

The Gospel Preceptor

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Psa 119:104

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Calling Evil Good

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In his book entitled, *The Closing Of The American Mind*, Allan Bloom wrote of the decadence that consumed German society in the 1930s. "...anything was possible for people who sang of the joy of the knife in cabarets. Decent people became used to hearing things about which they would have in the past been horrified to think, and which would not have been allowed public expression."

Bloom could have been writing of modern America. Sin that once would not have been allowed public expression is now not only condoned, but has been given the stamp of approval by public officials.

Our nation has reached the same point as ancient Israel where evil was no longer considered evil, but good. Isaiah wrote of their decadence in these words: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil" (Isa. 5:20). Their morality was turned upside down. What God called evil, they considered good, and what He called good, they considered evil. As Bloom wrote, "decent people became used to hearing things about which they would have been in the past horrified to think, and which would not have been allowed public expression."

That's the sordid picture of our society today. The pagan society in which we live says that every good moral precept that God gave is "**evil**" and American society says that every **immoral evil** is "**good**." Consider this month's theme, "Calling Evil Good."

Stealing is Sin

Ron Cosby



The apostle Paul told the Ephesian brethren to steal no more, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need" (Eph. 4:28). We note that the charge to stop stealing is only half of the instructions. He added that brethren work for their own benefit and for the benefit of those less fortunate. This is the method God uses to care for the poor. Each man is to work. This enables God's man to give instead of take. So, becoming a Christian calls for a taker to become a giver.

The narrative of the Good Samaritan gives us examples of the two mindsets introduced by Paul. unfortunates selfish and brutal thieves beat a man and took from him that which belong to the cast-off. On the other hand, the Samaritan gave, going so far as to seeing to the victim's needs on the following day. The idea of working and the idea of giving did not start with Christianity. It was ignored then as much as it is ignored now.

Reading the daily newspaper gives us a clear picture of the mindset that is hurting the nation. Big cities have so much crime that city politicians have changed the way they report it. Some refuse to report it. Stealing is no longer prosecutable if the amount stolen is less than \$1,000. Since there is no longer a charge, there is no crime. Since there is no crime, the city leaders shout, "Our crime rate is falling." Hopefully, they will

not be able to fool the people forever. The big cities are showing us how **not** to address lawbreaking. Men cannot ignore bad conduct and expect it to simply go away.

God' Classification of Stealing

Primary meaning of stealing includes the following. Judas was a thief because he took from others. "Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein" (John 12:6).

Purloining is when workers misappropriate money or material from their place of employment. Paul told Titus, "Exhort servants to be in subjection to their own masters, and to be well-pleasing *to them* in all things; not gainsaying; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:9-10). When a delivery driver plays volleyball while on the clock, he is stealing time. Employers have been known to rip off their workers. In the New Testament, James addresses the problem, and Moses in the Old Testament condemns it (Jas. 5:4; Lev. 19:13).

Moses addresses the issue of larceny. He even includes stealing a man's grass. "If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feed in another man's field ... shall he make restitution" (Exo. 22:5). He addresses the finders keepers losers weepers motto.

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother *be* not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself" (Deut. 22:1-3).

Taking that which belongs to another is hurtful to all victims, but some crimes are more egregious. In the early days of film, the villains were always taking advantage of widows. Amos shows it is an age-old issue.

Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? (Amos 8:4-5).

After Hurricane Ian ravaged Florida recently, within days, four suspects were busted for looting. What is there in some men that cause them to take advantage of the misfortunate. You don't have to be a widow to be abused by the greed of others. Ahab stole Naboth's vineyard by deceit and murder (1 Kings 21:6).

Money or goods deceitfully taken from others is destructive to society. Though the Bible does not use the words "credit card" or "electronic banking" or "embezzle" or "pickpocket" or "handbag snatching," Moses addressed the specifics with the wording "deceitfully gotten" (Lev. 6:4). Any active or passive lie to obtain another's property or stuff is "deceitfully gotten." A daughter charged thousands of dollars to her sick father's credit cards, knowing he would die before repayment. John the Baptizer addressed extortion, calling for fruits of repentance (Luke 3:7-14).

Bribery distorts justice and steals a man's freedom (Deut. 16:19). "Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." The Bible gives us a number of examples: The sons of Eli (1 Sam. 8:3). The Philistines bridled Delilah to betray Samson (Jud. 16:5). The Jewish leaders bridled Judas to betray Jesus.

The principle behind the idea of stealing includes the following. David stole Uriah's wife (2 Sam. 11:2-5). Another way to steal a man or woman is to enslave them (1Tim. 1:10). With the Law of Moses, restitution for stealing a man was the lost of one's own freedom forever (Exo. 21:16).

God's System of Justice

Speaking of restitution, God's system of justice in the Old Testament is, to say the

least, a much better code for redress. It serves as a good model even for today. Paying double for your crime is not a bad idea, “If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall pay double” (Exo. 22:1, 4). Do you remember when you were eight years old and your mother took you back to the store where you had stolen a package of gum? She made you pay double for your thievery. It cost you your allowance for two weeks. Such cost for bad behavior helped you to overcome temptation for a few years. Some costly lessons need to be learned repeatedly by youngsters.

In God’s view, even the needy who steals out of perceived necessity has to repay the victim. The wise man affirms that humans have a soft spot for those who steal because they are hungry, “Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy himself when he is hungry” (Prov. 6:30). However, we also note that even the poor man ought to pay for his crime. Solomon continues, “But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; He shall give all the substance of his house” (Prov. 6:31). Folks, God calls for him to give “all.” He has taken that which belongs to another. Crime needs to cost the criminal or else the lawbreaker will elevate his wrongdoing. A hungry thief ought to know better than to steal from another, possibly causing the victim to go without food himself. By God’s standard, not even unemployment is an excuse for stealing.

Other nations echo Solomon’s sentiment. An Indian proverb says, “A thief is a thief, whether he steals a diamond or a cucumber.” Here are two proverbs that give the same advice: An English proverb says, “He that will steal an egg will steal an ox.” A Georgian proverb says, “If you forgive the fox for stealing your chickens, he will take your sheep.” Solomon’s teaching is indeed sound and wise. The newspapers are full of examples of crooks who have committed even more grievous evildoing after receiving leniency. God’s way is to prevent the stealing when it is minor.

God has provided a process that allows the hungry thief to pay less than sevenfold. Moses charged, “If any one sin, and commit a trespass against Jehovah, and deal falsely with his neighbor in a matter of ... robbery ... he shall even restore it in full, and shall add the fifth part more thereto” (Lev. 6:2-5). So, if a thief repents, the punishment is less severe. The penitent Zacchæus was more than willing to pay the full price for his wrongfully actions. “And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wrongfully exacted ought of any man, I restore **fourfold**” (Luke 19:8, Emph. RC). He was a rich man. Rich or poor, in God’s system, each must pay for his crimes.

Thievery is not only costly to individuals but to a society as well. Citizens have to pay police officers, buy police equipment, pay judges, pay prosecutors, build courts, incarcerate thieves in jail or prison. When God’s system of justice is followed fully, society does not have to pay double for catching a thief. With God’s method of recompense, the injured party receives the help for their loss. Today, the unfortunate person loses when he is attacked and when he goes to court. When God’s arrangement of justice is followed, the thief pays for his wrongdoing, and he learns from it. It is interesting to note that **with God’s method of recompense, the government does not receive the money from the lawbreaker. The victim does.** God’s Old Testament system of restitution gives us a good model to follow.

Conclusion

Peter gives us an excellent conclusion to our lesson. He charges, “For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if *a man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name” (1 Pet. 4:15-16).

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Biblical Modesty

Mark 7:14-23; Jeremiah 10:23; 17:9

Gene Hill

Introduction



It doesn't take much study to conclude that our society and culture have changed remarkably in the last 60 years or so from the previous standard of morality to what they are currently. It is also remarkable to observe how the speed of such change is increasing.

As examples of such change as well as how far reaching it is, ask any given gathering, "What is a woman?" or even what pronouns a person wants used in reference to them. What we are seeing is a break with reality or certainly a refusal to recognize reality. If you refuse to accommodate their preferred pronoun usage, or disagree with how folks currently identify what a woman is you are vilified as being insensitive.

We are creatures of volition. Consequently, mankind has the capacity to observe our environment, see what brings success and causes failure, evaluate both courses of action and then decide to behave in a way that will bring benefit even if it means some degree of pain is experienced in the process. These evaluations are always made in relation to our particular world view, which is always religious. What is a world view? "We define a world view as 'a pattern of ideas, beliefs, convictions, and habits. A world-view shapes what we pay attention to and what we ignore. What we believe and what we pay attention to can cause us to interpret the world in a certain way' (Noebel, p. 159).

For our purposes in this article, we are presupposing the existence of an infinite Being who is responsible as Sole Proprietor for His creation, that He has provided sufficient evidence of His existence through His creation, and has self identified Himself to His creation by communicating specific information to us through the Holy Bible of which we have an adequate copy based on a study of the extant manuscripts.

When we say, *Biblically Modest*, what specifically are we discussing? A web search on Bing (accessed 10/29/2022) informs us that biblical is that which relates to or is included in the Bible, and that modesty is behavior, manner, or appearance intended to avoid impropriety or indecency. Therefore for one to be biblically modest is to comport oneself in any given situation in such a way as to be in harmony with any and all pertaining standards found in the Bible.

Biblically Modest Thinking

Our mind is a very important facet of who we are and how we ultimately will be. Vine's says of the word translated mind that it denotes generally the seat of reflective consciousness, comprising the faculties of perception and understanding, and those of feeling, judging and determining (p. 69). The apostle Paul informs us that this mind will have one of two ways of perceiving and understanding and thus behaving. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5). The marginal reading in verse 6 for carnally minded is 'the minding of the flesh'. A carnally minded person may range in behavior from living lives of indifference (2 Thess. 1:8) to murder (Acts 7:51-60; 12:1-3).

The first account the Bible presents of the carnal mind is that of Adam and Eve in their temptation by the serpent (Gen. 3:1-6). The forbidden fruit was presented as that which would provide something God had neglected to give them. The serpents presentation was such that Eve now saw the tree as a food source, that it was pleasant to see and that eating the tree's fruit would provide that which was lacking in their lives. Vs 6. John tells us that this is nothing more than worldly lust, 1 John 2:15-16, and James informs us that this leads to death (Jas. 1:13-15).

Jesus tells us that it is out of the heart that both evil things and good things can flow (Matt. 12:34-35). In Matthew 15:19 we see a list of pure evil, For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blas-

phemies. The question we then ask is why is this the case? Paul gives us the reason in Romans 1:18-32 but particularly verse 28, And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

Biblical modesty requires a spiritual mind and the Bible tells us how to acquire that mind set.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

The parable of the sower tells us that the Word of God is sown in hearts through the preaching of the gospel (Luke 8:11-15; Matt. 28:18-20). The Word has power (Rom. 1:16) to convert the hearers so that they are willing to repent of their sins and submit to the truth (Acts 2:14-47). In putting off the old man of sin the new life in Christ begins (Rom. 6:1-11, 16-18). Since the mind has been transformed, the new child of God begins the journey to heaven (1 John 1:6-10; Eph. 4:17-32).

Biblically Modest Speech

What constitutes speech that is Biblically Modest? The serious nature of words is seen in the words of the Lord,

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matt. 12:34-37).

We have seen that the Christian has a newly transformed heart through obedience to the Word and uses that obeyed standard to direct his thoughts and thereby his words.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16).

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers (Eph. 4:29).

There is simply no room for mean, hateful, derogatory speech in the life of the child of God. "Rather we are to speak truth to our neighbor" (Eph. 4:25).

This sort of speech can be used to chastise someone for their behavior as when Paul confronted Peter (Gal. 1:11-21). It is employed in confronting false teachers, shutting their mouths (Tit. 1:9-11), or delivering those making shipwreck of the faith to Satan (1 Tim. 1:18-20). The same breath can both admonish and warn as Paul did regarding the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-38). These things should not cause wonder when we realize the power of words, whether spoken or written. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Words of the Gospel are powerful enough to save souls (Rom. 1:16).

The source for how and what we are to speak is God's Word and His works. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psa. 1:2). I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. Psalms 77:12. When we are versed in the scripture, we are able to provide an answer when asked (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15).

Biblically Modest Behavior

The writer of Proverbs tells us this, There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 16:25). Paul admonished the Ephesian brethren about their behavior,

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (Eph. 4:17-19).

However John informs us of a way that is in direct contrast with a seemingly right way that isn't a walk of vanity. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

The Psalmist tells us that God's word guides our feet, illuminates our path and provides us with understanding (Psa. 119:105, 130). Jesus says that His words are spirit and life (John 6:63). Such being the case, it would be wise to see what the Scripture says about how to live.

There is behavior that becomes sound doctrine as found in Titus 2:1-10. Aged men are to have sound judgment, be honorable and honest, have self-control and moral conviction, be affectionate (note Tit. 1:8), and possess cheerful endurance.

Aged women are to be reverent in behavior, to not be slanderous in speech, nor addicted to wine (cf. Rom. 6:16; 2 Pet. 2:19), teachers of righteousness, instruct younger women in soundness of mind, to love their families, be self-controlled, innocent and modest, home-makers. Young men are likewise to develop and have sound judgment, exemplary behavior, and sound faith. Peter tells us that righteous conduct will bring harsh judgments against us (1 Pet. 4:4).

The kind of behavior caused by gospel obedience is readily apparent clearly identifying us as servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). Paul says that such behavior will bring persecution. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Biblically Modest Personal Presentation

As the title of this article suggests, Biblical Modesty is the focus of this assigned topic. More than likely when the title is first read our minds turn to clothing and not just the style but also the quantity that is worn—or **not** worn as the case may be. When contemplating just how to approach this topic, it occurred to me that the length of the hemline or the tightness of cloth was really not the problem itself but rather a symptom of a greater problem which is the condition of the heart.

As creatures of volition created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-28) we can decide how we will behave. I will be judged by and held accountable for the things that flow from my heart as previously discussed. I hold the view that simply because I have the power to perform doesn't give me the authority to act. Because I can doesn't mean I should (Acts 10:34-35; Rev 20:12; 28:4; 62:12; Pr 24:12,29; Ec 12:14; Jer 17:10). Why would a child of God want to behave, speak or dress in such a manner that someone will stumble as a consequence? If we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40) and if I should behave towards my neighbor as I would want him to behave towards me (Matt. 7:12) then I simply would not do anything that would tempt another.

While it is true that the contrast of my righteous behavior to that of worldly behavior can draw bitter attention, those speaking evil of me will one day acknowledge my righteousness (1 Pet. 3:16-17; 2:12; Titus 2:8). A wife's good presentation can win her husband (1 Pet. 3:1-2). Our presentation glorifies God. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

Probably the most important factor of all when considering how we present ourselves

is that the Heavenly Father sees. “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3). The question the child of God ought to ask and to always have before himself is how is the Lord viewing what I think, do and say? May each of us always have concern that as those professing Jesus as Lord we always behave in a way that is readily identified as being Biblically Modest.

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Modest Dress

Roddy Covington

Most agree that immodest dress is inappropriate; however, not very many agree as to what constitutes immodesty. As always the Bible has something to say about this and many are not going to like it!

What about modern day swim suits? From the onset of time God has deemed nakedness as inappropriate. Adam and Eve sinned causing them to recognize each others nudity. They “sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). The word translated “aprons” is elsewhere used to describe a girdle that **covers the loins** (1 Kin. 2:5; Isa. 32:11). God considered this “apron” (similar to modern day swimsuits) inadequate dress and made for them clothes out of animal skins (Gen. 3:21). Unquestionably, modern swimsuits would also be considered inappropriate by God and public swimming or sunbathing in mixed company is not for God’s people.

What about short shorts? The prophet Isaiah used this example that will help us understand God’s regulation on “nakedness.” In Isaiah 47:2- 3 we read, “Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen.” Exposing the thigh (above the knee) constitutes “**nakedness.**” We should be mindful of this principle when we buy and wear summer clothes.

What about short skirts? In the Old Testament times the priest wore robes similar to dresses or skirts. A specific command was issued by the law of Moses forbidding them from going up steps to the alter while wearing this skirt, thus allowing the possibility for someone to see underneath the robe; “Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon” (Exo. 20:26). Anyone wearing a skirt so short who (whether sitting, standing, or using stairs) would expose themselves is not very mindful of God’s provisions under the Old Testament forbidding such.

When provocative clothing is displayed it is likely that someone will be provoked to look and lust. Jesus said if a man “looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Mat. 5:28).

Some worldly minded men and women will look and lust even when not provoked; but woe unto those who, **by their sinful dress, provoke lust.** Jesus said, “Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Mat. 18:7). By your dress, don't promote sin in an already darkened world. Be a light to those in darkness, set yourself apart from the world **especially with your modest attire.**

All live, all die, all stand before the Lord in judgment, and all “spend” eternity somewhere—if you have been to a funeral (especially one I preached) then you have probably heard something on that order before. That is the constant for all men of all ages. That never changes. As individuals, however, we all change. We grow older, fatter, thinner, richer, poorer, healthier, sicker, saner, senile, etc. We start as babies and end up as dead folks. We are constantly changing. It is not a matter of will we change, but where will our changes take us. May yours never take you from the protection and care of Him with Whom we have to do. —**Tim Smith**—

The Sin of Transgenderism

Kent Bailey

Just when it seems that those immersed in the filth of human debauchery and debris have reached the lowest levels of sub-human activity, other individuals, desiring to descend to lower levels, either discover or invent additional sinful pursuits. Such is the case with the thought and practices of *Transgenderism*.



The subject of Transgenderism is that type of sexual perversion that is inclusive of, “Trans-sexuality, “cross-dressing,” and seeking “gender identity development, i.e., physical identity through radical surgeries, hormone treatment; and more broadly, “gender atypicality that is inclusive of an irrational thought process where individuals falsely conclude that there are more genders than that of male and female. Such is a myriad of subcultural expressions of self-selecting gender.

Such ethically depraved perverts desire to choose their own identity of male, female, or somewhere in between do not comprise a third sex. They remain biological males or females. They simply refuse to accept rational thinking and realization of reality in the way that they have been procreated in the image of God.

It is a pathetic notion to see the regression of human thought which degenerates into the dangerous secularistic and humanistic views of Michael Foucault and Kimberle Crenshaw, and, increasingly, advocate and argue for public school textbooks that endorse transgenderism. We have reached a point of American thought where government school administrators, members of boards of education, and teacher union representatives view concerned parents, who oppose “drag queens” reading to kindergartners as domestic terrorists. Such is a clear indication of how far that we have collectively drifted as a nation. Such also is a prime example of the clear and present danger that results from the elevation of subjective thinking over that of objective truth.

Transgenderism is Opposed to Scientific Facts

Science is properly defined as *observable knowledge*. Such is based upon knowledge that is empirical in nature and is subjected to facts that are known based upon the use of human senses. Empirical knowledge is not the exclusive knowledge that is extant to humanity. Contemplative knowledge is also a legitimate branch of knowledge. Such knowledge is based upon that of contemplation, logic, and epistemology. When we deal with the physical aspects of humanity we must make proper usage of the laws of physical science, or that which is observable.

While the concepts of origin, such as recorded in the book of Genesis, deals with that of contemplation; the way scientific reality functions is that which is contingent upon observation and the analysis of scientific data. Such is the case when it comes to the study of human gender. Certainly, contemplative knowledge

is of crucial importance regarding such a study. A proper analysis of factual information regarding the Genesis account of creation is a necessity to understand divine revelation regarding such. However observable knowledge of the function of the human body is equally important. *The American College of Pediatricians* correctly observed:

Human sexuality is an objective biological binary trait: “XY” and “XX” are genetic markers of male and female, respectively—not genetic markers of disorder. The norm for human design is to be conceived either male or female. Human sexuality is binary by design with the obvious purpose being the reproduction and flourishing of our species. This principle is self-evident.

Divine Revelation Reveals Truth About Gender

While certainly it is the case that all individuals today are accountable to the New Testament of Christ (John 12:48), and while it is also the case that the Old Covenant has been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14; Hebrews 7:11-12); it is still nonetheless true that eternal moral principles stated in the Old Testament also apply in the New Testament of Christ. That knowledge of God views immorality in the Old Testament gives information how God views the same immoral practices today.

A study of Old Testament History indicates how pagan rituals would have included some aspects of transgender practice. Sexual sins, including transgenderism, were among the most heinous practices of the people that were living in Canaan. The lessons of their judgment because of deviant sexual practices remain as critical danger signs as well as a divine warning to us today.

When individuals reject the basic message of the Bible and repudiate faith in God they also reject what God has revealed about His work regarding the essence and/or nature concerning His creation. Case in point: Michael Foucault, noted French philosopher and social critic, has attempted to argue that Theism and belief that the Biblical concept of creation has leveraged cultural powers to repress human sexual expression. It is interesting to note that which God accomplished in the creation of humanity regarding the aspect of male and female as being that which is good (Gen. 1:26-31). Such being the case, when human efforts to thwart that which God has accomplished are introduced the results are sinful therefore bad.

The Creation of God in Humanity Being Limited to That of Male and Female is Exclusive in Nature and is Therefore Sinful to Alter

Whenever individuals seek to change a divine arrangement sin comes as a result of such change. We note such in God's scheme of Redemption, The New Testament church: Its nature, organization, worship, and work. We also note such in the development and revelation concerning the word of God. The same principle is the case as it relates to the creation of the universe, the material creation of our planet, and as humanity in accomplishing God's purpose for our existence.

Regarding humanity: God created only male and female. God has not left us without information regarding His will concerning human sexuality. Consider the fact that humanity is binary (Gen. 1:26-28; 5:1-2). There is no third or fourth category of humanity. Homosexuals, lesbians, and those attempting a transgender approach cannot physically reproduce. Such stands squarely in opposition to God's physical law in addition to perversion of that regarding spiritual law.

Regarding the New Testament of Christ and its relationship to all of humanity Christ noted:

Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder (Matt. 19:4-6).

All sexual sin is an abomination. While the texts under consideration is a divine indictment against same sex relationships the same divine condemnation also apply to the transgender movement's "intersectionality" instrument inclusive in our study.

Old Testament passages during patriarchy that condemned the sin of Sodomy also in principle condemns the sin of Transgenderism (Gen. 19:1-29). The same is true regarding sexual perversion regarding Sodomy under the covenant of Moses:

- Leviticus 18:22-23
- Leviticus 20:13
- Deuteronomy 23:17
- 1 Kings 12:24
- 1 Kings 15:11-12
- 2 Kings 23:7

Transgenderism expression is not new. Such a practice is a deviant and sinful expression of rebellion against the created order of God. Such was true under the covenant of Moses (Deut. 22:5) and such is true under the New Testament of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3).

Whenever society promotes a confusion between the sexes deviant sinful actions comes as the result of such. As New Testament Christians we must be alert to the anti-

God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible evil age of Secularism. Transgenderism is a definite component within this system of heresy that has been conceived by the Devil and hatched in hell to destroy civilized society.

Romans Chapter One and Transgenderism

It is difficult to imagine a contemporary social movement that is more dangerously consistent with the downward spiral of Romans chapter one than Transgenderism. Such is an outgrowth of the Sodomite movement and gives traction to its goals and accomplishments:

- Romans 1:18-22: Humanity from antiquity had known through patriarchy the invisible attributes of God inclusive of His eternal power and divine nature since the creation of the world. Such being the case, humanity is without excuse in sinking into the depths of gross immorality by dishonoring God.
- Romans 1:26-28: Because of this reason God gave those who had corrupted their minds over to dishonorable passions that are contrary to nature. Transgenderism is a contributing factor to such identity. Such thinking promoted women exchanging natural relations for those contrary to nature, and men giving up natural relations with women. Such passion is not only sinful within themselves; such is also fueled by the Transgender movement as well.
- Romans 1:29-32: Paul depicts an immoral descent into the sin of one's own making. Unbelief and the rejection of truth leading those to repudiate even nature itself in the presence of the undeniable joined with intellectual and spiritual anarchy devolves into the normalization of the irredeemable, but also the codification of the indefensible.

Transgenderism is a grievous sin that must be opposed with all of our might. It is degrading by nature, filthy in its conduct, and eternally fatal in its results. While we must have a holy hatred for all sin in general and for this sin in particular, we must always remember that our hatred must be directed against the sin itself rather than upon the sinner. This distinction does not suggest that we develop a toleration for sin, but rather a genuine love for the sinner—to persuade them to turn from evil practices that they may escape the righteous wrath of God in an eternal hell through obedience to the gospel as well as faithful living.

Editor's Traveling, Preaching, and Writing

I preached three sermons in December. We went to Yukon, Okla. where I preached on Sunday morning, Dec. 4. We worshiped with the Pioneer and Bell church in Elk City, Okla. on Dec. 11 and I preached at Yukon, Okla. Sunday morning on Dec. 18. I finished my preaching on Dec. 25 for the Pioneer and Bell church of Christ in Elk City.

We received several requests for my book, *"The Thing Than Hath Been..." The Cycle of Apostasy*, after Gary Summers' article, "Recommended Reading: *The Thing That Hath Been (Vol. 2)*" appeared in *Defender*. We are grateful for its Editor, Michael Hatcher, who printed Gary's article.

Our newest publication, *The Watchman*, will make its debut in Jan. 2023. Like *The Gospel Preceptor*, *The Watchman* is free for the asking. That publication will focus on apostasy within the churches of Christ which we documented in *"The Thing Than Hath Been..." The Cycle of Apostasy*. With this new publication, brethren will have **two** credible publications dealing with issues—*Defender* and *The Watchman*.

When Gideon answered the call of God to go in His might deliver Israel from the hand of Midian, he built an altar at the scene of his call and named the place, Jehovah-shalom, ("The Lord Send Peace"). God did send peace. But it was peace through conflict, not compromise. We do not see Gideon calling a "unity meeting" with the Midianites; he did not ascend a knoll, lift up benedictory hands, stretch out spreading arms to Israel's foes, and say: "Let us have peace together." He drove the Midianites out by "the sword of the Lord and Gideon." There are some who seem to think that the Lord has dispensed with the sword, dismantled the Armour, and resorted to diplomatic conferences with the powers that be. —Foy E. Wallace, Jr.—

Drinking Alcohol is Sinful

Jess Whitlock



You can make alcohol legal in America, which we have most assuredly done; but you can **never ever make it right!** The problem arises when someone reads the word “wine” 194 times in the Old Testament and 37 times in the New Testament. The student then turns to *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* and reads: “the fermented juice of fresh grapes used as a beverage.” There’s the rub! President Ronald Regan once said, “Within the covers of that single Book (The Bible JLW) are all the answers to all the problems that face us today, if we would only read and believe.”

There are over 500 references to drink and drinking in God’s Word. Some are warnings, some are commendations, some are condemnations. That is why “study” is commanded (2 Tim. 2:15). Three Hebrew words are in the forefront:

- (1) *Yayin* (pronounced wine), occurs 140 times, refers to that which is pressed or squeezed from the fruit, many times the grape (Exo. 29:40; Num. 6:3; Neh. 5:15; Isa. 5:11).
- (2) *Tirosh* is found 32 times, associates with wheat, corn, oil, and sometimes can be eaten or vine-fruit, always commended (Num. 18:12; Deut. 28:51; Neh. 10:39).
- (3) *Shekar* is found 42 times, comes from sources other than grapes, always condemned with woes and sorrow (Lev. 10:9; Num. 6:3; Deut. 14:26; Pro. 31:6; Isa. 24:9; 28:7; 56:12).

There are 6 other Hebrew words rendered “wine.” “Strong drink” is found 57 times in the Old Testament; only one time in the New Testament.

In the New Testament we have two words in Koine Greek.

- (1) *Oinos* (corresponds to the Hebrew *yayin* and *tirosh*, but not *shekar*). *Oinos* is found 33 times, and is the general word for wine. The context must determine the intoxicating ability. Many have concluded that all “wine” in Bible times was intoxicating. Ancient writers such as Aristotle, Horace, Josephus, Pliny, Plutarch, et al. cite four processes by which the ancients could preserve fruit juices to prevent fermentation: boiling, filtration, subsidence, or fumigation with the use of Sulphur.
- (2) *Gleukos* is found only in Acts 2:13. It is defined as “sweet wine, must (fresh juice, JLW), new wine” (*Vine’s & Strong*).

Gary Summers has noted that “*Vine* and *Strong*, after giving the proper definition of the word, then try to re-define it according to their interpretation of Acts 2:13, which is faulty. Wine that is sweet and new is **not** intoxicating...” Brother Summers cites the *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, stating that “*gleukos* means strictly (unfermented juice of grapes); hence, sweet new wine.” (*Spiritual Perspectives*, Vol, 8, No. 45).

We have three accounts of the “Last Supper”: Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:15-20. In each account we read that Jesus “took a cup...the fruit of the vine...” Not one of the Gospel writers uses the word *wine*. The vine does not produce alcohol. None can doubt that the bread was “unleavened.” Leaven causes fermentation and was not accepted in Old Testament sacrifices (Lev. 2:11; Exo. 34:25; etc.) Leaven was not allowed in the houses of the Hebrews during the time of Feats of the Tabernacles (Exo. 12:15-20). The bread was unleavened, so why would any insist on fermented wine? The text specifies: “**fruit of the vine.**” Alcohol is the result of decay, so we know the drink was not fermented!

The favorite “sugar stick” of the “sipping saints” among us is found in John 2:1-11, the wedding feast in Cana, where Christ performed the first miracle. Christ changed water into wine! Christ lived and died under the Old Testament economy. God forbade even looking upon an intoxicating drink (Pro. 23:30-32). Christ miraculously created al-

most 150 gallons of the “best wine.” My Lord did **not** create one single drop of a fermented, intoxicating beverage.

I once visited my aunt in a congregation in north Texas. The class was in a study of John chapter 2. The teacher was doing a good job with the text. After a while, I heard a voice behind me, and a man stating: “we had better not leave the impression that it’s wrong to imbibe alcoholic drinks, because we have friends and neighbors who do drink!” A couple of other chimed in agreement. I waited as long as I could and held up my hand. I made the comment that Jesus “hath been in all points tempted like as we are, **yet without sin**” (Heb. 4:15). I observed that Christ had to be without sin to be our perfect sin-offering. I had the class to read from the prophet, Habakkuk: “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, to thee that addest thy venom (fury), and makes him drunken...” (Hab. 2:15). I observed that if Christ caused one wedding guest to drink an intoxicating beverage, then our Lord sinned, and we are left without a Savior! (Heb. 9:12-15; 10:7-17). I even got a few “amens.” “Wine is a mocker strong drink is a brawler; and whosever erreth thereby is not wise” (Pro. 20:1). If one is not wise, then he must be **otherwise!**

Lest we forget, Paul has listed “drunkenness” as a “work of the flesh” (Gal. 5:21). Mr. Webster actually agrees with *Vine’s, Thayer, Strong’s, Robinson*, and a host of others that the sin of **drunkenness** involves “habitual intoxication.” Paul plainly taught that those who partake of drink “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Paul had written to the church at Corinth to warn that “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God...**drunkards**... and such were some of you...” (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Notice please, that in listing nine sins that will send your soul to hell, Paul stated such “**were**” not “**are**” some of you. They had been, but not any longer!

The Word of God condemns the first drink of any alcoholic beverage. Let your fingers do the walkin’ and let the Bible do the talkin’. “And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot; but be filled with the Spirit;” (Eph. 5:18). Some will say the verse only condemns being drunken, and not taking a drink. Let’s look a little closer...the word “drunken” is from *methusko*, which signifies “to make drunk, or to grow drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process or the state expressed in # 1) to become intoxicated” (*Vine*). “Inceptive” means expressing the beginning of an action. *Thayer* says: “to make drunk, to get drunk, become intoxicated.” In today’s vernacular Paul wrote, “Do not even begin to become drunk.” I have a friend, a member of the church and of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. He once told me that when a person takes one drink, that person is “one drink drunk.” Paul and the OHP condemn even that **first** drink.

The Christian is constantly admonished to be **sober**: (1 The. 5:6-8; 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:6-8). Joel referred to wine that is dried up in the field (Joel 1:10); can someone explain how such could cause intoxication? Isaiah wrote of those that **tread out** the wine (Isa. 16:10) and Amos told of grapes being **trodden** (Amos 9:13); how intoxicating was that wine at the time? Joseph took grapes and **pressed** them into Pharaoh’s cup (Gen. 40:11); from the moment the juice left the grape and hit the cup, how much fermentation could have taken place?

History recalls a time in America known as “Prohibition Law,” enacted as the 18th Amendment of the Constitution in 1919. For some 14 years it was illegal for Americans to sell and/or consume alcoholic beverages. The 18th Amendment shut down 177,790 saloons and 1,775 breweries. America saw crime **decrease 54%**, the death rate due to **alcohol consumption decreased by 42%**, **97 of the 98 Keely Alcoholic Cure Clinics** went out of business, **insanity decreased by 66%** and all 60 Neel Cure Clinics closed.

Then, in 1933 the 18th Amendment was repealed. The following year **drunkenness** (a work of the flesh) **increased by 350%**, major St. Louis hospitals alone recorded a **400% increase of alcoholic patients**. Believe it or not, most history books in school classrooms refer to the days of prohibition as being the “scourge of American liberty”! By 1929 the Prohibition Bureau had arrested more than 500,000 violators. To charge that Prohibition was a “scourge” or that “it did not work” is simply to bury one’s head in the proverbial sand! Prohibition did drastically reduce the consumption of the

beverage alcohol.

Alcohol abuse is nothing new. The ancient Egyptians offered advice to imbibers of alcohol in a book of etiquette dated c. 1,500 B.C. The book in Egyptian hieroglyphics is entitled, *The Making of Ani*. It states in part:

Make not thyself helpless in drinking in the beer shop. For will not the words of thy report repeated slip out from thy mouth without thy knowing that thou hast uttered them? Falling down thy limbs will be broken and no one will give thee a hand to help thee up. As for thy companions in the swilling of beer, they will get up and say, 'outside with this drunkard.'

America is under attack from alcohol on a daily basis. Alcohol is a drug. Ethyl alcohol is contained in beer, wine, and whiskey. It is a depressant designed to dull inhibitions and to decrease self-control. America spends in excess of \$60,000,000,000 per year on alcohol related problems. Annually our nation consumes more than 270,000,000 gallons of hard liquor, 1,600,000,000 gallons of beer, and 170,000,000 gallons of wine. The beverage alcohol contributes annually to **53% of all highway fatalities; 50% of spousal abuse cases; 40% of all child abuse cases; 72% of physical assaults; 69% of deaths by drowning; 70% of sexual abuse cases; and 83% of deaths related to fire.**

It is very strange that a Roman Catholic priest welcomed the delegates of the "Small Brewers Convention" in Chicago. From the *Roman Ritual*, he prayed:

Bless O Lord, this Thy creation, beer, which thou hast designed to produce from the heart of the grain in order that it might be a healthful remedy for mankind. And grant that, through the invocation of Thy holy name, whoever shall drink of it shall receive health of body and safeguard of the soul, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

The H.A. Luvezzi Beer Company warned their drivers they could not drink beer on their lunch breaks. They believed it would be foolish for them to drink beer and then drive one of their eight-ton trucks! The year I graduated that company fired two of their drivers who were caught drinking beer while having lunch. I have never heard of a shoe company that fired its sales people for wearing their shoes. I have never heard of a driver for Pepsi or Coca-Cola being fired for drinking one of them. I have never heard of a driver for Wonder Bread, losing his job for having a sandwich made on Wonder Bread. How about you?

In Ardmore, Oklahoma I once interviewed a judge, a District Attorney, and a member of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol about the subject of beer and alcohol. Here are some of those responses, which I then used in one of my radio programs while in that city:

"I know of no other factor that contributes more than drinking to family problems, divorce, and juvenile delinquency, than does alcoholism."

"I see children naked and hungry, whose mothers and fathers waste all their money on it."

"A four-year old was brought into my court for being drunk on the street!"

"A teenage-girl whose mother is dead, spent nights on the front porch because she was afraid of being sexually molested by her drunken father."

"A mother had a baby that weighed less at three months of age, than when born, because the mother used money given to her to buy milk, to buy liquor for herself instead."

"Almost every community has at least one place that will sell beer/whiskey to minors."

Dateline UPI:

Wilson Turner was sitting at a bar in Florida. 'One more drink for the road won't hurt' he thought. He bought another bottle to carry with him. He got into his car and drove home. He was anxious to see his son, Randell, who was in the 5th grade. The nearer he got to home, the faster he drove. Maybe that last drink had dulled his senses. Suddenly from a side street a boy on a

bicycle appeared... He swerved to miss, but struck the boy. In fear, he left the scene of the accident. Later the police came to his house and arrested Turner. He was found in the attic with the bottle he had bought, crying, as he tried to drown the event out of his mind. Turner was put in jail, but released long enough to attend the funeral service of the boy his car had struck. This was the worst thing that had ever happened to him in his life...

The newspapers carried this story and added one more fact that you really need to know. **The young boy who had been killed was Turner's only son, Randell!** Turner had thought, just one more drink for the road won't hurt—but it did!

“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it sparkleth in the cup, when it goeth down smoothly: at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Pro. 23:31-32). Alcohol will send your soul to hell!

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Divorce For any Reason Except God's, is Sinful

Michael Demory

“...Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put (her) away? He saith unto them, Moses **for your hardness of heart** suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so.” (Matt. 19:7-8, Emph. MD).



Divorce, putting away, to cut apart, expel, or dissolve are all words affiliated with the sin that has plagued man for thousands of centuries. As the wisdom of King Solomon put it, “There is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9). Since the dawning of time man has sought to do that which is right in his own eyes (Jud. 17:6; 21:25), and dissolving God’s institution of marriage is no different.

When God proclaimed it was not good for man to be alone, thereby determining to create for Adam a “helpmeet” (Gen. 2:18), this completed His creative work through the introduction of both male and female (Gen. 1:27). As an intellectual and spiritual being, man would not have been suitable, by himself to carry out God’s eternal purpose. Like the animal kingdom, there had to be a way for mankind to multiply in order to bring our Savior into the world. Woman, as man’s help meet—meaning she would be the exact counterpart of man, brought with it man’s social condition, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Mankind, created with emotions, desires, a will, and ability to choose which path he will take, has been authorized by God to fill his sexual desires only through the institution of marriage. As Paul points out, “...to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). Fornication, the only authorized reason for a spouse to put away, dissolve, cut apart one’s marriage (Matt. 19:9).

Marriage, as Paul stated, is for those who cannot contain themselves, to prevent fornication (1 Cor. 7:9). However, it is also for those who have matured enough to be re-

sponsible adults. Those who will not run home to momma every time things do not go their way (Matt. 19:5). It is for men and women determinedly work out their problems together, for it was their love of inseparableness that sent them to the altar of matrimony in the first place. They vowed before witnesses and God that they would love and cherish one another until death. That sickness, health, poverty, and wealth couldn't dissolve their love for one another but would carry them through until death released them from the law of the husband and wife (Rom. 7:1-3):

Know ye not, brethren, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

As it was under the law of Moses, divorce was never commanded, but allowed, tolerated; and it is under the law of Christ, finding no command to divorce one's spouse, but should there be no way to reconcile the unfaithfulness, God allows the faithful spouse to put away their mate. God, who is longsuffering towards us (2 Pet. 3:9), allowed the Israelites to play the unfaithful spouse for decades, and despite His warnings for them to repent and be faithful once again, their heart was so hardened that the time came for God to divorce them (Ezek. 16:1-63). This is many times the cause of divorces in any generation, one spouse loves the other so much they can't bear to cut ties with them, but the time comes when the one playing the harlot has such a seared conscience that nothing can be done to motivate them to repent and turn. We are of course speaking of a Scriptural divorce, and not a divorce for any reason other than fornication. While there is no requirement by God to encourage repentance by the unfaithful party, love for the soul of that party should cause a pause in running to the courthouse for an immediate dissolution of the marriage. Yes, our feelings have been hurt, we may find it very difficult to even forgive the individual for what they have done, but the Christian must firstly consider the person whose soul is in jeopardy and work diligently to do what is possible to save them.

The Hebrew husband as the head of the family and as such the head of his wife, made it next to impossible for the wife to divorce her husband even on Scriptural grounds. Though she was his most prized possession, she was subordinate to her husband. The law concerning divorce as recorded in Deut. 24:1-4 allowed the husband to "write a bill of divorcement":

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness [unseemly thing] in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, or if the latter husband die, which too her to be his wife; her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shall not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

The common term was "ishshah," meaning, the sending away of the wife" (Deut. 22:19-20). The purpose of such a bill, laid out the reasons for the divorce in order to make it harder, and to regulate an evil that the husband could not extirpate. The Law was meant to protect the wife against unceremonious and capricious expulsion from house and children. The grounds for divorce are difficult to determine from the Hebrew words that are rendered "some uncleanness" (KJV). Common sense tells us that it does not have to do with fornication or adultery, as such crimes were under penalty of death (Deut. 22:20ff).

There were two schools of thought among the Jews concerning the grounds for di-

voiced. One group averred that unchastity or adultery justified a husband to put away his wife, while the other group was more open. The Jewish Mishna is full of reasons, such as finding another woman the man liked better...because she didn't keep her vows...conversed with men in the street...found out on the street with her hair loose...fed her husband food that had not been tithed...spoke so loud that her neighbors could hear her...burning the food or not seasoning it correctly. As for adultery, this only applied to the wife, for the husband was never guilty of adultery by having intercourse with one of his several wives, concubines, slave, or bondwoman while married. He would only be guilty of adultery when he dishonored his "free wife" (Lev. 20:10ff). That is, a wife free from suspicion as she had devoted herself to prayer by avoiding any activity outside the house that could compel her to adultery.

God's immutability is proof that we can depend upon His promises, as well as His word to never change.

"For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6)

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (Jas. 1:17)

Therefore, the principles taught in the Old Testament, are just as binding today as they were in the days of Adam, Abraham, and even the Israelites. Jesus proves this to be the case when He stated:

...have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Matt. 19:4-6).

Since the beginning it has been God's will that there be only one man and one woman married for life, with fornication as the **only cause** for putting away a spouse. It is due to the hardness of the Israelites hearts that He allowed divorce for any reason, but that allowance has been replaced with a New Covenant (Heb. 8:6-13; Col. 2:14). For God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16), always has and always will, because of the numerous sins it causes—(1) the breaking of vows [Matt. 5:3-37] (2) the breaking of the golden rule [Matt. 7:12] (3) the breaking of the law [Gal. 5:14] (4) it demonstrates love of the world, rather than God [1 John 2:15], just to name a few.

A recent study by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University discovered that less than one-third of Americans believe the Bible should serve as their ultimate standard of right and wrong; while 42% of those surveyed believe "what you feel in your heart" should be the only standard for determining moral values. Sixty-three percent believe the Bible is not God's true and accurate words. This coming from men and women who claim to be Christian. Is it any wonder why the world and our country are falling apart at the seams? It is this attitude toward God's Word that brought sin into the world in the first place.

Divorce has become so commonplace that it's hard to know when, or if, it was ever unheard of. The earliest recorded divorce in the United States was in Massachusetts Bay in 1629 when the Legislative body granted divorces on the basis of adultery, desertion, bigamy and in more cases than not, impotence. By 1776 divorce law became less restrictive and the legislatures turned the work over to the judiciary, as it is today. By the end of the 18th century states such as Utah, Indiana and the Dakota Territory became known as "divorce colonies" (mills), as later Mexico, Reno and Las Vegas would become. The husband and wife would be required to move to the colony and live there for a minimum of three months after which they could get their divorce and leave. In the 1920s some States began allowing "trial marriages" that allowed couples to try out marriage for a limited time, thus hopefully preventing the rise in divorces. By the 1930s Reno and Las Vegas were offering quicky three-day divorces, which Clark Gable and his second wife were one of the first to take advantage.

In 1953, the State of Oklahoma was the first to introduce “no-fault-divorce” where a spouse could end a marriage without having to prove a fault with their partner. By 1969, California followed suit with their “Family Law Act,” and most States have since adopted the same, with only a few that do not recognize such a divorce. There are a number of reasons that couples divorce, but when boiled down the common denominator is a lack of communication. Following is a list of reasons in within the United States today:

1. Fornication
2. Abuse (physical, psychological, verbal)
3. Domestic violence
4. Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, etc.)
5. Incompatibility
6. Irreconcilable Differences
7. Lack of commitment
8. Conflict, arguing, breakdown in relationship
9. Lack of intimacy
10. Financial problems
11. Marrying too young
12. Lack of shared interests
13. One partner not carrying their weight
14. Different values
15. Abandonment
16. Health problems (spouse or children)
17. Lack of communication

Fifty-eight percent of couples 50-70 yrs divorce due to a cheating spouse, while 85% in the same age group divorce due to a lack of commitment, and 61% divorce due to conflict. Fifty-five percent of couples 20-40 yrs divorce because of a lack of intimacy and communication, and 34% of them divorce due to domestic violence. Thirty-three percent blame their ex-spouse. Forty-50% of marriages end up in divorce, with the percentage increasing with every subsequent marriage. The majority of marriages end after the first 7 years of marriage, with 80% of the time women initiating the divorce. However, there is a good sign that we pray will continue, since COVID, divorce rates have dropped from 8.2 per 1,000 people, to 5.1. This may be good, and it may not, as more men, and women view marriage as an outdated institution and are choosing to shack-up rather than formalizing their relationship, so it’s really hard to tell how accurate the statistics are.

Man has been given the ability to choose on his own whether to obey or reject God’s will, and that is certainly evident with the excuses used to justify doing something that God hates. Divorce for any reason is the devil’s tool, and the religious world has been sucked into the vacuum of his devices by not preaching against divorce, but instead ignoring it just to keep the pews filled. Yes, at one time God allowed divorce for any reason, but it was at a time of man’s ignorance (Acts 17:30). When God hoped His law would reveal its purpose to bring the carnal man to a spiritual understanding of His will (1 Cor. 3:1). It should be unnerving to hear fellow Christians tell their children, “well, if it doesn’t work out, you can always get a divorce.” Such spiritual immaturity is becoming more common than not, and elders and preachers need to teach against such nonsense. There has always been only one reason for putting away, dissolving, and expelling, and that is fornication. May we ever turn to God’s word as our standard of right and wrong, and stop with Pentecostalism—if it feels right, do it.

Send your email address to jbbbbbrewer@gmail.com to subscribe to *The Watchman*

The Sin of Using Foul Language

Harrell Davidson



When the erudite editor of *The Gospel Preceptor* asked me for some thoughts on “Foul Language”, I began to contemplate exactly how I would approach it. I knew that the word “foul” had several meanings. A foul is sometimes when something is out of bounds. There are lines in sports that must not be crossed or one is out bounds and a foul is called. It also means in sports that when a player has accidentally struck someone and that is a foul.

I realize by the assignment that the word “foul” is not spelled *fowl*. These are generally birds such as ducks, geese and crows and more.

Foul language is out of bounds also in many ways. One person was described as having a “potty mouth”. It takes little imagination to understand what is meant by this. Dirty smutty words are always foul-out of bounds if you please.

A recent news item on national television after a hurricane had devastated part of a city on a southern coast, a news person was interviewing one of the citizens and this happened: “It was a miracle that anyone was spared, OMG” meaning of course Oh my God. This is equal to shaking one’s fist in God’s face but this happens in our society almost every day. Not the same situation but the term “OMG.” Exodus 20:7, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Seemingly this means little in today’s culture. It has become a favorite expression for many and accepted by most.

This, like potty mouth, is out of bounds in the sight of God. I’m sure that fowls communicate with each other in some language that by nature they have been endowed, but not one of them uses such before the Maker of the air that it takes for them to fly.

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:36-37).

If we shall be called on to give account for every idle, rash, inconsiderate word, how much more for such blasphemy as the Pharisees had uttered? How careful, too, should we be to see that our speech is pure! Jesus here makes words the basis of the judgment of God. Elsewhere we find it is works such as Rom 2:6; “Who will render to every man according to his deeds” and in 2 Cor. 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” There is no confusion here. The judgment in its finality must be based upon our character. Our faith forms our character, and our words and works are indices by which we may determine what manner of character it is.

The word “idle” means one who is useless and without purpose. This is the kind of talk that the scribes and Pharisees were using. They were teaching others to not accept the teaching of Christ. First Timothy 5:13 will help us in this. Paul said, “And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.” This is not talking about joking or teasing a bit. This has to do with language that is damaging to the soul. Now, would you want to use gutter potty language before God on judgement day?

I had always thought, until the last several years, that such language was due to a lack of education and how to express one’s thoughts without a dirty mouth. Observe now that the most educated use such language as a matter of rote it seems. Children hear it at home from dad and mom and take it to school and it only broadens from there.

Please consider the following passages of Scripture: “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain” (Jas. 1:26).

But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.
Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men,

which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh” (Jas. 3:8-12).

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience (Eph. 5:3-6).

Notice these terms: Neither filthiness, all kinds of indecency, foolish talking jesting, words of doubtful morality, words and suggestions of doubtful and double meaning—smutty potty mouth. These are not convenient. Are not becoming. It is more becoming to Christians to engage in thanksgiving.

Birds of the heavens have more sense-judgement than a human being that will use such filth in communicating. Such language should not be part of our vocabulary whatsoever.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes (Rom. 3:10-18).

The writer realizes the context in which Paul wrote. Nonetheless it takes little imagination for our country in this type of situation in the 21st century. People are not seeking as a whole. Thus, there is no way for them to understand. Mouths are running over with vulgarity. Many are bitter and seeming think nothing of cursing. We walked into a business a few days ago and a man was telling vulgar jokes. He looked at men and said, “I’m sorry preacher” to which I responded by saying, “if you can say that before God who am I.”

Yes, the fowls have more sense than many people—young or old.

God’s Word on Sodomy

David Ray



God has always given His laws to mankind for our benefit, but mankind has chosen his own way (Isa. 53:6). Men seem to believe that they know better than God what’s right and what’s wrong. As society degrades more and more, that which is good and wholesome in God’s eyes is deplorable, while that which is an abomination to God and His people is acceptable and praiseworthy. This is nothing new. Isaiah said, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isa. 5:20).

One such example that is quite prevalent today is homosexuality, ever increasingly praised by those who practice it, and becoming more openly accepted even by those who don’t. Lately it seems you can’t watch a television commercial that doesn’t include homosexual couples. Sometimes it’s less obvious that others, but sometimes it’s being flaunted before us.

While the world euphemistically calls this “an alternate lifestyle” or one’s “sexual preference,” the Bible calls these people *sodomites*, obviously a reference to the abominable perversions that occurred in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of

Abraham and Lot, and for which these people are “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). You can read the disgusting details in Genesis 19, particularly verse 5.

The word *sodomite* or *sodomites* occurs five times in the Old Testament (KJV). It is defined by Strong as “a (male) *devotee* (by prostitution) to licentious idolatry: -sodomite, unclean.” Those who want to find biblical authority for homosexual behavior focus in on the “prostitute” part of the definition, claiming that God was only forbidding prostitution (particularly the temple cult practices so common in antiquity). They then improperly transfer this meaning to other passages that do not use the same word and clearly condemn all homosexual activity. For this article, we will be focusing on these clear biblical condemnations, both in the Old and New Testaments.

“Gay” and the Rainbow

Two beautiful things that have been hijacked and perverted by homosexuals are the rainbow and the word *gay*. The word *gay*, according to Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, still means “happily excited, merry, bright, lively, brilliant in color.” Of course, this is a secondary definition. The primary meaning is “of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one’s same sex.” As we’ll discuss momentarily, there is nothing gay about sodomy!

And what a disgusting theft to change God’s beautiful rainbow into a sign of filth. After God flooded the world in Noah’s day due to the pervasion of sin throughout society (Genesis 6:5), God graciously gave us the beautiful rainbow, still as mesmerizing to behold today as it was then, as a sign that He would never flood the world again (9:13-17). Maybe the sodomites’ display of a rainbow to represent their abhorrent lifestyle is nothing more than an arrogant claim that they know God won’t flood the world again because of their abominable acts. Either way, they need to consider what He said in 2 Peter 3:5-7, that while the world was destroyed with water before, the next destruction of sinful man will be with fire. Faithful Christians don’t fear this day; we look forward to it. But we **do** fear it for those who practice sodomy (and all other sin), and we earnestly desire their repentance before it is eternally too late.

What the World Says

So, what does the Bible say about the practice of sodomy? According to many sodomite apologists, it really says nothing. Let’s consider some thoughts from an article titled *What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?* on the Human Rights Council website (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality>).

Near the beginning of the article, it says, “Before we can jump into how it is that Christians can maintain the authority of the Bible and also affirm sexual diversity....” Stop right there. No need to finish the article, or even the sentence. We already know that the goal of the author is **not** to determine biblical truth, but rather to harmonize the Bible’s clear teachings with his own unbiblical beliefs and desires. In other words, he has no interest in simple adherence to the Bible’s teachings. No wonder we find things like this:

While the six passages that address same-sex eroticism in the ancient world are negative about the practices they mention, there is no evidence that these in any way speak to same-sex relationships of love and mutuality.

Notice the admission that the Bible speaks **negatively** about “same sex eroticism.” We can be certain from the context that he has, therefore, taken all homosexual activity and divided it into two categories: that which is between two people who allegedly love each other, and all other such activity, which he calls *eroticism*. He then concludes that it must be this second category that is condemned by Scripture, not the first since, after all, these two men/women love each other. While the article claims it, the fact is clear that **the Bible makes no such distinction** in its condemnation of sexual activity between two people of the same sex (as we’ll see below).

So, what does this article say about these “six passages that address same-sex eroticism”? Not much. Watch how it attempts to dismiss four of these verses in two short sentences:

The injunction that “man must not lie with man” (Lev. 18:22, 20:13) coheres with the context of a society anxious about their health, continuing family lineages, and retaining the distinctiveness of Israel as a nation. Each time the New Testament addresses the topic in a list of vices (1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10), the argument being made is more than likely about the sexual exploitation of young men by older men....”

So, God's clear condemnation of **all** practice of sodomy in Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 was actually given because of their health concerns, their needs to procreate, and the requirement to remain distinct from other nations? Interesting is the assumed admission that sodomite relationships bring health concerns and the inability to procreate! Of course, none of these things is mentioned as being the reason for God's condemnation of sodomy. He simply condemns it...**all** of it. The article's claim is false.

And, read 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10 and see if you can find in these contexts anything about “the sexual exploitation of young men by older men.” As we'll see below, the definition of one of the words in these two lists may include, but is not limited to this idea, but the other word used is in no way limited to such a specific sin; it is broad its meaning (and therefore condemnation) of sodomy. The author of this article simply hones in on it and ignores the broader sin being condemned. Again, the article's weak attempt to redefine the context fails.

And don't think that our author forgot about Paul's resounding condemnation of sodomy in Romans 1. Let's notice how he helps us understand that this is **not** a blanket condemnation of sodomy (like it clearly is):

...and what we read in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans is a part of a broader indictment against idolatry and excessive, self-centered lust that is driven by desire to “consume” rather than to love and to serve as outlined for Christian partnership elsewhere in the Bible.

The passage to which he refers, Romans 1:26-27, speaks of Gentiles, who knew God and the truth (v. 20-21) but rejected it (v. 28) and became fools (v. 22), giving themselves over to numerous sins (v. 23-32). Included in this was their sodomite sin:

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

According to our author, this is simply a broad condemnation of idolatry, excess, and those who just want to “consume” rather than love. Yet again, no such contextual limitations can be found in this passage. Rather, Paul is condemning many sins they committed, one of which was sodomite relationships. We notice that the inspired apostle called only **one** relationship “natural”, and that was a man with a woman. He says that the relationships of men with men and women with women are “against nature,” “unseemly,” and “error,” not to mention “dishonor(ing) their own bodies between themselves” (v. 24). And **all** of these are the result of “vile affections” (*vile* means “disgrace, dishonor, reproach, shame,” according to *Strong's Greek Dictionary*). There is nothing in the context that could possibly lead an honest truth seeker to conclude that **any** sodomy relationship could be acceptable or authorized by God, regardless of how much these two claim to love each other. Any man who truly loves another man will do everything in his power to help him be saved rather than participating with him in activities the Bible clearly identifies as sin.

What we see in this article is the same thing we see so often in the religious world — mislabeling of the context of a biblical passage in order to water down its meaning. This is a popular tactic among false teachers and those whose goal is **not** to understand the purpose and meaning of a passage. This is why we have to be on our guard against such error. Each of us needs to fulfill his own responsibility to study each passage in its context (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15) and then do what it says (Jas. 1:22-25). An honest reading of these passages (as we're about to do) will cause an open-minded Bible student to conclude that the practice of sodomy is **in no case** approved by God, but

rather is an abomination to Him and will cause the impenitent participant to be eternally lost.

Scripture on the Topic

Now let's let the Bible answer the question clearly regarding whether or not the practice of sodomy is authorized.

1. Leviticus 18:22 – “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” This is not ambiguous! There is no specific Hebrew word used here that can be defined more precisely in order to limit the context. It simply condemns a man for “lying” (obviously euphemistic for sexual intercourse) with another man in the same manner (i.e., sexually) that he would with a woman. There is no broader chapter context that would limit the meaning. Hence the author of the above article fabricated a very broad societal context of health, family lineage, and national distinction (see above).

2. Leviticus 20:13 – “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.”

3. 1 Kings 14:24 (see also 15:12; 22:46; Deut. 23:17) – “And there were also sodomites in the land: *and* they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.” As mentioned above, the definition of the Hebrew word for *sodomite* includes the idea of “temple prostitute,” which causes many to falsely believe and teach that **every time** the practice is condemned, it's really only the pagan temple practice that's being condemned. However, it's crystal clear from these other passages that **all** sodomy is sin before God, regardless of any specific purpose.

4. Mark 10:6-9 – “...from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” The only sexual relationship God authorized is between a man and woman (more on this below).

5. Romans 1:26-27 – “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.” This has already been discussed (above).

6. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” “Abusers of themselves with mankind” (KJV) is translated from a compound Greek word meaning “man” and “coitus” (i.e., sex between men) and is translated “homosexuals” (NKJV) and “sodomites” (Young's Literal Translation). Also in this list, “fornicators” refers to those who practice **any** unauthorized sexual activity, which includes sodomy.

7. 1 Timothy 1:9-10 – “...the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners...for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind...and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” “Whoremongers” and “them that defile themselves with mankind” are translated from the same two Greek words as in 1 Cor. 6:9-10 (see #6 above).

8. Jude 1:7 – “Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” The “going after strange flesh” further defines the type of “fornication” to which Jude refers.

“Strange” is translated from the Greek *heteros*, which means “different”; i.e., different than what is normal and “natural” (Rom. 1:26); different than what is authorized (i.e., unauthorized flesh). Sodom and Gomorrah, and all those who practice this sin, will suffer “the vengeance of eternal fire.”

What IS authorized?

We’ve shown clearly that, in all three dispensations (Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian), God condemned the practice of sodomy. But, even if He’d been silent on this unnatural practice, He was not silent on the topic of sexual relationships and what He wants and authorizes for all mankind. God identified the one type of sexual activity that He authorized. No other such activity is permitted. Hebrews 13:4 says “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” The **only** sexual activity that is authorized is in the “**marriage** bed.” And He limited **marriage** to the union of a man and a woman.

Genesis 2:24 – “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” A **man** (Hebrew “*iysh*” meaning man or husband) shall cleave unto his **wife** (Hebrew “*ishshah*” meaning woman or wife). There is no authority here for two men or two women.

What did Jesus have to say about this verse?

Matthew 19:4-5 – Jesus quoted this verse when challenged by the Jewish leaders on the question of divorce and remarriage. He said, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?” Jesus therefore makes it clear that a marriage is defined as one man and one woman, and that this union is to be for life (v.6f).

We can see then that God **1)** specified the only type of sexual relationship He authorized, and that is between one man and one woman in their marriage bed, and **2)** was **not** silent on any other kind of sexual relationship, but explicitly forbade and condemned them. Therefore, **any** other sexual activity (including but not limited to homosexuality) is unauthorized and forbidden by God. If a man or woman chooses to participate in such unauthorized and forbidden relationships, he or she violates God’s law, which is the definition of sin (1 John 3:4). Sin separates one from God (Isaiah 59:2) and will result in spiritual death (Jas. 1:14-16). In other words, sodomy (among all other unauthorized sexual activity) will lead the partaker to Hell.

As sinful and soul-threatening as the practice of sodomy is, we need to recognize that it is **not** an unpardonable sin; any homosexual can be forgiven if he obeys God’s plan of salvation, which includes repentance and ceasing the sinful practice (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11 – “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus...”). Nor is this sin any worse in the eyes of God than any other sin. **Any** unforgiven sin will result in eternal separation from God (Isa. 59:2). It’s important for the Christian, who should be disgusted by the practice of sodomy, to be just as disgusted by the practice of **any** sin.

Let’s also recognize that it is the **practice** of sodomy that is condemned. Many people today may have confused feelings of attraction for the opposite sex but refuse to act upon those feelings because they know such action to be sin. These people are to be commended for their refusal to participate in what they know to be an abomination to God. And they need the support of Christians to remain pure of the sin that tempts. It is certainly an important work of the church to evangelize the lost and encourage the saved.

When the apostles and other inspired men told inquiring sinners what to do to be saved, the sinner did not stop to puzzle over God's part in the matter, but promptly did what he was told to do. “Then they that received his word were baptized.” They had not been blinded by being told that man could do nothing and that salvation was wholly a matter of grace... There are two sides in the sinner's salvation—namely, God's side and man's side. On God's part, or side, man's salvation is a matter of grace; on man's part, or side, salvation is wholly matter of works. —R.L. Whiteside—

What the Bible Says About the Sin of Lying

Nana Yaw Aidoo



A story is told of a young man who decided on a flip and point approach to Bible study. He flipped his Bible open and put his index finger on a text. The text read, “a lie is an abomination to the Lord.” Wanting to learn more he closed his Bible, flipped it open again and dropped his finger on another text which read: “but a very present help in time of trouble.”

This combination of texts represents the attitude of most people as far as lying—a false statement presented as the truth and made with the intention of deceiving—is concerned. With regards to the sin of lying most Christians do not live on a higher level to non-Christians. We lie to avoid trouble; shift blame; shirk responsibility; impress others; avoid conflict; hurt others; and sometimes just to be nice. There are also times we lie and convince ourselves that it is for the benefit of the other person.

Lying is one of those sins some have termed “respectable sins.” Many who have no sympathy or place for false teaching or immorality either in their own lives or in the lives of others have no issues winking at a lie (which is also **immorality**, Ed.), which others or they themselves have told. A study which was done on lying revealed that 60 percent of people cannot speak for 10 minutes without lying (Yarber). One wonders how many of this 60 percent are members of the churches of Christ. It is a behavior that most people learn by the time they are 4 years old (Yarber).

So commonplace is this sin that some have tried to justify it by appealing to Rahab’s lie (cf. Joshua 2). Some years ago in a Bible class one sincere brother (and others) suggested the propriety of lying in some instances due to the favorable comments the Bible makes about Rahab (cf. Jam. 2:25). It is true that Rahab did lie. Some say she didn’t. However even a blind person can see that she did (cf. Josh. 2:1-6). And it is also true that she is commended in the Scriptures. However, she is not commended because she lied. To think along such lines is to think beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6).

The writer of the book of Hebrews mentions her faith (Heb. 11:31). Rahab had faith in the one true God (Josh. 2:9-11) and she “*believed* assuredly what her other countrymen disbelieved, and this in the face of every improbability that an unwarlike few would conquer well-armed numbers” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown). This faith manifested itself in the **work** (cf. Jam. 2:25) of hiding the spies even to the risking of her own life. Thus, James, far from commending her lie, was arguing (as he had done beginning with the 14th verse) that this woman showed,

...by her act that her faith was genuine, and that it was not a mere cold and speculative assent to the truths of religion. Her act showed that she truly believed God. If that act had not been performed, the fact would have shown that her faith was not genuine, and she could not have been justified (Barnes).

But did she not, in showing her faith by her works (Jam. 2:18), lie to Jericho’s king? Yes, she did. However, commending an aspect of a person’s actions or life is not necessarily a commendation of everything that person has done or everything in that person’s life and character. To so argue is to suggest, for example, that when we commend a drunkard for saving a person from drowning, that necessarily means we have commended or sanctioned his drunkenness. This is an argument only a person who wants to indulge in the devil’s brew would make. The Bible is not pro-situational ethics. It is a book of absolute and objective truths. And verily it is a mark of its divine inspiration that it both explicitly and implicitly condemns the sinful actions of its heroes.

While some people based on poor and incorrect reasoning about Rahab would say, “I cannot believe that lying in every circumstance is wrong,” thus says the word of God:

1. God abominates lies: “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:... a lying tongue, and... a false witness that speaketh lies” (Prov. 6:16-19).

- 2. Humans are never more like the devil than when they lie:** “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).
- 3. Lying is a form of hate:** “A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin” (Pro. 26:28).
- 4. A Christian, no matter how doctrinally sound, is unfaithful, if lying is his/her habit:** “If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (Jam. 1:26).
- 5. The one who encourages (either implicitly or explicitly) the liar, is just as guilty as the actual liar:** “Who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things (like deceit – Rom. 1:29) are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure (also consent – ASV 1901) in them that do them” (Rom. 1:32).
- 6. Liars cannot live fulfilling and fulfilled lives:** “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile (deceit – NKJV)” (1 Pet. 3:10).
- 7. Big liars (politicians especially fall into this category), small liars, white liars, all liars will be condemned by the holy and awesome God to an eternity in hell:** “But...all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death... And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:8, 27).

Conclusion

Dear reader never forget this. None of us is immune to the sin of lying (1 Cor. 10:12). You are a liar if you think you are. And also, a lie, no matter how innocent, is a sin against the Almighty God. “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:9-10).

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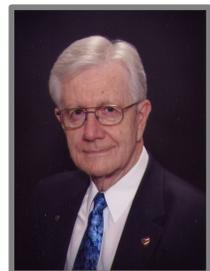
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The Sin of Fornication

Dub McClish

Introduction

In the beginning God created mankind, made them “male and female,” and commanded them to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Gen. 1:27–28).¹ God further inspired Moses to state His intent in this regard: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (2:24). Moses recorded the beginning of their fulfillment of God’s first command to them in simple and straightforward terms: “And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain” (4:1a; cf. v. 25). That Adam “knew” Eve is a reference to their sexual union, by which they began the perpetual process of fruitfulness and multiplication of humankind God had ordered.



The foregoing statements prove that God created us with sexual instinct and appetite and with the ability to fulfill them. It is no less evident that He expected us to do so. In

fact, Adam and Eve could not have obeyed God's command to reproduce and populate the earth apart from their fulfilling this instinct. God made this instinct extremely strong, surpassed only by that of self-preservation (viz., desire for food and drink and for self-defense). In His infinite wisdom, He knew that the sexual appetite must be regulated and controlled for it to be a blessing rather than a curse. God thus ordained the fulfillment of the sexual instinct, but only within His own clearly stated benevolent limitations. Not only is sexual fulfillment therefore not innately sinful, evil, or shameful; when engaged in within God's limitation for it, it is God-ordained, pure, and honorable.

God's Boundary for Sexual Fulfillment

Fornication, which we will later define more specifically, describes sexual activity outside the boundary God ordained for it. This boundary must therefore be included in any discussion of this term. Were there no such limitation, there would be no such thing as fornication, for "...where there is no law, neither is there transgression" (Rom. 4:15). God has issued a dictum on this matter, and as will become clear, those who ignore, reject, and disobey it become thereby guilty of fornication and thus subject to the wrath of a holy and just God.

The only sphere of innocent sexual intercourse involves three elements:

1. It must be between a man and a woman (Gen. 1:27–28; 2:24; Mat. 19:6–9; 1 Cor. 7:2; etc.).
2. It must be between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4; etc.).
3. It must be between a man and a woman authorized by God to be married (Mat. 5:32; 19:6; etc.).

Jesus stated that these limitations were God's will in the first century, that they had been so "from the beginning" (Gen. 2:24), and, by implication, that they would always be so.

And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Mat. 19:4–6).

Jesus twice employed both *fornication* and the closely related term/activity, *adultery*, in the same context:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery (v. 9).

In a companion statement in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had previously used these same two terms in discussing marriage and divorce:

But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery (Mat. 5:32).

The numerous loopholes that brethren have devised in an effort to evade New Testament teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage are largely traceable to attempts to justify relationships that involve fornication.²

Fornication Defined and Condemned

Our English word, *fornication*, derives from the Latin term, *fornix* or *fornicis*, meaning an archway or a "vaulted chamber." A building of such description in ancient Rome was a venue for prostitutes and became a euphemism for whoredom or a brothel (*Online Etymology*). The Greek word rendered "fornication" in the King James and American Standard versions (1901) is *porneia* (and four cognates). Of the forty-five times this word-family appears in the New Testament, *porneia* occurs most frequently (thirty-six times).

Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich define this word as "prostitution, unchastity, fornication,

of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse” (699). Kittel and Friedrich define *porneia* in the New Testament as “all extra-marital and unnatural intercourse” (6:590). Thayer’s definition is “...illicit sexual intercourse in general” (532). Other Bible versions variously render this term as “sexual immorality” (NKJV), “unchastity” (RSV, TCNT), and “marital unfaithfulness” (NIV). *Porneia* is obviously a comprehensive term that includes every sort of sexual union besides that which God has ordained within Scriptural marriage (i.e., sodomy, lesbianism, incest, bestiality, prostitution, adultery). *Adultery* specifically involves one who is married and who is sexually unfaithful to his or her spouse, while *fornication* is the general term for every sort of Biblically illicit sexual behavior, including adultery. Thus, *fornication* **generally** relates to marital infidelity, but *adultery* **particularly** does so. While all acts of adultery constitute fornication, not all acts of fornication constitute adultery.

One doesn’t read very far in the New Testament, as earlier indicated, before encountering Jesus’ condemnation of fornication (Mat. 5:32; 9:9). In five of Paul’s lists of “works of the flesh” that, if unrepented of, will result in eternal damnation, fornication heads the list (1 Cor. 5:11–13; 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 5:3–5; Col. 3:5–6). Stern warnings of the eternal consequences of this moral defilement are among the closing words of Holy Writ (Rev. 21:8; 22:14–15). The words of Hebrews 13:4 are clarion clear on the Divine mandate on this subject: “Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” **The Holy Spirit left no doubt about God’s attitude toward fornication and its participants—nor will faithful preachers, elderships, and churches!**

A Corinthianized Culture

When Paul walked into Corinth in about A.D. 51, he entered a city well-known throughout the civilized world for its moral turpitude—especially relating to sexual free-wheeling. Among the ten evils out of which the Gospel had called some of the saints there, four of them were various strains of fornication, including homosexual behavior (1 Cor. 6:9–10). Even in an amoral pagan world, Corinth was so distinguished for its sexual debauchery and lewdness that men made a verb of its name: To “Corinthianize” meant to corrupt and pollute.

Our great nation has increasingly become “Corinthianized” to a substantial degree since the 1960s. Every day of my public-school years through 1953 began with a home-room devotional period, including a Bible reading and prayer. These were outlawed by a Supreme Court ruling in 1962. Coincidentally (or perhaps, **not**), “values-neutral” “sexuality education” (disguised as “health/hygiene” courses) began finding their way into the public high schools in 1963, teaching the fundamentals of sexual performance, but allowing children to reach their own conclusions about sexual perimeters. The premise of these courses was that “teenagers are going to be sexually active anyway,” so the main concern of the curriculum was to instruct in “safe sex.” Even a dummy way down on the dummy scale can deduce that plugging in classes on sexual performance and unplugging prayer and Bible reading is a bad formula for strengthening and elevating moral standards in young people.

Significantly, until the 1960s, adultery was the principal legal ground for divorcing one’s spouse. With the passage of “no-fault” divorce laws in that decade, divorce became a comparatively routine procedure, thereby grossly cheapening the institution of marriage.

Those of us who were adults during those years well remember observing the infamous “sexual revolution” as it began unfolding in the mid-1960s. The entertainment industry began to relax its former standards (such as they were). Scenes, words, and themes that formerly were taboo on the big screen gradually began to appear, most of them involving sexual liberties. Rock and roll song lyrics, though mild compared with subsequent ones, were risqué and shocking at the time. In those years I several times called local radio stations and shamed them for playing songs with very suggestive lyrics. With but few exceptions, TV programming since the mid-1970s has been characterized by ever-increasing levels of indecency, much of which has been specifically aimed at sexual stimulation and titillation.

The Internet has made pornography and even arranging rendezvous for fornicators available at the mere click of a computer mouse. The relaxing of heterosexual moral standards has given opportunity for male and female sodomites to make great headway in their campaign to earn general acceptance for their abominations—even achieving the legal “right” of so-called homosexual “marriages.”

The God-ordained institutions of marriage and home are consequently under open, full-scale assault and are being abandoned to an alarming degree. Unblushing, open fornication, politely described by the more palliative terms, *living together*, has become the norm in the minds of millions. This sin has produced millions of out-of-wedlock births and additionally, millions of murders in the womb to prevent such births, thanks to the infamous 1973 Roe v. Wade disaster.

Tragically, these influences have greatly affected the Lord’s people. The area most involved is the Biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, as mentioned earlier. The Humanistic philosophy that human pleasure and personal happiness are one’s reason for existence has influenced many in the church. Oh, these saints believe in God and His Son, and they are convinced that God and Jesus want them to be happy and enjoy life, even if it means living in an adulterous marriage.

In over half a century of preaching I’ve been amazed and appalled at the various attempts by various preachers among us who, through books and sermons, have advocated positions that circumvent the Lord’s clear teaching about fornication, especially as it pertains to marriage. In many locales, once faithful congregations have become “sanctuary churches” for those who are involved in Scripturally forbidden marriages. Elders in such churches permit no preaching of the Truth on this subject, and sad to say, many are the preachers who have rationalized observing the “passover” in this regard by preaching and teaching less than “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). How can these face all those who will find themselves lost forever at the Judgment because they followed those errors.

Conclusion

We live in an exceedingly wicked world, saturated with encouragement on every hand to fulfill one’s sexual desires in ways and in settings that a righteous God cannot tolerate indefinitely. The destructive influence these constant stimuli have had and continue to have on young people is a special source of concern to all who value moral purity.

What can we do about it? Paul and his first century companions in the Gospel faced a sex-saturated world, though admittedly without the instant accessibility modern technology (print, film, TV, Internet) affords today. However, the way they responded to these corrupting influences was to preach the Word “in season, out of season” by every means at their disposal (2 Tim. 4:2). The Gospel is still God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). The more we preach and teach by the media available to us, the more potential impact we may have as a purifying influence in a sex-saturated putrid world.

Further, we can vote for political candidates at every level whom we know stand for moral decency, and we can challenge, by means of telephone, emails, and postal letters, those who have been elected thus to stand. Many people still read letters to editors of local newspapers, in which we can voice the need for moral purity.

We need to continue to pray for our families that our children and grandchildren may remain pure, all the while doing our best to provide Biblical moral guidance and instruction for them. We need to pray for the church of the Lord, so many members of which have succumbed to the call of compromise relating to adultery and fornication. We need to pray that men and women in positions of authority may awaken to the reality of the moral pigpen in which our nation now wallows and exert leadership in reversing it.

We need to pray to God that in His providence we may withstand the whirlpool of sexual immorality that surrounds us and undo the grave damage it has done to the church and to our nation the past few decades. If we are not able to do so, given the inspired history of God’s dealing with nations and their impenitent moral corruption, one is made to wonder how much more longsuffering He has left for us.

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Endnotes

1. All Scripture quotations are from the ASV (1901) unless otherwise indicated.
2. For comments on several of these attempted circumventions, see my MS, "Christ Confronted Error About Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," click [HERE](#).

Gambling: "Just a Game" ..or Sin?

Our subject: Gambling. Our question: Is it, as many claim, "Just a game"? Or is it truly a sin? As always, our source for answers: The Bible.



Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat: Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but **cast lots** for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture [Psalm 22:18] might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots

(John 19:23-24, Emph, RS).

This opening passage was chosen because I believe it is one of the most misused passages in the Bible concerning gambling—for it isn't! The reasoning for this conclusion follows:

The Bible is a book of principles, universally applicable to all cultures/ages/backgrounds. God expects its readers to exercise common sense and sound logic to recognize and apply those principles to their particular condition (Isa. 1:18). If we want to find a specific subject, we must search for the description, not necessarily the word. So we need a good definition of what we mean by *gambling* as a sin. It's more than just taking a chance! My English dictionary says for its first definition of *gamble*: "To play games of chance for money or some other stake." But its second definition is simply "to take a risk", which is the common usage today. Farmers take chances on the weather; investing in the stock market can be a risky endeavor; speculating on an oil well may well end with a dry hole! But none of these would fit a proper definition of *gambling* as a sin, for "chance" is just one element. The more important element: To take a risk "for money or some other stake." The key question: If you win, do others lose? Consider all the above examples: A successful farmer benefits everyone involved; if the stock market rises, everyone profits; if the well comes in, it's good for everyone with an interest in it. This is not the kind of *gambling* we're concerned with. In a true *gambling* endeavor, the winner takes his winnings from others' losses. That, then, is our working narrow definition of *gambling*, and that with which every faithful Christian should be familiar.

Now: Let's look again at our opening passage: "Casting lots" is not the sin of gambling in this narrow sense, but falls into the category of drawing straws, or flipping a coin, or playing the child's game of "eenie, meenie, miney moe" to make a decision. Those claiming such don't look very far ahead, for "casting lots" is used some 12 times in the Bible, most often commanded by God. Aaron was to "cast lots" to choose the scape goat from the sacrificial one, Leviticus 16:8; Joshua "cast lots" to determine the dividing of territory among the tribes (Josh. 18:10). The apostles "gave forth their lots" to choose Judas' replacement (Acts 1:26). If "casting lots" were sin, those passages would be impossible to explain away. That which proves too much, proves nothing. Don't mistake the trappings of gambling—lots, cards, dice, etc.—for the sin itself. My ultra-

conservative grandparents wouldn't allow us kids to bring into their house our Monopoly game (using dice), nor any card game, because of the association with gambling. We respected that, for it was their house; but we recognized, even as kids, the error involved: There was nothing of ours placed at risk for the winner to take.

So the soldiers at the foot of the cross weren't guilty of “gambling” for Jesus' coat; it doesn't fit our definition. None of the soldiers had a “stake” in the matter, for it wasn't their coat in the first place! None stood to lose anything they already had. They may have been guilty of stealing from Christ's heirs—perhaps by Roman law that coat now belonged to Mary—but all the elements of “gambling” weren't there. “Chance” is one element, but simple speculation does not constitute sin. With the added element of a possession of yours being placed at risk against the possession of others, we have our working definition of *gambling*.

Here is our primary concern: What does the Bible say about gambling? You may well hear the objection, “The Bible doesn't condemn it—the word *gambling* isn't even in the Bible!” Considering the plethora of Bible versions available, I'm not sure that statement is true; somewhere, some version surely uses the word! But it doesn't matter; the words *gay* and *lesbian* aren't in there either; nor *manslaughter* or *patricide*; *bigamy*, *embezzlement*, *con game* nor *scam*, etc. You see the point: Modern words, many coined since 1611, will not be found in a 400-year-old manuscript. Using that argument, car-jacking would be an acceptable occupation, for it's not condemned nor even mentioned in the Bible! The objection is meaningless.

So, the properly-phrased question: What does the Bible say about putting up your stake—something of value—against that of others in a game of chance? Some very basic stuff comes to bear here. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 states an important principle: “Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to **work with your own hands**, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (Emph. RS). Paul follows that up with the more succinct command, 2 Thessalonians 3:12, that “with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.” Laid alongside v. 10, “If any will not work, neither let him eat,” we have the Biblical principle of earning your own way rather than living off the labors of others. The very element that makes the difference between just taking a chance, and gambling, is what makes it sin: The taking of something of value from other people for nothing in return. It amounts to legalized stealing! The modern trappings of gambling are designed to disguise that fact. State lotteries tout the added income for the state; casinos offer entertainment, buffets, etc.. But think about it: Where does the money won in a lottery come from? From the pockets of all the other people buying lottery tickets! If you hit the jackpot on a 25 cent slot machine, where do you suppose all those quarters came from? From all the other people who fed it before you, trying to take the money of all those who came before them. The winner in effect “steals” money from the losers. Nothing's been earned; nothing's been bought or sold; nothing of value is given in exchange; just money that is put at risk on the outcome of chance, “winner take all”—and that terminology is accurate. The winner doesn't earn the money, he just takes it from the others. Again, it is nothing short of legalized stealing.

Another Bible principle that should be brought to bear is found in Matthew 7:20, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” So what are the “fruits” of gambling? In Minnesota where I live, the Wilder Foundation reports some 5 percent of the population are at-risk or addicted to gambling. That is some 285,000 people in just one state. Research shows over \$39,000 per month in Welfare payments are gambled away, by those who can least afford it. In 1988, before casinos or the state lottery existed here, the state **had one** “Gamblers Anonymous” group. Today **there are over 60**. 1 Corinthians 6:12 seems to fit here: “I will not be brought under the power of” anything. Anything addictive must be avoided.

A recent *Reader's Digest* article claims gambling in Minnesota costs the state \$200,000,000 annually in lost income, bad debts, treatment and crime. In counties hosting casinos, the crime rate has doubled. And not just in Minnesota, of course. The same pattern rules everywhere. Atlantic City legalized gambling in 1976. By 1979 it had

jumped from **50th to first place in crime per capita among U.S. cities**. In Ledyard, Connecticut, “Foxwood's Casino” opened in 1986, perhaps the richest and most extravagant of them all, partnering now with MGM. Within three years, rape, robbery, car theft and larceny **all increased by more than 400 percent**.

Such statistics could be quoted for pages, but these samples make it clear. Anything that is accompanied by this much evil must be evil itself. “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

But by far the worst characteristic (“fruit”) of gambling is that it encourages parasitic behavior, living off the labor of others rather than pulling one's own weight, earning your own way by your own work. This violates a Bible principle stated from almost the beginning. Because of Adam's sin, God said,

Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Genesis 3:17-19).

It's mentioned again just before the Great Flood: Genesis 5:29 records the words of Noah's father at the birth of his son: “(He) shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, which cometh because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed.” That curse continues with us to this day, and God expects us to accept that sentence--to support ourselves by hard work, not by living off others. That will not change until we arrive in Heaven, for Revelation 22:3 promises among other things that “There shall be no curse any more.” Until then, God expects us to work—hard, earning our own way. “Get-rich-quick” schemes, whether they be attempts to win the lottery or anything else, simply represent attempts to get out from under the responsibility God has given us. Christians have no business toying with that or even appearing to do so (2 Thess. 5:22).

So what do we learn about gambling?

1. Recreationally, it is legalized theft.
2. Professionally, it is slothfulness, parasitical and destructive.
3. To society, it is a blight that encourages addiction and crime, and discourages personal responsibility.
4. Spiritually, it is sin, violating a host of passages (see above).
5. Culturally, it reduces one's fellow man to a “target” to be taken advantage of if possible.

Bottom line: Christians are to abhor the sin of gambling, no matter the form it takes—from church bingo to scratch-off tickets to professional casinos, and everything in between. If you lose, you prove yourself a poor steward of the material things God has provided—you've paid good money for nothing! While if you win, you're taking money you haven't earned from the pocket of others. Whether trivial or vital, if your possession is placed at risk against that of others, with the winner—determined by chance—taking all, that is gambling, and that is sin.

Korban

Unknown

The one Hebrew word, *Korban*, which is most often translated as “offering,” generally speaks of the remarkable fact that access to God is gained by means of the offering. The word appears almost 70 times in this respect. The New Testament counterpart, the Greek word *prosphero*, appears in the book of Hebrews 19 times, referring to the sacrificial sense.

Hebrews 9:14 tells us that Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice without blemish, and verse 28 says, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” He is the way to God.

Abortion is Child Murder

Lester Kamp



There has much discussion in the public and political arena recently regarding the subject of abortion. On January 23, 1973 the Roe v Wade decision of the United States Supreme Court declared abortion to be a constitutional right and therefore no state could ban abortions. The court further stated that “legal personhood does not exist prenatally.” Between that date and the end of 2017 (latest statistic that I could find, LK) 63,459,781 abortions were performed in this country. That means over sixty-three million unborn babies have been killed in our country alone. To put this in perspective six million Jews and eleven million other people were murdered during the Holocaust: a total of seventeen million people (according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum). The Holocaust is recognized by almost everyone to one of the greatest atrocities of human history, the mass murder of millions under the maniacal Adolf Hitler, but many of those same people try to justify the murder of millions of unborn babies.

Many in America were greatly disturbed while others were greatly relieved by a more recent decision of the Supreme Court. On June 24, 2022 the Dobbs ruling of the Supreme Court reversed their earlier decision. Abortion is no longer considered a constitutional right, but now the individual states are to make their own laws governing abortion. Some have reacted to this reversal as if it were a ban on abortions, but all it has done is to make abortion a more local decision by States. Some States including the State of Colorado (where this author lives) already has a law which allows abortions all the way up to the time of birth and has encouraged women from other more restrictive States to come to Colorado for their abortions. Clearly, abortions will continue.

Every human life is precious! Humans are unique in creation since they were created in the very image of God (Gen. 1:26). Human life is therefore different from animal life. Under the instructions of God Abel offered an animal as a sacrifice to God which involved taking the life of one of “the firstlings of his flock” (Gen. 4:4). But, when Cain took the life of Abel it was obviously different. God said of this, “thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth...” (Gen. 4:10-11). Taking human life is murder and had God ordained consequences. “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed for in the image of God made he man” (Gen. 9:6). This has always been God's view since the beginning. The condemnation of murder was the sixth of the Ten Commandments of the law of Moses. Murder is included in the short list of things the Lord hates.

These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and **hands that shed innocent blood**, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Pro. 6:16-19, Emph. LK).

Murder is listed among the works of the flesh and God said of those who practice “such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:21).

Contrary to the widely held false doctrine of Calvinism, babies are innocent in every sense of the term. They have done no wrong; they have not inherited sin; they are innocent. No one would think that killing a newborn baby or even an older child would be acceptable. Such would be a crime with legal consequences and would also certainly fall under the category of shedding “innocent blood” (Pro. 6:17). So an important question is: “When does that innocent life (personhood) begin?” This is not determined by the laws of men, but by God.

Abortion advocates refer to that baby before it is born as a fetus or a mass of tissue. With this perspective their primary interest is in the mother's rights and choice regarding her own body. There is no concern for the rights of the unborn child. For them it is simply a woman's choice. Look at the following reasons statistically for having an

abortion:

Four out of 10 women (40%) seeking an abortion cited that they were not prepared to financially bear the burden and long-term commitment of having a child.

A similar number, 36% were making this choice because they felt that it was not the right stage in their life to have a baby.

3 out of 10 women or 31% reported some kind of issues with their partners as their main reason for seeking an abortion. Most commonly they were in a bad relationship or unsupportive relationship

A very similar number—29% of women wanted to focus on their existing children and give them a better life rather than bearing a new child.

20% were worried that childbearing would impact their future prospects and career opportunities.

19% were emotionally unprepared to bear a child.

12% mentioned health-related issues that impacted their pregnancies. Another 12% said that they wanted a better life for the baby than they were able to provide at that stage of their life.

7% mentioned that they were not mature enough to have a baby and another 5% mentioned influence from family and friends as their biggest reasons for choosing to abort their pregnancy.

It is obvious that the often-suggested cases of rape and incest that are used by the advocates of abortion to warrant abortions do not make up a very large number of cases where this was the reason for the abortion. In fact, these would be rare. By in large the reasons for abortions are matters of convenience and an unwillingness to recognize life within the womb and the consequences of previous actions. It is interesting and important to notice that the end of life is generally defined by medical science with all of the life-sustaining devices as the point in time when the brain waves cease. Consistency would demand the definition of when life begins as when brain waves begin. Brain waves begin about the sixth week of pregnancy.

Most assume that there is uncertainty in the medical field about when human life begins. It may surprise you that this is not the case. Professor and Doctor Hymie Gordon who was one time Chairman of Medical Genetics at Mayo Clinic stated:

But now we can say, unequivocally, that the question of when life begins is no longer a question for theological or philosophical dispute. It is an established scientific fact. Theologians and philosophers may go on to debate the meaning of life or the purpose of life, but it is an established fact that all life, including human life, begins at the moment of conception.

The results of research and photography show that:

By 18 days after conception the heart is forming and eyes are starting to develop. At 20 days the foundations of brain, spinal cord and systems are laid. At 24 days the heart begins to beat. Arms and legs have budded by 28 days. At 30 days blood flows in veins but stays separate from the mother's blood. At approximated 43 days after conception brain waves can be recorded. By 8 weeks the child appears as a well-proportioned small-scale baby. Every organ is present. The stomach produces digestive juices, the liver makes blood cells, kidneys begin to function and taste buds are forming.

More importantly, what does the Bible say? Unborn humans are not portrayed as non-persons in the Scripture. A careful look at John the Baptist as an example is enlightening. An angel declared to Mary, “And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son (*huios*) in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren” (Luke 1:36). What was it that Elisabeth had conceived? According to the Scripture she had not conceived a medical mass or a mere mass of tissue; she had conceived a son. Then when the child is born notice how this was described. “Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son (*huios*)” (Luke

1:57). Exactly the same word is used to describe John at conception as when he was born. Interestingly, three months before his birth, John the Baptist is also described this way by his mother, Elisabeth, “the babe leaped in my womb for joy” when she heard the voice of Mary (Luke 1:44). Personhood according to God begins at conception. To say it clearly, abortion is the killing of an unborn child, a person. Abortion is not simply a matter of a woman's choice concerning her own body. There is an unborn child involved who also has rights. Abortion is not the removal of an unwanted mass of tissue; abortion is the murder of a child. Abortion is not a trivial matter; abortion is the stopping of the life of a person (an unborn child). Abortion should not be encouraged; it is not an acceptable (to God) form of birth control. Abortion is sin no matter what the laws of the land say (Acts 5:29).

Furthermore, Scripture indicates that God is involved in the formation and development of human child within the womb.

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works. And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance (unformed substance, literally the embryonic state long before the mother feels life, lk), being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them (Psa. 139:13-16, NKJV).

John Scott wrote about this passage, “Although the Bible makes no claim to be a textbook of embryology, here is a plain affirmation that the growth of the fetus is neither haphazard nor automatic but a divine work of creative skill.”

Life is precious to God and should be to everyone. Abortion is an abomination. “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34). It is a sad commentary on people who campaign for the protection of whales, eagles, and the rain forest but think nothing about killing an unborn child created in the image of God!

The Gospel Preceptor's Website Preaches the Truth Around the World, 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week

Visitors to our website around the world on Dec. 6-7, 2022, were: Paris, France; Goose Creek, South Carolina; Istanbul, Turkey; Ruskin, Florida; Portland, Oregon; Lehi, Utah; San Antonio, Texas; Las Vegas, Nevada; Malibu, California; Shakhty, Rostov, Russian Federation; Buffalo, New York; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Bangkok, Thailand; Yecla, Spain; Brandon, Mississippi; Johannesburg, South Africa; Roost, Luxembourg; Macao; Tel Aviv, Israel; Ashburn, Virginia; Fulton, California; Kamensk-Ural'skiy, Russian Federation; Bogalusa, Louisiana; Tehran, Iran; Hangzhou, China; Gallatin, Tennessee; Amsterdam, Holland; Broken Arrow, Oklahoma; Kaohsiung City, Taiwan; Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Pietrasanta, Italy; Ashland City, Tennessee; San José, Costa; Topraisar, Romania; Singapore; Dublin, Ireland; Beijing, China; Darbhanga, India; Northampton, England; Atlanta, Georgia; Houston, Texas; Milan, Italy; Des Moines, Iowa.

God's Absolute Standard of Morality

Gary W. Summers



If morality were left to mankind to invent, establish, and sustain, it would vary from century to century and from locale to locale, as evidenced by the world we see around us. The slave trade, now regarded as reprehensible, was not abolished in England until 1807 and in the entire British Empire until 1833. In the United States, it took until the end of the Civil War in 1865. According to the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, nearly 50 million people still live in slavery in various parts of the world. And it is still as wrong today as it was 200 years ago.

How do we know that?

How is anyone to decide what is moral and what is not? Left on our own, without the Scriptures, we simply try to arrive at the best rationale we can, but it often lacks valid logic. Even with God's holy Word, we cannot seem to come to agreement, but the reason for that is that many people in society reject the teachings of the New Testament.

Even though moral positions are well thought out (and for our benefit), man chooses to be irrational.

Does refusing to murder others make sense? Yes, and so does not stealing from neighbors. Certainly, we don't want fellow citizens unjustly taking our lives or filching our possessions. Laws are passed as safeguards. Most civilized countries recognize the evils of slavery—especially when young women are attacked and removed from their homes to be used as sex slaves. No one wants such a destiny for his own daughter—and should not agree to it for anyone else's offspring. Yet the practice exists.

God's moral standards do not reflect changeable precepts; they are absolute. It has often been pointed out that God did not give Israel at Sinai "The Ten Suggestions." Of course, Christians are no longer under the old covenant (Heb. 8:6-7; Col. 2:14), but the morals found in the New Testament are just as absolute as those set forth under the Old. Careful consideration will be given to the issues we face today.

Various Crimes (Sins)

Stealing is the one sin that probably most will agree is wrong. Paul plainly wrote, "Let him who stole steal no more..." (Eph. 4:28). Society, as a whole, rejects stealing, but ask the police how much time they spend on recovering a victim's possessions once an incident has been reported. The New Testament teaches strongly against the underlying reason for theft—covetousness (Luke 12:15-21; 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19). Riches are deceitful and can choke the Word (Matt. 13:22).

Gambling is a popular form of stealing. "But nobody is forced to participate," some offer in defense of it, which is true. "And it's no different than investing or playing the stock market!" Really? Two problems result from this thinking. Jesus endorsed putting the one talent in the bank to draw interest, which was the least the man should have done. So, taking a risk to make more money would have been acceptable.

And how did the five-talent and the two-talent men double their money if they did not put it at risk? Here is the difference: the investor puts his money to work and prays that he and all others will be successful in the venture. The gambler hopes everyone else loses so that he might win. Which attitude sounds more Biblical? Gambling is a zero-sum game, but investment is not. Unfortunately, our society does not recognize God's absolute standard of morality and encourages all to be willingly robbed.

Murder is against the law, but only about half are solved. Of those arrested, a large percentage "plea it down," and some are found "not guilty" because some judge suppressed the evidence. And how many of the guilty are put to death each year—as many as one per state? After the Flood, God specifically decreed capital punishment (Gen. 9:5-6); in the New Testament, this duty falls specifically on the civil government (Rom. 13:4), which is failing us badly. It is absolutely moral to put to death murderers. Too many prosecutors refuse to do their jobs.

Abortion is murder. But many of those same individuals who refuse to punish the guilty somehow take great delight in taking the lives of innocent souls who have done nothing wrong. God still recognizes the baby (Greek *brephos*) in the womb (Luke 1:41, 44) by the same term (*brephos*) as a child out of the womb, who has been born (Luke 2:12, 16). No one has refuted this argument in 50 years, but such does not stop the advocates of death. How can men and women be so heartless as to kill a living being that medically, scientifically, and Biblically is a human being?

Other Moral Issues

Yes, there have been laws in the history of the United States that forbade **fornication, adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality**. However, it was argued that we cannot enforce our own personal morality on others—or some such tripe (although it has been done). We observe that, since these have been decriminalized, the percentages of those participating in such immoralities has exploded. God had a reason for outlawing these sins; they are detrimental to the home and to society.

The same can be said for **drinking** or doing **drugs**. Many have harmed their own bodies, drinking themselves to death or smoking so much, their lungs give out decades before they would have. The innocent suffer as well; just ask anyone who has lost a

loved one to a drunk driver. Many have been affected by second-hand smoke. The latest scourge is fentanyl, which is 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine. Too much (which involves only a small amount) kills. According to the internet, 71,000 people died of fentanyl or fentanyl-related problems in 2021. Illegals crossing our southern border have been responsible for many of these deaths.

Absolute

A rejection of God involves a repudiation of His morals and principles, and that's where our society is. Just like those who rejected God in the days of Noah, we are heading that direction again (Gen. 6:5). Do we expect a different outcome this time? Okay, so the weather forecast will change from *wet* to *hot*. Destruction will still occur!

Our current condition results from people failing to trust in God. Why do we think He does not know what He is doing? Why do we think we can challenge His moral system? On what basis do we think we will avoid His wrath? Jesus said: "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). That word will not disappear or fade away: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Very practical advice is given in Ecclesiastes 8:4: "Where the word of a king is, there is power; And who may say to him, 'What are you doing?'" Some translations have *authority* for *power*; others have *supreme*. The point is the same: "No intelligent person is going to challenge him who has all power." However, Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18), and He is challenged daily, as is the Father. Is that wise? God's power is supreme, and those who willfully violate it will be judged as worthy of eternal darkness. His will is for us to submit to His will—and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9).

Dancing is Sin

Don E. Smith

Introduction



In current times the citizens of the world would not think twice about participating in mixed gendered dancing or attending venues where such is taking place. At the very least, none of the world would object to such an activity. In the United States, it has become the norm for school age children to attend proms, homecoming dances, and other school dances, and many parents pride in sending their children off to these. With a look of innocence, not a few also take part in father-daughter dances. The adult world takes it to another level, with dancing taking place at clubs and bars. Seemingly innocent dancing is performed at wedding receptions and parties, holiday or otherwise. In contrast, the citizens of heaven forthrightly object to all of the above, knowing that all such is unabashed sin that is of utmost shame. The world would call the church evil for saying so, but what does the Bible teach on this subject? Let us find out.

What Does the Bible and Proper Reason Teach?

For faithful Christians, any worldly practice that is dangerous to the soul must be completely avoided. As will be seen throughout this study, dancing is absolutely perilous to the soul. What dancing leads to is eternally condemning, but the things associated with the activity are also "unchristian." The attire that goes hand in hand with dancing is, more often than not, of the most immodest nature. Many times, the establishments where dancing takes place are those places where the loosest of morals is flaunted, encouraged, and embraced. Let us remember that James tells us to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).¹

The nature of couples' dancing and otherwise is most unvirtuous. Movements of body parts that the act requires show forth lustful intentions, and are, in and of themselves, lustful actions. These many times lead to other sinful actions, which could be avoided, if dancing were not acted upon in the first place. This is one method of temptation Sa-

tan uses that we might carry ourselves into sin— “the lust of the flesh” (1 John 2:16). Dancing, therefore, is outright unrighteousness (cf. Rom. 1:18ff).

The absolute immorality of dancing cannot be overemphasized. The movements of the act are blatantly immodest, as anyone with any sense can see. Outfits that the participants are clad with when dancing many times go along with the intent the perpetrator of this sin has in mind. The clothing worn brings us to another point regarding two other forms of dancing, which many consider to be innocent. Cheerleading is a form of dancing, and the apparel worn for it is absolutely shameful. In a similar vein of thought is that of ballet. The tight revealing clothing for it brings just as much shame upon the person wearing it as does the cheerleading garments. Parents should not be enrolling their children into such activities, as it teaches them that such behavior and dressing is appropriate and okay. If women are to “adorn themselves in modest apparel” (1 Tim. 2:9), certainly children are to follow their example. This goes for men too. To involve oneself or one’s children in any of these aspects of dancing is therefore sin.

Ultimately, the question would be, “Is dancing authorized by the scriptures?” Does God approve of such? As will be seen later in this study, some dancing is referenced in the Bible, and it is not condemned. But our question deals with modern dancing, which the world chooses to see as okay. To ask whether dancing is authorized, is the same as asking whether the clothing and lustful movements of the body are authorized by God. It is the same as asking whether dance clubs and bars are authorized establishments for entertainment. Can we do such and attend these places in the name of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17)? Are we authorized to be a stumbling block to others by such a practice? The rhetorical nature of these questions is clearly seen, and we all know the answer.

In the foregoing, it has been demonstrated that dancing is unchristian behavior, unrighteous, immodest, and unauthorized by God. Clearly it is sin. Another element this sin spreads is its corrupting nature. Paul wrote, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). Another translation puts it this way, “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (ibid., ASV 1901). “Communications” therefore equates to companionships, as also defined by James Strong (3657). We are told that companionship can corrupt our good morals, and associating with those who are dancing is certainly influencing and corrupting.

Dancing is also lasciviousness. The word translated “lasciviousness” is defined as “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence” (Thayer). By understanding the nature of modern dancing, it could just as easily be defined the same. It is certainly unbridled lust (and causes such), outrageous, and shameless. Since the Bible condemns lasciviousness as a work of the flesh, dancing would be included in this (Gal. 5:19). Dancing is, therefore, against the law of God and sinful.

The act of modern dancing is also covered generally and specifically under the term “reveling.” Reveling is defined as “a carousal (as if letting loose),” according to Strong (2970). “Letting loose” is an excellent description of modern dance, which is condemned as sin by the inspired apostle Paul (Gal. 5:21). In other historical writings dating back close to the time the King James Version was translated, the term “revel” is used in parallel comparison with dancing (Geddes & Grosset). The condemnation of reveling, “and such like,” places sin square on the nose of dancing.

If dancing is as described in the foregoing (and it is), then it is of the darkest evil. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” Certainly, if we are to abstain from the **appearance** of it, we cannot engage in the practice of it. Paul also said, “Abhor that which is evil...” (Rom. 12:9). We are to literally hate evil, just as God does (Prov. 8:13; cf. Ps. 45:7; 97:10). Therefore, we should abstain from the appearance of dancing, never let the thought of practicing it cross our minds, and hate the activity as God does, knowing it is sin and what the wages of it are for all involved (Rom. 6:23).

Since the wages of sin is death (ibid.), what death is referred to here? As God teaches us, death is a separation. For example, a dead faith is a faith separated from works

(Jas. 2:17). Likewise, when we die to sin, we separate ourselves from it (Rom. 6:1-2). Our physical death is a separation of our spirit from our body (Jas. 2:26). So, it is understandable that we spiritually die when we separate ourselves from God (Isa. 59:2). Though not physical, it is this spiritual death that Adam and Eve suffered upon their sin in the garden (Gen. 2:17; 3:6). Therefore, when we commit the sin of being a partaker with the activity of dancing in any way, we separate ourselves from God, and in essence commit spiritual suicide. Dancing is **that** perilous to the soul.

If dancing is that perilous to the soul (understanding the foregoing, would any argue that it is not??), then it is a damnable practice. Its adherents and practitioners have nothing to look forward to but the “lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). To take the attitude to go and dance anyways, or encourage others to do so, whether directly or indirectly, is to be in disobedience to the injunctions of God that teach against it. Disobedience is equated to unbelief. In 1 Peter 2:7, Peter states, “unto you therefore which believe...” and then equates the opposite (unbelief) with disobedience, stating, “but unto them which be disobedient.” So, being in disobedience to God’s injunctions is to be in unbelief. Truly, “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas. 2:10).

There are some who attempt to use the Bible to justify the practice of dancing. A few passages exist that mention dancing, but none of them are in any form a reference to modern dancing. A common passage used is the reference to David dancing before the Lord (2 Sam. 6:14; 1 Ch. 15:29). The “reasoning” is, “if David danced, so can I.” Another frequently used verse to support their view is Ecclesiastes 3:4, “A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.” Some also bring up the idea that there was dancing taking place at the return of the prodigal son (Luke 15:25). The error in trying to support modern dancing with these verses is in the fact that this dancing was never done solely for entertainment, but was done at a time of a joyous occasion. It is better described as leaping for joy, not the lustful movements of today’s modern dance.

Further study shows that modern dance has no example or pattern by which it can be equated to the dance of the Bible. There is no instance in the scriptures wherein a man and woman are found dancing together, as in modern dance. Miriam and the women danced in joy at the protection God gave them from Pharaoh (Ex. 15:20). The daughters of Shiloh danced alone at a feast of the Lord, otherwise they would have been protected (Judg. 21:21). Again, each example in the Bible is an occasion of joy. There is no example of couples dancing together found on the pages of Holy Writ. Therefore, the mentions of dancing in the Bible cannot be used to justify the lust-filled sinful modern dance.

Conclusion

A study of the Bible shows that modern dancing is plainly sin. The Bible clearly teaches it is unchristian behavior. No Christian could practice it and claim to be doing that which is righteous. Modesty does not find any place in modern dancing. Therefore, we have seen that dancing is not authorized by the scriptures. Its very nature is corrupting. The actions of dancing perfectly fit with the definitions of the terms “lasciviousness” and “reveling.” By this, dancing is equated with evil, it is perilous to the soul, and damnable. Though some try to use the Bible to justify dancing, they will not be found justified by God. Even if the world will call the church evil for saying so, God stands as the ultimate Judge:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! (Isa. 5:20-23)

Works Cited

1. All scripture quotations and citations are from the King James Version (KJV) unless otherwise indicated.
2. American Standard Version, ASV, 1901.

3. Geddes & Grosset, *Sir William Wallace*, 2002.
4. Thayer, Joseph Henry, *Thayer's Greek Definitions*, e-Sword.
5. Strong, James, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996

Great Preaching

Leroy Brownlow

A mechanic went to hear a visiting evangelist in a little town.

The preacher preached that night on money and presented the sermon under three points. First point: "Make all you can." The mechanic nudged his wife and said, "That man is the best I've ever heard. He is no nitwit. He knows what it's all about. He is one smart man." Second point: "Save all you can." This excited the mechanic and he whispered again, "This beats anything I've ever heard. He's smart enough to be President. This town has never had a preacher that could hold a candle to him." The preacher commended hard work and thrift, denouncing laziness and waste. The mechanic could not keep quiet. He whispered, "I've believed this all my life." Third point: "Give all you can." "Oh, my," exclaimed the mechanic, "now he's gone crazy. He has quit preaching and gone to meddling."

Thought: Is it not strange that some people's conception of great preaching is a sermon that compliments them and rebukes others? Remember—your preacher did not write the Bible. He is not responsible for any word in it, but he is definitely responsible for preaching every word in it. And when it is preached, people judge themselves by their reaction to it.

New Testament Reading in 30 Days

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| Day 1..... | Mat. 1:1 - 9:26 |
| Day 2..... | Mat. 9:27 - 15:39 |
| Day 3..... | Mat. 16:1 - 22:46 |
| Day 4..... | Mat. 23:1 - 27:56 |
| Day 5..... | Mat. 27:57 - Mark 6:44 |
| Day 6..... | Mark 6:45- 12:44 |
| Day 7..... | Mark 13:1 - Luke 2:7 |
| Day 8..... | Luke 2:8 - 12:53 |
| Day 9..... | Luke 12:54 - 19:48 |
| Day 10..... | Luke 20:1 - 24:53 |
| Day 11..... | John 1:1 - 6:59 |
| Day 12..... | John 6:60 - 11:57 |
| Day 13..... | John 12:1 - 19:15 |
| Day 14..... | John 19:16 - Acts 6:7 |
| Day 15..... | Acts 6:8 - 13:12 |
| Day 16..... | Acts 13:14- 20:12 |
| Day 17..... | Acts 20:13 - 27:44 |
| Day 18..... | Acts 28:1 - Rom. 8:39 |
| Day 19..... | Rom. 9:1 - 1 Cor. 3:23 |
| Day 20..... | 1 Cor. 4:1 - 14:25 |
| Day 21..... | 1 Cor. 14:26 - 2 Cor. 9:15 |
| Day 22..... | 2 Cor. 10:1 - Eph. 2:10 |
| Day 23..... | Eph. 3:11 - Col. 2:5 |
| Day 24..... | Col. 2:6 - 1 Tim. 4:16 |
| Day 25..... | 1 Tim. 5:1 - Heb. 4:13 |
| Day 26..... | Heb. 4:14 - Jam. 1:27 |
| Day 27..... | Jam. 2:1 - 1 John 2:14 |
| Day 28..... | 1 John 2:15 - Rev. 8:5 |
| Day 29..... | Rev. 8:6 - 22:21 |