***Do not be Haughty, Proud, or Conceited
RO162-01***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 12:9-21. Our subject is "Christian Conduct," and this is segment number eleven.

Universal Studios in California is planning to release a new movie entitled The Last Temptation of Christ. Excerpts from the script of the film have been secured, and it reveals that Jesus Christ is portrayed as a deceitful sinner; a conman; and, a lowlife type, and that Judas is, in fact, presented as a confused but honorable man. In this movie, Jesus will be portrayed as a fornicator and a polygamist who declares that He has finally realized that God is female gender. Jesus is shown as happily realizing, at one point, that He is not the Messiah Savior of Israel, and therefore, He can do His own thing instead of facing the agony of the cross. The Lord is portrayed as the Father of several illegitimate children by His various lovers. And the movie, as a whole, is the boldest expression of blasphemy ever portrayed, and ever declared, in modern times.

So, get ready. When you see your movie page in the newspapers announcing The Last Temptation of Christ, and when the marquee signs going up with this title, you will know that this is a gross insult to the living God. And it is unbelievable that it is happening in our society today. The whole thing is an evil and perverted message, which is going to influence millions of Americans to go deeper into immorality, and into the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior of mankind. Our society is now ever closer to open rebellion against God, and against the Bible. I remind you that this is an end-time condition.

On the Phil Donahue program this past week, there was a discussion of people who had had near-death experiences, and they portrayed this as a very wonderful entrance into a state of bliss with nothing to fear at all on the other side for anyone. These were people who were in some trauma condition physically. While in that state, they found themselves floating out of themselves, and observing their bodies, lying below them, in a near-death condition. They all uniformly, interestingly enough, described the experience, while in this near state of death, of entering a tunnel, and flying through this tunnel, at the end of which was an enormous, beautiful light. When they came out, they found themselves immersed in love; in happiness; and, in great beauty.

Now this was experienced, as Donahue was careful to determine, by people who had no trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. So, the experience they were relating is not that which the Bible normally refers to as entering into the bliss of heaven. One woman, in response to the question about her religious affiliation, said, well she used to be a Baptist; then she became a Methodist; and, now she was a Roman Catholic. And you can see that the progression was downward all the way from start to finish into a system that was most compatible with doctrines of demons, and with spiritual delusions.

These victims of trauma, while in this state, described themselves as being greeted by a kindly guide who reassuringly told them there was nothing to fear, and the guide was to lead them into the glory land. I was reminded, as I listened to them, of the TV program Out on a Limb by Shirley MacLaine, in which David, her friend, who led her into Eastern mysticism, described how a beautiful woman had appeared to him in Machu Picchu in Peru, and had described to him that he was going to be the agent of the divine masters to find and to alert the woman who was going to be the leader in enlightening mankind, namely Shirley MacLaine. And here again was the female figure as the beautiful guide to the wisdom of the Masters.

The participants on the panel all had, in general, basically the same experience as they described it, and Donahue pointed that out. He, however, did not point out that the reason for this was because they all had a common origin in a work of Satan, who wants to imitate God, and so creates, as much as possible, the illusion of a heavenly experience.

Donahue could not restrain himself from asking the question, and I'm glad he did: does this mean that everyone goes to heaven? And the panel unanimously answered, "Yes," including some university professors or doctors who are experts in this field. I could not help wondering when they said, "Yes," whether that included Nero; Genghis Khan; Hitler; and, Stalin. I wish he had asked that question. I suspect that the panel was probably only referring to us ordinary Joe Six-Pack type of sinners – not these gross sinners.

Several years ago, when I was in London, I visited the famed Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum, and there were the great and marvelous figures of history, including Adolf Hitler. But there was one thing that was different about Adolf Hitler's figure. It was completely encased in glass, so that you could not touch it, where the other figures, you could walk around, and if you wanted to, you could reach out and touch them. You weren't supposed to, but they were just standing open. Hitler was completely encased. I immediately suspected that I knew why. The people of the British Empire were so enraged by what this evil man had done to them, that they could not keep their hands off, even that wax figure, to express their rage and their indignation over his evil.

When these people said, "Yes, everybody goes to heaven," I thought, "It's odd, isn't it – that human beings there in England, toward Hitler, have a deeper sense of justice than God does toward the evil of this man. It shows indeed that people do not have the sense of outrage toward evil that God has, and that these people did not understand at all the justice of God to say that everyone automatically goes to heaven.

**Ancient Mythology**

It is another signal that our society is moving ever closer to the open worship of Satan – another end-time condition. I also listened to a TV program conducted by Bill Moyers with a discussion by a well-known professor named Joseph Campbell, who is an expert in mythology of ancient civilizations. The title of the program was The Masks of Eternity. In this discussion, they observed how the different cultures of mankind throughout history have certain, basic, stated, common themes. They all talk about creation. They all talk about God. They all talk about an evil personality. They all talk about a special virgin birth. They all talk about a special person. They have a variety of basic, common information.

**Eastern Mysticism**

Professor Campbell pointed out that these common things all basically teach the same thing, which indeed they do; and, what they teach, is, in fact, Eastern mysticism. What they teach, as he pointed out, was basically that there is not a personal God out there, but that here is deity – that we basically are gods ourselves.

**The Circle**

It was interesting that Moyers brought up the subject of the fact that, throughout the pictorial depictions of these ancient cultures, the circle keeps appearing. The circle in various forms reappears. And they showed several pictorial productions from ancient civilizations, and there was often the circle.

**The Sun God**

Of course, immediately, I knew why the circle was there. It is because Satan has chosen the sun as his representative, and the sun up in the sky is what the ancient civilizations uniformly worshiped, and why God came down so hard in the Old Testament against worshiping the sun; the moon; or, the stars. Therefore, the circle reappears as the symbol of the sun god. It appears in the ancient pre-Christian civilizations as a halo. It was then taken over from that paganism by the Roman Catholic Church, and identified as an identifying mark of saints. It is in the wafer that the Roman Catholic Church uses in the Mass, representing the sun god. It is in the round shaving of the head of the monks to create the circle of the sun. It is seen all over the Vatican, including right behind the pope's throne – the circle of the sun.

It is no secret that this symbol was reproduced in ancient religious cultures because it represented the God that they were worshiping. But that is not so with Professor Campbell, who was a real pro, and an expert in this field. Instead, his explanation, when Moyers brought this up was, "Well, this is the way they express completeness. A circle is complete. And it just was a way of their expressing the completeness of life."

The only reality in all of these cultures, Campbell pointed out, was man to discover that he can express his own deity. Moyers said, "Is heaven a real place?" Professor Campbell said, "No, heaven is here," and he pointed to his forehead. Heaven is a mental attitude. "The Bible," he pointed out, "could not be a final authority." The professor said, "The Bible is so contradictory that it cannot be viewed as an absolute basis of truth."

**Satan**

Well, listening to that program, it became very clear again that Satan has, throughout history, and throughout the whole ages of mankind, really wanted to be like God. So, he creates doctrines and counterfeit truths to make himself appear like the real thing.

The stinger in all this came when I heard Bill Moyers, who is a graduate of the Southern Baptist Southwestern Seminary of Fort Worth, say that, "Basically, professor, I share all these beliefs that you have expressed." And he had some little exception here or there. But what he was saying was that he accepted the beliefs of Eastern mysticism. I was not surprised. I have heard Moyer's opinions before, and I have realized what a disoriented person he is from the real world, not only in his liberal mentality, but an anti-biblical viewpoint. And what he was implying, in fact, was that he did not share the beliefs of fundamental biblical Christianity, which indeed he had been taught in his own seminary.

**The New Age**

The New Age movement receives great credibility from such programs as this, from such prominent personalities as Moyers and Campbell. The program ended in a rather poignant way, in the fact that the screen went blank, and then they flashed on the date of birth of Professor Campbell, and the date of his death: 1987. Has he ever learned better now. And would he ever like to come back and have another interview on TV with Bill Moyers now, in view of what he has now discovered since he has gone out there to the other side, and found out how horribly wrong this keenly intelligent man has proved.

The world is being prepared to accept the deification of man as the only God that there is. This is another end-time condition.

**AIDS**

Last month, the fourth International AIDS conference was held in Stockholm, Sweden. 8,000 people from 138 countries gathered to hear a progress reports, and to plan attack on this disease. The overall reports were very discouraging as to the reduction of the AIDS infection through education; through safe sex; and, through clean drug needles. The disease continues to expand each month, the delegates were told, and there is no cure or vaccine anywhere in sight. This disease has now been rolling along for seven years. In the United States, there is a new case of AIDS every 14 minutes.

The total consequence of this perversion of God's moral laws governing sex is now at frightening panic levels. The delegates were told that the AIDS virus is now seen as one of the most complicated viruses known to man, and that it is capable of evading destruction by changing its characteristics. As one doctor said, "It is one sneaky little devil."

**HIV**

The medical findings now show that minute amounts of the AIDS virus can exist in a person's system for years, and be undetected – totally undetected by current tests. There is a silent infection in millions of Americans, consequently, at this point in time. That is referred to as "the Human Immunodeficiency Virus" (HIV). You will notice that, increasingly, doctors and medical people and TV people are going to be talking about HIV instead of AIDS. Their reason for this is to refocus attention on the fact that the problem is not just people who are sick with AIDS in hospitals, but the millions who are roaming around there in our society who have HIV – they're already carrying the virus in minute accounts, and it's building up until it breaks out in them.

Well, have they learned anything in the conference in Sweden? Have they said, "Well, you know, there is a solution for this?” It is a biblical solution. It is going back to doing things the way God created the world to function; and, to put sex in that proper functioning category, and out of its perverted category.

From an article in the "New American," July 18th, 1988, entitled "Experts Play It Safe and Sorry," reporting on this conference in Stockholm, Sweden, I'd like to read to you the conclusions concerning the solution: "Participants at the Stockholm conference repeatedly lauded condoms and safe sex as the wave of the future, and applauded speakers who suggested that needle exchange programs were the only way to control the spread of AIDS among drug abusers. At the same time, speakers attacked anyone who suggested that a return to morality, and the implementation of traditional public health measures, would be a more sensible approach to controlling the deadly AIDS epidemic.

"Gayle Klein of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm called attention to those 'moralists who would have us return to the morality of a bygone era. Such moralists,' he said, 'need to remember that the morality of those times was based upon a fear of an imaginary God who was all too real to them, and the concept of deadly sin. While this approach may be fine for religious Muslims and Christian fundamentalists,' he said, 'it is unrealistic for the majority of secularized people in today's world.'

"Justice Michael Kirby, president of the Court of Appeals of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, Australia, encouraged public health officials to keep a watchful eye on the attempt to impose on all a sexual expression suitable only to some. 'While chastity and abstinence will be an avoidance option for some people,' Kirby observed, 'morally responsible safe sex expression may be better for the individual and for society, than a return to sexual repression, and withering of the individual spirit, and the human right to the pursuit of happiness."

**Biblical Guidelines for Human Conduct**

Well, our God is sitting in heaven, laughing at the arrogance of the human race as these various illustrations, which I've given you today, demonstrate the arrogance of mankind toward resisting God's order for human conduct. Mankind is indeed getting ready to destroy itself by the consequences of violating the laws of God for human conduct and for human relationships. We are indeed in an end-time condition. For this reason, I stress all this to you, so that you will take, with great concern and with great seriousness, the importance of what we are learning here in Romans 12 for guidelines for human conduct. This is what the apostle Paul gives us through the Holy Spirit in explicit words, in order to preserve the human race from all the agonies, and from all the disease, and from all the destruction, and from all the disruption, and to enable the God Who is there to cause blessing and well-being to be the normative expression of our lives. These guidelines produce maximum well-being: spiritually; physically; mentally; and, socially. And don't make any mistake about that. And you better not have the attitude that you agree to these things, and you think they're fine and all right, because after all, they are in the Bible, but that they're not necessarily the basis upon which you must operate, or that you feel free to operate upon, because it interferes with certain objectives and goals that you have.

These precepts for human conduct in Romans 12 give maximum well-being: spiritually; physically; mentally; and, socially. Violations of these principles by Christians will result in suffering and loss of eternal rewards, and worst of all, possibly in spiritual insanity. Christians are, by nature of who they are, a strong people. And the local church congregation is a strong community when the believers are functioning on the principles of human conduct laid out for us in Romans 12. These precepts for personal conduct are of enormous importance, and they are not optional. For this reason, Satan belittles them, and causes you to want to take them lightly.

**Bible Doctrine**

Remember that God favors the believer who takes Bible doctrine seriously. God favors those of you who take His Word seriously. You do get special treatment. Make no mistake about it. God favors those who take His Word seriously. They are His favorite Christians, upon whom He can heap special care and special blessing. And He does. God has His favorites. And God is delighted to pour special care; pour special blessing; and, to do everything He can upon those who are the apple of His eye – the man-after-His-own-heart type of believer. How foolish to cut ourselves out of that favored category.

**Rejoice with them that Rejoice**

Today, we are at Romans 12:15. The apostle Paul says, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice. Weep with them that weep." The word "rejoice" is the Greek word "chairo." The word "chairo" means simply "to be happy." It is in the present tense, so this is a declaration to Christians that this is something that we are to be all the time. That's what present tense tells us in the Greek language. It is active voice, which tells us that this is your personal choice. Then we have an infinitive mood, but in a peculiar grammatical structure here in the Greek Bible, which makes it a command. This is a divine command – something that is not optional. You Christians are to rejoice with. . . Then he identifies the group that you are to rejoice with – with those who are rejoicing. It is a call to self-forgetfulness so that you can enter into another Christian's moment of happiness – entering into another person's moment of happiness. That is not a natural thing to do. It is not an easy thing to do. We often fake that we're doing it. But when somebody among us is really happy, or they are in a happy situation, or circumstances that are so fortunate, it's not easy for us to enter in, and be just as happy about that as if it were happening to ourselves.

This is why we attend weddings as memorable occasions. These are happy occasions for people, and we join in their happiness by being self-forgetful enough to come out and attend the wedding. It is a kind thing to do. It's a lively, happy occasion. We had a wedding in here yesterday, and it was enlivened by a man taking a flash picture, and the thing exploding like a firecracker. For a moment, I thought it was somebody finally trying to do me in because of those Scriptures I read in the service about the role of husbands, and about the role of women. I discovered that now that I read the Scriptures, and I say 1 Corinthians so-and-so, and Ephesians 5: so-and-so at the end, I haven't had anybody, for I don't know how many weddings, who comes up and says, "Very lovely service, but I didn't agree with everything you said." And the weddings are not as much fun anymore to me as they used to be, because those folks just don't come by telling me what they object to, because now I've made it very clear that if they say that, they're objecting to what God has said.

However, it was a happy occasion, and this man wanted to take a picture, and the thing blew on him. It was all I could do to restrain myself by saying, "Please, let us not start celebrating until I pronounce them married." I think in the future, maybe we'll ask people if they want the economy wedding, or the one with the fireworks that costs a little more. But I mean it made it. You can't deny that that was a memorable occasion, and it certainly enlivened everybody's happiness. And it's a wedding they will not soon forget.

In any case, this was an example of just coming out to share another person's happiness. Some people are so grim that they cannot share another person's happiness. Somebody gets up in the morning, and it's a nice day. And they come in and they say, "Isn't this a lovely day?" And the other person says, "Yeah, if doesn't rain." You just can't enjoy a happiness without squelching it: "Yeah, if this doesn't happen," because some people are so grim. It's not easy to rejoice over the good fortunes of another, and especially when things aren't going so well for yourself. That's a harder time to be a happy Joe with someone else, when things aren't all that well for yourself.

However, those who really love their neighbors as themselves, as Luke 10:27 admonishes us to do, find this an easier thing to do. Your love for the person will cause you to be self-forgetful enough to say, "Yes, I'd like to do this, and I'd like to do that, but I'm going to enter into this person's happiness at this point in time." After all, we as Christians all have a basic ground for perpetual happiness by virtue of the fact that Christ has died and paid for all of our moral guilt. Therefore, we don't have a thing to worry about in life anymore. The worst possible thing has been taken care of for us, and we have a real ground for happiness, whatever else may happen.

The opposite of rejoicing with a person is envy or gloating over his misfortune. We enter into another's joy as if it were our own. That is what the apostle is saying here. Enter into the joys of other Christians as if they were your own.

**Weep with them that Weep**

Then the opposite, he says, and those times when you have to enter the grief of other people. So, he says, "Weep with them that weep." The word "weep" is the Greek word "klaio." "Klaio" is a word which simply refers to being sad. You may or may not have actual tears in the process of expressing that sadness. Here again, we have the same present tense, meaning: "Do this all the time, Christians." Secondly, it is active, which means that this is your personal choice. Make this decision. And again, we have that peculiar infinitive construction that indicates that this is a divine command. God is saying, "Do it:" no questions; and; ifs; or, buts. Weep (share the sadness) with those who are sad. Forget your own happiness, at some point in time, to share a brother's sadness.

Weeping with the sorrowing is the opposite of being glad at their calamities. We, as Christians, take no pleasure in seeing a fellow Christian get the just discipline from God which he may deserve. And sometimes we are saddened by the fact that we are helplessly watching some Christian who is getting his brains beaten in by God as a result of his own deliberate, sinful actions. And we take no pleasure in seeing him get what he deserves. And we wish that he would change his ways, and the pressure would be taken off of him.

Christians are in the body of Christ, and for that reason, we should empathize with each other in sadness or in joy. The Lord Jesus Christ showed that He was filled with the Holy Spirit by the fact that He shared the joy and sadness of others. The first demonstration of the power of Jesus Christ was an expression of sharing happiness at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, when He performed His first miracle in John 2:1-11. The first expression of His power was in the act of sharing somebody else's happiness at a wedding.

The last demonstration of the power of Jesus Christ was upon the occasion of sharing in the grief of a death of a friend and a loved one, his friend Lazarus, which we have recorded in John 11:1-46, in the midst of which is that shortest verse of the Bible, verse 35, which says, "Jesus wept." That's His last expression of power. And it is in sharing the grief of other believers.

James 5:13 gives some divine viewpoint advice on these two relationships of happiness and sorrow: "Is any among you afflicted (that is, you're sorrowful)? Let him pray. Is any merry (happy)? Let him sing psalms." If you're sad, go to prayer. If you're happy, sing a spiritual song.

**Have a Godly Mental Attitude**

In Romans 12:16, Paul begins by indicating that another quality of Christian conduct is to have a godly mental attitude. First of all, he says, "Be of the same mind, one toward another." Be like-minded toward other believers. The word "mind" is the Greek word "phroneo." This word actually means "to think." And what he is saying is that you are to think, or to have a certain mental outlook. This again is present tense, telling us to keep on thinking this way, all the time. It is active. We are to personally think this way. It is a participle – a spiritual principle. But this participle again connotes a command. We are to think toward (and he indicates direction in this). We are to think in a certain way toward . . . who? One another. It's the Greek reciprocal pronoun "allelon." "Allelon" means every other Christian individually.

So, what is he saying here? He says, "To think the same way about every single believer, including yourself." Reciprocity of attitude and treatment – not just harmonious unity, is in mind here. He is telling us to have a mind toward others as they are in a situation, and that we seek for them that which we would want if we were in the same boat. That's what he means when he says, "Be of the same mind, one toward another." Have the same mind toward other people, and the situations that they're in, that you have for yourself, if you were in their place – the same mind to think the same way about every person in Christ under the same condition. Why? Because every one of us is made in God's image, and we've been placed in Christ, so we deserve equal treatment. There is no prejudice which should be exercised toward other believers on the basis of race, or nationality, in whatever circumstance they find themselves in.

Some Christians may indeed not be personally attractive to us, but we still treat them as God's new creation in Christ. They may even be insane in revisionism, and we still have to treat them as we would want to be treated in that situation. Christians cannot be spiritual while treating themselves with a concern and a graciousness which we do not extend to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now the Holy Spirit here is not calling for uniformity of thinking among Christians. He is calling for unanimity of treatment. He is calling for us to make allowances for the frailties of each other's sin natures. So, stop yelling at each other. Stop pushing each other around. Stop being unnecessarily indignant when you know that every one of us is diseased with the sin nature, and that we need to be given sympathetic treatment as you want and need sympathetic treatment when you're not feeling so well physically. You don't want people pushing you around, even if you're out of sorts. When you're out of sorts spiritually, you still need that sympathetic treatment. Make allowances.

The Lord Jesus Christ is certainly our grand example in this. He treated the common, divorced, and adulterous woman at the well at Sychar, in John 4, with the same consideration that He extended to the educated, cultured, and religious Nicodemus in John 3. And it's interesting that here were two contrasting personalities. The Lord Jesus treated both of them with the same consideration as He would have wanted them to treat Him. The Lord Jesus was just as patient in teaching the rebel Judas as He was in teaching His receptive and beloved friend John. The Lord Jesus Christ on the cross was just as kind to the dying thief who turned to him for salvation, who had previously abused Him, as He was to his mother, who had nurtured Him, and now stood at the foot of the cross.

**The Golden Rule**

So, to have equal regard for all believers as for yourself is what Paul is saying here. It is the principle of Matthew 7:12 that we call the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." So, every Christian should have the same kind of treatment that you would like to have in their situation.

**Do not be Haughty or Proud**

Secondly, this mental attitude is presented: "Mind not high things." The word "mind" is the Greek word "phroneo." "Phroneo" means "to think." It has a negative with it. Do not be thinking in this way. It is present tense. Don't ever think this way. It is active. Personally take the trouble to avoid thinking this way. It is participle. Again, it is a spiritual principle, but in the form of a command: "Do not be thinking about high things." The Greek word is "hupselos." "Hupselos" is an adjective, and it refers here to a mental attitude. The idea is do not entertain high thoughts about yourself as if you were a superior breed of Christian. It connotes: "Do not be haughty in mind:" "Do not be proud" is the way we would say it. Do not be thinking about yourself as some kind of a superior creature. The Christian may think that he is, for some reason, in a superior class of believer among all the saints. But God, I assure you, sees him as one saved worm among many other saved worms. And it would be well for us to remember that.

The word "proud" here is in the sense of being too good to associate with some Christians. Arrogant pride has no place in the Christian life. It's unrealistic. One of the all-time great classical examples of this kind of Christian, who felt he was so superior that he was too good to associate; to be kindly disposed; to be present with other believers; and, to treat them on an equal plane with Diotrephes, that John refers to in 3 John 9, where, we read that John says, "I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who we loved to have the preeminence among them, received us not." Diotrephes was there in this church. He considered himself a superior Christian, and he was pushing everybody else around and getting away with it. And the apostle Paul says, "He was even saying malicious things against the apostle. He was throwing sincere brethren out of the local assembly. He was just mistreating people. And John says, "When I get there, I intend to do something about that." Now, Diotrephes was not the kind of Christian that Paul, through the Holy Spirit, wants us to be.

**Condescend to Men of Low Estate**

Then he says, "But condescend to men of low estate. He introduces this with the word "but." And that is this particular Greek word "alla," which is the strong "but" in the Greek language. It connotes a very strong contrast: "But condescend." This work looks like this: "sunapago." The word "sunapago" means "to be carried away with." And you need to understand that. The word "condescend" kind of has a bad connotation in English, like becoming patronizing toward somebody that's beneath you. But what Paul is saying here is "being carried away." It connotes accommodating yourself to others, and responding to their thinking. This word is only used three times in the New Testament. It is rather an exclusive word.

It is used once here, and I'll show you in Galatians 2:13 the way it's used: "And the other Jews." Here he's talking about Barnabas coming to Antioch, and being intimidated about associating with gentile Christians: "And the other Jews dissembled in like manner;" that is, they cut out with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away." There is our same word: "sunapago:" "Was carried away with their false pretense. Barnabas did a wrong thing. He was carried away with this attitude of the other Jews: "We don't associate with those gentile gods, even if they are Christians. And Paul says, "That was very wrong of Barnabas to do that." But here you see how the word is used. It means to get carried away.

It's used one other place, in 2 Peter 3:17: "You, therefore, beloved brethren, seeing that you know these things before, beware, lest you also be led ("sunapago" – there's the word) – being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." So, here you have a clear example again of Christians not being influenced by other Christians to go in the wrong direction. Do not be influenced to be led away from the things of God.

So, here in Romans 12, that's what Paul is referring to, when he says, in verse 16, "But be led away by men of low estate." The idea is to be willing to listen to the humble person, and to be willing to consider their thinking in spite of their non-impressive status. "Men of low estate" – that is this Greek word "tapeinos." This is an adjective, and it connotes, "Do not be haughty toward the humble or the lowly folk." This refers to people who are in unpretentious, non-glamorous situations in life.

So, don't ignore somebody because he's just humble among us. But it says, "Get carried away with the humble folk. Associate with the non-prominent Christian, not with a patronizing heir; and, not as one who is lording it over the unwashed masses, but one who knows that they're both in the body of Christ. And while one may be in prominence, and the other out of the limelight, they are both brothers on the same ground at the foot of the cross. The old sin nature in the Christian lusts for power; for prominence; and, for wealth. So, people tend to court those who can deliver prominence, power, and wealth to them. The arrogantly proud don't see any point in pursuing the meek; the lowly; and, the powerless believer. They consider them beneath them. Personal conceit causes us to brush aside the humble person. The arrogant and opinionated Christian is impervious to the advice of ordinary people who often have very good advice to give.

So, Paul is saying, "Seek out those who may be the humble folk, rather than the in-crowd, because there's no aristocratic clique in the royal family of God. They're all a special class with the Lord. And don't pursue some group that you think is your type because you're above the rest. God loves believers who are not obsessed with scrambling for prominence; for position; and, for power, but who seek out the humble believers.

This is the opposite of seeking out the lifestyles of the rich and famous. The snobbish Christians, I remind you, are people of great arrogance, but of little quality. The cheapest people on the face of the earth are the snobbish Christians.

**Do not be Conceited**

One more: Paul says, "Do not be wise in your own conceits." The word "wise" looks like this: "phronimos." word means "to be prudent" or "sensible." It has the idea of being in the know: "Do not be wise in your own, or with conceits." The word "conceits" is kind of interesting, because it's really this word "heautou" in the Greek Bible, and it means "yourself." So, what it's saying is: "Don't be carried away with yourself. Don't be impressed with yourself." And our translation gives you the right idea by saying "conceits." Paul is saying, "Don't be wise with yourself – in your own eyes, by your own estimation. It connotes not being conceited – having too high an evaluation of yourself.

The Bible has explicit warnings seven times against this very thing. We don't have time to turn to them. I'll remind you of them, so you can pursue them on your own: Romans 11:25; Romans 12:16 (our passage her); Proverbs 3:7; Proverbs 26:5; Proverbs 26:12; Proverbs 26:16; and, Proverbs 28:11. All these verses are warnings against Christians thinking that they're something bigger than they really are.

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

So, the apostle Paul says, "Be not wise in your own conceit, Christian. Get off your high horse, and mingle with the hoi polloi (the common folk – the ordinary saints of God), as worm with fellow worm. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the example of personal humility to teach us this virtue. He pointed that out to us in Matthew 11:29, where we read, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me. For I am meek and lonely in heart, and you shall find rest in your soul." When you stop and think about the marvelous person that Jesus Christ was, and then you take a look at His life, and the circumstances of Jesus Christ, it is amazing how they in no way reflected the person that He was and the supreme truth of His teachings. Jesus Christ really was somebody. You and I often think we're somebody when we're not, but He really was. And yet, when you looked at Him, the signals wouldn't come through to you.

Just think for a moment. Matthew 13:55 points out to us that He had no basis for pride in family. He was just, it says, "The carpenter's son." Luke 9:58 tells us that He did not come from a family that had any wealth. John 1:46 tells us that He did not come from a prominent town. He came from Nazareth, which was a nothing. Isaiah 53:2 tells us that when He was on the cross, He was loathsome to look upon. He was not an attractive looking man, after they had beaten them up. Luke 7:34 tells us that He had no impressive VIP associates. Important people did not associate with Him. John 7:15 tells us that He had no university degrees. He did not have high formal education. Luke 22:27 tells us that actually He was a servant type person – not a master type. Isaiah 53:3 tells us that he had no widespread lasting following. People abandoned Him. John 4:30 tells us that He had no self-confident dependence upon His own abilities. Also, John 5:30 tells us that He had no spirit of self-indulgence to do His own thing. He waited on signals from His Father, and took the Word from Him. And, finally, John 8:28 tells us that He had no pride of intellect. He is the God-man, and He said, "I don't go around acting like I'm so smart. I go around waiting to be told by My Father what I should have in My intellect.

When you look at all that, this is not a very impressive person, and you would be tempted to write Him off, but you would do that in your own conceits. And that's what the apostle Paul is saying. Do not write off somebody because you are so conceited about yourself, and about your status, and about your knowledge of the Word of God, and about your progress in the Christian life, and about everything else that you admire about yourself. Do not think that you are superior to the humble common folk who really do know how to walk with God. The people who looked at Jesus rejected Him. They vilified Him. They murdered Him. All these were conceited fools who considered Him to be a nothing by their estimation, when, in fact, He was the greatest of all.

We have the tender story, in John 13:2-17, which describes how on the eve of His crucifixion, He demonstrated the quality man He was by His act of washing His disciples' feet – something that only a servant did. This was a very lowly type of action, and one that demonstrated that here, in the marvelous God-man, the greatest human being that ever lived, there was not an iota of conceit. And yet He had everything in the world indeed to be proud of.

Paul gives us some good, but some real tough, advice for the mental outlook. Have the same mental attitude toward other Christians that you have toward yourself. Treat them with the same graciousness and consideration and concern as you would want to be treated. Do not set your focus on the important VIP people, but be willing to be associated with kindness and consideration, seeking out (go out of your way to find) the humble folk, not just because you stumble on them and they're under your feet, and so you have to deal with them. But go out and pursue them. Be carried away with seeking out the unnoticed and ignored. Don't be conceited in your own estimate of being something more than you really are.

Those two verses, 15 and 16, in themselves, would carry us to a new level of human nobility, were we able to live up to them. And with the capacity of God the Holy Spirit and our positive volition, we can do just that.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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