***God's Power System for Living in the Devil's World
Romans 13:11
RO170-02***

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We are studying Romans 13:11-14. Our subject is "The Consummation of Salvation," and this is segment number four.

In Romans 13:13, the apostle Paul calls upon all Christians to behave honorably toward all other members of the human race. The standard of honorable conduct is, of course, God's moral code and its applications to life situations. This code of conduct expresses the very character and the righteousness of God. We do not determine what is right and wrong, or what is morally acceptable, on the basis of the majority opinion of human beings. The standard is not subjective. It is objective. It is beyond man. It is what God says is right. It is what God, who has created us, says that this is His way of doing things. It is extremely important for human beings to be aware of the fact that you have to do things God's way, or you are following a loser's way.

**"Agape" Love**

The key to personal honor is the "agape" love of the Holy Spirit functioning in the spiritual believer. "Agape" love is the love which is produced in the believer when he is in temporal fellowship; when he is in the inner circle of fellowship; and, when he has all of his personal known sins confessed.

**"Agape" Love is *Impersonal***

Since "agape" love is a mental attitude type of love rather than an emotional love, and it is a mental attitude expression of goodwill, it is impersonal. It is very important for you to understand that "agape" love (mental attitude goodwill) is an *impersonal* expression of love. Therefore, it is not dependent upon how you feel about a person. For this reason, a Christian can exercise "agape" love even toward people who are disgusting; who are mean; who are traitorous; who are corrupt; who are deceptive; and, who are arrogant. Your feelings and responses emotionally to the person don't make any difference because the love is impersonal. It is there because God has given you an attitude of goodwill, though the person may be offensive.

This is the love that was required of God have toward us as sinners, when we were totally offensive to His righteousness and His Holiness. God did not deal with us on the basis of how He felt toward us personally, but how He felt toward His righteousness. And His righteousness is what He wanted us to have. Therefore, He made it possible through Christ for that to happen.

**God's Power System for Living in the Devil's World**

This kind of love, of course, is beyond the capacity of a human being to produce. It is part of the fruit of the Spirit in the Christian. It is what we may describe as God's power system for living in the devil's world. Every human being has to have a power system for living in the devil's world which is beyond his human capacity. Being filled with the Spirit is the power system that God has provided for the church age. Being filled with the Spirit means that there is no barrier between you and God the Father. All known sins have been confessed. They have covered all unknown sins. The principle for that is 1 John 1:9. That magnificent verse transforms your life from being a wretched creature who is struggling to make it, and who is muddling along, to one who is really living as a royal member of the family of God. It is a dramatically important piece of doctrine. And what that verse produces for us is an impersonal love ("agape" love) toward everyone. This is impersonal, "agape" love given to the Christian enables him then to act decently before God and man. And that is the point that the apostle is making here.

The Christian obeys God's moral code instead of the evil desires of His sin nature. The Christian is given this divine power system to qualify for blessings in time, and for rewards in eternity. Without this power system functioning in your life, and without your moving within the confines of this power system, you will not have blessings in this life, and you will not have rewards stored in eternity. The Christian lives, therefore, in the expectation of an any-moment call to report to Jesus Christ, either through his personal death or through the rapture – to have his lifestyle judged by the Lord.

The problem with most Christians, I observe, is that they don't really think that they're going to face that kind of a call. They really don't think that they are going to face the call of accounting for the life they live as believers. They don't really think that Jesus Christ is coming again.

This was true early on in the New Testament church. We have this indicated and 2 Peter 3:3, where the apostle Peter says, "Knowing this first: that there shall come, in the last days, scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.'"

I was listening to a Bob Larson program on radio the other day, and somebody came on, and this is exactly what they said. They said, "This business of Jesus Christ coming back is a joke. It's been 2,000 years, and you Christians are running around saying, 'He's coming back. He's coming back. Why don't you wake up?'" And I couldn't help thinking, as I listened, about this passage in Peter. Scoffers in the final days, about the time the Lord's going to return, are going to increase and make fun of the idea that there is a human being (a God-man) coming from heaven back to this earth.

**Uniformitarianism**

"For this they willingly are ignorant of. That by the Word of God, the heavens were of old, and heaven standing out of the water and in the water. By which the world, that then was being overflowed with water, perished." These people are uniformitarians. They believe that natural laws always operate, and are never interrupted. But Peter says, "They're ignorant." The truth is that God interrupted natural laws when He flooded the whole earth with water, and He created all of these places like the Grand Canyon, as the water drained off and changed the surface of the earth. And with one blow, He wiped out all living things except the righteous eight people.

**With God, 1,000 Years is Like One Day**

Verse 7 says, "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, kept in store, reserved unto to fire against the day of judgment and perdition of godly men." The time is coming when all of this earth and these heavens, contaminated by sin, are going to be burned up, and going to be renovated: "But beloved, do not be ignorant of this one thing: that one day is with the Lord as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years as one day." Now when you think about time in terms of eternity, you can see that 1,000 years is nothing. It is like the passage of a day. And with God, that's the significance of 2,000 years.

So, while the scoffer on the radio program could say, "It's been 2,000 years, and nothing has happened," he was a very ignorant man, because with God, that's a very short period of time.

**God is not Willing that any Should Perish**

Verse 9 says that the thing to remember is that: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." What a great verse. God says, "I don't want anybody to go into the lake of fire, and I'm going to take the greatest offense and the greatest abuse, and I'm going to take the most vulgar, degraded conduct, and I'm going to hold off, and I'm going to hold off, and I'm going to hold off. And I'm going to give you a chance to change your mind and be saved. But one of these days, I'm going to put your name on the computer list that comes out in heaven every 24 hours that says, 'Take these people in this period of time off the earth, out of the land of the living.'" And all of a sudden your name pops up, and before that 24 hours is over, you're gone, and your opportunity with it.

**The Day of God**

Verse ten says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens and the earth shall pass away with great noise. The elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also, and the works that are in it, shall be burnt up." This is the end of the millennium, when God finally cleanses the earth, and restores it to a new heaven and earth: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved. What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy living and godliness; looking for and hastening into the coming of the day of God, in which the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." "The day of God" refers to eternity itself.

**Christians, Wake Up!**

"Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which dwells righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." That's the same thing that the apostle Paul is talking about in Romans 13. "Christians wake up and shape up. You are the royal family of God. You have a magnificent future before you in an eternity where all sin, and all of the effects of sin, will be permanently and forever removed." But in the meantime, you have a great opportunity to live within God's power system that He has provided for you, so that you have great blessings now, and enormous rewards in eternity.

**Impersonal ("Agape") vs. Personal Love ("Phile")**

The Christian who is living in this power system of temporal fellowship does not hurt people with evil conduct and a vile lifestyle. God's purpose in keeping the believer alive is to develop "agape" love in him through the intake of Bible doctrine into his soul. "Agape" love is the Christian way of life. And that's what Paul is talking about here in Romans 13. Doctrine functioning in the Christian soul produces *personal* love for God. This is a different (personal) love for God, because you trust God. You can have emotional attachment to God because He's never going to change. He's never going to disappoint you. We have a *personal* love for God, but an *impersonal* love for people, except for a few. A few people we have a personal, emotional attachment to. But for most people, our relationship is "agape" impersonal love. For a few, we have "phile," the personal attachment.

The Christian life, then, is not doing something for God. That's what fundamental Christianity has been cursed with – Christians being told to get out there and hustle for God; serve God; and, do something. They don't understand that Christianity is not doing something for God, but entering God's power system provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit and the completed Scriptures – the doctrines that represent the mind of Christ. A Christian who lives in that power system is a Christian who will then produce, indeed, divine good works as a servant of God.

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

The character of the Lord Jesus Christ is what is produced in the Christian by the Holy Spirit. This is then expressed in our personal integrity before God and man. The capacity of "agape" love, remember, was provided by God the Father to serve His Son. When the God-Man, Who is undiminished deity, took on true humanity, He was in the same boat that all of us are in. As a human being, He was confronted with living in the devil's world. He needed a system by which He would be able to survive without succumbing to that evil. That system was the indwelling Holy Spirit and doctrine. And the final Words of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross (the last Words He uttered before He gave up His life in death for the sins of the world) was quoting Scripture. That's how He functioned on the power system of doctrine to the very end. And you will remember that that passage does not tell us that He just whispered in a desperate last effort. This man was powerful to the end. The Bible tells us that He spoke in a loud, resounding voice that startled everybody around Him as He spoke up, and He quoted a verse of Scripture from the Old Testament, declaring the placing of His Spirit into the hands of His Father.

That power system worked for Jesus Christ in His humanity. It is now ours to enjoy every day of our lives. Obedience to God's code of conduct produces great personal freedom, blessings, and happiness. Bible doctrine in the soul forms the character and conduct of Christ in the believer. That's why it's important for you to learn Scripture. The sincere, devoted, dedicated one, who does not know doctrine, is just a nice person floating out in society, but he's a zilch zero when it comes to an impact on eternity, and enjoying personal happiness.

**Three Couplets of Evil**

The apostle Paul illustrates a dishonorable Christian lifestyle in three couplets of evil.

1. **Intemperance Evils**

We have looked at the first couplet, which deals with intemperance evils. In verse 13, he says, "Let us walk honestly." Let us walk as befits members of the royal family. He means, as people who are in the day, not who are in nighttime doing evil. The first two things that he couples together are reveling and drunkenness.

* 1. **Reveling**

Reveling means carousing in a boisterous drinking party.

* 1. **Drunkenness**

Drunkenness means intoxication or loss of control through the use of alcoholic beverages. American society is now so addicted to the use of alcohol that you may have become aware, as I have, that suddenly alcohol is now being classified as one of the drugs. Every time we hear information about drugs, alcohol is put in there, which, of course, it is. And the Bible says that carousing and drunkenness, while very popular in society, are out of bounds for the Christian. And yet here we are at the Christmas season, and what two things are going to characterize the world's commemoration of Christmas: carousing; and, drunkenness. What a travesty!

1. **Impurity Evils**
	1. **Immorality**

The second couplet is a couplet that deals with impurity evils. It deals with the subject of impurity. The first example of impurity, he says, "Not in immorality." The word "immorality is the Greek word "koite." "Koite" refers to sexual promiscuity, and it includes all kinds of illicit and perverted sex practices. In the ancient world, the worship of the gods at the local temple was done by means of sexual relations with the male and female prostitutes which were on call at the temples. This was the way they worshipped their gods, and this was the stench in the nostrils of the true God. Sex outside of marriage, therefore, we are told in Scripture, was never to characterize anybody, and especially not to be characteristic of Christians.

**Illicit Sex**

Ephesians 5:3 says, "But fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as is proper among saints." Illicit sex is out of bounds for the Christian. Sexual immorality grieves the Holy Spirit, and it dishonors the Christian's bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a great dishonor to our future husband to be engaged in illicit sexual activity. 1 Corinthians 6:15 puts it this way: "Don't you know that your bodies are the members of Christ (because you are indwelt by Him; you are joined to Him; and, He is your head). Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid. What? Do you not know that he who is bound to a harlot is one body; for He said, 'Two shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit." Illicit sex joins the individual in a way that disgraces our bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we, the church, His bride, are joined. Sexual relations always changes the personalities of those involved. And illicit sex always degrades the partners. It is axiomatic. And, in time, that degradation begins to show itself. It will show itself in physical effects; it will show itself in emotional effects; and, it will most certainly show itself in spiritual effects. Nobody gets away with illicit sex. It is a great delusion, and our society is permeated with it.

The basic preventative, of course, for something as attractive as sexual sin is flight. In Genesis 39:12, we are told that that's how the young Joseph handled the propositions from Pharaoh's wife. Genesis 39:12 says, "And she caught him (Joseph) by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me,' And he left his garment in her hands, and fled, and got out." That's the best solution in the world. But it takes a great deal of personal Christian maturity, stability, and character to do that under such appealing circumstances. There are indeed a lot of Christians who have never been guilty of illicit sexual activity, but only because they've never had an opportunity – because they would not have had the capacity to say "No," and to flee.

1 Corinthians 6:18 adds to this: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he that commits fornication sins against his own body. What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have of God; you're not your own? For you're bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body." Don't use your body to insult God. Impurity does not belong among Christians. It is a dishonorable way of living.

* 1. **Wantonness**

The next thing Paul points out in this couplet is wantonness. Wantonness looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "Aselgeia." "Aselgeia" means "sensuality" or "debauchery." It refers to unbridled sexual desires – pursuing self-gratification by indulging in the grossest moral indecencies. This is the role that pornography plays in our society today. It uses sex as a way, instead of being something that God provided to ennoble two people, of degrading a person, and turning him into a barnyard type of animal instead of a person who is reflecting the image of God in which he was created. It is the deliberate stimulating of the lust patterns of the sin nature as a supreme goal of life. Some Christians never get beyond "aselgeia." They're always out there, stimulating all of those lust patterns that are naturally inherent in their nature – all the sensual desires.

This is exemplified, for example, in Luke 12:19-20. This is the parable of the rich fool – the man who says, "I've got everything. I can't put it anywhere. I'll build myself more storage places." And in Luke 12:19, we read, "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years. Take your ease. Eat, drink and be merry.'" This character is finally satisfied. He has provided for his security. What a joke! Only God provides for security. The security that you may think that you have provided, you will find, can very quickly be jerked away from you – and if not materially away from you, you can be jerked away from it.

"But God said unto him, 'You fool. This night your soul shall be required of you. Then whose shall those things be which you have provided?" In the case of this man, he was removed from his wealth, and that very effectively neutralized all of his efforts. His indulgence here was going to be something that he looked forward to. There'd be no sensual restriction upon him. He had so much.

In Luke 16:25 in the historical account of the rich man and Lazarus, we read: "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you, in your lifetime, received your good things; and, likewise, Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and you are tormented.'" All this man was asking for was a drop of water on his tongue, and Abraham says, "You can't have it. You had your good times, Charley, when you were on earth. You didn't care about anybody else. And you had no concern for what was out there when you came to face God. Now you find what it's really like to go out into eternity without God. While you were on earth, your sensuality was the most important thing in your life – indulging yourself in your feelings, and your senses, and your possessions, that enable those senses to be indulged.

Jude 18-19 also speak on this, where we read, "How they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their ungodly lusts." They're "aselgeia:" "These are they who separate themselves – sensual, having not the Spirit." So, this is the characteristic of human beings in our society today.

The Christian, on the other hand, is to restrain the evil sensuality of his sin nature. He is not to indulge it. It is true that the Christian has all of these evil desires from his nature. He is not to indulge them. He is to live in God's power system so that these things pass by him.

1 Corinthians 9:27 reiterates this when Paul says, "I keep under my body, and I bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The apostle Paul says, "How terrible (it would be) for me to warn other people not to let their sensual appetites overcome them, and then for me to discover that I've been overwhelmed by them." Paul says, "I must be consistent. My advice is good. And I'm going to heed my own advice to other people. I will practice what I preach.

Colossians 3:5 also says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth (your physical body members): fornication; uncleanness; inordinate affection; evil desire; and, covetousness, which is idolatry." All of those things do not belong in the Christian lifestyle.

This same Greek word, "aselgeia," you will find used also in Mark 7:22, 2 Corinthians 12:21, and Galatians 5:19. It refers to sensual debauchery.

1. **Discord Evils**

Then there was a third couplet that Christians should avoid, and that is discord. Now we hit something that is more likely for Christians to be guilty of. We are coming now to something that is not uncommon among believers.

* 1. **Strife**

The first example of this he calls "strife." The Greek word is "eris." The word means "dissension" – a spirit of quarreling over everything with people. Have you ever run into somebody that always says, "No," and is always complaining, and it's always quarreling? You go to somebody, and you say, "It's a beautiful day, isn't it? It's wonderful today." And they say, "Yeah, if it doesn't rain." And right away, they want to quarrel. They want to complain about it. So, this is the word "eris," and it is being constantly engaged in a perennial dispute instead of pursuing a road of peace. These are hot-tempered types who are easily triggered into anger.

This is the result of doing the very thing that Paul, earlier in Romans 13, told us not to do. You remember that he said, "Don't return evil for evil." If you'll obey that, you'll never have to see a counselor to give you advice – if you just will not return evil for evil. And you will not do that unless you're living within the confines of that power system that God has provided. As long as you live in this power system, you will discover that, when people treat you with evil, you don't want to punch him back in the mouth. You don't want to react. You don't want to hit him back. You look upon him, and instead, your heart goes out to them because you know that they have a big problem where it counts with God. But if you're outside of this power system, you won't react like that. Then the Holy Spirit is not there to guide. He's not there to empower. He's not there to control you. He is not there to give you the capacity to respond in the right way. It's being heavy-handed and harsh, and retaliating when somebody abuses us. Strife is the result of somebody creating antagonisms. And there are some people who have super ability for creating antagonisms. There's just something about them that raises up indignation in people.

The book of Proverbs often refers to that. For example, Proverbs 25:20-21: "As he that takes away a garment in cold weather, and has vinegar upon soda, so is he that sings songs to a heavy heart. If your enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat. If he's thirsty, give him water to drink." Proverbs 26:20-21: "Where no wood is, there the fire goes out. So, where there is no talebearer, the strife ceases. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man that kindles strife." People create strife. And there are certain types that are bound and determined to respond to that strife.

Proverbs 28:25, says, "He that is of a proud heart stirs up strife. But he did puts his trust in the Lord shall be made fat."

Proverbs 29:22 says, "An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgressions."

So, what are you going to do? If you find that somebody is the kind that's always creating strife; who is hot-tempered; who is antagonistic; and, who is argumentative, just avoid him. You can exercise your impersonal "agape" love toward him, but don't let yourself become his victim. It's just as simple as that. This same Greek word is used in Romans 1:29, 1 Corinthians 1:11, and Galatians 5:20.

In Romans 16:17, we have this advice given to us: "Now I beseech you, brethren. Mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. There's the principle. You have somebody who's a troublemaker; you have somebody who's always creating strife; you have somebody that you know; you're at peace with the world; and, you're happy in God, and when he gets through with you, you're all torn up. Stay away from him. Avoid that kind.

* 1. **Envy**

The other factor in discord evils that he mentions is indeed a very terrible one. It is envy. The Greek word is "zelos." This word means jealousy. It is the basic cause of all discord in the world today: jealousy. In James 3:14, we read, "But you have bitter envy and strife in your hearts, do not glory, and do not lie against the truth." Verse 16 says, "For where envying and strife are, there is confusion in every evil work. When you have jealousy, you will have conflict, and you will have discord.

This is the desire to bring others down who possess some advantage. Somebody has some advantage. You don't like it. You want to bring him down. You want him not to have what you cannot have. And jealousy wants to destroy that individual. The apostle Paul, in the book of Galatians, observed this among the Christians of his day, and he warned them to stop chewing each other up, In Galatians 5:13, Paul says, "For brethren, you have been called into liberty, only do not use liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but by love, serve one another." Don't say, "Yes, I'm free in Christ. I have absolute freedom." You do. But don't use it to do what is evil, and to hurt other people: "For all the law is fulfilled in on one word, even this: 'You shall love your neighbor as thyself.'" And I don't have to explain this to you people. You automatically know that this verse is telling you to "agape" love your neighbor. And now you know that that means an impersonal love toward the individual. It's a love which will be there, no matter what kind of person that individual may be.

Verse 15 says, "But if you Christians bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed of one another." How many good Christian works have been destroyed? How many good congregations have been destroyed because people could not keep from chewing on one another? The solution for this is the power system that God has provided. And Galatians 5:16 points to that when it says, "This I say then: walk by means of the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." There it is. Walk inside the power system. God the Holy Spirit is free to use you because you're filled with the Spirit, because you're in temporal fellowship. Then you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. This same Greek word is used in 1 Corinthians 3:3, 2 Corinthians 11:2, and Galatians 5:20.

Now these three couplets of evil progress from one to the other. Intemperance with alcoholic beverages sets the stage for sexual misconduct and sensuality, which in turn results in contention and jealousy between individuals. There is no place, therefore, in the Christian life for these works of darkness promoted by Satan. Satan loves to drag Christians into these shameful acts in order to discredit the gospel; to discredit doctrine; and, worse, to discredit the Lord Jesus.

The spiritually mature Christian knows that the most abominable sins lurk within his nature, just awaiting a favorable opportunity to erupt. 1 Corinthians 10:12 points that out to us when it says, "Wherefore, let him that thinks that he stands take heed, lest he fall." As long as you stay inside the power system, you will be immune to falling. When you step out of that power system, and you're out there on your own in carnality, you can count on falling. The power system works every time because it is God who is running the show.

Romans 13:14 closes this chapter in this way: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not make provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts." "But" is a strong word of contrast. It introduces a different lifestyle in contrast to the sinful lifestyle that he's just been talking about. In fact, verse 14 is going to tell you how to do verse 13. Verse 14 is going to tell you how to avoid these sample types of evils. These are not all the evils that a person is capable of. These were just samples – the kinds of things we should avoid.

"Instead," he says now, "you will avoid that by putting on something." The Greek word for putting on is "enduo," which means "to clothe oneself." It connotes wrapping something around yourself. This is a divine command in the Greek Bible. It is telling you to do this, and it is middle voice which means that you will be benefited if you will wrap Jesus Christ like a garment around you.

**Experiential Sanctification**

At the point of your salvation, you have put on the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. We call this positional sanctification. Galatians 3:27 actually refers to that fact that we are, in God's sight, absolutely perfect: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ (that is, baptized by the Holy Spirit) you have put on Christ." Well, at the point of salvation, in your position before God, you are now clothed with Jesus Christ. And if you're clothed with Jesus Christ, then His perfection is all that God sees. He never sees your imperfection. However, Paul is advising here in Romans 13 that each day a believer is to put on Jesus Christ in his personal experience. We call this experiential sanctification. The uniform of the day and the church age is godliness.

**Make Jesus Christ the Lord of your Life**

So, the Christian's conduct should reflect the sinless character of Jesus Christ. This is the call, indeed, to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life. We hear a lot about that among Christians. Suppose that you were suddenly asked, "How can I make Jesus the Lord of my life?" Could you really tell a person how to do that, in words that have practical usefulness, not just in inspirational language?

Making Jesus Christ the Lord of your life is the result, first of all, of your being positive and receptive to the instructions that are found in the Word of God. When you are taught doctrinal principles, you do not sit there with resistance, but you sit there with receptivity. That is the first step of making Christ the Lord of your life. The second is the maintaining of your temporal fellowship by the confession of your known acts of evil to God the Father. You're in eternal fellowship when you are born again. You are in the inner circle of temporal fellowship when you have all known sins confessed. When you step out of it, you don't lose your salvation, but you are now carnal. And this is the power system that God has provided. The inner circle is the grace power system. The Christian who stays in that power system is a fantastic human being every moment of the day.

Putting on Jesus Christ implies being united with Him in His resurrection power. Therefore, you have great capacity over the sin nature. Philippians 3:8-11 describe that power system victory over the sin nature.

What we are talking about is a call to be able to sing "Jesus is all the world to me." That's what we're talking about. Paul is saying, "Put on Christ in such a way that He is indeed your Lord. And when you step out of line, you maintain your relationship by confessing, so that you can say, 'Jesus is indeed all the world to me.'" "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." That's the positive.

**Don't Make Plans to Do Evil**

The negative is, he says, "Don't do something else." Do not make ("poieo"), which means "to take some action." And this again is a command of God in the Greek language. You are commanded not to do this, and it is middle voice. You will be benefited if you don't do this. And what is that? "To make a provision." The word "provision" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "pronoia," "Pronoia" is a Greek word that refers to something that you have calculated and planned out beforehand. You are not to sit around and think up evil things you're going to do. You're not to sit around and say, "Boy, I'm going to indulge this sensuality. I'm going to go for this vileness. Nobody will know. I'm not proud of this, but I'm going to go for it." And you make plans to do what is evil.

All the world's society is always planning to do something Saturday night that's going to be evil, and degrading, and violating the Word of God. Evil for whom? Something evil for the purpose of your "flesh" ("sarx"). "Sarx" refers here to your inherent inclination to self-centeredness and immoral sensuality. The Bible uses the word "flesh" here to meet your innate, self-centeredness and innate inclination toward sensuality. The old sin nature has a pattern of lusts. It has a cluster of lusts. And he's telling us not to make provision for the sin nature to fulfill its lust. And he uses the characteristic word "epithumia," which is the word for intense desires. Here these are intense evil desires, and they are desires that refer to our rules of conduct which violate God's moral code.

The sin nature of man has no end of evil desires with which it can destroy you as a Christian: illicit perverted sex; stealing; violence; lying; coveting; jealousy; drinking; drugs; greed; and, we could go on and on. All of those things are in your sin nature, just waiting to pop up. The Word of God says, "Don't make any plans ahead of time to use those things, or to indulge those desires.

Some of these evil desires come out in very gross expressions. For most of you, probably, they would come out in a very cultured type of expression. The left, however, are going to bring shame to any Christian who indulges them when he faces the Judgment Seat of Christ and experiences the loss of rewards for a life which has been wasted. The sin nature expresses itself to the Christian's physical body, and the body is constantly being tempted by the sin nature to do that which is evil. And this even sometimes causes the Christian to abuse what is legitimate for him to do. The legitimate needs of the body for food; clothing; shelter; and, recreation are used by the sin nature to abuse the body.

So, there's always going to be temptation from the sin nature in the Christian life. The Christian is to use the power system of God to resist this lust pattern. Experiential sanctification will never terminate the operation of your sin nature, but it will restrain it. So, though the believers in Christ (and therefore a saint), he does remain a potential sinner of the worst kind. Analyze your own sin nature; determine where you are most inclined to sin; and, avoid those things. Flee the social condition conducive to your weakness.

**Put on the Lord Jesus Christ**

Now when you do fall into a weakness, please don't come up here and confess to all of us, because we're not interested. We do not want to be contaminated by your evil conduct, or what you've been into. But do what you're supposed to do. Make your confession to God the Father. He is the one alone to whom you are to deal with in this matter. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Your Two Missions as a Christian**

We may illustrate this another way. When you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will execute the two missions to which you have been called.

* 1. **Your Priesthood**

Mission number one is that of your priesthood. In Revelation 1:6, a statement is made concerning all those who are born-again believers in Christ Jesus. Revelation 1:6 says, "And has made us a kingdom of priests unto God, and his Father, to Whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Each of you are part of God's priesthood. The believer, therefore, alone, represents himself before God directly. There is no human mediator required to approach God. The church age does not have a specialized priesthood of a special group of men, as in Judaism, through whom you must go to approach God. It is a great travesty to call yourself a priest in the sense that people must approach God through you. It is a great travesty in the church age for you to stand before an altar and give people the impression that you are administering at this altar in their behalf for God's favor upon you. You are the only priest that exists in the church age, and you only exist as a priest for yourself. The priesthood is entered at the point of your salvation, and that is the point at which you enter the Holy Spirit power system on which your priesthood is to function. God's blessings to you will only flow through your priesthood.

If things aren't going well in your life, you might want to check your priesthood. If things are not coming together in your life, the first place to look is how your priesthood is operating, because any blessing that God has to give has to come through a properly functioning priesthood. How does that function?

**Learning and Believing Bible Doctrine**

First of all, your priesthood functions by learning and believing Bible doctrine in the privacy of your own soul and the filling of the Holy Spirit, and that's what you're doing now.

**Prayer**

Secondly, your priesthood functions by confessing to God the Father all known sins. You don't confess to a priest. You confess them to the Father so that you clear away all the debris, so that you can function as a priest. You approach God's throne personally in prayer. This is a very important part of your priesthood once you've learned doctrinal principles, and you're in temporal fellowship. But now you approach God in prayer. That is a major ministry of a priest. And finally, there are no priestly rituals required in your behalf. No priest needs to perform any rituals for you. It has all been done by Christ.

Now, of course, a priest should not live dishonorably. That is what Paul is saying: "Don't do that." A priest who lives in an offensive, disreputable way is an offense to everybody. But the Christian who is functioning properly in his priesthood is living in the divine sphere of the power system that God has provided. He is immersed in God's viewpoint. He's immersed in blessing. A Christian whose priesthood is operating is a Christian who is being blessed by God. Things may not always be going well, but you're on top of things; you're under control; and, you're under God's blessing.

* 1. **God's Ambassador**

The second mission to which all of us have been called is that of being God's ambassadors. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, we have this pointed out to us: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We beg you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." The believer represents God now before mankind. You represent yourself before God as your own priest. Now, as God's ambassador, you represent God to all mankind. The Christian is in Christ, so he shares Christ's royal role as God's representative in the devil's world. Since Jesus Christ is in heaven, we Christians are the ambassadors representing God on the earth.

If the Pope of Rome is a Christian, then he may indeed claim to be the vicar of Christ; that is, the representative of Christ on this earth. But I want you to understand that all the rest of you are also vicars of Christ on this earth. You also are His representative (His ambassadors). And if you want to call yourself a pope, that's fine. If you want to call yourself a "popess," if there's a word like that, that's fine. And you may greet each other: "Greetings this morning, pope John." That sounds good, doesn't it? However, you may wish to greet one another, you are the representative (the ambassador) of God upon this earth. Make no mistake about that.

The ambassador's message to the world is the Scripture, which is the mind of Christ. The Christian promotes God's policies in society, not his own opinions; that is, the Christian looks at society, and he applies principles of doctrine. Wouldn't America be changed if all the Christians were doing that? That's their job as ambassadors. That's why we put out information on these chairs for you to read – to keep you informed of what's going on in our society as it affects us as Christians, and how we may influence it. God supports and protects His ambassadors (His representatives) as they serve here on earth in Satan's kingdom. An ambassador who lives, however, as a dirty dog under the evils of his sin nature is a discredit to his Lord, and is an object of contempt to mankind.

So, here we Christians, in putting on Jesus Christ, are called to two missions: to be God's priests upon this earth; and, to be his ambassadors. And you see why it is fitting that we do not live an ungodly lifestyle. Who wants to be associated with an evil priest? Who wants to take seriously a corrupt ambassador? As priests, we Christians represent ourselves before God. As ambassadors, we represent God before mankind. Our priesthood deals with our private, unseen relationship with God, which generates motivation for Christian service.

When I find Christians who are not interested in Christian service activity, I know immediately what their problem is. They do not have a good relationship as priests with God. Therefore, they have no motivation to do things in Christian service. Once they get on track in the power system of relationship to God as a priest of God, they'll be on fire to serve the Lord.

Our ambassadorship, on the other hand, deals with our public and our visible relationship with people, and with the circumstances of life. So, as priests, we receive blessings from God. As ambassadors, we bring divine blessings to people. Our priesthood develops devotion to God so that our ambassadorship is governed by personal integrity. When you, as a priest, are devoted to God on your ambassador’s side, you're going to want to act right.

Our priesthood operates on a personal love toward God, Who can never change; while our ambassadorship operates on an impersonal love toward sinners who constantly change. With God, we can have personal love. With people, whom we cannot trust, we have impersonal love. No Christian can function as a godly ambassador producing divine good service unless his priesthood is operating under God's church-age power system. The indwelling Holy Spirit is filling the believer; controlling the believer; and, guiding him through Scripture.

So, no matter how good and dedicated we may appear to others, we have no eternal impact without a priesthood which is related to God in temporal fellowship. You may look very impressive to all the rest of us, but if, down inside where we can't see, you are not in God's power system, you're an nothing, and you're not making any impact on eternity. Each member of the royal family lives his own life as God's priest and ambassador based on having put on the Lord Jesus Christ through the truth of Bible doctrine resident in his soul.

Most Christians, I'm sad to say, never make it. They lose their way, and they simply waste their lives. They never can do things God's way. I thought the other day: "That would make the title of a good book, wouldn't it? Doing Things God's Way." It would be a book on how to do things God's way. What a practical volume that would be.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, our family went up to the Wichita Wildlife Refuge, 200 miles north to Oklahoma. And we went out mountain climbing. Those of you who have been up there know what big boulders those mountains are made of. You have to have the right kind of shoe, because you're actually walking up precipitous inclines sometimes, leaning forward, and keeping your traction until you get to a level spot. And we decided to go to an old bat cave – one that we hadn't been to before. And there's a long canyon, "the Narrows," that all of you campers up in the Wichita Mountains are acquainted with, down through which runs a river. And here, in the narrows, is a cave with bats.

So, as we went along, we came along the ridge to get by some tough parts, and then we made our way tediously down; we got to the river; and, then began following the river. Except we had hit a fork in the river, which we did not realize. We thought we were going one way, but we were moving off of this branch, and pretty soon, . . . the cliffs disappear. All of a sudden, the other man in the party said, "Which was the river flowing when we left? And we were trying to analyze where we had come from. At that point, we had lost our way. It was cold, and we didn't know where we were – except in Oklahoma. So, my associate climbed a high pinnacle (a little rock outcrop). And he told me to climb up there, and we left everybody else down below so that we could survey the countryside. And we looked out there, and we saw what looked like a ridge line. So, we said, "Let's go cross-country and head for that," which we did. And I'm happy to say we got out.

These mountains are several hundred feet high. And there, where we had left, we saw that pinnacle. Some of you may remember that pillar of rock that sticks up, which identifies Boulder Mountain. We said, "We know where we are." And we headed for Boulder, and we got back safely.

When we got back to our campground, and there we had a chart that had all this on it. And we got it out, and there it was all laid out. We saw exactly what we had done. And Had we had the chart with us, we would not have made that mistake. . . . I told the kids about this in Chapel, and I asked them, "Now, why did we not have the chart with us? Why did we leave it?" And one student was nice enough to say, "You forgot it?" I said, "No, because we were dumb, dumb, dumb. We knew this country. Hey, we've been here before. We know the maps personally. We don't need to take the chart. We left it back." And when we got out in the field, we lost our way, and we didn't know how to go.

That's the problem of the Christian life. It is important to do things God's way. The only way you will know how to do things God's way is if you know the basic doctrines of Scripture, and you live in the confines of the power system of the Holy Spirit and temporal fellowship. If you do that, you'll do things God's way, and you'll be an honorable priest, and a highly rewarded ambassador.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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