***Warning about False Teachers, No. 3
Romans 16:17-20a
RO199-01***

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Romans 16, we continue looking at verses 17 through 21. Our subject is Warning About False Teachers - Segment Number 3.

Among the final Holy Spirit directed words of the apostle Paul to the Christians in Rome is a warning about false teachers. Paul cautions the believers to keep their eyes open for people among them who cause divisions with false doctrines and who create spiritual obstacles over which Christians stumble spiritually. These teachers should be judged by the standard of Bible doctrine found in Scripture. False teachers are not to be tolerated, but rather they are to be abandoned.

You should all be aware of the fact that within any group of Christians who are going about the work of the Lord consistently and effectively, there are always religious pirates out there who are going to want to come in to siphon people off to their own operations, to siphon people off to some trivial side issue, to some side activity that is held up with some glamour and glow at some point in time. These people are not exactly false teachers, but they are also as dangerous as false teachers in that they bring you away, they move you away from the work to which the Lord has called you to play in some other operation. Be careful that somebody who may not be a false teacher may not in influence create the same effect upon you as a false teacher of diverting you away from your place of duty ministry and the work of the Lord in your place of blessing.

Fellowship with a false teacher implies, the Bible says, approval of his teaching. Therefore, they are not to be tolerated. They are to be abandoned. False teachers, Paul says, are slaves of the Old Sin Nature within them. They're not enslaved to the Lord Jesus Christ whom they purport to represent. They are slaves, in fact, of the lust patterns of the sin nature. These teachers are therefore devoted to satisfying their sinful, sensual appetites, not to serving God's people. The method of deception, Paul says, is sweet talk and flattery toward naive Christians who eat up that kind of approach. The minds of unsuspecting Christians are easily deceived by the false teacher who socks it to them for his own advantage. The objective, of course, of the false teacher is to get financial benefits from trusting Christians to indulge their own sensuality.

**"Underhearing" the Word of God**

So, this morning in Romans 16, we begin with verse 19. In Romans 16:19, Paul expresses his joy and his concern. The first part of the verse deals with the reputation of the Roman Christians. He begins by saying, "For the report of your obedience has reached to all." The word "for" is introducing another reason for the caution which he has given the Christians in verse 17. You remember in Romans 16:17, he says, "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eyes on those who cause division and stumbling blocks contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turned away from them." Actually now, in verse 19, he's giving another reason why they should be careful to follow that particular admonition. "For the report of your obedience," the word obedience looks like this in the Greek Bible: "hupakoe." This is a very significant word. It's actually made up of a Greek preposition, which is "hupo." This word means "under." It's also made up of the verb "akouo,"a k o u o. "hupo" is h u p o a k o u o, "hupoakouo." The word "akouo" means "to hear." So literally, what you have here is a word that means "under hearing." And what it connotes is "getting under what you have heard in order to act upon it." We say something to somebody, we give somebody some direction, and then we say "get with it." What we are saying is "hupakoa," "get under what I just told you to do," "get on with the instruction." The word here, of course, refers to compliance of the Roman Christians to Bible doctrine truths. Consequently, they are an obedient people. They have gotten under the doctrine that they have been taught.

**Obedience versus Disobedience**

Here's something interesting. Let's go to the opposite side. Let's go from obedience to disobedience. That is an illuminating word in the Greek language also. It looks like this: "parakoe," p a r a k o e. "Parakoe" means disobedience. It too is made up of 2 words: a preposition, "para," which means "along side of," and "akouo," the verb again "to hear," a k o u o. So, what this word literally means is "alongside of hearing."

See, you've got two hearings: obedience is "underhearing," disobedience is "alongside hearing." And what he is saying, what this connotes, what the word "parakoe" connotes is "standing alongside of what you have heard and not acting upon it," so that we say "not getting with it." This word would refer to not complying with Bible doctrine truths: one who listens to instruction and he doesn't let it bother him. He stands aside and apart from the instruction. He doesn't intend to get stuck with obedience, with subjection to the instruction given. He stands apart from what the Bible teaches and so, what is he? He is just disobedient. So you see these 2 words: when the Bible says "Obedience," it means getting under instruction, doing what God has said; when you talk about "disobedience," it means standing apart from God's instruction and saying, I want to keep at arm's length from that, I don't want anything to do with that.

Jesus illustrated this concept of the words for obedience and disobedience in Matthew 21:28-32, in the parable that He gave of the 2 sons. Matthew 21:28, Jesus says, "But what do you think? A man had two sons, [2 children] and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.'" What he did was gave a direction, he gave an instruction. The father told the son to do something. [Matthew 21:29] "And he [the son] answered and said, 'I will sir'; and he did not go." What did this first son actually do? He said to his father, I'll get under your direction. But after the dad left, instead of getting under, he stood alongside of his father's instruction because he didn't go to the vineyard to work and therefore he was disobedient. How is he disobedient? Very simply, he didn't do what his father told him to do. Verse 30, "And he came to the second and said the same thing." I want you to go work in the vineyard today. And this son said, "I will not." The son said "parakoe." I'm going to stand apart from your instruction. I'm not going to respond to this. [Continuing in verse 30] "yet he afterward regretted it and went." So what did the second son do? He changed his mind and he went back to "hupokoe:" he got under the instruction of the Father. Therefore, he's described as being obedient. So, Jesus asked the question, 'who really did the will of his father?' And everybody standing around said the son who got under the instruction of his father, the second boy, not the one who is a good talker.

Boy, do we have those in Christian circles: people who have been instructed in the word, and who got up at testimony meetings, good talkers, but they're personally not under the word, they're personally not under the authority of Jesus Christ, their whole life is personally not under the will of God. They're standing apart from the track that God has for them, and they're walking beside that track. Whereas the son who was obedient, has stepped off the side of the track, and he's gotten himself on the track so that he is the truly obedient one. Why, because he's doing what the father is telling him to do.

So, Jesus went on to apply His parable in verses 31 and 32. He said, "Truly I say to you that the tax gathers and harlots [the lowest levels of sinners in the society] will get into the kingdom of God before you." They're going to be saved before you, who's He talking to, these smug, arrogant Pharisees, who thought that they were the religious type who were the apple of God's eye and for whom God had nothing but contempt. Verse 32, Jesus says, "For John [that is John the Baptizer] came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax-gatherers and harlots did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterwards so as to believe him." Jesus said, the admittedly low life type sinners responded with positive volition to John the Baptist's call for repentance. They've gone to heaven. But you people, you self-righteous religious Pharisees, did not obey John's call for repentance and they have gone into hell. And Jesus said 'you didn't even get impressed when you saw people moving toward Christ, when you saw what was happening in their lives, when you saw their positive volition, you didn't respond. All you did was continue in your alongside attitude.'

So, "hupokoe" - obedience, means getting under the instruction of the Word of God? "Parakoe" - disobedience, means pulling yourself off and standing alongside of what God has said. It is a very illuminating set of words here and one that is most instructive and one that gives us a lot of cause for careful consideration. It is so easy to con yourself. Nobody can con you more effectively than you yourself. And you should remember that.

**Obedience Produces Blessing**

Obedience to Bible doctrine is in fact obedience to God's wisdom, which produces blessing and happiness in the life of the responder. Proverbs 8:32-36 put that principle in this way: obedience to doctrine is obedience to God's wisdom, and that produces the blessing and the happiness in one's life. Proverbs 8:32-34, "Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways. [Here is wisdom, God's wisdom personified, God's wisdom being treated like a person who is speaking and God's wisdom is saying this to the son.] Heed instruction and be wise [the instruction of doctrine], And do not neglect it. Blessed is the man who listens to me [God's wisdom], Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts." Like a servant who stands outside of his master's house, listening intently, waiting to do the next thing that his master tells him to do, he stands there listening. And when he hears his master in this oriental setting clap his hands, that servant pops in, bows down, and awaits the instruction of what to do next. Proverbs says that's how you should be with wisdom. You should be like wisdom is your master. The doctrines of God are the wisdom of God. So, stand beside the door to wisdom. And when you hear wisdom clap her hands to call you, to give you direction, you move it and you get in and you listen, and you "hupokoe," you get under the thing that you're told. You don't "parakoe," stand apart from it, look at it, sneer at it, and refuse to have something to do with it. You can do that. You will also pay a very bitter price. In the end, it's not worth it. Proverbs 8:36 says "But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death." Anybody who is not a devotee of doctrine is a devotee of self-destruction.

**Obedience Must Be Taught**

Paul then is speaking in Romans 16:19 of the obedience to doctrine of the Roman Christians: they were consistent doers of the words. And so he says to them "For the report of your obedience has reached to all." Everybody everywhere in the Christian community has heard about the consistent obedience to the Word of God that characterizes the Christians in Rome. It is indeed so sad to see Christians who hear alongside of God's word instead of hearing under His word.

This principle of obedience to the truth, of course, must be taught in early childhood, or the child will rebel against God's authority. Rebellion is bound up in the Sin Nature of a child, and it has to be broken for his temporal and eternal happiness. Neither God nor people are pleased with a brat. And a parent can instill no higher purpose in the life of his child than the goal of consistent, implicit obedience to Bible doctrine. The habit of getting under the instruction that you have received from God or from God's channel, a teacher speaking for God.

One of our teachers in the academy has a boy in her class who is one of those tragedies of which we now have 50% in American society, one parent homes. We are doing some big thinking about the whole problem that we in Christian education face of ministering to one parent homes. They've got some difficulties. They've got some needs that keep them from putting their children in our school, many of them who would rush to us if some of these problems could be removed. So, we're trying to remove those. We're trying to get those doors open. But when you have one parent home, you've got an exhausted mother who's out there working, doing the job that her husband is supposed to have been doing for her. And the result is that this child has never been drilled in the principle of being under the authority of direction. This guy is so adamant, is so rebellious that this past week he was saying something wrong in the answer to a question. The teacher said, 'No, the right answer is,' and she gave him the right answer. She said, 'Now let's say it right.' He said it exactly the wrong way again. She says, "No, you don't understand. That's the wrong answer. The right answer is this.' She gave him the right answer and said, 'Now let's say it the right way.' He looked her in the eye and said it the wrong way, the way he did in the first place. He would not say it right. Now, that's what you call a stubborn, brat, rebellious, alongside the word. The teacher gave him the right instruction and because he was determined to be disobedient, the way you are disobedient is you don't do what you are told to do that is right, you stand apart from what is right that you've been told to do and you get yourself under what is the wrong thing.

So, the apostle Paul has set out the principle for us where he had great admiration for these people in Rome, the word that had been spread around concerning the getting under the authority of doctrine that characterizes the Roman Christians, which is the objective of every Christian family in every Christian home. Romans 6:16, earlier in this book, has made it clear that we are all the slaves of Satan through our Sin Nature or we are the slaves of God through doctrine. Romans 6:16 said "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, [Got it? A slave is obedient to somebodies word? That's what makes you a slave, it's obeying someone.] you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin [nature] resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness [obedience to doctrine resulting in righteousness]? That verse has it all. You are a slave of somebody, each of you, either a slave of Satan through your sin nature or a slave of God through the Word of God. The choice is up to you.

One of the things that is pertinent, I think, to observe at this point that Jesus said is that the teachings of Old Testament doctrine could be summed up in one simple way when He was asked 'What's commandment number one?' The Jews knew that they had 613 commandments in the Old Testament. They came to Jesus and said 'Jesus, what is the number one commandment?' They wanted to put them in order of numbers. Jesus made an interesting observation in Matthew 22:34-40. Matthew 22:34, "But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together." Jesus had just turned the Sadducees on their ear and silenced them. Now the Pharisees come along to have a discussion. [continuing in Matthew 22:35-36] "And one of them, a lawyer, [Wouldn't you know it?] asked Him a question, testing Him, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?'" He didn't really care what the greatest number one commandment was. He wanted to get something against Jesus. This man was already alongside of the word. He was not under the word. He wanted to bring Jesus down to discredit what He was teaching. [Continuing in Matthew 22:37-40] "And He [Jesus] said to him, '"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."' This is the great and foremost commandment. [Then he said, and I'll tell you what number 2 is.] The second is like it, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'" Jesus said everything that the Bible teaches is summed up in this basic concept: love, God, love your neighbor.

The apostle Paul reiterated the same concept in Romans 13:8-10 when he said "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET.' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." So, the principle that the Lord lay down is that everything that the Bible teaches is geared to enable you as a human being to express the love of God, not the human love that is contaminated by the Sin Nature, but that pure, crystal pure, powerful love of God which God the Holy Spirit provides. Jesus said loving God, loving your neighbor is the point of all of the teaching of the Old Testament.

**Love One Another**

How are you going to get that kind of love? What is it that provides that kind of magnificent love of a human being? Turn to the gospel of John 13:34-35. Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." Jesus too reiterates that the goal of everything in the instruction of Scripture is to enable a person to have the capacity of divine love flowing through him. John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Now He adds a new factor. He says, 'Not only is love the objective of the born again godly life, but the way you get love is through a knowledge of doctrine. His commandments.' John 14:21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me, he shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." Now He's added a third factor. Not only is the objective of the Christian life to love, not only is the means to that love a knowledge of doctrine, but He says, 'He who keeps those commandments of doctrine, positive volition, getting under. Now you're back to "hupokoe" obedience. You're an under the Word believer, not an alongside the Word believer. Verses 23-24, "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. [You'll be in temporal fellowship.] And he who does not love Me, does not keep My words.'" Here again, you've got a "parakoe," an along side of the Word believer, one who is disobedient, therefore, he has no love. Disobedient to what? Disobedient to doctrine.

So, don't go around telling people you love them when you are disobedient to the Word of God. You can't do that. And any young woman who believes in some man's expression of love for her, when she can see that this guy is disobedient to the Word of God is very stupid to take it seriously. She should know that whatever expressions of love he is giving her is spewing out of his Sin Nature, not out of his regenerated nature.

John 14:24, "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Fathers who sent Me." In John 15:10, Jesus says, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." Jesus says if you stay in temporal fellowship, which is keeping the commandments of God, then the love of God will indeed be a natural factor, a natural expression of your life. You won't have to put it on. You won't have to be figuring out how to do it. You won't have to buy a study book on how to love. The principle is very simple. You just get with the Word, you get under the Word and you obey the Word. People get rich writing books to tell dumb Christians what they already know but have not gotten under; what they already know, but they've chosen to stay alongside of it. This is an enormously important principle. We haven't had one like this in a long time. I'm glad you're here to hear it.

John 15:17, "This I command you, that you love one another." And He comes back to what He started with: 'I am telling you to love.' He can't tell us to love, He can't command us to love, unless He also has given us a system by which we can do that. And that's where getting under the knowledge of the truth of the doctrines of the Word of God, the doctrines of Scripture, make that possible.

Let's add one more by the writer John: 1 John 5:2-3. John says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome." Yes. It's not like some vicious, ugly, mean god that you hate doing what he wants you to do. The commandments of God are very pleasant. They're very sensible and they bring great blessing, prosperity into our lives.

So, what are we saying? We're saying that the Bible declares that the world's greatest people are loving Christians. They are the truly beautiful people of our society for one simple reason. They've gotten under the doctrines of Scripture. You've got to know them first to get under them. Once you know them, to get under them in obedience makes you the beautiful people of our society.

**Commands Which Require Obedience**

What are we talking about? I just grabbed the Book of Romans last night just to see what Paul has to say to us about some of the "hupokoes," the things we should get under, the principles of doctrine relative to personal conduct. I just kept writing and writing and writing. I ran out of the alphabet. I had to start double lettering, just picking up just a cursory observation and then grabbing a few from a couple of other Scriptures. Let me show you something.

Commands which require obedience:

Romans 12:1 says "Present your bodies a living sacrifice."

Romans 12:2 says "Do not be conformed to this world," the pattern of this world.

Romans 12:3 says "Not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think."

Romans 12:9a says "Let love be without hypocrisy." That's a good one.

Romans 12:9b says "abhor what is evil; cleave to what is good." That simple, it's just a principle to get under.

Romans 12:10a says "Be devoted to one another with Christian love." Can you see how pleasant this would make life? Can you see how happy this would make you? Can you see how revolutionary this would be in society?

Romans 12:10b says "give preference to one another." When was the last time you jabbed some other Christian in the ribs to get ahead of him?

Romans 12:12a says "rejoice in hope."

Romans 12:12b says "persevering in tribulation." When things get tough, you don't drag your chin. You know that the tough thing, the tough situation is under the control of a very tough God who's going to carry you through. He's already told you, I'll never put anything on you that is greater than you can bear.

Romans 12:12c says "be devoted to prayer." That's a great one.

Romans 12:13a says "contributing to the needs of the saints," the fellowship offering.

Romans 12:13b "practice hospitality:" help out the folks who need some lodging and food and clothing and care.

Romans 12:14 says "Bless those who persecute you; curse them not." When was the last time you couldn't restrain yourself, and you said "Same to you fella'!" You got alongside the Word when you did that!

Romans 12:15a says "Rejoice with those who rejoice." Be happy over what other people have that brings them joy.

Romans 12:15b "weep with those who weep." Enter into their sorrow.

Romans 12:16b "Do not be haughty in mind." That means associate with the common folk. It's not pleasant to be around a Christian who walks with his nose up in the air, quivering slightly as if he's smelling a bad odor, and you suspect that you're it. That's standing alongside of the Word of God instead of getting under it. Associate with the common folk.

Romans 12:16c "Do not be wise in your own estimation."

Romans 12:17a "Never pay back evil for evil."

Romans 12:17b "Respect what is right before all men." There is a sense of basic moral decency in human society and all men respect those who honor that good.

Romans 12:18 "Be at peace with all men if possible."

Romans 12:19 "Never take your own revenge." Leave it to God.

Romans 12:20 says "If your enemy is hungry, feed him."

Romans 12:21a says "Do not be overcome by evil."

Romans 12:21b says "overcome evil with good."

Romans 13:1 says "be subject to governing authorities," to government.

Romans 13:6 says "pay your taxes."

Romans 13:7 says "Render to all what is due them."

Romans 13:12 "lay aside the deeds of darkness."

Romans 13:13 says "Let us behave properly. That is not with drunkenness, illicit sex, sensuality, strife and jealousy." He spells all those out specifically.

Romans 13:14b "make no provision for the flesh," the Sin Nature. You don't have to feed that thing. You don't have to indulge it.

Romans 14:1 "accept the one who is weak in the faith." Don't push around the weak brother.

Romans 14:13a "Let us not judge one another." Where the Bible speaks we can make a judgment. Where the Bible has not spoken, you cannot judge a person's motives. You leave that with God.

Romans 14:13d "do not put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way."

Romans 14:19a "pursue the things which make for peace."

Romans 14:19b pursue "the things that build up one another."

Romans 15:1 Do not "just please ourselves."

Romans 15:2 says "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification."

Romans 16:16 says "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

Romans 16:17 says, "keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances,... turn away from them."

In 2 Corinthians 6:14, the great statement "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." How many women, how many men wish they had paid attention to that before they got married? And I have people who almost every week come to me. I had one this past week. I sit there sadly looking at this parent who is saying 'I listened to your series on marriage, and I realized now the mistake I had made.' Now here is a parent torn with a divorce, with a youngster, how to handle this kid's life in a fractured family. It all began, as this poor man now realizes, because he unequally yoked himself with an unbeliever. He said, 'I knew it at the time. I thought we could work it. I thought we could grow.' Somebody should have said 'No! You knew better beforehand.' After you're into it, there's no way back out. It's all going to come apart. But this applies to every area of life, every social area of life, being unequally yoked with unbelievers. How many times we want to stand alongside and say, 'I don't want to get under that principle. That really is going to crimp my style if I can't be out here dating these jet-set types who are not the men of God.'

Ephesians 4:32 says be kind one to another with a forgiving spirit.

Philippians 4:6 says be anxious for nothing but pray.

Colossians 3:15 says "be thankful."

Hebrews 13:5a says "be free from the love of money."

Hebrews 13:5b says be "content with what you have."

Then 1 Peter adds a point, 1 Peter 1:16, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I [God] AM HOLY."

Paul had the highest regard for the Christians in Rome. These principles that he scattered throughout the Book of Romans that we just briefly mentioned are principles that he could say those people got under them. They were "underhearers" when it came to these principles; they were not "alongside hearers." Paul had many churches under his control, like the ones in Corinth that were really just the opposite. They were terrible places. They were filled with people who were alongside hearers and they were great agony to the apostle Paul.

So, Paul says, "your obedience [getting under the Word] has reached to all." Their reputation was widespread in the Christian world. As a matter of fact, when he wrote this letter at the very first, he recognized this quality about them in Romans 1:8. He said "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world," your ministry is wide spread. These Roman Christians, of course, have been well taught in doctrine, so they knew what God thinks, and they chose to be slaves of Jesus Christ, not of their Sin Natures. So, they got to be obedient people. They got under the Word. Roman Christians are highly esteemed for their obedience to Jesus Christ.

Now Paul is concerned that this reputation should in any way be tarnished. They are open to the Word: some con man preacher might come along and he might deceive them. And that's why [in Romans 16:17-19] Paul is warning them. He says, "Therefore, I want to caution you, be prudent. I don't want you to be a disappointment to the other Christians who think of you so highly. He says, for my part, "I am rejoicing over you." And the word "rejoice" here is a Greek word "chairo," c h a i r o, which means "to be happy." Paul was very happy over the positive volition to doctrine of these Roman Christians, and he delighted in them.

**Know What Is Good**

But, he wanted to make an additional clarity to them. And here we come to one of the most dramatic cautions that you'll find in the Word of God to a Christian, one that Christians live in a society where this is so easy to violate with the era of television, with the era of the lowering of the moral standards. Here is a principle, a desire expressed by the apostle Paul at the end of verse 19 that all of us need to take to heart and be on guard with: "but I want you to be wise." The word wise is "sophos," s o p h o s, here I want you to "know something," to be experienced and knowledgeable about something. And what is that: "what is good." The Greek word "agathos," a g a t h o s. This is something that is good in the sense of being beneficial. We get our English name Agnese from this. "Agathos," I want you to be good on the basis of what is good by God's standards. Paul says, 'when it comes to a knowledge about godly, loving and wholesome activities, I want you to know all about it. I want you to know everything that deals with godly living, what deals with wholesome activity. God's moral laws and rules for Christian living are always a great benefit for those who get under them. They're good by God's standard.

But he says 'on the other hand, while I want you to be immersed and knowledgeable about good, I want you to be innocent about something else,' innocent about what is evil. The word innocent is "akeraios," a k e r a i o s. "Akeraios" means to be "unmixed," to be "pure." This connotes being free of any foreign element. In the ancient world, this word was used to describe wine which had not been cut with water. It was used of metal which had not been debased with a foreign base metal. This was used only 2 other times in the New Testament. It is used in Matthew 10:16, which illustrates its meaning to be pure, unmixed. Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and [unmixed, pure] innocent as doves," One other place that this word is used, only 3 times in the whole New Testament: this one is in Philippians 2:15, which also illustrates its use. Paul says, "that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world," that you may yourselves prove to be blameless and innocent.

**Be Innocent of What Is Evil**

Unmixed children of God, no evil mixed into your conduct. The word for evil is the Greek word, "kakos," k a k o s, and the word refers to what is inherently evil, violent character, something that is worthless. It violates biblical standards. A Christian is not being knowledgeable or experienced in evil, the corrupt activities of Satan's world.

All you have to do is watch some of these television talk shows, and you know what we're talking about. Some of these television talk shows, I wonder how they can stay on the air. Every program is some corrupt, degrading, vile human practice. You should not listen to that. You should not watch that. You should not pay attention to that. You don't have to know about how dirty and low the Sin Nature can act. These talk shows, I notice in reviewing some of these in the afternoon, they're really scum ball level of programing: the very thing that the Bible says, 'you don't have to know about.'

It's like knowing about alcohol, booze. To be so sophisticated, you know, on television, somebody comes in always, 'well, would you like a drink?' 'Yes.' Would you know how to act under that condition? 'Yeah, I'll have bourbon. 'All I have is rye.' 'OK, scotch, Cutty Sark, Jack Daniel's, Roy Rogers, whatever you have. It's all good with me.' It's very sophisticated. You know your way all around these little drinks. Or you come in, 'So yeah, I'll have a little vodka. Vodka's good.'

The word vodka, by the way, kind of interesting. I have a lesson in booze this morning. This is the Russian word for "voda." "Voda' is water. This is a diminutive, 'give me a little watering.' Like you call someone "John," and if you want to be nice to express your affection, you say "Johnny," it's a diminutive. So, vodka, booze potential, is just a little diminutive of the Russian word for water. 'Yeah, I'll have a little vodka.' Or maybe I'm down south of the border at the cantina, and 'Oh Senor', a little tequila. Leave the worm in, I like the worm! I like to chew on the worm.' So, you've got to know your way around this stuff, you know! Or beer? 'Yes. Would you like a beer? What kind would you like?' 'Well, Bud, Schlitz, Edelweiss is good.' 'Heineken's.' 'Michelin.' I mean, you gotta' know your way around folks, or you're going to come out looking like kind of a jerk here. Yeah, did you want Bach beer, you know, that dark kind, or you want the light? You want the Pilsen beer? Pilsen beer, that's good, just outside of Frankfurt, the brewery there, you know. Ahh, wines. What are we eating? Fish? We gotta' have white wine, is that right? Oh no, we're having beef, gotta' have red wine.

Ahh, let's have a little bubbly champagne. How many TV movies have you seen with a little bubbly, having a great time with the champagne? You have all that little stuff, the sherry. Personally, I prefer Mountain Dew myself, but then there's Perrier. Those are all good. Then you get to the mixed drinks. If you've been on the airlines, you know, the hostesses come down, 'Would you like a little drink?' I used to think that they were asking just for the booze and I'd say no. Then I never got a Coke. So I found out; now I don't say that anymore, what to say. But these people are: 'I'll have a Bloody Mary,' 'Shirley Temple.' You know, sometimes I've been in groups socially, and all up and down, we're in a restaurant. The waiter comes up, 'would you like to drink?' 'Yeah, I'll have a Bloody Mary, have a Shirley Temple?' And they come to me and I want to be sophisticated. So, I say, 'Oh, I'll have a classic Coke. You sure you have classic? Not that New Coke, a classic. OK?' Yes, they're very impressed with that.

Now Mrs. Danish, she's not sophisticated. The last time we were out there, she said, 'Do you have a Mary Poppins?' Now what kind of a drink is that? What are you asking about a Mary Poppins for? She said 'Well I thought it was a little cake that popped over.' She didn't even know they were drinking. Then of course, you have all kinds of specialized drinks. You know, you have the high ball, the low ball, the slow ball, the spitball, the screwball, the screwdriver, and the hacksaw. All those are very pleasant. And every one of those will drill into you some place.

And I've been fascinated by it when they say, 'I'll have a martini, very dry.' All of the TV sophisticated super sleuths, 'Martini, very dry.' I see that bartender working under the bar and I suppose he mixes the stuff and hits it with a hairdryer for a little bit until it's very dry! Then he puts it up there. You've got to know your way around and you don't let them give you wine in a glass that puts your body heat on it. It's going to have a stem, the proper form so that you're not heating that wine. You're not going to lower your temperature to 98.6 just because of the glass of wine that you're holding. Very sophisticated.

Of course, there's the cocktail hour. You're nobody if you don't know your way around for the afternoon cocktail hour, so you can come in and say, I'll have a cocktail, horse's tail, a cottontail, a tailgate, a tailspin, a tail light, whatever it is. You've got to know the language. You've got to know how to talk. And of course, you have to ask for it on the rocks, so, they know you really know your way around.

Admittedly, if you're not schooled in these things, you could be intimidated. You could be with a group that (and I've been with it often, I move in circles like that.) these guys are ordering drinks and I don't know what they're talking about. I haven't even learned enough poker hands to know when they show on a movie, on a TV program, some guy's got a winning hand. I just look at the eyes and say, 'oh, that's a winning hand.' I can't look at the cards and tell.

But, do I have to know about all that stuff. So, the apostle Paul says 'there's a lot of bad, crummy, degrading, demoralizing stuff out there. You don't have to know about that. As a matter of fact, I want you to be smart as you can be, about every righteous principle, about every good thing there is to do. I want you to know how to ski down the mountain in the right way? I want you to know how to sluice. I want you to know how to turn. I want to know how to go back uphill and make the traverses. I want you to know how to water ski. I want you to know how to fly that airplane, bring it out of its tailspin and do all the other aerobatics and wonderful things. I want you to know how to do all the things you enjoy in life. I want you to get in that kitchen and just wow people with what you can do. Life is so full of dramatic, wonderful, terrific things. I want you to go all over the world, see things. I want you to become a person who's knowledgeable in all the good things that God has put together for you. But when it comes to the expressions of the Sin Nature, the world is filled with a lot of vileness. You should not look at it. You should not listen to it. You should not preoccupy your mind with it. You should not try to learn the way of the world.'

And one thing for sure, is you shouldn't be intimidated because they know their way around the devil's world and you don't. You don't have to be streetwise. Satan's followers claim that people need to be educated about vile things so that they will avoid them; so, we have drug education programs, we need to teach you about how to use drugs so that you won't do it. What you need is a spiritual education with a divine moral code. Sophisticated manners and lifestyle cannot make something that is dirty, clean. We live in a world where we have naive young people who think that if somebody is sophisticated and jet-set type, they can make something that is vile and low and very sophisticated, clean and significant.

Here's how Isaiah said it centuries ago. Isaiah 5:20-21, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!" Back in Isaiah's day, there were people who thought they were so clever, they were so smart, they were so significant that they had advanced to the point where something that was rotten and dirty and evil, they could declare it to be clean and desirable and acceptable. Isaiah says, 'you are a fool, you are deceiving yourself. You cannot make what is morally offensive to God acceptable because you say it is.' Calling some morally foul display an expression of art does not make it artistic and worthy.

Recently, I think it is in Cincinnati or Cleveland, one of those 2 cities in Ohio, there was a homosexual art display, vulgar beyond imagination and blasphemous to the extreme. I wouldn't even like to tell you what they displayed there concerning Christ and the Cross and how that was treated and dealt with. Cincinnati, I think that's where it was, has a city council that said, 'we've had enough of this moral debauchery in this city and we are going to stop it.' And they have brought it to an end. You can't go to a so-called adult bookstore. There are no porno video houses. There's nothing the city hasn't cleaned out. This man came along to make his display and everybody says, "You can't keep them from doing it. It's free speech." The city closed it down and the courts supported it. This is the moral standards of this community, the value system of this community, and this is that on which they operate. You do it ahead of time. Don't bring your filth in here. Who needed to go to a display like that to see visually what homosexuals do? Or to see vulgarities, blasphemies degrading Jesus Christ? Who needs to see that to know that that's out there? Nobody, as your mind is a camera that doesn't lose its pictures, stores them, and it comes up at the most undesirable times. Who would want to look at a pornographic magazine with all these mental images that it would create that degrades you as a man or as a woman, and it keeps you from using the physical qualities that God has given in an honorable, noble and happy and pleasurable way in the very presence of God.

On a recent Saturday Night Live program, somebody told me that some guests walked off and refused to continue after a vulgarity was displayed by somebody else on the program. Now that Saturday Night Live, such as I've seen, is not what you want to review in your Sunday school class as entertainment. And when somebody on that program says, 'You've gone so low that even I can't stomach it,' you can see how low it had to be.

The principle of the Word of God is to be smart in the principles of godliness, explore every avenue that God has opened to you, with all the ups and downs. Enjoy the world that God has created, that's what he told Adam. He said, I want you to have dominion over My creation. You enjoy it, you pursue it, you do it. But I want you to be like My son. In all of this, be like Jesus. That's the goal. That is the objective of the Christian life to be transformed into the image of Christ. I do not want you to be unlike Him and to learn the things that His mind would not pursue, and His life would not pursue.

You know, we have that in our hymn book under the song "I WOULD BE LIKE JESUS:"

"Earthly pleasures vainly call me, I would be like Jesus.
Nothing worldly shall enthrall me, I would be like Jesus.
He has broken every fetter, I would be like Jesus.
That my soul may serve Him better. I would be like Jesus.
All the way from earth to glory, I would be like Jesus.
Telling o'er and o'er the story, I would be like Jesus.
That in Heaven He may meet me, I would be like Jesus.
That His words "Well done may greet me," I would be like Jesus.
Be like Jesus, this my song, in the home and in the throng, be like Jesus all day long. I would be like Jesus."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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