***Confession and Prosperity
RO88-01***

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We are looking at Romans 7:12-13 on "The Merit of the Mosaic Law," and this is the second in that series.

**The Sin Nature**

The apostle Paul, you will remember, is dealing with the problem of the sin nature in man, which continues in a human being, even after the point of regeneration. There are some foolish Christian groups who suggest that there is a point in time after you are born again, when you may establish a relationship with God that is of such intensity that you will never sin again. That is a lie. It is a self-delusion. There never comes a time when the sin nature is not active within us, and when we potentially can fall victim to it.

So, the apostle Paul is dealing with this problem that does exist in the Christian life. It devastates people not to understand that just because they're born again, and they're going to heaven, and a great change has indeed come into their relationship with God, nevertheless, the sin nature is active. It is not removed. The Bible makes it very clear until we come into the face-to-face presence of Jesus Christ. The Word of God says, "When we see Him, we shall be like Him. He was born without a sin nature. He never secured a sin nature by an act of sin. Therefore, to say that we will be like Him, in part, means that our sin nature will be totally removed. You should understand that. You should anticipate, therefore, problems with this evil unless it is properly controlled.

**God's Judicial Solution for the Sin Nature**

God has a solution for the sin nature. The book of Romans, you will remember, gives us a solution in two sections. One is a verdict that God, as judge, makes relative to this problem. We call that His judicial solution concerning the problem of the old sin nature. And we've looked at that in detail. Romans 5:12 all the way through Romans 7:6 explains to us how God, as judge, has dealt with the sin nature. That is a verdict. It has nothing to do with our daily experience. The solution was this: He has removed the believing sinner from a position in Adam to a position in Christ. God, as Judge, has said, "You are no longer in Adam. You are now (because of your faith in Christ) in Christ. Adam is referred to as the old man which is enslaved to the sin nature, while Christ is called the new man, the Person who is free from enslavement to the sin nature. So, to be in Adam is the place of death and enslavement to the old sin nature. To be in Christ is the place of eternal life, and now to be a slave of righteousness.

So, God, as the judge of all creation, has declared that the believing center is in Christ, the position of eternal life, and has declared him remove from being in Adam, the position of the eternal death. It is our trust in Jesus Christ as personal Savior that secures this favorable judicial verdict.

**God's Experiential Solution for the Sin Nature**

However, that doesn't solve the problem entirely. That settles the problem of how we are going to go to heaven when we have this sin nature problem. It settles the problem that God, as judge, has made a verdict concerning the sin nature. But still we have to live with this viper. So, the next thing that Paul explains is what God's solution is so that you don't have to live like a dog enslaved to the sin nature. And from Romans 7:7 all the way through Romans 8:39, this is what he's dealing with – the experiential solution for the sin nature.

**The Indwelling of God the Holy Spirit**

The solution is simply this: that God has placed within us, at the point of our faith in Christ, the person of the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit permanently indwells every believer because he is a member of the royal family of God. This was not true of believers in other ages. We are permanently enthralled by God the Holy Spirit, and therefore we have the capacity to override, through the Spirit of God, the problem of the power of the old sin nature. It is the Holy Spirit who guides the spiritual believer through the Word of God, so that his soul is compatible with divine holiness in thought, feeling, and decisions. It is God the Holy Spirit who takes the doctrine that you know, and so guides you so that your thinking; your feelings; your emotions; and, your decisions (the exercise of your will) is compatible with the will in the mind of God.

Now that is a tremendous thing to be able to say, and to be able to walk with that kind of compatibility with God – the Christian who knows how to handle the sin nature in his daily experience. But it is a fact that God has made it possible for the believing sinner to experience daily victory over his innate propensity to evil. You don't have to be enslaved to that evil quality any longer.

**A Spiritual Christian**

Confession of known sins, when we do fall into evil, establishes the believer in the status that we call spirituality. To be a spiritual Christian (I hope that you can define that now) means that you are walking in temporal fellowship with God, the Heavenly Father. The easiest way to think about that is the concentric circles. The outer circle is eternal fellowship. You enter that that when you trust in Christ as Savior. But there is an inner circle, which is temporal fellowship, which you also enter at the point of salvation. Now you are walking under the control of God the Holy Spirit, and this is called being a spiritual Christian.

However, when you sin (you step out of that inner circle), you're still within the eternal fellowship. You don't lose your salvation. But now you are no longer a spiritual Christian, but a carnal Christian, because in this area, the old sin nature dominates and controls. Now that is the problem. The problem is how to stay in the inner circle so that you maximize your walk with God, and maximize the potential blessings with God.

**God Wants to Prosper You**

I have to remind you again. It's making some of you uncomfortable, and you come to me with distressing questions. It is the purpose of God, not for you to serve Him; not for you to suffer for him; and, not for you to do any number of things, all of which in the process of His will you may do. It is the purpose of God, first of all, to prosper you. He wants to prosper you. He wants to give you money. He wants to give you a good social life. He wants to give you a good family life. He wants to give you a good business life. He wants to give you everything that he has in His plan for you. He wants to prosper you.

However, that prosperity only comes when you're in the inner circle. As long as you log time out in the outer circle of the old sin nature, you're marking time; you're losing time; and, you're losing potential opportunity for storing treasures in heaven. Any treasure you send from heaven goes from the inner circle. Nothing goes from within the outer circle only. Anything you send from the outer circle only goes right down the rat hole. What you send from the inner circle goes up and is stored as treasures in heaven. So, we're talking about walking compatible to the inner circle. That's what Paul is explaining in this section: experiential control – control in your experience over the sin nature.

**Confession – Admitting your Sins**

Well, once you've stepped out of the inner circle (and you're into carnality), then, of course, the question is: how do I get back in? And that's where the 1 John 1:9 passage comes into play, because that passage explains to Christians how to get back into temporal fellowship – fellowship in your daily walk in terms of the daily time of your life: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If we confess – that means that if you go to God and admit it. That's all it's saying. It's not asking you to be sorry, and it's not asking you to plead with God.

**We Don't Ask God for Forgiveness**

A lady recently told me that she was visiting at another person's home, and she happened to walk into a room, and this other person was in an adjoining dining room (she didn't know anybody else was home), and she was in prayer. She couldn't help overhearing the prayer of this lady. And the prayer was to the effect of pleading with God to forgive her her sins: "If there was something I've done, God, You know that I didn't mean it. Please forgive me. I hope you'll forgive me for what I've done."

**God is Faithful**

If you've heard somebody talking to God like that, you can know for absolute certainty that they don't understand the principle of being in fellowship and out of fellowship. They don't understand 1 John 1:9. They don't understand that that verse says, "If you admit that you were wrong – if you bring the evil and say, "I did it; I thought it; or, I said it," and bring it to God: that's confession. Then it says, "He (God the Father) is faithful and just to forgive you your sins," so that He brings you back into the inner circle of fellowship. "He is faithful" means that He will do it every time. You have done that terrible evil; you realize it's wrong; and, you confess it. An hour later you do it again. You go back again and you confess. An hour later, you've done it again. You go back and confess. What does God do every time? Finally, does He say, "That's it, fella. You've had seven chances. Don't come back to me anymore. You're not going to get another shot at it?" No, that's what the word "faithful" means. He will do it every time you admit it – every time you go up and say, "That's right. I bombed out again. I should have known better. The sin nature got its claws in me, and I went down." He will forgive you.

**God is Fair**

The reason He can do that is because the next words say, "He is just," which means that he is fair. It is a righteous act on His part to forgive you. He is not just grandfather-like, saying, "Oh, that's all right. You're just a little piece of clay. I understand. I won't hold that against you." No, "just" means that somebody pay for what you did. Somebody paid the price, and it was Christ on the cross who paid for all those future evil acts as well as those up to that point in time, and any other point in time in your life.

So, when it says, "He is faithful," He will forgive you every time that you confess. And when it says, "He is just," it means that He has a ground for doing that. And it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to have that sin forgiven. That was included. He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins (to forgive us our sins). Then it gives a covering clause which is very important: "And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," because those of you who are thoughtful people will say, "What if I don't remember the thing I did? What if I wasn't even aware that I was doing an evil?" And that's the covering clause: "He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When you confess known sins, the unknown are covered by His grace.

That's a beautiful passage of Scripture. It's a winning / winning position. You might run as a test case, if you're curious, among Christians who are your friends and who move in the Christian community – to ask them about how God deals with us when we sin. You'll be amazed at the stupid answers you will get. And the tragedy about that is that when they don't know how to get back out of this outer circle into the inner circle, then their whole life is wasted. Every dollar they give in offering is nothing. Every hour they spend in Christian service is nothing. Every act of mercy they perform is nothing with God. Anything done in the outer circle only doesn't count, because it is the province of the control of the sin nature.

**Human Good and Divine Good**

So, any good that comes while we're in the outer circle only is what we call human good. The good that counts with God is what comes from the inner circle, and that is divine good, because it's produced by God the Holy Spirit through you.

So, this is what the apostle Paul is dealing with her – that there is a provision by God for the solution of our daily experience – our walk in time where the sin nature does not control us.

So, 1 John 1:9 repairs the damage that has been done when we have fallen into sin. To that we may add Ephesians 5:18, which says, "And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." The expression "be filled with the spirit" means to be controlled by the Spirit. This is just like there are certain things that control people, and you say, "Oh, that person is just full of this or full of that: That person is just full of football." That means that football is the thing that controls him. To be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. The way you are filled with the Spirit is by confessing all known sins so that you are in the inner circle of Christian fellowship.

To that we may also add Galatians 5:16 – this relationship to God in our walk. Galatians 5:16 says, "This I say then: walk in the spirit (literally, 'walk by means of the spirit'), and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." And there you have it: "Walk by means of the Holy Spirit, who indwells you, as He guides you according to the doctrine you know, and you will not fulfill the evil desires (the lust cluster) of the sin nature." "The flesh" refers to the sensual, evil, animal-like desires that characterize the sin nature. If you want by means of the Holy Spirit, you will stay in this inner circle, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the sin nature. You will not fulfill that evil pattern.

**Moral People**

So, Paul has declared that no one can be saved, and freed from enslavement to the sin nature, by keeping a set of rules. Particularly, he has used the Mosaic Law as an example. You can't follow the Mosaic Law and get to heaven. You can't follow the Mosaic Law and become a godly person (a spiritual Christian). There are many people who are moral people. They obey the Mosaic Law, but they never confess known sins. They're not spiritual. They're out of the inner circle with all the morality. There are many people who have never trusted in Jesus Christ who are very moral. In fact, it has been my experience on occasion more than once to discover that the people who are not Christians have more integrity and walk with more of a sense of morality than do some Christians. The fact is that hell is filled today with moral people. They kept the commandments, but that does not bring eternal life.

What Paul is going to show here is that these rules do not bring you sanctification. They do not bring Your Holiness. They do not bring you spirituality either.

Now Paul, however, is not implying that the Lord God given to Moses was in itself an evil thing. He wants to avoid that impression. The Mosaic Law was an expression of God's absolute righteousness, which is required of a person for eternal life in heaven. The Mosaic Law did say: "This is what God is like. Therefore, if you want to be in heaven, this is what you must be like." And what that Law tells us is that God is absolutely perfect – absolute righteousness. That was the purpose of the Mosaic Law. It was like a mirror. The evil nature of man was revealed by the mirror of the Mosaic Law, and it was particularly revealed by the fact that no one can keep the Mosaic Law perfectly. The most sincere person cannot obey the moral code of God completely, because if they manage to keep it outwardly, overtly, they will break down someplace along the line inwardly (mentally). The sin will be there.

Even worse is the fact that mankind rebelled against the moral standards of the Mosaic Law, and they hated God for imposing these rules upon the human race. It was bad enough that you cannot be saved by the Mosaic Law. It is bad enough that you cannot become spiritual through keeping the Mosaic Law. Man made it even worse by hating the God who imposed them on the human race.

So, the Mosaic Law revealed that all mankind, including the religious and the best types of human beings, were hopelessly doomed to an eternity in hell. Paul says that it was the Mosaic Law, as a matter of fact, that revealed to him that he was guilty of a kind of sin that he didn't count before. He was proud of the fact that no one could accuse him of outwardly breaking any of the rules of the moral code. No one could say to Paul, "You were a thief here." No one could point to Paul and say, "You lied here Paul. You bore false witness." No one could say to Paul, "You had a foul mouth. You used curse words here."

**Not Taking God's Name in Vain**

You don't have to use the name of God to break the rule about not taking God's name in vain. All you have to say is the word "hell," or the word "damn," because those are words that call upon a power source in the universe. And there are only two power sources: the power source of God; and, the power source is Satan. So, when you use words like "hell" and "damn," as well as all the other words that are curse words, they are calling upon the power source of Satan. They are recognizing the authority of Satan. And that's why the Bible says, "Be careful about the words you say, because you will be held accountable in eternity for those words. You will be held accountable for every word that you use, like a "hell" and a "damn" that calls upon Satan as a power source, because that's what you're doing.

Nobody could accuse Paul of doing that. Nobody could accuse Paul of being an adulterous person; a fornicator; or, anything else. But suddenly, as he studied the Mosaic Law, and as God came through to him with salvation on the Damascus road, he suddenly realized that all the while he thought he was special with God, and was a saved man, he realized that he wasn't that at all. He was as unsaved as they come. He realized that, while he was outwardly acceptable and blameless, he was inwardly shot-through with mental attitude sins. And it was the rule against coveting that revealed that to him.

In this portion here of Romans 7, he is referred to that particular law: "You shall not covet." And he realized that he himself, in his mind, was guilty of covetousness. So, here was a man who considered himself saved, who found through the Mosaic Law that he was spiritually dead, and was doomed, and suddenly found himself in the position of the terror of the possibility of facing a holy God. And once you understand what God expects from you, and once you understand your own natural condition with the sin nature, and you realize that you're going to face that kind of a God with that kind of a condition, any rational, normal human being is struck through with a great fear and a sense of terror upon having to face that God.

The sin nature takes the good Mosaic Law, Paul says, and it uses it as a base for creating in man a spirit of rebellion, because that Mosaic Law exposes man for what he really is. When Paul discovered what he really was, he did not welcome it. And when people discover what they are, by God's standards, they grind their teeth in indignation, and they hate the God who made a rule, and they hate the moral code that God has established.

**Secular Humanism**

So, the sin nature takes the moral code, such as the Mosaic Law (the Ten Commandments), and it creates a spirit of rebellion in man, which then expresses itself in a cluster of mental and overt evils. Society itself expresses its rebellion against God's standard of holiness by legitimatizing the very evils that God's law forbids man to indulge. It is the purpose of secular humanism to counter any divine authority above man – any authority who can make the rules.

**The Humanist Manifesto**

If you've ever read The Humanist Manifesto I and II, these people minced no words. They tell you point blank that there is in their minds no rational evidence that there is a supernatural being in the universe who has the authority to impose rules upon man. They say it in just so many words: "There is no evidence for a supernatural being in the universe to whose authority man must be subject, and whose rules man must obey."

The purpose of saying that is because the humanists wants to exalt man as God, and he wants man to be the person who makes the rules. In our society today, humanism has gone so far that people are comfortable with the fact that our society legitimatizes the very evils of the moral code that God says, "Thou shall not do." Our society says, "It is OK to do those things."

The old sin nature deceives the sinner into thinking that he can qualify for heaven by works of his own doing, and it belittles the divine standards required by the Mosaic Law. Instead, the sin nature says, "Just balance your human good against your human evil, and you'll make it. The sin nature, as a matter of fact, tries to make God appear to be unloving and to be a tyrant. While the Mosaic Code was the product of a holy God, it was nevertheless an instrument that the sin nature used to create rebellion in man, and to lead man to eternal death. And that's the problem that Paul wants to deal with.

How is it possible that a moral code that God produced could be used by the sin nature to lead a person (instead of leading him to God; to godliness; and, to eternal life) – to lead him into eternal death? And that's what he wants to explain. In Romans 7:12, Paul seeks to remove any implication that the Mosaic Law given by God was in itself an evil thing.

So, Paul says, "Wherefore, the Law (referring to the Mosaic Law) is holy." The word "holy" means that it is separate from evil, and that it is compatible with God's standard of absolute righteousness. While the Mosaic Law as such was given by God only to the Jewish nation, it did nevertheless express the holiness of God. So, don't fall into the trap of saying, "Well, that's Old Testament. That's part of the law. We don't have to obey the Ten Commandments." However, every one of the Ten Commandments is repeated in the teachings that do apply to the royal family of God – the church. It is true that the Mosaic Law, as such, per se, with all that it has, does not apply to Christians, but it reflects a standard of God's holiness. And that standard does not change. When you get to the New Testament, the absolute standard of righteousness is still there. All of the Ten Commandments are repeated except one, and that is the one which requires believers to worship on Saturday (on the Sabbath they worship). That one is not repeated because that one is no longer in force.

So, the Mosaic Law, as a way of life, does not apply to Christian-age saints – only to Old Testament Jews. But the standard of righteousness expressed in the Mosaic Law is the same today. The divine moral standard that is expressed by the Mosaic Law then completely crushes the unbeliever's self-confident righteousness, and it makes him hate the code of God.

What Paul is doing now is preparing to show that even as keeping the rules of the Mosaic Law would not secure salvation, so too it would not secure sanctification or spirituality in daily experience. Keeping the mosaic rules will not make you a spiritual Christian. That will not keep you in the inner circle of fellowship. That will not keep you filled with the Spirit. It is the confession of known sins, and the positive volition walk with the Spirit of God, according to the doctrines you know – that is what makes you a godly person. It is your confession of sin, moment-by-moment. This is terrible. It's a terrible thing if you, as a believer, can say, "Hey, man, I don't ever have to confess anything to God. As a matter of fact, I can just think back several days, and I haven't had to say a thing to God." It's wonderful to have such friends – to know folks that are that perfect, that you rarely, if ever, have to make confession. That's a very costly thing to do, because I assure you that I know most of you very well. I am the best one of this group. From me, it's downhill all the way. And I don't get away without confession. So, I know you don't either.

In the next part verse 12, three important words tell a dramatic thing about the specific moral code. And I hope that you kids are listening carefully, because this is some confusion and some misrepresentation that your peers are going to give. Get smart now, and listen carefully first.

Verse 12 says, "Wherefore, the law is holy. Then Paul says specifically, "The commandment is holy." The word "commandment" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "entole." . . . This is a general Greek word for a "precept" or "injunction" – for any kind of rule. It is used in the Bible to refer to those specific moral rules that we refer to as the Ten Commandments. Here, the word is even more specific because it is, as you have in the English: "*the* commandment" (singular). And it is singular because it is referring to the commandment that he's been talking about – the specific commandment of the ten that he has been referring to up in verses 7 all the way through verse 10. That is the commandment number ten about coveting. This is the commandment which says, "Thou shall not covet." And then it goes on and explains in further details what that means.

**The Ten Commandments**

All the moral rules of the Ten Commandments code are repeated (again I remind you) in the New Testament. They are applicable to the church-age Christian, except for Sabbath day worship. So, anything that is said here concerning the Ten Commandments, as far as morality is concerned, applies directly to us as Christians.

These commandments (these moral rules) apply, furthermore, to a believer and unbeliever, because they are designed by God to preserve freedom in Satan's world. The Ten Commandments do not apply only to Christians. That's why we have laws which legislate morality. We have laws which tell us that you cannot do the things that the Ten Commandments forbid a person to do. Unfortunately, that is not consistently carried through. There are other commandments and implications, such as the moral commandment against adultery (illicit sex is the basic concept there) that express themselves in homosexuality; bestiality; child abuse; child pornography; and, the pornography of Playboy magazine and other magazines of that type. All of that comes under the condemnation of this rule. Therefore, our society, if it is putting God's law above man's law, would have laws that legislate that those things are illegal in this society.

These moral rules apply to unbeliever as well as believer, because they are designed to preserve freedom for the individual. The believer has the motivation, however, and the power of the Holy Spirit, that enables him to obey the moral commandments. He has the capacity to do a better job of obeying. But they are obligatory upon believers and unbelievers.

Christians should be careful, however, not to put themselves in a tempting situation where you may fall into immorality. Many a Christian who is solid, strong, and mature, has got the shock of his life when he broke some of these rules – when he broke one of these moral commandments. He never thought he'd do it. He didn't think it was possible in his case. But he carelessly put himself into a position where opportunity to sin was available, and opportunity was attractive. And in a moment of weakness, the evil was committed.

So, it's not only that we have capacity better than the unbeliever to obey these rules, we, nevertheless, have to be aware of the fact that we have capacity to break them, just as the unbeliever does. And we capitalize on the dwelling Holy Spirit, and we strengthen our position that we have through him by not putting ourselves in tempting positions of compromise, so that we do not get psyched (as many people are in our society), – psyched by an immoral society which does not view the breaking of God's commandments with the horror with which it should.

The concept of breaking any one of these Ten Commandments should be something that we should recoil with the most intense horror. If you young people don't look at those Ten Commandments, and recoil with an enormous horror, then you don't understand what's going on, and you're playing a very dangerous game.

**Joseph**

A classic example to all of us is, of course, Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was taken by his brothers and sent as a slave to Egypt. When he got there, because of his personal character and his devotion to the moral code of God, he rose very quickly to positions of authority in the military officers' household (Potiphar's household) in Egypt. A situation developed in that household with Potiphar's wife, who was one of the ancient Delilah / Cleopatra / playgirl types, who wanted to play games, and to keep house with whoever happened to be around. She put Joseph into that compromising position of opportunity – great opportunity, and potential violation of the moral code of God.

Now look at the horror that this very young man expresses. Genesis 39:1: "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, brought him of the hands of the Israelites who had brought him down there. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man, and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. And the master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him. And he made him overseer over his house; and, all that he had, he put into his hand." Joseph was in charge of everything: money; household operation; and, the whole thing.

"It came to pass, from the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. And the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field." This is the pattern that God constantly does. Here comes a young man. He obeys the moral code of God. The first thing he finds is that he has prospered. If you obey the moral code, you may be assured of blessing. This prosperity and blessing not only accrued to him, but anybody who was associated with him. It's splashed over to them. And these people around them could look and say, "I don't really have this coming, but do you know why I'm being blessed? Just because I'm associated with Joseph."

**Lot**

Lot did the same thing: "Do you know why I'm being blessed? Just because I'm associated with Abraham." It is faithful Abraham. It is faithful Joseph that is accruing blessings to those around them. The same thing happens today.

Verse 5: "And it came to pass, from the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. And the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand. He didn't know anything he had, save the food which he did eat. And Joseph was a handsome person and well-favored."

So, this man was so confident in Joseph. The man himself didn't even know how much he owned. He said, "I don't really care, Joseph, You take care of it. Just see that the food keeps flowing, and the parties are run. You take charge of it.

In the meantime, it observes that one of the other ways that Joseph prospered was physically. Because he was living by God's rules, he was in good health, and he had a well-favored external appearance. Ah, there is the problem.

"And it came to pass, after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.' But he refused, and said into his master's wife, 'Behold, my master doesn't know what is with me in the house. And he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I. Neither has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Now his motivation was: "This would certainly not be a very fair way for me to treat a man who's treated me that kindly. He's given me everything that I could ask for in his household. It's all at my disposal, to use and to enjoy; but not you. You're his wife."

Then notice what Joseph says: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against Pharaoh; sin against Potiphar; or, sin against the Egyptian people?" No – sin against God, because it was God's law that he would break. It was God's moral code that he would violate. And whoever was injured in the process of his breaking those rules, ultimately it was against God that he would sin.

**David**

David understood this principle too. When his sin of adultery with Bathsheba went full-blown because David put himself in the opportunity, and the sin nature took advantage of that base of operation to lead him into that evil. Finally, about a year later, when David is all torn up; things are going wrong; he is psychologically torn apart; and, he is emotionally torn apart. Finally, he goes to God, and he makes the confession he should have made a long time ago. In that confession, in Psalm 51, he says, "Against You, and You only have I sinned."

That's why we say that 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins," meaning to God the Father. You don't come here into this assembly and confess your sins to us. We're not interested in them. Some people are, but most of us aren't. And even those who might be interested will be degraded by them. So, we're not interested in hearing about your personal violations of God's rules. You make that confession to the Lord. And even the people who have been injured (whatever steps may be taken on the human level), ultimately, your relationship to God is how you deal with Him in confessing to Him that you have broken His rules."

"How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Verse 10: "And it came to pass that she spoke to Joseph day-by-day, that he hearkened not unto her to lie by her, or to be with her. It wasn't bad enough what she wanted him to do. Joseph recognized that he should not be with her. So, he avoided now the presence of the evil. He took steps to avoid the violation of the moral code. That is the principle of not putting yourself in the snake's pit where you can be bitten.

"And it came to pass, about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his work. And there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garments saying, "Lie with me." And he left his garment in her hand, and he fled and got out." Make yourself absent from the position of evil.

You can go the other way, and create a crisis by the fact that you go to evil. If you read pornographic materials, you have gone to the evil. If you watch pornographic movies, or you watch movies which are degrading and vile and filthy and foulmouthed, you have put yourself in the position of evil. You get acclimated to what is degrading. And what some of you parents better wake up and think about is the fact that somewhere along the line, your children are going to pick up those signals from you. They are going to know what is acceptable to you. They are going to know what you look at. They are going to know what kind of a lifestyle you have. They are going to know your philosophical, economic, social, political, and religious (habits), and they'll pick it up. You better think ahead, and see whether you are prepared to destroy and tear up their lives with the vileness that is represented in our society by secular humanism, which is designed explicitly to oppose the rules of God.

Well, you know the rest of the story. There is no less like the wrath of a woman scorned. And she accused him falsely to her husband, and everything that she was trying to do, she accused Joseph of trying to do. And the result was that he was put into prison, and lost his place of authority in the home. But again, God watched him, and God took care of him. Because he was faithful to the moral code, there was one thing that you could not keep from Joseph: prosperity. He no sooner gets in prison, that he becomes a trustee. He's the head of the prison now. He gets to be the head slave. Now he's the head prisoner. And from there, you know what happened. He became the number two man in the nation under the Pharaoh himself.

So, the case of Joseph should be an encouragement to us and a classic example of how we deal with the moral code of God. God has given us these "entole." They are commandments. They are rules. They are not optional for you to say, "Well, they apply today, but they don't apply tomorrow."

**Situation Ethics**

An Episcopalian Bishop, Joseph Fletcher, a few years ago, came along with the thing called "situation ethics." That was exactly what he said. He said, "The Ten Commandments cannot be read as they are recorded in Exodus 20. You must, in our day (in our advanced culture), always qualify the Ten Commandments by the word "ordinarily." So, you don't say" You shall not murder, ordinarily." And, of course, that comes as a great comfort to a lot of us, because there are many exceptions we would like to make to that rule within the circle of our friends and acquaintances.

"You shall not steal, ordinarily." And there are some people that that's just what they deserve. They're so stingy, and a little cheap: I'd just like to steal from them. They got that brand new lima bean (I mean, limousine) that they just bought, and they drive around, and they're so cocky. I'd like to steal the thing, and ordinarily I wouldn't. But in this case, he deserves it. That's exactly what the Mafia says. The Mafia doesn't consider that they're thieves. They feel they are executing justice, and they don't steal, except from somebody who deserves to be stolen from. They don't murder people, except for those who deserve to be murdered. "You shall not do this, ordinarily." That is the way our society thinks about the moral code of God.

However, these commandments (these "entole") are not up for option. They are not up for our analyzing; for our human viewpoint verdict; or, for our reason to decide whether they apply or don't apply. These commandments then are described by three words, which we'll look at next time, that are enormously important words. These are three little words describing what the moral commandments of God are like. They are holy; they are just; and, they are good. It will be enormously enlightening to you when you understand what those three words mean concerning the moral laws of God, and it will give you a whole new perspective of appreciation, and of seriousness, of living by the moral code of God. These three words that we're going to study will dignify the commandments of God in your mind, perhaps as they've never been before. Obeying the commandments of God is going to make you a super person.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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