I thought the devil was tremendously clever and powerful in the past, but I have a new awe and respect for the devil when I can see three knowledgeable Dallas seminary-type of instructors being caught up in the same evil delusion of the charismatic movement under the title the "Signs and Wonders" movement. They take that from Acts 2:43.

**The Vineyard Churches**

It's called the Vineyard churches, and these people are as much victims of Satan and his deceits as any of the old-line charismatic Pentecostalists. 2 Thessalonians 2:9 says, "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders." I thought, "That's interesting – that here's this very Scripture where Paul produces these very words of "Signs and Wonders" to Satan. Do the Vineyard Churches have signs and wonders? You bet they do, but they're not from God. They're from Satan. Did you get that? 2 Thessalonians 2:9: "Him who’s coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." Yes, you'll get your signs and wonders, but they're not from God, because that's not how he's working currently. Now what can preserve us from this? Only a true knowledge of the doctrines of the Word of God.

So, the apostle Paul says, "First of all, Christians, permit God the Holy Spirit to give you a mental attitude goodwill Spirit toward all men – the idiots; the unattractive; the degraded; the vile; the repulsive; as well as those that are attractive to us. We have nothing but the best in our heart for every human being.

Then the apostle Paul says, "Abhor that which is evil." Be repulsed by everything that is evil, that is a product of our society, both in sins and in human good.

**Cling to that which is Good**

Then the next thing that Romans 12:9 says is, "Cling to that which is good." The word "cling" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the word "kollao." The word "kollao" means "to glue together." It is used to describe the nature of marriage in God's plan. For example, this word is used in Matthew 19:5, which says, "And said for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave ('kollao' – be glued) to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

This word is used again in describing the marriage relationship in 1 Corinthians 6:16-17: "What? Do you not know that he who is joined ('kollao' – glued to) a harlot is one body with her? For two, says He, shall be one flesh? But he that is joined ('kollao' – glued) to the Lord is one spirit." So, it connotes firmly joining two things together. And it is very serious to whom are joined in spirit, and in soul, and in body. This is in the present tense in the Greek language, which indicates that this is the continual condition of a Christian. He is to be glued to what is good. It is in the middle voice, which indicates that if you do this, it will be to your personal benefit. When you hang on to what is good, you are going to be prospered, and glad that you did. It is in the participle mood – a spiritual principle. And this particular word here implies a command from God.

**Be Glued to what is Good**

What are we to cling to? What are we to be glued to? The Greek word is "agathos" – the word for "good." "Agathos," in the Greek here, means "the good thing." This is the word for something which in itself is beneficial in its effects. It's a word for something that is good in itself, and it is beneficial in its effects. Here it is referenced basically to what is morally right, and thus the will of God. When you do what is morally right, you do something is beneficial to yourself. When you do something that is morally wrong, you open yourself up to disease, and all kinds of destructive effects.

So, on the basis of mental attitude love, Christians are to be revolted by evil works, but they are to be strongly attached to divine good works. The Bible, I need not point out to you believers, makes a great stress repeatedly upon Christians being active in divine good works. Please notice a few Scriptures on that, lest you should forget that.

Why are you taking your next breath? So, that you can be prepared to go on to live out your spiritual gift in the expression of some divine good works. And I will guarantee you that when you come to the point where there is no hope for you to return to producing divine good works, you will not take your next breath. You'll be cut off, and the Lord will ship you into heaven.

Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we don't faint. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Galatians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them."

Colossians 1:10: "That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

1 Timothy 6:18: "That they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, and willing to share." These are good works in terms of your financial resources.

2 Timothy 2:21: "If a man therefore purges himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor; sanctified; and, fit for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

2 Timothy 3:17: "That the man of God may be perfect (mature), thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It is doctrine that prepares us to be effective in good works service.

Titus 2:14: "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people of His own, zealous of good works."

Then in Hebrews 10:24: "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works."

Hebrews 13:16. "But to do good and to share – forget not. With such sacrifices, God as well-pleased." If you're interested in pleasing God your Father, good works is the prime way to do it.

The apostle Paul says, "Be repulsed by what is evil, but cling ('be glued') to that which is divine good works." But it has to be divine good works. It can't be just what people think is good. It's got to be what God says is good. Here again we come back to the moral guideline standards or the Word of God that give us the guidance for what is God's good works.

I would point out to once more that the basic moral standard of God for the church is clearly spelled out in the New Testament, and it indeed does reflect what was given to the people of Israel in the ten commandments. This is what God considers doing what is good and beneficial.

**The "Nine Commandments" for the Church**

1. **Have no other Gods before You**

Number one is that you have to have no other gods before you beside the true God. We are told this, for the age of grace (for the church) in Acts 14:15. I'm not bringing this over from the Old Testament ten commandments. I'm talking about the teachings to the royal family. You, as the royal family of God are told, in Acts 14:15, not to have any other gods before you.

1. **Do not Worship any Images of God**

You are also told not to worship any images of God. 1 John 5:21 tells the royal family God: "Do not bow down and worship idols."

1. **Do no use God's Name in Vain**

We were also told that we are not to use God's name in vain. We are told this in James 5:12. It says, "Don't use God's name loosely, and in curse words.

1. **Honor your Parents**

As Christians we are told that what is good (what constitutes good with God) is to honor your parents. Ephesians 6:1 tells us, as Christians, that we are to honor our parents.

1. **Do not Commit Murder**

Next, we are told that we are not to commit murder. What God considers good is if that you do not take other people's lives first (John 3:15). 1 John 3:15 tells a Christian not to commit murder.

1. **Do not be Guilty of Illicit Sexual Sins**

for the Christian. We are told that we are not to be guilty of illicit sexual sins. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 forbids sexual sin to the Christian.

1. **Do not Steal**

The Christian is also told that what constitutes good is not to steal. Ephesians 4:28 tells the Christian: "Don't steal from other people." If you want something, earn the money and buy it. Do not use government to use its power to take money from some citizens to give it to others that they choose more worthy. That's stealing on the part of government, and this is one of the things that government does best of all. If you get somebody's services, pay them for them, and don't rationalize that you can do something else without paying for the services that you have received. Don't steal.

1. **Do not Bear False Witness**

The next thing that God considers being good is not to bear false witness. Colossians 3:9 tells the Christian: "Don't bear false witness." Don't tell falsehoods about other people.

1. **Do not Covet**

Finally, we Christians are told we are not to covet what other people have. Ephesians 5:3 says, "Don't want what other people have – to want to take it away from them, that is. Do not covet in terms of wanting to take away from other people what they have.

**The Christian has no Sabbath Day**

You will notice that no commandment is given here concerning the Sabbath day observance. What I have listed for you are nine commandments out of the ten commandments, but the Sabbath day is not applied to Christians. Saturday worship was a legal obligation under the Mosaic Law. It's not so under Christianity. Saturday Sabbath was a day of total inactivity for the Jews – total inactivity from labor. And if you worked, it was a capital crime. You got killed for it. For the Christians, there is no such regulation. The Sabbath day was a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant relationship between God and Israel. The church has no part in that. Violation of the Sabbath was serious business. Christians do not have a Sabbath day. So, don't call Sunday the Sabbath day. Christians have the Lord's day, and it's a day of worship, and it's a day of refreshment. It's a totally different kind of a day. It's a day of great activity, and of great change of pace: indeed, a day of spiritual refreshment. But it is a day of great freedom in what you may do upon it.

Galatians 4:9-10 says, "But now, after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how do you Christians again to the weak and beggarly elements unto which you desire to again to be in bondage. You observe days and months and times and years." Do you see what he's talking about? There are no holy days. There is no Sabbath day. And when you talk about the Christian Sabbath, you insult our God. The Old Testament Scripture clarifies God's basic righteous character. And we, as human beings, whom he has created, must live by that standard. This standard of God's righteousness was applied to the Jews under the Mosaic Law in the code of the ten commandments. That does not apply directly to Christians. We have, as I have shown you, a grace moral code that God has made very clear, which applies to us. It's the same righteousness expressed in two different ways.

The New Testament Scriptures, therefore, are filled with guidelines for Christian conduct – what God considers to be good. Since He is the Creator, He sets the standards for what is genuine good. It is a reflection of His Character based upon how He has created us. Human viewpoint good is a reflection of man's sin nature character, based upon what man thinks in is simple condition. Anything that's destructive to your body; to your soul; or, to your spirit are not good, and they should be rejected.

For this reason, the apostle Paul prays for the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctifies you holy, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless under the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul calls upon God to preserve all parts of the Christian. And the Christian, therefore, is told to abstain even from the appearance of anything that's evil, because it is destructive to his very nature.

So, the unbeliever and the carnal Christian are always getting good and evil backwards. That's what I'm trying to point out. When God says, "Cling to that which is good," you have to understand what is good by God's point of view, because people are forever calling something good that God does not consider good. They're getting it absolutely backwards.

I like the way the prophet Isaiah put it in Isaiah 5:20-21, when Isaiah said, "Woe unto them who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe until them who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." That's us. That's our society today – people who are calling evil a good thing, and who are calling what that God says is good evil. They're wise in their own eyes. They're prudent in their own sights. But someday they are going to get a big, big shock, when they finally face that God.

Our example is the Lord Jesus Christ who, in Hebrews 1:8-9, concerning Him we read, "But unto the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hatred iniquity. Therefore, God, even your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows." God says that Jesus is our example, as one who is repulsed by evil, and who is attracted by what is good.

This Hebrew passage is quoting from Psalm 45:6-7 about the Messiah, and it is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ here, who is Israel's Messiah. The Lord Jesus Christ hated lawlessness. He loved righteousness. He exposed evil, and He honored good. The hatred of evil is a Christian virtue and a divine good act. If you want to do something to please God, hate evil. Hate it enough to refuse to have anything to do with it. Hate it enough to refuse to incorporate it into your life. If you want to do that which pleases God, cling to that which is good. Be glued to the thing which is good, and good by the standard of the living God.

It is only the Word of God that keeps you and me in balance in a world where we are getting constant false signals. It's a lot tougher now than it was before the era of television. The influence of television is very clear Paul the fact that no matter where you go in the United States now, people are the same.

When I was a young 19-year-old, I came from the big city of Chicago – from the northern culture to the small town of San Marcos, Texas. It was night-and-day difference. It wasn't just that the accent was different. It wasn't just the fact that they phrased sentences differently. It was the whole lifestyle: the things that were interesting (that they were interested in); the way they did things; the places they went to eat; the things that they thought were fun to do; how they dressed; and, what they thought was entertaining. It was different. But now, once television came, everybody laughs at the same jokes. You can tell a joke anywhere in the country and everybody will know what the frame of reference is. Now you can talk about McDonald's, and everybody will know.

When I came to Texas, there was a great thing called Leslie's Chicken Shack. I never heard of Leslie's Chicken Shack up north. It was a tremendous place that served nothing but chicken. They had a marvelous price – Leslie's Chicken Shack. It's out of business now. Leslie got tired of plucking chickens and he just retired or something. I don't know what happened to him. But it was a whole new thing to go to the Chicken Shack.

They had a place called Pepi's Mexican Hacienda. They served Mexican food – stuff that Mexicans eat. It was a whole introduction. All I knew up to then was tamales. I never knew about enchiladas, tacos, salsa, hot and green sauce, and all that stuff. But now everybody knows it. There is a cultural sameness, no matter what part of the country you come from.

Unfortunately, there is a spiritual evil sameness as well, because we all listen to the same dirty jokes on television. We all listen to the same foul language. We all listen to the same implications and dignification of evil. And all of us are bombarded with the same viewpoint, so that we have a whole American culture which is moving lock-step (out-of-step) with God.

This is no small thing when the apostle Paul says, "For those of you who are to be the salt of our society; for you, who are to be the hope of preserving American freedom, you must be people who are repulsed by this evil, when you hear it, and when you see it, in Christians as well as in non-Christians. And you must be people who, on the other hand, are devoted – you are glued to the things that are good, and to the things that are beneficial, because they are right, because this is how God has made us.

Now we're going to talk about a lot of those things now. Paul gets very specific. He puts one thing after another. If you faithfully keep with us on these sessions, you're going to hit someplace where you're going to say in your soul, "Boy, I have to go home today (and maybe you've already come to that point today) and get a piece of paper out, and write down a few things I need to straighten out. I need to take care of a few things to realign my integrity with the integrity of God. I have been out of line with something that God calls evil, and I'm going to change that. And I've been out of line with something that God calls good, and I haven't been doing it, and I'm going to straighten it out. As you go along, you will find that these practical guidelines are indeed what makes a Christian happy, and opens the door for God's blessings upon us. Thank God for the fact that we Christians have the capacity, through God our Holy Spirit, to be able to do better than the rest of the world around us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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