

Family Constitution



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Written by:

Family Guardian Fellowship

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or

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2. They have been offered an opportunity to modify it so that it accurately reflects the collective views of the family.
3. They have done their utmost to modify the document to ensure that it accurately reflects the collective views of everyone in the family. They have reached the point where there are no other modifications that they feel are necessary in the pursuit of this goal.
4. They covenant before God to honor all of this Family Constitution but they agree to be legally bound by the contents of section 9, only.

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4. Remember that this document is updated frequently to reflect changes in and new understanding of the legal issues discussed herein. We are constantly improving and expanding it. It is **always** a good idea to come back to our website at **<http://famguardian.org>** or one of our mirror sites (shown on the opening page of our website) to obtain a recent copy (see the version number on the title page to know the date and version number) so that you can be sure you have the latest information, and this is especially true if you are involved in litigation over any of the issues discussed in the document.
5. The Revision History at the beginning of the document is a good place to find out what we changed between versions so that if there is an update, you don't have to go back and reread the whole huge document again to update yourself.
6. Feedback and corrections on this document are welcome. Complements and encouragement are even more welcome, since these are the only reward we get for the hard work we have put into this document

TESTIMONIALS: WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

There are a lot of very smart, passionate, and patriotic people here in America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. One of the exceeding joys of writing this book for an audience like that is that once you give people your product, if you tell them you want input, they will *overwhelm* you with suggestions and practically write the book for you! That has been my experience so far. All I have had to do is sit back and be a good listener and volunteer to be a scribe and a cheerleader and the rest takes care of itself! We get so many very insightful and helpful suggestions from people out there on how to improve this book and our website, which is the main reason how both got to be so comprehensive, large, complete, and good (at least that's what people tell us because we don't toot our own horn, in accordance with God's Law in Prov. 27:2)! My sincere thanks go to *all* of our 100,000 readers and growing for helping me in the monstrous task of writing, researching, and perfecting this book and standing up our website. You're a great bunch of people who I'm *proud* to serve and proud to call my friends. I'm as proud of all of you as I am of being an American. God bless you all, and God Bless America!

About This Book:

"Just a quick note to say thank you for the Family Constitution. I am a Pastor and an Ordained Minister. I have a bachelor's degree in Theology. However, in Seminary, we did not go over marital counseling. Unfortunately, I have seen many marriages fall apart in the church. Therefore, as a rule, before I perform a marriage, I must sit down with the couple first. In times past, I made up some things to go over. However, I came across your Family Constitution and it was great. It is what I needed in a written form. I can print out some pages and go over checklists with the couples. Again, just a quick note to say thank you for your labors. It is most certainly appreciated."

[Rev. E.G. Tucker, Pastor, New Testament Christian Church, Richmond, VA; 4/15/2003]

About Our Website:

"I have finished reading EVERY shred of information on your site relating to marriage, divorce and family matters. I've also read all the jokes, listened to the songs and checked out all the links....Thanks again for making your website. It's like a University for Christians and Truth seekers! Awesome!"

[Simon Grovin, 1/9/2003]

 "Your website is a godsend! ... Thanks for all your good work."

[David M. Leugers, 1/7/2003]

 "Thanks for putting together such an incredible site. I most appreciate your efforts!!"

[Louie, 12/22/2002]

 "You have a great web site. One OF THE BEST ON THE INTERNET. I BET YOU GET LOTS OF SPECIAL ATTENTION FROM THE IRS :-)"

[Mike and Carol from N.H., 11/30/2002]

 "Excellent site. I have not seen so much great info in one place ever before!"

[Matthew Bauman, 10/26/02]

"Thank you for writing a thoughtful and thorough rebuttal to the Luckey Report. I was wondering when someone was going to do it. It is a frustrating dilemma: the coordinated confiscation of citizens money—and the "legal" system and their minions are willing accomplices. I never imagined such brazen, systemic corruption was possible in America. SOUTH America maybe, but not in the United States...Thank you for your work in this movement."

[Christopher Gyorgy, 10/18/2002]

"I am amazed with your site. I have never come across a more informative site on the web. I can't thank you enough for providing this information to the public. I would love to see you create a infomercial and air it at least once per day. What would it take to make that a reality? I would gladly collect donations for this and I'm certain others would do the same. Perhaps a form or note of some kind can be created and given to those making donations so they can deduct it from any taxes they are liable for. I see different people everyday in my work and I inform them of the tax issues. I always tell them about your site and '[We The People](#).' I just can't say enough good things about your site. Keep up the most excellent work."

[Bryan Rush, 10/17/2002]

"The site is incredible, and right on the money. It dis-spells myths of all kinds concerning the fallen theories of some freedom fighters. Best Blessings and regards for Family Guardian"

[Leonard Williams, 8/20/2002]

"I just wanted you to know that I came across your website and think it is the best thing on the Internet. Very informative and plan on sending a link to all in my address book."

[Arleen Marta, 8/8/2002]

"I just wanted to commend you on your very informative site. I became aware about 10 months ago. I have been discouraged by this situation for years. I was happy to see there are many like-minded people out there who are fed up with being **robbed** each year."

"I have already spent hours researching your site and downloading pages for future reading and printing."

[Bryan Rush, 7/30/2002]

"I want you to know how much I appreciate what you are doing with your website. The information and the tools are superb. What I can download in a short time must have taken you endless hours to prepare. I only hope that everyone I tell about famguardian.org actually looks at and uses the information. Very truly,

[Richard C. Keech, M.D. 6/30/2002]

"Thanks for the tremendous effort that you have put into the collection and running of your website. Its a shame that it takes more than just making the information available to get the word out."

Thanks to your work and data collection and the complete body of evidence that you present, I am inspired to do what I should have done a long time ago at my mother's urging, become an attorney so that I could fight for the rights of the people as guaranteed in the Constitution. For years as a teen I would argue with my mother about much of what I saw the government doing (as seen in the news and such). She suggested that if I wanted to have a significant impact on the way this country works, I needed to do it through the law and that eventually I could effect change if that was my goal. So I think I am going to become an attorney and practice "Constitutional Law" and "Civil Rights Law".

So maybe there will be at least one HONEST Lawyer working to track and watch the government."

[Ronald Winter, 5/14/02]

"I absolutely agree your work is second to NONE!! I would like to link your site from www.uslawbooks.com/ajs/"

[Sir Martin Davis, U.S. Lawbooks, <http://www.uslawbooks.com>, 3/25/02]

"Man, what a GREAT site! I only wish we had the same amount of research and documentation for Canada as you do for the IRS."

[Chris Givens, 3/13/02]

"I have been looking at your site and it is GREAT! I think you should get more stuff, what have you been doing? I'm JOKING! Man, I like it. And your reference to God well that is what we need more in the world and nation! GREAT job!"

[Tony Bernard, 1/17/02]

"I must first start off by telling you what a wonderful website you have, it works in perfect conjunction with *The Great IRS Hoax* [book]. All I can say is that 'you're brilliant.' ... I've spent well over two hundred hours in the past two months researching this issue, and I've read MANY conflicting viewpoints. Your ideas and beliefs not only seem to be the strongest and best presented, they are in unison as well, and do not conflict from one page to another, as I've found in some sites and books. I also commend you for not 'selling' your information, as I'm sure you spent an amazing amount of time researching and writing."

[Jim Sebastiano, Jr., 1/6/2002]

"Thanks for all the time and effort you have put into this website. You truly have fulfilled the holy writ in that you love your brother as your self. God bless you."

[John Whitney, 12/14/2001]

"I have to say that your web site is the most extensive on the issue of Income Taxes that I [have] come across."

[Daniel, 11/21/2001]

"The information on your site I find to be extremely accurate, amazingly understandable, and a HUGE blessing to those of us in America that are getting educated on all the deception out there."

[Mark Rothbauer, 9-20-2001]

"I really enjoy your website. You have links to unlimited resources. I am in full agreement with your arguments."

[Jeff Galaska, 8/31/2001]

"You are doing a great job with this site. The information is so powerful and informative!"

[Jason Gresczyk, 8-9-2001]

"Thank you for fighting the giant monster. You, Shulz, and others are real heroes. I'm inspired and preparing my fight as well. God Bless and keep it up!"

[Paul Meyer, 7/28/2001]

"I have wondered for so long how someone would charge another for information of this import. Your site is a God-send and I wish to let you know that I am appreciative of it. ...I believe that there is an abundant resource of persons who wish to complain when given the opportunity but a scarce amount of those willing to complain will stand! up to the bully to see what will happen. I sincerely believe that there is a great amount of 'dirty Dancing' going on within Title 26 and have found numerous loop de-loops and dead ends trying to understand it myself. I really can't believe that no one has attempted to get the whole title thrown out as Void for Vagueness. "

[Larry Wainwright, 7/7/2001]

"I laud your efforts. As a student of the constitution and a patriotic defender of our God-given rights, I am impressed and grateful for your contribution to freedom in this country. Thank you.

"I have had the pleasure of referring other, God-fearing people to your website. They also have gratitude and respect for your efforts."

[Les Austin, 7/6/2001]

"I'm sending this message from your web site; terrific! What a lot of info you have. I've visited it before and downloaded that tome [*The Great IRS Hoax* book] but don't remember if I've ever contacted you directly. Anyway, thanks for your work and for including my own work, 'The Colossal Fraud of Involuntary Perjury'...on your list."

[Pitman Buck, 5/30/2001, <http://www.pitmanbuck.net/>]

"I can't begin to thank you for all the time and information you have put into this website. It is proving most beneficial to me and is helping me greatly in understanding the true meaning of freedom. Thank you. Keep Fighting the Fight!"

[John Douglass Constiner II, 5/30/2001]

"I just wanted to express my appreciation of the monumental effort you have put in to share the truth. I have been reading and hearing about this stuff for years, and now, because of your effort, I am finally starting to be able to see through the maze. Since I logged on to your web site I have not been able to stop reading..."

[Greg, 4/21/2001]

"Incredibly good work, Chris. What a service you have provided your fellow citizens of this republic. Thank you, and God bless you."

[David Zuniga, Laredo TX, 4/12/2001]

"I just found your site...I saw your hit meter only registering 1, so I assume it is broken! Or it should be. I am one of a growing number who have stopped filing and paying, because of the dignity I must live with. Finding this out has been an adventure and will continue to be. Thank you for this great page."

[Grave Easton, 4/10/2001]

"You have by far, one of the greatest web sites I have ever had the 'right' to read and study. I stumbled across it in a search for knowledge on building codes and their application...Anyhow, I began to dig into legal resources and the like and discovered that a building permit was actually a contract forced through threat and deception. With encouraging sites like yours, I am no longer afraid to skip the permit, do my research, and secure my God-given rights to use my property as I see fit. Thanks again for the encouragement and God Bless you and yours.

As soon as I get time, I'm going to conduct an in-depth study of your tax information. That is another topic of law that disturbs me. I never have been able to figure out how I can be directly taxed (unapportioned) against my constitutional rights. Thanks for being such a diligent citizen. You would no doubt been party to signing the Constitution."

[Bryan Taylor, 3/30/2001]

PREFACE

The Family Constitution is a document intended as the spiritual and legal foundation for starting and running an enduring and happy and *sovereign* family perpetually free of the encroachments of the corrupt government and unethical family law profession. Its main goal is to achieve "separation of family and state" by showing people and families how to be self-governing and entirely autonomous. The book is based entirely on Christian principles found in the Bible which are then supplemented with additional information only in those areas that are important but where the bible is silent, such as law and psychology. Even though it is based on the Bible, we have written it to be appealing to non-believers as well because it is as much a philosophy book as it is a spiritual work. One year of research by the webmaster went into writing the book. The main focus of the book are Biblical models for RELATIONSHIPS of all kinds, including:

1. Human-God relationship.
2. Family relationships.
3. Husband-wife relationships.
4. Parent-Child relationships.
5. Employer-employee relationships.
6. Relationship to governments and the world.

The end of the book gives you instructions on how to get married without a state marriage license by getting a common law marriage based on a marriage covenant/contract. The advantage of the marriage covenant is that state courts can't alter or abolish or disregard or overrule the covenant/contract, and the terms of your marriage aren't subject to the whims of corrupt government officials passing some new state legislation nor are they dependent on what state or country you live in. Instead, the only thing the state courts have jurisdiction to enforce within the relationship is exclusively and only the contract itself, which is fair and based entirely on biblical Christian principles. This book is inspired by the following scripture and my own painful experiences being unequally yoked to an unbelieving and downright evil X-spouse:

*"Unless the Lord [not the socialist government or a marriage license it issues] builds the house [or the family],
They labor in vain who build it;"*
[\[Psalm 127:1\]](#)

During the writing of this book, and in particular Chapter 7 on Government, we began investigating the legality of the federal income tax. Our research revealed such startling information that we later decided to write another book on the income tax fraud entitled *The Great IRS Hoax: Why We Don't Owe Income Tax*. That book will blow your mind when you find out the most incredible scam in the history of the world foisted by our own government on an unsuspecting public. You can download this free book from our website at:

<http://famguardian.org/Publications/GreatIRSHoax/GreatIRSHoax.htm>

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REVISION HISTORY

<i>Date</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Description</i>
12/16/99	1.0	Started initial version.
12/25/99	1.01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated section 1.1 2. Added section 3.7.3: Disallowed modes of communication. 3. Added section 4.12: Marriage Event Schedule 4. Added a new item to section 2.2: Role of the Christian. 5. Added a new section 3.3: Family Event Schedule 6. Changed initials to Husband and Wife in the footer of each page. 7. Renamed section 3.8 from Verbal Abuse to Emotional and Verbal Abuse. Considerably expanded this section.
12/28/99	1.02	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 5.12: Answers to Common Questions Children Ask 2. Expanded section 4.15 to add references to Malachi 2:16. 3. Added section 4.9: How to be Best Friends with your Spouse. 4. Expanded section 4.7: Role of the husband to add quotes from the book "Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time." 5. Added section 4.12: Money: The Great Mischief Maker.
12/29/99	1.03	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 3.7: Dealing Effectively with Personal Problems. 2. Revised section 3.8: Techniques for Correction and Encouragement. Added Biblical references for each type of sin listed. Reordered the types of correction. 3. Added section 2.5: People Who We Won't Have as Friends 4. Reorganized section 3 to add a new subsection 3.1: Getting your own personal act together first 5. Fixed problems with section 3.5.3: Types of sin and correction. Disallowed application of punishment techniques under any circumstances.
1/2/00	1.04	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Edited section 2.5 People who we won't have as friends. Modified it to say that we should still help people and be charitable, but that we can't be friends with people who are unwise. 2. Modified section 1.1: Introduction. Emphasized team authorship and editing of the document.
1/3/00	1.05	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 3.8: Dating. 2. Added 1 Cor. 13:1-8 to section 4.11: Importance of Love. 3. Modified section 3.5.7 to add references to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Iniquity being purged by mercy and truth. 3.2. Correcting privately first, and then bringing witnesses if that doesn't work. 4. Reorganized Section 4 to put Love, Commitment, Communication in a new section called "Crucial Elements of Marriage". 5. Expanded section 4.5.3 on love considerably. Added 1 Cor. 13 and discussed the triumph of love the action over love the feeling. 6. Updated section 3.5.7 How Should We Correct? Added references to approaching your brother privately before the correction. Added references to how mercy and truth purge iniquity, not truth and correction. 7. Considerably expanded section 3.1.2: Mutual Respect. Added several new elements to mutual respect. 8. Added section 2.4: The Holy Spirit in Christian Living. 9. Added section 6.4: The state of California's default pre-nuptial agreement. 10. Added several subsections to section 4.13: Emotional and Verbal Abuse. 11. Removed initials from bottom of each section except the legal section. 12. Changed the header to the signature page. Modified section 1.1 Purpose of this document. 13. Added signatures to the end of section 6.6: Pre-Nuptial Agreement section.

Date	Version	Description
		<p>Also added section for Notary Public to sign. 14. Corrected several spelling errors.</p>
3/27/00	1.06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 3.8.1: How do people become emotional abusers? 2. Renamed section 3.8.2: Dichotomies of the Emotional or Verbal Abuser. 3. Added to the end of section 8.1, Introduction, statistics about how the divorce rate among non-Christians is even higher than for Christians. 4. Added following items to the Family Mission Statement in section 1.3: 7, 8. Modified items 2, 10, 11,12. 5. Updated guidance on the use of I-messages in section 5.12. 6. Added section 3.9: Dysfunctional behaviors. 7. Added section 2.4: The problem science has with Jesus Christ. 8. Added section 4.15: The humorous side of marriage. 9. Added section 6.6: Questions and answers for prospective spouses who can't accept having to sign a pre-nuptial agreement 10. Expanded section 6.7 to add a list of things that the pre-nuptial agreement prevents.
4/30/00	1.07	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 3.9.5: Lying as a dysfunctional behavior. 2. Expanded section 3.9.10 on Pride to explain its ill effects.
5/6/00	1.08	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 4.13: Marriage Counseling. 2. Added section 3.9.12: Sexual promiscuity/infidelity. 3. Added section 5.2.1 The First Parent: God. 4. Added section 8.6.7: Do pre-nuptial agreements put too much of the focus of the relationship on selfishness and materialism? 5. Added section 4.5.11: Men's Rules for Relationships.
5/7/00	1.09	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expanded section 4.13: Marriage Counseling. Further explained how we will approach marriage counseling. 2. Added section 3.4.4: How to hold "Family Court" 3. Added section 4.15.3: Marriage Dictionary. 4. Rearranged section 4.15. 5. Added one more commandment to table 2-2: The Role of Christians (Fear God and keep his commandments). 6. Added section 6: Employer-Employee Relationship 7. Added section 3.7.2: Effective Listening 8. Changed the footer in section 7 to MAN/WOMAN, instead of HUSBAND/WIFE because it is signed before marriage. 9. Revised section 8.7: Pre-nuptial agreement. Added Homemaking section, more definitions, expanded Separate property section. Changed mandatory deposits to joint account from ALL income to only a monthly allotment in the amount of that needed to pay 120% of expenses for the month. 10. Added to the end of section 4.1 an excerpt from chapter 6 (Christian Marriage) of C.S. Lewis' book <i>Mere Christianity</i>. 11. Added section 3.11 on Sexual Morality. Used an excerpt from chapter 5 of C.S. Lewis' book entitled <i>Mere Christianity</i>. 12. Added section 3.9.2: Authoritarianism. 13. Expanded section 3.10.2: General Guidelines for Dating to add that Christians should seek to be equally yoked per 2 Cor. 6:14. 14. Corrected problems with heading styles in section 5. 15. Renamed section 4.14 from Marriage Counseling to Marriage and Family Counseling and modified it. 16. Added section 6.4.3: Phases of a Project. 17. Expanded section 3.9.2: Authoritarianism. 18. Modified the title to the question in section 8.6.2. 19. Modified item 6. Relatives under section 1.2: Family Priorities. Added a reference to "Love your neighbor."

<i>Date</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Description</i>
		<p>20. Modified section 3.5.4: Why should we correct, by adding a reference to Lev. 19:17.</p> <p>21. Modified section 3.9.3.</p> <p>22. Added item 7: Church to section 1.2: Family Priorities.</p>
7/10/00	1.10	<p>1. Completely reorganized Chapter 5.</p> <p>2. Added Section 5.4: Characteristics of Empathetic and Effective Caregiver Communications.</p> <p>3. Added section 5.8: Disciplinary Communications Fostering Social Responsiveness and Competence.</p> <p>4. Added section 2.9: Behaviors We Should Hate.</p> <p>5. Modified section 3.9 to add a few more scripture references about God's prescription for sin and dysfunctional behaviors.</p>
7/26/00	1.11	<p>1. Moved section 3.9: Dysfunctional Behaviors, into new section 7 entitled Sin and Dysfunctional Behaviors.</p> <p>2. Divided the new section 7 into two subsections: 1. Sin; Dysfunctional Behaviors.</p> <p>3. Added section 7.1.2: Anger.</p> <p>4. Added section 7.1.4: Greed.</p> <p>5. Added section 7.1.5: Laziness.</p> <p>6. Added section 7.1.6: Lust</p> <p>7. Added section 7.1.8: Murder.</p> <p>8. Expanded section 7.1.9: Pride.</p> <p>9. Renamed chapter 2 from Spiritual/Religions Foundation to "Our Relationship With God"</p> <p>10. Moved "What We Believe" from section 2.1 to section 1.2. Added the first four of the ten commandments to the beginning of chapter 2.</p> <p>11. Added section 7.1.3: Envy.</p>
8/11/00	1.12	<p>1. Added following changes to section 8.7:</p> <p>1.1. Added section 6, Domestic Violence.</p> <p>1.2. Added definition for Domestic Violence to 1.5.9.</p> <p>1.3. Added section 14.3: Splitting costs of polygraph tests.</p> <p>1.4. Reorganized to put Sufficient 7.1 Grounds for Divorce and 7.2 Insufficient Grounds for Divorce into a new section 7.</p> <p>1.5. Added section 9.1: Community personal and real property.</p> <p>2. Added section 2.8: Jesus Christ is the Source of our Strength and Self-Esteem.</p> <p>3. Added section 8.6.9: Wouldn't I be the laughing stock of my family and friends or coworkers if I signed a prenuptial agreement?</p>
8/19/00	1.13	<p>1. Added John 5:30 to the beginning of section 3.5.2: What is Righteous Judgment.</p> <p>2. Moved section on Dating from 3.9 to 4.1.</p> <p>3. Added section 4.2: Premarital Inventory and Planning</p> <p>4. Added section 7.2: Common Sinful Excuses for Evading Responsibility for Sin</p> <p>5. Added section 7.1 Sin as Spiritual Addiction/Slavery</p>
8/25/00	1.14	<p>1. Added section 8.2: Religious Tolerance in the Public Schools.</p> <p>2. Reorganized chapter 4.</p> <p>3. Added section 7.7: Statistics on Sin in the Bible.</p> <p>4. Expanded section 4.14.3: Statistics on Divorce, to add item 26, which has more information about single dads and divorce.</p> <p>5. Modified section 8.8, section 7 to label subsections and Added items 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5 based on lessons learned from current divorce.</p> <p>6. Modified sections 6.1 and 6.2 to add Ephesians 6:5-9.</p>
9/1/00	1.15	<p>1. Added a quote to the beginning of section 7.6.6: "As a man thinketh, so is he."</p> <p>2. Added section 6.2: The Nature of Work.</p> <p>3. Added item 2 to section 1.4: Family Mission Statement, which discusses God's</p>

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		<p>plan for the family.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Added section 2.3: Christian Character and Behavior and put several previous sections under it. 5. Added section 2.3.1: Church Involvement 6. Added section 2.3.4: Faith. 7. Revised section 2.3.7: Joy. 8. Added section 2.3.6: Humility. 9. Created section 2.5 and put 2.5.1-2.5.3 under it. Added to section 7.3.3.7: Overcoming Envy. Added a reference to Hebrews 13:5-6. 10. Added section 2.3.10: Obedience. 11. Added section 2.3.11: Prayer. 12. Added section 2.3.12: Persistence and Endurance. 13. Added section 2.3.13: Proper Attitude About Suffering and Problems in Our Lives.
9/10/00	1.16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added an introduction to section 7.3.4: Greed, which included Matt. 6:19-34, about wealth. 2. Added section 2.3.16: Responsibility. 3. Added section 3.2.19: Wisdom.
9/16/00	1.17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated and expanded section 2.3.9: Forgiveness. 2. Considerably revised and expanded section 2.3.7: Joy. 3. Added section 2.3.13: Political involvement. 4. Considerably revised and expanded section 2.3.15: Repentance and confession. 5. Completely revised and expanded section 4.5: Role of Wives. 6. Expanded section 2.3.15 to include information about vows and how we should keep them. 7. Added several additional comments about homosexuality to section 2.3.5. Talked about hating homosexuality. 8. Added item 8: Forgiveness, to section 4.6, which is the Mission statement for our marriage. 9. Added item 10: Divorce, to section 4.6, which is the Mission statement for our marriage. 10. Added an explanation of self-esteem to section 7.3.9: Pride. 11. Updated section 3.5.2: What is Righteous Judgment. Added a reference to the end to Prov. 2:1-9 about how we can become righteous judges. 12. Added section 7.7: Using Symptoms to Diagnose Sin in Interpersonal Relationships. 13. Added item 3.4 to section 8.8: Prenuptial Agreement. This section talks about Joint loans and credit. 14. Added section 2.3.17: Righteousness. 15. Added section 6.4: Principles of Leadership. 16. Modified section 2.3: Christian Character and Behavior. Added a requirement that Christians will obey God's word, learn about it, and live a sinless life. 17. Corrected several spelling errors throughout the document.
9/30/00	1.18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 4.1.3: Principles of Loving Toughness During Courtship/Dating 2. Modified the title of section 4.8.2 from Commitment to "Shared commitment" and added a treatment to the end of the section of the scenario of two spouses who are unequally committed. 3. Added items 11-12 to Section 4.6: Mission/Vision statement for the marriage. 4. Modified section 1.4: Family Mission Statement, by adding a couple items. 5. Modified section 4.6: Mission Statement for the Marriage. 6. Added items 7.8 and 7.9 to section 8.8: Pre-Nuptial/Marital Agreement. These talk about kick-out from SP residences and rape charges. 7. Modified definitions at the beginning of section 3.5.3: Types of sin and correction. Definitions for Reprove and Exhort were inconsistent with

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		<p>following statements.</p> <p>8. Modified item 3 of section 4.8.5.2: The Four Fundamental Laws of Sexual Satisfaction in Marriage. Added a comment that refusal to submit sexually is technically a ground for divorce, because it causes the man to lust after other women and commit adultery in his mind, which is a divorceable offense.</p> <p>Modified item 3 to indicate that rape is a legal impossibility within marriage.</p> <p>9. Modified section 4.14.1 What God Says About It [Divorce] to indicate that lack of sexual submission is a grounds for divorce.</p>
10/28/00	1.19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Split document into 10 separate documents, one for each chapter, and then used the "RD" field to generate a separate table of contents. 2. Added section 8.7.8: "Do pre-nuptial agreements have financial advantages for both spouses over the state's default pre-nuptial agreement?" 3. Added section 8.7.9: "Don't Prenuptial Agreements Encourage Domestic Violence or Spousal Abuse?" 4. Correction a few problems with section 8.8: Prenuptial agreements, in item 9.2. 5. Added item 2.8 "Terms under which marriage of parties is considered valid and legal by the state" to the prenuptial agreement in section 8.8. 6. Added section 8.3: Five Reasons Why Christians Should Not Obtain a State Marriage License, obtained from: 7. Fixed section references in section 8 after adding section 8.3. 8. Added section 2.6: Are You Good Enough To Go To Heaven? 9. Added section 7: Relationship to Governments and the World. 10. Add section 8.3.1: Abortion 11. Added section 8.3.6: Homosexuality.
11/7/00	1.20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added section 8.3.7: Idolatry. 2. Added item 6 to section 9.9: Prenuptial/Marital Agreement. This section talks about Custody Evaluation Requirements. 3. Updated item 7: Spousal Support in section 9.9. 4. Added a definition of Christian to section 9.9 (item 1.4) 5. Added requirements for supervised visits to item 5.5 of section 9.9. 6. Expanded and updated section 8.3.2: Adultery. 7. Expanded section 3.5.1 Should Christians Judge? Added more details on why we should judge. 8. Expanded section 3.5.2: Righteous judgment to add the requirement for contentment at the end of that section. 9. Added a description of the symptoms of pornography addiction to section 8.4.8: Pornography addiction. 10. Considerably expanded section 7: Relationship to Governments and the World. Added section 7.5: Social Security. Added section 7.6: Sources of Government Tyranny and Oppression. Added section 7.7: Income Taxes as Government Extortion and Slavery. Added section 7.8: They Told the Truth!: Amazing Quotes About the US. Government. Rearranged the section. 11. Added section 9.8.12: Is it true that most family law attorneys don't like prenuptial agreements and advise against them? 12. Added section 9.8.13: Aren't prenuptial agreements supposed to give me MORE freedom and autonomy and not less?
11/17/00	1.21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added a quote from the bible to section 7.1: Role of law (1 Peter 2:13-17) 2. Added a quote to the beginning of section 9.9: Prov. 31:3. 3. Added a quote to the beginning of section 7: Relationship to Governments and the World. Quote was from George Washington. 4. Added section 7.6.3: The Federal Reserve. 5. Added section 7.6.4: Debt. 6. Added section 8.3.5: Gossip. 7. Added section 3.4: Importance of Unity. 8. Modified section 3.6.2: What is righteous judgment, to talk about hypocrisy and the importance of not having any when we judge others.

Date	Version	Description
		9. Reorganized chapter 3 into a more logical flow. 10. Added section 3.1: The Role of Families. 11. Added section 7.5: Testaments of Truth, from Christopher Hollman Hansen. 12. Added section 7.7.1.3 Case Study in Emancipation from Government Slavery: Joshua Hansen. 13. Added Christians to the end of section 3.7.1: Should Christians Judge?
3/18/01	1.22	1. Added copyright notice, website address, and version number to the bottom of each page in the document.
5/6/01	1.23	1. Added section 7.5 through 7.17. 2. Removed a couple profanities from section 4.15.
11/15/01	1.24	1. Put a table of contents at the beginning of every chapter. 2. Revised section 9.9 to replace the Prenuptial Agreement with a completely different and much simpler one. Fixed formatting problems in section 9.9. 3. Added section 7.1: “Biblical Law: The Foundation of ALL Law.” 4. Rewrote section 7.2: “Role of Law”. 5. Fixed several typos. 6. Added to the introduction of Chapter 7 to mention <i>The Great IRS Hoax</i> book and where to download it.
5/1/02	1.25	1. Revised section 4.2.3, the wedding vows.
11/14/02	1.26	1. Added section 4.12. 2. Fixed table headers crossing pages. 3. Added “Where to Get Copies of this Book” to the beginning. 4. Fixed several spelling errors. 5. Added a Table of Authorities to the beginning, which includes Constitutional Provisions, Other Authorities, Cases, and Statutes.
4/14/03	1.27	1. Replaced all occurrences of “Hansen Family” with “_____ Family”. 2. Corrected grammar errors in section 3.5.1. 3. Corrected the web link in the “Where to Get Copies of This Book” at the beginning of the book. 4. Added sections 7.2 through 7.4. 5. Added section 7.14.3.1 and 7.14.3.2. 6. Added section 7.14.7. 7. Added section 7.14.1 through 7.14.5 and 7.14.12. 8. Added section 7.19 through 7.23 and 7.25 through 7.29.. 9. Modified the cover page to better describe how to make a copy of the book. 10. Added a Testimonials section to the beginning of the book. 11. Added a Preface section to the beginning of the book. 12. Corrected formatting problems on table of contents.
8/16/03	1.28	1. Corrected the quote in section 8.3.12 from Exodus 20:13. 2. Replaced all occurrences of “familyguardian.tzo.com” with “famguardian.org”.
9/1/03	1.29	1. Deleted duplicate item #13 from section 1.4. 2. Added section 6.4: The Four Types of Workers. 3. Added items 1-3 to section 1.4.
2/16/05	1.30	1. Fixed bad footer in first few chapters. 2. Fixed grammar problems in section 4.15.1. 3. Expanded section 7.2 to add a definition of “worship”.

1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Purpose of this Document

The Bible says:

Prov. 4:26: *“Ponder the path of your feet, and let your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.”*

Prov. 14:15: *“The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps.”*

Prov. 25:8-10: *“Do not go hastily to court; for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor has put you to shame? Debate your case with your neighbor, and do not disclose the secret to another; lest he who hears it expose your shame, and your reputation be ruined.”*

This document is a vision and a plan for how to honor God by honoring each other within the _____ Family. It is an attempt to ensure that our family lives up to the apostle Paul’s admonition to *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* (1 Cor. 14:40). It establishes privately and confidentially between the spouses or prospective spouses the path mentioned in Prov. 4:26 that this family will take to ensure that they meet this goal in every way. It emphasizes faith, respect, responsibility, and love in defining all the implications, rules, and consequences, or “steps” resulting from the sacred marriage that is or will be its foundation. It is intended to be signed preferably before two people marry. It describes the most important aspects of the spiritual, personal, and legal relationships that exist or will exist between the members of the _____ Family. It keeps the marriage and family relationship in the spiritual and religious realm where it belongs and prevents involvement of the parties with the secular/godless state or the legal system under all possible outcomes. This document also embodies the approach advocated by Dr. James Dobson in his *Love for a Lifetime* book, who said:

The key to a healthy marriage is to keep your eyes wide open before you wed...and half closed thereafter.¹

This constitution was and will continue to be developed and refined with the involvement and consent of every adult in the family. Other than section 9, Legal Agreements, it is not considered legally binding, but we do swear and affirm before the Lord to do our best within our abilities to honor every part of it and to ensure that every part of it and our actions are conformed to His will and the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is a living document, not unlike the living water that Jesus talked about in John 7:38. It is as fluid and modifiable as the relationship between the spouses that is its foundation, and which is expected to evolve and mature over time. Dating couples who receive it who are not married are expected to collaborate in editing and refining it so that it accurately reflects the collective views of *both* parties in the relationship. Spouses are welcome and even encouraged to edit it after it has been signed and after they are married, but any edits will need to be approved by *both* spouses to emphasize that the marriage is a team effort and not a dictatorship. If the document is already signed by the spouses, then its contents are considered sacred and the members of the family agree not to question any part of it or the Bible that is its foundation until a new version that everyone can better agree on has been authored and approved by all.

¹ *Love for a Lifetime*, Dr. James Dobson, Multnomah Press, 1987, ISBN 0-88070-174-9, p. 17.

Note that the purpose of this constitution is *not* to do any of the following: 1. Make divorce easier to get or encourage divorce; 2. Control or oppress any member of the family; 3. Gain undue or unfair advantage of one individual over another; 4. Create an oppressive, legalistic environment devoid of love or compassion within the family. To the extent that it achieves any of these adverse goals, the parties who sign it should feel encouraged and obligated to modify it to eliminate any of these problems preferably prior to signing it.

Instead, this constitution is meant to emphasize *liberty* for every member of the family, which is simply *freedom with personal responsibility*. The goal of this constitution is to define the extent of the freedoms that each family member has and the responsibilities that go with those freedoms. The members of the family agree to respect and enforce these freedoms and each other, but also to ensure that the responsibilities that go with these freedoms are honored and properly exercised by each member. We as a family also commit ourselves to temper and balance these liberties within our family mentioned above with *love*, as the apostle Paul pointed out in Gal. 5:13-15, because if we are following God's teachings, then we will act lovingly regardless of how we feel or how other people act as it states in 1 John 4:8 "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." We acknowledge and define as a family that love is an act and a choice we make more than it is a feeling we are victimized or controlled by. Love is not something we can or will "fall into" or "fall out of". Instead, it is a commitment and a choice God *commands* us to make every day of our lives on how to act as described in Matt. 5:43-48, Mark 12:31, and Romans 13:9. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that God expects us to choose to demonstrate daily as His spiritual children. We acknowledge that love the feeling is produced by choosing continually and daily to act in a loving way towards each other. No matter how we feel about other family members, if we always choose to act in a loving way, love the feeling will be the inevitable consequence.

Because we are all imperfect sinners, we know that the works of the flesh may operate at least occasionally in our lives in a way that may not allow us to live up to every aspect of this idealistic constitution. For such situations, we need to follow God our Father's example in recognizing our fallibility as humans and be loving and patient with our family. We recognize that the love that we show for others will do a *much* better job of motivating them to improve than the most carefully or consistently administered rebuke or punishment or the most strict laws or rules. We think it is always important to show a personal interest in the physical and emotional welfare of everyone in the family.

The members of this family include the following individuals:

Table 1-1: Family Members

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Date of birth</i>	<i>Social Security Number</i>
	Husband		
	Wife		
	Child		
	Child		
	Child		

1.2 What We Believe²

The _____ Family is and shall forever be a Christian family. This means that they agree that:

² Family Support Foundation Statement of Faith, <http://www.fsfministries.org/doctrinal.html>

1. That there is only one God, Creator and Lord of all, who has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. The Bible to be the only inspired infallible and authoritative Word of God. We believe that BIBLE stands for the following:
 - Basic
 - Instructions
 - Before
 - Leaving
 - Earth
3. We want to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. (Deu. 6:5)
4. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16)
5. God commands us that he who loves God must love his brother also. (see 1 John 4:21).
6. We are all imperfect, fallible sinners and fall short of deserving the grace of God. (see Romans 3:23-24)
7. That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)
8. In the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ as true God and true man, His incarnation and virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His imminent personal return to earth.
9. That the Lord Jesus Christ died and shed His blood as a sacrifice for our sin, and that we are justified by grace through faith in Christ alone apart from any human merit.
10. That the regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the salvation of lost and sinful man, through the repentance from sin and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as savior and Lord.
11. In the present ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is able to live a godly life.
12. In the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved unto the resurrection of eternal life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of eternal separation.
13. That the Church, the spiritual Body of which Christ is the Head, is bound together by the Holy Spirit consisting of all who are born again, and that, as the Body of Christ He is constantly purifying and preparing it for His return.
14. It is not through works, but through faith in Jesus Christ and God's grace that we achieve salvation and eternal life. (Romans 3:38)
15. We evidence and demonstrate our faith to God by keeping His commandments. Faith without works is dead faith, which is not faith at all.

1.3 Family Priorities

The priorities of *every* member of the _____ Family shall be as follows, listed in decreasing order of importance. This list derives from our beliefs as described in the previous section:

1. *God/religious faith.* This is because in Eccl. 12:13-14 it says:

“Fear God and keep His commandments.

For this is man's all.

For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

Proverbs 8:13 says that *“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.” Therefore, to fear God is to loathe these kinds of bad behavior but to love the person who is doing them.*

2. Spouse. This is because in Eph. 5:25-29 it says:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.”

3. Child. This is because in Matt 18:5-6, it says:

“5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. 6 But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

4. Job. Job comes before self because in 1 Tim. 5:8 it says:

“8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

5. Self. This is because in 1 Cor. 3:16-17 it says:

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”

6. Relatives.

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

7. Church/religion.

By this we mean going to church or strictly following the rules and dogma of a specific faith. Churches are not the way to our salvation, faith in Jesus Christ is. No one ever went to hell for not going to church. Churches are only a means of fellowship with God and the members of God’s spiritual family, but we can enjoy His fellowship without being in a church by having a personal relationship with him on a daily basis through prayer. Jesus said in James 1:27 about church/religion: *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”*

It is important to realize that we agree that every aspect of how members of the family relate to each other should be a reflection of these priorities, which are not subject to change or renegotiation. In particular, the following behaviors will be a reflection of these priorities:

- How we spend our money. How we spend our money says more about our priorities than any other aspect of our behavior. We will spend more of our money on the more important things.
- The things we do first, when we have multiple obligations. We will do the most important things first.
- The respect we show for others. More important things will get more of our respect.
- How we spend our time. More important things will get more time and attention.

1.4 Family Mission Statement

Below is the vision statement for our family, which derives from the beliefs we described in section 1.2: What We Believe. The items listed are in descending order of importance and priority:

1. Divorce is not an option. We agree to conform our behavior to what God says about divorce, which is:
 - 1.1. Mal. 2:16 says God hates divorce.
 - 1.2. Romans 7:2-3 says that death of a spouse can free a person from the bonds of marriage.
 - 1.3. 1 Cor. 7:15 says an unbelieving spouse can divorce a believing spouse, but not the other way around. Both parties to this Constitution profess to be believing spouses so this is not an option.
 - 1.4. Matt. 5:31-32 says sexual immorality or adultery is the only basis to initiate divorce by either party if both are believers.
2. We will honor the Ten Commandments to the best of our ability:
 - 2.1. We will put God first in everything that we do. Exodus 20:2-11.
 - 2.2. We will not lie or deceive or exaggerate or tell a partial truth. Instead, we will tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”. Exodus 20:16.
 - 2.3. We will not covet what other family members have earned. Exodus 20:17.
 - 2.4. We will not murder. Exodus 20:13.
 - 2.5. We will not commit adultery. Exodus 20:14.
 - 2.6. We will honor our father and our mother. Exodus 20:12.
3. We will not use or abuse guilt to manipulate family members:
 - 3.1. If a person has sincerely apologized for a sin they committed, we not bring the issue up again. We will instead forgive those who repent as the Lord requires.
 - 3.2. We will not criticize or complain about family members in front of others if they violate this constitution, unless they have already been approached privately and refuse to try to improve the situation.
4. We will maintain and renew our faith in God continually. We will make prayer and reading the Bible an important part of our life. We will put God and his commandments first in everything that we do.
5. We will respect and honor God by honoring His plan for the family and for marriage. God's plan for marriage requires that:
 - 5.1. *Husbands must exercise spiritual and moral leadership (also called headship) in the home.* The absence of leadership is the reason why women frequently feel that they need to take charge in the home.
 - 5.2. *Husbands must honor and love their wives as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25-29).* The love they show for their wives should be in spite of the response and must be unconditional, or it is not love, but is selfishness disguised as love. Loving one's wife means that husband's should consult their wives for important decisions and be interested in their needs and opinions and defer to those desires if they will not harm anyone in the family and will maintain peace and satisfaction in the family. However, it doesn't mean that they must be "mind readers", and they shouldn't be expected to know what their wives want without being told.
 - 5.3. *Wives must submit to their husbands as to the Lord (Eph. 5:23-24).* This submission should not be conditional, but absolute, or else it will be selfish and sinful manipulation craftily and deceitfully disguised as love. Conditional love is not love at all. Love is not something you can trade or barter with, because love isn't selfish or proud and doesn't seek personal gain at other's expense.
 - 5.4. *Spouses should submit sexually to the needs of their partner at all times, regardless of how they feel (1 Cor. 7:3-5).* We cannot make the affection we give dependent on what we receive from our partner or on what we want that we aren't getting, or it will be selfish manipulation

deceitfully disguised as love. Failure to observe this requirement can and often does cause the end of marriages, anger, and resentment.

- 5.5. *We will always try to give more to our spouse of what they want than we receive of what we want, so that there will always be symbiosis in the relationship.* This is part of the concept of "going the extra mile" we talk later about in section 2.5.3: God's Memorandum to Us. For instance, husbands will try to give wives more of the affection women want than of the sex that husbands want or receive, so that the wife will feel rewarded for submitting herself to her husband. Likewise, wives will give more of the sex that husbands want than of the affection wives expect or receive in return.
- 5.6. *Children must honor and obey their father and mother (Eph 6:1-3).*
6. *We will continually demonstrate our love, both verbally and non-verbally.* We will both ask how we can help the other each day. We will be patient, unselfish, kind, and proactive in our dealings with other family members. We will consider the interests of other family members to be at least as important as our own.
7. *We acknowledge that love is both a choice and a feeling. However, we take full and personal responsibility to always act and think in a loving way toward everyone and especially towards each other, regardless of whether we have love the feeling.* By doing love the act, we produce love the feeling. To be loving means to *choose* to act in a loving way regardless of how we choose to feel or how our partner affects the love that we feel. Our behavior and our feelings and the beliefs that produce those feelings are our choice and our responsibility, and not something that we allow to victimize us or the people around us. We refuse to act lovingly toward someone only when we get something we want back from them because that is selfish manipulation disguised as love. Our love for each other must be unconditional or it simply isn't love.
8. *We will be frequently and continually affectionate with each other, even when other family members do not reciprocate:* We acknowledge that being affectionate is the way that we show to each other that we accept and value our spouse. We may be distressed by some sin they have committed, but rejecting affection or love or sex, even when we are angry at them, is to reject them as a person, which we agree never to do. We will always initiate and respond positively to the affection that is offered to us by our spouse and other family members.
9. *We will demonstrate empathy towards each other.* We will practice doing a task the way another family member does it at least once before we encourage them to do it our way. When we speak, we will consider how the other person might react to what we want to say before we say it and modify what we say to accomplish the desired result. We will work hard and in humility towards admitting when we're wrong and not being defensive.
10. *We will show respect toward each other.* We will show interest in one another when we first meet at the end of the day. We will give each other at least one compliment a day. We will patiently listen to one another without interruption even when we don't agree with what the other is saying. We won't nudge or draw attention to other family members if we are in church and the pastor is criticizing or convicting the congregation about some sin.
11. *We will act responsibly, honorably, and courteously with other family members.* We will clean up after ourselves and not expect other people to do our work for us. If we take something out, we will put it away. If we are expected to perform a chore, we will do it cheerfully and promptly and won't make excuses for not doing it. We will always try to leave things in better shape than we got them. We will not expect something for nothing from someone else. We will always tell the truth about our feelings and be willing to share our feelings tactfully with other family members. We will not use marriage or the parent-child relationship as an excuse to not work or contribute financially to the family or to our own needs. We will not expect spousal support from our spouse, unless we are so physically ill that we can't work.

12. We will honor our father and mother. We will do this in spite of how they treat us, because the Bible commands us to do this.
13. We will be flexible. We will demonstrate an open mind to the opinions and feelings and needs of others. We will not insist that others see the world the way we do. However, we will also expect them to responsibly honor all of their commitments and oaths, and especially the sacred marriage commitment.
14. We will hate the sin but never hate the sinner. We won't devalue anyone because of the sins they commit. Instead we will demonstrate love for them at all times, even when they are deep in sin. If they are committing sins, we will rebuke, exhort, and reprove them respectfully and in love, but we will be firm and fair in how we deal with sin by focusing on their best interests and the best interests of everyone in the family rather than selfishly promoting our own interests. See section 2.3.5 for further details on hate of sin.
15. We will be without hypocrisy. For instance, we will never ask anyone to do anything we ourselves wouldn't be willing to do, and if we ask someone to do something, we ought to be willing to help them unless we are physically or intellectually unable to, in which case we should assist them with other things we are good at to show our appreciation. We also will examine and judge ourselves by the same standards by which we examine others, and we will look at our own bad behavior *before* we say a word about other's behavior in accordance with Matt. 7:1-7. See section 3.5.2 for further details on righteous judgment. When we criticize others, it will be constructively with a focus on how to fix the problem and on cooperatively committing to at least one solution rather than on who is to blame and how people will never change.
16. We won't live in the past and use blame or guilt for sins that have been repented for as a way to use guilt to continually control, oppress, manipulate, hurt, or discourage other family members. When another family member admits their sin and repents, then we promise to forgive them, never again be angry or resentful over the sin, and never bring up the sin again. We will also do our best to bear the fruit of true repentance as described in section 2.3.15 when we have sinned against other family members or others.
17. We will take the time to notice, complement, and reward behavior we like and which is good. This will incentivize family members to habitually do the right thing.
18. We will actively participate in family meetings and family court. We will work diligently to improve the family environment to make it better for everyone without advantaging any one family member over the other.
19. We will do our best NOT to do any of the behaviors described in section 8.3: Types of Sin. If we slip and do any of these sinful behaviors and are made aware of it by someone else, we will repent immediately and ask for the forgiveness from the person or people who were hurt by these behaviors. We will also ask for God's forgiveness and attempt to compensate fully and completely for the harm we may have done.
20. We will do our utmost to understand and know the will of the Lord about how He wants us to act in the process of glorifying Him in everything that we do. We will do our utmost to demonstrate our faith and repentant and thankful attitude continually through good works and good behavior by demonstrating the behaviors documented in section 2.3: Christian Character and Behavior.

2. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

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The Bible is a book about our relationship to God. The first four commandments of the Ten Commandments describe directly from God how we should relate to Him:

“You shall have no other gods before Me.”
[Exodus 20:3]

You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands to those who love Me and keep my commandments.”
[Exodus 20:4]

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”
[Exodus 20:7]

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it”
[Exodus 20:8-11]

2.1 Role of Christians

The table below identifies the roles and responsibilities of Christians. Since we as a family profess faith in the trinity, consisting of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, then all of these requirements apply to every member of the family.

Table 2-1: Role of Christians

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Fear God and keep his commandments	Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.	Ecc. 12:13-14
2	Do not marry unbelievers	Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.	2 Cor. 6:14-16
3	Submit sexually to your marriage partner	Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband	1 Cor. 7:2-5

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
		does not have authority over his own body but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self control.	
4	Pursue harmony at home	But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."	Matt. 12:25
5	Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven	Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy <i>against</i> the Spirit will not be forgiven men.	Matt. 12:31
6	Take care of your own	But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.	1 Tim. 5:8
7	Show compassion and be courteous	Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.	1 Pet. 3:8
8	Persevere under trials	Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.	James 1:12
9	Demonstrate humility	Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.	Phi. 2:2-4; Eph. 4:2
10	Consider trials and difficulties as joy	Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."	James 1:2-3
11	Do not be greedy for gain/selfish	He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live.	Prov. 15:27
12	Seek knowledge	The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.	Prov. 18:15
13	Do not be proud	Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.	Prov. 16:18-19
14	Exercise self-control	He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.	Prov. 16:32
15	Do not isolate yourself	A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.	Prov. 18:1
16	Seek wisdom	He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who keeps understanding will find good.	Prov. 19:8
17	Do not lie and hate lying but not liars	A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are his delight.	Prov. 19:9; Prov 21:6 Prov. 12:22

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
		A righteous man hates lying, but a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame.	Prov. 13:5
18	Put an end to arguments	It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.	Prov. 20:3
19	Do not love sleep	Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes and you will be satisfied with bread.	Prov. 20:13
20	Be diligent	The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.	Prov. 21:5
21	Do not love pleasure	He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.	Prov. 21:17
22	Watch what you say	Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.	Prov. 21:23
23	Having credibility is more important than great riches	A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.	Prov. 22:1
24	Watch your steps	A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.	Prov. 22:3
25	End contention by casting out the scoffer	Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; yes, strife and reproach will cease.	Prov. 22:10
26	Do not make friends with angry people	Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.	Prov. 22:24
27	Excel at your work	Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men.	Prov. 22:29
28	Buy the truth and do not sell it	Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.	Prov. 23:23
29	Avoid and do not envy evil men	Do not be envy evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devised violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking.	Prov. 24:1-2
30	Do not rejoice when your enemy falls	Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the Lord see it, and it displease Him, and he turn away His wrath from him.	Prov. 24:17-18
31	Rebuke the wicked	But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.	Prov. 24:25
32	Don't visit your neighbor too often	Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house, lest he become wary of you and hate you.	Prov. 25:17
33	Do not answer a fool with his own folly	Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.	Prov. 26:4
34	Do not involve yourself in other people's arguments	He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own, is like one who takes a dog by the ears.	Prov. 26:17
35	Do not praise yourself	Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.	Prov. 27:2
36	Don't speculate or boast about tomorrow	Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.	Prov. 27:1
37	Favor integrity over affluence	Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.	Prov. 28:6
38	Confess your sins	He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have	Prov. 28:13

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
		mercy.	
39	Do not trust in your own heart	He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.	Prov. 28:26
40	Do not be hasty with words	Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.	Prov 29:20
41	Choose your friends very carefully	The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.	Prov. 12:26
42	Homosexuality is wrong	You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.	Lev. 18:22
43	Love your neighbor as yourself	You shall love your neighbor as yourself.	Matt. 19:19
44	Do not worship idols	You shall not make yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands to those who love Me and keep My commandments.	Exodus 20:4-6
45	Do not swear	You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.	Exodus 20:7
46	Keep the Sabbath day holy	Remember the Sabbath day, to keep I holy.	Exodus 20:8
47	Do not murder	You shall not murder.	Exodus 20:13
48	Do not commit adultery	You shall not commit adultery.	Exodus 20:14
49	Do not steal	You shall not steal.	Exodus 20:15
50	Do not bear false witness	You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	Exodus 20:16
51	Do not covet anything of your neighbor's	You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.	Exodus 20:17

2.2 The Holy Spirit in Christian Living³

As a loving wife and mother tenderly watches over her child, so the Holy Spirit cares for the children of God (1 Cor. 6:19).

1. The Holy Spirit indwells Christians. The Bible teaches that all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). The purpose of this indwelling ministry is to control the newly created nature given at conversion (2 Cor. 5:17); Eph. 3:16).
2. The Holy Spirit fills believers. We are admonished to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). The word “fill” means “to be controlled.” The filling does not mean that the Christian gets more of the Holy Spirit, but rather, He gets more of us!
3. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer (Rom. 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13).

³ The Open Bible, New King James Version, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997, p. 1652.

4. The Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life of the believer. This fruit is described by Paul: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23).
5. The Holy Spirit imparts gifts to Christians (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; Eph. 4:7-12). A spiritual gift is an ability imparted to every Christian (1 Cor. 7:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). The purpose of these gifts is twofold, namely, to glorify God (Rev. 4:11) and to edify the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-13).
6. The Holy Spirit teaches believers. He will instruct us in all spiritual things as we read the Word of God (John 14:26) and abide in the Son of God (1 John 2:24-27).

2.3 Christian Character and Behavior

The following subsections describe the essential character attributes of Christians and their origin in scripture. Note that in addition to these characteristics, Christians also will attempt to live righteously, which means take the time to learn about and obey God's commands in the Bible and keeping their lives free of the sins mentioned in section 8: Sin and Dysfunctional Behaviors.

2.3.1 Church Involvement

The Lord Jesus is the head of the church and He is building it and it is His body and He has called us to be a part of it (Eph. 5:23). And if you're not a part of it, you're disobedient. You are forsaking the assembling of yourselves together though you're commanded not to do that. You're to be together with God's people because you must stimulate one another to love and good works. And you are to be reminded that the church gathers for the breaking of bread and for prayer and for fellowship and the apostles' doctrine. And in that environment the power of God operates. You are to be reminded also that if you are indifferent to the church to any degree, it raises the question of whether you're a Christian or not because Christians are known according to 1 John 3:14 because they love the brethren and love of the brethren results in the longing to be with those of like precious faith. And Christians are also known because they hear the Word and do it...Jesus said...and they love to submit themselves to the authority of the Word of God and obey it.

It's a very dangerous thing to isolate yourself from God's people and it's very indicative of the heart if you're not faithful. Proverbs 18:1, "*He who separates himself seeks his own desire.*" It's very clear. When someone is unfaithful to the assembly of the saints, unfaithful to the worship of God and fellowship and the breaking of bread and the hearing of the apostles' doctrine, it is because they have other personal desires that are far less noble than those that mark out the devoted Christian. I'm calling you to faithfulness to the church. I'm calling you to the attitude of the psalmist who in Psalm 122 said, "I was glad when they said to me let's go to the Lord's house." There ought to be a gladness to be a part of God's people, a part of His church. There are a lot of reasons in today's church why that gladness often doesn't exist, which we will now talk about.

There is very much of a consumer mentality in today's church and it leads to some interesting perceptions. It seems to me that today we have a lack of commitment on the part of people to the church as such. And I'll tell you what I mean by that. We have a consumeristic view of the church. It's sort of the mood of the mob in this particular time in which we live in our culture. People have about the same commitment to the church they do to the mall. If there's something there that interests them, they'll go there. They might even make a financial exchange, you know, they might give a little money for services rendered, if the services seem to fit their need. People have seemingly no more commitment to

the church than they do to the mall. They look and say, "Well is there something there that I can get?" It's kind of a marketplace mentality, there's really no responsibility, there's no accountability that I have to the local church, but I'm willing to go there if they offer me something." That's a selfish attitude on the part of parishoners that puts the church into the compromising position of having to always feed baby Christians who never want to grow up. Have you ever been at this kind of church when they ask people for volunteers? People start looking away. They come there to receive, not to give, and its an obviously unhealthy environment of political correctness instead of God's truth responsibly and faithfully portrayed.

And second thing that I would notice as a contributor to a lack of real commitment to the church which, of course, leads to a lack of understanding of the church is not only the consumeristic mentality but the privatization of spirituality. We live in a time which basically rejects authority as such in favor of personal rights. We don't want to submit ourselves to an authority, we want to make sure that we have the personal right to do and be and believe and act in any way that we want. That's kind of in our culture. Personal rights dominate our culture. And personal rights contribute to a privatization of spirituality. By that what I mean is I'm the person who will define for me what my spiritual life is going to be. I'll pick and choose, I'll assemble my own Christianity and with a proliferation of tapes and books and radio programs and Christian TV and all of this, there's no end to the options. You can formulate any kind of Christianity you want. You can pick and choose from fifteen different views of Christianity and assemble your own...it's kind of a Burger King mentality, have it your way kind of thing. And you have the individualization, the privatization of spirituality and Christianity and it all sort of eclectically is pulled together at the whim of any individual. And the idea is that my personal relationship with Jesus Christ and my personal spiritual life transcends any compelling corporate life that a church might oppress upon me or hold me to.

In this time in which we live there is a sad but true contributor to the lack of interest in the church and that is disillusionment with church leadership. Christianity is full of people who have been deeply hurt and wounded by church leaders and that contributes to their distance from the church and contributes to their indifference to submitting themselves under the authority of teachers and leaders. They're reluctant to do that because they have been exposed in the past to false pastors and false teachers and false leaders who were either unholy in their conduct or unholy in their teaching, or both. Some of you fall into that category. You've kept your distance, you're here but you're not integrated into the life of the church, and maybe it's because you've been exposed to preachers who secretly brought in heresy, they always do it secretly, and they tell you they're teaching you the Bible or they have something that God has given them to say, but they are basically unbiblical and you were exposed to that. And you've come to understand that and your trust level has been severely hampered by it. Maybe you even have been exploited by certain leaders for personal gain while they were asking you to make sacrifices, they were getting wealthy at your expense. It is also possible that you have been under leadership that indulged sexual appetites and as the New Testament says "Had eyes full of adultery" and destroyed your trust by having been engaged in sexual sin which came to light. And that continues to be a sad, sad tale.

You have been exposed to leaders who didn't know much about the Bible and who cheated you because they didn't feed you the way you should have been fed. They contributed to your spiritual weakness, rather than your spiritual growth. You may have been exposed to teachers who were authoritarian or pastors who wanted to dominate your life. You may have sat under people who had some oratorical ability but said nothing of value. And so you've sort of interpreted the church in the light of these things. You may have been in a congregation of people where there were a number of hypocrites, where there

was little that God seemed to be doing, where there was a lack of power. And all of these things contribute to a sad kind of distance that people have from the church.

A fourth thing that contributes to people's indifference toward the church is some kind of expectation for perfection that is really unrealistic. The expectation that the church should be everything that the Bible says all the time without any failures leads people to a certain kind of disillusionment. People leave a perfectly wonderful church, a marvelous church, a good, healthy, whole, sound ministry because of some perceived weakness or some real weakness, or some real weakness, or some perceived failure or real failure or some disappointment that came along and they wander away. I hear about people, and it's always amazing, who think about, "Well, we'll leave Grace Church and we'll go out and all four of us will start our own perfection because we found a failure there."

Sad to think about that but that's not an uncommon thing. I often wonder what people like that would have done in New Testament times when there was one church per city and that was it. So many people in so many places in the world would give anything and everything to have a good church, a noble church, a place where the Word of God was faithfully upheld. And yet some people will foolishly disregard that and the value of it in favor of something far less. You find a church committed to the true teaching of salvation, you find a church that believes in the inerrancy of Scripture, you find a church that interprets Genesis 1 to 11 historically and literally, you find a church where Jesus Christ is presented as the only way to heaven and that He is both Savior and Lord, you find a church that believes in the virgin birth of Christ, His substitutionary death on the cross, His bodily resurrection and bodily return to set up His Kingdom, you find a church that is committed to male leadership according to the scriptures, that believes in a literal hell, a church that exercises church discipline, proclaims sound doctrine, loves people, evangelizes the lost and disciples the saved and when you find it, thank God you found it. And pour your life into that place and don't have unrealistic expectations of perfection and worst of all, don't believe you're worthy of perfection.

It's sad that people don't get involved in the church, the only institution the Lord ever built. God grieves over this consumer mentality that views the church as selling something. And if you want to buy it, you go and buy it but if it really doesn't interest you, you'll go some other place or no place. God grieves over the privatization of spirituality where we have people assembling their own spiritual lives in some kind of an eclectic fashion, controlled only by their own personal desires. God grieves over the continued disaffection of the church toward leadership because of the terrible tragedy of sin among church leaders. God grieves over that. God also grieves over people establishing unrealistic expectations for what a church should be and expecting perfection, and when they don't find it, having a half-hearted or less than that commitment to the church.

2.3.2 Contentment

*Two things I request of You
(Deprive me not before I die):
Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches.
Feed me with the food allotted to me;
Lest I be full and deny You,
And say, "Who is the Lord?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the names of my God.
[Prov 30:7-9, Bible, NKJV]*

*5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.
 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.
 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
 [1 Tim. 6:5-7, Bible, NKJV]*

CONTENTMENT: What a rich word. It means to be satisfied. And yet there are so many Christians who are dissatisfied with the church and it's at a rampant level. We hear all about those ministries that are directed at felt needs. And I was reading a book recently that has a telling tale. It's a research project on the whole Seeker-Friendly Church which is built around needs. And with the help of the people who have started that movement being interviewed at great length over a two and a half year period they affirm that the whole driving issue in their ministry is to bring people to self-fulfillment, to recognize that people are not fulfilled, they're not satisfied and they need to be fulfilled and satisfied.

Well that may sound okay at the start but when you structure a ministry that is designed to approach people on the basis of a lack of satisfaction and build everything around that and by that woo them to Christ, you have still sold everybody self-satisfaction as a buyable goal. And then when you've got those people to Christ they are still going to be consumed with whether or not they are satisfied. You've promised them Jesus, we'll satisfy you. And I don't know about you but there are lots of things in life even in Christ that aren't from the human comfort level very satisfying. As one writer says, "In endeavoring to identify with this unchurched person and identify all his needs and pick out his need for satisfaction, in endeavoring to move him from the world to the church, you have just moved the church into the world because you've redefined his greatest need as personal satisfaction. Now you've got a church full of people who have been taught that the compelling issue is personal satisfaction defined in human terms." What a tragic situation to have to deal with.

And so, in our culture we are constantly being sold dissatisfaction, that's how the whole advertising world works, to make you discontent and dissatisfied and to make personal satisfaction the most compelling issue in your life. The truth of the matter is, it really doesn't matter at all. Nothing in this world that's going to burn up, nothing in this passing world really should be tied to our contentment, or our satisfaction, nothing.

Contentment is a biblical word. Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:6, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." And then in 1 Tim. 6:8 Paul said, "Having food and clothing, be content." The writer of Hebrews in chapter 13 verse 5 said, "Be content with what you have, for He said, I will never leave you or forsake you." So the Bible talks a lot about contentment and basically commands us to be content. It's another one of those essential spiritual attitudes in the life of the church. The church needs to be content. You need to be content. You're commanded to be so.

Well as I thought about that marvelous attitude, that wonderful attitude that should pervade our lives, I asked myself: where in the Scripture would I go to find the greatest illustration of that? And I found it easily, the first place I turned, Philippians chapter 4, turn to it with me. Philippians chapter 4. Now as the Apostle Paul writes this epistle to the Philippians you need to know a little about his circumstances.

At the time he is writing he is a prisoner. He is a prisoner. He is in the city of Rome, the great metropolis of the Roman Empire. And because of his preaching of the gospel which has stirred up so much trouble among the Jews and the Gentiles, he has been made a prisoner. It is a somewhat modified imprisonment because he has some kind of private quarters that he is in rather than being thrown into the dungeon with everybody else. Apparently there is some kind of a private environment in which he is chained to a Roman soldier. Now we do know that he was incarcerated in the filthy prison, probably the

Mamertine Prison which is still visible if you go to Rome. But in this particular occasion it seems as though he is imprisoned in a private environment in which he is in very sparse conditions chained to a Roman soldier. He is in isolation from his friends, from people. He cannot go and come as he chooses, he cannot preach and minister. He has lost all freedom and he has lost privacy, continually chained to a Roman soldier. He has only the basic issues of life, a bare minimum of food and drink and clothing. He is afflicted with the difficulty of being a captive. And in some ways, being chained to a person would be worse than being in a prison cell or even in a cell full of prisoners. He has only the very basic issues of life. In some ways this is the worst possible human condition. Only a few friends occasionally are able to find him and commune with him. He is in this condition waiting for a trial before Nero, a trial which could end in his execution. He knows that. He has been deprived of every human comfort. He is a lonely man, as it were, humanly speaking. Every movement of his hand as he writes causes the clanking of the chain to which he is linked to the soldier. It is in that environment that we read Philippians 4:11.

"Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."

What a blessed lesson to learn and he had learned it. You don't get that without learning. There's a process to learn contentment. Here he is in this horrible condition, isolation, no privacy, chained, imprisoned and he says, "I have learned to be content." Here is the description of a contented man. And this is the kind of man you need to learn from because this is a man with nothing, absolutely nothing.

First of all, I want to point out that he knew nothing of a victim mentality. He knew absolutely nothing of a victim mentality. He has nothing to say about the difficulty of his imprisonment. He has nothing to say about the unfair judicial process to which he has been exposed. He has nothing to say about the undeserved hatred from the Jews, or the undeserved hostility from the Gentiles. He has nothing to say about himself being mistreated, maltreated, abused, etc. He knows nothing about being a victim.

Boy, in our society it's a far cry from the mentality of today, isn't it? Where everybody is a victim of everything. It's just incredible how in a hurry we are to identify ourselves as victims.

The word "content" here, very interesting word, it means basically to have enough. A simple word, to have enough, to be sufficient. In fact, Lightfoot, the great Greek commentator says, "It refers to someone who doesn't need any aid." It refers to somebody who doesn't need anything. And when you look at Paul and you say...Well there's a man who doesn't need anything...by today's definition that would be ridiculous. He has nothing but doesn't need anything. Now that's content, that is absolute contentment. To have nothing and need nothing. "I have learned", he says, "to be content."

Down in Phil. 4:12 he says it again toward the end of the verse. "I have learned the secret." Again he uses this verb "to learn." In the Greek it's a verb to be initiated into. It was used, for example, of the initiation into the secrets of the mystery religions...it's, for your Greek students, *mueo*. Some of you follow me in your little Greek New Testament...*mueo*. It means to be initiated into the inner secrets of some religion. In fact, they used to say in ancient times that a person was an initiate, that is to say they were learning the inside secrets of their religion. Paul says I've learned the secret, I've been initiated, I have learned how to be content. That is a secret that eludes most people. And frankly, folks, and this is one of the hardships you must bear in our culture, the more stuff you have the harder it is to learn this lesson. It's a lot easier for people who don't have anything. It's a lot easier for people in India to learn to be content than it is for us because we define life so much in terms of what we have...we're so used to these things. Paul says I've learned.

Now the question that comes in my mind is how do you learn this? How can you be so content? How can you get to the place in your life where you can say I have nothing and I need nothing? How can you get there? How can I learn that lesson? How can I get initiated into contentment? How can I stop riding that mood roller coaster up and down dependent upon on how things go? How can I get over the hump of having been mistreated by my spouse, or my family, or my parents, or my friends, or my boss, or my teacher, or my professor who gave me a low grade? How can I get above feeling like a victim, like I'm not getting what's fair and what's right? And I'm being this...how can I rise above that and say "Hey, I have nothing and I don't need anything? I am sufficient, content, I don't have any needs." How can I get on that kind of plane and just stay there and not rise up and down, dependent upon how things are going in my world?

Well we're going to find out in this passage. There are five principles that you must learn if you would be content...five principles. They are the secrets of contentment. And when you learn them you will move to contentment.

Number one, trust in God's providence...trust in God's providence. Now this is only alluded to here, but I think in a wonderful way...trust in God's providence, have confidence in God's providence. Let me just say a word about providence. Providence is a term that has been used by theologians for years to describe the fact that God works everything to His own will. That's what it means. It means that God takes the millions of contingencies that occur in the universe and out of them all orchestrates His own will perfectly. And as I've told you in the past in talking about providence, providence to me is a greater miracle than a miracle. If God just stopped the normal process of things and injected a miracle, He could do anything He wanted, and you could understand that. He has great power. He created things so He can stop the normal processes of the natural operation of the way the world goes and just inject a miracle. But what He does in providence is let all those contingencies take place, millions of people making millions of choices, doing millions of things and demons and all of the host of Satan working their whole system, and then you've got all of the physical factors in a physical universe, all of the complexity of those millions upon millions of contingencies and God with them all perfectly blended together creates His own purposes and brings them all to pass. That is beyond imagination to me. You put a few components in my life and I get confused and I can't get where I'm going if there are too many components, it gets too complicated.

I've often thought that intelligence...and this is purely a non-professional definition...intelligence to me as it increases is the ability to handle greater and greater complexity, okay? Really, really dumb people, just plain old every day ordinary folks that aren't too smart, can't handle too much that's complex, but as you keep going up that IQ ladder, the higher you get the more complexity people can handle. But even when you've got up to the strange folks, you know, who are up there around 175 and above, and start getting...they can handle a myriad of complexities but can't find matching socks, you know those people...well, even when you get up there there's an end to what they can handle. But when you're talking about God, you're talking about a level of genius, you're talking about a mind that can handle all the existing complexities in the universe and pull them all together in a perfect plan to absolutely effect His will. Talking about something that is inscrutable, to put it mildly and that's why you don't understand all the theological issues because your brain bails out...most of us long before we ever hit 175. By the way, the average IQ is about 100. The average college graduation IQ is about 120 to 125, so we do pretty well to figure out the things we figure out in this world. But not even near the genius of God.

There was a little circumstance God fit into the whole program in Paul's life, look at Phil. 4:10. He says, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly..." he said..."I rejoiced for this reason, now at last you have revived your concern for me. Indeed you were concerned before but you lacked opportunity."

Now why is Paul rejoicing in the Lord? Why is he not thanking the Philippians? Why is he not saying, "I want to thank you guys for what you did? He's rejoicing in the Lord because he knows who brought it all to pass. Here's the situation, if I can just kind of paint the picture for you a little bit. For ten years the Philippian church had never sent Paul any support. And he was basically an itinerant preacher who worked and owned his own living the best he could. But once you get into prison or once you're incarcerated, it's a little tough. For ten years the Philippian church had been unable to send him support.

When you get into the story a little bit of those ten years and you ask the question why, there's two answers that come up. One, because they were poor and they barely had enough for themselves. Now remember, it was ten years earlier from the writing of Philippians that Paul had gone into the city of Philippi. And he first went to that synagogue, really wasn't a synagogue, it was a group of Jews down by the river, there weren't enough to start a synagogue. And he went down there and there were some men and women by the river and they were Jews and they were worshiping Jehovah and he went and met with them. And you remember how the story goes, and he preached the gospel and then some demon-possessed came along and Satan tried to cooperate with God to gain a little ground and Paul cast the demon out of the girl, doesn't want publicity from Satan, and then you remember what happened...Paul eventually preached the gospel in the city of Philippi, was put in jail. And while he was in stocks he and his friend Silas were singing praise to God in the middle of the night, an earthquake came, broke the walls of the jail, kicked all the stocks open. You remember the jailer was converted and a church was planted in Philippi. Ten years have passed since that time. Ten years since Acts 16 records that incredible story.

And Paul says in Phil. 4:10, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before but you lacked opportunity." During those ten years they never had the *kairos*, that's the word opportunity, the season. We don't know the specifics why but it was certainly partly because of their poverty. There was persecution of Paul in that town and surely there was some difficulty for that young church in that town, but even beyond that there was Paul's...Paul's inaccessibility for one thing, he was always on the move and may have been a little hard to track down. And secondly, he was busy earning his own way as he worked with his leather work and his tent making. But recently he got himself, of course, in a situation where he had no way to earn his own living anymore and his needs were great and it was at that very appropriate time, ten years after he had started that church, that they revived their concern for him. And what he's referring to here is that they sent him a gift. They sent him a gift. They sent him something to care for him...it may have been clothing, food. We're not sure what it was specifically but he sent...he was sent a gift.

You'll notice down in Phil. 4:16, "Even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once...not that I seek the gift." So here recently they've started to meet his needs. They sent him some gifts in Thessalonica and now in the situation that he's in, in the prison in Rome they have sent him gifts again. They're starting to be able to do that and the Lord is making it happen at the time of Paul's great need.

By the way, the term "revived" there is a horticultural word, just so you understand it. And it has to do with something that blooms or flourishes, comes to bloom. And he is saying your concern has blossomed, your concern has bloomed and you've been concerned before but you didn't have the opportunity or the capability and now you have. And that's why I rejoice in the Lord greatly.

You see, he knew what the writer of Hebrews said was true, that you don't ever need to be anything but content for I will never leave you or forsake you. I mean, he knew that God was there. He knew what Proverbs 16:9 says that a man, the mind of a man plans his ways but the Lord directs his steps. He knew what Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many are the plans of a man's heart, but the Lord's counsel stands." Paul knew that he didn't have to sort out all the issues because as he said in Philippians 2:13, "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." He knew that his life was in God's hands. He knew the Old Testament. He knew the providence of God in the life of Joseph. His brothers sold him into slavery and the fact that Joseph ended up in Egypt, became Prime Minister was what preserved Israel. He knew the story of Esther how Esther was planted in a pagan king's palace to stop a conspiracy that would have been genocide and wiped out the Jewish people...the providence of God. You don't even read the name of God or the word God or any reference to God in the whole book of Esther and He is unseen doing His will providentially in every verse.

You remember the story of Ruth and how God providentially worked through that incredible story to bring about the line of David and ultimately the Messiah. God working with all those millions of contingencies. And Paul knew all about that. He knew it from his understanding of Scripture. He knew it from his experience. He had learned that God was in control of everything.

Now there's a second principle that you must learn...not only the providence of God that at the time and the place when it is needed God will act, but secondly you need not only to trust in God's providence, but to be satisfied with little...to be satisfied with little. This is not easy.

Phil. 4:11 is where we get to this principle. "Not that I speak from want..." Paul wants to put a little caveat in here. He's rejoicing in the Lord because the Philippians just at the appropriate time have met his needs, but not because of his own personal wants, because he says, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." It's not...it's not that I'm rejoicing because of my wants, look, I'm content any way. I don't have any needs. I mean, I'm rejoicing in what little you gave me, but that's plenty for me, I don't need anymore. It's not because all of a sudden my longings are being met, I just need the basics and through you the Lord provided them. I trust He'll always do that providentially. But it's not because I need more.

Can you imagine somebody saying this today? I have no needs. I have no needs. That's very hard for us in this consumer mentality to say, isn't it? I don't have any needs. I don't need anything. There's nothing I need. And we have so much more than the Apostle Paul who said there's nothing I need. I mean, we had a few years ago, you know, the booming of the prosperity gospel. The prosperity gospel didn't last long because the poor got poorer giving their money to the prosperity preachers. So the prosperity gospel had a short life. People didn't get rich. It didn't kind of pan out that way. Just...it's like a pyramid scheme, you know, just the ones at the top got rich. And the prosperity gospel kind of went away, it's kind of fading. And in its place has come the needs theology. We've got a lot of needs and we're all victims and we've all been kicked around, beat up and hammered and nobody understands us and life isn't fair. Like that court case I heard about where the court awarded an employee eleven point two million dollars because some other employee said something to him which he interpreted as a racial slur. Now I don't think you should do that. But somebody said to this person something that he interpreted as a racial slur...which is not appropriate to do to anyone...and the court awarded him eleven point two million dollars. And I was glad to see that this week another case overturned that and said...Hey, that's life...that's life, fellow, give us a break. Do you think you're going to go through life and sue everybody who you perceive makes you a victim of some unkind statement? That's life, this is

the world. I was thankful for that judge, I don't know anything about him but at least somebody out there has some sanity in the middle of this.

But we have a new theology that's built on need and the idea is I've got all these needs and God better meet my needs and Jesus better meet my needs, and boy, I've got to be satisfied and I need to be fulfilled and I need...I need to be successful and I need to flourish in my business, and I need my marriage to be what it ought to be. Boy, when you start down that track, that is a track to disaster. And in reading about this church, this Seeker-Friendly thing all predicated on the foundation of fulfillment and personal satisfaction, what has happened is they've got thousands of people in their congregation every year going for psychotherapy. Why are they going for psychotherapy? Because they've been told that when you get into this Christian deal you're going to get satisfied and you're going to have your needs met and they're living in a culture which tells them there's no end to those. And so they've got to run off and get fixed...somebody's got to be there to tell them you're just a poor victim, poor you. That kind of thing is a tragic, tragic thing.

The compelling need that you and I have is we need to escape hell and we need to worship the true and living God. It doesn't really matter whether we have anything in this life or don't. You know, sometime...and we have so much, I mean, we're so rich and that's fine, God has blessed us and that's okay. You can take it, you just have to keep realizing you don't need it. In fact, the more of it you get, the more you know you don't need it and pretty soon you don't even want it. When people say, "I want to give you a gift," they tell me sometimes I want to give...I say, "Look, if it isn't combustible or consumable, don't give it to me." If I can't burn it or eat it, I don't want to stick it some place. There was one other thing. If I can read it, give it to me.

Paul says, "I have learned to be content. I've learned to be satisfied in whatever circumstances I am." He's not denying that life has difficult circumstances, that's life. He's not denying that he's mistreated. But he is no victim. He has no victim's mentality. He is triumphant. He is satisfied with little. He never forgets what he really deserves, right? He also never forgets what is coming. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him," right? So he's trusting in God's providence, to meet his needs. He knows the Lord never forsakes him and he is content and satisfied with little.

This...this sort of Christian humanism that says I'm the center of the universe and my needs are the driving compelling force is certainly an unbiblical approach. I don't want to say when I say Paul was content that there aren't some...some areas where he wasn't content. Let me suggest a couple. He refused to be content with his own spirituality. He was not content with that. He said, "O wretched man that I am." He was not content with his pursuit of holiness. He was not content with his goal of becoming like Christ. He said, "Not as though I have obtained it or attained it, I press toward the mark." He was not content with the way the world was treating Jesus Christ. He was not content with the blasphemy against him. He was not content with people going to hell and rejecting the gospel. There were a lot of things that he wasn't content with but they had nothing to do with his physical circumstances. It was enough for him that God had willed those circumstances and that God was showing Himself faithful and powerful in those circumstances. He could say with the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none on earth beside Thee, my heart and my flesh fail but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." To have God was to have everything and he needed nothing. He had learned that the chief end of man was to glorify God and the chief joy of man was to love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. And, listen, the love that he had for God in the relationship was enough...it was enough. It's like that kind of pure wonderful love that

sometimes we even experience when we first fall in love with that life partner, or that love that we cherish with that little child, it's so pure in itself that it.. it has no regard for circumstances.

So we could say that the Christian's life must be a life liberated from need...liberated from need. Be satisfied with little. Let me take you to a third point, and this one is related to the second one, it's the third element in the fabric of contentment. You need to be independent from circumstances. You need to be independent from circumstances. If you're going to be a person who is satisfied, you must be satisfied with little and you must be confident that the little is really what God has providentially provided. And thirdly, you must be independent from circumstances. And you see this independence in Phil. 4:12, it's a most interesting verse. It's a verse in which he cancels out everything, watch how he does it. "I know how to get along with humble means, I also know how to live in prosperity, in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need."

"In any and every circumstance," that's the key, that little phrase right in the second line, "In any and every circumstance." In other words, it doesn't matter. Circumstances are irrelevant. You will learn to be content when you have learned to trust God, providentially to care for everything. When you have learned to be satisfied with a minimum and when you have learned to be indifferent toward your circumstances. I know how, he says, I know how. I know how to get along with humble means. Literally the verb here has to do with just the basic bare necessities. I also know how to live in *perisseuo*, abundance, overflow in the matter of earthly goods and supplies. I know both of those. I know how to get along with little and I know how to get along with a lot. And sometimes that's tougher, isn't it, and keep your perspective because in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret again, I've learned it. I've learned how to be filled and to go hungry, how to have abundance and how to suffer need. And what he's doing is canceling everything out. He's just saying I'm content, it doesn't matter what the circumstance is. That is real spiritual maturity.

As I said earlier, so many people just ride the roller coaster of their perceived satisfactions. He found all his satisfaction in the relationship with the Lord, all his satisfaction in the hope of the future, all his satisfaction in being useful to God for Kingdom purposes, all his satisfaction in ministry. He had suffered profoundly. In fact most of his life was, I think since he became a believer, most of his life falls into the category of humble means, going hungry and suffering need, rather than living in prosperity, being filled and having abundance. I think that was the exception rather than the rule. But what he is saying is it really doesn't matter, it's not an issue. If I have it, if God provides it, fine. I want to be a steward of it and thank Him for it and understand its usage. And if I don't have it, that's fine, too. And he remembered, you know, 2 Corinthians 12 the experience that God was putting him through all through his life culminated in that 2 Corinthians 12 passage where he says he was content in persecution, distress, insults, weaknesses, because those were the things that humbled him, drew him to God and made him powerful.

So, beloved, contentment is an elusive thing in this society because this society wants to make you a victim. This society wants to emphasize and glorify your personal rights. This society wants to personalize and privatize and individualize your spirituality and your Christianity so that it's everything you think it ought to be. This society wants to turn Jesus into the genie, you rub the bottle, he jumps out and gives you what you want. This society through advertising wants to dissatisfy you with absolutely everything. And I admit there are troubles and issues in life, and there are struggles in life, but so many of them stem from the selfishness that this sinful approach breeds. When you bring...introduce your selfishness into your marriage, it will mess it up. You introduce it into your family, it will mess it up. It

will mess up the church. It will mess up any relationship. It will mess you up if you're driven by self-satisfaction. That's a terrible thing. That's a tragic thing. And when you tell people that Jesus...they should receive Jesus because He will produce self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction, you have put them on a road to disaster. Some of them may actually come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and then spend most of their Christian experience wondering why it didn't work out the way you were promised it would.

If you're going to be selfish, if you're going to be a victim, if you're going to take very wound personally, if every time somebody says something that offends you, or something you didn't like, you're going to strike out, then you will destroy all relationships. You will destroy your own life. But if you will recognize that your circumstances are by the providence of God what He intended for you and that you should be satisfied with little and utterly detached from your circumstances in terms of their ability to change your contentment, then you will learn to be content. And wouldn't it be wonderful if we were all so contented because it would turn to great praise for God.

Now let's come to the fourth principle. And this is a very important one and a very obvious one. It is brought to bear on this issue in Phil. 4:13. Let's say it this way. If we're going to be contented, we have to trust in God's providence, be satisfied with little, be independent of circumstances and be sustained by divine power...be sustained by divine power.

Phil. 4:13, "In spite of what my circumstances are," remember he was a prisoner when he wrote this, chained to a Roman soldier in the worst kind of circumstance. But in verse 13 he says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And I believe what Paul knew here was that nothing was ever too hard for the Lord. His adequacy came because he was attached to the power source. And what I want to say to you at this particular point is contentment will only be yours when you are plugged in to that power source. If by virtue of sin and if by virtue of iniquity in your life you have begun to walk in the flesh, you're going to disconnect yourself from the resource that sustains you and you're going to forfeit that contentment. It might even be that God will deprive you of the things that you are promised if you're an obedient believer and you will sink into dire circumstances more than you can bear and the Lord might even do that to bring you to repentance.

That is probably what went on in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 where a man in the church was sinning grossly by having an affair with his father's wife, probably his stepmother. A form of incest and he was parading it and he was proud about it and the church wasn't doing anything about it. And the Apostle Paul says, "Turn that person over to Satan for the destruction of...what?...the flesh." There will be times in the life of a believer when the basic subsistence needs will not be met. To the Corinthian church the Apostle Paul had to say, "Some of you are weak and some of you are sick and some of you have died because of the sins you have committed in the way you have approached the Lord's table."

Now the Lord is always sufficient for the obedient believer, always sufficient for the trusting and submissive believer, always sufficient. And that's Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." That strength is available. That's why the Apostle Paul prayed in that wonderful prayer of Ephesians chapter 3 verse 16 that God would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man. And the way that you experience that power is to be yielded to the Spirit in the inner man. It is to say to live a Spirit-controlled life, to walk in the Spirit to use the language of Galatians, to be filled with the Spirit to use the language of Ephesians chapter 5, another way of saying letting the Word dwell in your richly so that you respond to it in obedience. Adequacy comes, contentment comes from being connected to the power source, to the One who can strengthen you for everything. I can do all things. Literally he is saying I am able, I have the strength, I have the strength to do all things. And by the way in the Greek the "all things" is emphatic,

all things I am capable of doing. All things I can accomplish. Why? "Because of Him who strengthens me." When you're connected to the power source you can go through anything, any difficulty, any deprivation, or any overabundance and even respond to that rightly.

And I believe the "all things," just to stop and take a look at those two words for a moment, I believe the "all things" that is in the emphatic position has to do with the issues of Phil. 4:11 and 12. And those are issues of material comforts and worldly circumstances, or earthly circumstances. And what he is saying is I can go without the food that I might want to have, I can go along on a bare subsistence level. I can go with just a minimal wardrobe, limited comfort, less warmth than I might desire, less freedom than I might desire, less personal care than I might desire. I can go through that, I can endure the pain, I can endure the threats, I can endure the punishment and the danger because I am infused with strength from the One who strengthens me.

He is literally talking about having the ability to overcome the most difficult, physical circumstances because of the great mercies of the Lord that were dispensed to him. He abides...he was abiding, as it were, in the vine--to borrow the language of John 15:5--and the Lord's life was being, as it were, pumped right through him.

The statement at the end of Phil. 4:13, "through Him who strengthens me," *endunamoo*, *dunamis* from which we get the word dynamite with the preposition at the beginning of it intensifies it and the preposition *en* means into. So the verb means to infuse dynamite into, to infuse power into, to infuse strength into. And thus the Apostle Paul is simply saying in the midst of any situation, the Lord Himself infuses strength into me.

Now you always want to be in a relationship to the Lord like that so that you are infused with the strength to endure any difficulty. In 2 Timothy 4 there is a marvelous illustration of this from the life of the Apostle Paul. This is, of course, the last letter he wrote, as you know, and he was this time in prison for the last time and about to be executed. And in verse 16 of 2 Timothy 4 he says, "At my first offense no one supported me, but all deserted me, may it not be counted against them," a prayer like the prayer of Stephen when he prayed that the Lord would not hold the sin against the people who stoned him and like Jesus who prayed that God would forgive His crucifiers. Here Paul asks the Lord to be merciful to those who have abandoned him in the time of his great trial. He obviously was brought to trial in Rome and Christians instead of coming to stand beside him all fled just as the disciples had done when Jesus was taken prisoner. They deserted him and he doesn't want it held against them, that's how much he loved him.

Here he is in the most difficult of circumstances and no one is there to defend him. All those lives he influenced, all those people he led to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, all those churches he planted, all those people and they've gone and there's nobody there. That has to be a sad way to end such a faithful life. One thing to get persecuted by the unbelievers, another thing to get deserted by the Christians. One thing to get deserted by the Christians you don't know, another thing to get deserted by the ones you poured your life into. Don't expect too much. People are greatly capable of disappointing even the noblest of Christian servants. But in 2 Tim. 4:17 he says, "Even though nobody was there the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." And I'm not exactly sure what all that means, I'm not exactly sure what he meant by that. It certainly would include some kind of infusion of strength to go through a very trying physical ordeal, emotional and mental ordeal, and certainly it includes great spiritual strength so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished and all the Gentiles might hear and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth.

The Lord gave him strength at his defense to preach the gospel and strength to use his mind and his energy to give whatever kind of message needed to be given to postpone the inevitable...at least for a season. And even in the end when death does come, 2 Tim. 4:18, "*The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and will bring me safely to His heavenly Kingdom.*" The worst they could do was send him to heaven. The indwelling Spirit is his strength. That's why he was being humbled by the Lord so he'd learn to trust. Remember again 2 Corinthians chapter 12, a monumental scripture, by the way, that all Christians need to know, where Paul has this thorn in the flesh that is tearing up his life. He prays for it to be removed. The Lord says I'm not going to remove it but I'm going to give you sufficient grace to endure it. I'm just going to crank up the grace so that you can endure the pain. In fact, the pain is good because it humbles you. So he says, "I'll boast about my weakness that the power of Christ may dwell in me." The weaker you become the more dependent you become on the power of Christ. If you are to be a contented person you need to recognize that you have to be plugged in to the power source.

And Paul was. He says in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." He saw Christ alive and at work in him. "For to me to live is Christ," he said earlier to the Philippians. And this was his passion. And he can say here, "I have the capability, I am capable of all things through the one who regularly and faithfully infuses His power into me.

Beloved, if you're struggling with discontent it could be because you don't trust the providence of God. You don't trust that God is orchestrating everything for His glory. It could be because you're not satisfied with little and for some reason think you deserve more and have talked yourself in to some kind of victimization mentality. It could be that you're not living independently from your circumstances but you're all sucked into them and you're riding the roller coaster of the up and down trends of life. Or it could be that you have allowed sin in your life and as a result of that sin there is a short in the connection between you and the power source that provides the strength for every situation.

It may seem like it's a stretch for you to grasp this but I can tell you this from my own limited experience in life and that is this, I have learned to embrace the joyous product of suffering, pain, misrepresentation, misunderstanding, false accusation. I have reached a point where that kind of thing actually causes a smile in my heart because I understand its perfecting purposes instead of an attitude of retaliation...and through all of the difficulties, whatever they might be. And sometimes you think you're at the end of your strength, it's amazing how God infuses you with the strength necessary to accomplish that to which He's called you.

Well one last point and this is a very basic and a very important one. Without this you will continue to struggle with the matter of contentment. You must have confidence or trust in God's providence, satisfaction with little, independence from your circumstances, sustenance by divine power and finally preoccupation with the well being of others...preoccupation with the well being of others.

Selfish people are never content...never. This is such a basic element of people's contentment, unselfishness, being much more concerned with how others are doing than how you're doing. Much more concerned about that. And I'm always thrilled to get into a conversation with somebody who is suffering and have them want to talk about nothing but how I'm doing. That's such a mark of the work of God in the heart, such an evidence of contentment. Let's look at it here in this wonderful passage of Philippians chapter 4 because it unfolds.

Phil. 4:14, follow the flow, "*Nevertheless you have done well to share with me in my affliction. I'm really glad you sent me the gifts, I'm glad you shared with me in this time of my affliction, and you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone. You're the only ones. In Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.*" Now here's the issue. "*Not that I seek the gift itself, my concern is not that you sent me a gift for my sake,*" I love this, he says, "*but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.*" He says the reason that I am so glad you sent me a gift is because of what it means to you.

What does it mean to you? Very simple, "It profits to your account." What does that mean? If they were poor and they gathered together the little they had and sent it to Paul, how did it profit to their account? Very simple, they were laying up treasure...where? In heaven and it would bring an eternal reward. That's the issue with Paul. He's saying I don't have any needs. I'm connected to the power supply and my God is supplying my needs and I'm able to do everything through His strength. But I'm glad for the gift because of what it means to you. Phil 4:18, "*I have received everything in full and I have an abundance, I am amply supplied.*" This is pretty grand language for a prisoner. He is in tribulation, pressure and trouble, he says that when he refers to his affliction in Phil. 4:14, it's the word *thlipsis*, pressure. And he says you're the first to help me.

He founded the church, as we noted, in Acts 16, signaled the beginning of the gospel's penetration into Europe. He had preached at Philippi, then moved on to Thessalonica and Berea. And when he left that region to go to Achaia, the Philippians were faithful to help him in those early years to get started, and then there had been years since they were able to do anything. And now at the appropriate time they send to help him to meet his needs. But he says to them, it's not that that blesses me, it's not because I wanted it, it's not that I might consume it upon myself, that's not the source of my joy. The source of my joy is the profit that increases to your account.

The word "profit" there is actually fruit, it's actually the Greek word for fruit. It's...it produces fruit to your account. It puts your treasure in heaven for which you will receive an eternal reward. It fulfills Luke 6:38, "Give and it shall be given unto you." Interest is already accruing with God and God will bless you in life and in eternity. He really didn't want them to give because it would satisfy him. He wanted them to give because it would mean tremendous blessing to them. That is the heart attitude of a contented man. All he can see is benefit to somebody else. He holds everything very lightly, gives it up very readily, gives it up very easily, gives it up very generously because he is far more concerned about others than he is himself.

His needs are not an issue. His needs now are not an issue. his needs in the future are not an issue. What is an issue is that God be glorified, that spiritual life and growth take place. So he can say in Phil. 4:18 I have everything, I have enough, I have more than enough, I'm amply satisfied. He says I don't need anymore because...follow it in Phil. 4:18..."I have received from Epaphroditus, who had come from their church, what you have sent. It is a fragrant aroma. It is an acceptable sacrifice. It is well pleasing to God." That's why I love your gift, not because of what it means to me, but because of what it means to you because it was given to honor God.

That is sacrificial language, by the way, not accounting language. That is sacrificial language. He transitions out of the agricultural fruit, out of the accounting terminology which is used there, increasing to your account, and he turns to sacrificial language and he sees the gift for what it really is. And what it really is an offering to God. It's an act of holy worship. It's a spiritual act of sacrifice on the part of those Philippians. And he knows that because it is that it will accrue to their spiritual benefit.

I mean, he is living out here and illustrating what he said earlier to the Philippians. If you look back at chapter 2, familiar passage, verse 4, "Do not merely look out for your own personal interest but also for the interest of others." You'll never be content until you do. You'll never have enough. You'll never be satisfied. You'll always be grasping.

One of the sad definitions of sin is the desire to get things, to consume them upon your own desires. Paul was grateful not for what the gift meant to him, but for what the gift meant to them. Beloved, I can't stress this enough. Contented people are consumed with meeting other people's needs. That's just basic. And until you are willing to do that, and until that is the priority, you will battle the temptations of discontent. And you will feel yourself personally harmed if someone does something to you, takes something from you, cheats you out of something...etc., etc. Or if you don't gain all the things you need to gain, or if you don't have stockpiled all the pile you think you need to hedge against tomorrow, if that's what's consuming you, you will struggle with contentment. But when you recognize that the most important issue is somebody else and the meeting of their needs, you are free from dissatisfaction.

He sums up the reason for his joy in Phil. 4:19, a great verse. Wish we had time to develop this verse, he says, "*My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*" How can he say that? How can he say to those Philippians confidently, "My God shall supply all your needs," God is going to meet all your needs, how can he say that? He can say that because there is a principle working and it is the principle of giving that says you sow and you will...what?...you will reap. You give and it will be given to you. That is a spiritual principle. Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians chapter 9, sow sparingly, reap sparingly; sow bountifully, reap bountifully. The issue is what you sow with God He returns. And God has pledged and promised that you cannot out give God. You can go back into the Proverbs and it says you bring to God your firstfruits and your barns will be full. That's the principle.

And Paul knows that principle and that's why he rejoices because he says your gift to me is clear indication that you have stepped into that principle, and God in response to your giving is going to pour out gifts on you. My God is going to supply all your needs.

There are conditions for that. That's just not something you can sort of yank out of the context. If indeed you are honoring the Lord with what you have, He'll make sure all your needs are met. That is the issue. And that passage which we studied some months ago in 2 Corinthians chapter 9 is so important. It says in 2 Cor. 9:6 "*Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he is purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver,*" all right? You sow, you reap. How much should you sow? Whatever you want. You purpose in your heart, you sow it, don't do it grudgingly or under compulsion, legalistically, do it cheerfully, give whatever you want. And here comes the response, "*And God is able to make all grace abound to you that always having all sufficiency in everything you may have an abundance for every good deed.*" God will pour out blessing upon you. Scripture says...Test me and see if I'll not open the windows of heaven and pour out more blessing than you can even receive.

"*He who supplies seed to the sower,*" it says in verse 2 Cor. 9:10, "*and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; and you will be enriched in all things for all liberality.*" You give and you sow and God pours back blessing. That's why he can say verse 19 is true. That's why he can say to the Philippians, "*My God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus,*" because you have taken the first step in that operative principle and you have given generously and sacrificially, and you have sown and you will reap. That's the principle. When we learn this we are blessed.

Now, you see, that is why Paul was so greatly encouraged. It wasn't that he was encouraged because he received what he received, but because the Philippians would receive from God the blessing that comes because of their generosity. It's not hard to understand why he was content, is it? Really not hard. In fact, it's fairly obvious when you go through this text.

Here was a man who had absolute confidence in God's sovereign control over everything, and he knew that God knew his circumstances and that God was aware of every single issue in his life and was in charge of every contingency in existence in the universe and all of it was working together for God to fulfill his purpose for the Apostle Paul. Secondly, he had learned to be satisfied with very little. Thirdly, he lived independently from his circumstances. They were really immaterial. Fourthly, he walked in the Spirit and so he stayed plugged in to the power source that provided to him the strength for every issue of life. And fifth, he was utterly preoccupied with the well-being of others.

Faith, humility, submission, dependence, unselfishness, those are the kinds of virtues that make a contented Christian. And Paul was that. So much so that he closes this little paragraph in the midst of his dire circumstance as a prisoner by saying in Phil. 4:20, "Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen." And that's all that mattered to him was that God be glorified.

Contentment...a wonderful blessing and a glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. If we say we belong to Him we ought to be content with whatever it is that He has called us to endure and with whatever provisions He has made for us. And for those of us to whom He has given much, the challenge is even greater to be content and to be willing to divest ourselves of that for the benefit of others, for the sheer joy of seeing God pour blessing on them. What a tremendous privilege.

Father, again we have traversed the Scripture and been reminded of principles that are so foundational in our lives. It's not enough, Lord, not enough at all, in fact it is a serious, serious violation of Your will for us to know this and not act upon it. So, Lord, I pray that You would lead us by Your Spirit in the days to come, teach us the lessons that produce contentment. Teach us how to be indifferent to the circumstances around us, how to be satisfied with little, how to trust You for everything. Teach us how to lose ourselves in love for others and be more concerned about their blessings than ours. Teach us that kind of humility. Teach us that we need to walk in the path of righteousness so that we're always connected to the power source we need in the times of our great need. And we know that if we respond properly You will meet all our needs and we with the Apostle and many others will give You glory. To that end we pray because You are worthy. Amen.

2.3.3 Discernment in Choosing Friends

Jesus tells us to love everyone, even our enemies (Luke 6:27,35). But Proverbs 13:20 says: "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed." Therefore, if we are to grow wise, we must walk with wise people. If we choose "fools" as companions, we'll suffer harm.

A "companion" is much more than an acquaintance; he or she is one who becomes a close friend, a "traveling buddy," an intimate coworker, or even a mate. Companions are people who we spend our free time with, who we invite to our house for dinner, and whose house we go to with our family on special occasions. They are also the people we spend time with at parties and social events. Companions are the people who our children observe us with and who serve as examples to our children. If we choose companions who don't love God or don't act according to His Word, we're told in no uncertain terms that we're walking straight into trouble.

As parents, our job is to protect our children from harm. Therefore, our job is to teach them to choose friends wisely. And this lesson is every bit as important for us as it is for our kids. Our companions are either making us wiser or leading us right into harm's way.

The Bible doesn't contradict itself at all on this issue. Love your neighbor. Love your enemy. But choose your friends with care. Prov. 12:26 sums this up: "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray."

With that said, we should also remember that we don't have to be someone's close companion or friend to help them or show charity towards them. We can still donate our time to the sinful, the destitute, the widows, the poor, and the orphans as Jesus expects us to. We can still have a big and forgiving heart and act kindly toward people who are practicing even serious sin, but the Bible reminds us that we can't make them into friends or companions because we will suffer harm. For occasions when we are with these kinds of more sinful people who might make us unwise, the approach we need to take is described in Ephesians 6:11-17:

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..

The apostle Paul told us that we should not have as friends people who are brothers and sisters in Christ who do any of the following behaviors mentioned in 1 Cor.5:11-13:

"But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Therefore, we agree to avoid making friends or companions of people who act as described below:

Table 2-2: People Who We Won't Have As Friends or Companions

#	Behavior	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Don't marry or date unbelievers	Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.	2 Cor. 6:14-16
2	Refuse to work	But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw form	2 Thes. 3:6-12

#	Behavior	Description	Scripture(s)
		every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us...For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,...For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.	
3	Argue at home	But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."	Matt. 12:25
4	Blasphemers against the Holy Spirit	Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy <i>against</i> the Spirit will not be forgiven men.	Matt. 12:31
5	Do not take care of their family	But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.	1 Tim. 5:8
6	Greedy	He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live.	Prov. 15:27
7	Proud	Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.	Prov. 16:18-19
8	Liars	A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are his delight. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	Prov. 19:9; Prov 21:6 Prov. 12:22 Exodus 20:16
9	People who sleep too much	Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes and you will be satisfied with bread.	Prov. 20:13
10	Hasty to get wealth	The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.	Prov. 21:5
11	Pleasure seekers	He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.	Prov. 21:17
12	Unwise	A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.	Prov. 22:3
13	Scoffers	Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; yes, strife and reproach will cease.	Prov. 22:10
14	Angry	Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways	Prov. 22:24

#	Behavior	Description	Scripture(s)
		and set a snare for your soul.	
15	Violent	Do not be envy evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devised violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking.	Prov. 24:1-2
16	Meddlesome	He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own, is like one who takes a dog by the ears.	Prov. 26: 17
17	Won't admit fault or accept blame	He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.	Prov. 28:13
18	Hasty to speak	Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.	Prov 29:20
19	Homosexuals	You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.	Lev. 18:22
20	Idol worshipers	You shall not make yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands to those who love Me and keep My commandments.	Exodus 20:4-6
21	Cussing	You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.	Exodus 20:7
22	Murderers	You shall not murder.	Exodus 20:13
23	Adulterers	You shall not commit adultery.	Exodus 20:14
24	Thieves	You shall not steal.	Exodus 20:15
25	Covetous	You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.	Exodus 20:17
26	Wink eyes, shuffle feet, point fingers, devise evil continually, stir up strife	A worthless person, a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth; he winks with his eyes, he shuffles his feet, he points with his fingers; perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord. Therefore calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly he shall be broken without remedy.”	Prov. 16:12-15

2.3.4 Faith

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
[Hebrews 11:1]*

The first issue of the heart, the first heart attitude that we want to see in the life of God's people is faith...faith, trust in God. I mean, if that's not there it's going to be very difficult to get you to believe anything that God says or to rely on His promises. It's clear that the Bible says that if you obey the Lord your life will be blessed, if you listen to His Word you'll be happy and fulfilled. If you obey His Word you'll prosper spiritually and you'll have good success, Joshua 1:8. God has made a myriad of promises.

You stay in the circle of obedience you'll experience the fullness of His love. You'll enjoy His protection. You'll enjoy the assurance of your salvation. You'll have peace and joy and love and all of those things. And the Lord will meet every need of your life and He'll take away all your anxiety and bear it for you and all of those promises of Scripture but they mean nothing if you don't believe Him, right? So the first attitude is an attitude of faith.

Now how do you...how do you engender in people an attitude of trust in God? Well there's only really one way to do it, you trust someone you know, right? You have to know Him well enough to trust Him. When you come to church or when you come to hear a message or a Bible study or a lesson or read a book or do your devotions or prepare a Sunday-school lesson, whatever you do you should constantly be exposed to the character of God revealed in Scripture. And as you come to know your God, with that knowledge comes trust.

Let me show you an illustration of this. Let's go back to the little minor prophet Habakkuk. Happiness is sitting next to somebody who knows where Habakkuk is. Habakkuk...Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk...Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi...fifth from the last in the Old Testament, Habakkuk.

Now Habakkuk has a problem...a big problem. Judah, the people of God, the southern kingdom, Judah, the people of God are unfaithful to God. They're not just unfaithful, they're downright sinful, they're hypocritical, they're wicked. And the prophet Habakkuk does not understand why God doesn't intervene. And so in Habakkuk 1:2 his oracle, or his sermon, or his burden is, "How long, O Lord, will I call for help and You will not hear? I cry out to You about this violence and You don't save. Why do You make me see this iniquity and cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me, strife exists and contention arises, the law is being ignored," and he means by that the divine law, "justice is never upheld, the wicked surround the righteous," and that means for evil purposes, "and justice comes out perverted." Now that's his basic burden here. He's saying, "Look, this is Judah, this is the southern kingdom made up originally, of course, of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. These are Your people and they're defecting and they're wicked and they're iniquitous and I keep telling You this and I keep crying out to You and You don't do anything."

It might have been that Habakkuk's first request was that God would come down and bring a spiritual revival and they'd all repent. But he also must have included in his petition that God ought to step in and judge because people shouldn't be getting away with this. And he's got a real dilemma because God isn't doing either. He's not coming down with a great move of salvation and restoration, and He's not coming in judgment, and he doesn't understand how God can just look at this and not act.

And here comes the answer in Habakkuk 1:5. *"Look among the nations, Habakkuk, observe, be astonished, wonder because I am doing something in your days and you wouldn't believe it if you were told."* In other words, He's saying to him...I can't tell you about it because you wouldn't believe it, I have to wait till you see it...but I'm doing something, I am doing something.

What is He doing? Habak. 1:6, *"Behold, I'm raising up the Chaldeans that fierce and impetuous people,"* and they were a vile and wretched and wicked people. *"And I'm raising them up, those people who march throughout the earth, to seize dwelling places which are not theirs."* They were plunderers, they were murderers, they were wicked, they were marauders. They slaughtered people. In verse 7, *"They are dreaded and they are feared. The only justice and authority they have is that which they invent. It originates with themselves. They were vicious and efficient warriors. Their horses are swifter than leopards and keener than wolves in the evening. Their horsemen come galloping, their horsemen*

come from afar. They fly like an eagle, swooping down to devour." Very graphic terms, descriptive of the fierce and formidable work of devastation wrought by these Chaldeans. "All of them come for violence. Their horde of faces moves forward. They collect captives like sand. They mock at kings and rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress and heap up rubble to capture it." You know what that means, when they had a fortress with all the stone walls, the way you took the fortress was to pile up rubble and make a ramp out of it and just march right up. And that's what they did.

And at the end of Habak. 1:11 he says, "*They'll sweep through like the wind and pass on. They will be held guilty, they whose strength is their god.*" They worship nothing but their military might. They are a wicked, vile, vicious people.

Well that's not the answer he wanted, I don't think. I really don't think that's what he wanted. I think he wanted a revival and if he couldn't get a revival he wanted God to sort of step in supernaturally and do some judging that would cause the people to repent. But not the Chaldeans.

Then...now he's got even another question. First question--God why don't You act? Second question--God, You're going to do that? He didn't understand why God didn't act and when God said I'm going to act he couldn't understand why God would use the Chaldeans. Why? Because the Chaldeans were far worse than the Judeans. How could God use a far worse people, not a covenant people to come in and to slaughter the covenant people? That didn't make sense in terms of how he understood the covenant's people relationship to God which he thought was a saving delivering relationship. And it certainly didn't make any sense that God would make the judge a worse people. He's got a major dilemma.

To put it in simple terms, he didn't understand why God was doing what He was doing. Ever wondered about that? Didn't make sense. Why are You doing this? Why aren't You doing this, why are You doing this? I suppose you could ask the same question in our environment. You could say the church in America, America itself is in iniquity and wickedness and it escalates and it escalates and it escalates and now You're lifting up in authority people who are at the heart of the problem, rather than solutions. Why? This is the problem history that he has. He doesn't understand why it's all unraveling, particularly with regard uniquely so to the covenant people.

Well how is he going to solve his dilemma? He's going to solve his dilemma by his theology. Habakkuk 1:12, he starts musing, he starts talking to himself, really, in actually what is a prayer to God but it's his own thoughts. "*Aren't Thou not from everlasting?*" First thing he does...he is on...he is on quicksand right now, he is sinking into the quicksand of his dilemma. He can't solve his problem. He doesn't understand it and he starts sinking and he's looking for a rock and he finds that rock in what he knows to be true about God. First thing he says...Aren't Thou not from everlasting? Oh yes. God, You're eternal, You were here before this problem started, You're going to be here after this problem is over. You are bigger than this problem. This is a small little deal, this is a little period of time in the middle of history and You are the eternal God from eternity past to eternity future who always existed and always will, You are far greater than this little moment in history.

See what he's doing is reaffirming what he knows to be true about God and that becomes the rock on which he can find his footing. You're bigger than this problem, You obviously understand how it fits into the eternal plan.

And then he says, "O Lord my God," and he uses the term here for sovereign one. Not only are You transcendent and eternal and this fits within the full eternal scheme and it's a little tiny moment in the

midst of eternity, You are far greater than this and You also are the Lord, You are *adonai*, You are ruler and sovereign, You are omnipotent, You are in charge of this, nothing is beyond Your control.

And then he says, "*My holy One.*" What does he mean by that? You don't make mistakes. Whatever You're doing fits Your perfection.

And then he says, "*We will not die.*" What does he mean by that? God is faithful. You will not destroy Judah because You have a covenant to fulfill with them. God had made a covenant with Abraham that must be fulfilled with God's people. You have made promises to them of a kingdom and a future and salvation.

And so what is Habakkuk doing? He's reaffirming that God is eternal, God is sovereign, God is perfect and God keeps all His promises. And on the rock of his knowledge of God he finds secure footing. And he says, "I see, You have just appointed them to judge and Thou, O rock," see, he's on the rock, "You establish them to correct." I understand, Your eyes are too pure to approve evil and You can't look on wickedness with favor, and so You are going to use them to judge. I see it.

And the real sum of it all comes at the end of Habak. 2:4, I wish we had time to go through all of it, look what he says, "*The righteous, or the just, will live by...what?...his faith.*" The just will live by faith. That is such an important statement, you ought to underline it, put a little asterisk by it, or a check or something because that becomes a key statement in the New Testament, doesn't it? Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38, repeated in the New Testament, the just shall live by faith, the just shall live by faith. And that's where he was, he was anchored by his faith in God. He knew God was eternal, far beyond any event in time. He knew God was sovereign, *adonai*, Lord, in charge of everything. He knew God was holy and never made a mistake and he knew God was faithful and wouldn't violate His promise. God was doing what had to be done.

Now you know, Habakkuk feels a lot better now and his circumstances haven't changed. And I love the way he wraps it up. Go to the end of the book. Habak. 3:17, now this is language that would mean so much to people then and doesn't mean as much to us today until we understand the background. "*Though the fig tree should not blossom,*" guess what? Fig trees always blossom. "*And there be no fruit on the vines,*" and there was always fruit on the vines, "*and though the yield of the olive should fail.*" And I'll tell you one thing about an olive tree, they last. When you go to the Garden of Gethsemane now, they will point to some trees they believe were saplings when Jesus lived and they're still producing olives. "*And the fields produce no food,*" and the fields did produce food, "*though the flocks should be cut off from the fold.*" In other words, animals stop calving and there aren't any more. "*And there's no cattle in the stalls.*"

In other words, if everything that is common, ordinary, every day dependable kind of natural happening all of a sudden stops...in other words, if everything goes upside down and everything you can always count on stops happening, if the whole world goes nuts, upside down, inside out and backwards...Habak. 3:18, "*Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,*" that's what exult means, "*I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.*"

In other words, he's saying this...when I don't understand the circumstances I do understand my God. You understand that? And then Habak. 3:19, the sum of it all, "*The Lord God is my...what?...strength. I know my God, He's my strength and He has made my feet like hinds feet.*" Hinds are mountain goats. Ever see a mountain goat? Flying around in Alaska right close to those mountains and those rugged rocky cliffs you see these white kind of...call them sheep but they're more like a goat...and they're standing right on the edge of a ledge with absolute safety and security. And he's saying God is my

strength and I might be on the precipice in my ignorance and I might be in an unsolvable dilemma and I might be in a circumstance from which it looks like there's no escape but the Lord makes my feet like the feet of a mountain goat and He makes me walk all over the high places with safety, security and confidence. You could walk on any precipice that you ever face in life if you have enough confidence in your God, right? And how do you get that confidence? By getting to know your God and learning that He is eternal, He is sovereign, He is holy, never makes a mistake and He always keeps His promises. That's faith. That's faith. And that's the inner heart attitude that God's people must have. That's crucial to the internal systems of the church. Give me a people that believe their God.

That's one of the reasons that we don't have lots of people in our church falling apart. As somebody once said years ago, in fact a Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't. When you know your God you can ride out the storms, you can walk on the high places in complete safety.

In Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me...I love this...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." Oh, this is so rich. On the one hand I live by faith in God, and on the other hand I live by faith in Jesus Christ. And what is Paul saying here? I live trusting the Son of God. Now why...why would you trust the Son of God? Why would you trust Jesus? Why would you trust Him totally with everything? His answer, "Because He loved me enough to do...what?...to die for me." And as Paul said in Romans, "If while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, how much more now that we belong to Him shall we be saved by His living intervention." I live by faith in my great God, I live by faith in my great Savior who is personally devoted to me as the one for whom He died. I know my God and I know my Lord. And I know my Lord has promised that He will sustain me, that He will protect me, that He will guard me. He is the shepherd, isn't He? He is the one who protects His own sheep. My God sticks closer than a brother. My God will never leave me or forsake me...neither will His Son who has taken up residence in my heart. And the Lord Jesus Christ seeks every good thing for me. My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by...whom?...Christ Jesus. In other words, Christ Jesus is the means, the indwelling powerful ever-present Christ is the means by which God fulfills that promise, the means by which God meets all our needs is through the ever-present indwelling Christ.

I have faith in God, don't you? I have faith in the greatness and the power of my God, the faithfulness of my God and the perfection of my God and the holiness of my God and I have faithfulness...I have confidence and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and I have faith to believe that what He began He will finish. I have faith that when Jesus said that all that the Father gives to Him will come to Him, and whoever comes He will receive and whoever He receives He keeps and whoever He keeps He raises. I have faith that Jesus will bring me to glory, don't you? I have faith that He'll supply my needs. I have faith that He'll never let anything come into my life that I cannot bear but always will make a way of escape. I have faith that He'll pour out blessing upon my obedience. I have faith that He will use me. I have faith that He'll overcome every trial in my life victoriously if I am obedient to Him. I have faith in Him, I trust in Him, I believe in Him. That's the beginning attitude. It starts at salvation because salvation occurs when you trust in God, doesn't it? You trust Him to forgive your sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That's the beginning of faith, it's not the end, that's just the start. And then the just shall live by faith. That's the first great attitude.

So, what does the...what does the preacher, what does the leader want to produce in your heart? The confidence of the Apostle Paul who in 2 Corinthians 5:7 said this, "We walk by faith, not by sight." We don't evaluate life by what we see and feel and smell and touch. We evaluate life through the eyes of faith and faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, but it's not wishful

thinking, it's built on the rock of the character of our God and the character and work of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you have that faith you can face anything in life. When you know that God works all things together for good to them that love Him, then you can accept anything. When you know that nothing shall ever separate you from the love of Christ, absolutely nothing, not life or death or things present or things to come or height or depth or any other creature, not anything, when you know that and believe that you can trust Him in every situation. And that's the initial, that's the beginning attitude.

Faith becomes the shield, Ephesians 6:16, you quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one with faith. When Satan tempts you to do something, it's quenched by your trust. I told you this a few months ago. Sin is what you do when you're not satisfied with God. And if you're not satisfied with God it's because you don't know Him. So what shields you from temptation is faith. James 1 says, "Ask in faith and you'll receive." Hebrews 10:22 says, "Draw near in faith." Hebrews 12 says, "Run by faith." Romans 4 says, "Be strong in faith, like Abraham."

So the first attitude is to trust in our sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, wise, loving, gracious and just God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ who has promised to save you eternally and that attitude is the attitude upon which you build your life.

2.3.5 Hating the Things God Hates

In Prov. 6:16-19, we learn about what God hates. We also talk about what God hates in section 5.10.14. Below is a list of the things God hates compiled from this scripture:

- **Pride:** God hates "haughty eyes," because he knows just how ridiculous it is when any person thinks he or she is better than another person. In God's eyes, we are all of equal value.
- **Lying:** God is Truth, and he hates it when we tell big lies, "little" lies, or any lies.
- **Murder:** God hates "hands that shed innocent blood." We see a lot of this today—drive-by shootings, terrorist acts, bombings. God hates such senseless destruction of human life.
- **Conspiracy:** God hates a "heart that devises wicked schemes," or that plots and plans to do evil.
- **Willingness to do evil:** God hates "feet that are quick to rush into evil." feet that act out the wicked plans of the heart.
- **Betrayal:** God hates it when people lie so that other individuals will be hurt.
- **Dissension:** This sin could include gossiping, cheating, stealing, lying—anything that pits one person against another and takes their focus off their identity as God's children.

Here we have a very clear list of actions and activities that God hates or finds detestable. They all have to do with things that distance us from himself and from living peacefully with others. These seven things can be summed up with one little word: sin. As a perfect being, God abhors anything that rebels against his perfection, and this listing contains several types of rebellion. As we are careful to avoid doing the things on this list, we will find ourselves being drawn closer to God and to others.

The Bible teaches us that we should hate all the same things God hates. Psalm 97:10 says: "*Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.*". An interesting consequence of following this command to hate evil is that we can't hate what we can't discern. Therefore, we must discern and judge a behavior as being evil before we can hate it. Jesus commands us to exercise righteous judgment in the process of doing this, as we talked

about in section 3.5.2. However, as we pointed out in item 11 of section 1.4, we are commanded to hate sin and evil but never hate the sinner, or the person who does the evil.

Contemporary society tries to distort the Christian approach towards hating sinful *behavior*, and this is especially true of homosexual activists. Homosexual activists, for instance look at the Christian attitude about hating *bad behavior* and try to confuse, distort, and lie about it by saying that *all* Christians hate *them as people instead of hate just the bad behavior*. This tactic provides a convenient excuse to promote the homosexual agenda in the name of "human rights" and tolerance. It also makes them into "helpless victims" deserving of state protection. Christians should believe that human rights are a noble goal insofar as they relate to race, gender, and religious beliefs, for instance. However, homosexuality is *not* a religion: it is a discretionary physical preference that is a product of *choice* and upbringing and conditioning. When it comes to discretionary preferences, and especially abnormal and harmful preferences, there is no basis to approach these issues as human rights issues at all. There is plenty of science behind this idea. For instance:

1. *A large number of people who end up being homosexual were sexually abused as children by members of their same sex.* This creates low self-esteem in them during a vulnerable point in their youth that leads them to avoid the opposite sex out of shame, which predisposes them to associate with people they are most comfortable with of their same sex.
2. *Homosexuality and gender-conflicts are much higher among single-parent families where divorce has occurred.* We alluded to this in section 4.14.3: Statistics on divorce, in item 1.9. This is because boys who grow up with single moms will resent and hate their mothers more often than in two-parent families when a father figure is not present to administer discipline. This anger and resentment will predispose them to alienate themselves against *all* females and pursue homosexual relationships. The story is similar for girls who are raised by their divorced fathers in a single parent home.

If science suggests that homosexuality is a preference or a behavior, and not an inherited trait, then it should not be treated as a human right, in the same way that murder or rape are sinful preferences or behaviors that we willingly choose that are also harmful. However, homosexual activists have tried very hard to deceive heterosexual population to have them believe that there is science behind the idea that homosexuals are genetically different from other people, in order to perpetuate the idea that their choice of lifestyle is an inherited trait that is a product of their physical makeup. This promotes the convenient idea that they are victims of their circumstances who don't have to assume responsibility for their sin. That way, they don't deserve to be criticized or scorned or judged for their sinful choices. It also removes the moral justification of the state to condemn them because of their bad choices and behaviors.

Even though homosexuals make up a small minority of the overall population, currently about only 2%, they have maliciously tried to oppress and suppress the rights of the rest of the 98% of us heterosexuals by forcing us to accept and condone their lifestyle at the expense of our sacred personal and deeply-held religious and moral beliefs, which is not something that people should ethically be forced to do. You could say that they have used hate and discrimination on the part of the state to eliminate hate and discrimination. Clearly, two wrongs don't make a right here. Either hate and discrimination is wrong, or it is right. If it is wrong, then no one, including the state, should be using or promoting it. However, we also can't expect to legislate morality, which is what this clearly is an attempt to do. Here are some of the unscrupulous tactics that homosexuals have used in this pursuit of their selfish political agenda:

1. *Homosexuals have tried to pass laws that would make it illegal not to hire someone for ANY kind of job based on their sexual preference.* This includes teachers, who are supposed to be an example of

good behavior for our children and who spend more time with our children giving moral instruction than we do as parents.

2. In Boy Scouts of America V. Dale 120 S Ct 2446, homosexuals filed a lawsuit that went all the way up to the Supreme Court in order to make it illegal for private organizations such as the Boy Scouts to not allow homosexuals to be scout leaders. Fortunately, the lawsuit affirmed the right of privately funded groups like the Boy Scouts to decide who should be in the group. The response of homosexuals in August of 2000 was to petition all U.S. state, city, and county governments to eliminate public funding of the Boy Scouts. They also petitioned the United Way, an alliance of charitable organizations, to terminate support of the Boy Scouts. It was a malicious attack on an otherwise very honorable group that has existed for centuries, all in the name of "tolerance". Hypocrisy!
3. Because many homosexuals are intelligent middle class citizens that are actively involved in the media, they have tried to publicize the idea that homosexuality is a genetically inherited trait and therefore it is not a choice or a discretionary behavior, but a characteristic of people. Section 8.5.8 (It's Genetic) of this Family Constitution addresses this approach to sin. One doctor did a study on this, who by the way refused to disclose that he too was homosexual, which of course biased his study. His study was eventually dismissed after several years as self-serving nonsense, but it did succeed for a short time in convincing some people with lies in the name of science that homosexuality was an inherited trait. However, when homosexuals are proved wrong on this point by the testimony of former homosexuals who turned straight and renounce their former lifestyle, the response of the homosexual community is a kind of intolerant, rude, hateful, and obsessive contradiction of the facts and science of that situation in pursuit of selfish ends. There is no science behind the idea that homosexuality is a genetic trait and there never will be, but lies and misinformation about this situation abound because the liberal media has a political agenda that they want to relentlessly and selfishly promote.
4. Lobbying for legislation to force public schools and schoolteachers to promote their lifestyle in the schools. They have tried, for instance, to get school textbooks and curricula that portray their lifestyle as acceptable and ethical among young children. This may be behind the desire of parents for vouchers, so they can remove their kids from this kind of godless, morally bankrupt environment.
5. Trying to pass "hate crime" laws that make it a criminal offense to say or think things that could contribute to violence against people of a certain race or homosexuals. This gives rise to "thought police" who then have state sanctioned broad discretion to invade the lives of law abiding citizens and maliciously prosecute them all in the name of "tolerance," which instead is really a form of legislated malicious *intolerance* toward people based on their nonviolent, moral and religious beliefs. In our opinion, *no one but God* should ever have the right to evaluate or judge our thoughts and it sets a very dangerous precedent to allow the state to be in this position. Such laws could eventually be used as a means to institute political persecution of people based on their religious or moral beliefs.

Once again, we wish to emphasize that there is *nothing* rude, intolerant, obsessive, or radical about hating, punishing, judging, or preventing wrong, harmful, sinful, or illegal behavior, including homosexuality. As a matter of fact, that is precisely the foundation of all law, which is based on the public interest. The public interest clearly isn't well-served by promoting homosexuality and the oppression of the 98% majority for the selfish advancements of the 2% minority, and it is a *big lie* on the part of Satan to label doing this as tolerance or the advancement of human rights. It is clearly wrong to label or hate people, but not to label or hate their behavior. As Christians, we should follow Jesus' command to love everyone, love people (but not their behavior) and love our neighbor, including homosexuals, but we can still hate the bad behavior and make it illegal.

The thing we also should remember as we emulate God in hating sin and evil in our lives is that as we mature spiritually as Christians, there should be a continual effort to eliminate sin in our lives and sin should lessen. *"He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him"* (John 14:21). However, the little sin we have at the end of that maturity process we should hate more than the larger amount of sin we had when we weren't Christians or were less mature Christians. This attitude should be a natural consequence of the process of learning about and knowing God, becoming more like Him, and being perfected in our faith in the tribulations that He puts us through.

As we mature spiritually and become more like God for His sake, we are also told in no uncertain terms that the world will *hate* us as Christians. As a matter of fact, the more like God we become, the more likely it is that non-Christians in the world will hate us:

"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."
[Matt 13:13]

Another natural consequence of becoming more like God is that we will become more selective about the friends we keep as we will talk about in the next section. One consequence of not becoming friends with everyone or being very discerning about our selection of friends will be that some of the people we won't be friends with will hate us. We wish to emphasize, however, that we are just as bad as them if we hate them back. Instead, we are commanded by God: *"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."* (Lev. 19:18).

2.3.6 Humility

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interest of others."
[Phil. 2:3-4]

Apart from faith and obedience as a general category, probably there is no more important spiritual virtue than this matter of humility. At the very heart of life in the church comes this matter of the virtue of humility. How do we learn to become humble? It is done by being thankful! Jesus said those who are most humble will be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven:

"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom."
[Matt 18:3-4]

Turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 5...Matthew chapter 5. If there was anything true about the Judaism of Jesus' time, it was that it bred spiritual pride. If there was anything true about the Judaism of Jesus' time, it was that men paraded their external religion and expected the accolades of the crowd. We remember reading in Matthew 23 how the leaders of Israel always sought the chief seats and the high places. When they did their alms they blew a trumpet or when they did their fasting they went into public and threw...public places and threw ashes on their heads that everyone might see how devout they really were. Legalism always is the companion of spiritual pride, true spirituality has the virtue of humility coming alongside. And so when Jesus started the Sermon on the Mount, He attacked the religious of His day with a direct hit.

Opening His mouth in Matthew 5 He began to teach them, and the first thing out of His mouth, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied."

The promises that come at the end of each of those verses have to do with the realm of salvation. He's talking about people who are saved, they're being in the Kingdom, they're being comforted, they're ultimately inheriting the earth and they're being soul satisfied. Those are all descriptions of features of salvation. Those all describe what it means to belong to Christ, to belong to God, to know that you're in the Kingdom, to have comfort in all the issues of life, to have the promise someday of inheriting the earth in its ultimate and final form...the glories of the new heaven and the new earth in the eternal heaven and soul satisfaction. Those things belong to the redeemed.

And the redeemed here are described in these ways...they are poor in spirit, they mourn, they are meek, and they hunger and thirst. All of those are descriptive of various facets of humility.

First of all, that phrase "blessed are the poor in spirit" captures a Greek word in the verb form, those who are poor in spirit, *phoneo* which means to be so poor that you have to beg. The best way to describe it as that they are bankrupt and they have no means of support. They have nothing and they have no means of getting anything. It's a term used for beggars who had no skill, or were disabled so that they could not function, could not work. They are the utterly destitute. The Kingdom belongs to the destitute, Jesus is saying. The Kingdom belongs to people who know they have nothing, who have come to the realization of their utter bankruptcy. And, of course, He's not talking about material things here but spiritual ones.

It doesn't belong to the people who believe they have achieved great spiritual ends. It doesn't belong to people who think they have accumulated merit with God. It doesn't belong to people who are counting on their circumcision, their having been born into the race of Israel, having been born as the Apostle Paul, for example, into the very noble tribe of Benjamin. It doesn't belong to those people who manage to maintain all the externals, the traditions and who outwardly conform to the law and consequently have filled their gain column with personal religious achievement. It belongs to people who are beating their breasts saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

If you've ever wondered how people in the Old Testament were saved, they were saved the same way people now are. They were just on the other side of the cross. And the manner of salvation was, first of all, the conviction of sin which was brought about when someone knew they couldn't keep the law of God. God gave His law, laid it out very clearly to Moses, it was written down for all to see and read. And people endeavored to keep it and failed, could not keep the law. Went through the repetitious response of the sacrifices, never ever having soul satisfaction because the blood of bulls and goats couldn't take away sin and so there was a sort of endless repetition until they came to the point where they recognized their bankruptcy, they recognized their utter inability to keep the law of God and the utter inability of animal sacrifices to take away their sin. And in the bankruptcy of all of that, threw themselves on the mercy of God and pleaded for forgiveness. In fact, that publican in Luke 18 beating on his breast is an illustration of how an Old Testament person, a person living pre-cross was saved, pounding on his chest, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Can't even look up toward heaven because he's so embarrassed and mortified by his unending iniquity. He cries out for the mercy of God. And at that point God steps in the words of Jesus and that man went home justified. The righteousness of Christ was imputed to him, just as it is imputed to us on this side of the cross. Brokenness, humility is the issue.

The one who understands his spiritual bankruptcy and notice in Matt. 5:4, the one who when contemplating his spiritual bankruptcy has an attitude of mourning. There's an attitude of desperation, there's a depth of sorrow and an agonizing over this condition. It is followed in Matt. 5:5 by meekness, almost a timidity, a fear to even approach the throne of God because of one's utter unworthiness. And that is reflected in the man in Luke 18 not being able to even lift his eyes up toward heaven but being down on the ground.

And then finally, Matt. 5:6, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness they know they do not have. The Apostle Paul, we're reminded in Philippians 3, spent the first nearly forty years of his life accumulating self-righteousness and it was utterly unfulfilling. In a moment of time on the Damascus road he met Christ and he says Christ gave to me a righteousness not of my own, but the righteousness of Christ imputed to me by faith.

This is all about humility, spiritual bankruptcy, mourning over sin, meekly coming before God, almost afraid to look up, and recognizing you're utterly devoid of what you desperately need, and that is righteousness. That's how you come into the Kingdom.

This is further emphasized in Matthew chapter 18. Just so we understand how it all starts, in Matthew chapter 18 Jesus really speaking in the same general area about how one enters the Kingdom and emphasizing the matter of humility says in Matt. 18:3, "*Truly I say to you, unless you are converted,*" and the disciples desperately needed to be converted, literally that means to be turned around and go the other direction because you remember, if you know the background of Matthew 18, the disciples were having an argument at this point and their argument was about who was going to be greatest in the Kingdom. When they joined up with Jesus they knew they were in the presence of a very remarkable man. They came to understand that He was the Messiah. That was articulated a couple of chapters earlier in no uncertain terms when right out of Peter's mouth it came, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." You're the Messiah, God incarnate. They knew that this was the Messiah and the Messiah was bringing a Kingdom. And the more they knew about the Kingdom, the more they began to argue about which of them was going to sit in the chief seats.

It isn't long after this incident, showing how hard it was for them to hear with hearing ears and believe, even when Jesus told them what He told them, it wasn't long after this very incident that James and John sent their mother to ask personally if Jesus would allow them to sit on His right and left hand in the Kingdom. So the argument was going on, it was even going on in John 13 the very night Jesus was being betrayed. Instead of them being sensitive about what was going to happen to Jesus, He had told them that He was going to die, they were all arguing about which of them would be the greatest in the Kingdom. In the middle of this argument, Jesus sitting in a house in Capernaum, maybe even Peter's house, some think that was his home, pulls a little child to Himself, a little baby. Sets the little baby in His lap and uses that little baby as an illustration and says, "Unless you turn around and go the other way and become like children, you'll not even enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." The Kingdom belongs to the humble. You come in humble.

Now what does He mean humbling himself as this child? Very simple, a child is absolutely dependent, that's part of it but maybe that's the minor part, the major part is that a child has achieved nothing. A child has achieved nothing...a child has accomplished nothing. There's no great record of achievements. You come bankrupt with nothing, as the hymn writer so magnificently says, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling." That's how a child comes...no record of achievement, that's how you come. You come in as a little child.

Further emphasizing this, I want to take you to one of the great evangelistic texts of all the New Testament, James 4. And I want to start in verse 4 because I think it sets the context for us. "*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be the friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*" That's very much what John said in 1 John, "*If anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him.*"

James 4:5, "*Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?*" And then verse 6, "*But He gives a greater grace.*" This transitions from the very strong language of verse 4 about being a friend to the world and thus being an adulteress and an enemy of God and to verse 5, a very difficult verse to sort out which means rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit to the fact that in James 4:6 God still gives grace. You may be a friend of the world, you may be at enmity with God, you may be resisting the Spirit but there is grace available. And I really believe he's talking here to the unregenerate, and I'll show you why. In James 4:8 right in the middle of this context you see, "*You sinners, cleanse your hands, you sinners.*" There is no place in the entire New Testament where believers are ever so designated. That is not to say we don't sin, we do. But never are we called sinners. In fact we are called even though we sin just the opposite, what? Saints. We are not double minded in the sense that there is some interest in spiritual things, but a captive interest in the world.

That's exactly what he was talking about in James 4:4. You may think you're the friend of God but if you're double minded and attached to the world, you're not. You're like that soil in Matthew 13 where the weeds, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choked out the truth.

So he's talking, I believe, to the unregenerate who can be classified as adulteresses, who are friends of the world, who are hostile toward God, who are enemies of God, who are in verse James 4:8 called sinners. And in verse 6 he says there is an available grace but please notice to whom it is given. Verse 6, "*God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.*" That statement is recorded both in the Psalm and the Proverbs. Saving grace is for the humble, those with the Beatitude-attitude, those who are spiritually bankrupt and know it, mourn over their bankruptcy, come to the Lord meekly, almost hesitant to come into His presence they're so ashamed, but they're so hungry they'll come because they know what they most need they lack.

Now how is this humility demonstrated? Follow this. God gives grace to the humble so here's how to manifest that humility. James 4:9 "*Submit therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you, draw near to God and He will draw near to you, cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you doubleminded be miserable and mourn and weep,*" and there's that Beatitude language again. "*Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom, humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you.*"

I really believe that is one of the great evangelistic texts of the New Testament. We don't have time to sort it all out but the whole intent of that is to call to the sinner and the one who loves the world to humble himself. And that humility means you submit yourself to God and that is to say you submit yourself to God as revealed in Scripture. You turn, as it were, from the devil. You draw near to God. You confess your sin. You cry for the purging of your heart with a miserable, mourning, weeping attitude. And in such humility the Lord will lift you up.

Now this is the way it all begins, folks...the way it all begins. You come in humble and broken with a contrite heart. I think that's essentially the same thing as you have in the Old Testament, there really isn't any difference. I don't...I don't like it when people make some kind of great difference between

how people in the Old Testament came to the Lord and the difference say between those in the New...it's really the same.

Listen to Isaiah 55, "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near, let the wicked forsake his way and let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts and let him return to the Lord and He will have compassion on him and to our God for He will abundantly pardon." There it is again, you come realizing your wickedness, you come realizing the absence of righteousness, you come broken, casting yourself on God's mercy. That's how you came into the Kingdom. You came in humble.

And may I suggest to you, all of that to say this...nothing changes...nothing changes. You are no more worthy now of salvation than you were when you came, right? You are no more worthy now of God's goodness in Christ than you were when you came. You're still a sinner and it is still God's grace that sustains you. There's no place for pride in your life ever. Whatever good, whatever noble, whatever godly features may exist in your life are the work of the Lord and not you. That's why Peter in 1 Peter 5:5 says, "Clothe yourselves with humility," and quotes those same Old Testament passages, "God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:6, "*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time.*" And here he's talking to believers, the principle is the same. I think in James he's talking to unbelievers, sinners, and adulteresses and friends of the world, but here he's talking to young men...some of them may even be in the ministry serving as elders because that's the immediate context. But certainly he's talking to believers here. And the command is to humble yourselves...to humble yourselves.

To keep himself from exalting himself, the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 12:7, says, "There was given him a thorn in the flesh." Really a stake, not just a little thorn like in a rose bush, the word means a stake, like a sharpened pencil only the size of a shaft and it was designed to ram right through his otherwise proud, human flesh to keep him from exalting himself. It was a thorn in the flesh from God, we know that because in 2 Cor. 12:8 he entreated the Lord three times that it might depart. And the Lord said no. So the Lord must have allowed it because the Lord refused to remove it. And furthermore if it was sent to humble him, Satan is in the business of humbling people.

But you say, "Wait a minute, it was a messenger of Satan to buffet him." That's right. And God will use demons if need be to humble His own. That's why it's so silly for people to run around chasing demons away, even if they could chase them away they might be chasing away the ones the Lord had sent to do His work. And the Lord had allowed this...this demon-possessed person, I think this is a particular reference to the ring leader of the Corinthian conspiracy that was just tearing up that church and in the tearing just breaking the heart of Paul. That's what this whole epistle is about. And Paul didn't like it and he probably prayed the imprecatory Psalm and wished the guy was dead and said, "God, kill him." But the truth of the matter was the Lord wanted him there to drive that stake through Paul's flesh because so many successes and so many revelations would norm...would make a normal man and even a good man like Paul proud and God wanted him humble. And God will go to whatever extremity He needs to humble His own, even if it means sending a messenger from Satan to plague them, even if it means trouble in the church as there was in Corinth, even if it means an attack on his character, the character assassination that was going on in the Corinthian church was directed right at Paul. And you know what they said about him, he's in it for the money, he's seeking sexual favors from women, he is self-centered, he lies, he's a deceiver and on and on and all of that comes out of 2 Corinthians. And there are times when God will even allow the tearing up of a church and the assassination of a man's character if it humbles him. That's how important humility is.

Why is it so important? 2 Cor. 12:9, "*He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you for power is perfected in...what?...weakness.*" And God crushed him because when he was at the end of himself and he had nothing, then he was most useable. Paul learned that. So most gladly, therefore, he says in verse 9, "I will rather boast about my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me." You see, he knew that power was the direct relationship to humility, to brokenness. "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, difficulties for Christ's sake for when I am weak then I'm...what?...strong." He learned to embrace adversity. You're being falsely accused, you're being maligned, you're being misrepresented, embrace it...embrace it, search your heart, let the humbling work go on, be content because it's in your weakness that His strength is perfected. He wants you humble and He will go to whatever extremities necessary.

The humility of the Apostle Paul, I think, is manifest as clearly as anywhere in Philippians chapter 3. If you'll turn over to that chapter. The point is humility, and if anyone in the spiritual realm had achieved, it was Paul. If anyone had achieved what could certainly please God and bring Him accolades, it was Paul. And I suppose from the world's standpoint that's why they named a city in Minnesota after him and that's why they name cathedrals all over the place after him, and churches all over the place after him, and little boys after him. But I want you to know how he viewed himself in Phil. 3:12. "*Not that I have already attained, I have not already arrived, I have not become perfect, I press on...I press on...I press on.*" When he wrote to Timothy at the end of his life he said it as simply as he could say it, he said, "*I am the chief of...what?...sinners,*" 1 Timothy 1:15, "*I am the chief of sinners.*" And he says, "*You know why God saved me? He saved me because I was so bad that He could put on a demonstration of mercy of a unique kind with me in order that me...he says...as the foremost, the worst might allow Jesus Christ to demonstrate His perfect patience, using me as an example.*" As if to say...if He could save me He could save anyone. And nothing's changed in the heart of Paul. He says, "I haven't arrived, I am as unworthy now as I've ever been." Read him in Romans 7. He says there's still a law in my members warring against the law of my mind that leads me to this conclusion, "*O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?*" I'm like a murderer with a corpse strapped to my back eating its way through me. That's humility...that's humility. Not that I have already attained or become perfect, but I press on...*dioko*, I pursue, I chase. And I'm just trying to lay hold of what I was laid hold for. And why did God lay hold of him? Romans 8, "*Predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.*" God saved him to make him like Christ and He'll do it ultimately, that's going to be the prize of the upward call, Christ's likeness, that's the goal in eternity and that's the goal in time, so he says I'm just pursuing the very thing for which God laid hold of me and that was to make me like His Son. Some day He'll do it in eternity, but until that time I pursue it here and now, I haven't arrived.

And that's the way you measure yourself, beloved. If you want to know how far along you are spiritually, compare yourself not with someone else...you remember 2 Corinthians, Paul says we don't compare ourselves with ourselves, or measure ourselves by ourselves at a human level. If you want to know where you are spiritually, compare yourself with Jesus Christ, that will keep you humble. And before honor, Proverbs 15:33, comes humility. Before honor comes humility.

God wants you humble. You came in humble. You have no reason to be proud now, none at all. You're no more worthy of salvation now than you were before God saved you. You're still wretched and unworthy in and of yourself, it's just that you've been covered by the righteousness of Christ because He paid the penalty for your sins. But you in yourself are no more worthy now. And when God brings those things into your life that humble you and push you down and break you and shatter your self-confidence, those things you can't fix, you can't make right, you can't undo, when the criticism comes and it's like blowing a dandelion into the wind, you'll never get the pieces back and you wonder what it

will do to you...just remember that what it's most likely to do to you if you deal with it rightly is to humble you and make you more useful.

The place to close our little discussion of humility as we come to the Lord's table is Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2 and we'll start at verse 3. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than oneself."

You know, there's something true about a humble person and that is this, they see their own sin as worse than everybody else's. That's a mark. If you are more critical of other Christians than you are of yourself, you lack humility. It is pride that allows you to crawl up out of your own hole and condemn others. And I'm not talking evaluating truth, I'm not talking about being discerning, I'm talking about being preoccupied with criticizing the sins of others. That's hard to do when you're overwhelmed with your own. When the sins that most offend you are yours, when the sins that most grieve you are yours, when the sins that you would want to prevent are yours and when the effects of those sins that impact the church are your sins and not somebody else's, you have a measure of humility and you're able to do what it says here...regard one another as superior to you.

It also involves in Phil 2:4 not looking out for your own personal interests but also for the interests of others. When you are more concerned for the enterprises of others, the successes of others, the blessings of others, the benefits of others than you are yourself, you have a measure of humility. When your personal interests are not what matters, when you could care less about your own personal successes and you could care less about your own personal achievements and you could care less about your own personal privileges, popularity, reputation, but you are consumed with those things in regard to others, you have a measure of humility. It has to do with how you view your own self...negatively with regard to your sin and positively with regard to your successes. Are you more concerned about your sins than anybody else's? And more concerned about others blessings than yours?

That was the attitude of Christ. He was more concerned about us than Himself. The attitude that is expressed in Phil 2:5, "*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.*" He was perfectly willing to give up His privileges to bear our sins. He was willing to be separated from God and endure agony which is inexplicable and incomprehensible to us in order that we who are unworthy might be saved. And it's this marvelous passage familiar to us that points this out. "Although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God something to hold on to." He was willing to give it up. He emptied Himself. "Taking the form of a bondservant, being made in the likeness of men," this is the condescension right here, the kenosis, as it's called, the self-emptying. "and being found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross." In other words, He came all the way down for us, all the way down for us.

What is this humility that God seeks for us? It is a sense of one's spiritual bankruptcy and utter unworthiness as manifested in the Beatitudes and in the sermon Jesus preached in Matthew 18 and in the book of James. It is an attitude that continues after our salvation when we recognize that we are no more worthy now than we ever were in the past. It is an attitude that realizes the suffering and pain that comes into our lives that cuts so deeply and buffets us...and that's a word from 2 Corinthians 12 that means fist, it's a blow to the face, the very same word used of the soldiers who punched Jesus in the face. And when we get punched around in life and falsely accused, we embrace that because we understand that through it God humbles us and the humbler we are the more powerful He is through us. It's the kind of humility that is more concerned about our sins than the sins of everybody else or anybody else. It's the kind of humility that particularly looks on the interest of others demonstrated in the condescension of

Jesus Christ...that's humility. And that, beloved, is an attitude of the heart that is at the very center of spiritual virtue.

Father, as we think about this we all are feeling guilty in our hearts, I know I am. You have given me many blessings and from the standpoint of ministry in the church, You have opened up many avenues and many experiences and many privileges. And, Lord, such a privilege necessitates a humbling and I understand that and I thank You for those things that come into my life that bring me quickly to the end of myself and cast me on You, I thank you for the insults, the distresses, the misrepresentations, the false accusations, I thank You for the trials and tribulations, the distress that comes to the church, the difficulties...yes, even satanic enterprises, demonic enterprises. I thank You for all of those that are not a result of iniquity but are the unfolding of the purposes that You have for the humbling of your servant. And I thank You for the same in the lives of these beloved people, I thank You for doing what You need to do to humble them so they can know how to depend on You, so they can be driven to intimacy with You because they have no where else to go, so that they can be powerful.

If Jesus humbled Himself to the cross, O God, give us this same attitude, may we be like Him and humble ourselves. As we come now, Lord, to this table and we look at the very humility of Christ in its most graphic demonstration, we see Him humiliated, the Creator, the One who spun the whirling worlds into space and splattered the stars across the heavens, the One who created the universe in six days and rested, the One who is infinitely holy and perfect, untouched by sin, who interacts in this wicked world like a sunbeam in a dump, untouched by the pollution, pure and bright. But, Lord, we know that we so often forget Your grace and mercy and the extent of Your humiliation. That's why we need this table, that's why we need to come here and be reminded again that You humbled Yourself for us. You came and were made sin for us when You knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God through You. You became sin only in the sense that You were treated as if You had committed our sins, when in fact You never committed any, so that we could be treated as if we committed none and had done only Your righteous acts. This is wondrous grace and condescension.

And as we look at the cross, there are so many perspectives. But we want to see there Your humility, Your condescension as a model for our own. May we humble ourselves realizing the sinners that we are so utterly unworthy and may we therefore humble ourselves before you and before one another, expressing that greater love can no man have than that he would lay down his life for his friends. Humble us, Lord, by whatever means necessary that we might manifest the very character of Christ whose we are and whose image we long to reflect.

2.3.7 Joy

Being joyful means we are hopeful, excited, thankful, and enthused about God and our salvation. We want God to operate in our lives.

The apostle Paul also identified joy as one of the many fruits of the spirit in Gal. 5:22:

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against these there is no law.

Solomon saw in Eccl. 8:15 that joy was commendable and an important goal of life:

So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor all the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

The apostle James also told us to consider difficulties we encounter as joy in James 1:2-4:

My brethren, count it all joy [be thankful] when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Having joy is about having a good attitude in spite of our circumstances and letting God determine that attitude instead of our emotions. It means being positive, constructive, and helpful in whatever we are doing. Joy is about thankfulness, and our speech, to be edifying, should always reflect that thankfulness by focusing to some degree on praise and thankfulness for the many gifts that God, in His infinite wisdom and grace, has bestowed upon us all through the blood of Christ Jesus. Joy is the opposite of being cynical or uncaring. A joyful person can't be angry, but joy is often the best antidote we know of to overcome anger.

There would be a number of places in the Scripture we could go to pick up this next spiritual attitude that should characterize believers and the church, there could be a lot of scriptures. In fact, most notably the book of Philippians would be a place to go because it rings this chime again and again. But I want us to go to 1 Thessalonians because it's so concise and it's so inescapable and it's so direct, turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 16 we read this very short verse. "*Rejoice always.*" That's it. In fact, in the original language the adverb comes first and so it goes like this, "Always...and the command is in the present tense to the latter part would be...always continue to rejoice...always be rejoicing."

Now that is the command of verse 16 and the attitude I want to talk about is joy...joy. There's plenty of reason in the world in which we live to be sad, distressed, disturbed, upset, concerned, anxious, stressed out, full of fear, doubt...but not for the Christian. We are commanded to rejoice always. And that's not an isolated command...seventeen times in Paul's letter to the Philippians he talks about joy. Just a few of those come to mind...Philippians chapter 2, "Even if I am being out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all and you too rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me," no matter what's going on. Even if I am a prisoner and even if I might lose my life and wind up being a sacrifice to get the gospel to you, I rejoice, I share my joy with you, I expect you to rejoice and share your joy with me.

In chapter 3 verse 1 of Philippians, "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*" In chapter 4 verse 4, "*Rejoice in the Lord always..and again I will say rejoice.*" **We are commanded to rejoice. We are commanded to have joy.**

I'm going to make a statement now that might seem a little bit hard if not impossible to believe, but I mean what I say and I'm going to try to show you why. Here's the statement. There is no event and there are no circumstances in life that should diminish the Christian's joy. Let me say that again. There is no event and there are no circumstances in life that should diminish the Christian's joy.

In fact, let me go further than that. If there are circumstances or events that do diminish your joy, you have sinned...you have sinned. Does that sound ridiculous given the woes of life? Does that sound like

an impossible thing to believe? But the Bible commands rejoice...how often?...always. In case you didn't get it, again I say rejoice.

Now let's look at this command here and let's see why what I just said is true, why there is no event or circumstances that occur in the life of a Christian that should diminish that Christian's joy. Let's look at the command, first of all, "*Rejoice always*," and as I said, it is not isolated, such a command is repeated certainly in Philippians and elsewhere. I think about 1 Peter 4:13, it says, "*Keep on rejoicing even to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ.*" Paul said, "*Even though I am suffering I'm rejoicing.*" Peter says, "*To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, to that degree keep on rejoicing.*" It's sort of like as your suffering escalates, so should your rejoicing. Scripture has a lot to say about this...a lot to say about it.

You remember that in the discourse that our Lord had with the disciples in the upper room on the night of His betrayal, John 13 shows Jesus sitting down at the table with the disciples and from then flowing through chapter 17 He has this amazing dialogue in which He leaves a legacy to them. I call that section the legacy of Jesus. And one of the things that Jesus leaves is His own joy...and eight times in that section He refers to joy or full joy. He even says, "*Everything I'm saying to you is so that your joy may be full.*" I'm leaving, I'm going to die, I'm going to be crucified, I'm not going to be here, I'm not going to be with you. You're going to have a lot of trouble in this world, you'll have tribulation. They'll pursue you. Those who are leading the synagogue will come after you, they'll take your life. If they've persecuted Me, they'll persecute you...and all of that. But I'm telling you all these things because I want you to have full joy.

Wow. In the midst of frightening circumstances, the death of the Lord, the loss of Him who was their life, as He was going to leave them in the midst of the anticipation of terrible suffering and persecution and even death, in all of that He said you should have full joy. Continually this is stressed. And adversity doesn't change it.

Let's go back to Matthew chapter 5 for a moment. It doesn't matter how severe the difficulty is, it doesn't change the requirement. Verse 10 of Matthew 5, "*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of Me. Rejoice and be glad.*" Boy, that's not always easy to do when you've been insulted, persecuted and all kinds of evil things have been said against you falsely. Rejoice and be glad.

There's a very similar passage in Luke's gospel. Luke 6:22 and 23 says, "*Blessed are you when men hate you,*" and the word "*blessed*" means happy. "*Happy are you when men hate you and ostracize you and cast insults at you and spurn your name as evil because you're associated with Christ.*" Listen to this. "*Be glad in that day and leap for joy.*" Leap for joy? Jump for joy? That's like when you come home and after a day at work and you're whistling a tune and singing a song and a smile is from ear to ear and you're skipping along and just kind of feeling in a bouncy mood and maybe you do a little jig...and your wife says, "*What happened to you?*" Oh, I was persecuted today, I was insulted, ostracized and all manner of evil was spoken against me.

I was having a conversation not long ago with a friend and he was telling me about how terribly he was being treated and about how terrible things were being said about him and terrible insults and misrepresentations were being poured out against him. And he was sick of it and he was tired of it and he didn't like it and it wasn't fair.

And I was listening, endeavoring to be sympathetic to a degree. And I finally said, I said, "*Could I ask you a question?*" I said, "Apart from the fact that you don't seem too joyful, have you ever thought about what it is that God is trying to accomplish in your life through all of this?"

"Well...he said...well He's probably...He's probably trying to show me I ought to be careful who I say things to."

"Oh? I wouldn't think that would be the point. I'm not talking about that...what do you think He's trying to do to you? What do you think the Lord is trying to accomplish in you? Do you think maybe He'd like to make you more like His Son?" Boy, that's a convicting thing to say to somebody who is just wallowing in their misery and feels justified. "How about leaping around for joy, does that seem like the thing you ought to be doing?"

"Are you kidding?"

But if you obey this command "rejoice" how often? Always, even when you're suffering, even when you're persecuted, alienated, ostracized, all kinds of evil is spoken against you, even when you're mistreated and misunderstood and misrepresented and you are to respond by rejoicing, how can one do that?

Well certainly the Apostle Paul he was good at it. He had to be because his whole life was one of pain. James was very instructive when he said in chapter 1 verse 2, "*Count it all joy when you fall into various trials.*" You ought to be happier about your trials than you are about the good times because the trials are much more refining, aren't they? They're much more spiritual productive, aren't they? They're much more likely to strip off your self-centeredness. They're much more likely to convince you that you're not in control of everything and break your pride. They're much more likely to humble you. They're much more likely to make you dependent. They're much more likely to enhance your prayer life. They're much more likely to give you sympathy with the pain of Christ and everybody else's pain.

Oh they have such a good work. James says, "*Count it all joy when you fall into various trials because the trials of your faith, or the testing of your faith produces endurance and endurance has a perfecting work.*"

Do you rejoice in your trials? Do you rejoice in your suffering? Do you rejoice in your pain, in your difficulty? Well that is what the Bible calls you to do.

Now you say, "Well wait a minute, it says in Romans 12:15, 'Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.' I mean is that a contradiction? I mean, isn't there a time to stop rejoicing?" Well in an outward sense.

Yesterday I was in this conference in Chicago. We had a great time. But there were other speakers speaking and I was standing outside the auditorium while someone else was finishing up. And one of my dear, dear friends came out and he came up to me and he was just frustrated. You could see it everywhere. "Oh...he said...oh...he said...I just can't believe it." I said, "Well let's talk about it."

So he came over and he started to cry. And, of course, that gets to me, you know, my friend is crying and I put my arm around him and I for a moment understood what it was to weep with him who weeps. That didn't effect my joy. He was traumatized by something that was happened that broke his heart. It didn't effect my joy and it really didn't effect his either. Through my sympathy and empathy I smiled at

him and I just suggested that maybe the Lord was still on the throne and maybe He had a purpose to unfold.

There's something about outward identification with normal human emotion, of course we share that. There's something about a tender embrace for someone who is in pain and sorrow. There's something about sharing a tear. There's something about understanding sympathetically someone's sorrow and showing them compassion. But that doesn't touch the deep down abiding joy. It shouldn't.

I think the balance is expressed in 2 Corinthians 6:10. The Apostle Paul says, "*As sorrowful yet always rejoicing.*" That's the balance he's talking about...as sorrowful yet always rejoicing. Sure, there's a place for normal human sympathy, but always rejoicing. Under those tears and under that sympathy is this unending joy, at all times rejoicing.

This is so much a part of the early church, by the way, that their greeting...and I wish we could get this started...their greeting was *chairote*. You know what that is? That's rejoice, that's rejoice. And you know who initiated that? Jesus did. On the morning after His resurrection, you remember He came out of the grave and then He met with His disciples, the first thing He said in their greeting was, "All hail." What a crazy translation. All hail, as if Jesus was British. I suppose if Americans had translated the word they would have said, "Hi." The word is *chairote*, rejoice, that's what He said. And that was the right thing to say, wasn't it? After the resurrection He comes in to these guys and they're all moaning and weeping because He's gone and He shows up and says, "Rejoice," and that became the greeting. It's sure a lot better than "hi." Can't we get that started? Rejoice...good morning, rejoice. That's...that's the common greeting that they used...rejoice, and well they should because there was constant reason to do it and it was a command. And you need to be reminded of that command a lot.

In Acts 15:23 they sent a letter, you remember the Council of Jerusalem sent a letter. The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch, in Syria, and Cilicia, who are from the Gentiles, greetings. Greetings? They really said "rejoice...rejoice...rejoice." And certainly we have every reason to rejoice, we're commanded to. Scripture says our joy is to be great, it is to be abundant, it is to exceeding, it is to be animated, unspeakable, full of glory and awe. All of that is what the Scripture says.

It's not like the joy the world has. The world's joy is a whole different deal. I mean, when you think about the joy of the world, if you wanted to define it biblically, this is how the world's joy would be described biblically. First of all, it is derived from earthly pleasures. The world's joy comes from earthly pleasures. For example, in Ecclesiastes chapter 2 verse 10, chapter 11 verse 9, both those places it talks about earthly joy. And it says that people rejoice by following the impulses of their heart, which I translate as their emotions rather than the Holy Spirit. In other words, when you get a emotional passion or a longing or a desire or a lust for something, and you get it fulfilled, you have joy...that's earthly joy, completely connected to the fulfillment of earthly desires. But Proverbs 14 says this is delusive because it says the end of joy may be grief. People want, want, want, want and they rush toward that want driven by their impulses, they fulfill that want and very often not long after they have fulfilled that lust it turns to grief. It is short-lived...this pleasure, it's only as good as the time you're enjoying the pleasure that you can enjoy the joy. The joy doesn't last beyond the pleasure, because it is primarily physical and emotional, rather than spiritual. That's why Job chapter 20 verse 5 says, "*The joy of the godless is momentary.*" It is completely connected to some transient physical or emotional pleasure. When the pleasure ends the joy is gone and often turns to grief.

In fact, Ecclesiastes 7:6 says that worldly joy is like kindling wood, it just burns up. James said it often has turned into mourning, let your joy be turned to mourning. And that means it has the implication of

judgment. It's very possible that when you have fulfilled your short-lived pleasure, the pleasures of sin for a season, when you have fulfilled it and it's turned to grief and in the aftermath you've got the hangover of emptiness, what you have to look forward to is the judgment of God for such indulgence. That's why Isaiah 16:10 says, "*The joy of the godless will be taken away.*" That's judgment.

So we're not talking about that kind of joy. We're not talking about some kind of...some kind of pleasure fulfillment. We're not even talking about something that's sort of a personality trait, some people are naturally more bubbly and buoyant than other people and some people have a sort of a natural approach to life where they can put a positive spin on things better than others. Some people we call them "moody" people, don't we, who just seem to sink under everything. They just tend to be that way as if their sort of psychological makeup was some excuse for their failure to obey the Word of God. We're not talking about some kind of natural characteristic, some kind of ability to bounce above things. We're not talking about a sort of a Norman Vincent Peale positive thinking approach, or Robert Schuller positive thinking approach where you try to recreate your own fantasy world of positive things in the midst of negative reality. We're not talking about playing mental games. It's not a natural thing we're talking about here. We're talking about something that has to transcend that because that's only good for so long and in some rather shallow circumstances.

We're talking about a supernatural joy here. We're talking about something that belongs only to Christians, something that's deep down. It is as to its source identified in Galatians 5:22 as a fruit of the Spirit. "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy...*" In fact, in Romans 14:17 it says the Kingdom of God is made up of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. We're talking about a spiritual joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, like spiritual peace and righteousness and love. We have a love that is not earthly love. We have a righteousness that is not self-righteousness. We have a peace that is not the peace the world gives. And we have a joy that is different. It's a deep down joy. It's not the kind of joy the world knows. It comes from God through Christ, is dispensed by the Holy Spirit. And no circumstance...I say it again...no circumstance, no event should cause the absence of that joy.

There's only one thing...one thing that legitimately should steal your joy. What is it? Sin and it shouldn't steal it for very long because you immediately should...what?...confess that sin and rejoice in God's forgiveness.

Now let me give you a definition of this joy just so you know what it is, it isn't a natural joy, it isn't this worldly joy, it isn't something that some people have because they put a positive spin on life. Here's what it is. It is the experience of well being that springs from the deep down confidence that God is in perfect control of everything for my good and His glory. Okay? It is the experience of well being. It is feeling okay, good, on top, positive, triumphant, victorious, not because of the circumstance but because of the deep down confidence that God is in charge of everything and that it is all moving for my good and His glory. All of us can respond to everything in life with joy if we believe that God is effecting His glory and our good out of that. That's why I said to my friend, "What do you think the Lord's trying to do through this? Think He's trying to make you more like Christ? Boy, you ought to be happy, you ought to say thank You, Lord, for this trial, thank You, thank You."

All of us should be in the habit of constantly expressing joyful wonder when you just think about what God is doing in your life. Now, that's the command...rejoice always. Let me give you the reasons to obey it, okay? And I'll just give you a little list here...real simple, straightforward. Here are some good reasons for you to be thankful:

1. Number one, **because joy is an act of proper response to the character of God.** And I'm starting right where I just left off. Joy starts because I know my God is sovereign, gracious, loving, merciful, kind, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and He has my well being in His mind. Right? That's the deep down confidence...I know my God. And my God says they might mean it for evil, but I mean it for good. My God says I work all things together for good to those who love Me. Wow...wow, I know my God and I can rejoice in my God. I can't always rejoice in my circumstances but I can rejoice in the God who controls my circumstances.

I can rejoice in the character of my God. Are you...are you not glad that your God is unchanging? What if God changed the way He operated from time to time. Whoa...what a frightening thing that would be. What if His grace was whimsical and only dispensed on certain occasions when He felt like it? What if His justice came and went? What if He had mental lapses? What if He had a few moments, you know, like Greg Maddox(?) had yesterday in the baseball game in the third inning? What if God had lapses in His abilities? Most of the time He's pretty good, you know, seven out of eight innings he's great. What a frightening thing that would be. The consistency of our God's character, the absolute immutability, unchanging, wisdom, sovereignty, power, grace, mercy...that causes joy in my heart. It causes me joy to know that what my God says He does. What He promises He fulfills.

2. Secondly, **joy is a proper act of appreciation for the work of Christ.** Joy is a proper response, a proper act of appreciation for the work of Christ. When I realize that Jesus Christ bore my sins in His own body on the tree, that Jesus Christ who knew no sin became sin for me, when I realize that God laid on Him the iniquity of us all, when I realize that I was redeemed not with corruptible things like silver and gold but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, when I realize that when I was an enemy, when I was hated, when I hated God, when I was His enemy and when I was against Him and a blasphemer and mocker in mercy and in love, God sent His Son to redeem me. When I understand that the cross takes away all my sin, when I understand that His perfect substitutionary atonement covers me with the righteousness of Christ, when I understand that therefore heaven is eternally mine, when I understand all that Christ has accomplished, that gives me an abiding joy that any trivial passing circumstance of life should not effect.
3. Thirdly, **I ought to have incessant joy as an act of confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit...**an act of confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit. When you think about...what is the Holy Spirit's work? Well I've told you Romans 14:17 says He brings righteousness, peace and joy. In Galatians 5 He produces love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self- control. Second Corinthians 3:18, you remember that wonderful verse says that the Holy Spirit is moving us from one level of glory to the next, ever increasingly like Jesus Christ and He's doing that all the time. The Holy Spirit is showing us the things of Christ. No man knows the mind of God and the mind of Christ but the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of Christ lives in us and He shows us Christ and He leads us into all truth and He brings all things to our remembrance and He teaches us all things. And He is the anointing from God that we possess. And He is the arrabon, the down payment, the engagement ring, the first installment of our eternal inheritance...all of that that the Spirit of God is doing in us. He protects us from sin. He seals us unto the day of redemption. He fills our mouths with praise. And that goes on all the time.

So, your joy should start in the reality of the triune God, in the unchanging character and greatness of your God, in the glorious finished work of Christ your Savior and in the ongoing sanctifying power of the indwelling Holy Spirit who lives in you. That's the deep down confidence that all is well.

Well let me give you some more reasons. We move from the workers to the work. We are rejoicing over God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, but let's look at what the work is that they do.

4. Fourth, **we are to rejoice as an act of reasonable response to spiritual blessings continually given.** It never stops. For example, Ephesians 1 says, "We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies," and that just keeps going on and on and on and on. God just keeps pouring out spiritual blessing.

You say, "Well what do you mean by that? I don't feel like my life is really too blessed right now." Let me tell you something. Every single time you sin and it is instantaneously forgiven, that is a monumental blessing, the absence of which would catapult you into hell. Every time God moves you one step more toward the image of Jesus Christ, that is a monumental blessing. Every time God refines you through the trials of life, that is a great bless...God is pouring out forgiveness, He's pouring out provision. God brought you through another day and spared you some agony the likes of which you perhaps could never have known and would not know because you never experienced it because of His mercy. Blessings are poured out on you constantly. He is even now, and I think about this so often, preparing a place for us. Some things are going on up in heaven just to get ready for us, blessings we will yet to experience. God is pouring out His blessing upon us, pouring out His forgiveness, pouring out His guidance, pouring out His wisdom, pouring out His power. All spiritual blessings unendingly poured out upon us. Every wonderful rich joy in this life comes from Him and blessings seen and unseen.

Do you ever think about the Holy Spirit interceding for you all the time with groanings which cannot be uttered? This is going on all the time. The Holy Spirit interceding for you, constantly calling on God to do that which brings you blessing and joy and brings Him glory. And the Holy Spirit always prays according to the will of God, Romans 8 says, so His prayers for you are always being answered. And Jesus Christ's intercession for you never stops either. He's constantly before the throne of God interceding on your behalf. There are endless blessings...endless blessings.

5. Number five, **joy is an act of proper response to divine providence.** And we've talked a little about this but let me make it a specific point. Joy is an act of proper response to divine providence. By divine providence I simply mean the fact that God orchestrates all circumstances to bring about your good. Divine providence, I've always said, is a bigger miracle to me than a miracle. If I was God it would be a lot easier if I wanted to do something specific, if I wanted to reach a certain goal, like if I had an objective and a plan and a purpose and an end and I wanted to achieve that to just step in and make it happen. You know, that's my nature anyway. People who know me and work with me know that if I have a goal in mind, I just as soon go do it. Other people they want to say, "Well now, John, don't be in too big a hurry here, you know, we ought to have a committee and we ought to talk to these people and we ought to get them involved and we ought to get these people involved, and there's this process here and we took..." Okay...and, you know, I sort of step back and say...Yeah, but, I mean, you know this is right. Yeah, sure, this is right. See, if I were God...and of course that would be an unthinkable thing...but if I were God I would just say...forget the providence deal, I'm doing a miracle now...bang, it's done. But God says, "No, we're just going to let all this stuff happen and I'm just going to control all this stuff...this billions of contingencies and it's going to all come to the end that I want." What genius is that? And God controls all of that that goes on in your life for His end which is to conform you to Jesus Christ.

You should imagine if God was just up there saying, "Oh, whew, I didn't expect that deal to happen. Oh, how am I going to fix that?" But what a deep down confidence to know He's in control of all of it. Amazing.

6. Number six, **joy is an act of proper response to the promise of future glory.** The reason I wrote the book on heaven was because I...if Christians don't have that view you get so messed up just getting stuck down here. If you can lose yourself in the glories of what is to come, this all of a sudden fades, doesn't it? I mean, you know, when the Apostle Paul told the Colossians set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth, He wasn't trying to say something to them that was going to be excruciatingly painful...do this even though it hurts. He was telling them something that would free them from all the debilitating preoccupation with stuff that doesn't matter anyway. I mean, your joy should never ever be touched.

I said, "You know, the worst is that you're going to be in the presence of the Lord, in the glories of heaven."

She said, "And that's my confidence." And she said they sent a psychiatrist in here today in the hospital with somebody and they said we're going to put you in group therapy and we're going to put you under special therapy because we want you to get in touch with your inner child. And she said, "No thanks." She said, "I don't need to get in touch with my inner child, thank you. I'm in touch with my Lord Jesus Christ, everything is fine, everything is fine."

You can face any kind of situation with that kind of hope in your heart. That's an essential part of maintaining your joy. I never really get too disturbed about what goes on here because it's so temporary and I can't fix it all the time anyway. And it makes heaven all the more wonderful and alluring.

7. Seventh in my little list, **deep down joy should always be there as an act of appreciation for answered prayer.** Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full, John 16:24. What have I ever asked for that the Lord didn't do that was consistent with His character and His purpose? The Lord has answered my prayers over and over and over again. And as an act of appreciation for all the answered prayers and for those prayers yet unanswered that I know He'll hear and answer, my joy can be untouchable.
8. Number eight, **as an act of appreciation for the scriptures.** Psalm 19 verse 8, one of the...you know that's one of my favorite Psalm, I'd preach on it all the time if I could. I would ring that bell over and over. "The precepts of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart." The scriptures bring me joy. Jeremiah says, "*Thy words were found, I did eat them and they were in me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.*" The psalmist, Psalm 119, just read Psalm 119, how many times does David say that the Word brings him joy, that the Word is his delight?

You should...you should have that deep down appreciation of the Word of God that brings you joy, thanking Him for all that He has given. Listen to what John said, "These things I write unto you that your joy may be full...full."

9. Number nine, **you should rejoice always as an act of appreciation for Christian fellowship.** What a sweet benediction Christian fellowship is. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 3:9, "For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before God because of you?" Paul says I just have joy because of you.

I can say that. I have so many...so many causes for joy in my life because of you and how God is using you and blessing you and how you're receiving the Word and serving the Lord and how...I go places in the world and around the country and people come and tell me what the Lord means and what the Word means.

When I went back to Chicago I was at dinner and this guy said to me, "I've got to tell you a story." He said, "I went to a place called a Hundred Mile Post."

I said, "What kind of place is that?" It's a town in Canada. When you leave civilization going north in Canada toward the Arctic Circle, you go up into the lumber area, they put a post every fifty miles so there's fifty-mile posts, hundred-mile posts, hundred-and-fifty-mile posts and two-hundred-mile posts. And it's up toward no place.

And he said, "I got to a place called Hundred Mile Post to speak and I met a guy. And there was a church there." And he said, I think he said it was a church of a hundred and fifty or two hundred people in this place that hardly had that many people. And he said he told me how this story started. Some missionary flew in there, this is a lumber...a bunch of lumberjacks. This missionary had come in there and given them some Grace To You tapes fifteen years ago. And they had no ministry at all and this guy started listening to tapes and he got saved and he started getting more tapes and more tapes and more tapes. Now there's a church of two hundred people in a place Hundred Mile Post. And this guy was rejoicing in the fellowship and the fact that there was such commonality because they had...they were sort of an extension of Grace Community Church because of the teaching.

Is there anything sweeter than that? Christian fellowship when you need it, a friend, someone there to pray with you and be your strength.

10. Finally number ten, **we should have constant joy as an act of appreciation for the privilege of witnessing**, the privilege of gospel preaching. What a privilege to proclaim Christ...what a privilege, what an honor.

You remember the apostles in the early part of the book of Acts and they whipped them and they flogged them and they beat them. And then they sent them out of there and what did they do? They went on their way...what?...rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. It was such a thrill for them to be able to preach the gospel no matter what it costs.

Well those are the reasons. You know, there are things that are going to hinder you. If you don't have joy in your life, may I suggest what it might be?:

1. **It could be that you're not saved or not a Christian**. That's right. It could be false salvation. Remember Matthew 13, the seed went into the soil but the soil was rocky and it sprung up and there was joy and the sun came out and burned it and it died and there was no life there. There can be a momentary sort of initial psychological bump or boost or emotional joy, and it disappears. If you're struggling and you just don't have joy in your life, and you just can't get on top of it, maybe you don't really know Christ and you ought to examine yourself to see whether you're in the faith.
2. **Maybe you're being tempted**. Maybe you're under some very strong temptation because if there's anything Satan would like to do, it's steal your joy. He goes around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, Peter says. And so Peter says here's the solution...casting all your care on Him. Maybe you're carrying too much of your load, that will turn into a temptation real fast because you're not off-loading it, casting it on Him.
3. **You might have false expectations**. Maybe you think you deserve more than you're getting when the fact is you deserve less. Is that not true? What does an unregenerate people deserve? What does a wicked sinner deserve? Hell. God in His mercy gives them life and sunshine and rain and food and family and love, much more than they deserve. God does that even for those who aren't His own, and look what He gives to us who doesn't deserve anything...so much.

Why do people expect everything? One woman left the church and went to a charismatic church that preached the prosperity gospel. She came back and said, "I don't want to go there, they won't let you be poor or sick." Hey, in life some people are poor and sick, some people are just poor and some people are just sick. What do you expect out of life anyway? Happy, rich, successful, constantly healthy and full of miracles? You'll set yourself up for a real problem.

4. **Your life might be prayerless.** Prayerlessness will take your joy and that's back to what I said earlier, because you're going to carry the load yourself. You're just going to carry the whole deal. You don't need to do that, just give it up, just get it before the Lord, hand it over to Him, let Him carry it for you. Cast all your care on Him. Philippians 4, get involved in prayer. "Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication let your request be made known to God." And as a result, the peace of God will take over.
5. **Too much reliance on feelings and emotions.** This is a common problem, especially among women. If you run by feelings and operate by feelings, you're going to have a hard time sustaining joy. People say, "Well I...I just...I don't feel like being happy. I don't feel like rejoicing. And how can I rejoice if I don't feel like it? And how can I control my feelings?" Let me tell you, you better. I mean, if everybody ran around doing what they felt like doing, what in the world kind of place would we have? We all control our feelings to some degree. It's silly to go around saying, "Well I...I just don't feel like it." Well you control your feelings all the time. You have to. And the way to control the kind of feelings that steal your joy is by your mind being filled with truth. And now I'm getting to the main deal here, and the main deal is this, the number one contributor to the lack of joy is ignorance. You don't know the truth of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, you don't have the mind of Christ, you don't know about God's sovereignty, God's mercy, God's providence, all those things we've talked about. When your mind is filled with sound doctrine and you believe it with all your heart, it takes over control of your emotions. And then you're not running around just flying off emotionally. You are a rational being and your feelings must be controlled by your reason, by your mind. And your mind when filled with the truth of God will control your emotions. I mean, it could be as simple as you're flying in an airplane and the thing...something goes wrong, loses an engine and you start to bump and bounce and flop...emotions take over initially. And then you say to yourself, "Oh, this could be the most novel experience of my life. I could be...this could be flight 841 to heaven. I could see...I may see the Lord soon. God's work will go on. Isn't this a marvelous potential?"

See, reason has to take over and whatever...whatever is in your mind controls your emotions. Some people would say, "I'm not going to break up, I'm not going to get panicky, I'm going to...control yourself, you don't want to embarrass yourself." You know, the mind takes over at that point in a superficial way and that person grits their teeth and hangs on for dear life.

That happened to me taking off from LAX, an engine went out just on lift off and this woman sunk her fingernails into my arm, you know...yikes. And I just...I just kind of smiled, you know. Sure you have emotional reaction to that but you're...all of a sudden I'm thinking about all this that's the reality of what might happen.

You see, you have to...your emotions can be controlled by your mind. So if your mind is controlled by the truth of the Word of God, that's how your emotions are going to respond, right? And so they'll have true responses to the reality that is most important, and that's the spiritual reality.

6. **Pride.** It could be the sin of pride, the ugly, ugly sin that says, "I don't have enough, I want more of this or that, or that." And, you know, the whole culture sells dissatisfaction, right? I mean, they put...they put women on the screen on the TV to make you unhappy with the one you've got. They put men on the screen to make you unhappy with the one you've got. They put cars on the screen to make you unhappy with the one you've got. They put all that stuff before you to make you dissatisfied. The premise of all marketing is make them dissatisfied.

So the culture blasts you with that. And you, you go home to your wife and your husband and your car and your life and your job and it's not the fantasy that they try to sell you but it is exactly the dissatisfaction that leads to you purchasing or giving up what you have for the deception. Pride will make you chase that stuff endlessly and ingratitude will eventually kill your joy. It will make you anxious and obsessive about getting "things" and needlessly pursuing the praise of the world and of people around you.

2.3.8 Love

Love is the most important evidence that the holy spirit is working in our lives. See section 4.8.3 for a detailed definition of love. We won't list it here to avoid repetition. One way to know if we are loved is if we have fears or phobias. The Bible is clear on how love makes us feel:

*"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
[1 John 4:18]*

Below is a great quote about love that helps sum up what it is about:

I've learned-that you cannot make someone love you. All you can do is be someone who can be loved. The rest is up to them.

I've learned-that no matter how much I care, some people just don't care back.

*I've learned-that it takes years to build up trust,
and only seconds to destroy it.*

I've learned-that it's not what you have in life but who you have in your life that counts.

I've learned-that you can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life.

I've learned-that you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.

I've learned-that regardless of how hot and steamy a relationship is at first, the passion fades and there had better be something else to take its place.

I've learned-that my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and have the best time.

I've learned-that true friendship continues to grow, even over the longest distance. Same goes for true love.

I've learned-that just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have.

I've learned-that maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

I've learned-that you should never tell a child their dreams are unlikely or outlandish. Few things are more humiliating, and what a tragedy it would be if they believed it.

I've learned- that no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.

I've learned- that no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.

I've learned- that our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.

I've learned- that just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other and just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do.

I've learned- that we don't have to change friends if we understand that friends change.

I've learned- that you shouldn't be so eager to find out a secret. It could change your life forever.

I've learned- that two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.

I've learned- that your life can be changed in a matter of hours by people who don't even know you.

I've learned- that even when you think you have no more to give, when a friend cries out to you, you will find the strength to help.

I've learned- that the people you care about most in life are taken from you too soon.

I've learned- that it's hard to determine where to draw the line between being nice and not hurting people's feelings and standing up for what you believe.

2.3.9 Forgiveness

In today's psychologically seduced culture, in today's culture bent on exercising and glorifying the sin of self-esteem, forgiveness is mocked and vengeance is exalted. This is just the opposite of what the Scripture teaches us. We must express an attitude of forgiveness.

Jesus says in the Bible says about forgiveness in Matt. 6:14-15:

14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will you Father forgive your trespasses.

Also, in Luke 17:3-4, Jesus further details how many times we should forgive people who have sinned against us:

3 "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him".

What all of these scriptures teach us is that God commands us to forgive people who have sinned against us when they repent. But, even when our brother doesn't repent, sometimes we should forgive him or her anyway. An example was when Jesus was on the cross in Luke 23:34, when he said:

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Dr. James Dobson very aptly described what it really means to forgive people:

"Forgiveness means giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me."

Even for those who aren't Christians, there are several practical reasons to forgive others:

1. We release and surrender our anger to the Lord.
2. We release our bitterness and resentment.
3. We remove the offending party's ability to continue occupying our thoughts in negative ways and thereby continue to hurt us.

All of these outcomes are healthy for our bodies because they lower our stress level and our blood pressure. This helps us live longer and happier lives.

It is important to remember that forgiveness is the most godlike act a person can do...forgiveness is the most godlike act a person can do, because it manifests the same kind of grace towards others that God manifests towards us. Nothing is more godlike than forgiving someone, and never are you more like God than when you forgive.

If it is your heart's prayer to be like Christ, to be as God's children, beloved children who manifest His character, then you must necessarily be characterized by forgiveness. Forgiveness is a marvelous thing. Forgiveness is a promise. Forgiveness is a pledge. Forgiveness is a statement of undeserved, unearned love that says no matter what you've done there is no anger, no matter what you've done there is no hatred, no matter what you've done there is no desire for vengeance, no matter what you've done there will never be any retaliation. I pass by that transgression completely. I do not hold you guilty. I do not blame you. I feel no self-pity for myself because I've been offended, rather I pass by that transgression completely and extend my love to you fully. That's forgiveness and that's godlike.

Reminding ourselves of that we go back to Exodus chapter 34. In Exodus chapter 34 we read this in verses 6 and 7, "Then the Lord passed by in front of him..." that is in front of Moses who had asked, you remember, to see His glory. Lord is identifying Himself here as He passes by Moses and lets a small portion of His glory be manifest. The Lord introduces Himself in verse 6 with these words, "The Lord...the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness...that's another word for grace...and truth who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." There is the characteristic of God that we want to identify. He is by nature a forgiving God.

Psalm 32 verse 1 says, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity." Psalm 85 further expresses God's forgiving heart when it says in verses 2 and 3, "Thou didst forgive the iniquity of Thy people, Thou didst cover all their sin, Thou didst redraw all Thy fury. Thou didst turn away from Thy burning anger." Again and again in the Psalm the theme of forgiveness is brought up.

Another one that is worth noting is in Psalm 130 and verse 4, "But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared." Feared meaning worshipped, treated with awe and respect and honor. God gains worship from those whom He so graciously forgives.

In the book of Isaiah, Isaiah the prophet speaks about God's forgiveness in the forty-third chapter of his prophecy. Recall that much of his prophecy has to do with judgment and then it sort of turns in the middle and the latter part is all about forgiveness and a glorious future. In Isaiah 43:25 we read that God speaks and says, "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake and I will not remember your sins." What a great statement. "I wipe out Your transgressions for My namesake." What does that mean? That I might put My character on display as a forgiving God and therefore be worshiped as such by those who are grateful for such forgiveness.

And then that great text in Isaiah 55 verses 6 and 7, "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

The prophet Jeremiah spoke much of the same way. Just one passage, a marvelous one, Jeremiah 33:8, "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me." God reiterates the significance of the transgression and then repeats twice His attitude of forgiveness.

Jesus taught many parables. When we come, of course, to the New Testament they dominate much of His teaching. None of those parables is as well known, perhaps, as the one that we call the parable of the prodigal son. It is actually not the parable of the prodigal son, it is the parable of the forgiving father. That would be a better title for it. It is that most familiar of all stories recorded in Luke 15 where God is seen like a father who totally forgives an unworthy and undeserving son. The son in that parable was not unlike many sons, greedy, self-centered, indulgent, anxious to get his hands on the wealth he had not earned, foolish, wasteful in the way he spent it on fast living with those who, by the way, exploited him and left him in misery when his money ran out. Slowly coming to his senses, dying of hunger, eating pig slop, he was in a condition that really mirrored his life and said to himself, "My father's servants live far better than I, I'm going to go home."

He didn't really expect forgiveness, in fact that was the last thing he expected. He said I'll just go home and be a slave, just to take the chance to say what a bum I've been, what a terrible son I've been. I don't expect to be a son, but I will go back and ask if I can just be a slave. All I want was a roof over my head, all I want is a decent piece of food to eat, something better than pigs get. And he started on the road back.

When he arrives near the house of his father, Jesus teaches us what it means to forgive. Because what does the father do? The father doesn't wait for the sinner to arrive. As soon as he sees him coming he runs to meet him, while he's yet afar away the father runs. When he starts to open his mouth and speak, before he can even say the "ssss" of sorry, before he can get a sentence out of his mouth, the father throws his arms around him and starts to kiss him and love him, calls for him to be dressed in the best outfit, for a ring to be put on his finger, calls for a festival, a party, a celebration, to get the best meat, cook up the best meal that anybody could ever imagine, start the music, call the friends. That's the lavish character of forgiveness.

You say, "Well how did the Lord know he wanted forgiveness?" Well He knew that because he had come back. Obviously he had started in that path. When God sees the sinner moving in His direction

and hardly having said the "sss" of sorry, God throws His arms around the sinner and hastily lavishes His forgiving love on that sinner...that's forgiveness the way God forgives.

God grieves deeply over people who carry bitternesses. It is so ungodlike. It is so unlike the character of Jesus Christ. God grieves over people who think they have to retaliate for every wrong that was rendered against them. Somehow they've got to get their pound of flesh. Somehow they have to react back to preserve their ego and their pride, they become divisive. God grieves over those people who want to undermine the church of Christ and undermine the work of God, undermine the life and ministry of faithful servants.

The forgiving father can only say that he loves the unworthy son. He can only say that he will always love that son who has committed such gross sins. And sins committed directly against that father. And he will do nothing but rejoice over that son and lavish him with the expressions of forgiveness, and he'll do it not for any personal gain but for the sheer joy of reconciliation and the sheer love of virtue. And that's why I say forgiveness is the most godlike thing you can do.

It's very hard to divide a church full of forgiving people because you can't get anything started. No matter what failures your pastor may make, or your leaders may make, or you might make, or somebody around you might make, when there's a rush to forgive it's very hard to bring about those divisions that so dishonor the Lord. Jesus hanging on the cross looked out over the people who were taking His life, the sinless Son of God, and lifting His eyes to heaven on their behalf He said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." And Stephen being crushed under the bloody stones of those who were smashing his life away looked up to heaven, saw Jesus Christ in a glorious vision and said, "Lay not this sin to their charge. O God, don't hold them responsible for what they're doing."

It was Sir Thomas More, the lord chancellor of England, after having been tried at Westminster and condemned to death for no just cause, Thomas More said to his judges this, and I quote, "As St. Paul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen to death, and as they are both now saints in heaven and shall continue there friends forever, so I verily trust shall therefore most heartily pray that though your lordships have now here on earth been judges to my condemnation and death, we may, nevertheless, hereafter cheerfully meet in heaven in everlasting salvation," end quote. He prayed for the salvation of his executioners...that's forgiveness...that's godlike. God has been overtly and blatantly and unjustly offended and blasphemed and dishonored by all of us and yet eagerly lavishes us with the expressions of His forgiving love.

Now this is Paul's salient point in Ephesians chapter 4. Turn to it if you will, Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 32. In Ephesians 4:32 we read this, "And be kind to one another."

We ought to stop and talk about that for a moment. Ours is such an unkind world, such an unkind society, so angry, so hostile, so merciless. Simple kindness, overlooking errors, overlooking misjudgments, overlooking failures, overlooking weaknesses, overlooking sins and treating people with kindness, overlooking self...self-centeredness, selfishness, one's own agenda, one's own expectations and just being kind whether people conform to all your supposed standards or not. And that kindness includes being tenderhearted. That's a simple phrase to understand, tenderheartedness...treating people tenderly. And here is one way to do it, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

And again I say, you are never more like God than when you forgive, when you express kindness, when you are tenderhearted and forgive just as God has forgiven you. And it's not a shallow forgiveness, it's a deep forgiveness, it's a lavish forgiveness.

In Colossians 3:13 Paul unfolds the same great truth, "Bearing with one another and forgiving each other whoever has a complaint against anyone just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." Forgiving with the same kind of magnanimity and the same kind of generosity with which the Lord forgave you from the heart.

Remember the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." See, that manifests a forgiving heart. Why? Verse 45, "In order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." And again I say, you're never more like God, you're never more evidently His son than when you forgive. And back to that text of Ephesians 4 for just a moment. It says in verse 32, as I read, "Forgiving each other as God in Christ also has forgiven you," and then I wish there wasn't a chapter break there because immediately in verse 1, "Therefore be imitators of God." And again you imitate God when you forgive.

By the way, Paul wrote Ephesians and Colossians, those two letters that call for forgiveness from a jail where he was unjustly and hatefully imprisoned. He was practicing the very virtue he was exhorting the believers to manifest.

A second thought as we think about forgiveness is this, whoever has offended you has offended God more...whoever has offended you has offended God more. You say, "What's the point? The point is, if God can forgive when He has received the greater offense, can't you forgive who have received the lesser?"

You say, "What do you mean by that?" I mean by that what is clearly indicated in Psalm 51. Psalm 51 was written by David as was Psalm 32, both of them at the time when David was overburdened with the iniquity of his sin with Bathsheba and the death of her husband Uriah. And in the midst of his penitence he wrote Psalm 32 and 51. But in Psalm 51 and verse 4 he makes this very important point about his sin. Remember now, he had violated Bathsheba by engaging himself in sexual relationship with her. He had violated Uriah by making sure that Uriah was put in a compromising position on the battlefield so that he lost his life. So he was guilty of adultery and he was guilty of murder. It certainly sinned against those people. But notice in verse 4 what he says in this prayer. Verse 3 he says, "*I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me; against Thee and Thee only I have sinned.*"

Psalm 51 provides a an excellent example to us all on how to repent. This psalm contains the actual words of confession and repentance uttered by King David after his great sins of adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11). David's prayer can serve as a pattern to Christians when guilty of sin today that they want to repent to God for.

1. David begins his prayer by freely admitting his sin (Ps. 51:3,4). This honesty is vital in our confession. God will graciously forgive all our sins but not on account of our excuses.
2. He then displays real sorrow over his sin (Ps. 51:17). Paul writes (2 Cor. 7:10) that the main characteristic of true confession is godly sorrow.
3. He asks God's forgiveness (Psalm 51:1,7-9).
4. He believes that God has heard him and will restore him (Ps. 51: 12-15).
5. In the new testament the most important single verse concerning confession is 1 John 1:9. In essence John tells us the means of forgiveness and cleansing is the blood of Christ, while the method of this forgiveness and cleansing is the confession of the Christian.

Like David, we must admit our sin, regret the actions of our sin, plead the blood of Christ, and believe that God has indeed done what He promised, namely, to cleanse us from sin and restore us to fellowship and service.

When you really look at sin you must agree that sin is primarily against God, for God is the holy standard whose law it is that we violate. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned. Although it would seem to us a major sin against Bathsheba and a major sin against Uriah, it is really a minor infraction against them and a major infraction against God Himself.

Psalm 41:4 also attributed to David, "As for me, I said, `O Lord, be gracious to me, heal my soul for I have sinned against Thee."

Listen, God is perfectly holy. He is thrice holy...holy, holy, holy. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, cannot look upon iniquity. He cannot tolerate sin. He despises sin. He hates sin. And while He is forgiving there will be an end to His patience and He will not endure sin forever. There will come a time of judgment and justice. He says that all the way back in Exodus 34 and verse 7. At the same time that God is forgiving, there is an end to His forgiveness because ultimately His holiness will take over where there is impenitence. He is perfectly holy and ultimate, ultimately does require a just punishment for sin...either from the sinner or from a substitute for the sinner, namely His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. To say that is to say that God is holy and sets a holy standard, so much so that ultimately sinners unforgiven will be damned to an eternal hell of punishment. There's no question about the extent of God's holiness. And that in itself makes His forgiveness all the more astonishing. God then who is most holy, God who is most supremely offended forgives.

We who are unholy shall we not forgive? What is it, some kind of God complex people have who won't forgive? Indeed it is. You have an elevated opinion of yourself who will not forgive. You have exalted yourself to a standard higher than God.

Now let's take note of one thing, and that is that from the heart we are to forgive all offenses all the time. My enemies and those who persecute and hate us are unlikely to ask for my forgiveness, and yet Jesus said, "Love your enemies and do good to them." That manifests an attitude of forgiveness. And there are going to be Christians who offend you and me. There are going to be Christians who are bitter and full of vengeance and want retaliation and want their pound of flesh and are going to do things that hurt us because they've been hurt by us or imagined they have. And I really believe that from the heart it is essential that we extend to them a kindness, a tenderheartedness and a forgiving love with the understanding that there can never be a restoration of the relationship until there is a real repentance on their part. The relationship can't be what it ought to be until there is a real seeking on their part of that restoration through forgiveness.

But let me tell you something. You can't wait for that in every situation. Look at it in your own home, look at it in your own marriage, look at it in your own family. Are you just going to accumulate a whole long litany of iniquities that someone may have committed or offense that may have committed and they haven't come and confessed them all and pled forgiveness for each and every single one of them? Are you just going to accumulate that and accumulate that and accumulate that? I think not. I think in the magnanimity of your love you pass by those things, love covers a multitude of...what?...of sins. There may be a breach in that relationship until forgiveness is sought, but from the heart that forgiveness has to be proffered and offered or you will accumulate bitterness.

We are so incidental to sin. Sin is not primarily against us, it is against God. And God forgives it in His children, shall not we? He who is most offended forgives freely, shall not we?

Another point that I want to make and I think this is all that I'll have time to make, and it is an important one. By the way, if you want another text to attach that to, Matthew 18. Matthew 18, that story about the man who came before the king, you remember, verses 21 to 35, and he was forgiven such a great debt and then went out and strangled another man who owed him just a small debt. And the point Jesus is making is how can you accept the forgiveness of God for all your sins and not forgive someone else when God who has forgiven you the most and God who was most offended and God who is of the highest and holiest standard has given you complete forgiveness, should you not forgive others? Matthew 18, very important text, I wish we had time to look at it.

But one final point, and it takes us into the place of preparation for the Lord's table. And it is this, the one who doesn't forgive won't be forgiven. You say, "What do you mean by that? Are you talking about the fact that we're going to die and go to hell?" No. In the big picture all your sins are forgiven if your faith is in Jesus Christ. We're not talking about that which has to do with your eternal destiny. We're talking about that which has to do with your joy, your peace, your usefulness, your fellowship. We're talking about what Jesus talked with Peter about when Peter said, "I want a bath," and the Lord said, "You already had a bath, you just need your feet washed." It's not a question of you being clean, you're clean, you just got some dirt on your feet that makes you a foul fellow for sitting at the table with us.

In Matthew 6, very important portion of Scripture. Jesus said this, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." And then down in verse 14, "For if you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." That makes the point about as clearly as it could ever be made. God will forgive you if you forgive others.

Eternal forgiveness...that's a settled issue. We have that in our justification and that settles the issue of future blessing. But temporal forgiveness rather than eternal forgiveness, temporal forgiveness we need in our sanctification and that settles the issue of present blessing. You understand the difference. Eternal forgiveness we as Christians have in our justification, settles the issue of future blessing. Temporal forgiveness we as Christians have and need in our sanctification, settles the issue of present blessing. The point is, if you're not forgiving others regularly and consistently and completely, then God is not forgiving you in a temporal sense and if you're not being forgiven in a temporal sense, several things will happen. You will forfeit blessing and you will come under chastening. Remember in the parable of Matthew 18 the man who wouldn't forgive, he had been forgiven, notably marking out that he was a believer, that's what it's saying in the parable, he was a believer who had been completely forgiven by God. He wouldn't forgive a man so the king brought him in and whipped him. God chastens those who do not forgive others. Sometimes he chastens them even perhaps to death.

Through the years as a pastor, I have been at it a long time now and I have found the emptiness, the dryness, the insipid dullness, the lack of joy, the lack of power, the lack of usefulness in the lives of people often related to an unforgiving heart. It's due to God's blessing being withheld because of an unwillingness to forgive. Sometimes a person will sit down with me and say, "They're saying this about me and they're saying this about me, and I've heard this about me, and I'm really angry with all of this and I'm upset about all of this." And my question is, what do you think the Lord's trying to do in your life? Do you think there might be some reason why you're experiencing all of this?

In other words, the implication is: could this be a chastening? Have you looked at your heart? What I hear coming out of your heart is anger and what I hear coming out of your heart is bitterness. And maybe it is the lack of forgiveness that is causing the escalation of all of these trials. We are to forgive because it is like God whose children we are.

We are to forgive because the most holy One forgives and shouldn't the least forgive? We are to forgive because we have been forgiven the greater sins against God and should be able to forgive lesser ones against us. We are to forgive because not to forgive is to forfeit fellowship and the love of the brethren and it is to be chastened. And furthermore, if we don't forgive we're really not fit to come to the Lord's table, we're not fit to worship.

In the same Sermon on the Mount where Jesus taught us how to pray and included the idea of forgiveness, back one chapter in Matthew 5 He said this in verses 23 and 24. *"If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, then come and present your offering."*

Now this is very basic. If you have an unsettled grudge with somebody else, settle it. Reconciliation needs to precede worship. Where there is bitterness and anger and unforgiveness, you need to do everything you can to resolve it. Where there is the iniquity of unforgiveness, God will not receive your worship. Such is the centrality of forgiveness.

Summing up, a statement from an anonymous saint:

"Revenge indeed seems often sweet to men, but Oh, it is only sugared poison, only sweetened gaul and its aftertaste is bitter as hell. Forgiving enduring love alone is sweet and blissful, it enjoys peace and the consciousness of God's favor. By forgiving it gives away and annihilates the injury, it treats the injurer as if he had not injured and therefore feels no more the smart and sting that he had inflicted. Forgiveness is a shield from which all the fiery darts of the wicked one harmlessly rebound. Forgiveness brings heaven to earth and heaven's peace into the sinful heart. Forgiveness is the image of God, the forgiving Father, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world."

Never are you more like God than when you forgive.

2.3.10 Obedience

In 1 Peter 1:22, the apostle describes salvation as an act of obedience. It says, *"You have in obedience to the truth purified your souls."* He describes the same reality in verse 23 as having been born again through the Word of God. When you were born again through the Word of God that also could be described as obeying the truth that purified your souls. What truth was that? The gospel. What was the gospel? Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, right? And that's a command so you either obey it or you don't. God said, "This is My Son, hear Him." Jesus said, "Repent, repent, repent." The apostles remember on the day of Pentecost, Peter says, "Repent, be baptized for the remission of sins," and so forth. Always they preached the gospel...believe, believe, that's a command. It's always in a command mode and it calls for obedience. So Peter says you obeyed the truth and you were purified, you were saved, you were born again because you obeyed the truth...the truth contained in the Word of God. The Word of God was preached, you heard it, you believed it, you obeyed it. It said "believe," you believed. It said "repent," you repented. It said "cast yourself on Christ," you cast yourself on Christ.

So, the point is that at the moment of salvation you engaged in an act of obedience. But you did more than that. You pledged yourself that that obedience was only the beginning, not some isolated event. In other words, at the time when you committed yourself to obey the gospel you also affirmed Christ as Lord, right? You came and you recognized that He was your Savior and there was no other way to be saved from your sins and you were on your way to hell and the burden of your sin was overwhelming. And so you said I can't save myself, I can't deliver myself from sin, and only You can, You alone are the Savior and please forgive my sin, I cast myself on Your mercy, I cast myself on Your grace. Please forgive my sin based upon the fact that You died in my place. And you recognized Jesus as Savior. But at the same time you also acknowledged that He was lord and master and you said, "I'll follow You...I'll follow You." I don't...I'm confident that no Christian at the time of salvation has a grasp on the full implications of what that commitment meant. You don't know what that means at that point but the commitment is there. Why? Because the Holy Spirit has produced it. The Holy Spirit has produced the sense that you are now becoming a servant of God and you are now becoming a servant of Jesus Christ your master and acknowledging Him as your Lord. And you have stepped in to a place of obedience. That's part of the covenant of salvation. God's part--I save you, I forgive your sins, I give you eternal life through the work of Jesus Christ. Your part--you repent and you submit to follow Me. That's salvation. When you came to salvation that's what you did...that's what you did, you committed to obedience, though you didn't fully understand all the implications involved in that.

But go back to 1 Peter again, moving back from verses 22 to 23 to verse 1 and 2, this is a very, very important portion of Scripture. As Peter starts writing, the end of verse 1 he starts to talk about this matter of salvation. He starts with election. He talks to the aliens, the scattered believers who are chosen. So he's starting to talk about salvation here and he starts with election. Back in eternity past God chose who would be saved and He did it, verse 2 says, according to His foreknowledge. Foreknowledge doesn't mean that everybody acts independently and God way back looked ahead and saw what they were going to do and said, "Oh, so that's what they're going to do, if that's what they're going to do this is what I'll do." Foreknowledge is a predetermination...predetermined relationship. "Fore" means before we were ever born, before we ever had a choice, before we ever did or didn't do anything God predetermined to know us. In the same way that He says, "Israel only have I known." It doesn't mean that they're the only people on the planet that He knows, it means they're the only ones with whom He has personal relationship. It's the same knowing as Cain knew his wife, it's the same knowing as Mary's pregnant and Joseph has never known her. It's the same knowing as in John 10 where "My sheep hear My voice and I know them." It is the knowing of intimacy. And God in His plan chose based upon a predetermined relationship. He predetermined to have an intimate relationship with certain ones before the foundation of the world. That's the past part of salvation.

The present part moves in the phrase "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit." That which was in the decree of God in eternity past moved into time through the work of the Spirit. In what sense? We were sanctified by the work of the Spirit. To put it another way, we were begotten of the Spirit. To borrow John 3, "Born of the Spirit," that's our salvation there. That's the initiation of the sanctifying work. Sanctify means to separate, when the Spirit separated us from sin, separated us from death, separated us from hell, separated us from Satan in the sense that we were saved.

So first eternity past, we are chosen based upon God's predetermination to have a relationship with us. We are saved as the Spirit of God moved in and separated us unto God. That's the sanctifying work of the Spirit. It started at our salvation. And then notice this, next statement, "In order that..." we were chosen and saved, "In order that you may...do what?, what's the next word?...obey Jesus Christ."

We were saved unto good works, Ephesians 2:10. We were saved unto obedience. That's the point. So the past, chosen on the basis of the foreknowledge of God. The present, saved by the separating work of the Spirit of God. The future, a life of...what?...obedience. I mean, that's the redeeming purpose, a life of obedience.

And then this most interesting little statement there. "And be sprinkled with His blood." That's strange. What a strange thing to say. "And be sprinkled with His blood." What does it mean to be sprinkled with His blood? Isn't that more of a salvation issue? It's referred to in Hebrews 12:24, "the sprinkled blood." What is that?

There is an answer to that and it's in Exodus 24 and that's what Peter's alluding to. Go to Exodus 24, it is a very important text and a very interesting one. In Exodus 24, and we're going to find out what that sprinkling of the blood is, in Exodus 24 Moses has been up on the mountain and received the law of God. God has given man His law, it includes the ten commandments and all the rest of the law that God gave. And in that law God has revealed His will in very specific terms. Obviously prior to the Mosaic law God had revealed His ways and His will in many different manners, but now it's all going to be written down in absolute specifics in the law of Moses. So Moses went up the mountain, you remember Mount Sinai and was given the law of God. Then Moses came down.

Let's pick it up in chapter 24 verse 3. Moses came and all of this law, it's this massive law, all of the law that came through Moses, ceremonial law and moral law and all the laws of social life, the whole thing, Moses came, recounted to the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do." Now this is a very important moment. Moses comes down and I guess by the work of the Holy Spirit was able to remember everything and he recounts the whole thing...all the law of God to the people. And unilaterally with one voice they say, "We will do all of that." And they make a public vow. They make a pledge, they make a promise and it is a promise of obedience, it is a promise of obedience.

There's a covenant being made here, God's part of it is: I will send you My moral law, I will provide in that moral law My standards, I will provide in that moral law for when you violate those standards because in the moral law...I mean in the Mosaic law, and it certainly has moral implications, spiritual implications, but in the Mosaic law there was the sacrificial system and they were instructed as to how to deal with their sin as well. So God even revealed His grace and His mercy through that law. So God says My part of the covenant is I'll show you My will and I'll show you what I want you to do and I'll give you a path of righteousness and I'll give you a means of grace and mercy. And He gave all of that. And the people said, "And our part is we will obey."

You have a parallel right there to salvation. At the point of salvation God says to the sinner...Here is My law, here is My means of grace, I will bless you, I will care for you. And the believer says...And I will...what?...follow You, I'll obey You. So it's a very similar scene.

Follow along then in verse 4. Moses after having recited all this again, no doubt, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote down all the words of the Lord. And then he arose early in the morning. The implication is that it was a full night of writing. And he built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. Now he's going to get ready to publicly symbolize the covenant that has been made between God and the people. God revealed His part, the people declared their part...God spoke, they spoke and now he's going to demonstrate a sealing symbol. So he builds this altar out of stones, no doubt, and puts twelve stacks of stones representing the twelve tribes as a symbol of everybody's participation. He sent young men of the sons of Israel and they offered burnt offerings

and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord. The sacrifices being an indication of the people's pledge in response to God's law.

And then he did a most interesting thing in verse 6, he took half the blood...and believe me, burnt offerings, sacrificing young bulls, there was blood everywhere...it was a real blood bath as they were bleeding all of these animals, cutting the jugular, in most cases, and capturing all the blood. Moses took half the blood, put it in basins, collecting it all in these big basins. And the other half of the blood he splattered across the altar...the altar represented God. And so the covenant was going to be ratified in this sort of demonstrable way and he splattered some of the blood across the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant, that is what he had written down all night, and he read it in the hearing of the people. He read it all over again, this would be the fact that they had heard it once and now they hear it again. And all the people responded the same way, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and we will be...what?...obedient." That's the covenant made between the people and God. So Moses, verse 8, took the blood and splattered it on the people.

Some of the blood on the altar, symbolizing God's part in the covenant. The rest of the blood on the people, symbolizing their part. "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." He said His part, you said your part, the blood is the physical demonstration that you both made that commitment.

Now with that in mind go back to 1 Peter. And in 1 Peter 1 you read this, "That you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood." Peter is borrowing from that graphic, graphic ceremony of Exodus 24. And Peter is saying when you came to Christ, when you put your trust in Jesus Christ, you accepted His part of the covenant, I will write My law in your heart, new covenant, I will write My statutes in your heart. I will forgive all your trespasses and all your iniquities, I will grant you mercy and I will grant you grace. And at that part, at that point when you were receiving all of that from Him, you were responding by saying, "Yes, Lord, and I will follow You." And that was the covenant of salvation. I confess you as Lord, and Lord means the one in charge, and that's what you confessed. And at that point in God's eyes the blood that had been splattered on Christ, the sacrifice, was then splattered on you because of your part in the covenant. It's a beautiful picture.

So when you came to salvation, my friend, you made a simple covenant of obedience. The sad story of Israel is that they did...what?...they violated it. And so do we...and so do we. If there's anything that has to be the companion of faith, it must be obedience because those two were the companions when we were saved, right? Faith in the Savior is the only one to save us, commitment to obey the Lord as our King. Obedience...that from the heart is what we desire in the church. Give me a church full of people whose hearts are devoted to obedience and I'll show you a church with power and joy.

Look at Romans 6:17, I'm going to give you a few more and we'll be done. Romans 6:17 on this issue of obedience...but look at verse 16, first of all, "*Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience you are the slaves of the one whom you obey.*" That's pretty obvious. If you become somebody's slave, the main word is obedience. When you present yourselves as a slave to somebody, the issue is you do what they tell you. And then he makes that simple illustration, a spiritual doctrine in verse 17, "*Thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin you became obedient from the heart,*" I love that phrase, you ought to underline it, "*obedient from the heart*" because it's your desire, because you love to be obedient, because it's from the inside. You became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed. In fact, verse 18, you became a slave of righteousness.

When you came to Christ you entered into a new obedience. You had been obedient before to the flesh, the world, the devil. You had been obedient to sin. And now you're obedient to Him. You're obedient to righteousness.

It's not just a question of hearing the Word, it's a question of obeying it. In Matthew 7 there were people who hear...who heard the Word and didn't obey it, and they were building their house on sand. And when the judgment came it would collapse. Obedience means hearing and putting it to practice.

One last scripture, very important, James 1. We'll close with this one, James 1:22, "*Prove yourselves doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*" You know what happens if you hear the Word and don't apply it? You're living in a delusion, you are deceived about your true spiritual condition. If you're not applying the Word of God in your life you are deceived about your spiritual condition. And then he gives an illustration of such deception...a very interesting one, verse 23, "If anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror," literally the word "looks" is glances. You go in there in the morning and you've decided you're going to shave off your mustache and you get half of it shaved off, you've got half your hair combed and half your teeth brushed and the phone rings and you go out of there and you've just barely gotten started maybe and you go out of there and you get on the phone and you forget what you look like and you go off to the office to the hilarity of everybody who greets you because you forgot what you look like. So it is with an individual who merely glances at the Word of God, who doesn't apply it. He really doesn't understand the condition he's in. He thinks everything is fine but everything is not fine, he is deceived about his true condition. And when he goes away he forgets because he doesn't apply.

This certainly applies to a non-believer, a non-Christian who hears the gospel, hears the gospel and never puts it into practice, never really looks very deeply at it, just water off a duck's back and is deceived about his true condition. This can be true about a person who comes to the church, makes a profession of Christ, might even in his own mind think he's a Christian, listens never applies anything, never applies anything...he's in a state of delusion about his spiritual condition.

It can also be true of a Christian who hears teaching about a certain area and he will not deal with that, he will not apply that in an area of his life. He becomes totally deceived about his true spiritual condition.

So the point is this, you better take more than a passing glance if you want to know your true condition. And James 1:25 says it, "The one who looks intently," that's a Greek verb that means you look very closely and for a prolonged period to rightly assess your condition. You look in that mirror which is the perfect law, the law of liberty. What's that? The Word of God, it's the perfect law, it's the law that sets you free from sin and delusion and you abide by it. You are not a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed. It's obedience that brings the blessing. And people who don't obey are self-deluded. Maybe they're not even Christians, maybe they're Christians who mistakenly think all is well when all is not well.

Father, we thank You for again the reminder of the foundation of our Christian life being obedience. There is a plan. There's a right way to do things in your church and that involves spiritual attitudes from the inside out. And, Lord, we ask that You would grant us great faith and the strength to be obedient and the longing to confess our disobedience and make it right. Work that work of conviction in our hearts that makes us hate our disobedience and long to submit. Produce in us those attitudes which will cause us to live in ways that bring You glory, for Christ's sake. Amen.

2.3.11 Prayer

The family that prays together stays together.

Prayer is the very important and only vehicle that we have to communicate with our Heavenly Father while we are on this earth. Prayer is also how we grow and maintain our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and learn about what He wants in our lives. It is how the Holy Spirit manifests its will in our lives. Regular prayer is also how we ensure spiritual stability in our lives. Spiritual stability calls for reacting to problems with thankful prayer. Phil 4:6, "*In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God*".

Prayer is the antidote to worry and it is relief from anxiety. By the way, this section does not emphasize the theology of prayer. It emphasizes the importance of prayer and the attitude of prayer. There are three different words for prayer used here. They're translated prayer, supplication and request. They all have to do with petitions and the assumption is that when you get into a problem you're going to cry out to God, right? I mean, that's natural. You're going to cry out to God. But what Paul is saying is instead of crying out to God in your difficulty with doubt, with questionings, with dissatisfaction, with discontent, blaming God, cry out to God with what attitude? Thanksgiving, thanksgiving. Well you say, "Why?" Well because you know that He's the God of promise who has promised that nothing's ever going to come into your life that's too much for you to bear, that He is the God of promise who is working all things for your good. He is the God of promise who is causing you to suffer a while in order that you might be made perfect, that you might be settled, that you might be established, 1 Peter 5:10.

In other words, you see in all the difficulty God's purpose and you thank Him for the available power you know is there. And you thank Him for the promises which He never will violate instead of questioning God, doubting God, sort of shaking your fist at God. He says in everything. That's like 1 Peter 5:7, casting all your care on Him, in everything. When you pray and supplicate and request to God in the process of doing that, do it with thanksgiving, thankful for His purposes, thankful for His providence, thankful for His power, thankful for His promise, thankful for His perfecting work, thankful for the hope of relief, thankful for the hope of glory, thankful that it is His will, thankful that He's doing exactly what He wants in your life to accomplish what He wants, thankful for past mercies that are the foundation of future blessings.

You see, prayer should always be about thankfulness. Thankfulness is a synonym for the word "JOY" in a Christian context, which is something we mentioned in section 2.3.7 that we are commanded to have, especially when we are having problems in our lives. That's why it's so important to pray when we have problems and why prayer can give us the peace and joy we need to deal effectively with our problems. Prayer will then immediately release me from fear and worry because I see God's purpose in a situation. I never question His purpose, but prayer helps us understand the purpose. I know my God is sovereign. I know He orchestrates all things for my good, Romans 8:28, and His glory. I know that whatever may come He can turn to His own praise and to my growth. And so I'm thankful. I'm thankful that He knows the problem. I'm thankful that He can deal with the problem. I'm thankful for His knowledge, His power, His promise, all of that. All three of those words, by the way, refer to specific direct requests...prayer, supplication, requests. They all assume that in difficulty you go to God. But the issue here is the thankful heart. And if you really know your God and you can thank Him in the midst of all of this, you have spiritual stability. This is so basic, folks. I watch people who are worried and fretting and anxious and troubled about everything and at the bottom line is they do not trust that everything is under the control of God for their good and His glory. They can't handle that. Either they don't understand their God, or the sin in their life has caused them to have a weak faith in the God they do know to be a

sovereign God. If you understand that my God shall supply all your needs, if you understand that God knows everything in your life and cares about it, if you understand that God has the power for every difficulty, if you understand that God is perfecting you to be like Christ, if you understand that nothing escapes God and nothing is outside of His tolerance and His purposes, then why would you fear and be anxious about anything? I mean, get in touch with the reality of it.

Now what is the result of a thankful heart? Philippians chapter 4 verse 7, "*And the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" I would venture to say that everybody with a problem would like to find peace, right? We'd like to find tranquility, we'd like to find contentment, some kind of inner calm in the midst of the difficulty. Would you please note that that's precisely what Phil. 4:7 promises? Now I need to just give you a little bit of a thought here. In the middle of difficulty when you're pleading and supplicating and praying to God, and you have a thankful heart, the answer is not the issue. Did you hear that? The answer is not the issue. It doesn't say that if you will pray and you will supplicate and you will request to God with thanksgiving God will answer your prayer the way you want. It doesn't say that. It says nothing about the answer, it says whatever the answer may be and whenever the answer may come, God will give you...what?...peace. That's the issue....that's the issue.

What is the peace of God? Well it's the peace that God possesses and gives to us. It's inward peace, Godlike peace given to us. That's what provides the calm. Would you please note again it is a gift from God to one who prays thankfully? This is building to a spiritual crescendo. As you exist in an environment of love, and peace, be a peacemaker, as you focus on your relationship to the living Christ, as you have a humble heart, not demanding anything, as you begin to know your God, understand your God and trust your God so that in the middle of grave difficulties when you're pouring out your prayers before that God you can do so with thanksgiving, God in response to that kind of heart attitude dispenses His peace. That's the promise. He grants you His peace.

Listen to Isaiah 26:3. "*The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace because he trusts in Thee.*" That's it. You trust in God, you get a steadfast mind, God keeps you in peace. That's how to face life with stability.

So much wrong advice. So much trust in man's ability. So much distrust in God's sovereignty that we have sent people down the wrong path. Beloved, I don't care what the problem is in your life. I don't care what the difficulty that creates anxiety, psychosis, neurosis, whatever it is, if you understand who your God is, if you can take every issue of life with a thankful heart as you pray and ask him for deliverance, in the midst of it all the promise of the Word is that God will give you peace. Now what kind of peace is it? Please notice Phil. 4:7, it is peace which surpasses all comprehension. What does that mean? It's not human, it's not rational, it transcends intellectual powers, it transcends analysis, it transcends man's insights, it transcends man's understanding, man's definition, man's explanation. It is not human. You don't go to man to get it. Did you hear that? You go to God to get it. There's no counselor in the world that can give it to you. There's no therapy in the world that can give it to you. There's no technique in the world that can give it to you. It is a gift of God to a believer who so confidently understands and trusts his God that he is thankful in the trial and out of his thanksgiving, God responds by granting him peace, supernatural peace.

Boy, are there a lot of cheap substitutes being offered for that today. It is beyond any approach that attempts to reason your troubles away. It is superior to human scheming, superior to human devices, superior to human solutions, superior to any so-called human security. I can simply sum it up by saying the real challenge of Christian living...please note this because it runs cross-grain to our culture...the real

challenge of Christian living is not to see if you can eliminate every uncomfortable issue in your life. The real issue of Christian living is to see if you can trust your infinitely holy sovereign and powerful God in the midst of every situation and have His perfect peace.

People are running around trying to create a perfect world so they'll be happy. They don't like the way they look. They don't like the way they're shaped. They don't like the way their mother treated them. They don't like the way their father treated them. They were abused. They were misunderstood. They weren't treated properly. They don't like the way their husband treats them. They don't like the way their wife treats them. They don't like the way their kids are turning out. They don't like the place they live. They hate their job. And out of all of these things come all these petty anxieties. Sooner we should learn we are fallen people, we live in a fallen world, that's the way it's going to be. And the great reality is that our glorious sovereign God has overruled our fallenness, it says it, doesn't it, in John 16:33, "*In this world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer...what?...I have overcome the world.*" When are we going to start living on the supernatural plane and accepting that we live in a fallen world and wait for the overcoming God to do His perfect work in us here and some day in the glory to come? I must accept the fact that I'm a fallen person living with fallen people in a fallen world and there are manifestations of that fallenness all over the place. There will never be the tranquility I would like circumstantially in this world, but I will find my peace from God as I entrust everything confidently into His care.

Now notice what this peace does, Phil. 4:7. "*The peace of God which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" Guard you from what? From anxiety, from doubt, from fear, from distress. This is a great truth. That term "*shall guard*" is a military term, it literally means shall keep guard over, shall protect. The Philippians lived in a garrison town where Roman soldiers were stationed to watch out for the Roman interests in that part of their world. They knew what a sentry was, what a guard was, what a garrison was...a protector. And what Paul says...look, he says, if you know your God and you know your God is near and you confidently trust your God in the midst of any trial, knowing that it is effecting His purpose, and then being thankful in the midst of that for the purpose of God even in the difficulty, you are granted the peace of God, that peace will guard you and protect you from anxiety, difficulty, distress, dissatisfaction, discontent, doubt.

Bunyan had a beautiful picture of this. You remember in Holy War he has the picture of the city called Man's Soul and it's representative of the soul of man. And he has the Prince Emanuel who, of course, is Christ, and then he has this special character called Mr. God's Peace. And Mr. God's Peace is in the town of Man's Soul, he's on patrol and his job is to guard the town. Bunyan writes, "*Nothing was to be found but harmony, happiness, joy, and health so long as Mr. God's Peace maintained his office.*" And Bunyan talks about how the town Man's Soul grieved Prince Emanuel. Prince Emanuel left and Mr. God's Peace laid down his commission and chaos resulted. That's what happens in the Christian life. When Christ is out of our thoughts, when we no longer see things in the light of how He views them, when we no longer are under, as it were, the confidence in His sovereignty, then all of a sudden Mr. God's Peace doesn't function anymore and we're left with troubled minds and troubled hearts. But where we have that confident trust in the Lord, so much so that we can thank Him in the midst of our petitions, then we have Mr. God's Peace on duty and he is the protector of the peace of our souls. That couldn't be a clearer perspective for all of us to understand.

Now why does he mention hearts and minds? Some say, "Well, there's a distinction." I think not. I don't think he's trying to delineate between the heart and the mind, he's just trying to make a comprehensive statement. We could say the heart is the seat of personhood and the mind is the seed of thought, and

whatever. But I think he's just saying your hearts and minds in a general sense, saying he'll guard your whole inner person, this Mr. God's Peace. He'll guard them in Christ Jesus. Because you're in union with Christ you have this guardianship.

So, spiritual stability...how can you face the inevitable day of your death? What if you have a coronary? What if you're told that you have cancer? What if one of your children is tragically taken from you? What about the difficulties that you face right now in your life, how do you face them with spiritual stability? How do you stand your ground?

First of all, it requires the stability of the church. People in the church need to hold each other up. And where you have a strong unified peaceful loving church, you find great strength in the individual members. Secondly, you must maintain a spirit of joy and that means constantly cultivating your relationship to the living Christ so it's the source of joy for you all the time, no matter what may be going on around you. Thirdly, you have to learn to be humble and not expect anything because we don't deserve anything any way and not feel like you got cheated nor dealt a dirty deal or that God gave you the short end of the stick...we who are so utterly unworthy of anything. Then you must rest on a confident faith in the Lord. You must understand and trust Him to be consistent with Himself as revealed in Scripture and then react to your problems with thankful prayer and the promise of God is that peace will guard you...peace, tranquility, contentment.

2.3.12 Persistence and Endurance

As Christians, it is very important for us to be persistent and disciplined in honoring God during our brief time on earth, because like Jesus and the suffering he went through, we learn endurance and become more useful to God. Hebrews 12:1-4 describes the attitude we should take:

1 Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

4 You have not resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

2.3.13 Political Involvement

*"Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."
[2 Corinthians 3:17.⁴]*

*"We must obey GOD rather than men."
[Acts 5:29]*

"Those people who are not governed by GOD will be ruled by tyrants."

[William Penn]

"Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."

[George Washington]

"The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

[Edmund Burke, 1729-1797]

"Woe to those who decree unjust statutes and to those who continually record unjust decisions, to deprive the needy of justice, and to rob the poor of My people of their rights..."

[Isaiah 10:1-2]

"If My people which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek y face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

[2 Chron. 7:14]

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

[Unknown]

"There is nothing more terrifying than ignorance in action."

[Goethe]

"It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself."

[Thomas Jefferson]

"If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or your arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen."

[Samuel Adams]

"Why do we love this trial by jury? Because it prevents the hand of oppression from cutting you off .⁵..This gives me comfort--that, as long as I have existence, my neighbors will protect me. "

[Patrick Henry]

"To embarrass justice by a multiplicity of laws, or to hazard it by confidence in judges, are the opposite rocks on which all civil institutions have been wrecked."

[Johnson]

Responsible political involvement takes many forms:

1. Seeking wisdom and knowledge and understanding, is described in section 2.3.19.
2. Reading the newspaper and following current legislative events on the part of elected representatives to ensure that they vote in accordance with the will of the people.
3. Judging all situations righteously, in accordance with section 3.5.2 of this constitution: What is Righteous judgment.
4. Voting at every election.
5. Being a involved, responsible, and good juror.
6. Responding to the military draft.
7. Boycotting and protesting situations and behaviors that violate God's commandments.

Note that in this list, we deliberately put wisdom, being informed, and righteous judgment ahead of all the other responsibilities, because an unwise, misinformed or unrighteous vote or jury service is *worse* than not participating at all!

Political involvement, in addition to being a civic duty, is a duty and a stewardship we owe to God. This is especially true in democratic societies such as the United States, where the character and the nature of government is constrained by and conformed to the will of the people as determined by our constitution. With all the wickedness, communism, and political oppression found in the world today, it should be quite clear that freedom and liberty are *not* the natural state of man. Every people will eventually be oppressed by their own government if their rulers are left to their own selfish devices. That is the reason why even this blessed country at one time had to go through a Revolutionary War to free itself from the political oppression and tyranny of the British government. Therefore, we owe it to God, ourselves, our children, and the rest of the world to be vigilant in protecting and defending the blessings, liberty, and freedoms we enjoy. Doing so demands that we elect and encourage the involvement of men of character and of faith in the political process.

If our country is destroyed, this will most likely happen by a cancer from within: a callous, sinful, lazy, and indifferent citizenry who turn the other way and refuse to be politically involved while a wicked and corrupt government undertakes to destroy and eliminate, one by one, all their political and religious rights and liberties. **The only thing that stands between liberty and political oppression is your vote and your political involvement as a Christian.**

Nations and peoples go through a cycle as predictable as the seasons. Unfortunately, few of us live long enough to experience a whole cycle, and therefore we never learn from our collective mistakes as a nation unless we are avid students of the Bible and of history. The result is needless suffering caused by our own ignorance and shortsightedness. We could all learn something from this and prevent suffering on a large scale if we understood this process better and that is the goal of this section. Mormons teach about the cycle or process of civilizations in their seminary classes. Below is a detailed sequence of how this process happens (courtesy of the author and not the Mormon church):

1. Prosperity.

- 1.1. Low government debt.
- 1.2. Low taxes.
- 1.3. High wages.
- 1.4. Low inflation.
- 1.5. Low government spending.

2. Corruption. This includes, in order of occurrence:

- 2.1. A gradual and slow attack by Satan on personal morality and ethics. This begins with the wicked liberal media and is sanctioned by the government in the name of political and religious freedom, freedom of speech, and human rights.
 - 2.1.1. Political indifference. This facilitates items 2.1.2-2.1.5 below.
 - 2.1.2. Elimination of prayer in the schools in the name of "religious tolerance".
 - 2.1.3. Religious persecution in the workplace.
 - 2.1.4. Pornography and sex on TV and in the media in the name of "free speech".
 - 2.1.5. Greed for material gain perpetuated by the media and advertising.
 - 2.1.6. Idolatry: Worship money and power instead of God.

- 2.1.7. A government that gets so large that it becomes ineffective and unresponsive to the people because of its size, which cause inefficiencies that require taxes to be raised to exorbitant levels.
- 2.2. An attack by Satan on the family:
 - 2.2.1. Women's lib movement.
 - 2.2.2. Feminists maligning motherhood as the noble profession that it is.
 - 2.2.3. Reentry of women into the workforce and abandonment of their families.
 - 2.2.4. Kids staying at home and being raised by the media: "latch key kids".
 - 2.2.5. Decriminalization of abortion in the name of choice. This starts a wholesale slaughter of the most defenseless members of society whose only problem is that they aren't represented politically and so they are destroyed.
 - 2.2.6. Decriminalization of euthanasia in the name of "mercy". This starts a wholesale slaughter of the old people and the economically deprived.
 - 2.2.7. A new generation of wicked and corrupt children who were raised by the liberal media and the godless schools and who have no wisdom or discretion become adults and begin to vote.
 - 2.2.8. "No fault" divorce laws. These laws simply reward irresponsibility by spouses and encourage the breakup of families in the name of selfishness.
 - 2.2.9. An openly corrupt people who suppress and oppress their conscience and the Holy Spirit will then try to hide their sin or at least eliminate the public persecution of their sin. At this point, Satanism and hedonism becomes in effect a religion that they expect the same kind of protection for as religions enjoy. The result is the following on a large scale:
 - 2.2.9.1. Pride
 - 2.2.9.2. Lust
 - 2.2.9.3. Envy
 - 2.2.9.4. Greed
 - 2.2.9.5. Selfishness
 - 2.2.9.6. Lack of discernment.
- 2.3. High divorce rate (irresponsibility and selfishness). The consequence then becomes:
 - 2.3.1. Increase in single-parent families.
 - 2.3.2. Even less oversight and involvement by parents in the lives of their children, because now even more of them have to work.
 - 2.3.3. Even more influence by the liberal media and the amoral and areligious public school system on the lives of children.
 - 2.3.4. Further decay in religious values of succeeding generations.
 - 2.3.5. Worsening moral situation.
- 2.4. Legal assaults on religious groups by such organizations as the ACLU. This includes:
 - 2.4.1. Eliminating school prayer.
 - 2.4.2. Eliminating religion in the schools.
- 2.5. Political activism against religious groups.
 - 2.5.1. Preventing passage of laws that would enact school vouchers and parent choice in public education. This is financed by greedy teachers unions. It prevents parents who don't want liberal ideas taught to their children from being able to remove their children from public schools.
 - 2.5.2. Pushing for the passage of anti-hate crime bills, which are really just "hate against hate" bills. These laws criminalize certain thoughts and make the government into "thought police", who then have broad discretion to use the legal apparatus of the state to persecute any group based on their beliefs in the hypocritical name of human rights.

- 2.6. Criminalization of discrimination based on sexual preference using the lie that it is "genetic".
- 2.7. Revisionism of the school textbooks to glorify homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.
- 2.8. Excessive over-reliance by private citizens on the government to do what the family should be doing. This includes:
 - 2.8.1. Social security
 - 2.8.2. Medicare.
 - 2.8.3. Welfare.
 - 2.8.4. Food stamps.
 - 2.8.5. AFDC.
- 2.9. Sexual promiscuity and pornography on public television and the media:
 - 2.9.1. Playboy channel.
 - 2.9.2. Howard Stern (what a vile, wicked person he is)
 - 2.9.3. Sex movies for rent in the privacy of your own home.
- 2.10. Development of a litigious society: Everything gets litigated because personal freedoms are so important that they are worth paying any price to get.
- 2.11. Increase in marital conflict over sex issues. Further increase in divorce rate, sex crimes.
- 2.12. Welfare becoming a lifestyle.
- 2.13. Assault by the government on businesses, which causes them to flee the country:
 - 2.13.1. Progressive taxes rates that punish success.
 - 2.13.2. Anti-trust lawsuits against successful companies.
 - 2.13.3. Over-regulation of the workplace by the government.
 - 2.13.4. Anti-discrimination laws that tie the hands of employers and prevent them from selecting the best qualified candidates.
3. Economic collapse. This occurs in the following sequence.
 - 3.1. Lack of will by the government to balance the budget. This equates with fiscal irresponsibility by elected officials. This lack of fiscal discipline results in chronic deficit spending.
 - 3.2. High or oppressive taxation or corruption of government officials with bribery.
 - 3.3. Government deficit spending which continues to increase taxes to pay off the debt.
 - 3.4. Consequent over-regulation by the government in order to pay the increasing taxes.
 - 3.5. High inflation caused by government deficit spending.
 - 3.6. Stock market crash. Reactive stock market.
 - 3.7. Cut in consumer spending.
 - 3.8. Layoffs and downsizing.
 - 3.9. High unemployment.
 - 3.10. Government declares bankruptcy and refuses to pay its debts. The people who then suffer are those who lent the government money, which undermines government credibility and makes debts for legitimate purposes later on more difficult to find lenders for.
4. Downfall and political instability.
 - 4.1. Riots, protests.
 - 4.2. Anger against God.
 - 4.3. Civil war.
 - 4.4. Heightened crime and unrest.
 - 4.5. Looting.
 - 4.6. Anarchy
 - 4.7. SUFFERING on a grand scale.
5. Conviction and God's judgment.
 - 5.1. People turn to history to try to explain what happened.

- 5.2. Suffering brings them into church for fellowship and help.
- 5.3. They become wise and are convicted of their sin.
- 5.4. The church tells them to repent.
- 5.5. People begin to realize the error of their ways and repent.
- 5.6. The political landscape changes to be more favorable to the truth being told, because people are dissatisfied with the status quo, which has demonstrated that it doesn't work. They want change and are willing to talk publicly about it.
- 5.7. The suffering people went through teaches them the value of political involvement.
- 5.8. People begin to vote and be politically active. They do this because they want a better life and the old ways don't work. Political indifference is gone.
6. Repentance and God's Forgiveness, Religious revival:
 - 6.1. People turn their problems over to God, and repent for their sin in their poverty.
 - 6.2. Political activism causes laws being to changed:
 - 6.2.1. Prayer in the schools.
 - 6.2.2. School vouchers.
 - 6.2.3. Strengthening of marriage.
 - 6.2.4. Criminalization of abortion.
 - 6.2.5. Criminalization of euthanasia.
 - 6.2.6. Criminalization of homosexuality.
 - 6.2.7. Criminalization of religious persecution.
 - 6.2.8. Criminalization of pornography.
 - 6.2.9. Simplification of the tax laws.
 - 6.2.10. Reduction in government taxes and spending.
 - 6.2.11. Elimination of deficit spending.
 - 6.3. Parents take their kids out of public schools and put them into private schools that have religious training and prayer.
 - 6.4. Divorce rate goes down.
 - 6.5. People are happier and suffer less.
 - 6.6. Companies who fled the country begin moving back because the laws and the workforce are more favorable to growth.
 - 6.7. Economic growth and prosperity.
 - 6.8. Stock market boom.
7. The cycle begins again!

2.3.14 Proper Attitude About Suffering and Problems in Our Lives

The Bible is filled with examples of people who suffered and how faith and endurance overcomes suffering. Christ, as we discussed above, suffered most for our sakes. Hebrews 12: 1-15 talks about how suffering is the primary tool which God uses to discipline and train his disciples. As we encounter vicissitudes in our lives, we need to continually remind ourselves what this scripture says because it is very easy to become discouraged:

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

*"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives."*

7 "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"

8 But if you are without chastening of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.

13 and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

15 Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

Another scripture that talks about suffering and trials and how we should handle them is James 1:2-4:

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Solomon also had some inspirational things to say about how we as Christians should face suffering in Ecc. 7:2-5

2 Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart. 3 Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better. 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is the house of mirth. 5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Solomon also said in Prov. 3:11-12:

My son, do not despise chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; 12 for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

To paraphrase what I think these scripture are saying, using more modern language, and applying the rest of what we read in this constitution to it:

1. Suffering is a gift from God that we ought to be happy we are receiving. It is a very important tool that God uses to help us mature as Christians, become wise, and develop a good heart and good character.
2. The fact that we are suffering should be interpreted as evidence that we aren't yet perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect and that He wants us to learn something from it, so like the loving Father that He is, he sends us to the "obedience school" called suffering so we can be "trained" about right

behavior by the pain we experience from wrong behavior. This training makes us patient and give us endurance, so that we can be a better blessing to Him.

3. We are the Lord's most precious resource and He loves us very much, but we aren't useful to Him unless we have been refined and molded into His image in the fire. Like gold and other precious metals, the Lord has to apply fire and heat to worthless dirt and rock to remove the sin and impurities from our foolish souls and to give us a new and golden purpose and direction in our lives that will better glorify Him. He needs to discipline us with the fire to purify and soften our heart so that the gold of righteousness is all that remains of the worthless dirt that was our original sinful human nature.
4. The heat, or suffering, we go through, like what Jesus experienced, is a natural part of the growth and refining process that all of God's children will inevitably encounter in their Christian walk. It is how He tests us and proves us and wins new souls to His kingdom. Many times, when the world sees how our faith leads us to handle problems, they are encouraged and they want the joy that we have, which draws them into pursuing the same kind of personal relationship that we enjoy with the Lord.
5. When we have problems and are experiencing heat in our lives, we should be on our knees asking the Lord: "Father, what is it that you want me to learn and to know from this situation, that I don't already know? What is the purpose for my life that I should glean from this situation, Lord, and how can I use it for Your glory and not my own selfish purposes?"
6. After we have prayed to the Lord and petitioned for His help, we should pursue the problem-solving techniques documented in section 3.1.4: Dealing with Personal Problems Effectively. This will ensure that we are doing everything we can to solve the problems, but we should do it prayerfully and frequently ask the Lord for His help and anointing in finding the right answers.

2.3.15 Repentance and Confession

Repentance was one of the first things that Jesus said in the first book of the new testament when he first appeared to the multitudes. It was the first and most important message and the main reason he appeared on the earth to be with mankind:

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17)

Repentance is something that mainly sinners need to do, as Jesus pointed out in Luke 5:32:

"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

God is also happy when sinners repent, as described in Luke 15:10: *"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

Proud people don't repent. Only humble people can truly repent of their sins. Therefore, we must work on being humble and eliminating pride before we can be effective and sincere and genuine in our repentance.

When we repent, we do more than sincerely say we are sorry to the person we hurt and to God. We also try to make things right for that person by trying hard to undo the damage we did to them if possible. This is how we demonstrate that we love them. When we are sincere in our repentance, then God commands Christians to forgive us (see Luke 17:3-4).

Paul gave us some idea in 2 Cor. 7:10-11 what the fruit of true repentance really is in the heart and behavior of the believer:

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

In Matthew chapter 3, we are introduced to the first New Testament evangel, none other than John the Baptist. In verse 1 of chapter 3 it says, "Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea saying, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then in verse 8, further John said, "Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance."

Let's look at Mark chapter 1 and verse 14. And again Mark introduces John, "After he had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God." And what was it? "Saying, The time is fulfilled and the gospel of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel."

Let's go to Luke chapter 15 verse 7, "I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who...what?...repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

Verse 10, He tells a story about a woman who found a coin and rejoiced. "And in the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

And then He tells a story of the prodigal son which is about a sinner who repented and a sinner who did not repent. The sinner who repented was the prodigal. And the sinner who would not repent was the brother who stayed in the house and wouldn't recognize his own sin.

The ministry of John the Baptist was repentance. The ministry of Jesus was repentance. The ministry of the disciples was repentance. And heaven recognizes it and rejoices when a sinner...what?...repents.

Chapter 16 of Luke, you know this record of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man died and went to Hades and was in torment. Lazarus, the beggar, died and went into the bosom of Abraham. And, of course, the rich man said, "Let me out of here so I can warn my brothers not to come here." But Abraham said in verse 29, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." But he said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent."

Now what you're beginning to sense here is that this concept of repent is the very essence of the gospel invitation. It is a call to repent. When they say here, when Abraham says, "They will...rather when the rich man says to Abraham...they will repent," he is saying, "They will repent and believe the truth." That's all implied. But repentance is so obviously germane to the issue that the whole of gospel response could be summed up in the word "repent." John preached repentance. Jesus preached repentance. The disciples preached repentance. And the sinner here understood repentance.

Coming to the conclusion of Luke's gospel and bringing it very close to home, chapter 24 verse 46, Jesus sums up the gospel. "Thus it is written," Luke 24:46, "that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem."

In other words, we are called to preach what? Repentance. I hear a lot of people say they want to share their faith. I don't hear too many people say they want to go out and preach repentance. But that's really what we're called to do. We're called to preach repentance for forgiveness of sins, to proclaim it to all nations.

Now let's see what the early church did. Go to the book of Acts. Did they pick up on the ministry of John and Jesus and the disciples? Did they follow the instruction of the great commission that repentance for forgiveness was to be preached among all nations? Let's listen to Peter, Acts 2:38. Peter stands up on the day of Pentecost, this is the first sermon in the new era, the church is about to be founded and born after the resurrection. And what is the message that in fact is the invitation which gives birth to the church? Peter said in verse 38, "*Repent...repent.*" And he follows in the great train of John and Jesus and the disciples and follows obediently the commission of Luke 24:47, repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. And repentance, of course, provides for the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3 of Acts, we follow further into the ministry of the early church. And here again Peter is the preacher. This is his second sermon. He says to the Jews listening to him in verse 14, "You disowned the holy and righteous one, you asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead. A fact to which we are witnesses. And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know. And the faith which comes through him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance just as your ruler did...your rulers did. But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of the all the prophets that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled." Now verse 19, "Repent therefore and return in order that your sins may be wiped away." Again the gospel message is a call to repentance.

Chapter 11 takes us further in the expansion of the church. And we find again in chapter 11 the Apostle Peter is still the main figure. His duty here is to report to the Jews at Jerusalem what he has seen God do in saving Gentiles, namely Cornelius and his household. And in verse 18 it says, "When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God saying, Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

Now you're beginning to get the idea that repentance is a synonym for saving faith, that it's an essential ingredient and element.

Let's go further. Acts 17, now we go into the ministry of the Apostle Paul. And Paul finds himself in Acts 17 in the philosophical capital of the Hellenistic world and none other than the city of Athens. Finds himself on Mars Hill, on the *aereios pagos* there. And he is interacting with the philosophers, the erudite of that city. And he gives them this message in verse 30, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should...what?...repent, repent because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world." You better repent because He'll judge the world. He'll judge it in righteousness. He'll judge it through a man He appointed, a man who was proven to be worthy by being raised from the dead. So Paul preached repentance.

Let's go to chapter 20. Here Paul is instructing the Ephesian elders. The Ephesian elders were largely responsible for giving leadership to all the churches of Asia Minor. They were key leaders. And Paul reminds them in verse 21 that his ministry was to solemnly testify to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul preached to church leaders the matter of repentance, knowing full well that they in turn were to preach repentance to others.

And then turn to chapter 26 verse 20. Here is Paul before King Agrippa. And he says to him in verse 19 of chapter 26, "Consequently, King Agrippa, I didn't prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first and also at Jerusalem and through out all the region of Judea and even to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God performing deeds appropriate to repentance."

Now, folks, that was Paul's classic definition of gospel preaching. It is preaching repentance. And it was because he preached repentance that they seized him, verse 21 says, and tried to put me to death. So you can see that the early church picked up on the preaching of Jesus and picked up on the preaching of John and picked up on the preaching of the disciples and was faithful to proclaim repentance from sin...turning from sin to God.

Paul writes in Romans 2:4, "Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" Now mark that. Mark that. The preaching of John was geared to repentance. The preaching of Jesus was geared to repentance. The preaching of the disciples was geared to repentance. The preaching of the early church was geared to repentance. And even the work of God is geared to produce repentance. Why? Because it says in 2 Peter, again chapter 3 verse 9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to...what?...repentance."

Dear friend, may I say to you this? That in that verse repentance is a synonym for what? Salvation. There can be no believing without repentance. There can be no salvation without repentance. Repentance is a synonym. It is an element within the saving work of God that is so essential that the saving work of God can actually be called repentance, turning.

There are other invitations in the New Testament that call for this without using the word. For example, look at Mark 8:34 and here the Lord Jesus is giving an invitation. "He summoned the multitude to gather together with the already present disciples and He said to that great congregation, that multitude of people, If anyone wishes to come after Me," you want to be My disciples, you want to follow Me, "let him deny himself and take up his cross," that is willingness to die, giving his life, "and follow Me." Now that is a call for turning, turning away from self, turning away from sin, turning to Christ.

Look at Luke chapter 9 and again just two verses there, 23, same thought, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me, for whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." That's an invitation. That's an invitation to a sinner to turn from controlling his own life to follow Christ.

You say, "Are you sure that's spoken to sinners? You sure He's not telling an already saved person to deny himself, take up his cross and be a more devout follower? You sure He's not saying you might die in chastening if you don't give up your life? Are you sure He's talking to unbelievers?"

Well, from verse 25 we know because He says immediately, "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" Or in the Authorized, "Loses his own...what?...soul." He's talking about whether you're going to lose your soul or not, not whether you're going to lose your reward or your blessing. So this is a call to turn from a self- directed life, a self-indulgent life, a sinful life to follow Christ.

Chapter 14 of Luke verse 26, "If anyone comes to Me and doesn't hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes and even his own life, he can't be My disciples." What a

statement. And then He follows up, "Whoever doesn't carry his own cross and come after Me can't be My disciple." There's a price. It's a turning. It's a turning from your own will, your own way, the things that hold you, the relationships that confine you to follow Christ at all costs. And you better count the cost, verse 28, "Which one of you when he wants to build a tower doesn't first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise when he's laid a foundation not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him saying, The man began to build and wasn't able to finish. Or what king when he sets out to meet another king in battle will not first sit down, take counsel whether he's strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace."

So follow this, "Therefore no one of you can be My disciple who doesn't give up...what?...all his possessions." My, it's a turning, it's a turning from your own life, your own will, your own way, your own sin to follow at all cost. It is a change of mind. It is a change of heart. It is a new life of denying self and sin and seeing the Savior as Lord and King in self's place.

How important is it to repent? Jesus said it, we just read it, Luke 13:3 and 5, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

Beloved, from just that brief look at the gospels and the Acts, a verse out of Romans and 2 Peter, we can see that the early preachers preached repentance. And I just...I've asked the Lord to give me a new dose of repentance in my preaching because the subject has been so ignored, tragically ignored. Where is that kind of preaching today? Where do you hear that kind of evangelism today? It's not fashionable to preach a gospel that demands that people give up all their possessions. The gospel you hear today is come to Jesus and you'll be rich. The gospel today is believe in Jesus and He'll forgive all your sin and give you heaven and you don't have to worry about giving up anything. That's not what Jesus preached. Repent, turn from your sin and your selfishness.

Now how in the world did this essential element of gospel preaching become avoided? Where did we lose it? Because it isn't around. You rarely ever hear the word.

We can go back to 1937, Dr. Harry A. Ironside, great man of God, Bible teacher. Dr. Ironside in 1937 noted that the biblical doctrine of repentance was being systematically diluted by those who wished to exclude it from the gospel message, 1937...fifty years ago. Ironside said they're trying to exclude it from the gospel message.

Let me quote from the book he wrote entitled *Except Ye Repent*. He was a champion for repentance and rightly so. He wrote this, "*The doctrine of repentance is the missing note in many otherwise orthodox and fundamentally sound circles today.*" This is not a new battle. This is an old battle. People today are preaching a gospel that says, "*Well, look, just believe, don't worry about your sin, don't worry about your past, just believe and that will all come later.*" Ironside fought that battle in 1937.

Further he said this, he spoke of, quote: "*Professed preachers of grace who like the antinomians of old decry the necessity of repentance lest it seem to invalidate the freedom of grace and that was the core issue.*" There were some who said if you call for repentance you're invalidating the freedom of grace and grace is so gracious and so free you don't have to do anything but just believe. Ironside recognized in his day the dangers of an insipient easy believism.

Further he said, "*Shallow preaching that does not grapple with the terrible fact of man's sinfulness and guilt, calling on all men everywhere to repent results in shallow conversions. And so we have myriads*"

of glib-tongued professors today who give no evidence of regeneration whatever. Prating of salvation by grace, they manifest no grace in their lives. Loudly declaring they are justified by faith alone, they fail to remember that faith without works is dead and that justification by works before men is not to be ignored as though it were in contradiction to justification by faith before God."

Harry Ironside in 1937 was on target fighting the same battle. And if we go backwards from there, back into church history, we also note that the history of the church records the testimony of God's leaders regarding the essential nature of repentance. Let me take you all the way back. How about the early church fathers 150 A.D., okay? Fifty years after John the Apostle died, that's early. Let me read you from the Second Epistle of Clement in 150 A.D., this is what it says, "*Let us not merely call Him Lord for that will not save us, for He says, 'Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will be saved, but he who does what is right.' Thus, brothers, let us acknowledge Him by our actions, this would end the world to come...this world, rather, and the world to come are two enemies, this one means adultery, corruption, avarice and deceit while the other gives them up. We cannot then be friends of both. To get the one we must give up the other.*" That's repentance...that's repentance.

That's exactly what James said. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. You are either the friend of the world or the friend of God, not both...that's repentance.

How about Martin Luther? In 1517, Martin Luther fired the shot that's been heard around the world when he pinned to the church door at Wittenberg his Ninety-Five Thesis. He postulated 95 principles that he thought the Roman Catholic Church ought to acknowledge. I don't know if you're aware of what those 95 were but after tonight you're going to be aware of what the first three were because here they are.

Number one, this is what was on the door at Wittenberg. "*Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ in saying 'Repent ye,' meant the whole life of the faithful to be an act of repentance.*"

Number two of his Ninety-Five Thesis, "*This saying cannot be understood of the sacrament of Penance, i.e., of confession and absolution which is administered by the priesthood.*"

Three, "*Yet He does not mean interior repentance only, nay, interior repentance is void if it does not produce different kinds of mortifications of the flesh.*" So said Martin Luther, three main points.

One, repentance is a way of life. Two, it has nothing to do with church sacraments, confession and absolution. Three, it's not just inward it produces mortification of the flesh. Martin Luther was right on target.

Let's move to the next century, 1674. In 1674 the theological masterpiece known as the "Westminster Shorter Catechism" was assembled. And in that catechism which some of you have perhaps read or even studied if you come from a reformed background, there's a series of questions and answers...that's what catechetical teaching was...question and answer, question and answer, question and answer, and you taught your children the catechism and eventually they memorized all the elements of theology.

One of the questions in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is this, what is repentance unto life? Answer, repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience. Great statement. It is a saving grace, that is it comes from God, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God

in Christ doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience.

Further the catechism says, "*Repentance unto life doth chiefly consist in two things. One, in turning from sin and forsaking it. Two, in turning to God.*"

Then comes the next question in the catechism. What is that turning from sin which is part of true repentance? Answer, the turning from sin which is a part of true repentance doth consist in two things. One, in turning from all gross sins in regard of our course and conversation. Two, in a turning from all other sins in regard of our hearts and affections. In other words, it's turning from sin in what you do and turning from sin in what you think.

The next question. Do such as truly repent of sin never return again unto the practice of the same sins which they have repented of? Answer, such as have truly repented of sin do never return unto the practice of it so as to live in a course of sin as they did before. And where any after repentance do return unto a course of sin, it is an evident sign that their repentance was not of the right kind. Some have truly repented of their sins although they may be overtaken and surprised by temptations so as to fall into the commission of the same sins which they have repented of yet they do not lie in them but get up again and with bitter grief bewail them and return again unto the Lord. So says the Westminster Catechism.

How about the Puritans? What did they believe about repentance? James Goodwin is representative of them, the British Puritan wrote this, "*Where mourning,*" that is weeping, "*for offending God is wanting,*" or lacking, "*there is no sign of any good well yet wrought in the heart to God nor of love to Him without which God will never accept a man.*" In other words, he's saying if there's no mourning over sin, it's evident God hasn't worked in the heart. "*Else there is no hope of amendment. God will not pardon till He sees hopes of amendment. Now until a man confesses his sin and that with bitterness, it is a sign that he loves it. Whilest he hides it, spares it and forsakes it not, it is sweet in his mouth and therefore till he confess it and mourn for it, it is a sign it is not bitter to him and so he will not forsake it. A man will never leave sin till he finds bitterness in it and if so, then he will be in bitterness for it. And godly sorrow works repentance.*"

Of all the statements that I have read on the subject, the strongest one comes from Charles Hadden Spurgeon. Listen to what Spurgeon said. "*There must be a true and actual abandonment of sin and a turning unto righteousness in real act and deed in every day life. Repentance, to be sure, must be entire. How many will say, Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other...but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold? Oh, sirs, in God's name let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor 50 sins which is true repentance. It is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbor one of those accursed vipers in thy heart and dost give up every other, that one lust like one leak in a ship will sink thy soul. Think it not sufficient to give up thy outward vices, fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of thy life, it is all or none which God demands. Repent, says He, and when He bids you repent, He means repent of all thy sins otherwise He can never accept thy repentance as real and genuine. All sin must be given up or else you will never have Christ. All transgression must be renounced or else the gates of heaven must be barred against you. Let us remember then that for repentance to be sincere, it must be entire repentance. True repentance is a turning of the heart as well as of the life. It is the giving up of the whole soul to God to be His forever and ever. It is the renunciation of the sins of the heart as well as the crimes of the life," end quote.*

Strong enough? What Spurgeon is saying is and what he's reflecting is the teaching of the church through all its centuries that the sinner beats on his breast and says, "*God, be merciful to me a sinner,*"

and is compelled to seek deliverance from all his sin, though it's not necessary that he recite every single sin. There's a desire in his heart to be freed from all of it. And Spurgeon is saying if you come to Christ and say I want You to be my Savior and I want You to give me forgiveness and I want You to promise me heaven, but there's some sins I want to keep holding onto, that's not sincere repentance.

So, we've looked at the Scripture, a message of repentance. We've looked at the history of the church, an affirmation of repentance. Beloved, in spite of all the scripture and all that the history of the church reflects, there are some people who continue to declare that preaching repentance to the unsaved violates the gospel. Did you get that? They teach that preaching repentance to the unsaved violates the gospel.

For example, no less an eminent theologian than Louis Barry Chaffer(?) writes in Volume 3, page 372 that repentance is one of the more common features of human responsibility which are too often erroneously added to the one requirement of faith or belief.

Absolutely incredible statement. Repentance is a human responsibility erroneously added to faith? It seems to me that it's interchangeable for saving faith in the biblical record.

You say, "Well, where does that come from? I mean, how can a person hold that view?" Well, Chaffer pointed out that in Acts 16:31, Paul did not tell the Philippian jailer to repent. He's right. You know what he said to the Philippian jailer as recorded in Scripture? "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved.*" Chaffer says this, "*Paul did not tell the Philippian jailer to repent,*" then he says this, "*that silence he called, an overwhelming mass of irrefutable evidence making it clear that the New Testament does not impose repentance on the unsaved as a condition of salvation.*"

I find it hard to understand that. What reasoning is that? You want to know something else Paul didn't say to the Philippian jailer? He didn't say Jesus was God, according to the record of Acts 16:31. He didn't say Jesus died on a cross. He didn't say Jesus rose from the dead. You want to know something? He probably said all of that including all there was to say about repentance but it was all summed up by Luke when he penned it under the inspiration of the Spirit just to give him that one statement. Because "*believing*" implied repentance, and the Lord Jesus Christ replied...implies all that He is and all that He did. But to argue from silence and cancel out every other element of repentance in the record of the New Testament and say that because it's not there that's an overwhelming mass of evidence is mind boggling. And one popular local pastor said, "*Repentance does not mean to turn from sin, nor change one's conduct.*"

Now, you see, the reason they have to say that is because they have to deal with the word "repentance." It's there. Another well-known teacher of the Bible says, "*Repentance means to change one's mind, not one's life.*" Aha, now we're getting close to the issue. Because you're asking yourself, "How in the world can people say repentance isn't an element if it just says repent, repent, repent all the time?"

And what you have to understand is they redefine repentance. And what they say is that repentance means to change your mind about who Jesus is, nothing more. Repentance is a change of mind about who Christ is, has nothing to do with turning from sin, has nothing to do with abandoning self-rule. It is utterly devoid of the recognition of personal guilt. It has no element of intention to obey God. It has no element of an intention or a desire for true righteousness. It's just to change your mind about who Jesus is.

You say, "Well, what in the world do they do with things like Jesus saying, 'If you want to come after Me, you have to deny yourself, take up your cross, follow Me?'" What do they do with the words of

Jesus, 'You have to hate your father, your mother, your sister, brother,' and so forth and so forth and so forth? What do they do? They say, "Oh all of that is directed to people that are already saved and that's calling them to the highest level of spiritual commitment."

That doesn't fly, folks. Because it's in that very passage that He said, "*What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?*" He's talking about your eternal soul. But they then have to take every one of Jesus' statements that call people to total commitment to abandon everything to follow Him and make them statements directed at already saved people calling them to the higher life. And so they conclude that when Jesus called someone to be a disciple, He was calling a believer to a second level. And a Christian is one thing and a disciple is another. But they say yes, you repent in the fact that you change your mind about who Jesus is. It has nothing to do with turning from sin. It has nothing to do with abandoning self rule. It has no recognition of personal guilt, no intent to obey God, and no desire for true righteousness. And I submit to you that that is not what Jesus intended by repentance. The gospel call of Jesus was a call to forsake sin as much as it was a summons to believe in Him. It was a call to turn from sin. From His first message to His last, the Savior's theme was calling sinners to turn from their sin, to embrace God, to pursue righteousness. It was not only that they had a new perspective on who He was, but that they turn from sin to follow Him.

And Luke, as we noted in chapter 24 and verse 47, said that when you go to preach, Jesus said, "*Preach repentance for forgiveness of sins.*" And if you're coming to Christ for forgiveness of sins, the thing that leads to it is repentance.

By the way, Luke is the only gospel writer who gives the content of the message that is inherent in the great commission. The other writers just give the commission, "Go and preach." Luke says, "*This is what you preach, repentance which leads to the forgiveness of sins.*"

And so, repentance is always linked to sin. It's not just changing your mind about who Jesus is. "Oh, I thought He was a man, now I know He's God." Not just that. It implies turning from sin.

Let me give you an illustration. Look at Luke 18...Luke 18 verse 9, it's a parable, a parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, viewed others with contempt, Pharisees namely. "*Two men went into the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee the other a tax gatherer. The Pharisee stood, was praying, talks to himself, God, I thank Thee that I'm not like other people, swindlers, unjust, adulterers, even like this tax gatherer. I fast twice a week. I pay tithes of all I can get.*" He was there confessing to God his...what?...his righteousness. Yeah...let me ask you a question? Did he believe in God? Did the Pharisee believe in God? Yes. Did he have faith in God? Yes. Was he saved? No. Why? Because his faith was devoid of what? Of repentance.

You see, that's a classic illustration of the fact that here is a man who believed in God. Here is a man who is devoted to God. Here is a man who went into the temple to pray to the God he believed in. But where there was no repentance in the heart, there was no relationship. He was a fraud.

The tax gatherer standing over there pounding on his breast crying, "*God, be merciful to me the sinner.* Jesus said, *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*" That first guy never knew salvation. He was a believer who didn't repent. The second guy was an unbeliever who repented. He was a spiritual and religious outcast but he repented. And inherent in that, of course, was the expression of faith. You cannot take repentance and strip it of its moral implications.

Now let me give you a quick definition. Okay? All of that introduction comes down to what we're talking about. What is the biblical definition of repentance? Number one, it's an element within saving faith. In fact, it can be used as an expression interchangeably with saving faith. We are to preach repentance. We're to call men to repentance. That means to saving faith. It's so inherent it can be used as a synonym for saving faith. You can call on someone and say, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." Or you could call and say, "*Repent of your sin and embrace Christ.*" Same thing. It is simply all that salvation is.

But let me make this very clear. It is not a synonym in the purest sense for believe because it doesn't mean the same. It is inherent in believing and believing is inherent in repentance so that the terms can be used interchangeably but each of those terms expresses a unique element. Believing expresses just that--trust, confidence, faith. Repentance expresses turning from sin toward God. They are complementary parts of the same process, said Burkhoﬀ in his systematic theology.

Now the Greek word is *metanoeo* and, you know, it comes from two words, meta, after and noeo, to understand, and it means an afterthought. So if you just took those words and put them together it would mean an afterthought or a change of mind. And some of these people who want to say repentance is nothing more than changing your mind about who Jesus is say, you see, that's what meta noeo means. But listen, folks, that is something that you see often done with Greek words that's so unfair. Not every word is necessarily the sum of its separate parts. Because meta means this and noeo means this, when you put them together it doesn't necessarily mean what those two parts mean. Often it does, often it doesn't.

Let's illustrate in English? We have a word in English "independent." Right? Now if you push that too far you could say, "I know what that means, that means in de pen there is a dent." No, it doesn't mean that. It doesn't mean in de pen there is a dent because in English...in English every word is not necessarily the sum of all its parts. It's true in Greek. You've got to go deeper than that. And the biblical meaning is much deeper than that.

Metanoeo as used in the New Testament always embodies more than the literal meaning of its component terms. It always speaks of a change of purpose and it specifically always speaks of a turning from sin.

One of the helpful tools that we use in studying the Greek language is Colin Brown's work, massive tome, this big, three volumes. In the section on conversion by Gettsman(?) Volume 1 page 358, he's dealing with *metanoeo* and this, of course, from a very scholarly perspective. And this is a quote: "*The predominantly intellectual understanding of metanoeo as a change of mind plays very little part in the New Testament. Rather the decision by the whole man to turn around is stressed. It is clear that we are concerned neither with a purely outward turning, nor with a merely intellectual change of ideas.*" So says the best of scholarship. In the sense that Jesus used it, repentance incorporated or repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation.

The other number one source for understanding all there is about Greek words was produced by Kittel. Colin Brown is this big, Kittel is even bigger. Every significant New Testament word is there in an exhaustive treatment. Let me read you what Beam says writing on *metanoeo* in Gerhard Kittel. Quote: "*The term demands radical conversion, demands a transformation of nature, a definitive turning from evil, a resolute turning to God in total obedience. This conversion is once for all. There can be no going back, only advance and responsible movement along the way now taken. It effects the whole man. First and basically the center of personal life, then logically his conduct at all times and in all situations,*

his thoughts, words and acts. The whole proclamation of Jesus is a proclamation of unconditional turning to God, of unconditional turning from all that is against God, not merely that which is downright evil but that which in a given case makes total turning to God impossible," end quote.

That's how they understand it from the technical side, the meaning of the word. This would be supported, wouldn't it, from 1 Thessalonians 1:9, do you remember that verse? Look at it. First Thessalonians 1:9, here is a chronicle of the elements of repentance. The second half of the verse, Paul reminds the Thessalonians how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God. Three elements of repentance, they're right there. One, turning to God. Two, turning from evil. Three, serving God. You turned to God from idols and all that's evil with them to serve God. Three elements of repentance: turning to God from evil to serve God. Beautiful summary. No...listen to me...no change of mind about who Jesus is can save until those three elements are present...turning from sin to God to serve Him. Repentance is an element within saving faith.

Second point, it involves a redirection of the will...it involves a redirection of the will. Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines *metanoeo* as quote: "*The change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds and have determined to enter upon a better course of life so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds,*" end quote.

In other words, it's a redirection of the will that results in a changed behavior. It's not merely sorrow for sin, although genuine repentance always has sorrow. It is a redirection of the human will. It is a choice to forsake all unrighteousness and pursue holiness. And please, beloved, it is that redirection of the will that is the work of God. We're not talking about something you do, we're talking about God doing something in you when He saves you.

People say, "Well, you're teaching that this is some pre- salvation work and until you clean your life up and repent you can't get saved." No, repentance is not a pre-salvation attempt to get your life cleaned up. It is not a call to stop sinning so you can get saved. Not at all. It is not just an invitation to turn your back on all evil so Christ will accept you. It is the thing which God produces in you when He saves you. It's an element of saving faith that redirects the will.

J.I. Packer in his helpful little book, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* writes, "*The repentance that Christ requires of His people consists in a settled refusal to set any limit to the claims which He may make on their lives.*" It's not just a mental activity.

There's an intellectual aspect as well. Repentance involves recognition of sin, recognition of the sinfulness of sin, recognition that sin affronts a holy God. It involves the intellectual recognition that I'm personally responsible for my sin and my guilt. It includes the recognition that Christ died for my sin and that He as God wants to rule my life, that's the intellectual part of repentance.

Secondly, it has an emotional part. That recognition produces sorrow, it produces new desires and new impulses, it produces shame. And 2 Corinthians 7:10 says there is a sorrow that leads to repentance. So it starts out, you see that sin is sinful, you see that you are guilty, you see that Christ has provided intellectually and then it touches your emotions and there's a brokenness and a sorrow and a shame and a guilt that pours out and out of that sorrow comes the third element, and that is the volitional. Finally, repentance enacts the will and brings a change of direction, a new determination to abandon stubborn disobedience and surrender your life to Christ. And then it produces a changed behavior. *Where there's*

no changed behavior, repentance may have been intellectual and it may have been emotional but it was never volitional. It redirects the will when it's genuine.

Thirdly, and as a result, it's life changing. It's an element of saving faith, it activates the will, redirects it, and it's life changing. That's why John said, "*Bring forth fruit, meat, for repentance.*" You say you repent, let's see your life. Demonstrate it. Real repentance alters the character of a person.

One of my heroes, the men that I esteem highly, is Martyn Lloyd-Jones. One of the books that's blessed me that he wrote has to do with the Sermon on the Mount. In it he writes this, he's now with the Lord, "*Repentance means that you realize that you are a guilty, vile sinner in the presence of God, that you deserve the wrath and punishment of God, that you are hell-bound. It means that you begin to realize that this thing called sin is in you and that you long to get rid of it and that you turn your back on it in every shape and form. You renounce the world whatever the cost, the world in its mind and outlook as well as its practices, and you deny yourself and take up the cross and go after Christ. Your nearest and dearest and the whole world may call you a fool or say you have religious mania, you may have to suffer financially, but it makes no difference. That is repentance.*"

It becomes an ongoing way of life. The repentance that begins at salvation starts a progressive life-long process of confession of sin. First John 1:9, we go on confessing our sin. The active continuous attitude of repentance produces the poverty of spirit, the mourning, the meekness that characterizes true believers in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5. Repentance produces a new way of life, not just a different opinion about Christ...a new way of life. Those who heard Jesus preach knew what He was calling for, believe me. The Jews knew exactly what He was calling for. He wasn't asking them just to change their opinion about Him. They knew what Isaiah said when Isaiah preached, what did he preach? Isaiah 1:16, this is what Isaiah preached, "*Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, remove the evil of your deeds from My sight, cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice. And then though your sins be as scarlet they shall be...what?...white as snow. Though they're red like crimson, they'll be like wool if you wash yourselves, if you make yourselves clean.*"

The progression begins internally and then manifests itself in attitudes and actions. The end of Isaiah, or near the end, chapter 55, we find the same kind of call. Two verses, rich verses on this matter of repentance...I don't know how they overlook these. "*Seek the Lord while He may be found,*" Isaiah 55:6, "*Call upon Him while He is near.*" How do I do that? "*Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts and let him return to the Lord and He will have compassion on him and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.*" He'll pardon when the wicked forsakes his way and the unrighteous man forsakes his thoughts and turns to the Lord.

That familiar text often misused and perhaps too frequently avoided, 2 Chronicles 7:14, "*And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin.*" When they turn, when they repent... And I'll tell you, when John the Baptist preached repentance, nobody missed it, they knew what he said and they knew exactly what he meant.

Where are the fruits? Prove your repentance by your life. And what are the fruits of repentance? Simply righteous deeds, holy deeds, godly deeds, transformed life. In Luke 3 we have the record of that very account of which I just quoted where the Pharisees came and approached again, as often they did, John the Baptist always wanting to parade their piosity and John says to them in verse 7 of Luke 3, "*You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*" What are you doing here, you snakes? "*Bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance,*" he says. Where are those fruits? What are they? Verse

10, *"The multitudes said, What do we do? What should we do? What are the fruits of repentance? Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none, let him who has food do likewise. Some tax gatherers came to be baptized, they said, Teacher, what do we do? What are the fruits of repentance? Collect no more than what you've been ordered to. Some of the soldiers came and said, Well, what do we do? And He said, Don't take money from anyone by force or accuse anyone falsely and be content with what your wages are."* Pretty practical stuff, right?

You want to know where true repentance shows up? In the character of your daily living. Do you give your cloak to one who doesn't have one? Do you make sure you don't take anything from anyone that you don't deserve? You don't force people. You don't accuse people falsely. Are you content with whatever your wages are? That's where the genuineness of your repentance shows up. That's pretty mundane stuff, folks. And, beloved, I submit to you that no message that doesn't press for repentance can properly be called the gospel. Conversion to Jesus is more than a break with an old thought pattern, it's a new life...it's a new life.

Beam says, writing again in Kittel's volumes, *"To be converted embraces all that the dawn of God's Kingdom demands of man,"* a changed life. And please understand, I don't think that anyone could miss my heart on this, this is not something you do so you can get yourself saved, this is something God's Spirit produces in you in saving you. That's why it says, and we've been reading it in 2 Timothy, and this is an essential passage for us to grasp, chapter 2 verse 25, that God may grant them repentance. It's a gift of God...it's a gift of God. Acts 11:31, that God has granted repentance to the Gentiles. It's a gift of God.

Let me close with this last passage, Matthew 21:28: *"What do you think?"* Jesus said. Think this one through with me, will you? *"A man had two sons. He came to the first, said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will, sir. And he didn't go." You've got a son like that? "He came to the second, said the same thing. He said, I will not. Afterward, regretted what he said and went. Which of the two did the will of his father? The crowd said, The latter. Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, tax gatherers and harlots will get into the Kingdom of God before you."*

Potent, my friend. Jesus describes two kinds of people, are you ready for this? People who pretend to be obedient but are actually rebels in their heart. They pretend to be obedient but they're rebels in their heart. And people who begin as rebels but do what? Repent. He told it for the benefit of the Pharisees who pretended to be obedient to God but were rebels in their hearts. And then there were the harlots and the tax gatherers who started out as rebels but repented.

There's no salvation apart from repentance. Let's bow together in prayer.

I'm reminded, Lord, of the words of James, *"Submit therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you, draw near to God and He will draw near to you, cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep, let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom, humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you."*

Father, give us an understanding of the call to repentance. My prayer is for anyone here who has pretended to be obedient but in the heart is a rebel, who says to God, *"I will go"* and does not. O God, transform that life, bring true repentance.

2.3.16 Responsibility

Responsibility is an important aspect of being a Christian. Responsibilities arise out of relationships and the role we play in those relationships. The most important relationship we can have, of course, is the personal relationship we have with Jesus Christ.

Responsibilities are defined either by promises exchanged between the parties to the relationship, by laws passed by the government, by contracts between parties, or by constitutions such as the Constitution of the United States or this Family Constitution. There are a lot of institutions and people that we as Christians are told by God in the Bible to demonstrate responsibility toward, and they are listed below in decreasing order of importance:

1. God:

- 1.1. You shall have no other Gods before me: Exodus 20:3.
- 1.2. Do not use the name of the Lord in vain: Exodus 20:7.
- 1.3. Keep the sabbath day holy: Exodus 20:8.
- 1.4. Fear God and keep his commandments: Ecc. 12:13-14.
- 1.5. Do not worship idols: Exodus 20:4-6.
- 1.6. Do not trust your emotions or your own heart: Prov. 28:26.
- 1.7. Confess your sins: Prov. 28:13.

2. Spouses

- 2.1. Must not divorce our spouse: Mark 10:2-9
- 2.2. Yield sexually to our spouse: 1 Cor. 7:3-5
- 2.3. Husbands honor their wives: Eph. 5:25-29; Col. 3:19
- 2.4. Wives respect and submit to their husbands: Eph. 5:22-25; Eph 5:33.
- 2.5. Don't commit adultery: Exodus 20:14.

3. Parents

- 3.1. Must Raise children to love God: Deut. 6:4-9.
- 3.2. Must discipline their children: Prov. 19:18; 22:6; 29:15.

4. Children

- 4.1. Must honor their father and mother: Eph. 6:1-3.

5. Managers/Employers:

- 5.1. Praise good works: Romans 13:13.
- 5.2. Be diligent: Prov. 12:24.
- 5.3. Be a good example: Matt. 5:16.

6. Employees:

- 6.1. Obey the law: 1 Peter 2:13-15.
- 6.2. Be subject to your boss: Romans 13:1.
- 6.3. Support your family through your work: 1 Tim. 5:8.
- 6.4. Value credibility: Prov. 22:1.
- 6.5. Do not isolate yourself, attend meetings: Prov. 18:1.
- 6.6. Do not lie: Prov. 19:9, Prov. 21:6.
- 6.7. Be diligent: Prov. 21:5.
- 6.8. Pay your taxes and show respect: Romans 13:7.
- 6.9. Work for the glory of the Lord: Eph. 6:5-8.
- 6.10. Don't curse the boss: Ecc. 10:20.
- 6.11. Be a good example: Matt. 5:16.

7. Neighbors and people in general:

- 7.1. Love your neighbor: Matt. 19:19.
- 7.2. Don't lie: Exodus 20:16.

- 7.3. Don't steal: Exodus 20:14.
- 7.4. Do not murder: Exodus 20:13.
- 7.5. Rebuke the wicked: Prov. 24:25.
- 7.6. Do not be greedy: Prov. 15:27.
- 7.7. Be humble and do not be proud: Phi. 2:2-4, Eph. 4:2; Prov. 16:18-19.
- 7.8. Don't fornicate as an unmarried person and deliver fornicators for discipline: 1 Cor. 5:18.
- 7.9. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (the Golden Rule): Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31.

8. Human government

- 8.1. We should be obedient and responsible to human government: Romans 13:1-7.

Responsibility means we live up to what people and God expect of us. It means we fully and faithfully honor our promises and the people we have relationships with, and by doing this, we demonstrate righteousness and glorify God. When we don't, we are guilty of sin, as described in chapter 7, and we disgrace God, because people around us know that we are Christians and will know us by our fruit (Matt. 7:15-20).

Oaths are one vehicle by which responsibilities are created. Jesus said we shouldn't take oaths in Matt 5:33-37:

33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'

34 "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

36 "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

37 "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

What He was saying here is that we shouldn't make oaths to God or the temple or our religion. This would imply that it's OK to make promises and commitments, but we shouldn't do them as part of an oath to God or our religious faith or the temple. He was saying this, I believe, because he didn't want people who couldn't live up to their commitments making the church or their religion or God look bad as a result of their irresponsibility.

Another type of vehicle by which responsibilities are created is vows, which in contemporary terms are promises. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 indicates that we should be diligent to fulfill our vows and promises:

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed--

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not to pay.

Deuteronomy 23:21 adds to this that if we vow and do not pay, then we are guilty of sin against God.

2.3.17 Righteousness

Righteousness is characterized by the following:

1. God is righteous and loves righteousness and the righteous:

*For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.
(Ps 11:7)*

2. Righteousness consists of obedience to God's laws and seeking His will rather than our own.

Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all those commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us. (Deut. 6:25.)

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Luke 1:6)

3. Jesus Christ loved righteousness and preached it:

"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--" 1 Cor 1:30

Note that we did not identify the righteous as one who obeys earthly laws or man's laws. It may be true that a person can be righteous by following the laws of a particular province or ruler, but only to the extent that the ruler or the laws are Godly. This derives from Acts 5:29: "We must obey God rather than men."

Righteousness is a vehicle by which God blesses us as Christians:

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing the bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil: 16 He will dwell on high; His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; Bread will be given him, His water will be sure. Is. 33:15-16

The wicked man does deceptive work, But he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward. (Prov. 11:18).

Righteousness makes us bold and gives us courage:

The wicked flee when no one pursues, But he righteous are bold as a lion. (Prov. 28:1)

2.3.18 Tithing

We believe that God expects us to tithe our income to the Lord to further his causes, in accordance with Mal. 3:8-10.

According to Barna Research, a nondenominational polling organization, below are some startling statistics on tithing in the U.S.:⁶

Evangelicals Are the Most Generous Givers, but Fewer Than 10% of Born Again Christians Give 10% to Their Church

(Ventura, CA) As millions of Americans focus on submitting this year's tax forms before the mid-April deadline, a new survey conducted by the Barna Research Group shows that although most people can claim a deduction for charitable giving, relatively few people proved to be substantial givers. Among the most surprising findings is that born again Christians are much more generous than the norm, but very few give 10% or more of their income - a proportion described in the Bible as a "tithe" - to their church.

⁶ <http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=52>; Apr. 5, 2000; Barna Research.

Most People Share Their Wealth

More than four out of every five adults donated some money to non-profit organizations last year. Eighty four percent made at least one donation during the year, which is a slight decrease from the 87% who did so in 1998. The people most likely to share their wealth with others were evangelicals (93%), Builders (ages 54-72, of whom 93% gave), people from households making over \$60,000 (93%), and political conservatives (91%). The people least likely to give contributions included adults who do not attend a church (27% of whom made no donations last year); Baby Busters (21%); Hispanics (24%); people with household incomes under \$30,000 (25%); political moderates (20%); individuals who are not registered to vote (24%); and adults who are not born again Christians (20%).

The median amount of money given to non-profits and churches by the typical adult last year was \$300. That is a 14% decline from 1998 levels (\$350 median per person). Even more telling was the decline in the mean total gift amount. The average for 1999 was \$1045 per adult. That represents a 24% decline from 1998, when the average cumulative giving was \$1377. The subgroups with the highest average giving were evangelical Christians (\$2476); households making \$60,000 or more (\$1687); born again Christians (\$1651); registered Republicans (\$1612); college graduates (\$1599); political conservatives (\$1533); people 54 or older (\$1341); and residents of the South (\$1281).

Among the largest declines in mean giving were the 36% drop in giving from non-born again adults. The decline among born again Christians was only 13% - substantial, but well below the 24% national decrease.

Overall, one out of every four adults (26%) donated more than \$1000 to charities, churches and other non-profits during the past year. That percentage remained unchanged from the year before.

Giving to Churches Increases

In opposition to the decreased overall giving of donors, churches actually received more money from adults in 1999 than they did in the previous year. Although there was no change in the proportion who failed to donate anything to churches (34%) compared to 1998, the average (mean) cumulative giving to churches rose from \$750 to \$806 per adult in 1999, a jump of 7%. The median donation level remained constant, at \$100. (The median is the level at which there are equal numbers of people who gave less than the median as gave more. The huge disparity between the mean and median figures underscores the fact that there are substantial numbers of people whose giving is extreme - i.e., either very low or very high.)

Church donations increased among born again Christians in 1999. The median rose by 25% (to \$500 per person) while the mean increased by 7% (to \$1439). The median among non-born again adults nudged forward from \$18 to \$20, while the mean also inched ahead (from \$378 to \$386, a gain of 2%). Oddly, giving by the most committed segment - evangelicals - actually dropped by 1%, from a mean of \$2380 in 1998 to \$2346 in 1999.

The size of the church a person attends is related to their giving habits. Churches that attract limited numbers of people also raise the least money per person. Among adults attending churches of less than 100 adults - which make up a majority of America's Protestant churches - the average (mean) donation was \$488 over the course of the year. Adults attending churches of 100 to 200 adults donated a cumulative mean of \$794 - 63% more than those in small churches donated. People attending churches of 201 to 999 adults contributed a mean of \$1561 in 1999 - more than three times the average in the smallest churches. Giving dropped off a bit in churches attracting 1000 or more

adults, to \$1462.

Churches Get the Lion's Share

According to survey respondents, about three-quarters of every donated dollar wound up going to churches or religious centers. For many people, all or most of their giving went to their church. For instance, among both evangelicals and African-American adults an average of 95% of their aggregate donations was given to churches. On average, 91 cents out of every dollar given by residents of the South went to their church, while 87 cents out of every dollar given by all born again Christians went to their church. Individuals who described themselves as politically conservative assigned 89% of their aggregate giving to churches.

The segments that devoted the smallest percentages of their giving to churches included the unchurched (whose median gift to churches was zero, but whose mean gift of \$156 represented 40% of their yearly giving), Hispanics (59% of their donations went to churches), Baby Busters (60%) and non-born again adults (60%).

Protestant adults proved to be more generous, in every measure, than were Catholics. Based on mean dollars donated in 1999, Protestant adults gave 57% more money away to all non-profits (\$1325 versus \$846, respectively); gave away 86% more money to churches (\$1084 versus \$584); and donated a larger share of their charitable gifts to churches (82% versus 69%).

Tithing Is Rare

One of the central teachings of many Protestant churches is that the Bible commands people to donate ten percent of the annual income to the church. The survey confirmed that the admonition is rarely followed. One out of every six born again Christians (16%) gave no money to his/her church during 1999. The proportion who tithed to their church was just 8%.

In general, the more money a person makes the less likely he/she is to tithe. While 8% of those making \$20,000 or less gave at least 10% of their income to churches, that proportion dropped to 5% among those in the \$20,000-\$29,999 and \$30,000-\$39,999 categories; to 4% among those in the \$40,000-\$59,999 range, down to 2% for those in the \$60,000-\$74,999 niche; and to 1% for those making \$75,000-\$99,999. The level jumped a bit for those making \$100,000 or more, as 5% of the most affluent group tithed in 1999.

Comments on the Research

The relative generosity of born again and evangelical Christians is paradoxical in the eyes of George Barna, president of the company that conducted the research. "On the one hand, evangelicals and born again Christians should be commended for modeling generosity within a culture that esteems giving a helping hand more than it actually gives such a hand. By giving more than double the national average of their income to non-profits and churches evangelicals have set a great example for others to follow. At the same time, however, the vast majority of those individuals attend churches that teach a biblical responsibility to tithe. The fact that fewer than one out of every ten born again believers does so suggests that financial stewardship is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges facing the Christian Church in America today."

The researcher also lamented the declining sum of money going to all charitable and religious causes. "Most analysts would agree that 1999 was one of the best financial years we have experienced in a long time. If we experience declining generosity by Americans during a period of unusual financial favor, what should we expect when the

economy hits a downturn? And as government leaders continue to push for more church-based and private initiatives to address America's growing list of social ills and cultural challenges, how can churches realistically take on such responsibilities? Churches cannot solve all of the nation's problems. But if they are to handle a significant share of the needs experienced in their communities, the typical Christian household will have to ante up more than 2% of their income to finance life-changing ministry activities - especially if they recognize tithing as one of God's requirements for their life."

Survey Methodology

The data described above are from telephone interviews with a nationwide random sample of 1002 adults. The maximum margin of sampling error associated with the aggregate sample is ± 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The data for previous years' survey was conducted in the same manner, using the same sampling techniques and survey questions, and also based on a sample of 1002 randomly selected adults. All of the interviews were conducted from the Barna Research Group telephone interviewing facility in Ventura, CA. Adults in the 48 continental states were eligible to be interviewed and the distribution coincided with the geographic dispersion of the U.S. adult population. Multiple callbacks were used to increase the probability of including a reliable distribution of adults.

The figures regarding tithing were derived by dividing the total amount of money donated by the respondent to churches into the respondent's total household income for 1999. The information is not based on respondents reporting whether or not they tithed.

"Born again Christians" were defined in the survey as people who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who then indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. Respondents were not asked to describe themselves as "born again."

Respondents were classified "evangelical" based upon their answers to nine questions regarding matters of faith. Those included the criteria for being born again, as described above; saying their faith is very important in their life today; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; believing that Satan exists, that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works, and that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Thus, evangelicals are a subset of the born again population. Being classified as an evangelical was not based on self-identification, and the classification had no relationship to church attendance or the denominational affiliation of the church with which they associate.

The Barna Research Group, Ltd. is an independent marketing research company located in southern California. Since 1984 it has been studying cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. This research was funded solely by Barna Research as part of its regular tracking of attitudes, values and behavior.

If you would like to receive a bi-weekly update on the latest research findings from the Barna Research Group, you may subscribe to this free service in the upper left corner of any page of this website.

"Average Giving to Non-Profit Organizations and Churches
(mean giving; national random sample of 1002 adults)

Population segment	Total giving	Church giving	Total % of giving to churches
all adults	\$1045	\$806	77%

Baby Busters (ages 18-34)	\$589	\$353	60%
Baby Boomers (ages 35-53)	\$1248	\$984	79%
Builders (ages 54-72)	\$1326	\$1205	91%
Seniors (ages 73+)	\$1389	\$997	72%
Males	\$1036	\$770	74%
Females	\$1055	\$845	80%
Income Under \$30,000	\$453	\$338	75%
Income \$30,000-\$59,999	\$1076	\$841	78%
Income \$60,000 or more	\$1687	\$1343	80%
Politically conservative	\$1533	\$1365	89%
Politically moderate	\$845	\$582	69%
Politically liberal	\$932	\$618	66%
Evangelicals	\$2476	\$2346	95%
Born Again	\$1651	\$1439	87%
Non-born again	\$644	\$386	60%
Protestant	\$1325	\$1084	82%
Catholic	\$846	\$584	69%

This surprising research reveals that even among born again Christians in the United States, we collectively are not living up to what God expects us to do with our money, and the way we spend our money is not in accordance with our professed faith or priorities. Section 1.3 summarizes what those priorities need to be from a Biblical perspective.

A bumper sticker we read recently sums up our attitude about tithing:

Tithe if you love Jesus. Any idiot can honk!

2.3.19 Wisdom

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. (Prov. 4:7)

What is wisdom? Wisdom is all about living life with purpose and doing everything for the glory of God and out of fear of God. Wisdom is produced by diligently seeking knowledge and instruction throughout our lives so we can eliminate the fear that comes from foolish ignorance. This helps us develop a vocabulary and tools that make us very effective and successful in dealing with the everyday situations of life. Wisdom is about a proper attitude and approach toward suffering and prosperity that will develop character and skill in living life to its fullest and enjoying God's blessings. The singular goal of this entire Family Constitution is to reveal and promote wisdom and discernment as they relate to families and personal affairs.

Through wisdom come discernment, prudence, happiness, peace, prosperity, and God's blessings. That is why wisdom is perhaps one of the most important virtues and character attributes that a Christian can have. Of all the character attributes we can have as Christians, there is more said in the Bible about wisdom and its importance than any other subject other than possibly love. A search of the scriptures reveals that wisdom is used 222 times in the Bible. King Solomon devoted two complete books exclusively to the subject of wisdom: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The scriptures below give us a better idea what wisdom is, who has it, how it is produced, and why it should be so very important to us:

Table 2-3: Scriptures About Wisdom

Family Constitution, version 1.30

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#	Behavior	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Righteous people speak wisdom and talk about judgment	29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. 30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. 31 The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide	Psalms 37:29-31
2	Wisdom begins with fearing the Lord	10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: His praise endureth for ever. (Psalm 111:10)	Psalms 111:10
3	Seek understanding and wisdom. Doing so is how you understand the fear of the Lord	1 My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, 2 so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; 3 yes, if you cry out for discernment, understanding, 4 if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk uprightly; 8 he guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. 9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path.	Prov. 2:1-9
4	Do not be wise in your own eyes and flee evil	Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones	Prov. 3:7-8
5	Wisdom produces happiness and peace	Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her. And happy are all who retain her.	Prov. 3:13-18

2.4 Our Family Prayer

FAMILY PRAYER

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve,
 I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
 I asked for health, that I might do greater things,
 I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
 I asked for riches, that I might be happy,
 I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
 I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men,
 I was given weakness, that I might feel the need for God.

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life,
 I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
 I got nothing that I asked for--but everything I had hoped for.
 Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
 I am among all men, most richly blessed.

LORD, we pray that you give this family what it NEEDS, NOT what the people in it selfishly wants or thinks they need:

Give it peace and tranquility.
 Give it unselfishness free of vanity.
 Give it honesty and personal responsibility.
 Give it humility.
 Give it patience and commitment.
 Give it the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
 ...and above all, give it **LOVE**.

2.5 Inspiration for the Christian

2.5.1 God's Promises Overcome our Negative Attitude

For all the negative things we have to say to ourselves, God has a positive answer for it.

Table 2-4: Scriptures to Contradict a Negative Attitude

You Say	God Says
"It's impossible"	All things are possible (Luke 18:27)
"I'm too tired"	I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28-30)
"Nobody really loves me"	I love you (John 3:16 & John 13:34)
"I can't go on"	My grace is sufficient (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)
"I can't figure things out"	I will direct your steps (Proverbs 3:5-6)
"I can't do it"	You can do all things (Philippians 4:13)
"I'm not able"	I am able (II Corinthians 9:8)
"It's not worth it"	It will be worth it (Roman 8:28)
"I can't forgive myself"	I FORGIVE YOU (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)
"I can't manage"	I will supply all your needs (Philippians 4:19)
"I'm afraid"	I have not given you a spirit of fear (II Timothy 1:7)
"I'm always worried and frustrated"	Cast all your cares on ME (I Peter 5:7)
"I don't have enough faith"	I've given everyone a measure of faith (Romans 12:3)
"I'm not smart enough"	I give you wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30)
"I feel all alone"	I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)

It is the Word of God that satisfies.

2.5.2 Jesus Christ is the Source of Our Strength and Self-Esteem

Jesus Christ is sufficient to solve all our problems. Without him, we have little hope of success. It is not our own foolish human wisdom, but Jesus' wisdom and grace, which makes us sufficient in His eyes. *"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.'"* (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

In Christ I Am Significant

I am the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13).

I am the light of the world (Matt. 5:14).

I am God's child (John 1:12; Romans 8:14-16; 1 John 3:3).

I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15:1,5).

I have been appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16).

I am Christ's personal witness (Acts 1:8).

I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16).

I am a member of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:27).

I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor. 5:17,18).

I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1).

I am a saint (Eph. 1:1).

I have been raised up and seated with Christ (Eph. 2:6).

I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10).

I am a citizen of heaven (Eph. 2:6; Phil. 3:20).

In Christ I am Accepted

I am Christ's friend (John 15:15).

I have been justified (Romans 5:1).

I am joined to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).

I have been bought with a price; I belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:20).

I have been made righteous (2 Cor. 5:21).

I have been adopted as God's child (Eph. 1:5).

I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18).

I am of God's household (Eph. 2:19).

I am a fellow citizen with the rest of the saints (Eph. 2:19).

I may approach God with boldness and confidence (Eph. 3:12).

I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins (Col. 1:14).

I am complete in Christ (Col. 2:10)

In Christ I Am Secure

I am assured that all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)

I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom. 8:35).

I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

I am free from any condemning charges against me (Rom. 8:33).

I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God (2 Cor. 1:21-22).

I have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing my inheritance to come (Eph. 1:13-14).

I have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13).

I am hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:3).

I am confident that the good work that God began in me will be perfected (Phil. 1:6).

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13).

I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).

I can find grace and mercy in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me (1 John 5:18).

2.5.3 God's Memorandum to Us⁷

Below is God's message to us. When we are discouraged or in conflict, we will read this message in its entirety together and heed what it says. We will then pray to God together for forgiveness and healing after we read it. In our prayer, we will ask Him to help us honor Him and each other by honoring our marriage commitment.

To: You

From: God

Take counsel.

I hear your cry.

It passes through the darkness, filters through the clouds, mingles with starlight, and finds its way to my heart on the path of a sunbeam.

I have anguished over the cry of a hare choked in the noose of a snare, a sparrow tumbled from the nest of its mother, a child thrashing helplessly in a pond, and my son shedding his blood on a cross.

Know that I hear you, also. Be at peace. Be calm.

I bring thee relief for your sorrow for I know its cause...and its cure.

You weep for all your childhood dreams that have vanished with the years.

You weep for all your self-esteem that has been corrupted by failure.

You weep for all your potential that has been bartered for security.

You weep for all your individuality that has been trampled by mobs.

You weep for all your talent that has been wasted through misuse.

You look upon yourself with disgrace and you turn in terror from the image you see in the pool.

Who is this mockery of humanity staring back at you with bloodless eyes of shame?

Where is the grace of your manner, the beauty of your figure, the quickness of your movement, the clarity of your mind, the brilliance of your tongue? Who stole your goods? Is the thief's identity known to you, as it is to me?

Once you placed your head in a pillow of grass in your father's field and looked up at a cathedral of clouds and knew that all the gold of Babylon would be yours in time.

Once you read from many books and wrote on many tablets convinced beyond any doubt that all the wisdom of Solomon would be equaled and surpassed by you.

And the seasons would flow into years until lo, you would reign supreme in your own garden of Eden.

Dost thou remember who implanted those plans and dreams and seeds of hope within you?

You cannot.

⁷ *The Greatest Miracle In The World*, Og Mandino, chapter 9.

You have no memory of that moment when first you emerged from your mother's womb and I placed my hand on your soft brow. And the secret I whispered in your small ear when I bestowed my blessings upon you?

Remember our secret?

You cannot.

The passing years have destroyed your recollection, for they have filled your mind with fear and doubt and anxiety and remorse and hate and there is no room for joyful memories where these beasts habitate.

Weep no more. I am with you...and this moment is the dividing line of your life. All that has gone before is like unto no more than that time you slept within your mother's womb. What is past is dead. Let the dead bury the dead.

This day you return from the living dead.

This day, like unto Elijah with the widow's son, I stretch myself upon thee three times and you live again.

This day, like unto Elisha with the Shunammite's son, I put my mouth upon your mouth and my eyes upon your eyes and my hands upon your hands and your flesh is warm again.

This day, like unto Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, I command you to come forth and you will walk from your cave of doom to begin a new life.

This is your birthday. This is your new date of birth. Your first life, like unto a play of the theatre, was only a rehearsal. This time the curtain is up. This time the world watches and waits to applaud. This time you will not fail.

Light your candles. Share your cake. Pour the wine. You have been reborn.

Like a butterfly from its chrysalis you will fly...fly as high as you wish, and neither the wasps nor dragonflies nor mantids of mankind shall obstruct your mission or your search for the true riches of life.

Feel my hand upon thy head.

Attend to my wisdom.

Let me share with you, again, the secret you heard at your birth and forgot.

You are my greatest miracle.

You are the greatest miracle in the world.

Those were the first words you ever heard. Then you cried. They all cry.

You did not believe me then...and nothing has happened in the intervening years to correct your disbelief. For how could you be a miracle when you consider yourself a failure at the most menial tasks? How can you be a miracle when you have little confidence in dealing with the most trivial of responsibilities? How can you be a miracle when you are shackled by debt and lie awake in torment over whence will come tomorrow's bread?

Enough. The milk that is spilled is sour. Yet, how many prophets, how many wise men, how many poets, how many artists, how many composers, how many scientists, how many philosophers and messengers have I sent with word of your divinity, your potential for godliness, and the secrets of achievement? How did you treat them?

Still I love you and I am with you now, through these words, to fulfill the prophet who announced that the Lord shall set his hand again, the second time, to recover the remnant of his people.

I have set my hand again.

This is the second time.

You are my remnant.

It is of no avail to ask, haven't you known, haven't you heard, hasn't it been told to you from the beginning; haven't you understood from the foundations of the earth?

You have not known; you have not heard; you have not understood.

You have been told that you are a divinity in disguise, a god playing a fool.

You have been told that you are a special piece of work, noble in reason, infinite in faculties, express and admirable in form and moving, like an angel in action, like a god in apprehension.

You have been told that you are the salt of the earth.

You were given the secret even of moving mountains, of performing the impossible.

You believed no one. You burned your map to happiness, you abandoned your claim to peace of mind, you snuffed out the candles that had been placed along your destined path of glory, and then you stumbled, lost and frightened, in the darkness of futility and self-pity, until you fell into a hell of your own creation.

Then you cried and beat your breast and cursed the luck that had befallen you. You refused to accept the consequences of your own petty thoughts and lazy deeds and you searched for a scapegoat on which to blame your failure. How quickly you found one.

You blamed me!

You cried that your handicaps, your mediocrity your lack of opportunity, your failures...were the will of God!

You were wrong!

Let us take inventory. Let us, first, call a roll of your handicaps. For how can I ask you to build a new life lest you have the tools?

Are you blind? Does the sun rise and fall without your witness?

No. You can see...and the hundred million receptors I have placed in your eyes enable you to enjoy the magic of a leaf, a snowflake, a pond, an eagle, a child, a cloud, a star, a rose, a rainbow...and the look of love. Count one blessing.

Are you deaf? Can a baby laugh or cry without your attention?

No. You can hear...and the twenty-four thousand fibers I have built in each of your ears vibrate to the wind in the trees, the tides on the rocks, the majesty of an opera, a robin's plea, children at play...and the words I love you. Count another blessing.

Are you mute? Do your lips move and bring forth only spittle?

No. You can speak...as can no other of my creatures, and your words can calm the angry, uplift the despondent, goad the quitter, cheer the unhappy, warm the lonely, praise the worthy, encourage the defeated, teach the ignorant...and say I love you. Count another blessing.

Are you paralyzed? Does your helpless from despoil the land?

No. You can move. You are not a tree condemned to a small plot while the wind and world abuses you. You can stretch and run the dance and work, for within you I have designed five hundred muscles, two hundred bones, and seven miles of nerve fiber all synchronized by me to do your bidding. Count another blessing. Are you unloved and unloving? Does loneliness engulf you, night and day?

No. No more. For now you know love's secret, that to receive love it must be given with no thought of its return. To love for fulfillment, satisfaction, or pride is no love. Love is a gift on which no return is demanded. Now you know that to love unselfishly is its own reward. And even should love not be returned it is not lost, for love not reciprocated will flow back to you and soften and purify your heart. Count another blessing. Count twice.

Is your heart stricken? Does it leak and strain to maintain your life?

No. Your heart is strong. Touch your chest and feel its rhythm, pulsating, hour after hour, day and night, thirty-six million beats each year, year after year, asleep or awake, pumping your blood through more than sixty thousand miles of veins, arteries, and tubing...pumping more than six hundred thousand gallons each year. Man has never created such a machine. Count another blessing.

Are you diseased of skin? Do people turn in horror when you approach?

No. Your skin is clear and a marvel of creation, needing only that you tend it with soap and oil and brush and care. In time all steels will tarnish and rust, but not your skin. Eventually the strongest of

metals will wear, with use, but not that layer that I have constructed around you. Constantly it renews itself, old cells replaced by new, just as the old you is now replaced by the new. Count another blessing.

Are your lungs befouled? Does the breath of life struggle to enter your body?

No. Your portholes to life support you even in the vilest of environments of your own making, and they labor always to filter life-giving oxygen through six hundred million pockets of folded flesh while they rid your body of gaseous wastes. Count another blessing.

Is your blood poisoned? Is it diluted with water and pus?

No. Within your five quarts of blood are twenty-two trillion blood cells and within each cell are millions of molecules and within each molecule is an atom oscillating at more than ten million times each second. Each second, two million of your blood cells die to be replaced by two million more in a resurrection that has continued since your first birth. As it has always been inside, so now it is on your outside. Count another blessing.

Are you feeble of mind? Can you no longer think for yourself?

No. Your brain is the most complex structure in the universe. I know. Within its three pounds are thirteen billion nerve cells, more than three times as many cells as there are people on your earth. To help you file away every perception, every sound, every taste, every smell, every action you have experienced since the day of your birth, I have implanted, within your cells, more than one thousand billion billion protein molecules. Every incident in your life is there waiting only your recall. And, to assist your brain in the control of your body I have dispersed, throughout your form, four million pain-sensitive structures, five hundred thousand touch detectors, and more than two hundred thousand temperature detectors. No nation's gold is better protected than you. None of your ancient wonders are greater than you.

You are my finest creation.

Within you is enough atomic energy to destroy any of the world's great cities...and rebuild it.

Are you poor? Is there no gold or silver in your purse?

No. You are rich! Together we have just counted your wealth. Study the list. Count them again. Tally your assets!

Why have you betrayed yourself? Why have you cried that all the blessings of humanity were removed from you? Why did you deceive yourself that you were powerless to change your life? Are you without talent, senses, abilities, pleasures, instincts, sensations, and pride? Are you without hope? Why do you cringe in the shadows, a giant defeated, awaiting only sympathetic transport into the welcome void and dampness of hell?

You have so much. Your blessings overflow your cup...and you have been unmindful of them, like a child spoiled in luxury, since I have bestowed them upon you with generosity and regularity.

Answer me.

Answer yourself.

What rich man, old and sick, feeble and helpless, would not exchange all the gold in his vault for the blessings you have treated so lightly?

Know then the first secret to happiness and success—that you possess, even now, every blessing necessary to achieve great glory (see Phil. 4:13, 2 Cor. 1:21-22). They are your treasure, your tools with which to build, starting today, the foundation for a new and better life.

Therefore, I say unto you, count your blessings and know that you already are my greatest creation. This is the first law you must obey in order to perform the greatest miracle in the world, the return of your humanity from living death.

And be grateful for your lessons learned in poverty. For he is not poor who has little; only he that desires much...and true security lies not in the things one has but in the things one can do without.

Where are the handicaps that produced your failure? They existed only in your mind.

Count your blessings.

And the second law is like unto the first. Proclaim your rarity (see section 2.5.2 above and Matt. 5:13-14).

You had condemned yourself to a potter's field, and there you lay, unable to forgive your own failure, destroying yourself with self-hate, self-incrimination, and revulsion at your crimes against yourself and others.

Are you not perplexed?

Do you not wonder why I am able to forgive your failures, your transgressions, your pitiful demeanor...when you cannot forgive yourself?

I address you now, for three reasons. You need me. You are not one of a herd heading for destruction in a gray mass of mediocrity. And ...you are a great rarity.

Consider a painting by Rembrandt or a bronze by Degas or a violin by Stradivarius or a play by Shakespeare. They have great value for two reasons: their creators were masters and they are few in number. Yet there are more than one of each of these.

On that reasoning you are the most valuable treasure on the face of the earth, for you know who created you and there is only one of you.

Never, in all the seventy billion humans who have walked this planet since the beginning of time has there been anyone exactly like you.

Never, until the end of time, will there be another such as you.

You have shown no knowledge or appreciation of your uniqueness.

Yet, you are the rarest thing in the world.

From your father, in his moment of supreme love, flowed countless seeds of love, more than four hundred million in number. All of them, as they swam within your mother, gave up the ghost and died. All except one! You.

You alone persevered within the loving warmth of your mother's body, searching for your other half, a single cell from your mother so small that more than two million would be necessary to fill an acorn shell. Yet, despite impossible odds, in that vast ocean of darkness and disaster, you persevered, found that infinitesimal cell, joined with it, and began a new life. Your life.

You arrived, bringing with you, as does every child, the message that I was not yet discouraged of man. Two cells now united in a miracle. Two cells, each containing twenty-three chromosomes and within each chromosome hundreds of genes, which would govern every characteristic about you, from the color of your eyes to the charm of your manner, to the size of your brain.

With all the combinations at my command, beginning with the single sperm from your father's four hundred million, through the hundreds of genes in each of the chromosomes of your mother and father, I could have created three hundred thousand billion humans, each different from the other.

But who did I bring forth?

You! One of a kind. Rarest of the rare. A priceless treasure, possessed of qualities in mind and speech and movement and appearance and actions as no other who has ever lived, lives, or shall live.

Why have you valued yourself in pennies when you are worth a king's ransom?

Why did you listen to those who demeaned you...and far worse, why did you believe them?

Take counsel. No longer hide your rarity in the dark. Bring it forth. Show the world. Strive not to walk as your brother walks, nor talk as your leader talks, nor labor as do the mediocre. Never do as another. Never imitate. For how do you know that you may not imitate evil; and he who imitates evil always goes beyond the example set, while he who imitates what is good always falls short. Imitate no one. Be yourself. Show your rarity to the world and they will shower you with gold. This then is the second law.

Proclaim your rarity.

And now you have received two laws.

Count your blessings! Proclaim your rarity!

You have no handicaps. You are not mediocre.

You nod. You force a smile. You admit your self-deception.

What of your next complaint? Opportunity never seeks thee?

Take counsel and it shall come to pass, for now I give you the law of success in every venture.

Many centuries ago this law was given to your forefathers from a mountain top. Some heeded the law and lo, their life was filled with the fruit of happiness, accomplishment, gold, and peace of mind. Most listened not, for they sought magic means, devious routes, or waited for the devil called luck to deliver to them the riches of life. They waited in vain...just as you waited, and then they wept, as you wept, blaming their lack of fortune on my will.

The law is simple. Young or old, pauper or king, white or black, male or female...all can use the secret to their advantage; for of all the rules and speeches and scriptures of success and how to attain it, only one method has never failed...whomsoever shall compel ye to go with him one mile...go with him two (see the Bible, Matt. 5:41, spoken by Jesus Himself).

This then is the third law...the secret that will produce riches and acclaim beyond your dreams. Go another mile (see the Bible, Matt. 5:41)!

The only certain means of success is to render more and better service than is expected to you, no matter what your task may be. This is a habit followed by all successful people since the beginning of time. Therefore I saith the surest way to doom yourself to mediocrity is to perform only the work for which you are paid.

Think not ye are being cheated if you deliver more than the silver you receive. For there is a pendulum to all life and the sweat you deliver, if not rewarded today, will swing back tomorrow, tenfold. The mediocre never goes another mile, for why should he cheat himself, he thinks. But you are not mediocre. To go another mile is a privilege you must appropriate by your own initiative. You cannot, you must not avoid it. Neglect it, do only as little as the others, and the responsibility for your failure is yours alone.

You can no more render service without receiving just compensation than you can withhold the rendering of it without suffering the loss of reward. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, these cannot be separated. The effect already blooms in the cause, and the end pre-exists in the means, and the fruit is always in the seed.

Go another mile.

Concern yourself not, should you serve an ungrateful master. Serve him more.

And instead of him, let it be me who is in your debt, for then you will know that every minute, every stroke of extra service will be repaid. And worry not, should your reward not come soon. For the longer payment is withheld, the better for you...and compound interest on compound interest is this law's greatest benefit.

You cannot command success, you can only deserve it...and now you know the great secret necessary in order to merit its rare reward.

Go another mile!

Where is this field whence you cried there was no opportunity? Look! Look around thee. See, where only yesterday you wallowed on the refuse of self-pity, you now walk tall on a carpet of gold. Nothing has changed...except you, but you are everything.

You are my greatest miracle.

You are the greatest miracle in the world.

And now the laws of happiness and success are three.

Count your blessings (see Phil. 4:13, 2 Cor. 1:21-22)! Proclaim your rarity (see section 2.5.2 above and Matt. 5:13-14)! Go another mile (Matt. 5:41)!

Be patient with your progress. To count your blessings with gratitude, to proclaim your rarity with pride, to go an extra mile and then another, these acts are not accomplished in the blinking of an eye.

Yet, that which you acquire with most difficulty you retain the longest; as those who have earned a fortune are more careful of it than those by whom it was inherited.

And fear not as you enter your new life. Every noble acquisition is attend with its risks. He who fears to encounter the one must not expect to obtain the other. Now you know you are a miracle. And there is no fear in a miracle.

Be proud. You are not the momentary whim of a careless creator experimenting in the laboratory of life. You are not a slave of forces that you cannot comprehend. You are a free manifestation of no force but mine, of no love but mine. You were made with a purpose.

Feel my hand. Hear my words.

You need me...and I need you.

We have a world to rebuild...and if it requireth a miracle what is that to us? We are both miracles and now we have each other.

Never have I lost faith in you since that day when I first spun you from a giant wave and tossed you helplessly on the sands. As you measure time that was more than five hundred million years ago. There were many models, many shapes, many sizes, before I reached perfection in you more than thirty thousand years ago. I have made no further effort to improve on you in all these years.

For how could one improve on a miracle? You were a marvel to behold and I was pleased. I gave you this world and dominion over it. Then, to enable you to reach your full potential I placed my hand upon you, once more, and endowed you with powers unknown to any other creature in the universe, even unto this day.

I gave you the power to think.

I gave you the power to love.

I gave you the power to will.

I gave you the power to laugh.

I gave you the power to imagine.

I gave you the power to create.

I gave you the power to plan.

I gave you the power to speak.

I gave you the power to pray.

My pride in you knew no bounds. You were my ultimate creation, my greatest miracle. A complete living being. One who can adjust to any climate, any hardship, any challenge. One who can manage his own destiny without any interference from me. One who can translate a sensation or perception, not by instinct, but by thought and deliberation into whatever action is best for himself and all humanity.

Thus we come to the fourth law of success and happiness...for I gave you one more power, a power so great that not even my angels possess it.

I gave you the power to choose.

With this gift I place you even above my angels...for angels are not free to choose sin. I gave you complete control over your destiny. I told you to determine, for yourself, your own nature in accordance with your own free will. Neither heavenly nor earthly in nature, you were free to fashion yourself in whatever form you preferred. You had the power to choose to degenerate into the lowest forms of life, but you also had the power, out of your soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.

I have never withdrawn your great power, the power to choose.

What have you done with this tremendous force? Look at yourself. Think of the choices you have made in your life and recall, now, those bitter moments when you would fall to your knees if only you had the opportunity to choose again.

What is past is past...and now you know the fourth great law of happiness and success...Use wisely, your power of choice.

Choose to love...rather than hate.
 Choose to laugh...rather than cry.
 Choose to create...rather than destroy.
 Choose to persevere...rather than quit.
 Choose to praise...rather than gossip.
 Choose to heal...rather than wound.
 Choose to give...rather than steal.
 Choose to act...rather than procrastinate.
 Choose to grow...rather than rot.
 Choose to pray...rather than curse.
 Choose to live...rather than die.

Now you know that your misfortunes were not my will, for all power was vested in you, and the accumulation of deeds and thoughts which placed you on the refuse of humanity were your doing, not mine. My gifts of power were too large for your small nature. Now you have grown tall and wise and the fruits of the land will be yours.

You are more than a human being, you are a human becoming.

You are capable of great wonders. Your potential is unlimited. Who else, among my creatures, has mastered fire? Who else, among my creatures, has conquered gravity, has pierced the heavens, has conquered disease and pestilence and drought?

Never demean yourself again!

Never settle for the crumbs of life!

Never hide your talents, from this day hence!

Remember the child who says, "when I am a big boy." But what is that? For the big boy says, "when I grow up." And then grown up, he says, "when I am wed." But to be wed, what is that, after all? The thought then changes to "when I retire." And then, retirement comes, and he looks back over the landscape traversed; a cold wind sweeps over it and somehow he has missed it all and it is gone.

Enjoy this day, today...and tomorrow, tomorrow.

You have performed the greatest miracle in the world.

You have returned from a living death.

You will feel self-pity no more and each new day will be a challenge and a joy.

You have been born again...but just as before, you can choose failure and despair or success and happiness. The choice is yours. The choice is exclusively yours. I can only watch, as before...in pride...or sorrow.

Remember, then, the four laws of happiness and success.

Count your blessings.

Proclaim your rarity.

Go another mile.

Use wisely your power of choice.

And one more, to fulfill the other four. Do all things with love...love for yourself, love for all others, and love for me.

Wipe away your tears. Reach out, grasp my hand, and stand straight.

Let me cut the grave cloths that have bound you.

This day you have been notified.

YOU ARE THE GREATEST MIRACLE IN THE WORLD!

2.6 Are You Good Enough To Go To Heaven?

Of all the questions you will ask yourself in life, probably the most important is, Am I good enough to go to Heaven? The way to find this out is to ask yourself if you have obeyed the Ten Commandments. Most would answer the question, 'Well, I've broken one or two, but nothing too serious, like murder, etc.' So let's go through them and see how you do:

1. 'You shall have no other gods before Me.'

Is God first in your life? Do you love God above all else? Many years ago, I purchased a TV for our children, but the first evening we had it, I arrived home from work and found that they didn't even bother to greet me. They were too busy watching television. I turned it off and explained to them that if they ignored me because they preferred to watch TV. They were setting their love on the gift rather than the giver, a wrong order of affections. In the same way, if we love anything -- husband, wife, children or even our own lives -- more than we love God, we are setting our affection on the gift rather than the Giver, which is a transgression of the First Commandment. In fact, the Bible says that we should so love God that our love for Mom and Dad and brother and sister should seem like hatred compared to the love we have for the God who gave those loved ones to us. We are also commanded to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. Jesus spoke of a Samaritan who found an injured stranger, bathed his wounds, carried him to an inn, gave money for his care and told the inn-keeper that he would pay for his expenses. We call him the good Samaritan, but in reality he wasn't 'good' at all, he merely obeyed the basic command to love his neighbor as himself. That is a picture of how God expects us to love our fellow human beings. We should love them as much as we love ourselves...whether they be friend or foe. Have you loved God with all your heart? Have you loved humanity as much as you love yourself? You be the judge. Will you be innocent or guilty on Judgment Day of breaking that Commandment? I'm not judging you -- I'm asking you to judge yourself before the Day of Judgment. The sentence for breaking this Commandment is death.

2. 'You shall not make for yourself any graven image.'

This means that we shouldn't make a god to suit ourselves, either with our hands or our mind. I was guilty of this. I made a god to suit myself. My god didn't mind a 'white' lie or a fib here and there -- in fact, he didn't have any moral dictates. But in truth my god didn't exist. He was a figment of my imagination, an 'image' which I shaped to suit myself. Is your god the One revealed in Holy Scripture? If not, then you have made your own god to suit yourself - you have committed the oldest sin in the Book. Scripture warns that no idolater will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. 'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.'

Have you ever taken God's name in vain -- instead of using a four-letter word to express disgust, you've used His name? Hitler's name wasn't despised enough to use as a curse word. If you have used His holy name in that manner, you are a blasphemer and will not enter the Kingdom of God.

4. 'Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.'

I ignored this command for 22 years. Even though God gave me the gift of life, never once did I ask what he required of me. I was guilty of breaking the Commandment.

5. 'Honor your father and your mother.'

Have you always honored your parents in a way that's pleasing in the sight of God? Ask Him to remind you of the sins of your youth. You may have forgotten them, but God hasn't.

6. 'You shall not murder.'

Jesus warned that if we get angry without cause we are in danger of judgment. If we hate our brother, God calls us a murderer. We can violate God's Law by attitude and intent.

7. 'You shall not commit adultery.'

Who of us can say that we are pure of heart? Jesus warned, 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart.' Remember that God has seen every thought you have had and every sin you have ever committed. The day will come when you have to face His Law, and we are told that the impure, fornicators (those who have sex before marriage) and adulterers will not enter the Kingdom of God. Punishment for transgression of this Commandment is the death penalty.

8. 'You shall not steal.'

Have you ever taken something that belonged to someone else (irrespective of its value)? Then you are a thief -- you cannot enter God's Kingdom.

9. 'You shall not bear false witness.'

Have you ever told a lie? Then you are a liar. How many lies do you have to tell to be a liar? Just one. The Bible warns that all liars will have their part in the Lake of Fire. You may not think deceitfulness is a serious sin. God does!

10. 'You shall not covet.'

That means we shouldn't desire anything that belongs to another person. The covetous will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Who of us can say we are not guilty of breaking these Commandments? All of us have sinned, and just as with civil law, you don't have to break ten laws to be a law-breaker, so the Bible warns, 'For whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.'

A little girl was once watching a sheep eat grass and thought how white it looked against the green background. But when it began to snow she thought, 'that sheep now looks dirty against the white snow!' It was the same sheep, but with a different background. When we compare ourselves to the background of man's standard we look pretty clean, but when we compare ourselves to the pure snow-white righteousness of God's standard -- His Law, we can see ourselves in truth, that we are unclean in His sight. That Law is the holy standard by which humanity will be judged on Judgment Day.

This may sound strange, but the worst thing you could at this point of time is to try and clean up you lifestyle -- you realize that you have sinned, so from now on you will keep the Ten Commandments, do good deeds, say the right things and think only pure thoughts. But should a judge let a murderer go because he says he will now live a good life? No, he's in debt to justice and therefore must be punished.

The Law of God is merely like a mirror -- all a mirror does is show you the truth. If you see egg on your face, you don't try and wash yourself with the mirror, its purpose should be to send you to water for cleansing. Neither should you try and wash yourself with the mirror of God's Law . . . that's not its purpose.

The sight in the mirror is not a pretty one, but if you can't face it and acknowledge that you are unclean, then all that 'dirt' will be presented on Judgment Day as evidence of your guilt, and then it will be too late to be cleansed.

Perhaps you think that God is good and will therefore overlook your sins. But if you were guilty of terrible crimes in a civil court and said to the judge, 'Judge, I am guilty but I believe that you are a good man and will therefore overlook my crimes,' the judge would probably respond by saying, 'You are right about one thing; I am a good man, and it's because of my goodness that I am going to see that justice is done, that you are punished for your crimes.' The very thing that many people are hoping will save them on Judgment Day, God's 'goodness,' will be the very thing that will condemn them. If God is good, He should punish murderers, liars, thieves, etc., and Hell will be their dreadful fate.

What a terrible place Hell must be. If you read in the newspaper that a man received a \$5 fine for a crime, you could conclude that his crime was insignificant. But if a man received multiple life sentences, you could conclude that his crime was heinous. In the same way, we can catch a glimpse of how terrible sin must be in the sight of God by looking to the punishment given for it -- eternal punishment. Ungrateful humanity never bothers to thank God for His wonderful blessings of color, light, food, joy, beauty, love and laughter, so He will take those blessings away from them. Instead of proving their gratitude by obedience to His will, they use His name to curse. Their punishment will be just but severe to the uttermost. Take the time to read what Jesus said Hell was like in Mark 9:43-48. I am afraid for you . . . please, look honestly into the mirror of the Law, then seek the 'water' that cleanses every sin. If you don't believe what I am saying about the reality of Hell, it means you think God is corrupt (that He hasn't the moral backbone to seek justice), that Jesus was a liar, that the Apostles were false witnesses, that God's promises are nothing but prefabricated lies, and there is no greater insult to God than to call Him a liar. By doing so, you are adding to your transgressions. Imagine if you reject the Savior, die in your sins and find that what I have told you is the Gospel truth? Then it will be too late, you will be judged for your sins. If that happens, and your eyes meet my eyes on the Day of Judgment, I'm free from your blood. I have told you the truth, but if you choose to ignore it your blood will be upon your own head . . . you will have no one to blame but yourself.

Can you see your predicament? You are guilty of sinning against God Himself, and because you have a conscience you have sinned 'with knowledge.' Isn't it true that every time you lied, stole, lusted, etc., you did it with knowledge that it was wrong?

Does the fact that you have sinned against God scare you? It should. You have actually angered Him by your sin. The Bible says His wrath abides on you, that you are an 'enemy of God in your mind through wicked works.' But let fear work for your good in the same way that a fear of jumping out of a plane at a great height would make you put on a parachute. Let your will to live open your heart to the Gospel of salvation.

I am not the only one who doesn't want you to end up in Hell. The person who gave you this document cared enough to give it to you and risk your rejection, and God Himself is not willing that you perish. To make clear what an incredible thing He has done for you in the Gospel, let's look again to civil law: You are standing in front of a judge, guilty of very serious crimes. All the evidence has been presented and

there is no doubt about your guilt. The fine for your crime is \$250,000 or imprisonment, but you haven't two pennies to rub together. The judge is about to pass sentence . . . he lifts his gavel, when someone you don't even know steps in and pays the fine for you. The moment you accept that payment, you are free to go. Justice has been served, the law has been satisfied, and what's more, the stranger who paid your fine showed how much he cares for you. His payment was evidence of his love.

That's what God did for you, in the person of Jesus Christ. You are guilty. He paid the fine 2,000 years ago. It is that simple. The Bible puts it this way: 'He was bruised for our iniquities . . . Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law being made a curse for us . . . God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'

It was no small thing for Jesus to die for us. The only thing that would satisfy the demands of Eternal Law was the suffering death of the sinless son of God. What love God must have for you! He suffered unspeakable agony, so that you wouldn't have to be punished for your sins. His sacrificial death and resurrection mean that you need no longer be in debt to the Law, and God can now grant you everlasting life if you obey Him -- death no longer has a legal hold upon those who belong to Jesus Christ.

Two men were offered a parachute while seated in a plane. The first man was told it would improve his flight, but the second man was informed that he had to make a 25,000 foot jump. When the flight struck severe turbulence the first man took his parachute off because, as far as he was concerned it didn't improve the flight. But during the same violent turbulence, this second man clung tighter to his parachute. Each man's motive for putting the parachute on determined whether or not he would keep it on*. In the same way, the reason you should 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ' shouldn't be to find peace, joy, true happiness, to have your marriage healed or your problems fixed, etc. (to have your flight improved), but it should be to escape the jump to come -- because of the fact that you have to pass through the door of death. Then, when the flight gets bumpy (when problems come) you won't fall away from the faith.

What should you then do? Simply repent and put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Don't put it off until tomorrow. Would you sell an eye for a million dollars? How about both for \$20 million? No one in his right mind would. Your eyes are priceless to you, yet they are merely the windows of your soul. Your life (your soul) is of such value, Jesus said that you should despise the value of your eye compared to it. He said that if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you, for it is better to enter Heaven blind, than to go to Hell seeing. In other words, of all the things that you should prioritize in you life, it's not your health, your vocation, etc., it's your eternal salvation.

Think of a man who has committed adultery. His faithful wife is more than willing to take him back, so what is the attitude in which he should approach her? It should be one of tremendous humility, asking for forgiveness, and determining in his heart never to even think of committing adultery again. That's how you should approach God. If you are not sure how to pray, read Psalm 51 and make it your prayer. Then put your faith in Jesus Christ in the same way you would put your faith in a parachute. You don't just 'believe' it will benefit you, you actually trust yourself to it by putting it on. Then, once you have made peace with God read the Bible daily and obey what you read.

2.7 The Problem Science Has with Jesus Christ

"Let me explain the problem science has with Jesus Christ" The atheist professor of philosophy pauses before his class and then asks one of his new students to stand. "You're a Christian, aren't you, son?"

"Yes, sir."

"So you believe in God?"

"Absolutely."

"Is God good?"

"Sure! God is good."

"Is God all powerful? Can God do anything?"

"Yes."

"Are you good or evil?"

"The Bible says I'm evil."

The professor grins knowingly. "Ahh? THE BIBLE!" He considers for a moment. "Here's one for you. Let's say there's a sick person over here and you can cure him. You can do it. Would you help them? Would you try?"

"Yes sir, I would."

"So you're good...!"

"I wouldn't say that."

"Why not say that? You would help a sick and maimed person if you could...in fact most of us would if we could...God doesn't."

No answer.

"He doesn't, does he? My brother was a Christian who died of cancer, even though he prayed to Jesus to heal him. How is this Jesus good? Hmmm? Can you answer that one?"

No answer.

The elderly man is sympathetic. "No, you can't, can you?" He takes a sip of water from a glass on his desk to give the student time to relax. In philosophy, you have to go easy with the new ones. "Let's start again, young man. Is God good?"

"Err...Yes."

"Is Satan good?"

"No."

"Where does Satan come from?"

The student falters. "From ...God..."

"That's right. God made Satan, didn't he?" The elderly man runs his bony fingers through his thinning hair and turns to the smirking student audience. "I think we're going to have a good semester, ladies and gentlemen." He turns back to the Christian. "Tell me, son. Is there any evil in this world?"

"Yes, sir."

"Evil's everywhere, isn't it? Did God make everything?"

"Yes."

"Who created evil?"

No answer.

"Is there sickness in this world? Ugliness, immorality, hatred? All the terrible things--do they exist in this world?"

The student squirms on his feet. "Yes."

"Who created them?"

No answer.

The professor suddenly shouts at his student. "WHO CREATED THEM? TELL ME, PLEASE!" The professor closes in for the kill and climbs into the Christian's face. In a still small voice: "God created them, didn't he?"

No answer.

The student tries to hold the steady, experienced gaze and fails. Suddenly the lecturer breaks away to pace the front of the classroom like an aging panther. The class is mesmerized. "Tell me," he continues, "how is it that this God is good if He created all evil throughout all time?" The professor switches his arms around to encompass the wickedness of the world. "All the hatred, the brutality, all the pain, All the torture, all the death and the ugliness and suffering created by this good God is all over the world, isn't it, young man?"

No answer.

"Don't you see it all over the place? Huh?" Pause. "Don't you?" The professor leans into the student's face again and whispers, "Is God good?"

No answer.

"Do you believe in Jesus Christ, son?"

The student's voice betrays him and cracks. "Yes, Professor, I do."

The old man shakes his head sadly. "Science says you have five senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. Have you seen Jesus?"

"No sir, I've never seen Him."

"Then tell us, have you ever heard your Jesus?"

"No, sir, I have not."

"Have you ever felt your Jesus, tasted your Jesus or smelt your Jesus...in fact, do you have any sensory perception of your God whatsoever?"

NO answer.

"Answer me, please."

"No, sir, I'm afraid I haven't."

"You're AFRAID you haven't?"

"No, sir."

"Yet you still believe in Him?"

"...yes..."

"That takes FAITH!" The professor smiles sagely at the underling. "According to the rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your God does not exist. What do you say to that, son? Where is your God now?"

The student does not answer.

"Sit down, please." The Christian sits...defeated.

Another student raises his hand. "Professor, may I address the class?" The professor turns and smiles. "Ah, another Christian in the vanguard! Come, come, young man. Speak some proper wisdom to the gathering."

The Christian looks around the room. "Some interesting points you are making, sir. Now I've got a question for you. Is there such a thing as heat?"

"Yes," the professor replies, "there's heat."

"Is there such a thing as cold?"

"Yes, son, there's cold too."

"No, sir, there isn't."

The professor's grin freezes. The room suddenly goes very quiet. The second Christian continues. "You can have lots of heat, even more heat, super-heat, meta-heat, white heat, a little heat, or no heat, but we don't have anything called 'cold'. We can hit 458 degrees below zero, which is no heat, but we can't go any further than that. There is no such thing as cold, otherwise we would be able to go colder than negative 458--you see, sir, cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. Heat we can measure in thermal units because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, it's just the absence of it." Silence. A pin drops somewhere in the classroom.

"Is there such a thing as darkness, professor?"

"That's a dumb question, son. What is night if it isn't darkness? What are you getting at?"

"So you 'believe' in darkness?":

"Yes."

"I'm very sorry, but science says you're wrong again, sir. Darkness is not something, it is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light, but if you have no light constantly, you have nothing, and its called darkness, isn't it? That's the meaning we use to define the word. In reality, darkness isn't. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker and give it to me in a jar. But you can't give me a jar of darker darkness, can you Professor?"

Despite himself, the professor smiles at the young effrontery before him. This would indeed be a good semester. "Would you mind telling us what your point is, young man?"

"Yes, professor. My point is, your philosophical premise is flawed to start with, and so your conclusion must be in error..."

The professor goes toxic. "Flawed...? How dare you...!"

"Sir, may I explain what I mean?" The class is all ears.

"Explain...oh, explain." The professor makes an admirable effort to regain control. Suddenly he is affability itself. He waves his hand to silence the class, for the student to continue.

"You are working on the premise of duality," the Christian explains, "that, for example, there is life and then there's death; a good God and a bad God. You are viewing God as a concept, as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science cannot even explain a thought. It uses electricity and magnetism, but has never seen, much less fully understood them. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life, merely the absence of it."

The young man holds up a newspaper he takes from the desk of a neighbor, who has been reading it. "Here is one of the most disgusting tabloids this country hosts, Professor. Is there such a thing as immorality?"

"Of course, there is, now look..."

"Again, I'm sorry sir, but you are wrong. You see, immorality is merely the absence of morality. Is there such a thing as injustice? No, injustice is the absence of justice. Is there such a thing as evil?" The Christian pauses. "Isn't evil the absence of good?" The professor's face has turned an alarming shade of red. He is so angry, he is temporarily speechless.

The Christian continues. "If there is evil in the world, Professor, and we all agree there is, then God, if He exists, must be accomplishing a work through the agency of evil. What is that work God is accomplishing? The Bible tells us that it is to see if each one of us will, of our own free will, choose good (the result of the love of God) over evil (the result of the independence or the absence of the love of God).

"There is nothing greater than love. God is love and God is good. If He is good, then the ultimate act of his goodness would be to give man the opportunity to experience the greatest thing that exists--love. But love cannot be forced on someone or else it is not love. There must be a choice involved. God loved us enough to allow us to make the choice. Evil is the result of the choice of independence from God."

The professor bristles. "As a philosophical scientist, I don't view this matter as having anything to do with choice; as a realist, I absolutely do not recognize the concept of God or any other theological factor as being part of the world equation because God is not observable."

"I would have thought that the absence of God's moral code in this world is probably one of the most observable phenomena going," the Christian replies. "Newspapers make billions of dollars reporting it every week! Tell me, professor, do you teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?"

"If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, young man, yes, of course I do."

"Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes, sir, or are you placing your 'faith' in the unobservable?" The professor makes a sucking noise with his teeth and gives the student a silent, stony stare.

The student replies: "May I follow up on the point you were making earlier to the other student?"

The professor wisely keeps silent.

"I believe you have a great mind Professor, but with all respect let me ask the class a question: "Is there anyone here who has ever heard the professor's mind...felt the professor's mind, touched or smelt the professor's mind?"

The class remains silent.

"No one appears to have done so. No one here has had any sensory perception of the professor's mind whatsoever. While I would not dare to imply it myself, but wouldn't the limitations of what you 'believe

in' (the rules of empirical testable, demonstrable, protocol, science) say that you have no mind? Wouldn't the same apply to your emotions and your will? I believe your great mind is hidden within your brain although I cannot observe it within the small box, or within the limited parameters which you want to place God within. If I want to know your mind or better yet the real you (your mind, emotions, will and even your spirit), all I have to do, if you are willing to be known, is be willing to seek to know you and to spend time with you."

"You can know that God exists--if you are willing. Are you willing Professor?"

Silence.

The bell rings.

"Class dismissed," replies the professor. "Time is up!"

2.8 Foundational Readings

The documents listed below will form the foundation for resolving all issues and disputes of doctrine, principle, and fact within the _____ Family. Any family court or family meeting held to discuss or resolve problems within the family will rely exclusively and only on the below-listed documents as evidence or grounds for resolving disputes. The documents are listed in order of priority or precedence, where lower numbered documents take precedence over higher numbered documents. Where documents are found to conflict then the lower numbered documents shall take precedence over the higher numbered documents.

Table 2-5: Foundational Readings

#	Title	Author	Details	Summary
1	Family Constitution	This family	Our plan for a happy family, subject to change upon mutual consent of mom and dad.	Rule book for this family.
2	The Open Bible	God	New King James Version; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1997	God's operator manual for our lives. Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth
3	Seven Deadly Sins	Anthony Campolo	Victor Books, 1987, ISBN 0-89693-533-7	Describes the seven most deadly sins including: 1. Sloth. 2. Lust. 3. Anger. 4. Pride. 5. Envy. 6. Gluttony. 7. Greed.
4	Love for a Lifetime	James Dobson	Tyndale House Publishing	Describes the foundations for a lifelong marriage

#	Title	Author	Details	Summary
5	The Parents Handbook	Don Dinkmeyer, Sr. Gary D. McKay Don Dinkmeyer, Jr.	American Guidance Service, 1997, ISBN 0-7854-1188-7	The most excellent and concise parenting book available and the most popular book of its kind. Deals mainly with emotional well-being of the child. Based on the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) curriculum.
6	Before You Say I Do	H. Norman Wright Wes Roberts	Harvest House Publishers, 1997, ISBN 1-56507-637-0	Pre-marital counseling book
7	The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People	Stephen R. Covey	Fireside Publishers, 1989, ISBN 0-671-66398-4	An inspirational and very concise book on self-improvement
8	Baby and Childcare	Paul Reisser, M.D.	Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; 1997, ISBN 0-8423-0889-X	Addresses practical medical and emotional aspects of parenting in great detail
9	Love Must Be Tough	James Dobson	Word Publishing, 1983, ISBN 0-8499-0348-3	Addresses how to deal with serious sin in a marriage context

2.9 Proverbs to Live By

1. Character:

- 1.1. "He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help." Abraham Lincoln (*A Husband's Little Black Book*, Robert Ackerman, p 112)
- 1.2. "Rudeness is the weak man's imitation of strength." Eric Hoffer (*A Husband's Little Black Book*, Robert Ackerman)
- 1.3. "Character is what you do when no one is watching." J.C. Watts, *Republican*.
- 1.4. "Behold the turtle: He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out." James Conant.
- 1.5. "Pride makes us do things well, but it is love that makes us do them to perfection." H. Jackson Brown.
- 1.6. "Luck is when preparedness and opportunity coincide. People who spend all of their time preparing and looking for opportunities tend to be very lucky indeed." (Me)
- 1.7. "When an old person dies, a library is lost." Tommy Swan
- 1.8. "Your ATTITUDE determines your ALTITUDE!" Unknown
- 1.9. "Do a good job because you WANT to, not because you HAVE to. That puts YOU in charge instead of your boss." H. Jackson Brown.
- 1.10. "Problems are just opportunities in work clothes!" H. Jackson Brown.
- 1.11. "What you are shouts so loudly in my ears that I cannot hear what you say." Ralph Waldo Emerson.
- 1.12. "Ask not and ye shall definitely receive not." Unknown
- 1.13. "One man with courage is a majority." Andrew Jackson
- 1.14. "Let the refining and improving of your own life keep you so busy that you have little time to criticize others." H. Jackson Brown
- 1.15. "Praise in public. Criticize in private." H. Jackson Brown
- 1.16. "You can fool some of the people some of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool ALL of the people ALL of the time." Abraham Lincoln
- 1.17. "Wear out, don't rust out." H. Jackson Brown
- 1.18. "Some goals are so worthy, it's glorious even to fail." Unknown

- 1.19. "There can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity." Samuel Johnson.
- 1.20. "Evil triumphs because good men passively sit and do nothing." Unknown.

2. Relationships:

- 2.1. "Be faithful, and remember: it doesn't matter where you get your appetite as long as you eat at home." (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman)
- 2.2. "If the phone rings when you are making love, don't answer it. Who could be more important?" (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p 133)
- 2.3. "If you forget her birthday, have a good excuse. If you forget her anniversary, move out of town!" (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p. 118)
- 2.4. "Fill the tub with hot water and bubble bath for her, light a candle, fill a glass of white wine--- then leave her alone!" (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p. 148)
- 2.5. "Write her a love letter, but be careful about what you promise. You don't want to be guilty of MALE fraud!" (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p. 155)
- 2.6. "Love her for who she is, not for what you would like her to be." (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p. 143)
- 2.7. "Remember that arguments have three sides: his, hers, and the facts." (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p. 75)
- 2.8. "It is more important to go together than it is to know where you are going." (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p 125)
- 2.9. "Order something for her from Victoria's Secrets catalog." (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p. 127)
- 2.10. "The opposite of love is NOT hate, it is indifference!" (Me)
- 2.11. "Would you rather be happy, or would you rather be right?" Unknown (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman)
- 2.12. "It is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses." Hammerskjold, Dag; past Secretary-General of the United Nations
- 2.13. "The test of a man or woman's breeding is how they behave in a quarrel." George Bernard Shaw (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman)

3. Parenting:

- 3.1. "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother." Theodore Hesburgh (A Husband's Little Black Book, Robert Ackerman, p 116)

4. Work/business/government:

- 4.1. "Read carefully anything that requires your signature. Remember that the big print giveth and the small print taketh away." Chris Hansen
- 4.2. "Do you know the difference between education and experience? Education is what you get when you read the fine print. Experience is what you get if you don't." Peter Seeger
- 4.3. "People who think logically are a nice contrast to the real world." Unknown
- 4.4. "Remember that the more you know, the less you fear!" H. Jackson Brown
- 4.5. "A conference is a gathering of people who single can do nothing, but together can decide that nothing can be done." Fred Allen
- 4.6. "Even when you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." Unknown
- 4.7. "Remember that only dead fish swim with the stream." Unknown.
- 4.8. "Friends may come and go but enemies accumulate." Unknown
- 4.9. "Computers let you make more mistakes faster than any other invention in human history, with the possible exception of handguns and tequila." Mitch Radcliffe

TO BE A LIBERAL:

1. *You have to believe the AIDS virus is spread by a lack of funding.*
2. *You have to believe that the same overpaid public school idiot who can't teach 4th graders how to read is qualified to teach those same kids about sex.*
3. *You have to believe that trial lawyers are selfless heroes and doctors are overpaid.*
4. *You have to believe that guns in the hands of law-abiding Americans are more of a threat than nuclear weapons in the hands of the Red Chinese.*
5. *You have to believe that global temperatures are less affected by cyclical, documented changes in the brilliance of the Sun, and more affected by yuppies driving SUVs.*
6. *You have to believe that gender roles are artificial but being gay is natural.*
7. *You have to believe that businesses create oppression and governments create prosperity.*
8. *You have to believe that hunters don't care about nature but pasty, euphorians who've never been outside Seattle do.*
9. *You have to believe that self-esteem is more important than actually doing something to earn it.*
10. *You have to believe there was no art before federal funding.*
11. *You have to believe the military, not corrupt politicians, start wars.*
12. *You have to believe the free market that gives us 500+ channels, can't deliver the quality that PBS does.*
13. *You have to believe the NRA is bad, because they stand up for certain parts of the Constitution, while the ACLU is good, because they stand up for certain parts of the Constitution.*
14. *You have to believe that taxes are too low but ATM fees are too high.*
15. *You have to believe that Harriet Tubman, Caesar Chavez and Gloria Steinhem are more important to American history than Thomas Jefferson, General Robert E. Lee or Thomas Edison.*
16. *You have to believe that standardized tests are racist, but racial quotas and set-asides aren't.*
17. *You have to believe second-hand smoke is more dangerous than HIV.*
18. *You have to believe that the only reason socialism hasn't worked anywhere it's been tried, is because the right people haven't been in charge.*

3. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

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3.1 Role of Families

Families are the cells that make up the organism called our civilization. They are the smallest and most permanent economic unit of our civilization and they are the means for bringing up the next generation of citizens and taxpayers. Unfortunately, the bible doesn't specifically talk about the role of families as a separate entity, but they surely have a role that is far more important than any other relationship or role. They are:

1. A means of passing down knowledge, lore, and moral values from generation to generation. For instance, older people (grandparents) can impart wisdom to their grand children.
2. A support network that allows people to help each other. For instance, parents and grandparents can provide daycare for younger couples who need some time alone together or have family matters to attend to. This has the effect of strengthening younger marriages and encouraging the goals of item #1 above. This in turn encourages economic prosperity, because two together can always live more economically than two living separately.
3. A means of honoring God by encouraging and maintaining unity, peace, and unselfishness among his children.
4. A mechanism for providing balanced sex role-models to children. Children learn by example how to behave from their parents and how healthy marriages are supposed to function and thereby get the tools for living life.
5. A way to prevent loneliness and give people purpose in their lives.
6. A way to transfer wealth from generation to generation through inheritance.
7. Back before we had social security and Medicare and all several other government entitlement programs as a safety net, they provided the equivalent of welfare when people were having a hard time. Family members would provide shelter and food to help each other get back on their feet when they fell on hard times. However, since that time, income taxes mainly have allowed the usurpation of the role of families in this area and have forced us into an unhealthy kind of idolatry, where the government replaced all these functions.

3.2 Getting Our Personal Act Together: First Things First

Before we have a prayer of interacting effectively with other members of the family, we have to get our *own* act together first. Just as Jesus said in Matt. 7:3-5:

And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother 'Let me remove the speck from your eye and look, a plank is in your own eye?' Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

If we are hypocrites, then other people in the family will recognize it and we will lose the respect and credibility that we need to interact effectively with them. Therefore, we need to continually focus on cleansing our soul, renewing our faith in God, and in demonstrating our faith through good works and the fruit of the spirit before we can expect to get the respect we deserve from other family members. We must work diligently to earn their respect before we can expect them to cooperate with us and work out problems collectively. This section focuses on how to do that.

3.2.1 Proper Attitude

*Life can't give me joy and peace,
it's up to me to will it.
Life just gives me time and space;
it's up to me to fill it.*

The following section provides a benediction to be read before the start of each day as an exercise to improve one's perspective and attitude for the remainder of the day. Our own outlook and attitude is the single most important factor that influences how we relate to other people in the family.

It's quiet. It's early. The sky is still black. The world is still asleep. The day is coming. In a few moments the day will arrive. It will roar down the track with the rising of the sun. The stillness of the dawn will be exchanged for the noise of the day. The calm of the solitude will be replaced by the pounding pace of the human race. The refuge of the early morning will be invaded by decisions to be made and deadlines to be met.

For the next twelve hours I will be exposed to the day's demands. It is now that I must make a choice. Because of Calvary, I'm free to choose. And so I choose.

I choose love... No occasion justifies hatred or apathy; no injustice warrants bitterness. I choose love. Today I will love God and what God loves.

I choose joy... I will invite my God to be the God of my circumstances. I will refuse the temptation to be cynical..the tool of the lazy thinker. I will refuse to see people as anything less than human beings, created equal by God. I will refuse to see any problem as anything less than an opportunity to see God.

I choose peace... I will live forgiven. I will forgive so that I may live and share with others the same mercy that God and his son Jesus gives to me continually.

I choose patience... I will overlook the inconveniences of the world. Instead of cursing the one who takes my place, I'll invite him to do so. Rather than complaining that the wait is too long, I will thank God for a moment to pray. Instead of clenching my fist at new assignments, I will face them with joy and courage.

I choose kindness... I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone. Kind to the rich, for they are afraid. And kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated me.

I choose goodness... I will go without a dollar before I take a dishonest one. I will be overlooked before I will boast. I will confess before I will accuse. I choose goodness.

I choose faithfulness... Today I will keep my promises. My debtors will not regret their trust. My associates will not question my word. My loved ones will not question my love. And my children will never fear that their parent will not come home.

I choose gentleness... Nothing is won by force. I choose to be gentle. If I raise my voice, may it be only in praise. If I clench my fist, may it be only in prayer. If I make a demand, may it be only of myself.

I choose self-control... I am a spiritual being. After this body is dead, my spirit will soar. I refuse to let what will rot, rule the eternal. I choose self-control. I will be drunk only by joy. I will be impassioned only by my faith. I will be influenced only by God. I will be taught only by Christ. I choose self-control.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To these I commit my day. If I succeed, I will give thanks. If I fail, I will seek His grace. And then when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest.

3.2.2 Mutual Respect

Respect is about esteeming and valuing other people. Truly respecting ourselves is hard if we don't respect others. People are encouraged when they feel respected.

We show respect by:

1. **Helping others:** This includes friends and neighbors.
2. **Being polite.** Everyone appreciates being treated politely. Use the words “please” and “thank you” frequently.
3. **Admiring and encouraging the good actions of others.** This will help develop their character and make them better people.
4. **Giving people resources, space, and time have their own identity apart from the relationship.** This means:
 - 4.1. Giving them privacy when they need it.
 - 4.2. Giving them some territory or domain within the relationship that they have complete and ultimate authority over and can “own.” For instance, if they are the woman, you might want to let them decide how the house gets decorated inside and the furnishings that are bought. If they are the man, it might be letting him decide how to do the landscaping.
 - 4.3. Giving them a budget or allowance of their own to do what they want with and don't question how they spend the money or ask for an accounting.
 - 4.4. Letting them spend time alone with friends and doing things without their spouse involved.
 - 4.5. Not trying to control or influence every aspect of their life.
5. **Being a good listener, and not interrupting people when they are talking.** Let them finish what they are saying and repeat back what they said when they are finished to make sure you understand before you start talking in response.
6. **Giving people equal time to talk.** Let them have enough space to get their feelings off their chest without interruption.
7. **Focus on the importance of the relationship and the value of the people.** Always end disagreements with a focus on how to fix problems, instead of who is to blame. Emphasize helping people and solutions rather than judgment, blame, and punishment.
8. **If you have to label things as bad or harmful, focus on behavior rather than people.** God loves everyone, but he hates bad behavior.

Expect your spouse and child to treat you respectfully too. Begin by telling them what you expect. If they forget, don't nag. Instead offer gentle reminders. If they get angry about being reminded, then rebuke them.

3.2.2.1 Appreciate That People are Different⁸

Our world is full of people who are different from one another. We come from large families and small families. We are of different races, religions, and values. We enjoy different activities. We have different interests, talents, and abilities. The Bible talks about how we should accept this kind of diversity and the differences between us in Romans 12:3-18:

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Teach your children to appreciate these differences, and show that you appreciate them.

3.2.2.2 Respecting Your Children

Parents often complain that their children do not respect them. Yet, many times, adults show children a lack of respect. How? By nagging, yelling, hitting, or talking down to them. By doing things for children that they can do for themselves. By following a double standard.

⁸ The Parent's Handbook, Don Dinkmeyer, 1997, American Guidance Service, ISBN 0-7854-1188-7, p. 57.

In a democratic family, no one is considered more or less important than anyone else. You show respect when you treat your child like an equal.

- Does this mean that you are both the same? No. You know more and have more life experience than your child. You have more responsibilities. But both you and your child are human beings. You both deserve respect.
- Does it mean that your child can tell you what to do? Or that you are not in charge? No. You need to be in charge. It is your job to guide your child. But you can guide your child respectfully.

A good rule to remember is that you want to treat your child and your spouse with the same respect you would show a friend. It may take some time for your spouse or your child to begin to show respect back to you. Don't give up if this doesn't happen right away. We all need to practice this habit and be willing to take the first step.

3.2.3 Stages of Personal Growth⁹

On the maturity continuum, there are three stages that we go through as we grow to adulthood:

1. Dependence: Dependence is the paradigm of *you*—*you* take care of me; *you* come through for me; *you* didn't come through; I blame *you* for the results.
2. Independence: Independence is the paradigm of *I*—*I* can do it; *I* am responsible; *I* am self-reliant; *I* can choose.
3. Interdependence: Interdependence is the paradigm of *we*—*we* can do it; *we* can cooperate; *we* can combine our talents and abilities and create something greater together.

Dependent people need others to get what they want. Independent people can get what they want through their own effort. Interdependent people combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success.

If I were physically dependent—paralyzed or disabled or limited in some physical way—I would need you to help me. If I were emotionally dependent, my sense of worth and security would come from your opinion of me. If you didn't like me, it could be devastating. If I were intellectually dependent, I would count on you to do my thinking for me, to think through the issues and problems of my life.

If I were independent, physically, I could pretty well make it on my own. Mentally, I could think my own thoughts, I could move from one level of abstraction to another. I could think creatively and analytically and organize and express my thoughts in understandable ways. Emotionally, I would be validated from within. I would be inner directed. My sense of worth would not be a function of being liked or treated well.

It's easy to see that independence is much more mature than dependence. Independence is a major achievement in and of itself. But independence is not supreme.

⁹ *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey, 1989, Fireside, pp. 49-52.

Nevertheless, the current social paradigm enthrones independence. It is the avowed goal of many individuals and social movements. Most of the self-improvement material puts independence on pedestal, as though communication, teamwork, and cooperation were lesser values.

But much of our current emphasis on independence is a reaction to dependence—to having others control us, define us, use us, and manipulate us.

The little understood concept of interdependence appears to many to smack of dependence, and therefore, we find people often for selfish reasons, leaving their marriages, abandoning their children, and forsaking all kinds of social responsibility—all in the name of independence.

The kind of reaction that results in people “throwing off their shackles,” becoming “liberated,” “asserting themselves,” and “doing their own thing” often reveals more fundamental dependencies that cannot be run away from because they are internal rather than external—dependencies such as letting the weaknesses of other people ruin our emotional lives or feeling victimized by people and events out of our control.

Of course, we may need to change our circumstances. But the dependence problem is a personal maturity issue that has little to do with circumstances. Even with better circumstances, immaturity and dependence often persist.

True independence of character empowers us to act rather than be acted upon. It frees us from our dependence on circumstances and other people and is a worthy, liberating goal. But is not the ultimate goal in effective living.

Independent thinking alone is not suited to interdependent reality. Independent people who do not have the maturity to think and act interdependently may be good individual producers, but they won't be good leaders or team players. They're not coming from the paradigm of interdependence necessary to succeed in marriage, family, or organizational reality.

Life is, by nature, highly interdependent. To try to achieve maximum effectiveness through independence is like trying to play tennis with a golf club—the tool is not suited to the reality.

Interdependence is a far more mature, more advanced concept. If I am physically interdependent, I am self-reliant and capable, but I also realize that you and I working together can accomplish far more than, even in my best, I could accomplish alone. If I am emotionally interdependent, I derive a great sense of worth within myself, but I also recognize the need for love, for giving, and for receiving love from others. If I am intellectually interdependent, I realize that I need the best thinking of other people to join with my own.

As an interdependent person, I have the opportunity to share myself deeply, meaningfully, with others, and I have access to the vast resources and potential of other human beings.

Interdependence is a choice only independent people can make. Dependent people cannot choose to become interdependent. They don't have the character to do it; they don't own enough of themselves.

As you become truly independent, you have the foundation for effective interdependence. You have the character base from which you can effectively work on the more personality-oriented “Public victories” of teamwork, cooperation, and communication.

3.2.4 Dealing with Personal Problems Effectively

Over the years, I have developed some very effective techniques for dealing with my own personal problems. I have learned that if we follow a structured plan for managing and fixing our personal problems, then they are much easier to deal with and we can converge on a much happier and more satisfying life over time. Here is the procedure I have developed:

1. Periodically sit down and review your life, your goals, and your accomplishments. I call this a “personal performance review”. The concept is just like a performance review at your job, but instead you are evaluating how good *you* have been at getting what *you* need out of life to make yourself happy. A good time to do this is at least once per month during a quiet time where you have at least two hours without interruption and access to a computer. If you are married, you should do this *with a spouse* and not separately. This time is:
 - 1.1. A time to review your personal journal and look at when problems are happening in your life and the factors or causes prior to the occurrence of the problem that contributed to the problem.
 - 1.2. A time to be honest with yourself about things you may be doing to contribute to the undesirable aspects of your living situation and your relationships.
 - 1.3. A time to read section 2.5 3 of this document: “God’s Memorandum to Us” before you begin writing things down.
 - 1.4. A time to focus on things that you can influence and control in a positive way and constructive way, and which you and your spouse and only the two of you are responsible for dealing with.
 - 1.5. To be used for prayer and brainstorming solutions to your personal problems or “wellness issues”.
 - 1.6. A time when you can sit down and evaluate how good you have been during the past month at making yourself and your spouse happy and meeting your emotional and material needs (not selfish wants, but legitimate needs). If you are married, then your partner's needs should be more important than your own.
 - 1.7. A time to evaluate or re-evaluate your longer-term goals in life, and whether they are Biblically sound, realistic, and achievable.
2. Begin with mutual prayer: Hold your spouses' hand, close your eyes, and kneel in prayer. Start the session by thanking God for all the blessings he has given, for your spouse and your children, for health and the absence of financial problems. Focus on thankfulness and contentment and ask the Lord to help you understand and document the problems you are having in your life together. Ask him for help in loving your partner and yourself unconditionally by always approaching problems constructively and trying to improve the situation. Focus on how you can help your partner rather than on how they can help you. This will:
 - 2.1. Put the focus on unselfishness and helping each other.
 - 2.2. Reduce anxiety and fear.
 - 2.3. Create hope for improvement.
 - 2.4. Increase trust in the providence of God's will in our lives as we petition him to influence our situation positively.
3. Make a Problem Summary List with your spouse. Another way to look at this is a wellness list. You can ask yourself “What things could I be doing better to increase the happiness and satisfaction of my partner (if married) or my own life (if single).” During your personal “performance review”, make a table with five columns and several rows. The Problem Summary List table is used to define and identify longer-term problems in your life that you can resolve to

work on and correct in the coming weeks and months. You should list the problems or “wellness issues” in order of priority, with the most important problems at the top of the list with the lowest number in the priority column. You might want to do this list on a computer to keep it sorted at all times. Writing your problems down helps you to deal with them logically and objectively. If they just bounce around in your head and never go on paper, you can’t look at them objectively or organize an approach for dealing with them. You can do the four sections as a four column table or you can devote one sheet of paper to each section if there are too many things to put in a table. The column or section headings are:

- 3.1. *Priority*-Priority or significance of the impact of this problem on your life. The priority should be a reflection of the family priorities identified in section 1.3 of this Family Constitution.
- 3.2. *Problem*-What personal problem are you having, in high-level terms? A good way to identify problems are those situations or events or processes that create fear and anxiety or anger. You can start by talking about things that make you angry, because fear and anxiety most often express themselves ultimately as anger. However, we must ensure that we aren't angry or upset about the wrong things. For instance, getting angry because we are overmaterialistic and want a brand new car but our spouse doesn't think we need one is probably a wrong reason to get mad, and therefore, we wouldn't list this as a problem that needs to be fixed. We might list the expressions of greed and envy that are behind this anger as a problem that needs to be fixed, though.
- 3.3. *Symptom(s) of problem*-Emotional and practical symptoms of the problem. How is the problem impacting your life? What is wrong with your life right now that needs to be fixed?
- 3.4. *Cause(s)*-Behavioral factors that you and the people you know are exercising that are causing this problem. Don't list people's names here, because anger and blaming will only discourage spouses from participating in the process.
- 3.5. *Solution candidate(s)*-Possible ways to correct the problem. The solutions should be focused on detailed and practical behaviors we can do to eliminate the causes that are expressing themselves as problems in our lives. We should never list as a solution a behavior that would be a sin as described in chapter 7 of this document.

Below is an example of one of my own Problem Summary Lists so you can see how this is done.

Table 3-1: Sample Problem Summary List

<i>Pri- ority</i>	<i>Problem</i>	<i>Symptom(s)</i>	<i>Cause(s)</i>	<i>Solution(s)</i>
1	Marriage is falling apart	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No communication. 2. Frequent arguments. 3. No sex. 4. Unhappiness. 5. Mistrust and/or suspicion. 6. Frequent criticism 7. Spending too much time at work to escape family involvement. 8. Kids are rebelling and critical of parents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selfishness. 2. Bad priorities: God first, spouse second, children third. 3. No spiritual life. 4. Not helping or encouraging other family members enough. 5. Negativity. 6. Lack of thankfulness, appreciation, and encouragement. 7. No sexual submission to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on God with prayer and Bible study regularly. 2. Spend less time at work. 3. Submit yourself sexually to your spouse as God commands, whether you feel like it or not. 4. Communicate more. 5. Have regular family meetings to deal with emotional problems. 6. Do more family

Priority	Problem	Symptom(s)	Cause(s)	Solution(s)
			<p>spouse as Bible commands us.</p>	<p>events together.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Reward and encourage family members for expressing their feelings and needs. 8. Show more empathy. 9. Be unselfish. 10. Work on trust and love. 11. Read books on parenting and relationships to give you ideas on how to deal constructively with your marriage/family problem. 12. Write a Family Constitution of your own, like this one!
2	Family money situation is tight	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frequent arguments with wife over money. 2. Large credit card debt. 3. Bad credit rating. 4. Paying bills late 5. Poor sex life, because of worries over family finances. 6. Spouses working overtime or two jobs to make ends meet. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No family budget. 2. Poor priorities: God should be first! 3. Family members too selfish. Need to focus on contentment and thankfulness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pay off debt. 2. Make a family budget. 3. Involve everyone in making the budget. 4. Review the budget monthly and stick to it. 5. Start having Family meetings regularly. Start them with prayer and focus on thankfulness and people, rather than things. Review progress on the budget so far with the family. 6. Tell the children they have to give up all but 10 of their toys to Goodwill. This will help them learn contentment. 7. Start serving the

Pri- ority	Problem	Symptom(s)	Cause(s)	Solution(s)
				needs of underprivileged others as a family to help learn contentment.
3	Feel lonely	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No activities with friends on weekends. 2. No one over for dinner. 3. No relatives living in the area. 4. Selfish focus on personal gratification. 5. Don't serve God and help other people enough. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Too focused on self. 2. No spiritual life. 3. Lack of contentment. 4. No daily prayer. 5. No Bible study. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to church regularly. 2. Pray at least daily. 3. Study the Bible at least daily. 4. Plan more activities as a family. 5. Join social organizations, like clubs, toastmasters. 6. Make more friends. 7. Do more activities with friends. 8. Be a volunteer at the church. 9. Focus more on helping others.

4. Spend at least one half hour filling in the table or sheets of paper with as much information as you can about your personal and collective family problems. Spend more time on the more important things. Frequently sort the list on the computer to keep it in priority order as you work so that you can focus on the more important things most. If you are married, the list should contain inputs from both spouses. Spouses can make their own lists before the "wellness session", but the output of the session should be a consolidated list that contains inputs from both spouses. This will emphasize teamwork, build communication and coping skills, and also serve as a way to inform your spouse about expectations that your partner has which you were not aware of. Being informed about these expectations regularly will help develop trust and empathy. Don't bitch or criticize or blame your partner, because this will just alienate them. Don't put names of people on the list who are to blame. Focus on behaviors and not people as much as you can. Emphasize to your spouse that mature love is about hope and improvement and a positive focus on doing things to help and give to your spouse rather than selfishly doing what benefits oneself only.
5. Select at least one solution for each of the individual problems you have from the Problem Summary List. The solution(s) you select should be specific, detailed, measurable things you can do to help eliminate the problem. These solutions will become part of your ongoing goals and objectives subject to periodic review. You will add these solutions later to your "To do" list and prioritize them. *Each spouse must pick at least one thing (solution) off the list that they personally can do to improve the situation and help their spouse.* This is their way of demonstrating commitment, unselfishness, teamwork, and love towards their partner.
6. Create a specific task list of measurable goals and progress indicators to deal with the problems based on the solutions you have selected in step 6 above. List them in order of decreasing priority.

The higher priority items should be at the top of the list and have the lowest number. They must be time-specific and detailed in nature. Some examples:

- 6.1. If the solution selected from your Problem Summary List in step 6 above is to attend more social functions, then select specific functions to attend and put them on your calendar or task list.
- 6.2. If the solution selected from your Problem Summary List in step 6 above is to attend family counseling, then select a counselor and schedule appointments with the counselor.
7. Enter the goals and objectives in your organizer program or Day-Timer. This will force you to look at the goals frequently and get them done in a timely manner.
8. Conclude in prayer.
9. At the end of the meeting, put the date on the working papers and then file them in a "wellness binder" that you can refer to during the next "performance review".
10. Track your progress until the next "personal performance review". Hold yourself accountable for your own happiness (if you are single) or your spouse's happiness (if you are married). Evaluate frequently whether the solutions you are attempting are working. Seek feedback from your spouse throughout the week on the effectiveness of the solution(s). Focus on the problem you are working on in your daily prayers up until the next meeting. If the solutions aren't working, write this down and use it as input for your next "personal performance review".
11. The next time you meet with your spouse for your "personal performance review":
 - 11.1. Retrieve the "wellness binder" for the session and look at the list from last week or the last time you had a "performance review".
 - 11.2. Go over the measurable goals you set for last time. Each spouse should provide a self-assessment to their partner of what they did to ensure that they met their responsibilities for relationships improvement during the past week. Don't criticize them if they didn't meet all their responsibilities, but ensure that they know they are accountable for their responsibilities and that behaving responsibly is the most important way that they can demonstrate the love they have for their spouse.
 - 11.3. After both spouses have completed their personal progress assessment, then they should take turns asking their spouse: "How do you think I did and what could I do better next time." They should then listen patiently for feedback from their spouse on how they could do it better. There should be no anger or resentment expressed, because this will only interfere with progress. The person who is listening should not interrupt their spouse, but wait until their spouse is finished talking. They should write the spouse's comments on a notepad to ensure they understand what is being said and can remember it. Good listening skills are every bit as important to empathetic communication as speaking skills.
 - 11.4. After reviewing progress during the past week, then go back to step 2 above and address new business for that week.

3.3 Rules of the House

1. We obey our Lord Jesus Christ and what he commands us to do in the owner's manual he gave us for our life on earth called the Bible.
2. We love, honor and pray for one another.
3. We tell the truth, ALWAYS.
4. When we make a commitment or a promise, and especially a marriage commitment, we ALWAYS try to live up to everything we promised because we are concerned about our credibility and integrity and made that promise in front of God, our family, and all our collective friends.

5. We always try to give to people that what they need and expect most from their family and their relationships:
 - 5.1. Acceptance
 - 5.2. Affirmation/appreciation/encouragement
 - 5.3. Empathy
6. We unselfishly consider one another's interests ahead of our own.
7. We speak quietly and respectfully with one another.
8. We do not hurt one another with unkind words or deeds, but we always tell the truth in love, especially if they are acting arrogantly and selfishly.
9. When someone needs correction, we correct him in LOVE and using TRUTH, not angry words, lies, or vain retribution.
10. When someone is sorry, we forgive him/her.
11. When we have done something wrong, we apologize to the people we have hurt immediately as soon as we realize it, and because others forgive us, then anger and resentment never accumulate and the family is always peaceful.
12. When someone is sad, we comfort him.
13. When someone is happy, we rejoice with him.
14. When we have something nice to share, we share it.
15. Personal responsibility:
 - 15.1. When we have work to do, we do it without complaining.
 - 15.2. We take good care of everything God has given us. It is only a gift that we have TEMPORARY STEWARDSHIP over during our short time here on earth.
 - 15.3. We do not create unnecessary work for others.
 - 15.4. When we open something, we close it.
 - 15.5. When we turn something on, we turn it off.
 - 15.6. When we take something out, we put it away.
 - 15.7. When we make a mess, we clean it up.
 - 15.8. When we do not know what to do, we ask.
16. When we go out, we act just as if we were in this house.

3.4 Family Event Schedule

The following schedule of events shall apply within the family, subject to change by written consent of both parents.

Table 3-2: Family Event Schedule

<i>Event</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>When</i>
Family meeting	Weekly	Sunday 2p.m.-4p.m.
Family Bible Study	Weekly	Sunday 1p.m.-2p.m.
Husband's Birthday	Annually	September 7
Wife's Birthday	Annually	October 25
Child's birthday	Annually	December 30
Family Week	Annually	

3.5 Importance of Unity within the Family

3.5.1 What is unity?

Like all of God's precepts, His commandments regarding marriage and family are intended to reflect a universal eternal principle. The principle behind God's commands for marriage and family is unity. God's design for a husband and a wife is evident in the words of Genesis 2:24: "a man will...be *united* to his wife, and they will become *one* flesh." God did not come up with that idea just to make for nice wedding ceremonies; in God's eyes, unity is the central element of the marriage and family relationships.

Similarly, God designed the family as a unity; an unbroken circle of strong, loving, lasting relationships; the primary unit of human society (Num. 1, e.g.); a hedge against loneliness (Ps. 68:6); a defense against poverty and affliction (1 Tim. 5:4-8); and an environment for child-rearing and education (1 Tim. 5:4-8).

God values unity. "*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in **unity!***" the Bible says (Ps. 133:1). Jesus reminded His disciples of His desire to bring all people --not only the Jews--into His kingdom, so that there would be "***one flock and one shepherd***" (John 10:16). Scripture records Jesus' prayer that His disciples "may be one" (John 17:21), and God's Word advises His children to "*Make every effort to keep the **unity** of the Spirit*" (Eph. 4:3).

God's precepts concerning marriage and family are not thrown out willy-nilly, like a child creating a spatter-painting on a spinning wheel at the county fair; they are part of a positive purposeful design, a design that is meant to reflect a principle: unity.

3.5.2 Example

For century upon century, faithful Jews have begun their daily prayers by reciting the *shema*, the phrase Moses spoke to the Israelites after delivering the Ten Commandments to them:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one (Deut. 6:4).

Those words are sacred to a Jew. Those are the words, written in Hebrew on tiny slips of paper, that orthodox Jews bind to their arms and foreheads in phylacteries, and attach outside the doors of their homes in a little box or cylinder called a *mezuzah* (in literal obedience to Deut. 6:8-9).

The *shema* reveals the singularity of God. There is no other God. "See now," God says in his Word, "there is no god besides me" (Deut. 32:39). "Before me no god was formed," He declares, "nor will there be one after me" (Is. 43:10).

But the *shema* does not only refer to the singularity of God; it also testifies to His unity. Long before Jesus Christ was revealed to men and women as the Son of God, long before the Holy Spirit was given to the Church of the Pentecost, God revealed Himself as a mysterious unity. Even the Hebrew Scriptures intimate the concept of a plural Godhead--yet within the Godhead existed also perfect unity. The Christian Scriptures reveal that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). Yet the *shema* makes it clear that God is not partnerships. He is not a conglomeration. He is not a committee. He is a *unity*: "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, *the Lord is one*" (Deut. 6:4).

He cannot be separated. He cannot be divided. Unity is not something He strives for; it is not even something He achieves. It is something He *is*. "I and the Father are one." Jesus said. "Understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:30, 38).

Unity is part of God's nature and character. He is one. And it is that unity that He wishes us to reflect in our marriages and family relationships. When the Bible says that a man and woman shall "be united...and...become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24), it is saying that marriage should reflect God's nature. When parents obey the divine command to "be fruitful and increase in number" (Gen. 1:28), that family should also reflect the unity that God values.

The test of truth grounds "family values" in the nature and character of God. Because God is one, disunity in a marriage or family is displeasing to Him. Because God is one, broken marriages and families do not reflect His standards. Because God is one, His nature defines marriage and family in lasting, lifelong terms. We can then say that unity in marriage and family is right for all people, for all times, and for all places.

3.5.3 Evidence

God ordained the institutions of marriage and family not only to reflect His unity, but also because He knew some things we didn't; He wanted to protect and provide for us.

The research shows that less than half of our kids (48 percent) can say that they want "a marriage like that of my parents," and eight in ten (79 percent) see divorce as a viable solution to marital problems, regardless of whether children are involved. Less than half (47 percent) see the family as a crucial element of American society.

Yet, at the same time, 90 percent of our young people avow that "God intended marriage to last a lifetime." These numbers suggest that most of our children desperately need to understand how the evidence supports God's standards for marriage and the family.

3.5.3.1 Protect from Disillusionment and provide for fulfillment

God's standards for marriage and family protect from disillusionment. Brokenness and disappointment invariably result from attempts to short-cut biblical standards of marriage and family. Our youth who live together outside of marriage are setting themselves up to be disappointed--even if they "intend" to marry later.

One woman wrote:

I wish I could tell every young adult in American that you truly will reap what you sow. Cohabitation may seem wonderful initially (sin is so deceiving!), but eventually it creates more problems than you can imagine.

I lived with my boyfriend for two years before we got married. I knew I was breaking my parents' hearts, as well as my Heavenly Father's heart! My boyfriend was not a Christian, but I figured I could change him if we moved in together.

The "this-is-yours, that-is-mine" mentality that enabled us to "successfully" live together completely unraveled once we got married. We had become too separate and too selfish,

*making it nearly impossible to become "one flesh." The honeymoon was over before the wedding day ever arrived.*¹⁰

Notice that the author of that letter was a professing Christian when she moved in with her boyfriend! She hoped to evangelize him by living with him outside of marriage. Like too many of our children, she accepted a counterfeit (cohabitation) for the real thing (marriage).

In his 1993 book, *The Future of the American Family*, George Barna says, "Cohabiting has increased 1888 percent among eighteen-to-twenty-four-year-olds in the last three years." Many of those cohabiting couples see living together as a sort of "trial marriage." But they are deceived.

"The National Survey of Families and Households," conducted by University of Wisconsin researchers, reveals that two-fifths of couples who live together break up within 1.3 years--before they get married. Those who *do* marry after cohabiting are 50 percent more likely to divorce than those who don't cohabit before marriage. In other words, the "conventional wisdom" that views cohabitation as a trial marriage is flat-out wrong; living together does not prevent mistakes nor increase one's chances of building a successful marriage. Quite the opposite.

Moreover, compromising biblical standards can be physically dangerous--especially to women. A Justice Department study reported that cohabiting women are sixty-two times (520 percent) more likely to suffer from assault as wives. Apparently, says religion columnist Michael McManus, "Men respect wives [more than they do] live-in lovers."

God's standards for marriage and family provide for fulfillment. Married life is not necessarily easy. Husbands and wives argue, dishes get dirty, laundry piles up, children struggle at school--family life can be complex and exhausting. But when a man and woman are "united...and...become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24), they can experience a unity that can weather the storms and bring intimacy and fulfillment in their relationship.

3.5.3.2 Protect from parental inattention and provide for parental involvement

God's standards for marriage and family protect from parental inattention. I do most of the traveling in my family. I fly off to distant cities and foreign lands, while my wife keeps the home and family running smoothly. Not long ago, however, the tables were turned; my wife went on an extended trip and I was left at home. It was my responsibility to not only keep up with my work, but to make sure my children go to school on time, to ferry them to sports events, to make sure they were fed, had clean clothes, and had their homework done. Some days, it seemed I had forty children (instead of four) and that I would never have enough time for them all.

That is the very situation many single parents must deal with daily. They strive not only to provide economically for their children, but to run a home, attend parent-teacher meetings, and, if any time is left, to read their little ones a story at the end of the day. Divorced parents who are remarried face incredible obstacles as well; some must squeeze all their parenting into weekends, or a few months out of the year. Ultimately, no matter how hard a parent tries, the child of a broken family usually gets less of his parents' attention and affection, simply because there are not enough hours in the day for one parent to be both mother and father. Nor can one parent be two places at once, giving attention to more than one household of children or step-children.

¹⁰ Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "Dan Quayle Was Right," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1993, p. 65.

Children of broken families suffer various ways from this inattention. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead writes:

Not only do children experience a loss of parental attention at the onset of divorce, but they soon find that at every stage of their development their parents are not available in the same way they once were. "In a reasonably happy family," [Judith] Wallerstein observes, "the child gravitates first to one parent and then to the other, using skills and attributes from each in climbing the developmental ladder." In a divorced family, children find it "harder to find the needed parent at needed times."¹¹

As much as a parent may strive to overcome such effects of family disruption, they cannot completely negate them. As I have stated before, God's standards are like an umbrella, and when--for whatever reason--we move out from under that umbrella, we no longer benefit from its protection. The more we can help our youth understand the evidence presented here, therefore, the more they will understand why a lifetime commitment of marriage is in the best interests of parents and children.

God's standards for marriage and family provide for greater parental involvement. Those ten or twelve days in which I had to manage my home and family while my wife was away not only renewed my appreciation for her, but revived my gratitude for God's wisdom in providing "a helper suitable for [each of us]" (Gen. 2:18).

My wife's contribution to our family does not only provide two more hands, making it possible for me to take our son to a concert while she helps our other child with her homework; she can answer questions that I cannot, and offer a perspective that I lack. That is part of God's wise plan. Our union enables us to be much more involved with our children--what they're planning--than either of us could manage alone. When we help our kids see the specific roles that each parent plays in their lives, they can better understand why God intended married partners to remain married.

3.5.3.3 Protect from emotional insecurity and provide for emotional stability

God's standard for marriage and family protect from emotional insecurity. A 1988 study by the National center for Health Statistics revealed that children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely to experience emotional and behavioral problems than children of two-parent families. They are more likely to drop out of high school, to use drugs, and to get in trouble with the law. Girls in single-parent families are more likely to be sexually active, and are more likely to become pregnant as teens, and to give birth outside of marriage.

Judith Wallerstein, director of the California Children of Divorce Study, reported that children whose parents have divorced suffer the emotional effects for years after the event. More than a third still experience moderate or severe depression five years after the breakup. ten years later, many continued to struggle, wander, or falter through life. Even fifteen years later, many of the subjects of Wallerstein's study exhibited the effects of the childhood trauma of divorce.¹²

¹¹ Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeese, *Second Chances: Men, Woman and Children a Decade After Divorce* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1990).

¹² As quoted by Barbara Dafoe Whithead, "Dan Quayle Was Right," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1993, p. 82.

Novelist Pat Conroy has said that "each divorce is the death of a small civilization." No one feels that loss more keenly than children. God wanted to protect our children from the emotional insecurity that results from divorce when he said, "What God has joined together, let man not separate" (Mark 10:9).

God's standards for marriage and family provide for emotional stability. Children need to know there are certain things they can always count on. They need stable and constant patterns in their lives. They need that sense of security that says "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world."

Adherence to God's standard for marriage and family provides that kind of stability. It fosters feelings of consistency and permanence. It helps them to know who they belong to, who belongs to them, who they can trust, and what their lives will be like tomorrow. That sense of being part of a relationship, the realization of being loved for who we are--is among the most basic human needs. A marriage and a family that are founded on God's standard of unity provide for the emotional stability of children *and* adults, a blessing longed for by many of our friends and loved ones, in our society--and in our churches.

3.5.3.4 Protect from relational problems and provide for healthy role models

God's standards for marriage and family protect from relational problems. Research reveals that many children of broken marriages and disrupted families face severe relational problems, not only as children, but throughout their lives. Many find it difficult to achieve intimacy in a relationship, to build long-lasting relationships, or to form a solid marriage. Some even find it hard to hold a steady job. Most of these studies invariably conclude that these children suffer from "adolescent alienation"--a relational disconnectedness from adults.

Such difficulties are not due only to marital separation and divorce, but also to the events that led to and followed the break-up. Divorce is not an isolated event; it is generally preceded by disagreements, arguments, even unfaithfulness. And it is often followed by new boyfriends or girlfriends, live-in partners, step-parents, and new "siblings." All of these, combined with the absence of one natural parent from the household, can create a breeding ground for a child to feel alienated that results in relational confusion and distress. Many children carry such scars well into their adulthood.

God's standards for marriage and family provide for healthy role models. An intact family of a husband and wife who display a loving, giving, respectful relationship provides an invaluable resource for children. When my daughter was much younger, I said to him "_____, do you know that I love your mother?"

"Yeah," she answered. "I know it."

"How do you know?"

"Because you always tell her."

"What if I lost my voice and couldn't tell her? How would you know then?"

"Because you always kiss her."

"What if I got chapped lips and couldn't kiss her? Then how would you know?"

She thought for a moment. "Because of the way you treat her," she answered.

That's the answer I was looking for, because it told me that I was modeling a loving relationship between a man and a woman. My children will benefit for the rest of their lives from my wife's model of womanhood; she has given my daughters a model to strive for, and my son a model to look for in a woman. My wife and I together have modeled what a loving, respectful male-female relationship should look like.

God's standard of unity in marriage and family relationships extends His gracious protection and provision to those who heed it. The evidence of God's truth is therefore shown below:

<i>God's Protection and Provision</i>	
<i>PROTECTS from:</i>	<i>Provides for:</i>
Disillusionment	Fulfillment
Parental inattention	Parental involvement
Emotional insecurity	Emotional stability
Relational problems	Healthy role models

3.5.4 How to Encourage Unity in the Family

Our children desperately need to see the values of marriage and family in terms of the precepts we described earlier (which grounds the virtue of unity in the nature and character of God) and in light of the Evidence presented (which conforms that marital and familial unity and stability is the safest and surest route to happiness and fulfillment for parents and children alike). But how do we apply the truth to our youth? What can we do to get the message across?

1. **Encourage your youth's involvement in a youth group.** A healthy and vibrant youth group is an important part of a young person's life--especially for a child from a single-parent home. Meet with your church youth worker and share the progress of your child's spiritual and emotional growth. Ask your youth worker what you can do to better support your child and the entire youth group. Youth workers need you and you need them. Let them know of good programs and resources that are available.
2. **Take advantage of adult small group studies and meetings.** Join a small group that is biblically based, one that focuses on helping you in your parenting responsibilities. Some churches have single-parent small groups. Ask your group leader what programs and courses will be covered over the next twelve months. Make them aware of the excellent parenting studies that are available. Of course, this book is an excellent resource to begin a church-wide emphasis on instilling biblical values within our youth.
3. **Pull out your wedding albums.** You may be surprised at how fascinated your children are--even teenagers--by the story (and pictures) of your wedding. Pull out the wedding photos and use them as a way to share your deep convictions about marriage, the vows you made to your spouse, and how that commitment stands today. Sharing stories of your courtship and marriage--and how honoring marriage has resulted in God's protection and provision in your life--will reinforce your child's convictions on marriage and family.
4. **Talk of your children's births.** Whether you are five, fifteen, or fifty, hearing about the details of the day you were born is always fascinating. Use that fascination to provide your child a greater sense of belonging. Emphasize to your children the fact that they came from the union of your

love for your mate. Explain how they have inherited distinct characteristics and features from each of you. The more they have a sense of their heritage, the more connected they will feel to the unity of the family.

5. **Openly communicate your love to your spouse.** Take advantage of every opportunity to let your children know how much you love your mate. Be affectionate with each other around them. The more you show them how much you are devoted to your mate, the more secure they will feel. Kisses, roses, special dates, favorite meals--there are a hundred and one ways to openly demonstrate before your children how you love each other. My kids love it when I involve them in helping me plan a special meal or surprise that demonstrates my love and appreciation for my wife; their participation also increases their awareness of--and confidence in--our loving commitment to each other.
6. **Use opportunities presented by television, news, and current events.** Use movies or news events of divorces or pending marriages as topics of discussion. Rather than condemning a person who has suffered a divorce, talk about the protection and provision they will be missing. If you know the person, discuss how you and your children can be supportive and helpful. Using current events can be an ideal way to discuss the negative consequences of violating God's standard of unity in marriage and family and a good way to point out the positive rewards of living in obedience to that standard.

God's truth about marriage and family is absolute--it is for all people, for all times, and for all places. Take the time to diligently teach the evidence presented here about marriage and family "to your sons (and daughters) and talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up...And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you..." (Deut. 6:7,18, NASB). Instill God's value of the unity of marriage and family in your children and they will reap rewards for generations to come.

3.6 Family Meetings

Back before man had convenient transportation and communication systems, families were more stable and less busy. They lived on farms and did everything together. Dinner was the time in this environment when most families had the equivalent of family meetings to resolve issues, encourage each other, and keep informed about what was happening. However, since the advent of TV, the Internet, and all the many distractions of modern life, that method of communication has been severely undermined. The result is that unless families make a conscious decision to spend time communicating and cooperating in the form of family meetings, then in most cases:

1. A team spirit won't develop.
2. Communication and cooperation skills won't develop.
3. Family members may become selfish and rebellious.

The concept of family meetings is not new. For instance, the Mormon church has used this concept for many years and called it "Family Home Evening", which they do on Monday nights. The Family Home Evening is normally a time to study scriptures, but it can and should be a time to collectively solve family problems as well. Therefore, regular weekly family meetings will be the norm within the Hansen Family.

3.6.1 Purpose of Family Meetings

Periodic and regular family meetings help provide an important way to do all of the following within the family:

1. Demonstrate love.
2. Resolve problems.
3. Communicate.
4. Improve communication skills.
5. Developing common goals.
6. Demonstrate and model respect towards other family members. This teaches children about respect and problem solving.
7. Develop a democratic “team” mentality.
8. Developing cooperation and common goals.
9. Emphasize personal responsibility and accountability to other members of the team.
10. Learning more about other family members.
11. Help and encourage other family members when they need it.
12. Help families have more fun together.

3.6.2 Meeting Schedule

Your family is busy. Find the time to meet by making a chart of everyone’s activities. Fill in the children’s and your own schedule for the week. This will help you find or make time when all family members are free.

Family meetings shall be held on a weekly basis at a time agreed to by all family members. This time shall be on Sunday afternoons following church around lunch time, if the members of the family are not able to otherwise agree to a time. All family members are expected to set aside at least one and one-half hours for this meeting.

3.6.3 Meeting Sequence

The following sequence shall be followed at every family meeting:

1. Pray together at the start of the meeting.
2. Have a short devotional. You might want to read a scripture or a passage of scripture.
3. Share good things that have happened since the last meeting.
4. Read the notes from the last meeting.
5. Talk about “old business”—things from the last meeting that still need to be resolved. Such things might include making a decision to commit to an approach that previously was only being tested and was temporary.
6. Talk about “new business”—things people want to talk about at this meeting.
7. Plan something fun to do before the next meeting or at the conclusion of the meeting. You might want to conclude the meeting with a fun activity, like going bowling, going to a sporting event, or having ice cream. Or you might want to plan for the activity later in the week.
8. Summarize. Say what people have agreed to. This is the equivalent of reviewing the action items.

3.6.4 Things to Talk About at Family Meetings

Here are some sample things to talk about in family meetings:

1. Share good feelings.
2. Kid's activities.
3. Allowances.
4. Errands.
5. Chores.
6. Rules when friends visit.
7. Weekend plans.
8. Using the phone.
9. Using the TV and VCR.
10. Homework.
11. Church involvement and activities.

3.6.5 Guidelines for Family Meetings

1. Meet at a regular time. The regular time might be once a week. Plan to have the meeting last from twenty to thirty minutes. How often and how long you meet depends on children's ages. Younger children need shorter or more frequent meetings.
2. Make a list of topics. Some people call their list of topics a meeting list or *agenda*. Post it on the refrigerator. The family can add to it during the days before the meeting. This helps keep track of everyone's concerns without much time or wasted effort.
3. Plan the time. At first, you will need to be in charge of this. Look at the meeting list. Decide which topics you can cover at the first meetings. Leave time to explore alternatives and make decisions.
4. Take turns. Take turns with different tasks during the family meeting. The leader reads the meeting list and keeps things on track. Young children will need help to do this. That's okay. It's still important to let each person have a chance to lead. Family members can take turns with taking notes. If a child is too young to write, he or she can get the agenda or minutes.
5. Take notes. Write down, or take the *minutes* of, the agreements and plans made in the meeting. This way no one will forget or be confused. Take turns doing the job of note-taking. Take turns posting the minutes so everyone can read them. A good job for older children is to read the minutes to children who can't read. Younger children could post the minutes.
6. Let everyone take part. When talking about something on the list, let your children speak first. This helps them feel responsible.
 - If a child hasn't talked, as the child, "What do you think?"
 - If a child talks too much, stay respectful. You could say, "It sounds like this is important to you. We need to hear how everybody else feels about it."
 - If someone is not showing respect, use an I-message: "When I hear name-calling, I worry that we won't be able to cooperate."
7. Limit complaining. Lots of complaining can turn meetings into gripe sessions. This won't solve problems or help families enjoy each other. If complaining is a problem, ask, "What can we do about it? How can we solve the problem?"
8. Cooperate to choose chores. To start choosing chores, you might want to volunteer for some of the chores no one likes. You might say: "I'll clean the cat box and the bathroom. Who will vacuum and dust?" As time goes on, expect others to do some of the "icky" chores too.

9. Use a job jar. One way to take turns is by using a job jar:
- Talk together about all the jobs that need to be done each week.
 - Write them on slips of paper and put them in a jar.
 - Each week, draw jobs out of the jar.
10. Do what you agree to do. Stick to agreements until the next meeting. If people want to change the agreement, they can do it then. Children *and* parents are expected to do what they agree to. What if *you* forget and break an agreement? What if one day you don't have time to do something you agreed to? Tell your family you are sorry. Say you will work to do a better job. A child might sometimes forget or not have time too. No one is perfect. If broken agreements continue, make a "work before fun" rule: before people do fun activities, their chores need to be done. The rule applies to parents as well as children.
11. Take time for fun. Meetings are a good way to solve problems and choose chores. But that's not all they are for. To add fun to meetings you can:
- 11.1. Talk about good things. You can thank each person for some help given during the week. Then each person can do the same. You can ask people to talk about what is going well for them right now. This sets a positive tone. It also teaches your children to encourage other people. It teaches them to encourage themselves.
- 11.2. Plan family fun. At the meeting, plan together to do something you all enjoy. You might plan to make homemade pizzas together on Friday night. You might plan to watch a TV show you all enjoy. You could even have a "fun jar," with ideas for family fun written on slips and placed inside. This would show that you value fun as much as work.
- 11.3. Have fun after the meeting. Some families spend a little time having fun together right after the meeting. You could play a game. You could go for a walk or bike ride. You could read a story together.

3.7 Techniques for Correction and Encouragement

Before we can correct someone's unrighteous or harmful behavior, we ourselves must first:

1. Be righteous and blameless before God.
2. Practice righteous judgment against the person we are trying to correct.
3. Correct according to God's word, and not our selfish desires.

Therefore, we will first address why it is considered Christian to judge and once we have passed righteous judgment, how we can apply that judgment to correct someone in love.

3.7.1 Should Christians Judge?

Webster's dictionary defines the word "judge" as follows:

"To form an opinion about through careful weighing of evidence and testing of premises."¹³

The book of Leviticus says we should not only judge, but that we should judge righteously:

¹³ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, Meriam-Webster, Inc., 1983, ISBN 0-87779-510-X, p. 653.

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.
[Lev. 19:15]

Some people would say that quotes like this from the old testament don't apply, because grace was not operative before Jesus died for our sins. However, Jesus himself said: "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*" (Matt. 5:17)

Proverbs makes it very clear that we need to judge to survive:

The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment.
[Prov. 10:21, NIV]

Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and the needy.
[Prov. 31:8-9]

Jesus also said about judging (Matt. 7:1-7):

JUDGE not, that you not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn you in pieces.

What Jesus was saying here is *not* that we shouldn't judge, but rather that we need to exercise *righteous judgment* by continually examining ourselves, our hearts, and be in constant communication with God through prayer. We need the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives in order to be a righteous judge. Jesus is saying that we need to apply the same standard to ourselves that we apply to others, and we need to do it **BEFORE** others have an opportunity, so we won't look like hypocrites. Only by doing this will we have a basis for judging and correcting others around us in love and grace and without hypocrisy.

The apostle Paul said "*For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged*" (1Corinthians 11:31). Since the very word "judgment" has developed a negative connotation within professed Christianity, is it any wonder that professed Christians do not practice judgment, or realize what it is when they do? "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6).

A trick of Satan has been to rob the people of God of righteous judgment in the name of love, i.e., "We ought to be loving and not judgmental." "We are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). By divorcing God's attribute of being the "Righteous Judge" (2 Timothy 4:8) from His attribute of being the "God of Love" (2 Corinthians 13:11), "false teachers" (2 Peter 2:1) have robbed the Church of the Godly conduct of "righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Instead, an anemic form of love is held forth as the correct alternative for Christian conduct, not caring that the LORD Jesus has given the correct view of love and judgment to the Body of Christ in His letters to the Seven Churches of the Book of

Revelation, i.e., "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

Without the correct conduct of righteous judgment, the professed Church is paving the way for the acceptance of the Antichrist. This will not only result in the Backslidden Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25) being left at the Pre-Tribulational Rapture, but the perishing world will consequently be punished by God by allowing them to be deceived by the Antichrist. *"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11).* What lie? That Antichrist is God. *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).*

And, all of this because the Church has been taught a false standard of not exercising judgment. The church has been sold this lie by the popular liberal media and contemporary culture, which emphasizes diversity and tolerance. Diversity and tolerance *do* have a rightful place within the church, but only insofar as race, religion, national origin, age, sex, and marital status are concerned. Beyond these nondiscretionary characteristics or attributes of people, character and the choices people make *do* matter and the Bible teaches us that we *should* righteously judge how people behave. But, "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).

Some Christians who have been sold the false idea that we shouldn't judge by our popular culture and the media, however, will try to make judgment more politically correct by using such words as "discernment" and "discretion" to describe it, but we need to remember that these words are types of judgment and are synonyms for judgment. Remember that we can lie to ourselves simply by the words we use to communicate or describe things. Our culture has taken this lie one step further by attempting to deglamorize, denigrate, and criticize those who judge or discriminate. They have in effect criminalized the use of the words "judge" and "discriminate". But remember that you can't criticize, deglamorize, or denigrate people without judging them! What they are doing is judging those who judge, and if judging is wrong, then using judgment to fight judgment is just as wrong!

We can use words to hide from the truth, or we can speak the unadulterated truth in love and with mercy. The latter is preferable. Therefore, for occasions where we are dealing with a person who stubbornly refuses to admit that they have a duty to judge righteously, consider the following roles and stewardships that we fulfill every day as members of society and how we can righteously fulfill the stewardship we have without judging:

1. Christian

- 1.1 How can you reprove, rebuke, and correct wrongdoers if you can't judge their behavior? (see Leviticus 19:17, Prov. 24:25, Prov. 28:23, and Prov. 8:13)
- 1.2 How can you abstain from sexual immorality and "flee fornication" unless you can judge these behaviors? (see 1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Thess. 4:3-6)
- 1.3 How can you discern right from wrong as a Christian and whether what your pastor or others say or do is consistent with God's word and commands if you can't judge?
- 1.4 How can you determine if a person is Christ or the Anti-Christ if you can't judge righteously?
- 1.5 How can you have the fear of the Lord we are commanded to have and hate evil, pride, arrogance, and the evil way as demonstrated by behaviors of people around you if you can't judge those behaviors? (see Prov. 8:13)

- 1.6 How can we ensure that we are demonstrating our faith with works and glorifying our father and heaven with those works if we can't judge our own behavior and motives?
2. Marriage
- 2.1 How can you decide (judge) if you should get married if you aren't allowed to judge the character or the behavior or your prospective spouse? (see 2 Cor. 6:14)
- 2.2 How can you discern whether you should divorce biblically unless you can judge for yourself whether your spouse has committed adultery?
3. Parenthood
- 3.1 How can you discipline your children if you can't judge their behavior and whether they are telling you the truth?
- 3.2 How can you protect your children from harmful influences if you can't judge those influences? For instance, how can you regulate your child's television viewing habits and prevent them from watching certain harmful shows unless you can judge those shows as morally depraved and defend that judgment in front of your children when they dispute it with you?
4. Management/vocation
- 4.1 How can you trust your employee or your boss if you can't judge their character and whether they are telling the truth?
- 4.2 How can you know what you have been ordered to do by your superior unless you can judge his intent in the absence of feedback from him?
- 4.3 How can you know if you are obeying work rules unless you can judge the intent of those work rules and whether you are complying with both the spirit and the letter of those rules?
- 4.4 How can you know if you are entering into a business relationship with a dishonest client unless you can judge the character of that person?
5. Voting
- 5.1 How can you vote for godly candidates if you can't judge their character or their qualifications?
- 5.2 If you can't judge the character of candidates, then why vote at all because character and behavior in that scenario become completely irrelevant? Is it any wonder then that voters have become politically passive and voter participation is down in an environment where our society criticizes those who judge?
6. Jury Duty
- 6.1 How can you discern guilt or innocence of the defendant as a juror if you can't judge? As a juror, you are not allowed to let others make your decision for you.
- 6.2 How can determine and apply both the facts and the law to a specific case and come to a conclusion if you can't judge?

Can you see how silly it is to say that we can't judge or shouldn't judge based on the above? The Apostle Paul was the most vocal critic in the bible of judging people. But we emphasize that Paul was talking about judging **people**, not **behavior**. We talk more about this in the following section on righteous judgment.

May we therefore, the professed people of God, conduct ourselves as we ought and according to the command of the Lord Jesus. "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*" (John 7:24). After all, it takes love to obey the LORD Jesus' command to "judge righteous judgment". "*He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him*" (John 14:21).

Accordingly, may the LORD Jesus Christ, Who is the Judge of All the Earth, be able to manifest Himself to us.

3.7.2 What is Righteous Judgment?¹⁴

Jesus said of righteous judgment in John 5:30:

"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father."

Therefore, righteous judgment is judgment which glorifies God and not man or us personally. In order for us to know that this is the case, we have to begin each judgment by letting God judge us first through His Holy Spirit to ensure that our motives conform to His will before we can judge people or circumstances outside of ourselves. The *Righteous* judgment described by Jesus in John 7:14-24 therefore begins with *self*-judgment. Righteous judgment is also "unselfish" judgment. When we call someone self-righteous, what we really mean is that they are practicing selfish judgment or unrighteous judgment, or judgment that benefits or glorifies mainly them rather than God.

An extremely important element of righteous judgment is that we must be free of hypocrisy when we perform it:

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"
[Matt. 7:3]

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."
[James 1:22]

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God."
[Rom. 2:3.]

"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."
[Rom. 2:13.]

The bible says there is only one situation when we are justified in judging:

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."
[Rom. 14:13]

Did you notice that what we are judging righteously above is wrong *behavior* that hurts others, and not the *people* who are committing the sin that is hurting others. There is a very important lesson to be learned from this analysis. That lesson is that it is righteous to judge bad *behavior*, but it is unrighteous to judge *people*. Judging *people* usually tends to devalue them and make them feel inferior. Judging *behavior* with mercy and truth and love toward the person maintains the value of the person while denigrating and discouraging the sinful behavior. Another way of saying this is that judging behavior convicts, but judging people condemns, and no one wants to be condemned because they will typically rebel and want to take revenge when this happens. Condemnation alienates people

¹⁴ <http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Judge.Righteous.text.html>.

and makes them angry. How can we tell whether we are judging the *behavior* and not the *person*? Here are some comparisons of words and language that distinguish the two. Note that the elements on the left in the field of psychology are classified as forms of "verbal abuse":

Table 3-3: Judging people vs. behavior

<i>Judging the "person"</i>	<i>Judging the "behavior"</i>
Focusing on the person	Focusing on the behavior
Being more interested in "who is to blame" than in how to prevent the problem in the future. Not caring whether the problem gets solved, but rather who is better and more righteous and has the least faults.	Being more interested in preventing the problem than in who is to blame for it. Trying to ensure that every discussion of a problem ends with an agreement on ways of changing behavior that will help everyone and improve the situation.
Using the word "you", or the person's name rather than referring to the behavior or sin	Using the words "that behavior" or "what you did"
Using adjectives or stereotypes to describe the person and not the behavior. For example: " <i>You are stupid and you will always be stupid.</i> "	Using adjectives that describe the behavior but not the person. For example: " <i>What you did was unwise and I hope you'll appreciate that I'm trying to help you by pointing this out. If you don't listen to me, you'll continue hurting yourself and others around you and I hope you don't want to do that.</i> "
Performing a rebuke or censure in public, behind their back or without their knowledge, or in front of their associates, such that they feel defamed or slandered.	Performing the censure in private initially, so they have a chance to remedy the problem before it becomes slander.
<u>Comparing people and failures and assigning worth to people.</u> For instance: " <i>You're just like your father and you will never change because you're such a loser. This situation is hopeless and I'm so angry and offended that I don't have the patience and self-control to explore ways to solve the problem. I'm so mad and so arrogant that I'm not able to reveal the needs and expectations I have that aren't being recognized because I'm afraid of being rejected.</i> "	<u>Comparing behaviors and progress.</u> For instance: " <i>You're getting better every time you do this. I have confidence that you'll eventually lick this bad habit.</i> "

When you conclude a conversation with someone who talks about and judges only behavior, you walk away feeling like:

"That guy is smart and he really understands me. I learn something from him every time I talk to him. He has helped me understand the problem better and develop empathy for people, and I feel appreciated and loved and he taught me how to love. I feel like I have new tools and solutions for improving the relationships I have with others now, and the space to try out a new approach without being put into a box with labels and stereotypes, and I'm thankful for that. That's the kind of person I want to have as a personal friend because they solve more problems than they make."

On the other hand, when we are interacting with people who judge people instead of behavior, we feel:

"That guy is arrogant and angry and selfish every time I talk to him.. I didn't learn anything from that conversation except how much of a jerk he is. He's so full of himself that there's not space left for anyone else when he walks into the room. Every time I talk with him, I feel criticized, blamed, and slandered. I feel immobilized from accomplishing anything to improve the situation or lessen the anger and frustration of others with any situation because we never arrive at the point of focusing on solutions, compromising, or problem solving. Instead, I feel frustrated, disrespected, and annoyed, and have been deprived of any hope for improvement because instead of understanding things better, I have usually been told that I am too stupid to understand. The goal of every conversation is "competition" and who is better than who. All he ever does is use criticism and slander to alienate me from people around me. He creates more problems and trouble in

every interpersonal situation than he solves. I'm going to avoid him to save myself the heartache in the future."

Can you see that the effect of unrighteous judgment is alienation and disunity, while the product of righteous judgment is unity, love, and growing respect? That's why we'd like to emphasize that when the bible, and especially the Apostle Paul, criticizes or prohibits judging, it is almost always talking about judging *people* instead of *behavior*.

Furthermore, God's people are not afraid of God's judgment. How can we pray for the fulfillment of God's judgments, if we are not willing for God to judge us first? "Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide" (Psalm 26:1).

How are we to practice self-judgment *before* we judge others righteously? "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). God's thoughts-- as revealed in His Word-- are the precious means by which we judge ourselves. "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:17). The Holy Spirit searches us with His Word. "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged 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. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:12-13).

Self-judgment implies that we must willingly seek out God's Word regularly to search out our motives and ultimate purpose. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word. With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy Commandments. Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:9-11). Self-judgment aids us in seeking God's cleansing from sin as well as keeping us from wandering into sin. It may be added that prayer, i.e., specific petition to God to keep us from sin and sinning, is essential to keep us from falling into sin. "And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Luke 22:40).

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). No threat of future judgment should be necessary to induce the professed Saints to thoroughly judge ourselves. However, the very idea that our God is completely able to review all of the Believers' conduct-- in particular, all conduct since we came to Christ-- and pronounce it "gold, silver, precious stones" (1 Corinthians 3:12) to be rewarded (3:14), or "wood, hay, stubble" (3:12) to "be burned" and "suffer loss" (3:15)-- "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8)-- should encourage us to "walk circumspectly [literally, carefully], not as fools, but as wise" (Ephesians 5:15). We need to be knowingly seeking to abide in Christ (John 15:4; 1 John 2:28), i.e., practicing such admonitions as: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

A righteous judge must have a servant's heart as King Solomon originally did, i.e., "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?" (1 Kings 3:9). That heart will be a discerning heart. *God is much more willing to answer an unselfish request for wisdom and understanding to make judgment for Him than to satisfy a simply material personal need.* "And God said to Solomon, "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My

people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like" (2 Chronicles 1:11-12).

Misguided judgment is as undesirable as the lack of judgment, i.e., "And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, LORD, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (Luke 9:51-56). A righteous judge has "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). The Samaritans would not receive the LORD Jesus. But James and John were not just angry for this callous treatment of the LORD. They were rebuked by the LORD Jesus because they sought judgment to fulfill their OWN purposes-- not His. A righteous judge, like Elijah, could not "command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them", unless the action justified God's judgment. James and John disliked the Samaritans, as most Jews did. They wanted judgment to satisfy their OWN anger, insomuch, so as to cause the Samaritans death by fire. The LORD Jesus "rebuked them" because they abused judgment. "Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of." Misguided judgment seeks selfish justification-- or personal revenge. Righteous judgment justifies God only. For it is only God that deserves to be justified. "Great and marvelous are Thy works, LORD God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:3,4).

The concept of righteous judgment is not unlike the concept of justice in the realm of law. Everyone instinctively knows that it is impossible for a judge or a jury to be objective about a judgment if they have their own self-interest at stake, because we would then say that they have a conflict of interest and we would want them removed from the case. Likewise, the same principle applies in our personal lives. We can't be objective in judging others if we are making the judgment in order to benefit ourselves only rather than the other person. However, if we pray about it, examine our hearts, and ensure that we are pursuing the judgment with the motive of helping the other person in love and glorifying God and not ourselves, then we are exercising righteous judgment. That is why couples who are having problems will often seek counseling, because they need objective, experienced third-party advice and judgment from counselors and church clergy on their interpersonal situation.

When we judge, God therefore commands us to be impartial and to view all persons equally: "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it" (Deut. 1:17). God also says we should not accept a gift if we are passing judgment: "You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous" (Deut. 16:19).

Unrighteous judgment of our neighbor is avoidable and forbidden to the people of God, i.e., "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor" (Leviticus 19:15).

How do we become righteous judges? Prov. 2:1-9 teaches us about this:

1 My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, 2 so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; 3 yes, if you cry out for discernment, understanding, 4 if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk uprightly; 8 he guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. 9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path.

One of the best ways to ensure that we are judging righteously is to work hard to be contented and satisfied with our lives and to ensure that we have no needs, passions, or desires that might influence or skew our judgment. That is because people who are completely contented with whatever life hands them can view their situation and that of others much more impartially than most. Jesus was the best example of someone who was very contented and unselfish. Whatever life hands us, we should learn to be happy with our situation. There should be nothing we expect or need from others that should influence our emotional state or happiness or sense of well-being. We talk about contentment further and how to develop it in section 2.3.2.

3.7.3 The Types of Sin and Correction

After we have righteously judged someone, we must then apply one of three types of correction: rebuke, reproof, and exhortation. What is the difference between these words? These words are listed in decreasing order of their firmness or strongness, starting with the most strong.

Rebuke: To criticize sharply: reprimand. Rebuke is administered immediately and strongly and is reserved for *serious sin* that has disastrous consequences or which affects several people very negatively as described below. Leviticus 19:17 says of rebuke: “*You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.*” Also, Luke 17:3 says on rebuke: “*Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.*”

Reprove: To scold or correct, usually gently or with kindly intent. To express disapproval: CENSURE. The goal is to give unselfish, positive guidance for situations that are not dangerous or very serious. This type of correction is reserved for *intermediate sin*, which is much more common place and serious in its affect than *serious sin*. Eph. 5:11 says about reproof: “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*”

Exhort: To incite by *arguing*: urge strongly. To give warnings or teachings or advice. Exhortation involves teaching, feedback, response, and debate and is less strong or immediate than rebuke. This type of correction is reserved for *everyday sin* that has less immediate effects than serious or intermediate sin. 2 Tim. 4:2 says of exhortation: “*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*”

As we have already said, judgment must occur before any of these three types of correction can be applied. When correction has been applied, then one outcome of that correction is *reproach* as defined below:

Reproach: A cause or occasion of blame, discredit, or disgrace. To discredit or disgrace a person.

It is important to consider that reproach in and of itself is not necessarily a bad thing if it is an outcome of correction that was based on righteous judgment. Reproach can be a very strong motivating factor to keep people from transgressing further. However, a perverted form of reproach is called slander, where one of the following occurred:

1. The judgment was unrighteous because it was based on either false information or selfish desires.
2. The judgment was publicized rather than kept private, causing shame or blame to spread beyond the circle of people who were hurt by the sin or transgression.

Slander is something that we as Christians should avoid because it is self-serving, deceitful, and does not glorify God or help win other souls over the Christ. The most frequent way that slander occurs is through gossip, and the Bible forbids us to gossip in Lev. 19:16.

For the purposes of the three types of correction described above, we define three classes of sinful behavior:

1. Serious sin. This type of sin constitutes a grave and long-term detriment to society and usually threatens either a life or a family or several families or people. It includes:
 - 1.1. Life-threatening behaviors (see murder)
 - 1.2. Murder (Exodus 20:13)
 - 1.3. Abortion (see murder)
 - 1.4. Euthanasia (mercy killing; see murder)
 - 1.5. Adultery (Exodus 20:14)
 - 1.6. Divorce or requesting divorce (Mal. 2:16; Mark 10:2-9)
 - 1.7. Kidnapping
 - 1.8. Moral infractions of church officials (1 Tim. 5:19-20)
 - 1.9. Idolatry (Ex. 20:4-6)
 - 1.10. Conspiracy to do evil (Prov. 6:18)
2. Intermediate sin. This type of sin has less serious consequences and is less immediate in its effect than serious sin. This type of sin is also illegal in most societies and affects fewer people than serious sin. This type of sin includes:
 - 2.1. Pride (Prov. 6:16-17; 8:13; 16:18)
 - 2.2. Disdain for correction (Prov. 10:7, 13:18, 29:1)
 - 2.3. Disrespect
 - 2.4. Lying (Exodus 20:16)
 - 2.5. Fraud/deception (Prov. 6:16-17)
 - 2.6. Cheating
 - 2.7. Drug dealing/drug abuse (Prov. 20:1; 21:17)
 - 2.8. Prostitution (Prov. 6:24-29; Hosea 4:11)
 - 2.9. Homosexuality (Lev. 18:22, 1 Cor. 6:18)
 - 2.10. Fornication/sex outside of marriage (Eph. 5:5, 1 Cor. 6:18)
 - 2.11. Stealing (Exodus 20:15)
3. Everyday sin. This includes:
 - 3.1. Flattery for personal gain (Prov. 26:28)
 - 3.2. Covetousness/envy (Exodus 20:17)
 - 3.3. Slothfulness or laziness (Prov. 6:6-11)

- 3.4. Lust and viewing pornography (1 Cor. 6:18; Matt 5:27-28)
- 3.5. Damaging or destroying personal property (1 John 2:11)
- 3.6. Gossip (Lev. 19:16)
- 3.7. White lying

The table below illustrates how to apply each of the three types of correction to the various degrees or types of sin described above.

Table 3-4: How To Apply Correction To Various Types of Sin

<i>Class of sin</i>	<i>Example behaviors</i>	<i>Correction to apply</i>
Serious	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life threatening behaviors (see murder) 2. Murder (Exodus 20:13) 3. Abortion (see murder) 4. Euthanasia (mercy killing; see murder) 5. Adultery (Exodus 20:14) 6. Divorce or requesting divorce (Mal. 2:16; Mark 10:2-9) 7. Kidnapping 8. Moral infractions of church officials (1 Tim. 5:19-20) 9. Conspiracy to do evil (Prov. 6:18) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rebuke publicly 2. Report to the police if a violation of law.
Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pride (Prov. 6:16-17; 8:13; 16:18) 2. Disdain for correction (Prov. 10:7, 13:18, 29:1) 3. Disrespect 4. Lying (Exodus 20:16) 5. Fraud/deception (Prov. 6:16-17) 6. Cheating 7. Drug dealing/drug abuse (Prov. 20:1;21:17) 8. Prostitution (Prov. 6:24-29; Hosea 4:11) 9. Homosexuality (Lev. 18:22, 1 Cor. 6:18) 10. Fornication/sex outside of marriage (Eph. 5:5, 1 Cor. 6:18) 11. Stealing (Exodus 20:15) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reproof privately 2. Report to the police if a violation of law.
Everyday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flattery for personal gain (Prov. 26:28) 2. Covetousness/envy (Exodus 20:17) 3. Slothfulness or laziness (Prov. 6:6-11) 4. Argument or differences of opinion 5. Lust or viewing pornography (1 Cor. 6:18; Matt 5:27-28) 6. Damaging or destroying personal 	Exhortation privately

<i>Class of sin</i>	<i>Example behaviors</i>	<i>Correction to apply</i>
	property (1 John 2:11). 7. Gossip (Lev. 19:16) 8. White lying	

Note that there are two primary ways to apply correction to a sinning person and change their behavior:

1. ***Verbal influence:*** Admonishing, rebuking, reproof, or exhorting are verbal exercises intended to influence a person to change their behavior. This type of behavior is always appropriate if it is based on righteous judgment. However, wicked people who don't want to be accountable or responsible for their bad behavior often use a victim mentality to inappropriately label legitimate correction based on righteous judgment as "emotional abuse" or "verbal abuse." This is a common and unethical tactic used by spouses in divorce cases, for instance, as a way to evade responsibility for the causes of divorce by one or both spouses.
2. ***Punishment techniques:*** Applying punishment techniques to get members of the family to change their behavior implies hurting them or conditioning them to feel hurt every time they demonstrate some kind of undesired (in the eye of the beholder) behavior. Some psychological texts call this approach "behavior modification". Punishments for the misbehavior might include:
 - 2.1. ***Emotional blackmail:***
 - 2.1.1. Refusing to communicate or being indifferent about or disinterested in other family members.
 - 2.1.2. Threatening bodily harm to the other person.
 - 2.1.3. Applying verbal violence or verbal abuse against the offending party.
 - 2.1.4. Getting angry to intimidate the other party.
 - 2.1.5. Being chronically critical or hypercritical.
 - 2.1.6. Lying about the application of behavioral blackmail.
 - 2.1.7. Refusing to disclose motives for behavior, and especially bad behavior.
 - 2.1.8. Being controlling or expecting things from the other person that are not allowed in this constitution.
 - 2.1.9. Being unforgiving even when one's spouse repents. Criticizing and belittling one's repentant spouse as a way to belittle, discourage, and hurt one's spouse.
 - 2.2. ***Behavioral blackmail:***
 - 2.2.1. Drugging the other person to get them to comply or relent.
 - 2.2.2. Making them hurt physically through domestic violence.
 - 2.2.3. Withdrawing affection or sex.
 - 2.2.4. Refusing to cook or clean.
 - 2.2.5. Refusing to do assigned chores.
 - 2.2.6. Taking or wasting all the family's money.
 - 2.2.7. Murder.
 - 2.2.8. Theft of some important thing belonging to the party being pressured.
 - 2.2.9. Quitting one's job and forcing the other spouse to support the household.
 - 2.2.10. Hiding or destroying financial records or information about income or expenses from one's spouse.

Applying punishment techniques is strictly not permitted or allowed for any type of sin because they demonstrate a blatant lack of respect for people and is completely unloving. There are two exceptions to this rule:

1. Parenting. Parents need to be able to spank or discipline their children physically or to apply punishments to their children, but that is the only type of behavioral punishment allowed. Parenting should always be done with empathy and love with the goal of discipline and teaching the child. This is permitted and encouraged by God. See Prov. 23:13 for more details.
2. Adultery, sexual immorality, or physical abuse by a spouse. When a married spouse has committed adultery, Jesus says in Matt. 5:31-32 that it is acceptable to divorce. The least judgmental way to approach adultery for spouses who want to reconcile is at least for a temporary separation awaiting repentance from the offending spouse. Although the Bible doesn't mention physical abuse, this situation also seems to warrant temporary abandonment from the home by the abused spouse awaiting repentance by the abuser. Therefore abandoning the home temporarily to encourage repentance for adultery or physical abuse by the offending spouse is the only permissible use of punishment techniques between adults within the context of a marriage. A good book that talks about how to properly apply this disciplinary approach to a spouse is Love Must Be Tough, by Dr. James Dobson, 1983, Word Inc., ISBN 0-8499-0348-3.

3.7.4 Why Should We Correct?

Leviticus 19:17: *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him."*

Prov. 24:25: *"But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them."*

Prov. 28:23: *"He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward than he who flatters with the tongue."*

Therefore, God expects us to:

1. Correct other people if they are causing us to sin. Hating your neighbor is a type of sin we should avoid by rebuking our neighbor when he/she is sinning against us.
2. Correct the wicked because we will be blessed.
3. Correct people who are receptive in order to find their favor.

3.7.5 Who Should Do the Correcting?

Prov. 9:10: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."*

Prov. 8:13: *"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate."*

Prov. 10:14: *"Wise people store up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction."*

Therefore, God expects us to do the following in order to be effective at correction:

1. Fear the Lord.
2. Despise or hate evil behavior but love the people who do these bad things the same way God loves them.

3. Seek to be wise.
4. People should correct who have strong evidence and first-hand, eyewitness, personal knowledge of the sin that was committed.

3.7.6 Who Should Be Corrected?

Prov. 9:7-9: *“He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.”*

Prov. 13:5: *“A righteous man hates lying, but a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame.”*

Prov. 14:9: *“Fools mock at guilt, but among the upright there is favor.”*

Prov. 24:12: *“Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.”*

Prov. 27:5: *“Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.”*

Titus 3:9: *“But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.”*

1 Tim. 5:1: *“Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”*

Therefore, God expects us to:

1. Not rebuke proud or self-righteous people (scoffers).
2. Exhort fools, but not rebuke them, because they will scorn us publicly for the private exhortation we give them, making the punishment worse than the crime.
3. Correct only wise and/or humble people who are receptive to the rebuke. By doing this, they will get learning and understanding and become more wise. However, in order to prepare them to be most receptive to the correction, we should first have a personal relationship with them.
4. Correct those people who have not repented of their sin if it is a serious sin whether they accept it or not.
5. Correct liars whether they want to be corrected or not, because God says in Prov. 13:5 that we should hate lying.
6. Correct people we have a relationship with who are hurting others physically or emotionally and who we have personal, eye-witness information about (domestic violence or verbal abuse).
7. Not argue with persons we have corrected if the issues are questions of law.

3.7.7 How Should We Correct?

Deut. 17:6: *“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.”*

Prov. 10:12: *“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.”*

Prov. 10:18: *“Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.”*

Prov. 10:19: *“In a multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.”*

Prov. 11:2: *“When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.”*

Prov. 12:5: *“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.”*

Prov. 15:1: *“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.”*

Prov. 16:6: *“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.”*

Prov. 17:9: *“He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.”*

Prov. 18:13: *“He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.”*

Prov. 29:11: *“A fool vents all his feelings. But a wise man holds them back.”*

Prov. 29:20: *“Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”*

Matt. 18:16: *“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax-collector.”*

2 Tim. 2:24-26: *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”*

Therefore, God expects us to approach correction as follows:

1. Correct with mercy and truth. While correcting, it is important to keep in mind that *iniquity is purged by mercy and truth*. Correction and truth without mercy demonstrates an unloving heart and disrespect towards the behavior being corrected. The application of truth and correction will therefore be ineffective if we don't show some mercy for the person we are correcting.
2. Settle sins privately with our brother first before litigating them. The motivation for doing this is that we should love our neighbor as ourselves and show mercy by trying to hide their sins. If our neighbor will not listen, then we are expected to go back and correct him in the presence of two or

- three witnesses. If he still won't repent, then we are to take up the matter with his church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then you should treat him as a heathen or tax collector.
3. Correct in love. Note that you can and should love the person but you aren't obligated to love the bad behavior. God hates sin but he loves everyone equally, including the sinner.
 4. Correct with a complete understanding of ALL the facts. This means being willing to seek out the facts and be a good listener in gathering all the facts and identifying the eyewitnesses.
 5. Have witnesses. More serious sins need to have more witnesses. Sins requiring death require two or three eye witnesses.
 6. Seek counsel and advice from those more wise than us when we correct.
 7. Correct strongly for more serious sins where we have indisputable knowledge and multiple witnesses of the act which accomplished the hurt.
 8. Correct unemotionally, unselfishly, and dispassionately.
 9. Be brief, concise, and sparing with our words during the correction so we don't commit sin in describing the sin.
 10. Correct respectfully.
 11. Correct patiently.
 12. Correct in humility.
 13. Try to teach people when we correct them, rather than just criticizing them. Help them to understand why their behavior is sinful or harmful, not just the fact that it is wrong. Show them what they need to repent for, but remind them that it is the behavior you have a problem with and not the person. Emphasize that you love them just as God loves them.
 14. Do not correct with the motive of benefiting self. This means avoiding correction in situations where you might benefit personally from the person correcting the situation. Eliminate any possibility that you might benefit from the person's changed behavior after you have corrected them. This will create the appearance that you are acting in their, not your, best interests in pursuing correction, which will create a bond of trust between the two of you.

3.7.8 Under What Circumstances Should We Correct?

Deut. 19:15: *“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”*

Prov. 17:13: *“Whoever rewards evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.”*

1 Tim. 5:19-20: *“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.”*

Therefore, we God expects us to:

1. Correct only when we have more than one witness for the offense or iniquity.
2. Correct in private for intermediate or everyday sins. This will help us build a relationship with the person we are correcting and prevent them from being gossiped about or slandered by people who overhear the correction.
3. Correct in public if we are dealing with elders or officials of the church or with serious sins, and then only when there are two or three witnesses to the offense.

3.7.9 What Happens When We Don't Accept Correction?

Prov. 10:17: *“He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray.”*

Prov. 13:18: *“Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored.”*

Prov. 29:1: *“He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”*

Therefore, people who don't accept exhortation and rebuke:

1. Are going astray.
2. Will experience poverty and shame.
3. Will suddenly be destroyed.

3.8 How To Communicate and Release Difficult Feelings¹⁵

When we are upset, disappointed, frustrated, or angry it is difficult to communicate lovingly. When negative emotions come up, we tend momentarily to lose our loving feelings of trust, caring, understanding, acceptance, appreciation, and respect. At such times, even with the best intentions, talking turns into fighting. In the heat of the moment, we do not remember how to communicate in a way that works for our partner or for us.

At times like these, women unknowingly tend to blame men and make them feel guilty for their actions. Instead of remembering that her partner is doing the best he can, a woman could assume the worst and sound critical and resentful. When she feels a surge of negative feelings, it is especially difficult for a woman to speak in a trusting, accepting, and appreciative way. She doesn't realize how negative and hurtful her attitude is to her partner.

When men become upset, they tend to become judgmental of women and women's feelings. Instead of remembering that his partner is vulnerable and sensitive, a man may forget her needs and sound mean and uncaring. When he feels a surge of negative feelings, it is especially difficult for him to speak in a caring, understanding, and respectful way. He doesn't realize how hurtful his negative attitude is to her.

These are the times when talking with your partner does not work. Fortunately, there are other alternatives. Instead of verbally sharing your feelings with your partner, you can:

1. Pray to God quietly and privately for your partner and to guide you in solving the problem.
2. Pray to God together with your partner. Be reverent, respectful, and talk about your feelings and how to deal with them instead of judging the other person. Focus on forgiveness.
3. Write a Love Letter
4. Write in your journal about the problem

¹⁵ Portions from *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus*, John Gray, PhD., 1992, HarperPerennial, pp-207-244. ISBN 0-06-016848

Praying and writing letters and journaling allow you to listen to your own feelings without worrying about hurting your partner. By freely expressing and listening to your own feelings, you automatically become more centered and loving. As men write letters they become more caring, understanding, and respectful; as women write letters they become more trusting, accepting, and appreciative.

Writing out or praying about your negative feelings is an excellent way to become aware of how unloving you may sound. With this greater awareness you can adjust your approach. In addition, by praying or writing about your negative emotions their intensity can be released, making room for positive feelings to be felt again. Having become more centered, you can then go to your partner and speak to him or her in a more loving way—a way that is less judgmental or blaming. As a result, your chances of being understood and accepted are much greater.

After praying or writing your letter you may no longer feel a need to talk. Instead you could become inspired to do something loving for your partner. Whether you share the feelings in your letter or you just write a letter to feel better, writing down your feelings is an important tool.

Instead of writing down your feelings or praying, you may also choose to do the same process in your mind. Simply refrain from talking and review what happened in your mind. In your imagination imagine you are saying what you feel, think, and want—without editing yourself in any way. By carrying on an inner dialogue expressing the complete truth about your inner feelings, you will suddenly become free from their negative grip. Whether you write down your feelings or do it mentally, by exploring, feeling, and expressing your negative feelings they lose their power and positive feelings reemerge. The Love Letter Technique increases the power and effectiveness of this process tremendously. Although it is a writing technique, it can also be done mentally as well.

3.8.1 Why We Need Constructive Ways to Release Our Feelings

As we have explored throughout this constitution, it is vastly important for women to share their feelings and feel cared for, understood, and respected. It is equally important for men to feel appreciated, accepted, and trusted. The biggest problem in relationships occurs when a woman shares her upset feelings and, as a result, a man feels unloved.

To him, her negative feelings may sound critical, blaming, demanding, and resentful. When he rejects her feelings, she then feels unloved. The success of a relationship is solely dependent on two factors: a man's ability to listen lovingly and respectfully to a woman's feelings, and a woman's ability to share her feelings in a loving and respectful way.

A relationship requires that partners communicate their changing feelings and needs. To expect perfect communication is certainly too idealistic. Fortunately, between here and perfection there is a lot of room for growth.

3.8.2 Effective Listening

Effective listening is an important key to communicating and releasing difficult feelings. It is the way that we can express and demonstrate empathy for our loved ones and it has the affect of strengthening our relationships with them. Effective listening is also called reflective listening. Effective listening treats human interaction as a kind of “ping-pong” match that keeps the “game” of communicating

going and validates the positive or negative feelings of people without necessarily giving them what they want or are asking for. Effective/reflective listening is an important way to show respect that allows members of the family to get their way with angry or upset people without looking too controlling or selfish. The key to effective listening is to respond in an *open* rather than *closed* way to comments or questions from a spouse or child. Open responses validate people's feelings and encourage them to further express themselves while closed responses deny people their right to have certain feelings and end the conversation. Below are some examples of Open vs. Closed responses:

Table 3-5: Effective Listening: Closed vs. Open responses

<i>Offended person</i>	<i>Offended person's remark</i>	<i>Closed Response</i>	<i>Open Response</i>
Child	I'm never going to play with her again!	Why don't you forget it; she probably didn't mean it.	You're really angry with her.
Child	I can't do it!	Now, don't talk like that! You just got started!	It seems very difficult to you.
Child	I wish I could go along. He always gets to go everywhere.	We've discussed this before—so, stop fussing.	It seems unfair to you.
Child	Look at my new model!	That's nice...now will you please go...	You're pleased with your work on it.
Child	I don't want to go to school today. Billy is mean!	Everyone has to go to school. It's the law.	You're afraid Billy will pick on you.
Child	You're the meanest mother in the whole world!	Don't you <i>ever</i> talk to me that way!	You're very angry with me.

3.8.3 Disallowed Modes of Communication

The following dogmatic, bossy, and/or offensive words, phrases, and modes of communication shall NOT be used and will be avoided in any communication among or in front of other family members because they alienate the hearers and undermine and destroy communication:

non-communication: Refusing to talk with any member of the family, and especially if they want to find out how you are feeling or what you want or need.

cuss words: four letter or vulgar words, including but not limited to fuck, shit, bitch, asshole, shithead, goddam, "jesus christ!"

"should/ought to/must": this type of language seeks to influence the other person to do something. You should consider using phrases like "I would like for you to..." instead.

always: Use "frequently" or "most of the time".

never: Use "infrequently" instead.

everyone: Use "most people" or "the majority of people" instead.

no one: Use "few people" instead.

telling someone they are worthless or denigrating their intrinsic value: This kind of communication takes many forms and is strongly discouraged. The value of the individual must never be questioned or denigrated. If you dislike anything about an individual, it should be the *behavior* and not the *person*. Jesus commands us to always love the person but hate the bad behavior.

you-messages: You messages are accusatory statements primarily intended to blame the other individual for doing something. Replace these with I-messages.

Members of the family found using these modes of communication may be sanctioned upon motion or request of any other family member who hears them or is offended by them. Sanctioned family

members should be exhorted to go to their room and not eat with the rest of the family or watch the television. The leader of the family should approach the sanctioned family member and say “We are hurt emotionally when you say _____ because we feel it is disrespectful. We would like for you to apologize for offending _____ or continue to eat in your room. It is your choice.”

3.8.4 Why Love Letters, Prayer, and Journaling Can Help

Love Letters, prayer, and journaling work because they assist you in telling the complete truth. Merely to explore a part of your feelings does not bring about the desired healing. For example:

1. Feeling your anger may not help you at all. It may just make you more angry. The more you dwell on just your anger, the more upset you will become.
2. Crying for hours may leave you feeling empty and spent, if you never move past the sadness.
3. To feel only your fears may make you even more fearful.
4. To feel sorry, without moving through it, may just make you feel guilty and ashamed and may even be harmful to your self-esteem.
5. Trying to feel loving all the time will force you to suppress all your negative emotions, and after a few years, you will become numb and unfeeling.

By expressing each of the four levels of emotional pain, our pain is released. Writing only one or two negative feelings does not work as well. This is because many of our negative emotional reactions are not real feelings but defense mechanisms we unconsciously use to avoid our true feelings.

For example:

1. People who get angry easily generally are trying to hide from their hurt, sadness, fear, or regret. When they feel their more vulnerable feelings, the anger goes away and they become more loving.
2. People who cry easily generally have a hard time getting angry, but when they are helped to express anger they feel much better and more loving.
3. People who are fearful generally need to feel and express their anger; the fear then goes away.
4. People who often feel sorry and guilty generally need to feel and express their hurt and anger before they can feel the self-love they deserve.
5. People who always feel loving but wonder why they are depressed or numb generally need to ask themselves this question: “If I were angry and upset about something, what would it be?” and write out the answers. This will help them get in touch with the feelings hidden behind the depression and numbness. Love Letters can be used in this fashion.

3.8.4.1 Realistic Expectations

To expect communication always to be easy is unrealistic. Some feelings are very difficult to communicate without hurting the listener. Couples who have wonderful and loving relationships will sometimes agonize over how to communicate in a way that works for both people. It is difficult truly to understand another person’s point of view, especially when he or she is not saying what you want to hear. It is also hard to be respectful of another when your own feelings have been hurt.

Many couples mistakenly think that their inability to communicate successfully and lovingly means they don't love each other enough. Certainly love has a lot to do with it, but communication *skill* is a much more important ingredient. Fortunately, it's a learnable skill.

3.8.4.2 How We Learn to Communicate

Successful communication would be second nature if we grew up in families that were already capable of honest and loving communication. But in previous generations, so-called loving communication generally meant avoiding negative feelings. It was often as if negative feelings were a shameful sickness and something to be locked away in a closet.

In less "civilized" families what was considered loving communication might include reacting out or rationalizing negative feelings through physical punishment, yelling, spanking, whipping, and all kinds of verbal abuse—all in the name of trying to help the children learn right from wrong.

Had our parents learned to communicate lovingly, without suppressing negative feelings, we as children would have been safe to discover and explore our own negative reactions and feelings through trial and error. Through positive role models we would have learned successfully how to communicate—especially our difficult feelings. As a result of eighteen years of trial and error in expressing our feelings, we would have gradually learned to express our feelings respectfully and appropriately. If this had been the case, we would not need the Love Letter Technique.

3.8.4.3 If Our Past Were Different

Had our past been different, we would have watched our father successfully and lovingly listen to our mother expand and express her frustrations and disappointments. Daily we would have experienced our father giving our mother the loving caring and understanding that she needed from her loving husband.

We would have watched our mother trusting our father and sharing her feelings openly, without disapproving or blaming him. We would have experienced how a person could be upset without pushing someone away with mistrust, emotional manipulation, avoidance, disapproval, condescension, or coldness.

Throughout our eighteen years of growing up we would gradually be able to master our own emotions just as we have mastered walking or math. It would be a learned skill, like walking, jumping, singing, reading, and balancing a checkbook.

But it didn't happen that way for most of us. Instead we spent eighteen years learning unsuccessful communication skills. Because we lack education on how to communicate feelings, it is a difficult and seemingly insurmountable task to communicate lovingly when we are having negative feelings.

To come to understand how difficult this is, consider your answers to the following questions:

1. When you are feeling angry or resentful, how do you express love if, while you were growing up, your parents either argued or conspired to avoid arguing?
2. How do you get our kids to listen to you without yelling or punishing them if your parents yelled and punished you to maintain control?

3. How do you ask for more support if, even as a child, you felt repeatedly neglected and disappointed?
4. How do you open up and share your feelings if you are afraid of being rejected?
5. How do you talk to your partner if your feelings say “I hate you”?
6. How do you say “I am sorry” if, as a child, you were punished for making mistakes.
7. How can you admit your mistakes if you are afraid of punishment or rejection?
8. How can you show your feelings if, as a child, you were repeatedly rejected or judged for being upset and crying?
9. How are you supposed to ask for what you want if, as a child, you were repeatedly made to feel wrong for wanting more?
10. How are you even supposed to know what you are feeling if your parents didn’t have the time, patience, or awareness to ask you how you were feeling or what was bothering you?
11. How can you accept your partner’s imperfections if, as a child, you felt you had to be perfect to be worthy of love?
12. How can you listen to your partner’s painful feelings if no one listened to yours?
13. How can you forgive if you were not forgiven?
14. How are you supposed to cry and heal your pain and grief if, as a child, you were repeatedly told “Don’t cry” or “When are you going to grow up?” or “Only babies cry”?
15. How can you hear your partner’s disappointment if, as a child, you were made to feel responsible for your mother’s pain long before you could understand that you were *not* responsible?
16. How can you hear your partner’s anger if, as a child, your mother or father took their frustrations out on you through yelling and being demanding?
17. How do you open up and trust your partner if the first people you trusted with your innocence betrayed you in some way?
18. How are you supposed to communicate your feelings lovingly and respectfully if you haven’t had eighteen years of practice without the threat of being rejected or abandoned?

The answer to all of these eighteen questions is the same: it is possible to learn loving communication, but we need to work at it. We have to make up for the eighteen years of neglect. No matter how perfect our parents were, nobody is really perfect. If you have problems communicating, it is neither a curse nor all your partner’s fault. It is simply a lack of having the correct training and the safety to practice.

In reading the above questions, you may have had some feelings come up. Don’t waste this special opportunity to heal yourself. Take twenty minutes right now and write one of your parents a Love Letter. Simply get a pen and some paper and begin expressing your feelings, using the Love Letter format. Try it now, and you will be amazed at the outcome.

3.8.5 The Love Letter Technique

One of the best ways to release negativity and then communicate in a more loving fashion is to use the Love Letter Technique. Through writing out your feelings in a particular manner, the negative emotions automatically lessen and the positive feelings increase. The Love Letter Technique enhances the letter writing process. There are three aspects or parts to the Love Letter Technique.

1. Write a Love Letter expressing your feelings of anger, sadness, fear, regret, and love.
2. Write a Response Letter expressing what you want to hear from your partner.
3. Share your Love Letter and Response Letter with your partner.

The Love Letter Technique is quite flexible. You may choose to do all three steps, or you may only need to do one or two of them. For example, you might practice steps one and two in order to feel more centered and loving and then have a verbal conversation with your partner without being overwhelmed with resentment or blame. At other times you may choose to do all three steps and share your Love Letter and Response Letter with your partner.

To do all three steps is a powerful and healing experience for both of you. However sometimes doing all three steps is too time consuming or inappropriate. In some situations, the most powerful technique is to do just step one and write a Love Letter. Let's explore a few examples of how to write a Love Letter.

The Love Letter Technique is really about patiently and teaching your partner about empathizing with your feelings and about developing skills in communicating in a loving way. It develops these areas of the relationship:

1. Teaching empathy.
2. Helping couples to understand each other better.
3. Develops communication skills.
4. Helps release frustrations.
5. Uses the I-message technique already discussed in section 5.9.6 of this document in the context of parenting.
6. Encourages couples to focus on solutions and each others' needs.
7. Encourages couples to communicate and problem-solve together.

3.8.5.1 STEP 1: Writing a Love Letter

To write a Love Letter, find a private spot and write a letter to your partner. In each Love Letter express your feelings of anger, sadness, fear, regret, and then love. This format allows you to fully express and understand all your feelings. As a result of understanding all your feelings you will then be able to communicate to your partner in a more loving and centered way.

When we are upset we generally have many feelings at once. For example, when your partner disappoints you, you may feel *angry* that he is being insensitive, angry that she is being unappreciative; *sad* that he is so preoccupied with his work, sad she doesn't seem to trust you; *afraid* that she will never forgive you, afraid that he doesn't care as much about you; *sorry* that you are secretly withholding your love from him or her. But at the same time you *love* that he or she is your partner and you want his or her love and attention.

To find our loving feelings, many times we need first to feel all our negative feelings. After expressing these four levels of negative feelings (anger, sadness, fear, and regret), we can fully feel and express our loving feelings. Writing Love Letters automatically lessens the intensity of our negative feelings and allows us to experience more fully our positive feelings. Here are some guidelines for writing a basic Love Letter:

1. Address the letter to your partner. Pretend that he or she is listening to you with love and understanding.
2. Start with anger, then sadness, then fear, then regret, and then love. Include all five sections in each letter.

3. Write a few sentences about each feeling; keep each section approximately the same length. Speak in simple terms.
4. After each section, pause and notice the next feeling coming up. Write about that feeling.
5. Do not stop your letter until you get to the love. Be patient and wait for the love to come out.
6. Sign your name at the end. Take a few moments to think about what you need or want. Write it in a P.S.

To simplify writing your letters you may wish to make copies of the following chart to use as a guide in writing your own Love Letters. In each of the five sections, a few helpful lead-in phrases are included to help you express your feelings. You may use just a few of these phrases or all of them. Generally the most releasing expressions are: “I am angry,” “I am sad,” “I am afraid,” “I am sorry,” “I want,” and “I love.” However, any phrases that assist you in expressing your feelings will work. It usually takes about twenty minutes to complete a Love Letter.

SAMPLE LOVE LETTER

Dear _____ Date _____

I am writing this letter to share my feelings with you.

1. For Anger.

- I don't like it...
- I feel frustrated...
- I am angry that...
- I feel annoyed...
- I want...

2. For Sadness

- I feel disappointed...
- I am sad that...
- I feel hurt...
- I wanted...
- I want...

3. For Fear

- I feel worried...
- I am afraid...
- I feel scared...
- I do not want...
- I need...
- I want...

4. For Regret

- I feel embarrassed...
- I am sorry...
- I feel ashamed...
- I didn't want...
- I want...

5. For Love

- I love...
- I want...
- I understand...
- I forgive...
- I appreciate...
- I thank you for...
- I know.....

P.S. The response I would like to hear from you:

SAMPLE LOVE LETTER ABOUT INDIFFERENCE

Jim was leaving the next morning for a business trip. That evening, his wife, Virginia, attempted to create some intimacy. She brought a mango into their bedroom and offered him some. Him was preoccupied reading a book in bed and briefly commented that he wasn't hungry. Virginia felt rejected and left. Inside she was hurt and angry. Instead of coming back and complaining about his rudeness and insensitivity, she wrote a Love Letter.

After writing this letter, Virginia, feeling more accepting and forgiving, went back into the bedroom and said, "This is our last night before you leave, let's spend some special time together." Jim put down his book and they had a delightful, intimate evening. Writing a Love Letter gave Virginia the strength and love to persist more directly in getting her partner's attention. She did not even need to share her Love Letter with her partner.

This is her letter:

Dear Jim,

1. **Anger:** I am frustrated that you want to read a book and this is our last evening together before you leave. I am angry that you ignore me. I am angry that you do not want to spend this time with me. I am angry that we don't spend more time together. There is always something more important than me. I want to feel you love me.
2. **Sadness:** I am sad that you don't want to be with me. I am sad that you work so hard. I feel like you wouldn't even notice if I wasn't here. I am sad that you are always so busy. I am sad that you don't want to talk with me. I feel hurt that you do not care. I don't feel special.
3. **Fear:** I am afraid you don't even know why I am upset. I am afraid you don't care. I am afraid of sharing my feelings with you. I am afraid you will reject me. I am afraid we are drifting further apart. I am scared that I can't do anything about it. I am afraid that I am boring to you. I am afraid you don't like me.
4. **Regret:** I feel so embarrassed wanting to spend time with you when you don't even care. I feel embarrassed getting so upset. I am sorry if this sounds demanding. I am sorry that I am not more loving and accepting. I am sorry that I was cold when you didn't want to spend time with me. I am sorry that I didn't give you another chance. I am sorry that I stop trusting your love.
5. **Love:** I do love you. That's why I brought the mango. I wanted to do something to please you. I wanted to spend some special time together. I still want to have a special evening. I forgive you for being so indifferent to me. I forgive you for not responding right away. I understand that you were in the middle of reading something. Lets have a loving intimate evening.

P.S. The response I would like to hear; “I love you, Virginia, and I also want to spend a loving evening with you. I am going to miss you.”

3.8.5.2 STEP 2: Writing a Response Letter

Writing a Response Letter is the second step in the Love Letter Technique. Once you have expressed both your negative and positive feelings, talking an additional three to five minutes to write a Response Letter can be a healing process. In this letter, you will write the kind of response you would like to have from your partner.

It works like this. Imagine that your partner is able to respond lovingly to your hurt feelings—the ones you expressed in your Love Letter. Write a short letter to yourself pretending it is your partner writing to you. Include all the things you would like to hear from your partner about the hurts you have expressed. The following lead-in phrases can get you started:

- Thank you for...
- I understand...
- I am sorry...
- You deserve...
- I want...
- I love...

Sometimes writing a Response Letter is even more powerful than writing a Love Letter. Writing out what we actually want and need increases our openness to receiving the support we deserve. In addition, when we imagine our partners responding lovingly, we actually make it easier for them to do so.

Some people are very good at writing out their negative feelings but have a hard time finding the feelings of love. It is especially important for these people to write Response Letters and explore what they would want to hear in return. Be sure to feel your own resistance about letting your partner support you. This gives you an added awareness about how difficult it must be for your partner to deal lovingly with you at such times.

Sometimes, women object to writing Response Letters. They expect their partners to know what to say. They have a hidden feeling that says “I don’t want to tell him what I need; if he really loves me he will know.” In this case a woman needs to remember men are different than them and don’t know what women need; they need to be told.

A man’s response is more a reflection of his planet than a mirror of how much he loves her. If he were a woman, he would know what to say, but he is not. Men really don’t know how to respond to woman’s feelings. For the most part, our culture doesn’t teach men what women need.

If a man has seen and heard his father respond with loving words to his mother’s upset feelings, then he would have a better idea about what to do. As it is, he doesn’t know because he’s never been taught. Response Letters are the best way to teach a man about a woman’s needs. Slowly, but surely, he will learn.

Sometimes women ask me “If I tell him what I want to hear, and he starts saying it, how do I know he is not *just* saying it? I’m afraid he may not really mean it.”

This is an important question. If a man doesn't love a woman he will not even bother to give her what she needs. If he even attempts to give a response similar to her request, then most likely he is really trying to respond.

If he doesn't sound fully sincere it's because he is learning something new. Learning a new way of responding is awkward. To him it may feel weak. This is a critical time. He needs lots of appreciation and encouragement. He needs feedback telling him he's on the right track.

If his attempts to support her seem somewhat insincere, it is usually because he is afraid his efforts will not work. If a woman appreciates his attempt, the next time he will feel more secure and thus be able to be more sincere. A man is not a fool. When he feels that a woman is receptive to him and that he can respond in a way that makes a positive difference, he will do it. It just takes time.

Women as well can learn a lot about men and what they need by hearing a man's Response Letter. A woman is generally perplexed by a man's reactions to her. She has no idea why he rejects her attempts to support him. She misunderstands what he needs. Sometimes she resists him because she thinks he wants her to give up herself. In most cases, however, he really wants her to trust, appreciate, and accept him.

To receive support we not only have to teach our partners what we need but we also have to be willing to be supported. Response Letters ensure that a person is open to being supported. Otherwise, communication cannot work. To share hurt feelings with an attitude that says "Nothing you say can make me feel better" is not only counterproductive but also hurtful to your partner. It is better not to talk at these times.

3.8.5.3 STEP 3: Sharing your Love Letter and Response Letter

Sharing your letters is important for the following reasons:

- It gives your partner an opportunity to support you.
- It allows you to get the understanding you need.
- It gives your partner necessary feedback in a loving and respectful way.
- It motivates change in the relationship.
- It creates intimacy and passion.
- It teaches your partner what is important to you and how successfully to support you.
- It helps couples to start talking again when communication breaks down.
- It teaches us how to hear negative feelings in a safe and non-defensive way.

There are five ways to share your letters outlined below. In this case, it is assumed that *she* wrote the letter, but these methods work just as well if *he* wrote the letter.

1. *He* reads her Love Letter and Response Letter out loud while she is present. Then he holds her hands and gives his own loving response with a greater awareness of what she needs to hear.
2. *She* reads her Love Letter and Response Letter out loud while he is listening. Then he holds her hands and gives his own loving response with a greater awareness of what she needs to hear.
3. *First he reads her Response Letter out loud to her.* Then he reads her Love Letter out loud. It is much easier for a man to hear negative feelings when he already knows how to respond to those feelings. By letting a man know what is required of him, he doesn't panic as much when he is

hearing negative feelings. After he reads her Love Letter he then holds her hands and gives his own loving response with a greater awareness of what she needs to hear.

4. *First she reads her Response Letter to him.* Then she reads her Love Letter out loud. Finally, he holds her hands and gives her a loving response with a greater awareness of what she needs.
5. *She gives her letters to him and he reads them privately within twenty-four hours.* After he has read the letters, he thanks her for writing them and holds her hands and gives her a loving response with a greater awareness of what she needs.

3.8.5.4 What to Do If Your Partner Can't Respond Lovingly

Based on their past experiences some men and women have great difficulty hearing Love Letters. In this case they must not be expected to read one. But even when your partner chooses to hear a letter, sometimes they are unable to respond right away in a loving manner. Let's take Paul and Theresa as an example.

If Paul is not feeling more loving after he has heard his partner's letters, then it is because he can't respond with love at that time. But after time his feelings will change.

When reading the letters, he may feel attacked by the anger and hurt and become defensive. At such times he needs to take a time-out to reflect on what was said. He might want to excuse himself to pray about it.

Sometimes when a person hears a Love Letter they only hear the anger and it will take a while before they can hear the love. It helps if, after a bit, he rereads the letter, especially the regret and love sections. Sometimes before I read a Love Letter from my wife, I read the love section first and then I read the full letter.

If a man is upset after reading a Love Letter, he could also respond with his own Love Letter, which would allow him to process the negative feelings that came up when he read her Love Letter. Sometimes I don't know what is bothering me until my wife shares a Love Letter with me, and then suddenly I have something to write about. By writing my letter I am able to find again my loving feelings and reread her letter and hear the love behind her hurt.

If a man cannot immediately respond with love, he needs to know that it's OK and not be punished. His partner needs to understand and accept his need to think about things for a while. Perhaps to support his partner, he can say something like "Thank you for writing this letter. I need some time to pray about and think about it and then we can talk about it." It is important that he not express critical feelings about the letter. It is also important that he show respect for his partner by committing to a definite date and time for discussing the letter. Sharing letters, however, needs to be a private and safe time for both parties.

All of the above suggestions for sharing Love Letters also apply when a woman has difficulty responding to a man's letter in a loving way. I generally recommend that couples read out loud the letters they have written. It is helpful to read your partner's letter out loud because it helps them to feel heard. Experiment with both and see what fits you.

3.8.5.5 Making It Safe for Love Letters

Sharing Love Letters can be scary. The person writing their true feelings will feel vulnerable. If their partner rejects them it can be very painful. The purpose of sharing the letter is to open up feelings so that partners can become closer. It works well as long as the process is done in safety. The person receiving the Love Letter needs to be particularly respectful of the writer's expression. If they cannot give true, respectful support, they shouldn't agree to listen until they can.

Sharing letters needs to be done with the correct intention. Sharing a letter needs to be done in the spirit of following two statements of intent:

Statement of Intent for Writing and Sharing a Love Letter

I have written this letter in order to find my positive feelings and to give you the love you deserve. As part of that process I am sharing with you my negative feelings, which are holding me back.

Your understanding will help me to open up and to let go of my negative feelings. I trust that you do care and that you will respond to my feelings in the best way you can. I appreciate your willingness to listen and support me.

In addition I hope that this letter will assist you in understanding my wants, needs, and wishes.

Statement of Intent for Hearing a Love Letter

I promise to do my best to understand the validity of your feelings, to accept our differences, to respect your needs as I do my own, and to appreciate that you are doing your best to communicate your feelings and love.

I promise to listen and not correct or deny your feelings. I promise to accept you and not try to change you.

I am willing to listen to your feelings because I do care and I trust that we can work this out.

3.8.5.6 When to Write Love Letters

The time to write a Love Letter is whenever you are upset and you want to feel better. Here are some common ways Love Letters can be written:

1. Love Letter to an intimate partner.
2. Love Letter to a friend, child, or family member.
3. Love Letter to business associate or client. Instead of saying "I love you" at the end you may choose to use "I appreciate" and "I respect." In most cases I don't recommend sharing it.
4. Love Letter to yourself.

5. Love Letter to God or Higher Power. Share your upset feelings about your life with God and ask for support.
6. Role reversal Love Letter. If it is hard to forgive someone, pretend that you are them for a few minutes and write a Love Letter from them to you. You will be amazed at how quickly you become more forgiving.
7. Monster Love Letters. If you are really upset and your feelings are mean and judgmental, vent them in a letter. Then burn the letter. Do not expect your partner to read it unless you both can handle negative feelings and are willing to do so. In that case even monster letters can be very helpful.
8. Displacement Love Letter. When present events upset you and remind you of unresolved feelings from childhood, imagine you can go back in time and write a letter to one of your parents, sharing your feelings and asking for their support.

3.8.6 Prayer

For all the same reasons as the Love Letter Technique, prayer also helps develop loving communication within intimate relationships. It also allows people to get in touch with the influence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

There are two types of prayer: 1. Praying privately with one's partner; 2. Praying as a family or as a group. Whichever technique you apply, prayer can have the many of the same healing affects as Love Letters, but you will need to follow it with the following activities order to have full impact:

1. Further investigate the problem and try to better understand it.
2. Brainstorm possible solutions.
3. Agree on a solution you can both live with.
4. Try out the solution.

These techniques are similar to those found in section 5.9.4: Cooperative Problem Solving Techniques.

3.8.7 Journaling

Journaling works the same as the Love Letter technique, except that journals are generally considered to be private. They should not be shared with anyone for the sake of your privacy and confidentiality, but you can address many of the same issues as with Love Letters. After you have used your journal to write a love letter, you might want to transcribe the letter onto a separate document and use the same techniques as Love Letters discussed previously.

3.9 How to Resolve Family Conflicts

3.9.1 Rules For Conflict Resolution¹⁶

Below are a few useful guidelines for resolving family conflicts:

¹⁶ Baby and Child Care, Paul C. Reisser, M.D., 1997; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; pp. 459-463.

1. Mutual, not one-way respect, is an absolute necessity. Without respect on both sides, any relationship will ultimately deteriorate or become destructive. With mutual respect it is possible to have an intense disagreement with another person without causing damage to a relationship or those who are affected by it. Respect acknowledges the ultimate worth of the other person—as established by God and not by any other attributes or accomplishments—and affirms that worth in attitudes, words, and actions.

If parents do not respect one another or if respect flows only in one direction, attempts to resolve issues are likely to be unsuccessful or hurtful. This fundamental problem must be addressed—usually in a counseling setting—if a marriage is going to survive and thrive through the years of raising children and beyond.

2. When a disagreement arises, conversations should focus on the issue and not the person. If Mom feels she needs more help with the kids in the evening, it isn't productive to begin the discussion with the statement "You care more about that TV than your own children!" If Dad is getting worried about the family budget, he won't get very far by saying, "All you ever do is spend the money I work so hard to bring home!" Once the issue is defined (How do we care for the kids when we're both tired? or How can we keep better track of our finance?), the focus can shift toward generating and evaluating a potential solution.
3. When an issue needs to be discussed, pick an appropriate time and place. Make time if you don't have any for each of you to express your needs and views. Not at the end of the day when energy is low and fuses may be short; not right before bed; not when anger is at a fever pitch; not when there isn't time to work through it; not when the TV is on, the phone is ringing, the kids are crying, and the dog is barking. If it is clear that an issue needs to be addressed, it's quite all right for either person to call time and say, "This isn't a good time to discuss this" or "I don't feel like talking about it right now"—as long as a specific time is set to talk about it in the very near future. The best time to talk is when both parties are rested, focused, and attentive or during a family meeting. It's helpful to work through an issue in a place that is relatively free of distractions and interruptions. This may be a particular room, somewhere out in the yard, or a place away from home. Many couples do their best negotiating at a coffee shop or on a long walk.
4. If it is not expedient to solve a problem as it happens because it is too big or because the parent or child are too busy or too tired to solve the problem immediately, then the parties involved should write down the problem and add it to the agenda for the next weekly family meeting.
5. Pray together before discussing the issue. Laying the issue before God can help keep it in perspective and reinforce your common ground. Be careful not to use this prayer time to express your viewpoint or claim God's backing for your side of the conflict. Prayer should be an exercise in humility, not a power play.
6. Each person must be able to express his or her viewpoint fully, without interruption. A key element of respect is listening carefully to what the other person is saying, without thinking about one's own response. One technique that encourages attentive listening involves picking an object (such as a pen) and stipulating that whoever holds it is entitled to speak without any interruption. The other person cannot say a word until the pen is passed, and the pen will not be passed until the person receiving it can summarize what was just said to the speaker's satisfaction—without argument, rebuttal, or editorial comment. If the listener doesn't get it right, the pen doesn't pass. This approach may at first seem awkward and ritualistic, but it is surprisingly effective at improving the listening skills. Get in the habit of checking frequently to be sure that you understand what the other person is saying. "I hear you saying that..." This is called empathetic or reflective listening.

7. Avoid “You..” statements—especially those containing the words always, never, should, or shouldn’t. Replace them with statements that express your own feelings. “You never spend any time at home anymore!” essentially demands a rebuttal (“That’s not true!”). IN contrast, “It seems as if the kids and I are spending more evenings by ourselves than ever before, and it makes me feel lonely” is a straightforward observation and an expression of a genuine feeling. Similarly, a statement such as “You shouldn’t make commitments for both of us without talking to me first!” is likely to provoke a defensive response. The one way in which a “you” statement can legitimately enter a conversation is in this form: “When you say (or do) _____, I feel _____.” (For example, “When you make commitments for both of us without talking to me first, I feel as if my opinion doesn’t count.”) This type of statement can help one person understand how specific words or actions are affecting the other.
8. Avoid “Why..?” questions—especially those (once again) containing always or never. “Why do you always leave the back door open?”: can be answered in only one of two ways: defensively (“I don’t either!”) or sarcastically (“Because I’m an idiot!”) “Why...?” questions immediately and automatically turn a discussion into a battle.
9. Avoid dragging events from the distant past into the current issue. “Here we go again...!” or “This is just what you did on our vacation in 1990, when you...” If current problems are indeed related to grievances from the past, then those specific concerns need to be discussed and resolved apart from any current problems.
10. Name-calling and other forms of insults are disrespectful and should be banned from all conversations within a family (or anywhere else). Verbal insults live in everyone’s memory long after apologies have been made. One of the most powerful lessons your children can learn from you is how to disagree or be angry with a person without labeling, name-calling, or insulting them in other ways. Remember that body language (sighing, rolling the eyes, etc.), gestures, and tone of voice can communicate disrespect as powerfully as the most explicit insult.
11. The discussion of an issue should eventually be focused on arriving at a point of cooperating on exploring possible courses of action. “What can I do to help you not feel so tired at the end of the day?” or “How can we make Sunday morning less hectic?” It may help to list a number of possibilities and then talk through the pros and cons of each one.
12. Realize that on a number of issues you may have to “agree to disagree,” and that in doing so, the other person’s viewpoint is not to be subject to constant ridicule. This will mean compromising in some cases. There is usually, however, some solution that will allow for each person’s needs to be met.
13. If your discussion of issues frequently deteriorate into shouting matches or glum statements, get some help. It takes courage and maturity to go to a counselor or to a mature couple whom you know to be experienced in conflict resolution, in order to determine what goes wrong when disagreements arise in your home. Constructive suggestions from an unbiased third party, if acted upon consistently, can drastically improve the quality and outcome of these conversations.

3.9.2 Should We Argue In Front of the Children?¹⁷

Parental modeling of respectful disagreements can be a powerful and useful life lesson for children to observe, provided that a few cautions are kept in mind:

1. Consider your audience. The child(ren) should be old enough to comprehend what you are talking about and emotionally mature enough to grasp the concept that you can disagree with someone

¹⁷ Baby and Child Care, Paul C. Reisser, M.D., 1997; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; pp. 463-464.

whom you deeply love and respect. Preschoolers and early-grade-school children can become terrified by the thought that Mom and Dad don't like each other and may misinterpret a spirited parental exchange as the unraveling of their world. They probably should rarely if ever, witness a serious parental disagreement. Older children and adolescents, on the other hand, can benefit from seeing how two mature people can settle an issue in a positive way.

2. *Play by the rules.* If kids are going to watch or listen, you should be well versed in healthy conflict resolution, resolve to keep the tone of conversation respectful and strive to come to a positive solution of your issue.
3. *Consider demonstrating how you settled an issue.* If you had a particularly fruitful conversation about a problem, think about reenacting it for your children to show how you dealt with it. You might even demonstrate some right and wrong ways to deal with an issue—especially if your children are having some problems in this area themselves.
4. *Beware of voicing a disagreement in front of a child who is the subject of the disagreement.* Parents should be united, even if they are not in total agreement when dealing with basic issues of child rearing—especially those relating to limits and discipline. A child must never get the idea that if Mommy says no, he can go talk to daddy, or that one parent will veto the other's disciplinary measures. However, with some concerns that are not fundamentally important, an older child might benefit from hearing different viewpoints, as long as they are expressed appropriately. (For example, the pros and cons of going to a summer camp or joining an athletic team could be an excellent topic for discussion among child and parents, even if there is no total agreement about the best decision).
5. *Declare a cease-fire, if necessary.* If your discussion is deteriorating into a shouting match and children are within earshot, *call it off* until you can continue in private—after you have cooled down. It is devastating—and inappropriate—for children to hear their parents yelling, insulting one another, or being physically aggressive. If your disagreement reaches this level, you should not only isolate it from your children but seek counseling as soon as possible.

3.9.3 When Siblings Engage in Combat¹⁸

This section does not begin with the word *if* because siblings *will* have conflicts—sometimes with shocking ferocity. In some families the nonstop bickering and pummeling that goes on in the backseat of the car, at the kitchen table, around the TV set, or in any other location where two or more children are gathered, is enough to cause mothers and fathers to want to turn in their resignation from parenthood. This is particularly exasperating when the parents have not modeled antagonistic or harsh behavior. *Where does all this awful hostility come from? Where did we go wrong?*

What generates so much conflict between brothers and sisters? With rare exception, it is not the result of poor parenting. Much of it is an expression of basic human nature. There is nothing in the human genetic code that spontaneously brings forth from children concerns for the rights and needs of others—including their closest family members. This (and nearly all other values) must be taught and modeled by parents, relatives, teachers, and other civilizing influences as children grow up.

A number of other factors may contribute to sibling combat. Recognizing them and working to reduce their impact can go a long way toward maintaining peace in your home:

¹⁸ Baby and Child Care, Paul C. Reisser, M.D., 1997; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; pp. 464-468.

1. *Desire for parental attention.* *There's only so much of Mom and Dad to go around—how do I know that I'm still loved and important?* This isn't merely the unspoken question of a toddler when a new baby comes home. Regardless of the number and the ages involved, if there is more than one child in the nest there will be some serious concerns about (and competition for) a parent's attention. Ironically, in some cases children may instigate a fight merely to get an adult involved with them—even when the consequences are unpleasant. But even if the attention-seeking behavior is annoying, the basic questions are the same: *Who cares about me? Am I significant to anyone? Does what I think or do really matter?*

To avoid endless guilt, you need to acknowledge that you have limits—that you can't be all things to one child, let alone many. Nevertheless, amidst all the basic responsibilities of daily living; maintaining a home; generating income; and pursuing church, educational, or community projects, *some time and energy must be available for individual attention to each child on a regular basis.* If your schedule is particularly busy, you should consider setting a regular date with each child, during which he will have your undivided attention. This need not be elaborate; a walk in the park or an outing for an ice-cream cone can be a memorable occasion, provided that the parent isn't distracted by thoughts about all the other things that need to be done at home.

2. *Comparisons.* When two children first meet, comparisons are an immediate and normal occurrence: Who is older, bigger, and faster? If there is a disagreement, who is tougher? What toys does one have that the other doesn't? Depending on the situation, these questions may be minor points of interest that do not affect a budding friendship, or they may prove to be a source of major conflict.

Within the close quarters of a family, comparisons between children will be an inevitable daily reality and may become a source of ongoing friction. What happens if one child is a prodigy in school and her brother has learning disabilities? What if one is gifted in sports and another literally can't get to first base? What if the first two children are relatively compliant but the third has a will of steel and a limitless capacity to tell everyone where to get off?

Parents of more than one child will regularly have to exercise a delicate responsibility: recognizing and praising each child's unique skills, strengths, and accomplishments without implying that one sibling is somehow better than another. In some cases, you may have to look a lot harder to find what is praiseworthy, but is that child who will most need your affirmation. Whatever you do, avoid negative comparisons such as "Why can't you throw a ball like your brother?" or "You'll go a lot farther in life if you buckle down to your schoolwork like your sister does!" These kinds of comments are virtually guaranteed to stir resentment.

3. *Invasion of privacy.* While sharing is a virtue that should be encouraged during and after the preschool years, no child—or adult—appreciates having his possessions pawed through, broken, strewn on the floor, or taken to places unknown. This often becomes a point of contention when a child becomes mobile and begins exploring (and thrashing) the fascinating toys belonging to older siblings. It is quite appropriate to help an older child safeguard her belongings when there is a toddler on the loose, perhaps by providing closet or shelf space for her that is inaccessible to the younger child, keeping the other child's bedroom door closed, or limiting the range of the toddler's explorations. Unfortunately, older children and adolescents can also thoughtlessly raid a sibling's (or a parent's) possessions, often provoking surprisingly harsh responses.

You need to caution your children about becoming overly attached to an emotional about their possessions. But you also need to instill in them a healthy respect for the possessions of others, especially within your own home.

4. *Oppression*. Older children can be merciless in their physical and emotional torment of younger siblings, and parents must be prepared to intervene when this type of behavior is going on. But sometimes younger children can harass and irritate older siblings, and they should not be given free rein to do so simply because they are smaller.
5. *Injustice*. “He did it!” and “She started it!” are common “not guilty” pleas of siblings who are asked to account for a mess, a broken toy (or window), or a fight. Many times you will have to sort out who did what to whom, and at times you will need the wisdom of Solomon to dispense justice in the face of conflicting testimony or inconclusive evidence. While children may fervently seek to escape punishment, they care desperately about fairness. Don’t play favorites. The fact that one child is normally more compliant than another doesn’t mean that he isn’t capable of instigating wrongdoing.

In addition to your efforts to minimize these hot spots for sibling rivalry, here are a few more general principles to keep in mind:

1. *Don’t get pulled into every conflict*. Sometimes children will start an uproar in a misguided attempt to gain adult attention. Ignoring their efforts will reduce the odds of a repeat performance. Even if that isn’t their motivation, some situations it’s reasonable to give children a chance to sort out their own conflicts.
2. *Don’t let conflicts get out of hand*. If the children are not arriving at an appropriate solution, if someone is being bullied, or if insults (or fists) are flying, call a time-out for tempers to cool down.
3. *Repeatedly teach the principle of mutual respect and its implications*. Just as marital conflicts must be settled within a framework of mutual respect, so also must disagreements between children. This is the basis for curbing insults and not allowing arguments to escalate into physical combat.
4. *Administer disciplinary measures privately*. The embarrassment of being disciplined in front of other people—especially other children who may secretly take pleasure in watching the punishment—is both painful and counterproductive and more likely to lead to resentment than improved behavior.
5. *Discourage tattling*. If one child tells you about the misdeeds of another, the second child’s behavior must be dealt with, assuming that the story is true. But if the first child seemed smug or gleeful while reporting to you what his sibling did or appeared to gloat over the other child’s discipline, he needs to be reprimanded too. The issue isn’t that he reported the wrongdoing; at times such information may prevent an accident or injury. What you want to discourage is the attitude of tattling that derives satisfaction or pleasure from another’s “crime and punishment.”
6. *Remember that “this too will surely pass”*. It is often difficult to believe that children who have squabbled so intensely for so many years can actually have civilized relationships later in life. Yet in the vast majority of cases, a child’s passage into adolescence and adulthood ends sibling warfare and replaces it with pleasant camaraderie, deepening friendship, and (most surprisingly) fervent loyalty.

3.9.4 How to Hold “Family Court”

A very healthy and innovative way to deal with family conflicts is to hold “Family Court”. Make the entire family who are 12 years old or older into a “jury” that renders a binding verdict. This provides healthy ways for people to discuss and to solve relationship problems and teaches the value of team work, discipline, respect, and self-control. Reserve this approach for hotly contested issues that cannot be resolved at the weekly family meetings mentioned in section 3.6 below. Over time, if you use the techniques for conflict resolution mentioned here, then most issues should eventually get resolved at

the family meeting in a much more cooperative way after they learn more about the attitudes and expectations of family members during a few “trials.” Use the rules documented below to govern the trial proceedings.

1. Maintain a “court calendar” on the refrigerator door. As disagreements happen throughout the week that family members feel the need to “litigate”, enter the disagreement onto this court calendar so they come up at the designated family court time. Emphasize that there is to be no argument or disputes unless and until the hearing happens. If there is a thing that is being argued over, the “judge” confiscates it temporarily until the hearing and a decision can be rendered about it.
2. Allocate a time each week to hold the court. Weekends are preferable. Hold court only if there are issues to “litigate” and devote no more than an hour to the hearing so family members don’t lose interest.
3. Maintain a binder that becomes the “court record” that everyone in the family can refer to for a synopsis of each argument and hearing. Give all family members access to a copy of this folder when there are disputes but let the “judge” keep the original locked up for safekeeping.
4. Court hearing protocol:
 - 4.1. At the beginning of the hearing, designate a “recorder” or “clerk” for the proceedings and rotate the responsibility, so each family member gets a chance to do this job and develops an appreciation for it. This person’s job is to record the argument and the results of the hearing.
 - 4.2. Family members who refuse to participate in the proceeding as a juror or recorder will:
 - 4.2.1. Not receive an allowance.
 - 4.2.2. Forfeit their right to litigate any disputes and automatically lose any dispute with another family member who is a juror. This forces them to compromise.
 - 4.3. Let Dad be the “judge”.
 - 4.4. Let each party who has a disagreement become their own advocate or “attorney”.
 - 4.5. Give each side equal time to speak and “present their case” to the “jury” without interruption.
 - 4.6. Allow parties to submit evidence and testimony during the proceeding at least one day before the hearing so that the other side has a chance to prepare to argue against it.
 - 4.7. Exclude the parties who are involved directly in the dispute from voting as part of the jury.
 - 4.8. After the matter has been “submitted to the court”, the jury renders a verdict. After the votes are tallied, each family member who renders a verdict is obligated to present reasons why he or she ruled the way they did to the rest of the jury.
 - 4.9. If the jury has an even number of members and there is a tie, then the “judge” (Dad/Husband) renders the final decision.
 - 4.10. The findings for each hearing should be transcribed by the recorder onto a “Court Findings” sheet that goes into the original and official “court record” binder.
 - 4.11. The judge then makes a copy of the findings and puts it into the copy “court record” binder that the family can view.

3.10 Emotional and Verbal Abuse

Emotional and verbal abuse within relationships are basically about control. One partner wants to control or manipulate the other.

3.10.1 How do people become emotional abusers?

Emotional abuse originates from our experiences during early childhood up to the age of about 11. Beliefs we learn as children are behind the emotions and actions that lead to emotional abuse. Recall from chapter five of this document children misbehave in order to feel important and needed for four different reasons: 1. To get attention; 2. To have power over parents; 3. To get revenge; 4. To display inadequacy. Emotional abuse in a spousal relationship can be classified as a type of power-motivated misbehavior. Basically, the child ego in the emotional abuser wants power and control over their spouse as a way for them to feel like they belong and are important. They need far more of this type of validation than most people because of the low self-esteem and mistrust of people they learned as a child that causes them to want to overcompensate to regain that self-esteem as an adult.

There are five types of traumatic experiences as a child that we can experience which can lead to the low self-esteem that causes the development of emotionally abuse behavior patterns in adults:

1. Rejection or abandonment by one's parents or other close family members.
2. Incest or sexual abuse by a parent or relative
3. Molestation by non-relatives.
4. Emotional abuse by other family members or emotional abuse between their parents that teaches them negative ways of dealing with their own family problems.
5. Physical abuse by family members.

Once a child has experienced any or all of these traumatic events, they are scarred emotionally and their emotional development stops. Unless they learn from others to deal effectively with these emotions, they will be scarred for life. Emotional development then stops because they learn at a very early age that people are selfish and hurtful and should be avoided. They decide that they can't or shouldn't trust anyone because they are afraid they might be hurt badly again. Fear and resentment and insecurity about human relationships is the result, which is at the heart of why they will then isolate themselves and not pursue relationships with people around them throughout their future life. The often subliminal or unconscious reasoning of people in this emotional state is:

“If the very people in my own family who are supposed to care most about me will hurt me this badly, then certainly non-relatives and everyday people I might interact with at home in a committed relationship, at work, and at church who are even less likely to care about me are sure to treat me even WORSE.”

Emotional abusers often make the perfect companion during the courtship process. When emotional abusers get married or have sexual relations with a prospective spouse, however, they can often demonstrate the Dr. Jekyll Mr. Hyde mentality, and suddenly use the marriage commitment as an excuse or weapon to become very controlling. They become very defensive and possessive. They do this because they have such a fear, mistrust, and a low regard for other people in general based on their very bad experiences as a child. They are afraid of being abandoned and hurt again and this fear pervades their every thought. They feel that people are basically conceited, selfish, and abusive by nature and because of this, they feel that the only way they can get their needs met on a continuing basis is to use force and coercion and legal means (behavior modification techniques in psychological parlance). They will then try to criticize, coerce, and punish people who don't meet their needs. They will become competitive and use threats of physical violence and legal action to intimidate the abused spouse. Instead of relying on mutual trust and respect to get their needs met like most normal people, their insecurity will cause them to fall back to old and destructive behavior patterns that will only alienate and isolate them further from the people who love them and who want to help (duress causes

us to regress). They will then watch how their spouse reacts to their negative behaviors and use this reaction as a confirmation of their basic fears and negative beliefs. In effect, they will see exactly and only what they wanted to see and their negative view of the world will become a self-fulfilling negative prophesy. They will ignore the beauty and the goodness in the people around them, and in the process, they will miss out on what life and love is really about!

Once the emotional damage has been done in early childhood, the self-destructive behavior patterns have been established that this person will carry with them into adulthood. Children who have been abused are likely themselves to become emotional abusers as adults, carrying on these destructive behavior patterns into future generations and infecting the families and lives of their children and their children's children. The only way to break this damaging cycle is with love, determination, counseling, and emotional support by the spouse of the emotional abuser. We need to keep the communication channels open and avoid being defensive or hyper-reactive. We need to be willing to debate and defend God's plan for the family and the right course of action without letting our emotions or selfish interests get in the way of right thinking. However, we also need to recognize that we will worsen the situation with an abusive spouse by reacting with a desire to control their behavior or coerce them. It would be unethical to fight emotional abuse with more emotional abuse. Therefore, unless there is physical abuse or infidelity, we should resist the temptation to flee home, refuse to submit sexually to our spouse, or refuse to communicate as a way to punish our spouse because this makes us just as abusive and bad as our abusive partner! By doing these things, we are just confirming our abusive spouse's worse fears. Instead, what is needed most is love, patience, commitment, and prayer.

Another interesting fact is that the negative attitudes and behaviors at the heart of emotional abusers are intensified when there are chemical dependencies in the family. For instance, emotional abuse is much higher among alcoholics and drug abusers than it is among sober people. Alcohol and drugs prevent people from dealing effectively and constructively with their problems, which makes them "slaves of sin." Therefore, before counseling or therapy for emotional abuse will work, chemical dependencies must be eliminated patiently and persistently. This will take commitment and cooperation from spouses and the family of the emotional abuser. The spouse of the emotional abuser should therefore be very supportive and encouraging of efforts to eliminate chemical dependencies by:

1. Attending AA meetings with one's spouse.
2. Encourage and support efforts to improve.
3. Be kind and patient and forgiving when there are relapses.

3.10.2 Dichotomies of the Emotional or Verbal Abuser¹⁹

Several dichotomies exist in the sphere of human interaction that are useful in describing the behavior of emotional abusers. This section identifies them clearly to help you understand the motivation and desires of emotional abusers.

3.10.2.1 Inequality Versus Equality

¹⁹ *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*, Patricia Evans; Adams Media Corp; ISBN 1558505822; 1996, p. 42

Since the verbal abuser needs to have Power Over his partner, he cannot accept her as an equal. He may, however, tell her that he does. Why can't he accept her as an equal? Because he would experience her equality as his inferiority. He would have to ask for what he wanted. He would be open to rejection. He would have to give up control and dominance. Control and dominance seem to give the abuser a sense of power, security, and identity as a male.

One way to identify a relationship of inequality is to determine whether or not the couple can set mutual goals and discuss them together. In an abusive relationship, the couple does not really plan together. Planning together requires mutuality and equality. In an abusive relationship the partner may discover that her mate will not discuss long-or short-term goals with her, nor is he willing, in some instances, even to make plans with her for a weekend. Neither personal goals nor plans for the future together are discussed and agreed upon in a mutually supportive way.

3.10.2.2 Manipulation Versus Mutuality

Since the verbal abuser derives his sense of power from Power Over, he feels powerless within. Feeling powerless, he may get what he wants through indirect and devious means. This is manipulation. One way of manipulating and closing off communication is to respond to the partner's attempt to discuss a problem with, "I never say anything right!" This is a covert way of saying "I can't change and I won't discuss the issue." At other times the verbal abuser may pretend not to understand or to have forgotten what his partner is talking about when she brings up an issue of deep concern to her.

There are many ways to manipulate another person, including being "friendly" only when one expects to get something from the other, suggesting disastrous outcomes to another's plans, and acting as if something has been agreed to or decided that hasn't been agreed to or decided.

3.10.2.3 Hostility Versus Goodwill

All verbal abuse is hostile. The partners of verbal abusers are universally dismayed to realize this. "Why would he be hostile toward me?" they ask in anguish.

The abuser's hostility may be expressed overtly or covertly. He may vent his anger frequently, or he may never reveal it, preferring, instead, to manipulate and subtly control his partner.

Hostility is expressed directly when the abuser blasts his partner. However, every blast may be so filled with accusation that the partner may believe that her mate's anger is her fault. If she accepts accusatory blame as Dora did, in all probability she would be shocked to realize that her mate is actually hostile towards her.

When there is goodwill in the relationship, there is a reaching out--a conscious concern for the other's well-being. Just as the partner asks, "What are you angry about?" her mate asks, "What is upsetting you?"

3.10.2.4 Control Versus Intimacy

When the verbal abuser refuses to discuss a problem, he prevents all possibility of resolution. In this way he exercises control over the interpersonal reality. Partners are frequently left with a sick, hurt feeling that is never really resolved. There is no feeling of closure. Upsetting incidents may reoccur in confusing flashbacks because they haven't been fully understood or resolved.

All verbal abuse is dominating and controlling. Verbal abuse used to control the partner without the partner's knowledge is called "crazymaking." "The sustaining of power seems to be one key factor in CM [crazymaking] behavior. It appears to be a way of asserting dominance while denying its existence or the wish for it." (Bach and Deutsh, 1980, p. 270)

Verbal abuse closes the door to true communication and intimacy. Intimacy in a relationship requires mutuality. Mutuality requires goodwill, openness, and a willingness to share oneself.

The abuser cannot control his partner and be intimate with her at the same time. Intimacy is lacking if there is no equality, partnership, mutuality, and goodwill. "Intimate love is fun, sexy, romantic, inspiring. Whether you have it in your relationship has little to do with how many years you have been together, but depends instead on how often and how deeply you share yourselves with each other." (Paul, 1983, p. 124)

3.10.2.5 Negation Versus Validation

Because of his need for dominance and his unwillingness to accept his partner as an equal, the verbal abuser is compelled to negate the perceptions, experiences, values, accomplishments and plans of his partner. Consequently, the partner may not even know what it is like to feel supported and validated in her relationship. She may take his negation as a lack of common interest or as a misunderstanding. In truth, a verbally abusive relationship is a more or less constant invalidation of the partner's reality.

Validation is a positive affirmation of the other, such as "Yes, I understand how you're feeling." "Is this what you mean?" "I hear you."

3.10.3 Things That Most Abusers Have In Common

Abusive people typically think they are unique, so different from other people that they don't have to follow the same rules as everyone else. But actually, abusers have a lot in common with one another and share a great many thinking patterns and behaviors. These may include:

The anguish and confusion which the partner experiences from the abuse is compounded by the abuser's negation and invalidation of both the abuse and its effects.

Excuse Making

Instead of accepting responsibility for certain actions, the abuser tries to justify their behavior with excuses. For example, "My parents never loved me," or "My parents beat me," or "I had a bad day, and when I walked in and saw this mess I lost my temper," or "I couldn't let her talk to me that way, there was nothing else I could do."

Blaming

The abuser shifts responsibility for certain actions to others, which allows the abuser to be angry at the other person for "causing" the behavior. For example: "If you would stay out of it while I am disciplining the kids, I could do it without hitting them."

Redefining

The abuser redefines the situation so that the problem lies not with the abuser but with others or the outside world. For example: The abuser doesn't come home at 6 p.m. for dinner as prearranged; he or she comes home at 4 a.m. The abuser says, "You're an awful cook anyway. Why should I come home to eat this stuff? I bet the kids wouldn't even eat it."

Success Fantasies

The abuser believes in fantasies of being rich, famous, or extremely successful in other terms if only other people weren't holding him back. They're blocking the way makes the abuser feel justified in getting back at them, including through abuse. The abuser also puts other people down as a way of building himself up.

Lying

The abuser manipulates by lying to control information. The abuser may also use lying to keep other people, including the victim, off-balance psychologically. For example: The abuser tries to appear truthful when actually lying, or tries to look deceitful when actually telling the truth.

Assuming

Abusive people often assume they know what others are thinking or feeling. Their assumption allows them to justify their behavior because they "know" what the other person would think or do in a given situation. For example: "I knew you'd be mad because I went out for a beer after work, so I figured I might as well stay out and enjoy myself."

Above the Rules

As mentioned earlier, abusers generally believe they are better than other people and so don't have to follow the rules that ordinary people do. That attitude is typical of convicted criminals, too. Each inmate usually believes that while all the other inmates are criminals, he is not. An abuser shows above-the-rules thinking in saying, "I don't need counseling. Nobody knows as much about my life as I do. I can handle my life without help from anybody."

Making Fools of Others

The abuser combines tactics to manipulate others. The tactics include lying, upsetting the other person just to watch her reactions, and provoking a fight between or among others. He may try to charm the

person he wants to manipulate, pretending a great deal of interest in and concern for that person in order to get on her good side.

Fragmentation

The abuser usually keeps the abusive behavior separate from the rest of his life. The separation is physical; for example, the abuser will beat up family members but not people outside the home. The separation is also psychological; for example, it is not uncommon for an abuser to attend church Sunday morning and beat the victim Sunday night. The abuser sees no inconsistency in this behavior and feels justified in it.

Minimizing

The abuser ducks responsibility for abusive actions by trying to make them seem less important than they are. For example: "I didn't hit you that hard", or "I only hit one of the kids. I could have done them all."

Vagueness

Thinking and speaking vaguely lets the abuser avoid responsibility. For example: "I'm late because I had to do some things on the way."

Anger

Abusive people are not actually angrier than other people. However, they deliberately use their anger to control situations and people. For example: "I'll break your neck if you don't shut up."

Power Plays

The abuser uses various tactics to overcome resistance to bullying. For example: The abuser walks out of the room when the victim is talking, or out-shouts the victim, or organizes other family members or associates to "gang up" on the victim by shunning or criticizing her.

Playing Victim

Occasionally the abuser will pretend to be helpless or will act persecuted in order to manipulate others into helping. The abuser has convinced himself that whenever he or she doesn't get what is wanted, the abuser is the real victim. The abuser uses the disguises of victim to strike back at or make fools of other people.

Drama and Excitement

Abusive people have trouble experiencing close, satisfying relationships. They substitute drama and excitement for closeness. Abusive people find it exciting to watch others become angry, get into fights,

or fall into a general uproar. Often, they'll use a combination of tactics described earlier to set up and exciting situation.

Closed Channel

The abusive person does not tell much about personal details and real feelings. The abuser is not open to new information about himself either, such as someone else's thoughts about them personally. The abuser is secretive, close-minded and self-righteous. Abusers believe they are right in all situations.

Ownership

The abuser typically is very possessive. Moreover, the abuser believes that anything that is wanted should be owned, and that the abuser can do as wanted with anything that is his. The same attitude applies to people. It justifies controlling others' behavior, physically hurting them and taking things that belong to them.

Self-glorification

The abuser usually thinks of himself as strong, superior, independent, self-sufficient, and very virile. When anyone says or does anything that doesn't fit this glorified self-image. The abuser takes it as an insult.

Poor Anger Management

- Individuals who have experienced a violent and abusive childhood are more likely to grow up and become spouse abusers
- A person who sees violence as the primary method for settling differences as a child is not going to have available very many alternate ways to channel anger.
- A person without an everyday outlet for anger risks exploding toward the people closest to them.

Inability to Express Feelings With Words

- This type of person is rarely capable of true intimacy and may feel very threatened by the prospect of being open and vulnerable
- Particularly when frustrated, the abusive person expects instant gratification from their spouse who is expected to "read" their mind and "know" what their mate wants. When the mate doesn't know what is expected the husband may interpret this as meaning they do not really love them. Rejection for the abuser = violence.

Emotional Dependence

- Abusive individuals are usually very emotionally dependent on their spouse.
- The result to their inner rage at being dependent means that the abuser acts in controlling ways to exert power and to deny their own weakness.
- One major symptom is strong jealousy and possessive actions, normally sexual in nature.

- The abuser will spend a great deal of time monitoring their spouses activities.
- The abuser lacks supportive relationships.
- Another sign of dependence is what happens when the abused person leaves the home because of abuse. It is common for the abused to make extraordinary attempts to persuade them to return.

Low Self-Esteem

- Jealousy, depression and sensitivity to criticism often result from low self-esteem.

Rigid Application of Traditional Sex Attitudes

- Abusive spouses tend to have more inflexible beliefs about roles and functions of their spouses in the marriage. The husband may expect the wife to over fulfill all the household and mothering chores and to be very submissive and subservient.

Alcohol and Drug Dependency

- 67% of abusers frequently use alcohol. Alcohol and drugs are used to avoid responsibility for actions.

Social Isolation

- Those who isolate themselves from family, friends and people in the community don't have the resources to cope with the stress.

Protected From Consequences

- Often a spouse will protect the abuser from consequences. The abuser must learn that actions have consequences.

Pride Combined with Power

- "When pride is mixed with power the result is genuinely volatile. Pride makes us think we are right, and power gives us the ability to cram our vision of rightness down everyone else's throat. The marriage between pride and power carries us to the brink of the demonic." (Richard Foster, Money, Sex, Power San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983,p.180)

3.10.4 How to Determine if Your Partner is an Abuser

No one wants to think that the person they are dating or in love with could possibly harm them. Many times, it is your friends or family that may see something you don't. They may tell you that something is wrong in your relationship. It is estimated that up to 30% or more of relationships have some form of abuse. There are common potential indicators.

The verbal abuser may show a few, many, or all of the following characteristics. Some of these characteristics, by their nature, are very difficult to recognize. Also, the abuser may describe himself

as the opposite of the way his partner experiences him. For example, he may blast her with angry accusations and describe himself as easygoing. The verbal abuser may be:

1. Irritable.
2. Likely to blame his mate for his outbursts or actions.
3. Unpredictable (you never know what will anger him).
4. Angry
5. Intense.
6. Unaccepting of his mate's feelings and views.
7. Unexpressive of warmth and empathy.
8. Controlling.
9. Silent and uncommunicative in private or, frequently, demanding or argumentative.
10. A "nice guy" to others.
11. Competitive toward his partner.
12. Sullen.
13. Jealous.
14. Quick with come-backs or put-downs.
15. Critical.
16. Manipulative.
17. Explosive.
18. Hostile.
19. Unexpressive of his feelings.

Instead of negating their thoughts, you may need to stop and look at your partner's actions. Answer these questions about your partner:

1. Did he or she have a history of any of the following events in her early childhood during their formative years up to about age 11?
 - 1.1. Rejection or abandonment.
 - 1.2. Incest
 - 1.3. Molestation or sexual abuse
 - 1.4. Emotional abuse
 - 1.5. Physical abuse
2. Does he/she come from an abusive home? Does he/she come from a dysfunctional home?
3. Are you discouraged from talking with friends/family?
4. Does he/she always insist on going everywhere with you?
5. Do you have to discuss activity plans, people you will be with, and why you are going to do something with him/her before you can do them?
6. Does he/she have problems with your success?
7. Does he/she react negatively to people in positions of authority?
8. Does he/she belittle you?
9. Does he/she blame you if things happen?
10. Does he/she negate your opinion?
11. Does he/she make you feel guilty?
12. Does he/she call you names?
13. Does he/she lose his/her temper and throw things or hit objects?
14. Have you ever seen this person become violent in a situation with someone else?
15. Does he/she get violent when he drinks?

16. Is your partner jealous of your time, your career, other people in your life?
17. Does he/she play mind games with you?
18. Does he/she believe the myths about domestic violence?

Now look at your own actions and reactions. Answer these questions about yourself to see whether you reward or encourage the abuse:

1. Do you have low self-esteem?
2. Do you accept responsibility for arguments?
3. Do you believe the myths about domestic violence?
4. Do you feel guilty if he/she becomes enraged or jealous, or that you may have caused his actions?
5. Do you allow yourself to be controlled because you believe the person would not do it if they didn't love you?
6. Do you believe jealousy is proof of love?

While all of these indicators are emotional, remember that emotional abuse is often the first one used. This nearly always escalates and becomes a physical form of abuse. It always involves control - one partner controlling the actions of the other. If this kind of behavior is present, you could have a potentially abusive situation that will only GET WORSE as the relationship progresses.

If you answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, you may have a problem. These are only warning signs to help you decide if you want/need help. They do not mean that an abusive situation will happen. However, if these actions are present, you both need to seek separate, outside, impartial counseling. You both need to accept the responsibility that each of you play in this situation. He/she needs to recognize that abuse is not acceptable and you need to recognize that you can't enable his/her actions.

3.10.5 How to Recognize the Emotional Signs of Abuse in Yourself

Many of us do some of these things when we're in a bad mood. When is the behavior classified as abusive? Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you doubt your judgment or wonder if you are "crazy"?
- Are you afraid of your partner and do you express opinions less and less freely?
- Have you developed fears of other people and tend to see others less often?
- Do you spend a lot of time watching for your partner's bad and not-so-bad moods, before bringing up a subject?
- Do you ask your partner's permission to spend money, take classes or socialize with friends?
- Have you lost confidence in your abilities, become increasingly depressed and feel trapped and powerless?

If you answer YES to many of these questions, it is probable you have been abused and have changed as a result of being abused.

If you have friends or relatives who give emotional support and believe you are a good person, you may trust your judgment. But if you feel your batterer is far more important or knows you better than they really do, you will not hear the supportive, positive messages that come your way. If you spend

little time with people other than your batterer -- a common situation -- there will not be other messages to hear.

One way to begin to help yourself is to change the messages you give yourself. You DO have a right to a life free of verbal, emotional and physical abuse. It is easy to get into the habit of coaching yourself for failure, but that can be changed. Begin to modify the things you say to yourself about yourself. You may not be able to change the batterer's behavior, but at least you can start giving yourself positive, empowering messages.

3.10.6 Characteristics of Verbal Abuse²⁰

1. Verbal abuse is hurtful. It is especially hurtful when it is denied. When the partner's perception of the abuse is discounted and there is not validation of her reality, part of her hurt is her confusion.
2. Verbal abuse attacks the nature and abilities of the partner. The partner may begin to believe that there is something wrong with her or that her abilities are her failings. As Bella noted:

"I heard so often that I was a lousy driver, I really began to think I had a problem driving. I think I was brainwashed. Do you know what? I've been driving twenty-seven years without an accident or a ticket.

3. Verbal abuse may be overt (angry outbursts and name-calling), or covert (very, very subtle, like brainwashing). Overt verbal abuse is usually blaming and accusatory, and consequently confusing to the partner. Covert verbal abuse, which is hidden aggression, is even more confusing to the partner. Its aim is to control her without her knowing it.
4. Verbally abusive disparagement may be voiced in an extremely sincere and concerned way. Ellen provides an example:

"When he quietly and thoughtfully said, "The real reason we've never been able to discuss a book is that there are common phrases you don't comprehend the meaning of but that the average American understands," I thought, "That must be why we have so much trouble in our communication."

I felt tremendous pain and despair; after all, then all my pain was my fault."

5. Verbal abuse is manipulative and controlling. Usually the partner does not know that she is being manipulated and controlled. She may notice, however, that she may be living her life quite differently than she's planned, or certainly less happily.
6. Verbal abuse is insidious. Verbal abuse disregards, disrespects or devalues the partner in such a way that:
 - 6.1. Her self-esteem gradually diminishes, usually without her realizing it.
 - 6.2. She loses self-confidence without realizing it.
 - 6.3. She may consciously or unconsciously try to change her behavior so as not to upset the abuser, so she won't be hurt anymore.

²⁰ The Verbally Abusive Relationship, Patricia Evans; Adams Media Corp; ISBN 1558505822; 1996.

As Dora advised:

You'll never be able to tell if you're verbally abused by what your friends see and tell you, nor by what your husband says about himself and the relationship. Please emphasize in your book how very vague and subtle and insidious it is. You get conditioned to it and confused by it, and then you don't know what's going on.

7. Verbal abuse is unpredictable. Unpredictability is one of the most significant characteristics of verbal abuse. The partner, as discussed earlier, is stunned, shocked, thrown off balance by her mate's sarcasm, angry jab, put-down, or hurtful comment. No matter how intelligent, discerning, or thoughtful she is, she never really expects it, nor, for the most part, can she understand why the upsetting incidents occur or how to prevent them.
8. Verbal abuse is the issue (the problem) in the relationship. When a couple is having a real argument about a real issue, like how to discipline their children or how much time to spend apart or together, both parties may feel angry but they can say, "This is what I'm feeling angry about." or "This is what I want," and eventually, if there is goodwill on both their parts, the issue is resolved. In a verbally abusive relationship there is no specific conflict. The issue is the abuse and this issue is not resolved. Another way to say this is that there is no closure.
9. Verbal abuse expresses a double message. There is an incongruence between the way the abuser speaks and his real feelings. For example, he may sound very sincere and honest while he is telling his partner what is wrong with her, or he may say "I'm not mad" while sounding very angry, or he may, for example, invite her out to dinner and then during dinner maintain an attitude of aloof, cold indifference. Partners say:

He tells me he loves me, and he tells me he can say anything he wants.

He says he's accepting of everyone but he criticizes me and won't accept my views or feelings.

He says he's relaxed and easygoing but he's angry and irritable every day.

He says he's supportive of me, but I feel isolated and lonely with him.
10. Verbal abuse usually escalates, increasing in intensity, frequency, and variety. For example, early in the relationship, the verbal abuser may abuse his partner with put-downs disguised as jokes and with withholding; gradually, other forms of verbal abuse are added. (These forms are described below as the categories of verbal abuse.)

In many, many cases, verbal abuse escalates into physical abuse which may also begin subtly as "accidental" shoves, pushes, bumps, etc., which then escalate into overt physical battering. One partner said that lately whenever she and her mate were standing near each other, looking at a map for example, she would find him standing on her foot. When she complained he would act surprised as if he hadn't realized it. But it happened again and again.

As verbal abuse escalates toward physical abuse, the abuser may begin moving into the partner's space. One partner said that whenever she was settled in a chair with her coffee and a pillow and then left the room for a moment, when she returned her mate had taken her chair. It did not, she said, matter which chair she had been in. He always refused to give it back. Later she noticed that he started stepping in

front of her when she was approaching the refrigerator or the sink. Noting this transition from verbal to physical abuse is important because the clinical experience of therapists who treat battered women provides evidence that all battered women have been verbally abused.

3.10.7 Categories of Verbal Abuse

The abuser is often so good at control that he can turn his intimidating displays on and off in order to continue to look good to the outside world. Many survivors describe this as "*Jekyll/Hyde*" behavior.

Many could not comprehend why their mates raged at them only when people who mattered were not around. Never did they suspect it was because they were chosen they became the chosen scapegoat. ***Verbal abuse is a behavior originating with the abuser's intense need to control his mate as well as his own feeling of powerlessness.*** He does this by diminishing HER and venting his feelings on HER while blaming HER for them.

1. ***Withholding:*** By withholding, the verbal abuser is saying, "I've got something you want and I can withhold it from you. Therefore, I am in control." Or, "If I don't respond, if I refuse to answer, I can control the outcome, that is, I can maintain the status quo. I can be sure that there will be no change. I don't have to ask. I don't have to say no. I don't have to say yes. I don't have to be vulnerable. I can stay in control and therefore risk nothing." To know whether your partner is withholding, ask yourself the following questions:
 - 1.1. Does the abuser stop speaking to you when they're displeased?
 - 1.2. Do they ignore you?
 - 1.3. Do they withdraw affection in order to punish you?
 - 1.4. Do they blame you for this?
2. ***Countering:*** By countering his partner, the verbal abuser is saying, "I can think for both of us. What you think is wrong. What I think is right. If I can get you to doubt yourself, I can control you more easily." To know whether your partner is countering, ask yourself the following questions:
 - 2.1. Does the abuser tell you you're wrong if you don't agree with them?
 - 2.2. Do they argue against your every thought?
 - 2.3. Do they tell you your feelings are wrong?
 - 2.4. Do they tell you that you don't know what you're talking about?
 - 2.5. Do they forbid you from having your own opinions?
3. ***Discounting:*** By discounting his partner's perceptions, the verbal abuser is saying, "I can decree the worthlessness of your perceptions and actions. I am not accountable. I can stay in control." To know whether your partner is discounting, ask yourself the following questions:
 - 3.1. Does the abuser ignore or disparage your feelings?
 - 3.2. Do they put down your feelings?
 - 3.3. Do they dismiss you with statements such as, "you're too sensitive" or "you don't have a sense of humor" or "you're just taking it wrong"?
4. ***Verbal abuse disguised as a joke:*** By telling the partner that the abuse is only a joke, the verbal abuser is saying, "I feel so UP putting you down that I never want to give it up, so I decree that my comments are humorous I'm in control. I can say what I want." To know whether your partner is using verbal abuse disguised as a joke, ask yourself the following questions:
 - 4.1. Does the abuser make fun of you?

- 4.2. Do they ridicule you regarding subjects about which you are particularly sensitive?
 - 4.3. Do they seem to enjoy it?
 - 4.4. Do they accuse you of not being able to take a joke?
 - 4.5. Do they use sarcasm to put you down?
5. **Blocking and diverting:** By thwarting his partner, the verbal abuser is saying, "I do not accept any responsibility to respond to you as a rational person, so I can change the conversation at will. I am in control." To know whether your partner is using blocking and diverting, ask yourself the following questions:
- 5.1. Does the abuser change the subject when you try to bring something up?
 - 5.2. Do they divert serious discussions by accusing you of various things?
6. **Accusing and blaming:** By blaming his partner for his abuse of her, the verbal abuser is saying, "You are to blame for your pain and for everything I say or do to you and for everything that isn't the way I want it to be, so I do not have to stop my behavior. I'm in control." To know whether your partner is accusing and blaming, ask yourself the following questions:
- 6.1. Does the abuser blame you for everything that goes wrong?
 - 6.2. Do they accuse you of hurting them when you tell them your feelings?
 - 6.3. Do they accuse you of having affairs?
 - 6.4. Are they jealous?
7. **Judging and criticizing:** By judging and criticizing his partner, the verbal abuser is saying, "When I tell you what is wrong with your thoughts or actions, I put myself in charge of you and therefore in control of you. If the two of you agree on a common philosophical and religious foundation for your marriage and if you marry a person of the same religious faith as you, then you are far less likely to find this kind of abuse in your marriage. Likewise, if you take the time as a family to document your collective beliefs and write down a family mission statement, you can avoid or lessen this kind of abuse. To know whether your partner is judging and criticizing, ask yourself the following questions:
- 7.1. Does the abuser find fault with everything you do and not praise you or encourage you in anything?
 - 7.2. Are they extremely hard to please?
 - 7.3. Do they tell you "ought" or "should" do things a certain way?
 - 7.4. Do they belittle men or women as a group?
 - 7.5. Do they ridicule or insult your most valued beliefs, your religion, race, heritage or class
8. **Trivializing:** By pretending that his partner, or her actions or perceptions or opinions or thoughts or concerns, are less than they are, the verbal abuser is saying, "When you see how insignificant you are, I will have more power and control over you." To know whether your partner is trivializing, ask yourself the following questions:
- 8.1. Does the abuser belittle what you say?
 - 8.2. Do they dismiss your feelings or accomplishments?
 - 8.3. Do they insult you when you express pride in your own abilities?
 - 8.4. Do they act as if your work is no big deal?
9. **Undermining:** By undermining his partner, the verbal abuser is saying, "When I erode your self-confidence and lessen your determination, you are easier to control." To know whether your partner is undermining, ask yourself the following questions:

- 9.1. Does the abuser squelch your enthusiasm with insensitive comments such as, "You wouldn't understand", or, "You'll never make it"?
 - 9.2. Do they sabotage your ideas by pointing out all the ways in which they might fail?
 - 9.3. Do they interrupt you when you need time alone?
10. **Threatening:** With this very obvious means of control, the verbal abuser is saying, "I have Power Over you. I am in control. Do as I say. If you don't, I'll..., or if you don't...this will happen implying physical harm by a fit of rage or by an unspoken threat like punching a wall, slamming a door with force or throwing something." To know whether your partner is threatening, ask yourself the following questions:
- 10.1. Does the abuser threaten you, overtly or covertly?
 - 10.2. Do they threaten you with violence?
 - 10.3. Do they threaten you with emotional pain?
 - 10.4. Do they regularly threaten to leave you or tell you to leave
 - 10.5. Do they threaten to hurt you or your family
11. **Name calling:** By calling names, the abuser is saying, "You do not exist. You are annihilated, you are now BLANK. Now that you are wiped out, I'm in control, just like in a war." To know whether your partner is name-calling, ask yourself the following questions:
- 11.1. Does the abuser use vulgarities to insult you?
 - 11.2. Do they call you cruel names?
 - 11.3. Do they use terms of endearment with intense sarcasm?
12. **Forgetting:** When the abuser regularly forgets appointments, agreements and/or incidents, he is saying, "I'm in control of your time, your energy or reality and I don't have to be accountable because I'm in control." To know whether your partner is forgetting, ask yourself the following questions:
- 12.1. Does the abuser make a promise and then "forget" to keep it?
 - 12.2. Do they pretend not to remember certain incidents or discussions?
 - 12.3. Do they pretend not to remember prior agreements?
13. **Ordering and demanding:** With these direct displays of control, the verbal abuser is saying, "I have a right to assert Power Over you in an overt act of control. If all of the other intimidating behaviors achieved my goal, you will do as I demand." To know whether your partner is ordering and demanding, ask yourself the following questions:
- 13.1. Does the abuser order you to do something instead of asking?
 - 13.2. Do they demand things?
14. **Denial:** By denying all of his abusive behavior, the abuser is saying, "I can keep everything exactly as it is, with you under my control, and I will not be held accountable." To know whether your partner is using denial, ask yourself the following questions:
- 14.1. Does the abuser deny that certain things happened?
 - 14.2. Do they tell you that they didn't say something, or that you never saw something occur?
15. **Abusive anger:** By being abusively angry, the abuser is saying, "As long as I am scary and intimidating and threatening you, I can have my way." To know whether your partner is using abusive anger, ask yourself the following questions:
- 15.1. Does the abuser erupt into a rage when they are angry?
 - 15.2. Do they scream, yell, or shout?

- 15.3. Do they hurl obscenities?
- 15.4. Does their body language become more aggressive?
- 15.5. Do they stomp, strut, hit things, or hit you? Do they become red in the face?
- 15.6. Do they throw things?
- 15.7. Do they physically get in your way, or follow you from room to room?
- 15.8. Do they snap at you?
- 15.9. Are they usually irritable?
- 15.10. Does all of this usually take place in private, when you are alone? (It's a sure sign things are escalating if the abuser attacks you in public.)
- 15.11. Does the abuser blame you for their anger?

16. **Isolation.** This type of abuse includes:

- 16.1. Controlling what your partner does, who he or she sees and talks to, what he or she reads, where he or she goes.
- 16.2. Limiting your partner's outside involvement.
- 16.3. Demanding your partner remain home when you are not with them.
- 16.4. Cutting your partner off from prior friends, activities, and social interaction.
- 16.5. Using jealousy to justify your actions.
- 16.6. Criticizing or abusing you in public or in front of other relatives so you won't want to spend time around them.
- 16.7. Withhold approval, appreciation or affection as punishment
- 16.8. Refusing to socialize with you.

17. **Deception or lying:** This type of abuse involves manipulating a situation by telling lies to others about the situation or about the behavior of the person who is the target of the abuse. Examples:

- 17.1. Harassing you about affairs your partner imagined you were having but weren't having.
- 17.2. Manipulating you with lies and contradictions.
- 17.3. Falsely accusing you of sexual abuse.
- 17.4. Falsely accusing you of domestic violence.

It is the nature of abuse is that it is never justified and that it is not about conflict. It is, instead, about control. The misconception: Verbal abuse in a relationship can be resolved because two adults should be able to work out their conflicts. The fact: If there is verbal abuse in a relationship, there is no conflict around the abuse. When one is ordered, one is abused; there is no justification and no conflict. When one is criticized, one is being abused; there is no justification for this abuse and certainly no conflict.

3.10.8 Categories of Behavioral Abuse

Behavioral abuse in this case is defined as actions rather than words which have the same affect as verbal abuse but which aren't spoken. Here are a few examples of emotionally abusive behaviors rather than statements.

1. Controlling behaviors:

- 1.1. Try to keep you from working.
- 1.2. Try to control your money.
- 1.3. Made all decisions.
- 1.4. Refuse to work or share money.

- 1.5. Took car keys or money away from you.
- 1.6. Change locks in the house and not give your partner a key.
- 1.7. Put partner's belongings out in the front yard.
- 1.8. Destroy personal or financial records designed to keep the abuser accountable.
- 1.9. Asking for divorce and spousal support as a woman and then refusing to get a job after the divorce, thus forcing the other party to support her indefinitely.
2. Threatening behaviors: These behaviors make the person feel threatened by the other party.
 - 2.1. Abused, tortured, killed pets to hurt you.
 - 2.2. Destroyed furniture.
 - 2.3. Punched holes in walls.
 - 2.4. Break appliances.
 - 2.5. Wield a gun in a threatening way.
 - 2.6. Put superglue in locks.

3.10.9 Checklist for Crazy-making²¹

Covert verbal abuse is subversive because of its indirect quality. It is covert attack or coercion. This kind of abuse has been described as "crazy-making." It is "a form of interpersonal interaction that results from the repression of intense aggression and which seriously impairs its victim's capacity to recognize and deal with the interpersonal reality." (Back and Goldberg, 1974, p.251)

Of value in teaching recognition of the crazy-making experience is the following checklist:

1. Feeling temporarily thrown off balance and momentarily unable to right oneself.
2. Feeling lost, not knowing where to turn, searching aimlessly.
3. Being caught off guard.
4. Feeling disconnected, confused, disoriented.
5. Feeling off balance, as if the rug had been pulled from under one's feet.
6. Receiving double messages but somehow unable or fearful to ask for clarification [Author's note: Or asking for clarification but not getting it.]
7. Feeling generally "bugged" by the simple presence of a person.
8. To discover that one was mistaken in one's evaluation or where one stood or what it was all about.
9. Feeling totally unprepared for a broken promise or unfulfilled expectation.
10. Experiencing the shattering of an important "dream."
11. Where one assumes goodwill, ill will seems to prevail.
12. One feels pushed around, not in control of one's own direction.
13. Unable to get off redundantly spinning circles of thoughts.
14. What seemed clear becomes muddled.
15. An uneasy, weird feeling of emptiness.
16. A strong wish to get away, yet feeling unable to move, as if frozen.
17. One is befuddled, not able to attack the problem.
18. Feeling vaguely suspicious that something is wrong.
19. Feeling that one's subjective world has become chaotic.

3.11 Sexual Morality

²¹ *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*, Patricia Evans; Adams Media Corp; ISBN 1558505822; 1996, p. 26

C.S. Lewis, a famous British philosopher, had some very insightful things to say about Christian sexual morality in his book entitled “Mere Christianity”. Below is an excerpt from chapter 5 of his book entitled *Sexual Morality* which we agree with wholeheartedly:²²

We must now consider Christian morality as regards sex, what Christians call the virtue of chastity. The Christian rule of chastity must not be confused with the social rule of “modesty” (in one sense of that word); i.e. propriety, or decency. The social rule of propriety lays down how much of the human body should be displayed and what subjects can be referred to, and in what words, according to the customs of the given social circle. Thus, while the rule of chastity is the same for all Christians at all times, the rule of propriety changes. A girl in the Pacific islands wearing hardly any clothes and a Victorian lady completely covered in clothes might both be equally “modest,” proper, or decent, according to the standards of their own societies: and both, for all we could tell by their dress, might be equally chaste (or equally unchaste). Some of the language which chaste women used in Shakespear’s time would have been used in the nineteenth century only by a woman completely abandoned. When people break the rule of propriety current in their own time and place, if they do so in order to excite lust in themselves or others, then they are offending against chastity. But if they break it through ignorance or carelessness they are guilty only of bad manners. When, as often happens, they break it defiantly in order to shock or embarrass others, they are not necessarily being unchaste, but they are being uncharitable: for it is uncharitable to take pleasure in making other people uncomfortable. I do not think that a very strict or fussy standard of propriety is any proof of chastity or any help to it, and I therefore regard the great relaxation and simplifying of the rule which has taken place in my own lifetime as a good thing. At its present stage, however, it has this inconvenience, that people of different ages and different types do not all acknowledge the same standard, and we hardly know where we are. While this confusion lasts I think that old, or old-fashioned, people should be very careful not to assume that young or “emancipated” people are corrupt whenever they are (by the old standard) improper; and, in return, that young people should not call their elders prudes or puritans because they do not easily adopt the new standard. A real desire to believe all the good you can of others and to make others as comfortable as you can will solve most of the problems.

Chastity is the most unpopular of the Christian virtues. There is no getting away from it: the old Christian rule is, “Either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence.” Now this is so difficult and so contrary to our instincts, that obviously either Christianity is wrong or our sexual instinct, as it now is, has gone wrong. One or the other, Of course, being a Christian, I think it is the instinct which has gone wrong.

But I have other reasons for thinking so. The biological purpose of sex is children, just as the biological purpose of eating is to repair the body. Now if we eat whenever we feel inclined and just as much as we want, it is quite true that most of us will eat too much: but not terrifically too much. One man may eat

²² *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis, 1952, pp. 88-95; Collier Books, New York.

enough for two, but he does not eat enough for ten. The appetite goes a little beyond its biological purpose, but not enormously. But if a healthy young man indulged his sexual appetite whenever he felt inclined, and if each act produced a baby, then in ten years he might easily populate a small village. This appetite is in ludicrous and preposterous excess of its function.

Or take it another way. You can get a large audience together for a strip-tease act—that is, to watch a girl undress on the stage. Now suppose you came to a country where you could fill a theatre by simply bringing a covered plate on to the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let every one see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food? And would not anyone who had grown up in a different world think there was something equally queer about the state of the sex instinct among us?

One critic said that if he found a country in which such strip-tease acts with food were popular, he would conclude that the people of that country were starving. He means, of course, to imply that such things as the strip-tease act resulted not from sexual corruption but from sexual starvation. I agree with him that if, in some strange land, we found that similar acts with mutton chops were popular, one of the possible explanations which would occur to me would be famine. But the next step would be to test our hypothesis by finding out whether, in fact, much or little food was being consumed in that country. If the evidence showed that a good deal was being eaten, then of course we should have to abandon the hypothesis of starvation and try to think of another one. In the same way, before accepting sexual starvation as the cause of the strip-tease, we should have to look for evidence that there is in fact more sexual abstinence in our age than in those ages when things like the strip-tease were unknown. But surely there is no such evidence. Contraceptives have made sexual indulgence far less costly within marriage and far safer outside it than ever before, and public opinion is less hostile to illicit unions and even to perversion than it has been since Pagan times. Nor is the hypothesis of “starvation” the only one we can imagine. Everyone knows that the sexual appetite, like our other appetites, grows by indulgence. Starving men may think much about food, but so do gluttons; the gorged, as well as the famished, like titillations.

Here is a third point. You find very few people who want to eat things that really are not food or to do other things with food instead of eating it. In other words, perversions of the food appetite are rare. But perversions of the sex instinct are numerous, hard to cure, and frightful. I am sorry to have to go into all these details, but I must. The reason why I must is that you and I, for the last twenty years, have been fed all day long on good solid lies about sex. We have been told, till one is sick of hearing it, that sexual desire is in the same state as any of our other natural desires and that if only we abandon the silly old Victorian idea of hushing it up, everything in the garden will be lovely. It is not true. The moment you look at the facts, and away from the propaganda, you see that it is not.

They tell you sex has become a mess because it was hushed up. But for the last twenty years it has not been hushed up. It has been chattered about all day long. Yet it is still a mess. If hushing up had been the cause of the trouble, ventilation would have set it right. But it has not. I think it is the other way round. I think the human race originally hushed it up because it had become such a mess. Modern people are always saying, "Sex is nothing to be ashamed of." They may mean two things. They may mean "There is nothing to be ashamed of in the fact that the human race reproduces itself in a certain way, nor in the fact that it gives pleasure." If they mean that, they are right. Christianity says the same. It is not the thing, nor the pleasure that is the trouble. The old Christian teachers said that if man had never fallen, sexual pleasure, instead of being less than it is now, would actually have been greater. I know some muddle-headed Christians have talked as if Christianity thought that sex, or the body, or pleasure were bad in themselves. But they were wrong. Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions which thoroughly approves of the body—which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body, that some kind of body is going to be given to us even in Heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty, and our energy. Christianity has glorified marriage more than any other religion: and nearly all the greatest love poetry in the work has been produced by Christians. If anyone says that sex, in itself, is bad, Christianity contradicts him at once. But of course, when people say, "Sex is nothing to be ashamed of," they may mean "the state into which the sexual instinct has now got is nothing to be ashamed of."

If they mean that, I think they are wrong. I think it is everything to be ashamed of. There is nothing to be ashamed of in enjoying your food: there would be everything to be ashamed of if half the world made food the main interest of their lives and spent their time looking at pictures of food and dribbling and smacking their lips. I do not say you and I are individually responsible for the present situation. Our ancestors have handed over to us organisms which are warped in this respect: and we grow up surrounded by propaganda in favour of unchastity. There are people who want to keep our sex instinct inflamed in order to make money out of us. Because, of course, a man with an obsession is a man who has very little sales-resistance. God knows our situation; He will not judge us as if we had no difficulties to overcome. What matters is the sincerity and perseverance of our will to overcome them.

Before we can be cured we must want to be cured. Those who really wish for help will get it; but for many modern people even the wish is difficult. It is easy to think that we want something when we do not really want it. A famous Christian long ago told us that when he was a young man he prayed constantly for chastity; but years later he realised that while his lips had been secretly adding, "But please don't do it just yet." This may happen in prayers for other virtues too; but there are three reasons why it is now specially difficult for us to desire—let alone to achieve—complete chastity.

In the first place our warped natures, the devils who tempt us, and all the contemporary propaganda for lust, combine to make us feel that the desires we

are resisting are so “natural,” so “healthy,” and so reasonable, that it is almost perverse and abnormal to resist them. Poster after poster, film after film, novel after novel, associate the idea of sexual indulgence with the ideas of health, normality, youth, frankness, and good humour. Now this association is a lie. Like all powerful lies, it is based on a truth—the truth, acknowledged above, that sex in itself (apart from the excess and obsessions that have grown round it) is “normal” and “healthy,” and all the rest of it. The lie consists in the suggestion that any sexual act to which you are tempted at the moment is also healthy and normal. Now this, on any conceivable view, and quite apart from Christianity, must be nonsense. Surrender to all our desires obviously leads to impotence, disease, jealousies, lies, concealment, and everything that is the reverse of health, good humour, and frankness. For any happiness, even in this world, quite a lot of restraint is going to be necessary; so the claim made by every desire, when it is strong, to be healthy and reasonable, counts for nothing. Every sane and civilised man must have some set of principles by which he chooses to reject some of his desires and to permit others. One man does this on Christian principles, another on hygienic principles, another on sociological principles. The real conflict is not between Christianity and “nature,” but between Christian principle and other principles in the control of “nature.” For “nature” (in the sense of natural desire) will have to be controlled anyway, unless you are going to ruin your whole life. The Christian principles are, admittedly, stricter than the others; but then we think you will get help towards obeying them which you will not get towards obeying the others.

In the second place, many people are deterred from seriously attempting Christian chastity because they think (before trying) that it is impossible. But when a thing has to be attempted, one must never think about possibility or impossibility. Faced with an optional question in an examination paper, one considers whether one can do it or not: faced with a compulsory question, one must do the best one can. You may get some marks for a very imperfect answer: you will certainly get none for leaving the question alone. Not only in examinations but in war, in mountain climbing, in learning to skate, or swim, or ride a bicycle, even in fastening a stiff collar with cold fingers, people quite often do what seemed impossible before they did it. It is wonderful what you can do when you have to.

We may, indeed, be sure that perfect chastity—like perfect charity—will not be attained by any merely human efforts. You must ask for God’s help. Even when you have done so, it may seem to you for a long time that no help, or less help than you need, is being given. Never mind. After each failure, ask forgiveness, pick yourself up, and try again. Very often what God first helps us towards is not the virtue itself but just this power of always trying again. For however important chastity (or courage, or truthfulness, or any other virtue) may be, this process trains us in habits of the soul which are more important still. It cures our illusions about ourselves and teaches us to depend on God. We learn, on the one hand, that we cannot trust ourselves even in our best moments, and, on the other, that we need not despair even in our worst, for our failures are forgiven. The only fatal thing is to sit down content with anything less than perfection.

Thirdly, people often misunderstand what psychology teaches about “repressions.” It teaches us that “repressed” sex is dangerous. But “repressed” is here a technical term: it does not mean “suppressed” in the sense of “denied” or “resisted.” A repressed desire or thought is one which has been thrust into the subconscious (usually at a very early age) and can now come before the mind only in a disguised and unrecognizable form. Repressed sexuality does not appear to the patient to be sexuality at all. When an adolescent or an adult is engaged in resisting a conscious desire, he is not dealing with a repression nor is he in the least danger of creating a repression. On the contrary, those who are seriously attempting chastity are more conscious, and soon know a great deal more about their own sexuality than anyone else. They come to know their desires as Wellington knew Napoleon, or as Sherlock Holmes knew Moriarty; as a rat-catcher knows rats or a plumber knows about leaky pipes. Virtue—even attempted virtue—brings light; indulgence brings fog.

Finally, though I have had to speak at some length about sex, I want to make it as clear as I possibly can that the center of Christian morality is not here. If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: the pleasure of putting other people in the wrong, of bossing and patronising and spoiling sport, and back-biting; the pleasures of power, of hatred. For there are two things inside me, competing with the human self which I must try to become. They are the Animal self, and the Diabolical self. The Diabolical self is the worse of the two. That is why a cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But of course, it is better to be neither.

4 HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP

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4.1 Dating Etiquette

One might ask why this subject is in the Husband-Wife Relationship chapter. The reason is because dating should be undertaken with the idea of eventually getting married. Any other motive will lead to fornication, which to Christians is a sin. We have to date before we can get married and become husband and wife, however, so we need to understand what God expects out of dating.

4.1.1 The Stages of Intimacy

Dr. James Dobson in his book *Love for a Lifetime* describes the 12 stages of intimacy that a romantic relationship must traverse through to reach full maturity:¹

1. Eye to body. A glance reveals much about a person—sex, size, shape, age, personality and status. The importance people place on these criteria determines whether or not they will be attracted to each other.
2. Eye to eye. When the man and woman who are strangers to each other exchange glances, their most natural reaction is to look away, usually with embarrassment. If their eyes meet again, they may smile, which signals that they might like to become better acquainted.
3. Voice to voice. Their initial conversations are trivial and include questions like “What is your name?” or “What do you do for a living?” During this long stage the two people learn about each other’s opinions, pastimes, activities, habits, hobbies, likes and dislikes. If they’re compatible, they become friends.
4. Hand to hand. The first instance of physical contact between the couple is usually a nonromantic occasion such as when the man helps the woman descend a high step or aids her across an obstacle. At this point either of the individuals can withdraw from the relationship without rejecting the other. However, if continued, hand-to-hand contact will eventually become an evidence of the couple’s romantic attachment to each other.
5. Hand to shoulder. This affectionate embrace is still noncommittal. It is a “buddy” type position in which the man and woman are side by side. They are more concerned with the world in front of them than they are with each other. The hand-to-shoulder contact reveals a relationship that is more than a close friendship, but probably not real love.
6. Hand to waist. Because this is something two people of the same sex would not ordinarily do, it is clearly romantic. They are close enough to be sharing secrets or intimate language with each other. Yet, as they walk side by side with hand to waist, they are still facing forward.
7. Face to face. This level of contact involves gazing into one another’s eyes, hugging and kissing. If none of the previous steps were skipped, the man and woman will have developed a special code from experience that enables them to engage in deep communication with very few words. At this point, sexual desire becomes an important factor in the relationship.
8. Hand to head. This is an extension of the previous stage. The man and woman tend to cradle or stroke each other’s head while kissing or talking. Rarely do individuals in our culture touch the head of another person unless they are either romantically involved or are family members. It is a designation of emotional closeness.
- 9-12. The final steps. The last four levels of involvement are distinctly sexual and private. They are (9) Hand to body, (10) Mouth to Breast, (11) Touching below the waist, and (12) Intercourse.

¹ *Love for a Lifetime*, Dr. James Dobson, Multnomah Press, 1987, ISBN 0-88070-174-9, pp. 32-34.

Obviously, the final acts of physical contact should be reserved for the marital relationship, since they are progressively sexual and intensely personal.

The steps of intimacy described above must proceed slowly if a male-female relationship is to achieve its full potential. When two people love each other deeply and are committed for life, they have usually developed a great volume of understandings or shared expectations between them that would be considered insignificant to anyone else. They share countless private memories unknown to the rest of the world. That is in large measure where their sense of specialness to one another originates. Furthermore, the critical factor is that they have taken these steps in *sequence*. When later stages are reached prematurely, such as when couples kiss passionately on the first date or have sexual intercourse before marriage, something precious is lost from the relationship. Instead, their courtship should be nurtured through leisurely walks and talks and “lovers’ secrets” that lay the foundation for mutual intimacy. Now we can see how the present environment of sexual permissiveness and lust serves to weaken the institution of marriage and undermine the stability of the family.

Before we tuck away this understanding of bonded commitments, we should emphasize that this concept applies not only to courtship experiences. The most successful marriages are those wherein husbands and wives journey through the twelve steps regularly in their daily lives. Touching and talking and holding hands and gazing into one another’s eyes and building memories are as important to partners in their mid-life years as rambunctious twenty year olds. Indeed, the best way to invigorate a tired sex life is to walk through the twelve steps of courtship regularly and with gusto! Conversely, when sexual intercourse is experienced without the stages of intimacy that should have preceded it in prior days, the woman is likely to feel “used and abused.” To those who are already married and now regret that the stages of bonding were taken out of order or that important steps were skipped altogether, it is not too late to work your way through them anew. I know of no better way to draw close to the person you love.

Intimacy must proceed slowly if a relationship is to achieve its full potential.

4.1.2 General Sexual Guidelines for Dating²

Below are some basic guidelines about dating:

1. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage is forbidden by the word of God. This type of sin is called fornication in the Bible. Scriptures in the Bible that forbid this include:
 - 1.1. 1 Cor. 6:18: “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”
 - 1.2. 1 Thess. 4:3-6: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is avenger of all such, as we have forewarned you and testified.”
2. Don’t rush the courtship period when you feel you have found the “one and only.” Frank Sinatra said it musically, “Take it nice and easy, making all the stops along the way.” At least a year is needed to allow the bonding process to occur—and even longer in some cases.

² *Love for a Lifetime*, Dr. James Dobson, Multnomah Press, 1987, ISBN 0-88070-174-9, pp. 35-36.

3. Ensure that you will be equally yoked to someone who has the same spiritual beliefs as you (2 Cor. 6:14). This means if you are a Christian, then you should marry a Christian. Likewise, even prospective spouses who are Christians should only seek a spouse who has the same degree of spiritual commitment as them.
4. Make the final choice of a marital partner very carefully and prayerfully..never impulsively or recklessly. You are playing for keeps now. Bring to bear every ounce of intelligence and discretion available to you, and then yield the ultimate decision to the will of the Lord. He will guide you if you don't run ahead of Him.
5. Proceed through the first nine stages of intimacy one at a time and in the order indicated.
6. Do not progress to stages 10-12 before marriage. Enter the marriage bed as a virgin. If it's too late to preserve your virginity, initiate a policy of abstinence today...and don't waiver from it until you are wed.
7. Seek to marry a virgin. This mutual purity gives special meaning to sex in marriage. No other human being has invaded the secret world that the two of you share, because you reserved yourselves exclusively for one another's pleasure and love. By following this Biblical plan, you also protect the reproduction system form new viruses, bacteria and fungi transmitted during casual intercourse. It is now known that when you sleep with a promiscuous partner, you are having sex with every person that individual has slept with in the past ten years! Virginity before marriage is by far the healthiest approach.
8. Remain faithful to your marriage partner for life. No exceptions!
9. Continue to meander through the stages of bonding throughout your married life, enjoying the wonder of intimate love.

4.1.3 Principles of Loving Toughness During Courtship/Dating³

Below are sixteen suggestions that will help you conform to the principles of loving toughness in matters of dating and courtship and secure a lasting and loving relationship firmly rooted in mutual respect, maturity, and responsibility:

1. Don't let the relationship move too fast in its infancy. The phrase "too hot not to cool down" has validity. Take it one step at a time.
2. Don't discuss your personal inadequacies and flaws in great detail when the relationship is new. No matter how warm and accepting your friend may be, any great revelation of low self-esteem or embarrassing weaknesses can be fatal when interpersonal "valleys" occur. And they *will* occur.
3. Remember that respect precedes love. Built it stone upon stone.
4. Don't call too often on the phone or give the other person an opportunity to get tired of you.
5. Don't be too quick to reveal your desire to get married--or that you think you've just found Mr. Wonderful or Miss Marvelous. If your partner has not arrived at the same conclusion, you'll throw him or her into panic.
6. *Most important.* Relationships are constantly being "tested" by cautious lovers who like to nibble at the bait before swallowing the hook. This testing procedure takes many forms, but is usually involves pulling backward from the other person to see what will happen. Perhaps a foolish fight is initiated. Maybe two weeks will pass without a phone call. Or sometimes flirtation occurs with a rival. In each instance, the question being asked is, "How important am I to you and what would you do if you lost me?" An even more basic issue lies below that one. It wants to know, "How

³ Portions from *Love Must Be Tough*, Dr. James Dobson, Word Publishing, 1983, ISBN 0-8499-0348-3, pp. 190-193

free am I to leave if I want to?" It is incredibly important in these instances to appear poised, secure and equally independent. Do not grasp the other person and beg for mercy. Some people remain single throughout life because they cannot resist the temptation to grovel when the test occurs.

7. Extending the same concept, keep in mind that virtually every dating relationship that continues for a year or more and seems to be moving toward marriage will be given the ultimate test. A breakup will occur, motivated by only one of the lovers. The rejected individual should know that their future together depends on the skill with which he/she handles that crisis. If the hurting individual can remain calm, the next two steps may be reconciliation and marriage. It often happens that way. If not, then no amount of pleading will change anything.
8. Do not expect anyone to meet *all* your emotional needs. Maintain interests and activities outside that romantic relationship, even after marriage.
9. Guard against selfishness in your love affair. Neither the man nor the woman should do all the giving. I once broke up with a girl because she let me take her to nice places, bring her flowers, buy her lunch, etc. I wanted to do these things, but expected her to reciprocate in some way. She didn't, and that was a clear sign to me that she would have made a fickle and demanding marital partner.
10. Beware of blindness to obvious warning signs that tell you that your potential husband or wife is basically disloyal, hateful, spiritually committed, hooked on drugs or alcohol, given to selfishness, etc. Believe me, a bad marriage is far worse than the most lonely instance of singleness.
11. Don't marry the person you think you can live with; marry only the individual you think you can't live without.
12. Be careful to defend the "line of respect," even during a dating relationship. A man *should* open doors for a woman on a formal evening; a woman should speak respectfully of her escort when in public, etc. If you don't preserve this delicate line when the foundations of marriage are being laid, it will be virtually impossible to construct them later.
13. Do not equate human worth with flawless beauty or handsomeness! If you require physical perfection in your mate, he or she will make the same demands of you. Don't let love escape you because of the false values of your culture. In the same vein, be careful not to *compare* yourself with others--which is the root of all inferiority. Likewise, it should be a cause of great concern to you if your dating partner likes to compare you to others. This can lead to emotional abuse later.
14. Regardless of how brilliant the love affair has been, take time to "check your assumptions" with your partner before committing yourself to marriage. It is surprising how often men and women plunge toward matrimony without ever becoming aware of major differences in expectation between them. For example:
 - 14.1. Do you want to have children? How soon? How many?
 - 14.2. Where will you live?
 - 14.3. Will the wife work? How soon? How about after the children are born?
 - 14.4. Who will lead in the relationship? What does that *really* mean?
 - 14.5. How ill you relate to your in-laws?
 - 14.6. How will money be spent?
 - 14.7. Where will you attend church?

These and dozens of other "assumptions" should be discussed item by item, perhaps with the help of a premarital counselor. Many future struggles can be avoided by coming to terms with potential areas of disagreement. If the differences are great enough, it is even possible that the marriage should never occur.

15. Finally, sexual familiarity can be deadly to a relationship. In addition to the many moral, spiritual and physical reasons for remaining virgins until marriage, there are numerous psychological and

interpersonal advantages to the exercise of self-control and discipline. Though it's an old-fashioned notion, perhaps, it is still true that men do not respect "easy" women and often become bored with those who have held nothing in reserve. Likewise, women often disrespect men who have only one thing on their minds. Both sexes need to remember how to use a very ancient word. It's pronounced "NO!".

4.1.4 Guidelines for Parents Dealing with Dating Children

1. *Parents be best friends with your children and talk about dating issues.* When you can be friends with your children and have a clear path of communication, it is much easier to discuss sensitive personal issues such as intimacy and sex with them. Also, when parents have a good relationship with their children, then they have more on deposit in the emotional bank account with their children that will be useful later should they need to make a withdrawal in the process of correcting bad behavior of their children through rebuke, reproof, or exhortation.
2. *Parents should talk candidly about sex with their teenage children.* They should warn their children about the drastic consequences of sexual sin and fornication, and why they should avoid it at all costs. Talk about your own experiences in dating and courtship with your children and the boundaries you set and why, but in an age-appropriate manner that does not offend them or give them more than they can handle. Watch over them and keep them out of trouble.
3. *To counteract the popular culture, remind them that the safest sex is no sex before marriage.*

4.2 Premarital Inventory and Planning

Before you marry, there are a lot of things you need to understand about each other. As we said before, you should make your choice of marital partner very carefully and prayerfully. You can't do this without a lot of information about your prospective spouse. This section is devoted to facilitating the process of getting to know your spouse better to ensure that you make a wise and informed choice, because it may be the most important decision of your lifetime and of the lifetimes of your children and their children.

4.2.1 Questions to ask a prospective spouse

4.2.1.1 Family Background

"You're just like your mother!" "You act the same way your father does!" These common statements are heard time and time again. In many respects, we are a product of our environment for our family backgrounds do affect our lives.

The way our parents treated us many times affects the way we will treat our spouse. Family traditions or the lack of traditions will influence our future marriage. The social and financial status of our childhood years plays an important part in our adult thinking.

How much do you know about the family background of your future marriage partner? Are there potential problem areas? It has been said that when you marry, you marry the family. How well do you know your fiancé's family? Are you accepted by them? How well do they know you?

Answer the following questions and then discuss them together. Your discussions may trigger other family background questions which will, hopefully, help you gain a deeper insight into each other and your families.

1. How old were your parents when you were born? Father: ____ Mother: ____
2. List your brothers and sisters in order of birth and include yourself:
 - 2.1. _____ Age _____
 - 2.2. _____ Age _____
 - 2.3. _____ Age _____
 - 2.4. _____ Age _____
 - 2.5. _____ Age _____
3. Were your parents ever: Separated Divorced Widowed?
 How old were you at the time? _____
 My parent's divorce affected me by:

 Who raised you? Father Mother
 Other: _____
4. My parents are still living: Yes No
5. My parents' occupations are:
 Father: _____
 Mother: _____
6. I would describe my parents' marriage as: Very poor Sometimes troubled Middle-of-the-road Usually happy Very happy
7. I feel the leader in my home was: Father Mother Neither They fought for leadership
8. Describe your relationship with your:

<i>Father:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Affectionate <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerated <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Persecuted <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<i>Mother:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Affectionate <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerated <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Persecuted <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
--	--
9. Describe the discipline of your:

<i>Father:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Domineering <input type="checkbox"/> Strict	<i>Mother:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Domineering <input type="checkbox"/> Strict
---	---

- Firm but kindly
 - Permissive
 - Indulgent
 - Other _____
- Firm but kindly
 - Permissive
 - Indulgent
 - Other _____

10. I would describe my childhood as:
 Very poor Sometimes troubled Middle-of-the-road Usually happy Very happy
 Other:

11. My parents think my marriage is:

12. My parent's opinions towards my fiance are:

13. Regarding my marriage, the parents of my fiance think that:

14. The type of relationship I have with the parts of my fiance is:

15. I see the following potential trouble points with my in-laws:

16. When I encounter difficulties with my in-laws, I will:

17. I think the following traditions and family traits of my family will affect my marriage:

18. After my marriage, if we live in the same house with my in-laws, I will:

19. When my in-laws give advice, I will:

20. I have the following questions about in-laws:

4.2.1.2 Sexuality⁴

The following questions are frank and deal with common problems encountered in giving sexual counseling. Most couples do not talk about sexual matters very deeply, even after they are married. These questions deal with real issues. A great deal of frustration, hurt, fear and anger could be eliminated if these issues were faced by the couple before they became crisis points in what is designed by God to be a most beautiful experience.

May I encourage you to discuss together the following questions:

1. Have you had a physical examination for your marriage? Yes No

2. Do you have any health problems? Explain:

3. At this particular time, I think about sex?

- 3.1. Seldom
 3.2. Periodically
 3.3. Frequently
 3.4. Regularly

4. My present feelings about sex are: Disturbed Fearful Anxious Neutral Expectant Excited Intrigued

5. Do you have any sexual inhibitions, fears or awkward feelings? Explain:

6. What was your first impression of your parent's sex life? Fulfilling Warm Casual Neutral Tolerant Cold Empty

7. Were you the victim of any unpleasant sexual experience as a child, adolescent or adult? No Indecent exposure Homosexual Molested Raped Incest

8. Who do you think is responsible for birth control? Husband Wife Both

9. In planning to postpone having children, the form of birth control method I prefer is Withdrawal Rhythm Douche Foam Vaginal suppositories Contraceptive jelly Condom Diaphragm Cervical Cap IUD Birth control pills Vasectomy Hysterectomy Abortion

10. Who do you think should initiate sexual activity? _____

⁴ *How Can I Be Sure?*, Bob Phillips, 1978, pp. 81-96, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene Oregon, ISBN 0-89081-073-7.

Why? _____

11. Who do you think should determine the way, the place, how often, length of time and variety of sexual activity? _____

12. How do you feel about seeing your partner nude? _____

13. How do you feel about having your partner seeing you nude? _____

14. State your thoughts about the following:

Lip kissing: _____

Tongue kissing: _____

Your partner kissing your body: _____

Kissing of your partner's body: _____

Caressing your partner's body: _____

Your partner caressing your body: _____

Kissing of your partner's genitals: _____

Your partner kissing your genitals: _____

Bringing your partner to a climax by hand: _____

Your partner bringing you to a climax by hand: _____

Bringing your partner to a climax by oral stimulation: _____

Your partner bringing you to a climax by oral stimulation: _____

15. How important do you think simultaneous orgasm is?

16. A woman reaches orgasm by:

17. Why is it important to communicate about sexual desires?

18. Why is it important to verbally tell your partner what stimulates you sexually?

19. What are your thoughts about intercourse during the wife's menstrual period?

20. What type of menstrual period do you/does your fiance have?

21. How many times per week do you think that you would like to have intercourse?_____

22. I think the act of intercourse should last:

23. I would prefer a lovemaking environment that includes (lighting, music, etc.):

24. Privacy in lovemaking is important because:

25. At what time of day should lovemaking take place?_____

26. What are your thoughts as to where lovemaking should take place?

27. What are your thoughts about various positions in intercourse?_____

28. What will you do if you find the man has difficulty in maintaining erection?

29. What will you do if you find the man has difficulty with premature ejaculation?

30. What will you do when you find the woman cannot reach a climax?

31. What will you do if you find the woman cannot reach a climax with the penis inserted into the vagina?

32. How important do you think the act of intercourse is on the Honeymoon night?

33. What will you do when you find the husband cannot make entrance into his wife and complete the act of intercourse due to the tightened vaginal muscles or pain in the vaginal area?

34. Suppose that you have been married for a period of time, and one day you discover your mate masturbating. What will you do?

35. Tell what you might do if you find that your partner does not like the act of intercourse?

36. How do men and women differ in their readiness for sexual climax?

37. If and when I discovered my partner was romantically interested in another person, I would:

38. Why are things like words, gentle touch and kind deeds important in the lovemaking process?

39. Do you think that you will be able to refuse sexual requests of your partner without offending him/her? () Yes () No () Uncertain
What will you say?

40. How much bathroom privacy do you feel is needed?

41. I have a lack of sexual knowledge in the following areas:

42. How tense are you as you answer these questions?

43. Do you believe in counseling for sexual problems? () Yes () No () Uncertain.

44. Who would you feel free to talk with concerning sexual problems?

45. After reading 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 and 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, state what you think is God's view of premarital intercourse:

46. In Hebrews 13:4 it says, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure." I think this means:

47. After reading 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, the concept I think the writer is trying to convey is:

48. I have the following questions about sexual matters:

4.2.1.3 Children

In many premarital counseling programs the issue of child rearing is not dealt with in great detail. This is usually because of a time factor, and because most couples are more concerned with immediate issues such as finances, marriage plans and the sexual side of marriage.

Some couples don not plan for children or use forms of birth control. Others can't wait to have children. What are your thoughts? Do you feel you should have children right away or do you plan to get to know your marriage partner better before having children? How long should a couple wait?

The questions listed below are designed to help you formulate your thoughts and verbally set forth a plan for child rearing. Share together your thinking in this important area of marriage.

1. Do you plan to have children? () Yes () No () Undecided

2. How many children would you like to have?_____

3. How long would you like to wait before having children? _____
4. Should a couple wait until they can afford to have children? () Yes () No () Undecided
5. I feel that it is important for the father to be present at the birth of the child. () Yes () No () Undecided
6. If we cannot have children, my feelings about adoption are:

7. What are your feelings if you would have only boys or only girls?

8. How much should a husband participate in the care of a baby?

9. What are your feelings toward sharing equally in all of the activities of care and raising of children? (feeding, changing diapers, late night responsibilities, etc.)

10. The names of children should be determined by:

11. The responsibility for the discipline of the children lies with: () Husband () Wife () Both
12. I want my children to learn the following values, rules, and characteristics:

13. My parents used the following discipline with me:

14. I will want to discipline my children in the following ways:
Early years:

Middle years:

Teen years:

15. Who should be responsible for assisting children with homework? () Husband () Wife () Both
16. My thoughts with regard to leaving children with baby-sitters are:

17. Who is responsible for buying clothes for the children? () Husband () Wife () Both
Comments:

18. Who decides what gifts to buy for the children? () Husband () Wife () Both

19. I feel that the place of pets in the home is:

20. I feel that favoritism of children in the home is:

21. What is your opinion about standing behind your mates' discipline of the children?

22. If you have children by a previous marriage, what will you want the relationship to be with the new father/mother?

23. If you have children by a former marriage, who will discipline your children?

24. If you have children by a former marriage, do you foresee any problems with visiting rights of the divorced parent? Explain:

25. In discipline, how strict do you think parents should be?:

26. I think the most important thing in child discipline is:

27. I think that praising your children involves:

28. How much should children sacrifice for their children?

29. What are your thoughts about parents caring more for the children than for each other?

30. I think that children should have the following privileges:

Early years:

Middle years:

Teen years:

31. What message do you think is conveyed in Psalm 127 and Psalm 128?

32. Read Proverbs 22:6, 22:15; 13:24; 23:13-14; 29:15; 19:18; 29:17; Hebrews 12:5-11; Proverbs 20:30; Ephesians 6:4. After reading these verses, I think that God's attitude toward discipline is:

33. I think that having children will teach me the following lessons:

34. I have the following questions concerning child rearing:

4.2.1.4 Communication

Reuel Howe, a gifted communicator feels that, "dialogue is to love, what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops, the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born. But dialogue can restore a dead relationship. Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue: it can bring relationship into being, and it can bring into being once again a relationship that has died."⁵

Marjorie Umphrey in her book *Getting To Know You* defines communication as the following:

1. Communication is giving and receiving a message.
2. Communication is giving of oneself.
3. Communication is sharing ideas, feelings and moments with another person.
4. Communication is experiencing another human being.
5. Communication is the giving and receiving of an emotional stroke.

⁵ *The Miracle of Dialogue*, Ruel L. Howe, 1964, The Seabury Press, p. 3.

- 6. Communication is getting my needs met.
- 7. Communication is meeting another person's needs.
- 8. Communication is looking at and seeing what another person is saying.
- 9. Communication is listening and hearing what others are saying.
- 10. Communication is my face and body talking.
- 11. Communication is using all my senses to recognize what the other's face and body and voice is saying.
- 12. Communication is putting myself in other's place.
- 13. Communication is touching.
- 14. Communication is reaching out.
- 15. Communication is tenderness and caressing.
- 16. Communication is words on the printed page.
- 17. Communication is allowing someone else to intrude into your world of thoughts.
- 18. Communication is expression through the arts.
- 19. Communication is spiritual.

How well are you communicating? How open are you with each other? Do you feel free enough for your future life partner to get to know the real you? Answer the following questions and explore with your fiance your deeper thoughts and feelings:

1. I think a person can change their mate by:

2. When I am emotionally irritated or bothered, my tendency is to: () act out or come on strong () withdraw and go into quiet irritation.

3. State your opinion about keeping each other informed regarding schedules and whereabouts:

4. What will you do when your companion continually refers to your faults?:

5. List things you think you would tale about at mealtimes:

6. How much should you share with your partner about work and other interests?

7. I can become more aware of my mates feelings by:

8. How much time should be devoted to leisure time activities?

9. How much time should be devoted to family?

10. How much time should be devoted to former friends?

11. What I find my mate remaining silent for a long period of time, I will:

12. To what extent do you think your mate should pursue his/her interests, activities and sports?

13. When I find that my mate is not as affectionate as I would like, I will:

14. When my mate yells at me, I will:

15. I think I can lift the spirits of my mate when he/she is depressed or discouraged by:

16. When you have a major illness strike your mate how will you react?

17. When my mate does something that displeases me, I will:

18. You may love your mate but what are your thoughts about him/her being your friend?

19. When my mate sulks, whines or pouts, I will:

20. When I find that my mate is not listening to me, I will:

21. When my mate uses the phrases "You always," "You never," or "Everytime," I will respond by:

22. What are your thoughts about sharing unpleasant things that happen during the day?

23. I think I can help develop my mate's self-image by:

24. In clarifying the misunderstood statements, I will:

25. I think that my mate and I need to improve our communication in the following areas:

26. I think that my mate would like to change the following qualities or behaviors in me:

27. I express love to my mate in the following ways:

28. What are your feelings about marriage counselors and pastors helping you to solve personal and marital problems? :

29. I have the following educational plans:

30. I have the following vocational plans:

31. I would like to ask the following questions about communication in marriage:

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. I think that the best time of day to talk over marital difficulties is:
2. The types of things that get on my nerves are:
3. State your opinion about your partner talking about former sweethearts or a former spouse:
4. When my mate says one thing and means another, I will:
5. I can compliment and praise my spouse more by:
6. When my mate goes out often with the guys/girls, I feel:
7. What are your thoughts about telling jokes at your partner's expenses?
8. What are your opinions about correcting your mate in public?
9. I like to do the following activities with my mate:
10. When I find it difficult to confide in my mate, I will:
11. How can you help your mate when he/she is upset because of work, children or some conflict with another person outside of your marriage? How much sympathy do you give? How much encouragement? How much correction?
12. What is your opinion about discussing your spouse's faults in public?
13. What are your thoughts about non-verbal communication in marriage?
14. What are your thoughts about arguing in public?
15. It has been said that marriage is a fifty-fifty partnership. What do you think?
16. I am easily offended in the following ways:
17. What are your thoughts about discussing in-laws in public?
18. I think that personality clashes are caused by:
19. I think that jealousy and possessiveness are caused by:
20. How important do you think it is for a husband and wife to discuss intellectual and emotional issues like race relations, politics, religion, etc.?

4.2.1.5 Decisions in Marriage

There are many decisions that have to be made in a marriage. Some are made by the husband, some are made by the wife and some are shared equally. Read over the following list of decisions and indicate who you feel should make the decision. (H for husbands..W for wives...B for both) then compare your answers with the answers of your fiancé.

1. Who decides on formal or informal engagement? _____
2. Who decides date of wedding? _____
3. Who decides what type of wedding? _____
4. Who decides whether to have a honeymoon? _____
5. Who decides where to go on a honeymoon? _____
6. Who decides where to live? _____
7. Who decides when to move? _____
8. Who decides whether the wife should work? _____
9. Who decides whether the wife should give up her job when a child is born? _____
10. Who decides financial decisions? _____
11. Who decides if incomes are to be shared? _____

12. Who decides who will handle the checkbook? _____
13. Who decides about borrowing money and going into debt? _____
14. Who decides on the budget? _____
15. Who makes justified complaints to tradesmen? _____
16. Who decides to buy a car? _____
17. Whose name is the car in? _____
18. Who looks after the car? _____
19. Who decides which house to buy? _____
20. Whose name is it in? _____
21. Who decides on the interior decor? _____
22. Who decides on the exterior decor? _____
23. Who decides on the furnishings? _____
24. Who decides on the landscaping? _____
25. Who takes care of the yard work? _____
26. Who is responsible for life and health insurance? _____
27. Who makes retirement plans? _____
28. Who decides activities after retirement? _____
29. Who takes the active role in sex? _____
30. Who decides whether to have children? _____
31. Who takes responsibility for contraception? _____
32. Who decides when to have children? _____
33. Who decides how many children to have? _____
34. Who takes responsibility in emergencies? _____
35. Who helps with the homework? _____
36. Who decides political issues for the family? _____
37. Who decides which pre-marriage friends to socialize with? _____
38. Who invites people to the house? _____
39. Who chooses television programs? _____
40. Whose food tastes prevail? _____
41. Who plans the day-by-day meals? _____
42. Who does the grocery shopping for the family? _____
43. Who decides when to go out? _____
44. Who decides where to go out? _____
45. Who decides what to do and where to go on vacations? _____
46. With whose relatives do you keep in touch? _____
47. Whose job is it to keep in touch with the relatives? _____
48. Who remembers anniversaries and birthdays? _____
49. Who copes with family disasters? _____
50. Who decides whether to go to church or not? _____
51. Who decides which church to go to? _____

4.2.1.6 **Finances**

Every couple experiences some degree of conflict or frustration in the area of finances. Next to communication and sex, finances rate among the big three of marital problems. The vast majority of couples who go into divorce courts are head over heels in debt.

How do you handle finances? are you a spender or a saver? Do you like to use charge cards? Do you have a budget? Robert J. Hastings thinks that, "Money management is not so much a technique as it is an attitude. And when we talk about attitudes, we are dealing with emotions. Thus, money management is basically self-management or control of one's emotions. Unless one learns to control himself, he is no more likely to control his money than he is to discipline his habits, his time or his temper. Undisciplined money usually spells undisciplined persons." ⁶

1. My attitude about the wife working outside the home is:

2. State your attitude about the wife working outside the home after the birth of children:

3. Are you going to pool financial resources? (gifts, inheritances, savings and earnings). Explain:

4. If you have been married before, do you have any reservations or do you feel that there will be any problems in pooling finances from the former marriage? (gifts, properties, savings, investments, insurance, trust funds or wills, etc) Explain:

5. I foresee the following problems with the "my money, your money" feelings:

6. My attitude toward debt, credit cards, borrowing money and buying on time is:

7. When we experience financial reverses (unemployment, debt, sickness, etc.) I plan to:

8. Who will handle the checkbook?

9. Who will pay the bills?

⁶ *The "10-70-20" Formula for Wealth*: Form the Marriage Affair, Robert J. Hastings, Tyndale House Publishers, 1971, p. 363.

10. What is your plan for budgeting? "

11. How generous are you?

12. What are your thoughts about giving? (church, charities, relatives, etc):

13. What are your thoughts about saving money? (savings accounts, investments, property, retirement)

14. What are your thoughts about life insurance?

15. What are your thoughts about health insurance?:

16. How do you feel about writing a will?

17. What are your thoughts about the possibility of someday being financially responsible for your in-laws?

18. How do you feel about the husband holding extra or part-time jobs?

19. What financial aspects to you think are involved in entertaining guests in your home?

20. When we get into financial difficulties I will:

21. I have the following questions about finances:

4.2.1.7 Insight Questions⁷

Please complete the following sentences. From your answers you will gain new insight into your thoughts and feelings.

1. When I hear from others that you have complained about me I:

2. When some other interest seems more important to you than I do, I

: _____

3. When you seem to hold back something from me, I:

4. When I hold back something from you, I:

5. When you look at other men/women with obvious interest, I:

6. When you are late and I have to wait for you,

I: _____

7. When you have a strong interest which I cannot share, I:

8. When I try to convince you of something and you can't accept it, I:

9. When you seem to be rejecting my feelings, I:

10. When you praise or complement me, I:

11. When I am confronted with or think of that which I fear most, I:

12. When I think you are judging me, I:

13. When you become violently angry with me, I:

14. When I have to admit that I was wrong, I:

⁷ *The Secret of Staying in Love*, John Powell, Argus Communications, Niles, Illinois.

15. When I think you are taking a superior role in our dialogues and discussions, I:

16. When I do not seem able to reach you, I: _____

17. When you frown at me, I: _____

18. When you are being too hard on yourself, I:

19. When you smile at me, I:

20. When you reach out and touch me, I:

21. When I think of praying with you, I:

22. When you make a sacrifice for me, I:

23. When others notice our closeness, I:

24. When we appear as a partnership, not as individuals only, I:

25. When I reflect that you love me, I:

26. When you seem annoyed with me, I:

27. When I have the opportunity to be alone and enjoy some solitude, I:

28. When we have been separated for a long time, I:

29. When I reflect that we are growing in mutual knowledge, I:

30. When we are holding hands, I:

31. When we are making plans together, I:

32. When I am buying you a gift, I:

33. When I reach out and touch you, I:

34. When you interrupt me in conversation, I:

35. When we are in some form of competition like cards or an athletic contest, I:

36. When you say "no" to one of my requests, I:

37. When I think I have hurt your feelings, I:

38. When you apologize to me, I:

39. When we can spend a quiet evening together, I:

40. When you help me locate my feelings, I:

41. When I hear from others that you have "bragged" about me, I:

42. When others look at you with obvious interest, I:

43. When you cry, I:

44. When you are sick, I:

45. When I think about your death and what life will be without you, I:

46. When we hear "our song," I:

47. When you ask me to help you, I:

48. When I have to apologize to you, I:

49. When you surprise me with something nice, I:

50. When you seem to appreciate me, I:

51. When you laugh at my jokes, I:

52. When I think that you are not recognizing my needs, I:

53. When I make a mistake and you point it out, I:

54. When you are holding me in your arms, I:

55. When our routines are different and our interests separate us, I:

56. When I am late and you have to wait for me, I:

57. When I reach out and touch you, I:

58. When I think you don't believe me, I:

4.2.1.8 Religion

Most people want a church wedding rather than a civil ceremony. Have you every wondered why? What is so special about a church wedding? Sometimes the couple really want their marriage blessed of God while others want a church wedding simply because it is a tradition. How important are religious and spiritual values to a marriage relationship? Does the spiritual life of the couple affect their marriage? Do the vows of commitment made before God and friends really mean anything?

Answer the following questions and share with one another your religious and spiritual convictions:

1. My father's religious background is: _____

2. How religious is your father? () Very () Middle-of-the-road () Not very () Not at all

3. My mother's religious background is: _____

4. How religious is your mother? () Very () Middle-of-the-road () Not very () Not at all

5. My religious background is: _____

6. How important do you believe religious commitment are to your marriage?

7. Do you believe in God? Yes No Unsure

8. Do you pray? No Once in a while Very often

9. Do you read the Bible? No Occasionally Fairly regularly Regularly

10. Do you and your fiance read the Bible together? Yes No

If yes, how often do you read together? _____

11. Do you and your finance pray together? Yes No

If yes, how often do you pray together? _____

12. I attend the services of a church: Never Seldom Periodically Frequently Regularly

13. I attend: _____ church

Are you a member? Yes No

14. What do you think it means to receive Christ as your Savior and Lord?

15. Have you ever personally received Christ as your Savior and Lord? Yes No Unsure

If yes, where? _____

When? _____

16. What do you think it means to be a Spirit-filled Christian?

17. Do you consider yourself to be a Spirit-filled Christian? Yes No Don't know

18. My most significant spiritual experience was:

19. My definition of a Christian marriage is:

20. I want a church wedding because:

21. A Christian marriage is important to me because:

22. Do you believe that it is important for you and your family to go to church? () Yes () No
() Unsure

Explain: _____

23. We plan to go to _____ church after we are married.

24. My fiance and I have the following religious differences:

25. My fiance and I plan to work on our religious differences by:

26. To me, equality before God means:

27. I believe that spiritual leadership in the home is initiated by:

28. I think that the spiritual growth of my children is the responsibility of:

29. We are planning for the following type of family devotions:

30. What do you think the phrase "To marry in the Lord" means?

31. Read Ephesians 5:15-6:4; Colossians 3:21; I Timothy 5:8; I Peter 3:7, and make a list of the responsibilities of a Christian husband:

32. Read Ephesians 5:15-6:4; I Timothy 1:9-10, 3:11; I Peter 3:1-6, and make a list of the responsibilities of a Christian wife:

33. Read Ephesians 5:15-6:4; Colossians 3:21; I Timothy 5:8; I Peter 3:7 and make a list of the responsibilities of a Christian husband:

34. Read Ephesians 5:15-6:4; I Timothy 1:9-10, 3:11; I Peter 3:1-6, and make a list of the responsibilities of a Christian wife:

35. I think that Psalm 127:1 means:

36. To me the word submission in Ephesians 5:21-22 means:

37. Does only the wife submit? () Yes () No () Uncertain

38. I feel a husband can submit in marriage by:

39. After reading Genesis 2:24, I feel the phrase "one flesh "means:

40. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:11-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; and I Corinthians 7:10-15. After reading the above scriptures, I feel God's attitude toward divorce is:

41. I have the following questions about spiritual matters:

4.2.2 Danger Signs: What to watch out for

Marriage is a very important decision. We need to be sure we are making the right choice of a marriage partner. Anthony Florio, a professional marriage counselor, lists the following danger signs to look for:

Like red lights, blinking, danger signs mean STOP, then proceed with caution (if at all!). It is better to take this brief test before you become engaged so that if definite danger signs turn up you will have time to do something about them before committing yourself officially to marriage plans. If you are

already engaged and encounter danger signs, then by all means delay your wedding plans until you can straighten out the problem areas that you or your partner have. Like icebergs, the negative traits may be hidden from you, and just the tips show what is going on beneath a supposedly mature exterior.

1. *A general feeling about the relationship. Lack of inner peace.* A nagging, aching, disturbing inside that says, "Something is wrong." Don't ignore that feeling. It may be your own temporarily numbed common sense, or it may be God's Spirit trying to communicate something to you. More than a few clients have admitted to me that they knew the marriage was a mistake even as they were walking down the aisle.
2. *Frequent arguments.* Never sure how the date will end. More fighting than fun.
3. *Avoiding discussing sensitive subjects because you're afraid of hurting your partner's feelings* or starting an argument. You find yourself thinking. "I'd better not talk about this." Perhaps subjects like: "I wish he'd show me more affection, I wish he wouldn't treat his mother so mean. I wonder why he always has a temper tantrum when he gets a flat. Can't he control it better? I wish he would shower more often."
"She makes a pig of herself when there's a box of candy anywhere in sight--don't you suppose she cares about getting fat? I wish she'd read a book once in a while. Why can't we ever talk about something interesting instead of just superficial topics?"
4. *Getting more involved physically.* You resolve to limit the acceleration of your physical intimacy, but find that on each new date you start again at the place where you left off. Sometimes couples get involved physically as a way to avoid arguments. Just one of the reasons for this being a danger sign is that your relationship may remain on the physical level only, throughout your courtship and marriage. After you're married you may not like the personality that goes along with the body.
5. If you find yourself always doing what your partner wants to do. Constantly giving in, being accommodating. This could indicate a selfish, domineering partner and/or a serious insecurity on your part.
6. If you detect serious emotional disturbances such as extreme fears, extreme shyness, bizarre behavior, irrational anger, inflicting physical injury, inability to demonstrate affection.
7. If you feel you are staying in the relationship through fear. For example, if thoughts like these go through your mind: "I wish I could get out of dating him, but I'm afraid of what he might do to me. Or he might commit suicide. I feel trapped and I couldn't stand the guilt if something happened."
8. If your partner is constantly complaining about apparently unreal aches and pains and going from doctor to doctor.
9. If your partner continually makes excuses for not finding a job. If he or she borrows money from you frequently. The partner who evades responsibility and who can't manage his money wisely will be a poor marriage risk.
10. If your partner is overly jealous, suspicious, questions your word all the time, feels that everyone is against him/her.
11. If the one you date is a perfectionist and is constantly critical. This kind of person often creates a tense unhealthy atmosphere.
12. Treats you contemptuously. Uses biting sarcasm.
13. Parents and other significant people are strongly against your marriage. Consider their reasons before you make a final decision.
14. Lack of spiritual harmony.
15. Few areas of common interest.
16. Inability to accept constructive criticism. Doesn't apologize when he/she is wrong.

DANGER SIGNS THAT WOULD INDICATE THE NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

1. Undue jealousy, suspicion, distrust.
2. Constant chip-on-the-shoulder attitude.
3. Temper tantrums.
4. Unresolved anger, resentment. Vindictiveness.
5. Physically abusive.
6. Objects to or is distant to any kind of romantic involvement.
7. Severe mood swings. High elation followed by depression.
8. Constantly negative attitude. Pessimistic.
9. Suspicious of everyone. Suspects some sort of plotting against him/her.
10. Speaks of suicide and the meaninglessness of life.⁸

4.2.3 Sample Wedding Ceremony⁹

Introduction by Minister

_____ (groom firstname) and _____ (bride firstname) , you are surrounded by your family and friends, all of whom are here to share in your joy on this special occasion. It will be one of the most memorable and happy days of your lives.

On this your wedding day, you stand apart from all others. You stand within the beautiful circle of your love. For this reason we are here in the presence of God, to join you both in holy matrimony. God has declared that marriage is an honorable and desirable condition. It was designed by God to bring joy, completion, and unity to man and woman. The basic biblical guidelines are that we should put God first, the welfare of our spouse second, and ourselves last within the marriage relationship. This is confirmed by the first commandment to love the Lord God with all our heart, soul, and mind and also by Phil. 2:3, which says:

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Minister speaks to both sets of parents

Would Mr. and Mrs. _____ and Mr. and Mrs. _____ please stand. It is traditional for the father of the bride to give her away. However, in a real sense, both sets of parents share in the giving and receiving. Therefore, Mr. and Mrs. _____, do you not only give your daughter _____ to be _____ husband, but also joyfully receive _____ as your son? (Response by bride's parents--"We do.") Mr. and Mrs. _____, do you not only joyfully give your son _____ to _____ as her husband, but receive _____ to be your daughter? (Response by groom's parents--"We do.")

⁸ *Two To Get Ready*, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1974.

⁹ Adapted from *How Can I Be Sure?*, Bob Phillips, 1978, pp. 97-105, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene Oregon, ISBN 0-89081-073-7.

Bride and Groom move to Altar**Minister proceeds**

Marriage was instituted by God Himself when He said, "It is not good that man should be alone."

From the side of man God created woman to be his friend and companion...

- Not out of his head to rule over him.
- Not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him.
- But out of his side to be equal with him.
- And under his arm for protection.
- And near his heart to be loved.

God said, "for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

- One flesh in companionship
- One flesh in the control of the God given sexual drives
- One flesh in the propagation of children
- And one flesh in the testimony of the joy of a Christian marriage

The Bible's description of true love

The Bible tells us that true love is "slow to lose patience.. love is kind...love looks for a way of being constructive. Love is not possessive...love is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

"Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. Love is not touchy. Love does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, love is glad with all good men when truth prevails.

*"Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; love can outlast anything. Love is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen."
1 Corinthians 13.*

This couple acknowledges love as both a feeling and an action that is a product of a choice and a commitment, and they recognize the superiority of love the action over love the feeling. They believe that love the feeling results from love the action and the one is a consequence of and cannot exist without the other. This couple covenants to obey the Lord's command to demonstrate love the action continually towards each other regardless of how they may feel, and they make their feelings their personal responsibility to manage and control as evidence of their spiritual maturity and shared commitment to the Lord. They will do this because God is love. This is confirmed in the Bible, which says about love the action in 1 John 4:8:

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

This couple covenants this day to choose to be like God every day of their lives by choosing to always act in a loving way towards each other regardless of the circumstances that the Lord blesses them with.

Admonition of Scripture to husbands and wives

Family Constitution, version 1.30

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In the book of Ephesians, chapter five, marriage is likened to the mystical union of Christ and the church...

"You wives must submit to your husband's leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord. For a husband is in charge of his wife in the same way Christ is in charge of his body the church. (He gave his very life to take care of it and be its savior!) So you wives must willingly obey your husbands in everything, just as the church obeys Christ.

The minister may possibly want to make personal comments to the Bride at this point

"And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the church when he died for her.

"That is how husbands should treat their wives, loving them as parts of themselves. For since a man and his wife are not one, a man is really doing himself a favor and loving himself when he loves his wife! No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body the church, of which we are parts.

The minister may possibly want to make personal comments to the Groom at this point

"So again I say, a man must love his wife as part of himself; and the wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband..obeying..praising and honoring him and avoiding gossip and talking about confidential personal matters with others."

Vows spoken to the Minister

After hearing the admonition of Scripture, do you _____(groom) take _____(bride) to be your lawfully wedded wife? Do you promise to nurture her and love her for life? Do you solemnly pledge before God and these witnesses that you will be faithful to her for the remainder of your life? If so, answer I will (Response by the Groom)

_____ (bride) do you take _____(groom) to be your lawfully wedded husband? Do you promise to love, honor and obey him? Do you solemnly pledge before God and these witnesses that you will be his faithful wife until you are separated by death? If so, answer, I will. (Response from the bride)

Minister will have the Bride pass her flowers to the Maid of Honor...Bride and Groom will turn and face each other and will hold hands

Minister proceeds with personal vows

_____ (groom) please repeat after me: I love you _____(bride), and today in the presence of our families and friends, I pledge myself to you. I reaffirm my faith in Christ and dedicate our marriage to be Christ-centered. I promise before God to love you, to honor you and cherish you. As God enables me, I will provide for your needs and desires. _____(bride), I love youBe my wife.

_____ (bride) please repeat after me: _____(groom), I love you. I've longed for this day...to be able to say publicly to our families and friends, that you are truly a man of God. A man that is tender and sensitive in his love for others. I promise to make you an orderly home where there is peace for your soul and joy for your heart. My goal is to be a Godly woman and to help fulfill our goals and dreams. I will respect you as my husband and I am honored to become your wife.

Exchange rings

What symbols do you offer that you will faithfully fulfill these promises? (Minister will collect the rings)

May the circle of this ring typify your unending happiness and love, and may the triangle formed in its passing, to me, and to one another, signify that triune relationship with God who reigns above were all true marriages are made. (Minister will hand back the rings to be placed on the Bride's finger and then on the Groom's.)

Bride and Groom again turn toward each other and hold hands**Minister proceeds**

Will you both please repeat after me: I give you this ring as a seal of my commitment and responsibility to you in the presence of these witnesses, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Since _____(groom) and _____(bride) have consented together in these promises and have symbolized this by the giving and receiving of these rings, I now pronounce them husband and wife. Whom God has joined together, let no man and no government dare to separate.

Minister prays: Couple may be standing or kneeling. They may wish to light a Unity candle..after which they will again stand before the Minister and face each other, holding hands**Ceremony of the Unity Candle**

The two outside candles of the center candelabra are lit to represent your lives in this moment. They are two distinct lights, each capable of going their separate ways. To bring bliss and happiness to your home, there must be the merging of these two lights into the unity of one light. This is what the Lord meant when He said:

"On this account a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall be one flesh."

From now on your thoughts shall be for each other rather than for your individual selves. Your plans shall be mutual, your joys and sorrows shall be shared alike.

As you each take a candle and together light the center one you will not extinguish your own candle as is usually done. Instead, place the outside candles back in their original places still lit symbolizing your individual personalities that remain, yet lives that merge together as one.

As the center candle is lit, may the radiance of this one light be a testimony of your unity and your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bride and Groom kiss**Minister proceeds**

It is my pleasure now to introduce you for the first time Mr. and Mrs. _____.

4.2.4 A Poem for the Marriage Day

TODAY

Turn your ear to the sound of the music of living,
Happy songs from the laughter of children at play;
Hold my hand as we run through the sweet fragrant meadows.
Making memories of what was today.

Seems like only yesterday we were grinning young babes:
Fragile but immortal...
Bringing laughter, pride, and smiles to our parents' faces...
Filled with sweet youthful innocence and wonder....
Fascinated by the simplest and silliest things, people, and places.

But somewhere along the way,
On the long journey that connects our origins with today,
The relentless march of time,
Taught us that our days are numbered,
And like a thief in the night,
Stole our innocence and wonder.

And already we are starting the same phase of the same long journey,
Over the same path that our parents once trod.
Yes, life is truly a circle, with no beginning and no end,
Repeating itself over and over again,
And what seems like a new and interesting melody,
Is but one more verse in the same familiar but happy song of life:
A verse that begins with "I now pronounce you man and wife!"

And so we all have this rare moment to hold in our hand,
And to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand.
Yesterday is gone forever and tomorrow may never come,
But we have this very special moment right here today,
And today is the most we'll ever have,
So before we let it slip away,
There is something we just have to say...

We are so very happy to share this very precious moment,
With so many very precious people who we have grown to know and to love.
Thank you sincerely for being there to share in the many joys and
the sorrows as we have sung the song of life together over
the many years that we have all known each other.
By your example and by your words, you have taught us, and continue to
teach us the meaning of love and commitment.
We look forward to sharing many more happy occasions with all of you
in the years to come.

4.2.5 A Marriage Benediction

May your marriage bring you all the fulfillment a marriage should bring and may the Lord give you patience, tolerance, and understanding. May it be full of joy and laughter, as well as comfort and support. May you discover the true depth of love through loving one another.

Remember that every burden is easier to carry when you have the shoulders of two instead of one. When you are weary and discouraged, look to Jesus to refresh and strengthen you.

May you always need one another—not so much to fill your emptiness, as to help you to know your fullness. May you always need one another, but not out of weakness. Rejoice in and praise on another's uniqueness, for God is the Creator of both male and female and differences in personality.

Be faithful to one another in your thoughts and deeds and, above all, be faithful to Jesus. May you see the marriage bed as an altar of grace and pleasure. May you remember that each time you speak to one another you are talking to someone that God has claimed and told, "You are very special." View and treat your partner as one who was created in the image of God. Remember that you are not to hold your partner captive, but to give them freedom to become all that God wants them to be. May you then embrace and hold one another, but not encircle one another.

May God renew your minds so you look to draw out the best and the potential in one another. Look for things to praise, never take one another for granted, often say, "I love you," and take no notice of little faults. Affirm one another, defer to one another, and believe in your partner. If you have differences that push you apart, may both of you have good sense enough to take the first step back. May the words, "I'm sorry", "You're right," "Forgive me," and "I forgive you" be close at hand.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for your presence here with us and for your blessing upon this marriage.

In Jesus' name

Amen

4.3 Purpose of Marriage

"The Christian view of marriage is not that it is primarily or essentially a binding legal and social contract. The Christian understands marriage as a covenant made under God and in the presence of fellow members of the Christian family. Such a pledge endures, not because of the force of law or the fear of its actions, but because an unconditional covenant has been made. A covenant more solemn, more binding, more permanent than any legal contract."¹⁰

"Marriage is a relationship between man and woman intended by God to be a monogamous relationship, intended to be a permanent bond in which many needs are satisfied—the need to love and be loved, the need for deep friendship, for sharing, for companionship, for sexual satisfaction, for children, the need to escape loneliness. Marriage ought to be a bond of love, reflecting the love Christ

¹⁰ *Cherishable: Love and Marriage*, David Augsburger, Herald Press, 1971, p. 16.

has for His people, a bond of sacrificial love where husband and wife have become one flesh, a unity.”¹¹

Below is a list of the characteristics and purposes of marriage identified in the Bible:

Table 4-1: Purposes of Marriage

#	Purpose/characteristic	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Marriage is honorable among all	Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.	Heb. 13:4
2	Marriage is to avoid loneliness	And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone: I will make him a helper comparable to him.”	Gen. 2:18
3	Marriage for procreation	Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply: fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and every other living thing that moves on the earth.”	Gen. 1:28
4	Causes two to become “one flesh”	Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.	Gen. 2:24
5	Be filled with the fruit of the spirit	And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in Psalm and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.	Eph. 5:18-21
6	Should love each other	This is the Biblical description of love	1 Cor. 13
7	Should be godly and contented		1 Timothy 5:3-16; Heb. 13:5
8	Marriage to avoid sexual immorality	Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.	1 Cor. 7:2
9	Married people should practice mutual sexual submission	Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer: and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.	1 Cor. 7:3-5
10	Marriage should be built on a firm foundation: God	Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man	Matt. 7:24-27

¹¹ *Why Get Married?*, Daniel Freeman, Theology News and Notes of Fuller Theological Seminary, 1973, p. 17.

		<p>who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.</p> <p>But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.</p>	
11	Marriage should be based on the fruit of the spirit	<p>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.</p> <p>And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.</p> <p>If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.</p> <p>Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.</p>	Gal. 5: 22-23
12	Marriage is for people who lack sexual self-control	<p>But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: it is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.</p>	1 Cor. 7:8-9

C.S. Lewis, a famous British philosopher, had some inspiring and insightful things to say about Christian Marriage in his book entitled *Mere Christianity*. Below is an excerpt from chapter 6 of his book entitled *Christian Marriage* which we agree with wholeheartedly:¹²

The Christian idea of marriage is based on Christ's words that a man and wife are to be regarded as a single organism—for that is what the words "one flesh" would be in modern English. And the Christians believe that when He said this He was not expressing a sentiment but stating a fact—just as one is stating a fact when one says that a lock and its key are one mechanism, or that a violin and a bow are one musical instrument. The inventor of the human machine was telling us that its two halves, the male and the female, were made to be combined together in pairs, not simply on the sexual level, but totally combined. The monstrosity of sexual intercourse outside marriage is that those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one kind of union (the sexual) from all the other kinds of union which were intended to go along with it and make up the total union. The Christian attitude does not mean that there is anything wrong about sexual pleasure, any more than about the pleasure of eating. It means that you must not isolate that pleasure and try to get it by itself, any more than you ought to try to

¹² *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis, 1952, pp. 95-103; Collier Books, New York.

get the pleasures of taste without swallowing and digesting, by chewing things and spitting them out again.

As a consequence, Christianity teaches that marriage is for life. There is, of course, a difference here between different Churches: some do not admit divorce at all; some allow it reluctantly in very special cases. It is a great pity that Christians should disagree about such a question; but for an ordinary layman the thing to notice is that Churches all agree with one another about marriage a great deal more than any of them agrees with the outside world. I mean, they all regard divorce as something like cutting up a living body, as a kind of surgical operation. Some of them think the operation so violent that it cannot be done at all; others admit it as a desperate remedy in extreme cases. They are all agreed that it is more like having both your legs cut off than it is like dissolving a business partnership or even deserting a regiment. What they all disagree with is the modern view that it is a simple readjustment of partners, to be made whenever people feel they are no longer in love with one another, or when either of them falls in love with someone else.

Before we consider this modern view in its relation to chastity, we must not forget to consider it in relation to another virtue, namely justice. Justice, as I said before, includes the keeping of promises. Now everyone who has been married in a church has made a public, solemn promise to stick to his (or her) partner till death. The duty of keeping that promise has no special connection with sexual morality: it is in the same position as any other promise. If, as modern people are always telling us, the sexual impulse is just like all our other impulses, then it ought to be treated like all other impulses; and as their indulgence is controlled by our promises, so should its be. If, as I think, it is not like our other impulses, but is morbidly inflamed, then we should be especially careful not to let it lead us into dishonesty.

To this someone may reply that he regarded the promise made in church as a mere formality and never intended to keep it. Whom, then, was he trying to deceive when he made it? God? That was really very unwise. Himself? That was not very much wiser. The bride, or bridegroom, or the "in-laws"? That was treacherous. Most often, I think, the couple (or one of them) hoped to deceive the public. They wanted the respectability that is attached to marriage without intending to pay the price: that is, they were imposters, they cheated. If they are still contented cheats, I have nothing to say to them: who would urge the high and hard duty of chastity on the people who have not yet wished to be merely honest? If they have now come to their senses and want to be honest, their promise, already made, constrains them. And this, you will see, comes under the heading of justice, not that of chastity. If people do not believe in permanent marriage, it is perhaps better that they should live together unmarried than that they should make vows they do not mean to keep. It is true that by living together without marriage they will be guilty (in Christian eyes) of fornication. But one fault is not mended by adding another: unchastity is not improved by adding perjury.

The idea that “being in love” is the only reason for remaining married really leaves no room for marriage as a contract or a promise at all. If love is the whole thing, then the promise can add nothing; and if it adds nothing, then it should not be made. The curious thing is that lovers themselves, while they remain really in love, know this better than those who talk about love. As Chesterton pointed out, those who are in love have a natural inclination to bind themselves by promises. Love songs all over the world are full of vows of eternal constancy. The Christian law is not forcing upon the passion of love something which is foreign to that passion’s own nature: it is demanding that lovers should take seriously something which their passion of itself impels them to do.

And, of course, the promise, made when I am in love and because I am in love, to be true to the beloved as long as I live, commits one to being true even if I cease to be in love. A promise must be about things that I can do, about actions: no one can promise to go on feeling in a certain way. He might as well promise never to have a headache or always to feel hungry. But what, it may be asked, is the use of keeping two people together if they are no longer in love? There are several sound, social reasons: to provide a home for their children, to protect the woman (who has probably sacrificed or damaged her own career by getting married) from being dropped whenever the man is tired of her. But there is also another reason of which I am very sure, though I find it a little hard to explain.

It is hard because so many people cannot be brought to realize that when B is better than C, A may be even better than B. They like thinking in terms of [dichotomies like] good and bad, not of good, better, and best, or bad, worse, and worst. They want to know whether you think patriotism a good thing: if you reply that it is, of course, far better than individual selfishness, but that it is inferior to universal charity and should always give way to universal charity when the two conflict, they think you are being evasive. They ask what you think of dueling. If you reply that it is far better to forgive a man than to fight a duel with him, but that even a duel might be better than a lifelong enmity which expresses itself in secret efforts to “do the man down,” they go away complaining that you would not give them a straight answer. I hope no one will make this mistake about what I am now going to say.

What we call “being in love” is a glorious state, and, in several ways, good for us. It helps to make us generous and courageous, it opens our eyes not only to the beauty of the beloved but to all beauty, and it subordinates (especially at first) our merely animal sexuality; in that sense, love is the great conqueror of lust. No one in his senses would deny that being in love is far better than either common sensuality or cold self-centeredness. But, as I said before, “the most dangerous thing you can do is to take any one impulse of our own nature and set it up as the thing you ought to follow at all costs.” Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. There are many things below it, but there are also things above it. You cannot make it the basis of a whole life. It is a noble feeling, but it is still a feeling. Now no feeling can be relied on to last in its full intensity, or even to last at all. Knowledge can last, principles can last, habits can last [and commitments can last]; but feelings come and go. And in fact, whatever people say the state

called “being in love” usually does not last. If the old fairy-tale ending “they lived happily ever after” is taken to mean “they felt for the next fifty years exactly as they felt the day before they were married,” then it says what probably never has nor ever could be true, and would be highly undesirable if it were. Who could bear to live in that excitement for even five years? What would become of your work, your appetite, your sleep, your friendships? But, of course, ceasing to be “in love” need not mean ceasing to love. Love in this second sense—love as distinct from “being in love” is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by (in Christian marriages) the grace which both parents ask, and receive, from God. They can have this love for each other even at those moments when they do not like each other; as you love yourself even when you do not like yourself. They can retain this love even when each would easily, if they allowed themselves, be “in love” with someone else. “Being in love” first moved them to promise fidelity: this quieter love enables them to keep the promise. **It is on this love that the engine of marriage is run: being in love was the explosion that started it.**

If you disagree with me, of course, you will say, “He knows nothing about it, he is not married.” You may quite possibly be right. But before you say that, make quite sure that you are judging me by what you really know from your own experience and from watching the lives of your friends, and not by ideas you have derived from novels and films. This is not so easy to do as people think. Our experience is coloured through and through by books and plays and the cinema, and it takes patience and skill to disentangle the things we have really learned from life for ourselves.

People get from books the idea that if you have married the right person you may expect to go on “being in love” for ever. As a result, when they find that they are not, they think this proves they have made a mistake and are entitled to a change—not realizing that, when they have changed, the glamor will presently go out of the new love just as it went out of the old one. In this department of life, as in every other, thrills come at the beginning and do not last. The sort of thrill a boy has at the first idea of flying will not go on when he has joined the R.A.F. [Royal Air Force] and is really learning to fly. The thrill you feel on first seeing some delightful place dies away when you really go to live there. Does this mean it would be better not to learn to fly and not to live in the beautiful place? By no means. In both cases, if you go through with it, the dying away of the first thrill will be compensated for by a quieter and more lasting kind of interest. What is more (and I can hardly find words to tell you how important I think this), it is just the people who are ready to submit to the loss of the thrill and settle down to the sober interest, who are then most likely to meet new thrills in some quite different direction. The man who has learned to fly and becomes a good pilot will suddenly discover music; the man who has settled down to live in the beauty spot will discover gardening.

This is, I think, one little part of what Christ meant by saying that a thing will not really live unless it first dies. It is simply no good trying to keep any thrill: that is the very worst thing you can do. Let the thrill go—let it die away—go on through

that period of death into the quieter interest and happiness that follow—and you will find you are living a world of new thrills all the time. But if you decide to make thrills your regular diet and try to prolong them artificially, they will all get weaker and weaker, and fewer and fewer, and you will be a bored, disillusioned old man for the rest of your life. It is because so few people understand this that you find many middle-aged men and women maundering about their lost youth, at the very age when new horizons ought to be appearing and new doors opening all around them. It is much better fun to learn to swim than to go on endlessly (and hopelessly) trying to get back the feeling you had when you first went paddling as a small boy.

Another notion we get from novels and plays is that “falling in love” is something quite irresistible; something that just happens to one, like measles. And because they believe this, some married people throw up the sponge and give in when they find themselves attracted by a new acquaintance. But I am inclined to think that these irresistible passions are much rarer in real life than in books, at any rate when one is grown up. When we meet someone beautiful and clever and sympathetic, of course we ought, in one sense, to admire and love these good qualities. But is it not very largely in our own choice whether this love shall, or shall not, turn into what we call “being in love”? No doubt, if our minds are full of novels and plays and sentimental songs, and our bodies full of alcohol, we shall turn any love we feel into that kind of love: just as if you have a rut in your path all the rainwater will run into that rut, and if you wear blue spectacles everything you see will turn blue. But that will be our own fault.

Before leaving the question of divorce, I should like to distinguish two things which are very often confused. The Christian conception of marriage is one: the other is the quite different question—how far Christians, if they are voters or Member of Parliament, ought to try to force their views of marriage on the rest of the community by embodying them in the divorce laws. A great many people seem to think that if you are a Christian yourself you should try to make divorce difficult for every one. I do not think that. At least I know I should be very angry if the Mohammedans tried to prevent the rest of us from drinking wine. My own view is that the Churches should frankly recognize that the majority of the British people are not Christians and, therefore, cannot be expected to live Christian lives. There ought to be two distinct kinds of marriage: one governed by the State with rules enforced on all citizens, the other governed by the Church with rules enforced by her on her own members. The distinction ought to be quite sharp, so that a man knows which couples are married in a Christian sense and which are not.

So much for the Christian doctrine about the permanence of marriage. Something else, even more unpopular, remains to be dealt with. Christian wives promise to obey their husbands. In Christian marriage the man is said to be the “head.” Two questions obviously arise here. (1) Why should there be a head at all—why not equality? (2) Why should it be the man?

- (1) *The need for some head follows from the idea that marriage is permanent. Of course, as long as the husband and wife are agreed, no question of a head need arise; and we may hope that this will be the normal state of affairs in a Christian marriage. But when there is a real disagreement, what is to happen? Talk it over, of course; but I am assuming they have done that and still failed to reach agreement. What do they do next? They cannot decide by majority vote, for in a council of two there can be no majority. Surely, only one or the other of two things can happen: either they must separate and go their own ways or else one or other of them must have a casting vote. If marriage is permanent, one or other party must, in the last resort, have the power of deciding the family policy. **You cannot have a permanent association without a constitution. [HENCE THIS FAMILY CONSTITUTION!]***
- (2) *If there must be a head, why the man? Well, firstly, is there any very serious wish that it should be the woman? As I have said, I am not married myself, but as far as I can see, even a woman who wants to be the head of her own house does not usually admire the same state of things when she finds it going on next door. She is much more likely to say “Poor Mr. X! Why he allows that appalling woman to boss him about the way she does is more than I can imagine.” I do not think she is even very flattered if anyone mentions the fact of her own “headship.” There must be something unnatural about the rule of wives over husbands, because the wives themselves are half ashamed of it and despise the husbands whom they rule. But there is also another reason; and here I speak quite frankly as a bachelor, because it is a reason you can see from outside even better than from inside. The relations of the family to the outer world—what might be called its foreign policy—must depend, in the last resort, upon the man, because he always ought to be, and usually is, much more just to the outsiders. A woman is primarily fighting for her own children and husband against the rest of the world. Naturally, almost, in a sense, rightly, their claims override, for her, all other claims. She is the special trustee of their interests. The function of the husband is to see that this natural preference of hers is not given its head. He has the last word in order to protect other people from the intense family patriotism of the wife. If anyone doubts this, let me ask a simple question. If your dog has bitten the child next door, or if your child has hurt the dog next door, which would you sooner have to deal with, the master of that house or the mistress? Or, if you are a married woman, let me ask you this question. Much of you admire your husband, would you not say that his chief failing is his tendency not to stick up for his rights and yours against the neighbours as vigorously as you would like? A bit of an Appeaser?*

4.4 Role of Husbands

The Bible is the ultimate authority on the role of the husband. Below is a summary of the critical aspects of that role:

Table 4-2: Role of Husbands

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Is head of the wife	For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.	Eph. 5:23-24
2	Love his wife	Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.	Eph. 5:25-29; Col. 3:19
3	Give honor to wife	Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that our prayers may not be hindered.	1 Pet. 3:7
4	Praise his wife	Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also, and he praises her.	Prov. 31:28
5	Should not commit adultery	Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away. For jealousy is a husband's fury; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will accept no recompense, nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.	Prov. 6:32-35; Prov. 7:1-27
6	Should avoid seductresses, harlots, adultery, and evil women	To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids. For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent.	Prov. 6:24-29

In Colossians 3:19, Paul tells the husband to love his wife (Eph. 5:25), while Peter tells the husband to dwell together with his wife (1 Pet. 3:7). The husband cannot live with his wife as Peter says unless he loves her in the way Paul means. The love that the husband is commanded to have for the wife is not primarily sexual or emotional (though both of those concepts are involved); it is a love that loves in spite of the response (or lack of it) in the one loved. It is the kind of love that God has for the world (John 3:16) and is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). A husband can only love his wife properly if he is a Christian and under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The two responsibilities the husband has in the family are to dwell with his wife according to knowledge and to render to his wife the honor that is due her because she is his wife. To “dwell together” with his wife means that the husband must take his wife into every aspect of his life. There are to be no areas of his life where there are signs that say, “Private, husband only—wife keep out.”

The husband is to perform his two duties for a spiritual purpose: “that your prayers not be hindered.” The man who is not taking his wife into every aspect of his life and rendering to her the honor that is due her because she is his wife cannot communicate with her in the way that God intended; hence, he cannot communicate with God either. To make sure that the channel of communication with God is open, the husband must make sure that the channel of communication with his wife is open. Only in this way can he truly love his wife as God intended and manifest his headship properly.

4.4.1 How Can a Husband Be His Wife’s Best Friend?¹³

Many people can be your friends, and some can be close friends. Outside of your personal relationship to Jesus Christ, your best friend should be your spouse. That takes time to develop.

A husband does not need a wife who acts like a sister, or a daughter, or (worse yet!) a mother—he needs a wife who becomes his *best friend*!

A wife does not need a father to overprotect her and treat her like his little girl; she also does not need a brother to compete with her or a son to take care of as a mother would. She needs a husband who will become her *best friend*!

Most men don’t know where to begin, much less put any effort into it. Society expects women to have other woman as their best friends, yet rarely does the husband play that role. Husbands find it difficult to develop a close and intimate friendship with their wives because they don’t understand their wives.

It takes a sensitive husband who cares about being a friend to his wife to become the friend that his wife really needs.

The Bible gives us two basic principles to the husband who wants to become his wife’s best friend:

- Love your wife!
- Honor your wife!

The primary effect upon a wife’s sense of worth is the attitude and response of her husband. If he loves and honors her the way the Bible teaches, then they will become best friends and both will have a positive, healthy self-image.

4.4.2 What Does “Love Your Wife” Mean?

Ephesians 5:25 says: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

¹³ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 127-142.

Verses 28-30 adds: “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body.

Love means different things to different people. Intimate close friendships are built on expressions and acts of true love. What one person sees as love is not what the other person sees at all.

That is why husbands in particular have such a struggle in understanding. They do not respond to their wives with the kind of love they need, but more with the kind of love men want and understand. That is often sexual and physical. Wives need that also, but find it hard to accept when other factors are missing.

1. It means that, next to Jesus, she’s number one in your life.

Nothing equals the impact of this one thing upon a wife. To become her best friend, the husband must make her a priority in his life. That means several things.

- (1) ***She comes before your parents!*** Ephesians 5:31 says: “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.”

If you learned that your wife and your mother were involved in car accidents at the same time in different parts of the city, to whom would you go first? Many husbands have answered such a question, “My mother,” without thinking of what implications that gives to their wives and their marriages. We all have heard stories of how wives are still attached to their mothers, but we have found that men often are more attached to their mothers. They feel, and rightly so, a debt of gratitude and responsibility to their mothers. But, when that becomes more important than their commitment to their wives, trouble is bound to occur!

Interestingly, God told the man to “leave his father and mother.” Though we expect the same application to the wife, it is never so stated in the scriptures. The implication is that husbands, not wives, have the basic problem of dependence upon parents.

- (2) ***She is never replaced by any other woman!*** If your wife is your number one priority, then no other woman takes her place. It’s as simple as that!
- (3) ***She comes before your children!*** Do you love your wife more than your children? We often face that question whether we realize it or not. Who gets the attention? Who gets kissed first? With whom does the husband spend more time? Does he ever agree with the children instead of the wife? Do they conflict over what should be done or allowed? There are many situations that occur in the average family each week that test this commitment of the husband and his wife.

Proving that the wife is first should not be necessary, but one argument deals with the Bible’s teaching about the submission and obedience of children to *both* father and mother. Prov. 1:8 says:

Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.

2. It means that the husband will give to his wife as much as he would give to himself.

Loving your wife according to Ephesians 5:28-29 is like loving yourself. Verse 33 says, "...Let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself..."

Many men are very selfish by ignoring the needs of their wives. One wife told us that she would like regular physical examinations by a doctor, but her husband tells her it really isn't necessary even though he has a regular checkup.

Loving your wife means that you care about her like you do yourself. Does she need attention? Have you looked at her wardrobe lately? Does she get some time to herself like you want? Have you helped her this past week?

3. It means you never resent her presence or opinions.

Husbands will not develop close, intimate friendships with their wives when they keep ignoring their opinions or resent their insights into people and situations. Colossians 3:19 tells husbands to "love your wives, and do not be embittered against them." One sure way to put up a barrier in your relationship to your wife is to criticize her viewpoint and make her look or feel stupid in the presence of others.

4. It means you don't make her live in fear.

If you really love your wife and are her best friend, then you never give her a reason to be afraid of you, your judgments, or your actions.

First John 4:18 says:

There is no fear in love; but perfect [mature] love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfect in love.

How can spouses be best friends if there is fear? That's the opposite of trust which builds a good friendship. Abraham was called "the friend of God" (James 2:23) because he trusted God to fulfill His promises to him even when his circumstances seemed otherwise. Mutual trust is necessary to build a close friendship.

5. It means that you are sensitive to her needs.

First John 3:16-18 states:

We know love this, that he laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Love is known and seen by its concern for someone's needs. In order to build a close friendship with your wife, you must care about her needs. One way of doing this is asking her what she needs today and encouraging her to express those needs.

6. It means that you are willing to sacrifice your own interests in her behalf.

This is the heart of what it means to love your wife. And, loving her is essential to making her your best friend. First John 4:9-11 tells us of the sacrificial nature of God's love:

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

God demonstrated His love to us when He sent His Son to die for our sin. What a sacrifice! Philippians 2:3-4 speaks about such unselfish, sacrificial love when it says:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Husbands who want their wives to become their best friends must be concerned about their wives' interests rather than their own. Going shopping with your wife doesn't thrill most men, but those who do it discover that friendship with their wives increases. She responds when you get excited about being with her in something she really enjoys doing.

When a husband chooses to be with his wife doing nothing he enjoys rather than being with others doing what he does enjoy, that's sacrifice. Furthermore, it makes your wife desire your friendship. You become special to her when such commitment continues to be demonstrated to her.

4.4.3 What Does It Mean to "Honor Your Wife"?

We said earlier that two things are necessary to become best friends with your wife: love her and honor her. But how do you honor your wife? What does that mean?

1. It means you understand her.

First Peter 3:7 puts it this way:

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

A part of the "understanding way" involves listening to her and talking with her. Wives frequently share in counseling sessions how little their husbands listen or talk to them. How can your wife become your best friend if you never listen or talk to her?

It's easy to grow apart. You start assuming a lot of things and taking each other for granted. Honoring your wife means you want to understand her and are willing to listen and talk.

2. It means you don't use your position or physical strength to dominate or suppress her.

Peter refers to the wife as "a weaker vessel." Most wives (not all) are physically weaker than their husbands. This "physical edge" is never to be used by the husband against his wife. When he does, the friendship is hurt and the honor is missing.

Some husbands use the Bible's teaching about the wife's submission to her husband as a tool to manipulate and abuse their wives. The Bible warns husbands about this in 1 Peter 3:7, warning them that their prayer life will be totally ineffective if they do not honor their wives as "a weaker vessel."

3. *It means you relate to her as a spiritual partner in ministry for the Lord.*

When 1 Peter 3:7 said "grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life," it was speaking of spiritual partnership. Close friendships among Christian husbands and wives often are hindered by the failure of the spouses to be spiritual partners.

Husbands must recognize the spiritual position of their wives—"fellow-heirs." There is an equality among believers that must be understood between a Christian husband and wife. There needs to be mutual respect and a realization that in addition to being spouses, we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

4. *It means you always speak well of her in the presence of others.*

Becoming your wife's best friend requires a certain defense and protection of her when she's not around. What you say about her reveals the depth of your friendship.

A good husband never allows his wife to be criticized by others. He constantly defends her and speaks well of her in public as well as in private.

Prov. 31:28 says of the "excellent wife": "Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her..."

5. *It means you understand your need of her as a companion and friend.*

Nothing so honors a wife as a husband's desire for her intimate friendship. When she becomes convinced of that fact, they will easily become best friends.

Genesis 2:18 reveals that this was the basic purpose of marriage:

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.'

It was God who told Adam that he needed a "helper." Husbands should recognize the source behind the instruction about needing a wife. God knows more about our needs than we do. When a wife senses that her husband really wants to be her best friend, she will be greatly honored.

6. *It means that you see her as a great blessing to you—a gift from God.*

Honoring your wife involves a proper attitude toward her. Is she a blessing to you? Do you see her as a special and wonderful gift from God to you? Prov. 12:4 says: "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband..." Prov. 18:22 adds: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord."

Do you see your wife as "a good thing"? A man may destroy all hope of being his wife's best friend simply because of his attitude toward her. He does not honor her, but constantly puts her down by simple neglect or active criticism. The wife becomes a "burden" instead of a "blessing."

4.5 Role of Wives

The Bible is the ultimate authority on the role of the wife. Below is a summary of the critical aspects of that role:

Table 4-3: Role of Wives

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Is submissive to husband	Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.	Eph. 5:22-25
2	Is a help-meet	And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone: I will make him a helper comparable to him."	Gen. 2:18
3	Respects her husband.		Eph 5:33
4	Must be wise, resourceful, and frugal		Prov. 31:10-31
5	Shall not depart from her husband	Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.	1 Cor. 7:10
6	Is a gentle and quiet person of the heart	Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.	1 Peter 3:3-6
7	Is glorified by having long hair	But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering.	1 Cor. 11:15
8	Cares about pleasing her husband	There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband.	1 Cor. 7:34
9	Is bound to her husband	A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.	1 Cor. 7:39
10	A gracious woman retains honor	A gracious woman retains honor.	Prov. 11:16
11	Excellent wife is a crown of her husband	An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones.	Prov. 12:4
12	Do not be contentious	It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.	Prov. 25:24

You know, it's amazing how our society has changed in its perception of a woman and her role. And I don't mean that it has changed over the several thousand years since Proverbs 31 was written, but it seems to me that it began changing in about 1960. It seems to me, at least in my own life time, there was a portion of my life in which our society could at least understand and affirm the pattern of an excellent wife given in Proverbs 31. But since about 1960, our society has moved so far from these principles that it may seem almost ludicrous to imagine a contemporary fitting in to the mold of the standards given here in Proverbs 31.

What kind of a woman does our society honor? Who is the honored woman of today? Who is the prototype woman of the eighties? What is the modern super-woman like? If our society and our culture could design a woman, what would that woman be like?

Well let me see if I can't pull it together for you. She would work at a job, build her own career, demand and get equal pay with men. She would refuse to submit to her husband, demanding equality with him in everything. She would have an affair or two or three, a divorce or two or three, an abortion or two. She would definitely exercise her independence. She would make sure that she was imminently fulfilled herself. She would rely on her own resources. She would not want her husband or children to threaten her personal goals. She would have her own bank account. She would hire a maid or cleaning service. She would eat out at least 50 percent of the time with her family or without. She would make cold cereal and coffee the standard breakfast fare for the family and quick-frozen meals usual dinner fare, and she would certainly expect her husband to do half the housework. She would be tanned, coiffured, aerobicized, bulging with muscle. She would be shopping to keep up with the fashion trends and make sure she could compete in the attention getting contest. She would put her children in a day-care center, making sure that each one also had a TV in his or her room so that when they were home they wouldn't interrupt her routine. She would be opinionated. She would demand to be heard from and eager to fulfill all of her personal ambition. The world would applaud her and she wouldn't be able to stay married or happy and her kids would probably be into drugs. But she would be the woman of the eighties. And she is a million miles from the woman of God described in Proverbs 31.

Do you understand that the book of Proverbs is a collection of wisdom that fathers and mothers were to give to their children? Do you understand that it was common in a Jewish family for a father to teach his sons the truths of this book? And not only a father, but a mother for on several occasions it says, "*Not to forsake the instruction of your mother.*" This was basically the composite practical manual for living that Jewish parents taught their children.

Now one of the very most important things that children needed to learn was directed at the young boys. And that was how to select the right woman. In fact, earlier on in the book of Proverbs young men are warned against the wrong kind of woman, the adulteress who flatters with her lips, the adulteress who forsakes her own husband, breaks covenant and entertains a union with someone else, the adulteress whose lips drip honey but who brings about death and destruction, the smooth-tongued adulteress who hunts for the precious life to make him her prey. Proverbs warns against the noisy woman, the quarrelsome woman, the rebellious woman, the foolish woman. And the sons of Israel were to be warned to stay away from and avoid all such women.

In chapter 12 of Proverbs and verse 4 it says, "*An excellent wife is the crown of her husband but she who shames him is as rotten as in his bones.*" Find an excellent wife, stay away from anything less. And so the warnings have been given. In chapter 19 and verse 14 there comes a hopeful truth. It says,

"A prudent wife is from the Lord, a wise wife, a virtuous wife, a godly wife is a gift from God." So all the way through this marvelous book of wisdom there is instruction about what kind of woman to avoid and to pursue the excellent woman, the excellent wife who is a gift from God.

It's interesting to me that the final chapter of Proverbs is chapter 31, that all the instruction given sort of climaxes at this point. And what you have in chapter 31 is the final lesson from a parent to a child. In this case, from a mother to her son. Verse 1 tells us that these are the words of King Lemuel, he wrote them down, but they are the oracle which his mother taught him. Here we have an unknown mother, we don't know anything about King Lemuel, this is the only time his name is ever mentioned. We don't know anything about his mother but here is a Jewish mother who taught her son how to pick a woman. And a lot of other very important things as well. And this is her wisdom given to him.

In verse 2, "*What, O my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows?*" In other words, what do I say to you? How do I instruct you? What do I tell you? The first thing I tell you is don't get involved in sexual immorality, do not give your strength to women. That's what that means. Don't get involved in living in sexual misconduct.

Then on down to verse 7 and following even, down to verse 9, she says, "*Stay away from drunkenness, strong drink. Take care of hurting people. Defend those who can't defend themselves. Stand by the oppressed. Support the needy and deal justly with all people.*" And gives him a wide range of practical truth. But then she comes to the real issue on her heart which he passes on to us. "*Most of all, my son, find a good wife. With her you will spend your life, she will determine your earthly accomplishments and set the perimeters of your living and your influence. Find a good wife.*" And from verse 10 to 31 such a wife is described.

The woman described here is of priceless value. She has physical strength, mental strength, moral strength and spiritual strength. Above all she loves God deeply and reverently. She is characterized in this section six ways, and I'll point them out to you as we just look together at the Scripture...six ways. Her character as a wife, her devotion as a homemaker, her generosity as a neighbor, her influence as a teacher, her effectiveness as a mother and her excellence as a person...the sum of all of that makes the excellent wife. And I might add that this is no woman in particular but this is the woman that every woman should seek to emulate. She is rare, look at verse 10, an excellent wife...by the way, the word excellent in Hebrew means force, a woman of force, a woman of substance, a woman of strength would be another way to characterize her. It's excellent in the sense of her strength spiritually, morally, mentally, physically. She is a woman of substances. She is a woman who has made a dent in society. She is one who makes a difference. There's a force about her life. This kind of wife, he says, who can find? Very rare. Hard to find this kind of woman.

By the way, chapter 20 says in verse 6, "*Who can find a trustworthy man?*" I just want to put that in because I don't want you to think that this thing is out of balance. It's just as hard to find a trustworthy man at the level of God's standard of character. That was chapter 20 verse 6.

Typically men seek a wife for all the wrong reasons, all of them. Looks, accomplishment, style, success, money, education, all the wrong reasons. They should seek a woman for virtue, strength of character, spiritual excellence, internal godliness, those are the right reasons. This kind of woman is a woman of force. She makes a difference. She leaves a mark. And verse 10 says her worth is far above jewels. Some would translate that word rubies, some would translate it pearls, the Septuagint translates it precious stones. In other words, she is more valuable than all earthly things which are valuable. She is a rare fortune, a rare find, a woman of force.

What are her qualities, this rare woman? First of all, let's look at her character as a wife, verse 11. And without saying anything specifically about her it talks about her husband to start with. "*The heart of her husband trusts in her.*" Now obviously the first thing we note about her character as a wife is that she can be trusted. She is trustworthy. This is the kind of woman who allows her husband to do her work away from home, who allows her husband to go away for perhaps an extended time. And to do all of that in absolute confidence in her integrity and her discretion and her wisdom and her care for all of his interests. The implication here is that there's a substantial home to be cared for and substantial resources of which she is a steward. But he trusts her. He trusts her. The heart of her husband trusts in her. She has proven to be trustworthy. She is virtuous to the point where he has no jealousy, he has no fear, he has no suspicion, he has no anxiety. He knows that his care is his concern, his comfort is her passion, his burdens are hers to relieve, his being at ease is her high priority and his house has become the home of his heart because he trusts in the one who leads that household, his wife. Integrity, discretion, wisdom, faithfulness, trustworthiness, that's what fills the husband of this woman so that he will have no lack of gain, no lack of gain.

In other words, she's not going to cause him to lose what he's working so hard to gain. She is a very careful steward of everything that he has. Let me tell you, this sees the woman in the role of the oikodespotes to use Paul's word used in 1 Timothy 5 and Titus 1, she's the ruler of the house. She manages the assets. She coordinates the activities. She is the steward of all of that which he has provided. And he has no lack of gain because of her stewardship, her management, her wisdom, her care. And that frees him to be everything that he can be in the pursuit of bread for that family and also freedom from anxiety because he knows whatever he brings in she cares for as treasure. Definitely she is in charge of domestic matters, using and accounting for the resources of the home so he is free to give himself to the work. She helps him to profit. She devotes herself to the care of his earnings. She is careful. She is wise. She is scrupulous. And he can leave home and never give it a thought. He can give his whole heart to that which compels him in his profession, his business, his work and know that all is cared for. Her character as a wife, she is totally trustworthy, she is a steward of everything that he provides for her. She is definitely on the receiving end of his provision and she cares for it as a precious treasure.

Personally, verse 12, she does him good and not evil. She does him good and not evil. She always does what's best for him. She pursues his best interests. She strengthens him. She builds him up. She encourages him. She sees it as her role to do good to this man. He is providing for her and for all those in her care in that home, children and household servants and workers if indeed this would include a farm. And he in providing all of that is worthy of her best. She does him good. She never takes things from him, not his money, his possessions, his resources, or his reputation. She never speaks evil of him so that those in the home would learn to distrust him because of her testimony of his absence of character. She does him good not evil. She does everything to build him up. And then it adds most interestingly this note, all the days of her life. Isn't that interesting? All the days of her life.

In other words, her love for him is based upon such high spiritual principles that it doesn't fluctuate with the circumstances of life. When you get married you no doubt have affirmed the vow that you will live together in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want. And that's a vow that this woman kept. Good times, bad times, weak times, strong times, sick times, well times, happy times, sad times, plentiful times, empty times, all times, all her life she did him good. Like Sarah in 1 Peter 3:6, she serves him as lord. She reveals her virtue by her consistent service on his behalf. Her love is so deep it has a purity and a power and a devotion that never ever changes. His comfort, his success, his reputation, his joy, his fulfillment, his blessing are her delight, utterly

unselfish. To live for him is her constant happiness and she knows she'll reap the benefit. Never unkind, always submissive in the most gracious way.

And this is the essence of what Paul said when writing to Titus, Titus 2:4 when he said, "*Wives, love your husbands. Do them good all your life, manage properly that which is in your care so that they have no need of gain.*" The benefit to the husband is expressed in verse 23, "*Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.*" You know what that means? He's risen to the very top of the esteem of the people in the profession he has chosen in life because he is free to do so because of the dutiful wife. She creates a world for him in which he can be everything that God would want him to be. She's so faithful to the duties of her love that he is free to be all that he can be as a man. He is known in the gates. He is a well-known man. The implication there is that he is esteemed, he is honored, he is respected. And that is because she has provided freedom from the things which tie him down and bind him so that he can be everything...everything that he would desire to be. That's her character as a wife. Trustworthy, doing him good all the days of her life, seeing to it that her life is spent to see that he can be everything God would want him to be. That's an excellent woman.

The underlying virtue there is selflessness, that's the underlying virtue. She is consumed with him and offers herself in loving service to fulfill that desire.

Secondly, not only her character as a wife makes her excellent but her devotion as a homemaker. Now being a homemaker is not a popular thing today. I was reading this week Vivian Gornick who is a professor at the University of Illinois who said, quote: "*Being a housewife is an illegitimate profession.*" It's replaced prostitution, in her mind. Being a housewife is an illegitimate profession. Phyllis Schlafley said, "*The most cruel and damaging sexual harassment taking place today is the harassment by feminists and their federal government allies against the role of motherhood and the role of the dependent wife,*" end quote. But in God's economy being a homemaker is an exalted role.

The sphere of the woman's duty is the home. She is the ruler of the house, the *oikodespotes*, Titus 2:5. And as we start in to looking at this in verse 13 we will see the beauty of her role there unfold. Notice verse 13. First of all, "*She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight. She expresses her ability with her crafts,*" in this case making clothing, blankets, perhaps even curtains to cover the open spaces in the home that let the air and the light in. She goes after wool. She looks for flax. The idea being she searches for the quality product. She brings home the wool, wool used for clothing that would be in the cold times. Flax used for linen which would be worn in warmer times and would be used for the specially beautiful clothing that they would wear at any season. She finds the best she can, brings it back with the purpose of using her hands to turn it into clothing. You see, her submission and her godliness, her virtue, her relation to her husband do not make her into a religious recluse, pretending to be spiritual when really being irresponsible. She is not defining laziness as spirituality. She is not shirking the duties of the home. In fact there's no place in this woman's life for self-indulgence. There's no place for laziness. There's no place for inactivity. She is full of energy. She is full of activity. She searches out the raw materials in order that she might work with her hands. It says she might work with her hands in delight.

And that's the key. You see, she loves the family and she loves her husband and it's the love of her heart that puts delight in her work. If she felt like the reason for her to live was to fulfill herself, everything she had to do for someone else she'd hate. But because she knows her reason to be is to give herself for the joy of those she loves, the delight of her heart becomes the delight of her hands. The Seriac version translates that her hands are active after the pleasure of her heart. No complaint.

There's joy in the most menial task because the motive is love and the love motive inside pushes delight into the hands. Self-denial is clearly behind the scenes. She's not concerned about her own pleasure, she's concerned about the joy and delight of her family which gives her joy and delight because she is consumed with love for them, sacrificial. She makes their clothes and all they need and does so with joy.

Proverbs 31:14 says, "*She is like merchant ships, she brings her food from afar.*" She goes great distances to get food. And she didn't hop on the freeway, she walked. And she would walk in order to get the best food at the best price in order to introduce variety in to the family, something beyond the local fare which could be purchased in her own vicinity. She was obviously engaged in good planning and good management. She was a faithful steward of her husband's gain and she would go as far as she needed to go to get what she needed for her family. Not just to provide food but to provide the variety and the quality of food that would truly express the love and delight of her heart. She wasn't just slapping whatever she had down and throwing it in front of them. She was involved in the process of going as far as she had to go to get what she thought they would enjoy.

Proverbs 31:15 says, "*She rises also while it is still night and gives food to her household and portions to her maidens.*" Typically in the east a lamp is always burning in the house, a little terra cotta lamp with oil in it and a little wick floating in the oil. And, of course, the wick would only burn as long as the oil was there. Because most often they went to sleep when the sun went down, the oil would not last all night and it was always the wife's responsibility to get up sometime after midnight and put more oil in the lamp that the family might sleep. Typically, the woman would rise some time after midnight, put oil in the lamp, keep it lit and then begin to do the work that was required to feed the family that day. She had to grind the corn. She had to prepare all the day's meals. There were no fast food places. There was nowhere to go. You fed your family by the work of your hand and the sweat of your brow. It was hot in that part of the world for much of the year, still is, and the cool of the night was a wonderful time...the quiet of the night. But it was still a major sacrifice. So she would grind the corn and do whatever she needed to do in order that when the family awoke a few hours later there would be food for them all. That was her dedication, her commitment. Her household could enjoy the comfort while she made the sacrifice for their greater enjoyment. You see, she was much more concerned with the blessing and joy of the people she loved than with her own indulgence.

And then it says, and I love this thought, "*and portions to her maidens.*" The word "portions" is quite interesting. It probably means portions of work, not portions of food. Portions is tasks in the Septuagint. The word used is *erga* in Greek. It is translated labor in Exodus 5:14. So what she did was get up in the middle of the night and start her own work and the maidens who were servants in the household also got up and she apportioned to them their tasks so that everybody was busy getting ready for the family and the household. Wonderful, consumed with the needs of others, doing it with delight, she is every bit the manager of the household.

To depreciate the role of a homemaker is pretty foolish. The breadth of the role of homemaker is amazing. To be able to be an economist, a steward of funds and resources, to be able to analyze all the products available, to be strong enough and well-planned enough to make the right moves at the right time to acquire the right things, to be fully a wife to your husband and a tender and loving mother to all of your children, to apportion all the responsibilities to everybody who was a part of the labor force, that takes some woman. People say, "*Well, you know, women have administrative skills, why should they get locked up in a house?*" They don't understand. It can be the fullest and most wonderful

expression of womanhood. To produce this kind of woman is a major task by God's grace, a tremendous privilege.

Proverbs 31:16 takes us even further into the enterprise woman. She considers a field and buys it, from her earnings she plants a vineyard. There's a field, perhaps adjacent to the property that the family owns. She feels it's at a right price and would be beneficial to the family. She buys it. There's a certain amount of independence in that. It doesn't say her husband bought it, she bought it. She made the decision that it was wise. She pursued that option. You say, "Well, now wait a minute, she bought it and she also from her earnings bought it and planted a vineyard in it." That's right. "Well where did she get the money? Did she have a job on the side?" Look at verse 24. "She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies belts or girdles, cloth cummerbands that were used to wrap up the robes worn by folks in those days and she sold them to the tradesmen." The word tradesmen literally is Canaanites...i.e. the Phoenicians, the sailors of the ancient world who carried the goods all around. She had a little cottage industry going. She made things with her hands, made a little money. She never let that extra money get into the operational cash flow, she kept it set apart and when she saw a judicious moment to purchase a field to the benefit of the family, she purchased it, planted the vineyard, she did that on her own. Wise steward, careful money manager, good analyst. This is some woman.

She makes wise investments to assist her husband. She labors in the home to help. She takes the money that she has earned on her own making those things and invests that in a long-term investment for the benefit of her family and her children and her grandchildren. She buys land and plants a vineyard. A wise woman.

Proverbs 31:17 says she girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong. The first statement, she girds herself with strength, expresses the energy or the force of this woman of force. It could be translated strength is wrapped around her, she's a strong woman, strongly disciplined, strong in terms of commitment to the family, strong in love to her husband. I mean, she's a strong woman. And then even her arms are strong, not because she goes to the gym. Her arms are strong because of the effort exerted in the daily tasks. Her strength is a result of effort. Her strength is a result of becoming a blessing to her family...totally selfless. This is what comes pouring through this passage, her humility, her selflessness, her love, the joy and delight of everything she does because she's lost in the love of her household.

And Proverbs 31:18 says she senses that her gain is good. In other words, when she gets the field and she plants the vineyard and the family prospers, she senses that it's good. In other words, as the Septuagint says she makes a good profit. She sees that it's good for the family. She sees that it's beneficial. It has welfare provision for them, it's for their well being. And so that motivates her. She's motivated by benefiting others. This is the woman of God's design. She is not motivated by self-fulfillment, self-esteem, self-glory, self-adulation. She is totally motivated by seeing others benefited. That's the godly woman. Spurred on, not by ego but by the fact that she sees what she does bringing good to others. So as a result, Proverbs 31:18 says, "*her lamp does not go out at night.*" She is so fulfilled in the benefit that's coming to others that it spurs her to work harder and harder and harder.

Hey, it's amazing what people will do to indulge themselves. It's also frightening what people will not do to benefit others. Her lamp goes not out at night, what does that mean? Because she is so pleased with the benefit of her work she finds work for the hours of darkness, motivated totally by the goodness and the benefit of the work. She is utterly unselfish. What a woman!

And Proverbs 31:19 says, in those nights perhaps when the lamp didn't go out, she stretches out her hands to the distaff and her hands grasp the spindle. Elements of spinning, the distaff and the spindle, turning the wool and the flax into thread. And then taking the thread and turning it into cloth. Then taking the cloth and cutting it into pattern, then sewing it into garments to clothe the family. Spinning the wool, spinning the flax, making the scarlet, making the linen, making the purple garments. Now all of it for someone else to be blessed and encouraged.

Proverbs 31:21 follows then, skipping over verse 20 for a moment, she's not afraid of the snow for her household. Did you know it snows in Jerusalem maybe three out of five years? It snows there. And even when it doesn't snow in the winter it can be very cold because it's so high. Read 2 Samuel 23 around verse 20, it talks about the snow. But she's planned for that. You know, they didn't have heaters in their homes. The way they heated a room was with a pan of hot coals. They would take that pan of hot coals and sit it on the floor. And then they would huddle together in the warmth of the blankets. But they needed not only warm blankets for sleep but warm garments because it was cold sometimes during the day, often that cold season could last a long time. But she had no fear for that. She wasn't afraid of the snow for her household. Look at this. *"For all her household are clothed with scarlet."*

Why doesn't it say they were clothed with wool? Well we assume it was wool because that's the thing that would keep them warm. The scarlet is added to show you that this woman has a touch of class. Normally the wool wouldn't need to be colored or dyed but she dyed it. She dyed it deep red in color because that was the color of elegance, still is. Because it was beautiful, it was still dark and dark clothes tend to keep the heat in better. But it was scarlet because there was something more beautiful, more dignified in the warmth and the beauty of that color. So she made them not just functional but she made them lovely as well. And she planned far enough ahead so that she didn't worry at all when the cold came because everything was ready. Remarkable woman.

Proverbs 31:22 adds something. She makes coverings for herself. Now what that literally means is coverlets...pillows, mattresses, bedding. She made bedding. Now remember, she has to make all this. She adorned all their beds with comfort and beauty, providing for them the comfort that they would enjoy. And again, behind the scene is this love, this devotion, this unselfishness, this humility that is at the heart of the excellent wife. You say, "Yeah, but, I mean, this woman is up all night, this woman has taken trips all over the place to get stuff, she is working her head off, planting a vineyard. I mean, I'll bet she is a tacky looking gal. I mean, I'm sure she goes around in a terry- cloth bathrobe with threads hanging everywhere and coils in her hair. I mean, this is...this woman...I mean, you know, you can see her husband coming home and saying...Hey, you keep a nice house but do you ever look seedy, I mean, can't you do something about it?"

Not this woman. She's appreciative of the beauty with which God has adorned her. She's appreciative of the love of her husband and wants to show him how much she cares and how much she wants to present herself to him in the beauty that God has given her. So Proverbs 31:22 says her clothing are fine linen and purple. That's lovely. Not silk and gold and pearls and etc. Just linen, not particularly expensive, but the best because she went to find the best flax and did the best weaving she could do. And purple because the beauty of the color would enhance her own beauty. She takes care of herself. She adorns the beauty of her own creation. She avoids the extreme of ostentatious display and opts out for graceful simplicity. It's not overdone. She knows that a woman's true adornment, as Paul said in 1 Timothy and Peter in 1 Peter 3, a woman's true adornment is her purity, her chaste character, her virtue, her godliness, her inner beauty. She seeks to honor God, to honor her family, to honor her husband.

And that does not preclude her own loveliness for that brings delight and joy to everyone. So she manages it all, for her family, even for herself and has enough time, Proverbs 31:24 says as we noted, to make some things to sell to bring a little extra in so that a field can be added to the estate, a vineyard planted and the family enriched. What a woman.

We skipped Proverbs 31:20 so let's go back and note the third thing about her, her generosity as a neighbor. Verse 20 says she extends her hand to the poor and she stretches out her hands to the needy. Of course we would expect this, wouldn't we? This is an excellent woman. And as devoted and loving as she is toward her family, so loving is she toward those outside her family. She demonstrates not only a special devotion to her home but compassion on all those who don't have the privilege of being in her home or a home like her home...the poor, the unfortunate. And verse 20 says she extends her hand to the poor, we might assume that it means she touches them, she's personally involved, she's intimately involved. No doubt making clothes for them and making sure they're warm and fed. But we might assume when it says she extends her hand to the poor that she's responding to those poor who come to her, the next phrase says she stretches out her hands to the needy, which implies that she reaches out to touch the ones who don't come near her. She is touched and she is touching. She'll not just touch those who come close but she reaches out to those who stay away with the idea of feeding them and clothing them and enriching their life through her resources.

She is very much the model and the example for Dorcas who it says in Acts 9:36 was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. And you remember when she died the widows stood beside Peter weeping and showing all the tunics and garments Dorcas used to make while she was with them. She made all these clothes for poor people and widows and that's the godly virtuous woman. She stretches her hands to the needy. Her generosity as a neighbor. She is engulfed in her family but she's not myopic. That's not all she sees in the world. It's not overdone. It's not isolationism. She cares about others, too.

That brings us to the fourth description of her, her influence as a teacher which comes starting in Proverbs 31:25 and then in verse 26 and we start in verse 25 because teaching starts with character. Strength and dignity are her clothing. She is garmented by strength and dignity. And she smiles at the future. Strength has to do with spiritual character. Dignity has to do with class, quality. She is a woman of great character, strong, dignified. She has a grace about her. She has a confidence about her. She has a spirituality about her that really is the foundation of her teaching. You see, you don't teach in a vacuum, not in a home. I mean, you may be a teacher in a school and show up and say anything you want, but you won't do that and be believed to people who live in a house unless you live what you teach, right? So that teaching starts with a platform of character in a home or else you're teaching people to be hypocrites and you sure don't want to give that lesson. When you demand your family to be what you're not, you're telling them it's really not very important that they learn this, it's only important that they try to teach it to somebody else and pass on the legacy of hypocrisy. No, the teacher in the home is the woman who has gained the right to be heard and believed because strength and dignity are her clothing.

It says, "*And she smiles at the future.*" She has no fear or anxiety because she knows in whom she trusts. She's deeply spiritual. All things are in God's hands. She has prepared elegantly for everything. It will be well in the future for her because she's right with God. It will be well in the future for her household because all things are in order. It will be well in the future for her children because they are properly brought along in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It will be well in the future for her husband for she has made provision in his case for him to be the best that he can be.

It will be well in the eternity to come for all of them because of her life. She has made a spiritual impact.

And then the teaching in Proverbs 31:26, out of that character base she opens her mouth in wisdom. She guides her family daily in wisdom. I believe the father is to be a teacher in the home. I believe he is the family priest. But I do not believe for one moment that that precludes the reality that it is the mother who day in and day out, hour in and hour out is teaching wisdom to the children. Not formal classes, but instruction in the flow of life, she's the teacher. Men, we may give the formal lessons but day in and day out she's the teacher.

And in what attitude does her teaching come? Proverbs 31:26, "*The wisdom of God comes out of her mouth and the law of kindness is on her tongue.*" The tora or the book of wisdom is her actions and her example to the children. The tora of loving kindness is on her tongue. The attitude in which she teaches all of this is a dominant attitude of loving kindness. What a challenge. What does that mean? Gracious speech, kind speech, tender speech, pleasing speech, compassionate speech, ministering grace to the hearers, as Paul said, edifying, building up. That which comes out of her mouth is the wisdom of God in tender and compassionate gracious kind words. What a teacher. The greatest teacher because the character of life makes her so believable, because the wisdom of God is true and because the attitude is compassionate and gracious...no teacher like that. What a portrait. Believe me, women, this is a challenge of a life time.

Fifthly, we note her blessedness as a mother or her effectiveness as a mother. In Proverbs 31:27 it sums up her leadership in the house by saying she looks well to the ways of her household. In other words, she exercises constant surveillance over it all. She manages the children well, all the resources well, all the household. She doesn't eat the bread of idleness. In other words, she is not eating the product of laziness, she's eating the product of effort. She worked hard at it..so hard that she didn't have time to gossip. She has the real satisfaction that come from a supreme effort. She surveys the household. She's got it all under control. She meets every need. And it implies that her children are in all of this because Proverbs 31:28 says, "Her children rise up and...what?...bless her." They reverence her. They honor her. They hold her in high esteem.

Let me give you something you need to know. The first half of your life, women, you make an investment, the dividends of which you will reap the second half. It flips over. This women would raise her children and when her children were old enough to be on their own, they would spend the rest of their life blessing the woman who gave her life to them. That's God's design. The compensation then for old age is the exhilarating blessed joy of the return of the investment of youth in children. The sad thing is that if you aren't this kind of honorable woman the first half of your life, then during the second half of life, you won't reap the rewards and life will be empty and unfulfilling. If you can't cut it and you either don't have children or don't follow God's plan as a wife and mother, then there probably won't be anybody around to care I during the second half of your life..you'll either be divorced or unhappily married and your kids won't call home because they are too selfish to. That's the tragedy. God has designed our life in passages and when we invest our life properly in those children God gives us, we will find the backside of our life will be the greatest sweetest time of blessing as they repay to us the blessing given. That's God's design.

As the children become older, they have their own children. And they seek to raise their children as they were raised. And therefore their mother is constantly before their eyes, her tender guidance, her

wise counsel, her loving discipline, her holy example, her hard work, her unselfish giving. They never cease to fill the memories of her children who try to pass them on to their children.

And there's another dividend for her motherhood. Proverbs 31:28 says her husband also and he praises her. And he says, "*Many daughters have done nobly but you excel them all.*" There are many women of strength, women of force, women of character but, honey, you're the best. That's a woman's reward right from the mouth of the Lord. You invested in your children and they'll return it. You invested in your husband and he'll return it.

But how can a woman be like this? It almost seems idyllic to be such a wife and such a homemaker and such a neighbor and such a teacher and such a mother. How can a woman be like this? That brings us to the last point, her excellence as a person. It all starts with the spiritual dimension. Please notice Proverbs 31:30, "*Charm is deceitful.*" Do you know what charm means in the Hebrew? Bodily form. That's deceitful. Some women spend all their time on their bodily form. That is deceitful because that's not the real you. Beauty is of no real value, it's vain, it's useless, it's empty. Form, deceitful. You think you're getting something you're not. Beauty has no real value. You want to know something? Those are the two things our world looks for. No wonder there relationships are empty and filled with deceit. That's all they look for. Fools, absolute fools. But here's the woman you want, a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised, give her the product of her hands and let her works praise her in the gates. What woman is this? She loves God. She's a true worshipper. She fears the Lord. You have to live with that all your life. You live with a woman who fears God, loves God and you are in the best environment. And by the way, she'll become more beautiful to you every passing year.

This is the woman of character. Only God can produce her. Matthew Henry said, "*Proverbs 31 is the mirror against which every Christian woman must stand and face herself.*" This is God's design. And only God can produce this woman. But this is the woman God wants. This is the woman who will be praised by her children and her husband. This is the woman who will be given the product of her hands, she'll get back everything she gave. And they will do for her for whom she did. This is the woman who is not only privately rewarded with the product of her hands by those she loves, but publicly rewarded as her works praise her in the gates. Listen, this is the woman that God wants and that every man should desire and that every woman should desire to be...one who is true to her mate, one who manages well her home, one who compassionately cares for the needy, one who lives and teaches divine wisdom with kindness, compassion and grace, one who fully fulfills the call of a mother so that her children bless her and one who though she seeks no praise will receive it anyway because of the character of her life.

I know we can't sell this woman to our society. I just pray we in the church can continue to focus on God's standard. It's a high standard but it's God's standard. And my prayer is that every woman who names the name of Christ will seek to be this kind of woman by God's grace. Let's pray together.

Father, I want to pray right now for all those who are wives and mothers, that, Lord God, You will give them the power of Your Spirit to move them toward this pattern, this design, this portrait of godliness. Also, Lord, may they know of Your forgiving grace for every failure in the process because the standard is so high. Thank You for the standard, thank You for the power in the Spirit who meet the standard, thank You for the grace of forgiveness for the failures. I would pray for every single wife and mother through death or divorce, struggling to be all that she should be without that man to give her guidance, that man for whom she can live and in whose love she is so fully rewarded. And I would

pray even with thanksgiving for those women, Father, who have not been given children because that wasn't in Your plan, make their life fulfilled in their husband. I pray for those who have been called to singleness, may they serve You in that unique way which only the single can without having the cares of the house and the family and may they be fully rewarded in the bliss of knowing they're in Your will. I pray for the young girls as yet unmarried that You would make them the woman that You want them to be. For the young men selecting a wife, that they would seek to find the character that is exemplified here...not in fulfillment but as the goal and direction of the woman of their choice.

And, Lord, even as I think about all of this, this is a heavy burden for women to bear and all along I can't help but be thinking to myself who would I be to deserve such a woman? Lord, we fall so short. Not a man of us is worthy of such a woman. Such a woman in our lives would make us guilty. So, Lord, make us the men we ought to be. And then, Lord, I want to thank You this day for my own wife, who has for all the years of our marriage sought to be this kind of woman...who has poured her life into me and to her children, to others, to our home and who has become so much a part of what I am that I know no longer where she ends and I begin. I thank You for the gift that she is from You to me. And I pray that somehow, Lord, I might be to her what a husband must be, that she might be fulfilled. That I pray, Lord, for all that we might be all that You would have us to be for Your glory in Christ's name. Amen.

4.6 Mission/Vision Statement for the Marriage¹⁴

Vision can be described as seeing the invisible and making it visible. It's having a picture held in your mind of the way things could or should be in the days ahead.

Vision is also a portrait of conditions that don't yet exist. It's focusing on the future rather than getting bogged down by the past or present. Vision is the process of creating a better future with God's empowerment and direction.

Vision is specific, detailed, customized, sometimes time-specific, and measurable. Vision is a way of describing the activity and development of a marriage. The vision you have for your marriage may be different from any other person's. Having a vision for your marriage is having a realistic dream for what you, your spouse, and your marriage can become under God's direction. We need to seek what God wants for us and our marriage because, without His wisdom, what we achieve may be out of His will. We need His wisdom because, "*the Lord knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile*" (Psalm 94:11).

Below is the mission statement for our marriage, which is based on everything we have learned about marriage up to this point. This vision statement applies individually to each of us *in addition to* the mission statement found in section 1.4: Family Mission Statement.

1. *We will show respect for each other.* We will show interest in one another when we first meet at the end of the day. We will give each other at least one compliment a day. We will listen to one another without interruption even when we don't agree with what the other is saying. We will give each other equal time to speak. We will first judge ourselves on each issue before we judge or criticize others.

¹⁴ *Before You Say "I Do"*, H. Norman Wright and Wes Roberts, 1997, pp. 34-35.

2. We will continually improve our sexual relationship. We will read a book on sex aloud to each other and work toward making our sexual experience creative, satisfying, and exciting most of the time for both spouses. We will both communicate clearly to each other before 8:00 p.m. if we are interested in sex that evening. We will also be verbal before and during lovemaking. We will submit always to the sexual needs of our partner because we don't want to encourage them to commit adultery, which can cause divorce and dishonor God and our marriage covenant.
3. We acknowledge that love is both a choice and a feeling. However, we take full and personal responsibility to always act and think in a loving way toward everyone and especially towards each other, regardless of whether we have love the feeling. By doing love the act, we produce love the feeling. To be loving means to *choose* to act in a loving way regardless of how we choose to feel or how our partner affects the love that we feel. Our behavior and our feelings and the beliefs that produce those feelings are our choice and our responsibility, and not something that we allow to victimize us or the people around us. We refuse to act lovingly toward someone only when we get something we want back from them because that is selfish manipulation disguised as love. Our love for each other must be unconditional or it simply isn't love.
4. We will continually demonstrate our love, both verbally and non-verbally. We will both ask how we can help the other each day. We will say "I love you" to each other at least once a day. We will make love at least once a week as a way to validate the worth and attractiveness of our spouse. We will ask what the other wants to do on Friday and Saturday nights.
5. We will be flexible. We will learn to handle being a spontaneous guest for dinner, and spontaneously having guests for dinner. We will not obstruct our boycott our spouses' spontaneous plans and will go along with them to events as long as they don't violate our moral values or result in unreasonable expense.
6. We will demonstrate empathy towards our spouse. We will practice doing a task the way our partner does it at least once before we encourage them to do it our way. When we speak, we will consider how the other person might react to what we want to say before we say it and modify what we say to accomplish the desired result. We will work towards admitting when we're wrong, repenting, and not being defensive or hypercritical or reactive towards comments about our behavior made in love.
7. We will be frequently and continually affectionate with each other, even when our partner does not reciprocate: We acknowledge that being affectionate is the way that we show to each other that we accept and value our spouse. We will always initiate and respond positively to the affection that is offered to us by our spouse.
8. We won't live in the past and use blame or guilt for sins that have been repented for as a way to use guilt to continually control, oppress, manipulate, hurt, or discourage our spouse. When our spouse admits their sin and repents, then we promise to forgive them, never again be angry or resentful over the sin, and never bring up the sin again. We will also do our best to bear the fruit of true repentance as described in section 2.3.15 when we have sinned against our spouse or others.
9. We agree never to ask our mate to change to suit our needs, especially if it is a behavior or attitude that our mate had at the time we got married. The only exception to this rule is if the person is committing crimes or *serious sin* as defined in section 3.5.3: The Types of Sin and Correction or if the person is committing verbal or emotional or physical abuse against us or other family members. Any attempt to deviate from this requirement shall be interpreted as conditional, not unconditional love, which is not love at all, but is selfish manipulation disguised as love.
10. We will treat our relationship as entirely confidential outside of the immediate family. For instance, we will not talk about our sexual relationship with friends, coworkers, or other family members. We will not reveal the existence or outcome of any arguments we might have to third

parties unless there is domestic violence or verbal abuse proved through admissible evidence other than the testimony of either spouse.

11. We will recognize, celebrate, and appreciate the uniqueness and individuality of our spouse. We will not compare our spouse to anyone else or try to make them feel inferior through comparison. Instead, we will complement and appreciate the gifts and strengths that God has uniquely endowed them with.
12. We will take the time to notice, complement, and reward behavior we like and which is good. This will incentivize family members to habitually do the right thing.
13. Divorce:
 - 13.1. We acknowledge and agree that divorce is NOT an option and that our spousal relationship is permanent. Until death do us part. We will always act as communicate with the assumption that the relationship is permanent, and never project negative expectations, statements, or attitudes onto our spouse by expecting, suggesting, or threatening that divorce will ever happen. Because God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16), we won't anger or disrespect or disobey Him by allowing it to ever happen. Instead, we will be responsible for the vows we make (see section 2.3.16: Responsibility) and expect that they are not a product of emotion, but of will and unwavering commitment, towards God and especially towards each other.
 - 13.2. Because the divorce rate in our culture is over 50% and because Christians are MORE, not LESS likely to get divorced than non-Christians (see section 9.1: Introduction), and because this is a Christian marriage, then we must unfortunately address the issue of what happens in the event of divorce. We therefore agree that if divorce ever happens, then we will identify the spouse who asked for it first in a written Divorce Declaration and we will both sign it before the divorce and provide a copy of it to our children when they reach the age of 18, so they can learn from our ignominious failures. The Divorce Declaration will document the reasons in writing for getting the divorce and defend those reasons from a Biblical perspective in order to preserve our integrity and to honor our vow before God. We will not use "irreconcilable differences", which is the biblically inadequate and anti-spiritual California state legal standard, as the foundation for divorce, but instead we will identify the specific sins from the list below and from section 8: Sin and Dysfunctional Behaviors of this document in the Divorce Declaration. We will identify the perpetrator who contributed to and caused the divorce, from our own perspective, and we will back up our claims with a polygraph test attached to the document which both spouses will undergo that asks about the truthfulness of our statements on the Divorce Declaration. The biblically sound reasons for divorce that we will identify in the Divorce Declaration shall be from the following all-inclusive list:
 - 13.2.1. Spouse has died. For such a case, we don't need a divorce declaration statement.
 - 13.2.2. Sexual immorality/adultery on the part of one or both spouses.
 - 13.2.3. Refusal by a spouse to submit sexually to the other spouse. This causes or contributes adultery as described above and in Matt. 5:27-30.
 - 13.2.4. Physical abuse.
 - 13.2.5. Emotional abuse as defined in section 3.8 of this constitution. We will give specific reasons and evidence (tape recording and the testimony of witnesses) to prove the existence of the emotional abuse, how it happened, when we warned our spouse about it, when or why they refused to address it or repent for it, and why we couldn't forgive them for it. At the same time, we agree NOT to call emotionally abusive attempts to share the truth in love, because if we did, then we would just encourage an attitude of irresponsibility and fear about trying to honor God by following His commandments.
 - 13.2.6. Gambling, drug addictions, or overuse of credit cards which endanger the health and financial wellbeing of the family.

- 13.2.7. Criminal tendencies that are federal offenses or cases where a spouse will be in jail for longer than two years, unless it is for unjust causes or causes that do not violate the standard of behavior in the Bible.
- 13.2.8. Abandoning one's home or spouse or abducting a child without the other spouse's consent for more than six months.
- 13.3. We agree and vow to God that the person who initiates or causes divorce to be initiated as indicated above will demonstrate their love by being honest with him or herself, with relatives, our children, and with everyone we communicate with about the divorce, by telling them that we disrespected God and committed blasphemy against Him by deliberately and knowingly and defiantly disobeying His command (in Mark 10:2-9) to stay married and not honoring our sacred vows before and to Him. We acknowledge this kind of deceit and rebellion and lying to God is the highest dishonor we can do to the Lord and runs the risk of being unforgivable, since we knowingly refused to repent prior to obtaining the divorce and because we knew going into marriage what we were making a covenant to. This kind of blasphemy, it is agreed, will subject us to His judgment and wrath and will pass down very harmful sin from the fathers and mothers to succeeding generations that will be very difficult for our children and their children to overcome. We acknowledge that these kind of serious consequences passed to our children cannot be a product of our own unconditional love or unselfishness, because we would not divorce or do things if we love our children or stepchildren and wanted a stable and secure and respectful environment for them to grow up in.
- 13.4. We acknowledge and admit that it is usually selfishness, irresponsibility, and pride that is the reason why people get divorced (something Jesus identified as "hardness of heart" in Matt. 10:5). We vow before God and each other to take full and complete responsibility in writing in the Divorce Declaration for our deceit, our personal selfishness and immaturity, our blasphemy toward God and disrespect of our partner that caused the divorce that we initiated or caused to be initiated.
- 13.5. We promise not to divorce because of selfishness or because our emotional needs aren't being met, because:
- 13.5.1. The marriage covenant we made is an act of our will and our love for God and represents a promise to subordinate our emotions to that will and thereby honor God.
- 13.5.2. Husbands are called to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25-29), which is also an act of unselfishness.
- 13.5.3. Wives are required to be submissive to their husbands and obey their husbands (Eph. 5:22-25). This is an act of unselfishness.
- None of these behaviors can be characterized as selfishness nor can they cause or contribute to divorce. As a matter of fact, divorce is impossible if both spouses follow these three requirements the Lord has placed on marriage. Therefore, if divorce occurs then one or the other spouse must be guilty of violating God's word and we promise to document who and how that happened in our signed Divorce Declaration. Furthermore, our claims will be backed up by a polygraph test that asks questions about the truthfulness of all our collective claims on the declaration. In the event that there is a dispute between us about accountability over this issue, we agree to allow our pastor to have the final word on this issue and to make an entry about his findings on the Divorce Declaration. If we can't agree on a pastor, then we will agree on a professional mediator who will settle the issues.

4.7 Marriage Event Schedule

The following schedule of events shall apply during this relationship, subject to change by written consent of both parties.

Table 4-4: Marriage Event Schedule

<i>Event</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>When</i>
Anniversary	Annually	Marriage date
Valentine's Day	Annually	February 14
Wife's week	Annually	
Husband's week	Annually	
Wife's nights	Weekly	Wednesday, Saturday,
Husbands nights	Weekly	Sunday, Tuesday
Both nights	Weekly	Friday

Definitions:

Wife's night: An evening where the wife dictates to the husband what happens romantically that night and husband must obey. This includes choosing the activities, the attire, or lack of attire, for the activities, and the duration. Husband must honor all requests by wife and may not choose any romantic activities unless wife explicitly grants him that right. Wife's nights are based on the content of Eph. 5:

Wife's week: A week during which wife chooses what to do activity-wise within the context of a vacation. Husband must honor all requests by wife. Cost of activities will be limited to no more than one week's pay for husband.

Husband's night: An evening where the wife dictates to the husband what happens romantically that night and wife must obey. This includes choosing the activities, the attire, or lack of attire, for the activities, and the duration. Wife must honor all requests by husband and may not choose any activities unless husband explicitly grants her that right.

Husband's week: A week during which husband chooses what to do activity-wise within the context of a vacation. Wife must honor all requests by husband. Cost of activities will be limited to no more than one week's pay for wife.

Both nights: Parties take turns doing what each other wants, and spend an equal amount of time submitting to each other.

Ground Rules For Wife's and Husband's Nights:

1. Activities can only involve husband and wife and no third parties.
2. Spouses may choose to not do anything during their respective night. This is perfectly acceptable.
3. Viewing of erotic pictures not involving exclusively the two parties is not permitted.
4. Taking of pictures or video tapes during the events is permitted. Parties agree to keep such items under lock and key and not provide to third parties.
5. Anal sex is not permitted.
6. Oral sex is permitted.

4.8 Crucial Components of Marriage

There are five crucial components of marriage. The following sections define and describe each of these components.

4.8.1 Common Spiritual Beliefs and Faith

The first and most important component of marriage is common spiritual beliefs. This means that as Christians, we need a Christ-centered home between two spouses that share the same religious faith and degree of spiritual commitment. The Bible says in 2 Cor. 6:14-16 that we as believers should likewise not marry unbelievers. There is a lot of wisdom behind this recommendation. How can spouses agree on approaches for disciplining their children if they don't even share the same God or church, for instance? Each religious faith has its own unique approach to moral and parenting issues, and parents need to agree on discipline or there is likely to be a lot of arguments between the parents over these issues that will not be healthy for the parents or the children and may cause irreconcilable differences later that lead to divorce. It is very stressful and difficult to respect someone who is dramatically different or even conflicting from your own beliefs, and mutual respect is the foundation of all healthy interpersonal relationships.

4.8.2 Shared Commitment¹⁵

Commitment is the second most important foundation of marriage. Without it, no marriage can survive. There are very few certainties that touch us all in this mortal existence, but one of the absolutes is that we will experience hardship and stress at some point. Nobody remains unscathed. Life will test each of us severely, if not during younger days, then through the events surrounding our final days. Jesus spoke of this inevitability when He said to His disciples, "In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

Dr. Richard Selzer is a surgeon who has written two outstanding books about his beloved patients, *Mortal Lessons* and *Letters To A Young Doctor*. In the first of these texts he describes the experience of "horror" which invades one's life sooner or later. When we're young, he says, we seem to be shielded from it the way the body is protected against bacterial infection. Microscopic organisms are all around us, yet our bodies' defenses effectively hold them at bay...at least for a season. Likewise, we walk in and through the world each day as though surrounded by an impenetrable membrane of protection. We may even be unaware that distressing possibilities exist during the period of youthful good health. But then one day the membrane tears without warning, and horror seeps into our lives. Until that moment occurs, it was always someone else's misfortune...another tragedy...and not our own. The tearing of the membrane can be devastating, especially for those who do not know the "good cheer" that Jesus gives in times of tribulation.

All too commonly, marital relationships are shattered by new stresses that invaded the lives of a couple. Parents who produce a mentally retarded child, for example, often blame one another for the tragedy that confronted them. Instead of clinging to each other in love and reassurance, they added to their sorrows by attacking their partners. I do not condemn them for this human failing, but I do pity them for it. A basic ingredient was missing in their relationship which remained unrecognized until the membrane tore. That essential component is called ...*commitment*.

¹⁵ Portions from *Love for a Lifetime*, Dr. James Dobson, Multnomah Press, 1987, ISBN 0-88070-174-9, pp. 58-59.

Dr. Francis Schaeffer spoke on this issue in 1977. He described the bridges that were built in Europe by the Romans in the first and second centuries A.D. They are still standing today, despite the unreinforced brick and mortar with which they were made. Why haven't they collapsed in this modern era of heavy trucks and equipment? They remain intact because they are used for nothing but foot traffic. If an eighteen-wheel semi were driven across the historic structures, they would crumble in a great cloud of dust and debris.

Marriages that lack an iron-willed determination to hang together at all costs are like the fragile Roman bridges. They appear to be secure and may indeed remain upright..until they are put under heavy pressure. That's when the seams split and the foundation crumbles. It appears to me that the majority of young couples today, like some of those competing on "The Newlywed Game," are in that incredibly vulnerable position. Their relationships are constructed of unreinforced mud which will not withstand the weighty trials lying ahead. The determination to survive together is simply not there.

In stressing the importance of committed love, however, we should consider not only the great tragedies of life, but also the daily frustrations that wear and tear on a relationship. These minor irritants, when accumulated over time, may even be more threatening to a marriage than the catastrophic events that crash into our lives. And yes, Virginia, there are times in every good marriage when a husband and wife don't like each other very much. These are occasions when they feel as though they will never love their partners again. Emotions are like that. They flatten out occasionally like an automobile tire with a nail in the tread. Riding on the rim is a pretty bumpy experience for everyone on board.

At a fiftieth wedding anniversary, a man made an incredible statement to his guests. He said he and his wife had never had a serious fight or argument in the fifty years since they were married. That was either a lot of baloney or he and his wife had a very boring relationship. Maybe both were true. To the newly married couples reading this constitution, I must say: Don't count on having that kind of placid relationship. There *will* be times of conflict and disagreement. There *will* be periods of emotional blandness when you can generate nothing but a yawn for one another. That's life, as they say.

People contemplating marriage should ask themselves what they will do when unexpected tornadoes blow through their home, or when the doldrums leave their sails sagging and silent in the wind. Will they pack it in and go home to Mama? Will they pout and cry and seek ways to strike back? Or will their commitment hold them steady? These questions must be addressed *before* the marriage, before Satan has an opportunity to put his noose of discouragement around your neck. Set your jaw and clench your fists.

***“Nothing short of death must ever be permitted
to come between the two of you. Nothing!”***

This determined attitude is missing from so many marital relationships today. I read of a wedding ceremony in New York a few years ago where the bride and groom each pledged "to stay with you for as long as I shall love you." I doubt if their marriage lasted even to this time. The feeling of love is simply too ephemeral to hold a relationship together for very long. It comes and goes. One writer wrote:

Marriage is no fairy tale land of enchantment. But you can create an oasis of love in the midst of a harsh and uncaring world by grinding it out and sticking in there.

Another said:

Perfection doesn't exist. You have to approach the first few years of marriage with a learner's permit to work out your incompatibilities. It is a continual effort.

Those views don't sound particularly romantic, do they? But they do carry the wisdom of experience. Two people are not compatible simple because they love each other and are both professing Christians. Many young couples assume that the sunshine and flowers that characterized their courtship will continue for the rest of their lives. No way, Jose. It is naïve to expect two unique and strong-willed individuals to mesh together like a couple of machines. Even gears made to work together have multiple cogs with rough edges to be honed before they will work in concert.

That honing process usually occurs in the first year or two of marriage. The foundation for all that is to follow is laid in those critical months. What often occurs at this time is a dramatic struggle for power in the relationship. Who will lead? Who will follow? Who will determine how the money is spent? Who will get his or her way in times of disagreement? Everything is up for grabs in the beginning, and the way these early decisions are made will set the stage for the future.

Therein lies the danger. Abraham Lincoln said "A house divided against itself cannot stand." If both partners come into the relationship prepared for battle in those first two years, the foundation will begin to crumble.

The apostle Paul gave us the divine perspective on human relationships—not only in marriage but in every dimension of life. He wrote, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). That one verse contains more wisdom than most marriage manuals combined. If heeded, it could virtually eliminate divorce from the catalog of human experience.

Below is a poem on why commitment is something our children want us to demonstrate and model for them:

Grandpa Tell Me 'Bout the Good Old Days

Grandpa, tell me 'bout the good old days.
Sometimes it feels like this world's gone crazy.
Grandpa, take me back yesterday.
When the line between right and wrong didn't seem so hazy.

Did lovers really fall in love to stay,
Stand beside each other come what may?
A promise really something they kept,

Not just something they would say?

Did families really bow their heads to pray?

Daddies never go away?

Grandpa, tell me 'bout the good old days.

Grandpa, everything is changing fast.

We call it progress, but I just don't know.

And Grandpa, wander back into the past,

Then paint me a picture of long ago.

Did lovers really fall in love to stay,

Stand beside each other come what may?

A promise really something people kept,

Not just something they would say and forget?

Did families really bow their heads to pray?

Daddies really never go away?

Grandpa, tell me 'bout the good old days.

Grandpa, tell me 'bout the good old days.¹⁶

What happens when the commitment between the spouses isn't shared or isn't equal? Let's explore this because it is a very common problem in many marriages today. We will begin by saying that adult romantic relationships continue to bear many of the characteristics of adolescent sexuality. We differ from the young only in degree, and will always reflect the rudiments of earlier sexual attitudes and values. Thus, grownups still love the thrill of the chase, the lure of the unattainable, the excitement of the new and the boredom with the old. Someone wrote, "Men love women in proportion to their strangeness to them." It is true. In committed love, of course, these immature impulses are controlled and minimized, but they exist nonetheless, especially in males. Furthermore, the desire for "breathing room" that was so typical during adolescence will be a lifelong characteristic, as will be the need to feel fortunate to have "captured" the one we married.

Conversely, in marriage where the mystery and dignity have not been preserved in the relationship, or where one partner clings to the other in desperation, the couple is faced with a serious "balance of payments" deficit. All the emotional energy flows in one direction, which is certain to deplete reserves and resources. This is precisely what happens when an insecure spouse begins to smother the other. Even if infidelity and abandonment are never threatened, the pleading by one partner for the affection

¹⁶ "Grandpa, Tell Me 'Bout the Good Old Days," sung by Wynonna and Naomi Judd, Hal Leonard Publishers. All rights reserved.

and attention of the other serves to short-circuit the electrical attraction between them. Once the process beings that says, "I own you?" the game is over. The home team loses.

Human freedom is a precious thing and we react decisively against those who would restrict it or take it from us. Not even a lover can deprive us of that God-given freedom *unless we surrender it voluntarily*. In fact, not even God will attempt to take it. If you ever come to Him in a love relationship, I guarantee that it will be of your own choice and through no coercion on His part. Not only must love be tough--it must be *free*, as well!

Country singer Tom T. Hall wrote a song in which he revealed surprising insight into this aspect of male-female relationships. He said, "If you hold love too loosely then it flies away; if you hold love too tightly, it'll die. It's one of the mysteries of life."¹⁷ Hall's observation is accurate. If the commitment between a man and woman is given insufficient or unequal importance in their lives, it will wither like a plant without water. The whole world knows that much. But fewer lovers seem to realize that extreme dependency can be just as deadly to a family. It has been said that:

"The person who needs the other least will always be in control of the relationship."

I believe that to be true.

4.8.3 Love

Love is the third important aspect of a stable and happy marriage. The best description of love is found in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8:

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

¹⁷ "It's One Of the Mysteries of Life." Written by Tom T. Hall. Published by Hallnote Music. Copyright 1977. All rights reserved.

The Bible makes it very clear in 1 John 4:8 that our religion is vain if we don't demonstrate love towards other people: "*He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*"

Many people have a confused view of love, and much of this confusion comes from the secular media we are exposed to. They confuse *love the feeling* with *love the action*. In Matt. 5:43-48, Jesus commands us to love everyone (*love as an action*) as ourselves. ***By acting in a loving way, we produce love the feeling.*** Certainly, everyone wants to *feel* loved. But the Golden Rule Jesus revealed in Matt. 7:12 says that

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

What Jesus is saying here is that, for instance, if we want to *feel* loved, then we should *act* in a loving way toward everyone regardless of the response we get from our spouse or our children or our friends or coworkers or neighbors. If we don't feel loved, the first thing we should be doing is examine ourselves to ensure that we are acting in a loving way, because ultimately, we will reap what we sow: "*Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*" (Job 4:8). This is the foundation of sacrificial, unconditional love and of every enduring interpersonal relationship.

Love involves empathy and seeing things from the other person's perspective before we make a decision to act in any circumstance. When we love someone, we first consider what they would want or expect out of us and what is best for them in spite of what they want, and then do our best to unselfishly try to provide what is best for them as a way to show that we care about them and their unique needs and desires. This is our way to show personal interest in their happiness and welfare, which will ultimately produce love the feeling, which is one of many fruits of the Holy Spirit.

"When we make deposits of unconditional love into other people's bank accounts, when we live the primary laws of love, we encourage others to live the primary laws of life. In other words, when we truly love others without condition, without strings, we help them feel secure and safe and validated and affirmed in their essential worth, identity, and integrity. Their natural growth process is encouraged. We make it easier for them to live the laws of life—cooperation, contribution, self-discipline, integrity—and to discover and live true to the highest and best within them. We give them the freedom to act on limitations. This does not mean we become permissive or soft. That itself is a massive withdrawal from the emotional bank account. We counsel, we plead, we set limits and consequences. But we love, regardless.

"When we violate the primary laws of love—when we attach strings and conditions to that gift—we actually encourage others to violate the primary laws of life. We put them in a reactive, defensive position where they feel they have to prove "I matter as a person, independent of you."

"In reality, they aren't independent. They are counter-dependent, which is another form of dependency and is at the lowest end of the Maturity Continuum. They become reactive, almost enemy-centered, more concerned about defending their "rights" and producing evidence of their individuality than they are about proactively listening to and honoring their own inner imperatives.

"Rebellion is a knot of the heart, not of the mind. The key is to make deposits to the emotional bank account—constant deposits of unconditional love."¹⁸

¹⁸ *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey, 1989, Fireside, pp. 199-200.

A good way to demonstrate our love for one another is using the Language of Love, which is an idea originated by Gary Smalley (see http://www.christianity.com/CC_Content_Page/0..PTID53147/CHID176346/CIID.00.html). Below is a summary of this concept, which relies on what he calls “Emotional Word Pictures” and significant emotional events to trigger the loving response that we want in our partner:

1. People (adults) learn mainly through significant emotional, rather than intellectual, events. These significant emotional events translate to strong feelings.
2. Women are different from men in this regard:
 - 2.1. Women are mostly right brain while men are mostly left-brain.
 - 2.2. Women are often emotional while men are rational and pragmatic.
 - 2.3. Women become a part of their environment easily. Men, on the other hand, dissociate themselves from their environment and become detached and disinterested easily. They instead focus on concepts and processes.
 - 2.4. Women verbalize things a lot more than men. Men are more action than talk oriented.
3. A good technique is to use emotional word pictures to connect emotions with facts to increase retention or awareness of the facts of the situation:
 - 3.1. Anyone can do it.
 - 3.2. Requires the use of:
 - 3.2.1. Intimacy
 - 3.2.2. Praise
 - 3.2.3. Correction
 - 3.2.4. Clarification
4. Some of the greatest poets use emotional word pictures. Solomon is an example in his book of Proverbs and Song of Solomon in the Bible. We have six (6) resources or wells from which to draw our word pictures:
 - 4.1. Memories. They bring back emotions and feelings.
 - 4.2. Feelings. They bring back more memories.
 - 4.3. Revisit old places or relive past events to bring back original feelings and memories.
 - 4.4. Music. Old songs or films can bring back emotions and memories.
 - 4.5. Films. Old films bring back emotions and memories.
 - 4.6. Pictures. Old photographs often bring back fond memories and emotions, which then bring back feelings. That is often why families keep photo albums.
5. We leave a legacy of our words, whether we realize it or not. Try to paint a vivid picture with our words that will stand the test of time and create positive feelings in our spouses and family members.

4.8.4 Communication¹⁹

The fourth important foundation of a healthy marriage is *communication*. In John 1:1, the Bible says about communication:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

¹⁹ *Before You Say “I Do”*, H. Norman Wright and Wes Roberts, 1997, pp. 56-57.

Therefore, knowing and loving God is to know and love his Word and the things He has to say to us and about us in the owner's manual for our life that He gave us: The Bible. *To know and to love God is to know and love communication and to be a good communicator, and to seek out the communication he wants to have with us in His Bible and in his spirit.*

Likewise, communication is also the essence of relationships. It is the glue that holds relationships together and it is the ONLY way for a couple to become "one flesh" as described in the Bible in Gen. 2:24. However, there are significant differences in the way that men and women communicate. Women enjoy communication *much* more than men. Scientific studies have been done comparing the number of words that women and men use in a day and the result was that women use about 3.5 times as many words in a given day as men. Another way of saying this is that they have a daily word quota of 10,000 words whereas men's quota is only 3,000. To illustrate, consider the following (humorous!) discussion about haircuts:

Women's version:

Woman2: Oh! You got a haircut! That's so cute!

Woman1: Do you think so? I wasn't sure when she gave me the mirror. I mean, you don't think it's too fluffy looking?

Woman2: Oh God no! No, it's perfect. I'd love to get my hair cut like that, but I think my face is too wide. I'm pretty much stuck with this stuff I think.

Woman1: Are you serious? I think your face is adorable. And you could easily get one of those layer cuts - that would look so cute I think. I was actually going to do that except that I was afraid it would accent my long neck.

Woman2: Oh - that's funny! I would love to have your neck! Anything to take attention away from this two-by-four I have for a shoulder line.

Woman1: Are you kidding? I know girls that would love to have your shoulders. Everything drapes so well on you. I mean, look at my arms -see how short they are? If I had your shoulders I could get clothes to fit me so much easier.

Men's version:

Man2: Haircut?

Man1: Yeah.

The Bible also talks about how good communication can bring many blessings:

Prov. 10:11: *"The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.."*

Prov. 10:20: *"The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver..."*

Prov. 12:18: "...the Tongue of the wise brings healing."

Prov. 15:4: "A soothing tongue is a tree of life."

Prov. 16:21: "...Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness."

Communication consists of three components: the actual content, the tone of voice, and the nonverbal communication. With changes in the tone of voice or in the nonverbal component, it is possible to express many different messages using the same word, statement, or question. Nonverbal communication includes facial expression, body posture, and actions. An example of nonverbal communication which should be avoided is holding a book in front of one's face while talking.

The three components of communication must be complementary and consistent to be believable. One researcher has suggested the following breakdown of the importance of the three components.²⁰ The percentages indicate how much of the message is sent through each one.

- **Content: 7%**
- **Tone: 38%**
- **Nonverbal: 55%**

Confusing messages are often sent because the three components contradict each other.

Our nonverbal communication and tone of voice are essential elements in conveying our messages. If you are not aware of your tone of voice, you may want to use a tape recorder to record some of your conversations. Then play them back and pay attention to your tone of voice and what it implies.

In his book *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* John Powell states that we communicate on five different levels, from shallow clichés to deep personal sharing. Hang-ups, such as fear, apathy, or a poor self-image keep us at the shallow level. If we can be freed from our restrictions, we can move to the deeper, more meaningful level.

The five levels of communication are:

Level Five: Cliché Conversation. This type of talk is very safe. We use phrases such as "How are you?" "How's the dog?" "Where have you been?" "I like your dress." In this type of conversation there is no personal sharing. Each person remains safely behind his defenses.

Level Four: Reporting the Facts About Others. In this kind of conversation we are content to tell others what someone else has said, but we offer no personal information on these facts. We report the facts like the six o'clock news. We share gossip and little narrations, but we do not commit ourselves as to how we feel about them.

Level Three: Ideas and Judgments. Real communication begins to unfold here. The person is willing to step out of his solitary confinement and risk telling some of his ideas and decisions. He is still cautious. If he senses that what he is saying is not being accepted, he will retreat.

²⁰ *Silent Messages*, Albert Metowbian, 1971, pp. 42-44, Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Level Two: Feelings or Emotions. At this level the person shares how he feels about facts, ideas, and judgments. His feelings underneath these areas are revealed. For a person to really share himself with another individual he must move to the level of sharing his feelings.

Level One: Complete Emotional and Personal Communication. All deep relationships must be based on absolute openness and honesty. This may be difficult to achieve because it involves risk—the risk of being rejected. But it is vital if relationships are to grow. There will be times when this type of communication is not as complete as it could be.

Persons who communicate primarily on a cognitive or thinking level deal mainly with factual data. They like to talk about such topics as sports, the stock market, money, houses, jobs, etc., keeping the subject of conversation out of the emotional area. Usually they are quite uncomfortable dealing with issues that elicit feelings, especially unpleasant feelings such as anger. Consequently they avoid talking about subjects that involve love, fear, and anger. These persons have difficulty, then, being warm and supportive of their spouses.

Others communicate more on the feeling level. They tire easily of purely factual data and feel a need to share feelings especially with their spouses. They feel that the atmosphere between husband and wife must be as free as possible from unpleasant feelings like tension, anger, and resentment. So, of course, they want to talk about these emotional things, resolve conflicts with their spouses, clear the air, and keep things pleasant between them.

Of course no one is completely cognitive or completely emotional. Where are you with your wife or fiancé? On the diagram below indicate (1) where you think you are, (2) where you think your wife or fiancé is, and (3) where you think your wife or fiancé would place you.

HIM: Cognitive (left-brain).....Emotional (right-brain)

HER: Cognitive (left-brain).....Emotional (right-brain)

Surprisingly, the so-called cognitive person (on the left) is controlled by his feelings just as is the so-called emotional person, but he doesn't realize it. For example, the stiff, formal intellectual has deep feelings also, but uses enormous energy to keep them buried so he won't be bothered with them. Unfortunately they do bother him. Whenever someone (like an "emotional" wife or child) is around asking him for affection and warmth, he might be unable to respond and angered that his equilibrium has been disturbed.

Communication is the process of sharing yourself, both verbally and nonverbally, in such a way that the other person can both accept and understand what you are sharing.

What is listening? Paul Tournier said "How beautiful, how grand and liberating this experience is, when people learn to help each other. It is impossible to overemphasize the immense need humans have to be really listened to. Listen to all the conversations of our world, between nations as well as those between couples. They are, for the most part, dialogues of the deaf."

The Living Bible expresses these thoughts about listening:

Any story sounds true until someone tells the other side and sets the record straight. (Proverbs 18:17)

The wise man leans by listening; the simpleton can learn only by seeing scorners punished. (Proverbs 21:11)

He who answers a matter before he hears the facts, it is folly and shame to him. (Proverbs 18:13, Amplified)

Let every man be quick to hear (a ready listener)... (James 1:19 Amplified)

4.8.4.1 What Kills Communication²¹

1. **Talking Too Much**: Good communication is balanced between talking and listening. You basically are not learning anything while you are talking. Some partners hide behind their verbiage and simply do not allow the other partner to share with them. Talking too much is very tiresome, not only for the speaker but for the person who has to listen. Many words do not convince a person. Sometimes the longer you talk the more obvious it is that you don't know what you're talking about!
2. **Not Saying Enough**: The other side of the talking problem is a typical way in which marital partners avoid confrontation—they just don't say anything. Ecclesiastes 3:7 says there is "...a time to be silent, and a time to speak." Your partner needs to hear from you as to what you think and believe about things. Unless you talk, he/she will not know what you are thinking or believing, and he will have a tendency to be suspicious of you. He will have a difficult time trusting you if you never share your feelings and thoughts with him. Sometimes, the verbal abuse we have received in the past keeps us from wanting to try again to talk. But talk we must! Your marriage will continue to deteriorate if there is no real communication taking place between the two of you.
3. **Exaggeration**: If you make a practice of exaggerating, your partner has a difficult time trusting you. Some people exaggerate to impress others. Other people exaggerate because they don't believe that people will respond to what really happened. A common problem in good communication is the matter of exaggerations—making too much out of something. Proverbs 13:3 says, "The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin." That verse is not talking about an exceptionally large mouth—it is speaking about the problem of exaggeration: "Opens wide his lips." Proverbs 22:13 adds, "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion outside; I shall be slain in the streets!'" The undisciplined person has a tendency to exaggerate a situation. Proverbs 25:14 says, "Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely." Exaggeration can be a terrible habit, and it can seriously affect communication between husband and wife.
4. **Anger**: If you want to break down good communication, just get angry—that will do it every time! Prov. 17:27 says, "He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding." It's hard to keep cool when we verbally attack or blame others. The one leads to the other. Prov. 19:11 says, "A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression." Instead of pointing out your partner's faults and mistakes, learn to overlook them and be forgiving. But what do you do when you do get angry? Some couples like to fight because they say they enjoy making up afterward! Some anger is justified if it is properly placed. It is right to get mad at sin, but not the sinner. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." There are times when it is right to be angry, but the real danger comes when we stay angry or shift our anger from a situation to a

²¹ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 14-20.

person. We are never to be angry at *people*. Don't go to bed angry. Get things straightened out between the two of you before you go to sleep.

5. **Too Quick to Speak**: Prov. 18:13 states, “He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.” Prov. 25:8 warns, “Do not go out hastily to argue your case; otherwise, what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame?” Prov. 29:20 puts it in proper perspective by saying, “Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hop for a fool than for him.” Obviously, it is a serious problem to be too quick to speak.
6. **Arguments**: Would you rather be happy, or would you rather be right? Have you ever noticed that no one seems to win in a marital argument? Prov. 18:19 says, “A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions [arguments] are like the bars of a castle.” Prov. 19:13 says, “...the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.” Prov. 21:9 adds, “It is better to live in a corner of a roof, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.” Verse 19 says much the same thing: “It is better to live in a desert land, than with a contentious and vexing woman.” The same principle is stated one more time in Prov. 25:24. This is obviously an important point—it’s tough to live with argumentative people! Disagreements will exist in any marriage, but when they turn into serious arguments, they are destructive rather than constructive. Arguments occur for many reasons. Sometimes they happen because we have to be right and are unwilling to see the other person’s viewpoint. There is a time when we must agree to disagree. We must learn to accept others regardless of basic disagreements. But what do you do when the husband and wife disagree about a matter in which a decision must be made? This is where God’s order for marriage comes in. The husband is responsible to make the decision, and he must then live with (meaning not complain about) it and bear the responsibility for it. That’s not an easy assignment. He must carefully consider the wife’s viewpoint, ask God for wisdom, and then make the decision, trusting God to reveal in time whether it was right or wrong.
7. **Unforgiveness**: Unforgiving people tend to live in the past and keep bringing up past sins. This can be very irritating and threatening for the listener, and especially if the sins being discussed have already been repented for! Avoid being unforgiving.

4.8.4.2 What Creates or Enhances Communication²²

1. **Time**: Time is necessary to build good communication. Talking to each other on the run is not the way to do it. Quick comments and hurried conversation tend to hinder your ability to communicate effectively. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 is an important passage on “time.” It tells us that there is a time for everything and every event under heaven. We need to realize this, and to enjoy the time that we have. We cannot live in the past or the future; *today* is all we have; and we must make the most of it. Take time to talk—it will continue to create good communication and feelings between the two of you.
2. **Honesty**: Sometimes honesty hurts, but it’s always the best way to go! Never lie to your marital partner. At some point in time you will regret it. Prov. 19:5 says, “A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape.” *The Bible is clear about the fact that if you lie you do not love the person to whom you tell the lie.* Prov. 26:28 says, “A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth works ruin.” Flattery is rooted in deceit and lying, and it doesn’t belong in a good marriage.

²² Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 20-26.

Some people believe that if their partner committed adultery, they wouldn't want to know about it. These people do not realize the importance of confession for the benefit of their marital partner. It is always more tragic for a marital partner to find out about a partner's immorality from someone else. Some words of caution, however, are needed in this regard. We do not believe that it is either wise or necessary for marital partners to discuss in intimate details the sins of immorality which occurred before they ever met. If these former situations have been dealt with properly, confessed, and true repentance resulted, then they should not be brought up again. Also, we believe that things done before one's salvation in Jesus Christ should be buried under His forgiveness. To bring up the past before you were a Christian can only do harm to your present relationship in Christ.

In addition, we believe it is extremely unwise to share your sinful *thoughts* with your partner in an effort to be completely open and honest. Ephesians 5:12 says, "For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." This verse is speaking about the sinful practices of unbelievers, but by application we believe that it is also dangerous to share what our minds have thought. We are all sinners and capable of very wicked thoughts. We can hurt our marital partners and our own credibility by bringing up these sinful thoughts, especially when by bringing up these sinful thoughts, especially when they involve people with whom our marital partner is acquainted. We need to learn to bring our thoughts into captivity to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)

3. **Trust**: Trust is a wonderful word, and it is essential to a good marriage as well as to good communication. There are two things that are involved: 1. Keeping confidences; 2. Dependability. With regard to keeping confidences, Prov. 17:9 says, "He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends." Gossip is a terrible thing, and it is most severe when a marital partner gossips about the other partner. The old sin nature loves to hear gossip! Prov. 18:8 says, "The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body." Prov 25:9-19 says: "Argue your case with your neighbor, and do not reveal the secret of another, lest he who hears it reproach you, and the evil report about you no pass away." Marital partners need to keep confidences with each other. Trust means that we can rely upon our partners not to talk about things that we have shared in confidence.

The second aspect of trust deals with the matter of dependability. Can your partner rely on you? Prov. 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Prov. 25:10 adds, "Like a bad tooth and unsteady foot is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble.

4. **Patience**: Love is patient (1 Cor. 13:4). Prov. 14:29 says, "He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly." Getting angry is often the opposite of patience. Patience means "taking a long time to boil." It is often translated "long-suffering" or "slow to anger." Prov. 15:18 says, "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger [patient] pacifies contention." Patience cools down a potentially dangerous argument. the great value of patience is painted for us in Prov. 16:32: "He who is slow to anger [patient] is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city."

I like to get to places on time, and I am usually ready to go a few minutes early, but I have learned not to rush my wife. She likes to know the exact time I plan on leaving, and she doesn't want to be forced to leave any earlier than that. Sometimes I am convicted by my lack of patience when I'm ready to go and I keep pushing her. It doesn't help my ability to communicate with her!

Being patient with your marital partner means that you give him or her time to explain. It means that you understand and are forgiving. While you may be upset with something that happened, it means that you do not transfer that to your partner and express anger. Patience means that you do not set standards of performance that cannot be met. It means that you give your partner time and room to breathe. If you are patient you are not judgmental; you are forgiving and kind. You do not have unrealistic expectations; you are not a perfectionist. You recognize the differences and uniqueness of your partner in relation to yourself.

5. **Complete Acceptance**: If your partner does not believe that you fully accept him or her, you will have a difficult time communicating with each other. No barrier is quit like that of a lack of acceptance. It is extremely damaging to your self-worth and value. Romans 15:7 says, “Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ accepted us to the glory of God.” When we realize what this involves, it becomes urgent for us to accept each other without reservation or hesitation. However, we can accept someone and love someone without accepting and loving their behavior. This is an important point to remember.
6. **Forgiveness**: The apostle Peter asked the Lord in Matthew 18:21, “...’Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven time?” Jesus responded in verse 22, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” Are you willing to forgive when the same offense has been committed several times? First Peter 4:8 says, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” Forgiveness flows out of a loving heart. Colossians 3:13 says, “Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against any one; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

If you want to hinder communication, just refuse to forgive your partner! Nothing is as devastating to your marriage as an unforgiving spirit. Forgiveness is essential for good communication. The willingness to forgive is also the refusal to bring the issue up again and use it against your partner. Learn to bury it under the blood of Jesus Christ and His wonderful forgiveness! We should also remember what forgiveness means:

“Forgiveness means giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me.”

When you continually bring up a situation that supposedly was forgiven in the past, it reveals a bitter spirit and an unforgiving heart.

4.8.5 Sex and Affection

The fifth important foundation or component of a healthy marriage is regular sex and affection between the spouses. We will now better define the role and impotence of sex in marriage in the following subsections.

4.8.5.1 Purposes of Sex and Affection

The Bible talks about four specific purposes for human sexual activity:

1. Procreation (Genesis 1:28; Deuteronomy 7:13-14)
2. Communication (Genesis 2:24)
3. Recreation. (Song of Solomon 4:10-12; Proverbs 5:18-19)
4. Release and protection for sexual immorality (1 Cor. 7:3-9)

We will now talk about these elements.

Procreation. Read Genesis 1:28 and Deuteronomy 7:13-14. What evidence to these verses give that sexual activity is for reproduction of the human race and is part of God’s design?

Reproduction. Read Psalm 127:3 and Psalm 139:13-15 from the Living Bible. What attitude toward human sexuality and reproduction do you discover in these verses?

Recreation and release. Read Song of Solomon 4:10-12 and Proverbs 5:18-19. Does it surprise or shock you that the Scriptures actually encourage the enjoyment and sensual delights of sex?

Reread Proverbs 5:18-19, remembering that the writer used poetic language as he spoke of sexual energies, drives, and outlets. Throughout the Bible a favorite symbol for sex is *water*—fountains, streams, cisterns, springs, wells, etc. Do you agree or disagree that Proverbs 5:18-19 encourages a husband and wife to come to their bed to experience sexual pleasure?

Communication. Read Genesis 2:24, Ideally the “one flesh” spoken of in this verse means a blending of spirit, mind, soul—your entire being—with your spouse.

In the plan of God, sex was intended to provide a means of totally revealing oneself to the beloved, of pouring one’s energies and deepest affection, hopes, and dreams into the loved one. Sex provides a means of presenting one’s spouse with the gift of oneself and experiencing a like gift in return; a means of saying, “I love you.” In short, sex becomes a mode of communication, a means of “knowing” each other.

Sex should be fun to both husband and wife, and it should be that special time when you become more close and intimate than at any other time. If things are not right between the two of you, your sex life will be disappointing, frustrating, or unfulfilling. In some respects, the level of enjoyment and satisfaction you have in your sex life is often a barometer of how the two of you are getting along.

4.8.5.2 The Four Fundamental Laws of Sexual Satisfaction in Marriage²³

Four fundamental laws of sexual satisfaction are taught by the Bible in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. These four laws of sexual satisfaction are essential for sexual fulfillment and happiness in marriage. When a marriage starts to ignore or disobey any of these four laws, the ability of the partners to be completely satisfied with each other starts to deteriorate. The laws are:

1. ***Marital Fidelity***: Marital faithfulness is paramount. Good sex is built on this principle. The trust that you have in each other makes your sexual life vital and enjoyable. When that trust is broken, sex is difficult, and sometimes impossible. There are many emotional and mental factors in having good sex. To give yourself completely to another person requires much trust and confidence. Genesis 2:24 says for a man to “cleave to his wife,” and this phrase is quoted again in Eph. 5:31. The Greek word in Ephesians refers to face-to-face sex. It is also used of cementing two blocks of stone together. It carries the idea of “gluing” yourself to your wife. Stick to her and to her alone! There ought to be no question or doubt about your loyalty to your marital partner. Romans 7:2

²³ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 65-80.

says, “For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.” The commitment of marriage according to the Bible is a vow binding until death. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 says:

“When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.”

The Marital Fidelity aspect of the four laws includes the following:

- 1.1. Rejoicing in the Wife of Your Youth.
 - 1.2. Being Satisfied at All Times with her Breasts.
 - 1.3. Being Excited with Her Love
 - 1.4. Refusing to Find Sexual Satisfaction with Others.
2. ***Immediate Response***: The second principle which affects our sexual relationship with each other is that of immediate response to the other partner’s sexual need. First Corinthians 7:3 says, “Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.” The discussion involves immoralities (v. 2). To avoid the wrong use of sexual desire, the husband and wife need to learn how to respond to each other sexually. The Bible therefore teaches us to be responsive immediately to the other partner’s needs, regardless of how we feel at the moment. Love is willing to give without thought of what is received in return.

Most husbands expect their wives to respond immediately to their sexual needs, but few sense that responsibility toward their wives. Sometimes the wife just wants to be held and embraced for a period of time, without jumping into bed! At other times, it’s simply a matter of holding hands that meets the need. An arm around the waist while walking together may do it, while at other times much more passion and sexual activity is needed. Learning to be sensitive to each other’s needs does not come easily. It takes time and years of caring.

According to the Bible, we are to respond to the other person’s needs. If your partner needs affection, then give it, regardless of how you feel. Couples do much harm to each other when they hold back or refuse to give affection when it is needed. It is so easy to hurt our marital partner by simply not being affectionate.

3. ***Sexual submission***: The foundation of sexual satisfaction is marital fidelity, and the motivation behind that satisfaction is immediate response to the needs of your partner. The extent to which sexual satisfaction is enjoyed is often related to the need of sexual submission. First Corinthians 7:4 contains this important truth about sexual submission: “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” When you get married, you relinquish control of your physical body to your marital partner. Your body now belongs to your partner, and should be available at all times for your partner’s enjoyment and satisfaction. The implication of this requirement is that there can be no such legal thing as rape inside the bonds of marriage. That is why rape is not allowed in the prenuptial agreement in section 9.9 later in this document.

One of the quickest ways to put a barrier between husband and wife is to hold back in sexual relationships. We learn soon that withholding sex from our partners is an easy way to hurt them and to demand their attention and response to us. But is it wrong and it is emotional abuse! It is sin to withhold physical affection from your marital partner. Your body belongs to your partner! Likewise, the outcome of not submitting is lustful thoughts, usually by the husband, toward other

women, which leads to "adultery of the mind" as described by Jesus in Matt. 5:27-28. Since adultery is also a basis for divorce, as indicated in Matt. 5:31-32, then technically, refusal submit sexually is a grounds for divorce!

A willingness to submit your body to the physical and sexual advances of your partner without fear and hesitancy is essential for a satisfying and fulfilling sexual relationship. It takes trust and confidence in the other person. It is our responsibility to submit to each other. If your partner desires to engage in some physical activity with your body that you find repulsive or distasteful, do not become bitter or critical or hostile. Take a few minutes and discuss it with each other. Openly share your feelings and the reasons behind your reluctance. Ask your partner for understanding and help.

4. ***Continual Habit***: If the foundation of sexual satisfaction is marital fidelity, and if the motivation is immediate response, and the extent of the satisfaction is determined by sexual submission, then the strength of that satisfaction is related to continual habit. 1 Cor. 7:5 says, "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

It is sin to hold back sexual involvement from your marital partner when it is in your power and ability to give it. The Bible warns couples about such withholding tactics. Only God knows how much responsibility rests on the shoulders of marital partners who have refused sex with their partners and then discovered unfaithfulness resulted. It doesn't every excuse anyone who commits adultery from bearing the responsibility or shame of such action, but it is clear from this verse that withholding sex from your partner is sin, and often leads to immorality.

Do not try to determine how many times you should have sex with your partner each week by what other people say. You should have sex as often as is needed whether once a day or once a month. The motivation should be your partner's need. If he or she needs it, then give it!

The Bible warns us about the strategy of Satan when we deprive each other of sexual relationships. He knows our weaknesses, and the Bible says that he will tempt us, fully knowing our lack of self-control. It doesn't do any good to act like you don't have the problem. Any one of us under the right provocation can commit the greatest of sins! We simply do not have self-control in and of ourselves. Galatians 5:23 says that it is part of the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit. God's answer to avoiding the problem of sexual temptation is by having husband and wife giving to each other sexually by way of continual habit. What most of us do in this regard is quite dangerous. Instead of telling our partners that we have sexual need, we keep quiet, waiting for them to respond. But they can't read our minds! We need to tell them when we have a sexual need, and not feel guilty for communicating that need, as though we have some serious sexual malfunction.

When we are having problems submitting sexually to each other, we agree to read the following passage and pray about it together:

*Lord, it's hard to know what sex really is—
Is it some demon put here to torment me?
Or some delicious seducer from reality?
It is neither of these, Lord.
I know what sex is—
It is body and spirit,
It is passion and tenderness,*

*It is strong embrace and gentle hand-holding.
 It is open nakedness and hidden mystery.
 It is joyful tears and honeymoon faces, and
 It is tears on wrinkled faces at a golden wedding anniversary.
 Sex is a quiet look across the room,
 A love note on a pillow,
 A rose laid on a breakfast plate,
 Laughter in the night.
 Sex is life—not all of life--
 But wrapped up in the meaning of life.
 Sex is your good gift, O God,
 To enrich life,
 To continue the race,
 To communicate,
 To show me who I am,
 To reveal my mate,
 To cleanse through “one flesh.”
 Lord, some people say sex and religion don’t mix;
 But your Word says sex is good.
 Help me to keep it good in my life.
 Help me to be open about sex
 And still protect its mystery.
 Help me to see that sex
 Is neither demon nor deity.
 Help me not climb into a fantasy world
 Of imaginary sexual partners;
 Keep me in the real world
 To love the people you have created.
 Teach me that my soul does not have to frown at sex.
 For me to be a Christian.
 It’s hard for many people to say,
 “Thank God for sex!”
 Because for them sex is more a problem
 Than a gift.
 They need to know that sex and gospel
 Can be linked together again.
 They need to hear the good news about sex.
 Show me how I can help them.
 Thank you, Lord, for making me a sexual being.
 Thank you for showing me how to treat others with trust and love.
 Thank you for letting me talk to you about sex.
 Thank you that I feel free to say: “Thank God for sex!”²⁴*

4.9 Basic Rights in a Relationship²⁵

²⁴ *Thank God for Sex*, Harry Hollis, Jr., Broadman Press, 1975, pp. 11-12.

²⁵ *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*, Patricia Evans; Adams Media Corp; ISBN 1558505822; 1996, p. 122.

1. The right to goodwill from the other.
2. The right to emotional support.
3. The right to be heard by the other and to be responded to with courtesy.
4. The right to have your own view, even if your mate has a different view.
5. The right to have your feelings and experience acknowledged as real.
6. The right to receive a sincere apology for any jokes you find offensive.
7. The right to clear, truthful, and informative answers to questions that concern what is legitimately your business.
8. The right to live free from accusation and blame.
9. The right to live free from criticism and judgment.
10. The right to have your work and your interests spoken of with respect.
11. The right to encouragement.
12. The right to live free from emotional and physical threat.
13. The right to live free from angry outbursts and rage.
14. The right to be called by no name that devalues you.
15. The right to be respectfully asked rather than ordered.
16. The right to behavior from your mate that is in agreement with what God says about relationships and marriage, and especially in the Bible book of Ephesians.
17. The right to equal time by the other spouse with any third party who you share information about your spouse with. Both spouses are expected to encourage and promote this equal time in order to prevent gossip and unfair or unbalanced characterizations of the other spouse.
18. The right to hold a family court or a family meeting when there are irreconcilable differences between spouses or children and spouses. Family court can be held only in families where there are children who can break a tie during votes. Parties should meet, present their case, and let the “jury” (family) decide on the verdict. This reinforces the idea that the family is a team instead of a dictatorship and encourages family members to express and explain their needs and expectations so they learn how to deal with their emotions and get their needs met.
19. The right to participate in and be consulted before making important decisions that might impact the family.

4.10 How to be Best Friends with Your Spouse²⁶

Below is a list of simple behaviors and techniques that we recommend in becoming best friends. We trust they will encourage you.

1. Spending a little time with each other each week.
2. Constant communication about our feelings, ideas, and desires.
3. Never criticizing each other in the presence of others; always building each other up.
4. Never believing that we have arrived by always working on our relationship.
5. Not suspicious of one another or jealous of relationships with others.
6. Total honesty and intimacy about sexual desires and fantasies.
7. A willingness to do whatever is possible to meet the other’s needs (including sexual).
8. Never interfering or trying to control the other partner’s role or domain.
9. Shopping together—learning to pick out each other’s clothes and communicating openly about what looks good and what doesn’t.

²⁶ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, p. 138.

10. Willingness to minister to others without feeling threatened or resentful of the time spent and the emotions expended (including family and relatives).
11. Frequent compliments about sexual attractiveness and personality traits that are positive qualities.
12. Refusing to concentration negative qualities of the other person (learning to live with the bad habits of your partner).
13. Learning to discuss in private and agree about the raising of children—especially about discipline.
14. Learning to laugh and have fun—not being concerned about what other think of our habits and practices (whether in the bedroom or outside).
15. Kissing each other after every prayer for meals.
16. Lots of physical affection and touching each other.
17. Regular time for prayer and Bible reading with family.

4.11 Dealing with Differences Between Men and Women

This section identifies a few of the major difference between men and women and how to deal with them effectively in a relationship

4.11.1 Comparison Between Men and Women

The table below compares the men and women. While the generalizations made in the table are accurate for the vast majority of cases, they are not always accurate for every couple.

Table 4-5: Comparison Between Men and Women

#	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
1	Want sex: Give affection to get sex	Want affection: Give sex to get affection
2	Are visual and physical about relationships	Are emotional about relationships
3	When presented with a problem, want to “fix” it for the victim	When presented with a problem, want to show empathy for the victim
4	Are less verbal	Are more verbal
5	Are left-brain dominant	Are right-brain dominant
6	Get hot easily	Get cold easily
7	Have an intuition about <i>things</i>	Have an intuition about <i>people</i>
8	Like to <i>earn/save/invest</i> money	Like to <i>spend</i> money
9	Are more focused on their careers	Are more focused on their relationships with people and their family
19	Get most of their social interaction from their job and their wife	Get most social interaction from their husband, their family, relatives, church, and their friends
11	Want opportunity and freedom in the workplace and get their financial security from their job	Want financial security to be provided by their spouse so they can choose not to work
12	Are usually better with math and engineering	Are usually better with English and liberal arts
13	Are more rational and practical	Are more reactive
14	Get their identity from their work	Get their identity from their family
15	Are hunter-gatherers	Are “nest builders”
16	Like science shows	Like sitcoms and arts shows and movies

#	Men	Women
17	Like sports	Like family activities and being included in them
18	Have fewer friends	Have more friends
19	Are the disciplinarian in the family	Are the nurturer in the family
20	Expect to be asked when women need help	Expect men to read their minds about what they need, anticipate it, and satisfy that need before they even need to ask for help
21	Like to focus on one “big” thing	Like to focus on many “small” things

4.11.2 Behaviors Women Can Use to Score Points with Men

Men give points differently from women. Every time a woman appreciates what a man has done for her, he feels loved and gives her a point in return. To keep the score even in a relationship, a man really doesn't require anything but love. Women don't realize the power of their love and many times unnecessarily seek to earn a man's love by doing more things for him than they want to do.

When a woman appreciates what a man does for her, he gets much of the love he needs. Remember, men primarily need appreciation. Certainly a man also requires equal participation from a woman in doing the domestic duties of the day-to-day life, but if he is not appreciated, then her contribution is nearly meaningless and completely unimportant to him.

Similarly, a woman cannot appreciate the big things a man does for her unless he is also doing a lot of little things. Doing a lot of little things fulfills her primary needs to feel cared for, understood, and respected.

A major source of love for a man is the loving reaction that a woman has to his behavior. He has a love tank too, but his is not necessarily filled by what she does for him. Instead, it is mainly filled by how she reacts to him or how she feels about him.

When a woman prepares a meal for a man, he gives her one point or ten points, depending on how she is feeling toward him. If a woman secretly resents a man, a meal she may cook for him will mean very little to him—he may even give minus points because she was resenting him. The secret to fulfilling a man lies in learning to express love through your feelings, not necessarily through your actions.

Philosophically speaking, when a woman feels loving, her behavior will automatically express that love. When a man expresses himself in loving behavior, automatically his feelings will follow and become more loving.

Even if a man is not feeling his love for a woman, he can still decide to do something loving for her. If his offering is received and appreciated, then he will begin to feel his love for her again. “Doing” is an excellent way to prime a man's love pump.

However, women are very different. A woman generally does not feel loved if she doesn't feel cared about, understood, or respected. Making a decision to do something more for her partner will not help her feel more loving. Instead it may actually fuel her resentment. When a woman is not feeling her loving feelings, she needs to focus her energies directly on healing her negative feelings and definitely not on doing more.

A man needs to prioritize “loving behavior,” for this will ensure that his partner’s love needs are met. It will open her heart and also open his heart to feel more loving. A man’s heart opens as he succeeds in fulfilling a woman.

A woman needs to prioritize “loving attitudes and feelings,” which will ensure that her partner’s love needs are fulfilled. As a woman is able to express loving attitudes and feelings toward a man, he feels motivated to give more. This then assists her in opening her heart even more. A woman’s heart opens more as she is able to get the support she needs.

Women are sometimes unaware of when a man really needs love. At such times a woman can score twenty to thirty points. Below is a list of how women can score points with men.

Table 4-6: Behaviors Women Can Use to Score Points with Men²⁷

#	<i>How Women can score points with men</i>	
	<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Points</i>
1	He makes a mistake and she doesn’t say “I told you so” or offer advice	10-20
2	He disappoints her and she doesn’t punish him.	20-20
3	He gets lost while driving and she doesn’t make a big deal out of it	10-20
4	He gets lost and she sees the good in the situation and says “We would never have seen this beautiful sunset if we had taken the most direct route.”	20-30
5	He forgets to pick up something and she says “It’s OK. Would you do it next time you are out?”	10-20
6	He forgets to pick up something again and she says with trusting patience and persistence “It’s OK. Would you still get it?”	20-30
7	When she has hurt him and she understands his hurt, she apologizes and gives him the love he needs.	20-30
8	She asks for his support and he says no and she is not hurt by his rejection but trusts that he would if he could. She does not reject him or disapprove of him.	10-20
9	Another time she asks for his support and he again says no. She does not make him feel wrong but accepts his limitations at that time.	20-30
10	She asks for his support without being demanding when he assumes the score is somewhat even.	1-5
11	She asks for support without being demanding when she is upset or he knows she has been giving more.	10-30
12	When he withdraws she doesn’t make him feel guilty.	10-20
13	When he comes back from having withdrawn emotionally, she welcomes him and doesn’t punish him or reject him.	10-20
14	When he apologizes for a mistake and she receives it with loving acceptance and forgiveness. The bigger the mistake he makes the more points he gives.	10-50
15	When he asks her to do something and she says no without giving a list of reasons why she can’t do it.	1-10
16	When he asks her to do something and she says yeas and stays in a good mood.	1-10
17	When he wants to make up after a fight and starts doing little things for her and she starts appreciating him again.	10-30
18	She is happy to see him when he gets home.	10-20

²⁷ *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus*, John Gray, PhD., 1992, HarperPerennial, pp. 199-202. ISBN 0-06-016848.

#	<i>How Women can score points with men</i>	
	<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Points</i>
19	She feels disapproving and instead of expressing it she goes in another room and privately centers herself and then comes back with a more centered and loving heart.	10-20
20	On special occasions she overlooks his mistakes that might normally upset her.	20-40
21	She really enjoys having sex with him.	10-40
22	He forgets where he put his keys and she doesn't look at him as though he was irresponsible.	20-20
23	She is tactful or graceful in expressing her dislike or disappointment about a restaurant or movie when on a date.	10-20
24	She doesn't give advice when he is driving or parking the car and then appreciates him for getting them there.	10-20
25	She asks for his support rather than dwelling on what he has done wrong.	10-20
26	She shares her negative feelings in a centered way without blaming, rejecting, or being disapproving of him.	10-40

4.11.3 Behaviors Men Can Use to Score Points with Women²⁸

There are a variety of ways a man can score points with his partner without having to do much. It is just a matter of redirecting the energy and attention he is already giving. Most men already know about many of these things but don't bother to do them because they don't realize how important the little things are to a woman. A man truly believes the little things are insignificant when compared to the big things he is doing for her.

Some men may start out in a relationship doing the little things, but having done them once or twice they stop. Through some mysterious instinctive force, they begin to focus their energies into doing one big thing for their partners. They then neglect to do all the little things that are necessary for a woman to feel fulfilled in the relationship. To fulfill a woman, a man needs to understand what she needs to feel loved and supported.

The way women score points is not just a preference but a true need. Women need many expressions of love in a relationship to feel loved. One or two expressions of love, no matter how important, will not, and cannot, fulfill her.

This can be extremely hard for a man to understand. One way to look at it is to imagine that women have a love tank similar to the gas tank on a car. It needs to be filled over and over again. Doing many little things (and scoring many points) is the secret for filling a woman's love tank. A woman feels loved when her love tank is full. She is able to respond with greater love, trust, acceptance, appreciation, admiration, approval, and encouragement. Lots of little things are needed to top off her tank.

Following is a list of 101 of the little ways a man can keep his partner's love tank full. Each item counts for 1 point:

²⁸ *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus*, John Gray, PhD., 1992, HarperPerennial, pp-180-185. ISBN 0-06-016848

WAYS TO SCORE POINTS WITH A WOMAN**1. Affection**

- 1.1. Give her four hugs a day.
- 1.2. Offer to give her a back or neck or foot massage (or all three).
- 1.3. Make a point of cuddling or being affectionate sometimes without being sexual.
- 1.4. Display attention in public.
- 1.5. When holding hands don't let your hand go limp.
- 1.6. Touch her with your hand sometimes when you talk to her.
- 1.7. Give her a kiss and say good-bye when you leave.

2. Empathy

- 2.1. Resist the temptation to solve her problems—empathize instead.
- 2.2. Validate her feelings when she is upset.
- 2.3. When she asks for support, say yes or no without making her wrong for asking.
- 2.4. Whenever her feelings have been hurt, give her some empathy and tell her “I’m sorry you feel hurt.” Then be silent; let her feel your understanding of her hurt. Don’t offer solutions or explanations why her hurt is not your fault.
- 2.5. Whenever you need to pull away emotionally, let her know you will be back or that you need some time to think about things.
- 2.6. When you’ve cooled off and you come back, talk about what was bothering you in a respectful, non-blaming way, so she doesn’t imagine the worst.
- 2.7. Take her side when she is upset with someone.
- 2.8. Be understanding when she is late or decides to change her outfit.
- 2.9. Notice how she is feeling and comment on it—“You look happy today” or “You look tired”—and then ask a question like “How was your day?”
- 2.10. Ask her how she is feeling.

3. Thankfulness, Interest, and Encouragement

- 3.1. Complement her on how she looks.
- 3.2. Pay more attention to her than to others in public.
- 3.3. Make her more important than the children. Let the children see her getting your attention first and foremost.
- 3.4. When she prepares a meal, compliment her cooking.
- 3.5. Show interest in what she does during the day, in the books she reads and the people she relates to.
- 3.6. When listening to her, reassure her that you are interested by making little noises like ah ha, uh-huh, oh, mmhuh, and hmmm.
- 3.7. If she has been sick in some way, ask for an update and ask how she is doing or feeling.
- 3.8. Laugh at her jokes and humor.
- 3.9. Verbally say thank you when she does things for you.
- 3.10. Notice when she gets her hair done and give a reassuring compliment.
- 3.11. Ask her specific questions about her day that indicate an awareness of what she was planning to do (e.g., “How did your appointment with the doctor go?”).

4. Helpfulness

- 4.1. If she generally makes dinner or if it is her turn and she seems tired or really busy, offer to make dinner.
- 4.2. Offer to help her when she is tired.
- 4.3. Notice when she is upset or tired and ask what she has to do. Then offer to help by doing a few of her “to do” items.

- 4.4. When going out, ask if there is anything she wants you to pick up at the store, and remember to pick it up.
- 4.5. If she usually washes the dishes, occasionally offer to wash the dishes, especially if she is tired that day.
- 4.6. Make the bed and clean up the bedroom.
- 4.7. If she washes your socks, turn your socks right side out so she doesn't have to.
- 4.8. Notice when the trash is full and offer to empty it.
- 4.9. Wash her car.
- 4.10. Suggest different restaurants for going out; don't put the burden of figuring out where to go on her.
- 4.11. Offer to drive the car on long trips.
- 4.12. Offer to fix something around the house. Say "What needs to be fixed around here? I have some extra time." Don't take on more than you can do.
- 4.13. Offer to sharpen her knives in the kitchen.
- 4.14. Buy some good Super Glue to fix things that are broken.
- 4.15. Offer to change light bulbs as soon as they go out.
- 4.16. Help with recycling the trash.
- 4.17. Keep the bathroom floor clean and dry it after taking a shower.
- 4.18. Open the door for her.
- 4.19. Offer to carry the groceries.
- 4.20. Offer to carry heavy boxes to her.
- 4.21. If she washes the dishes or it is her turn, offer to help scrub pots or other difficult tasks.
- 4.22. Make a "to fix" list and leave it in the kitchen. When you have extra time do something on that list for her. Don't let it get too long.
- 4.23. If she is tired, offer to make her some tea.
- 4.24. Organize and prepare a picnic. (Remember to bring a picnic cloth).
- 4.25. If she handles the laundry, bring the clothes to the cleaners or offer to do the wash.
- 4.26. If she normally shops for food, offer to do the shopping.

5. Respect

- 5.1. Upon returning home find her first before doing anything else.
- 5.2. Practice listening and asking questions.
- 5.3. Give her twenty minutes of unsolicited, quality attention (don't read the newspaper or be distracted by anything else during this time).
- 5.4. When she talks to you, put down the magazine or turn off the TV and give her your full attention.
- 5.5. Be patient when she is sharing. Don't look at your watch.
- 5.6. Don't flick the remote control to different channels when she is watching TV with you.
- 5.7. Drive slowly and safely, respecting her preferences. After all, she is sitting powerless in the front seat.
- 5.8. Write out neatly any phone message you may take for her.
- 5.9. When listening to her talk, use eye contact.
- 5.10. Don't answer the phone at intimate moments or if she is sharing vulnerable feelings.
- 5.11. Negotiate in a manner that shows her that you want her to get what she wants and you also want what you want. Be caring, but don't be a martyr.

6. Romance and Intimacy

- 6.1. Offer to build a fire in wintertime.
- 6.2. Tell her "I love you" at least a couple times every day.
- 6.3. Wash your car and clean up the interior before a date with her.

- 6.4. Wash before having sex or put on a cologne if she likes that.
- 6.5. Create occasions when you both can dress up.
- 6.6. Take short romantic getaways.
- 6.7. Take her dancing or take dancing lessons together.
- 6.8. Surprise her with a love note or poem.
- 6.9. Treat her in ways you did at the beginning of the relationship.
- 6.10. Get ready to go to sleep together and get in bed at the same time.
- 6.11. Create special time to be alone together.
- 6.12. Go bicycling together, even if it's just a short ride.
- 6.13. Take her for a walk without the children.
- 6.14. Eat lightly on romantic occasions so that you don't become stuffed and tired later.

7. Thoughtfulness

- 7.1. Bring her cut flowers as a surprise as well as on special occasions.
- 7.2. Plan a date several days in advance, rather than waiting until Friday night and asking her what she wants to do.
- 7.3. When you are going to be late, call her and let her know.
- 7.4. Let her know when you are planning to take a nap or leave.
- 7.5. Call her from work to ask how she is or to share something exciting or to tell her "I love you."
- 7.6. Learn her favorite drinks so you can offer her a choice of the ones that you know she already likes.
- 7.7. Get season tickets for the theater, symphony, opera, ballet, or some other type of performance she likes.
- 7.8. Buy her little presents—like a small box of chocolates or perfume.
- 7.9. Buy her an outfit (take a picture of your partner along with her sizes to the store and let them help you select it).
- 7.10. Take pictures of her on special occasions.
- 7.11. Let her see that you carry a picture of her in your wallet and update it from time to time.
- 7.12. Write a note or make a sign on special occasions such as anniversaries and birthdays.
- 7.13. When taking her out, study in advance the directions so that she does not have to feel responsible to navigate.
- 7.14. Read out loud or cut out sections of the newspaper that would interest her.
- 7.15. Bring home her favorite pie or dessert.
- 7.16. Let her know that you missed her when you went away.
- 7.17. Ask her to add her thoughts to this list.
- 7.18. Leave the bathroom seat down.

8. Travel

- 8.1. Schedule extra time when traveling so that she doesn't have to rush.
- 8.2. When you are out of town, call to leave a telephone number where you can be reached and to let her know you arrived safely.
- 8.3. When staying in a hotel, have them prepare the room with something special, like a bottle of champagne or sparkling apple juice or flowers.
- 8.4. On trips, handle the luggage and be responsible for packing it in the car.

4.12 The Evil Woman

In addition to describing the characteristics and roles of each spouse in successful relationships, the Bible also describes in detail the behaviors of an evil woman who should be avoided. Woe unto you if you marry a woman who has any of the characteristics listed below:

Table 4-7: Role of Husbands

#	Behavior	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Gossip	"A perverse mouth sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends."	Prov. 16:28 Lev. 19:16 1 Tim. 5:13
2	Destroys her house with her own hands	"The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish woman pulls it down with her hands."	Prov. 14:1
3	Greedy	"He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live."	Prov. 15:27
4	Angry and contentious	"Better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman."	Prov. 21:19 Prov. 21:28 Prov. 27:15-16
5	Evil mouth	"The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; he who is abhorred by the Lord will fall there."	Prov. 22:14

4.13 Money: The Great Mischief Maker

4.13.1 Facing Money Problems²⁹

No problem can hit your marriage harder than that of money. Some counselors call it "the bottom line." It seems that many marriages are constantly torn apart by money problems. As a matter of fact, 70% of divorces are related to money issues, and this is true even in Christian marriages.

Couples disagree on the use of their money, and many fail to find contentment with what they have. Wives often go to work outside the home in order to have money they can call their own, only to discover a growing resentment by their husbands.

Many husbands do not anticipate the needs of their wives, and thus never provide any money for them to use except for the basic needs of the home, such as food and clothes for the children.

Some men complain that their wives don't live within their incomes. They feel bitter toward their wives' spending habits.

Many wives resent their husbands' reluctance to spend any money on them and their needs.

Marriage counselors will tell you that money is something over which husband and wife can have serious conflict. Because feelings of hostility and bitterness can be quickly generated in money matters, husband and wife must learn to talk about it without anger or resentment. They must also learn to reach an agreement about money issues and commit themselves to having enough discipline to stick to the agreement and budget. Written agreements are best because they leave the least "wiggle room". A good place to start in their agreement about money is found in section 9.9 of this document, the Pre-Nuptial Agreement. If a pre-marital couple can't even talk about what is in this section or what

²⁹ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 145-151.

is in section 9 and mutually agree on how they want to handle the issues it discusses, then chances are good that they will have big communication and anger problems later about money and many other issues.

There are at least four major problems that we must face in relationship to our financial resources. These problems must be dealt with in order to have a successful and happy marital relationship. As one woman said: “How can I go to bed with a man who is in so much debt!” You’re deceiving yourself if you think that money problems will not affect your response to your partner.

4.13.1.1 Ownership

As children, we grow up saying “mine.” We learn to be possessive with our toys instead of sharing, and it’s hard to break this habit as we grow older. The things we own bring us a certain security and happiness that makes it hard for us to give them up. A girl who grows up in a wealthy home, being used to having many nice things, and then chooses to marry a boy who wants to make it on his own, without parental help, is headed for serious marital problems if this situation is not bathed in understanding and contentment.

God is the owner of everything. Communism says that the state owns everything, and capitalism believes in the individual’s right to private property. But the Christian believes that God is the owner of everything and that we are just temporary stewards of all that His gracious hand has allowed us to possess and use. Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.” First Chronicles 29:11 states:

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all.

If the things you have belong to God, and you see yourself as His steward, your attitudes will be different. You can part with things easier. When things are lost, stolen, or given away, your attitudes are greatly affected by your view of ownership.

When a couple gets married, the word “mine” must change to “ours” under the overall conviction that everything is “His.” It is dangerous to have possessions under separate or individual control, and not held jointly. Couples who are truly one in everything they do and have prefer to place everything they have in the names of both partners. This simple act cements their relationship in a way that couples who have separate accounts and separate possessions cannot experience.

4.13.1.2 Security

Our security should not be found in what we possess, but it often is. We all have the problem of feeling secure by what we own and by the size of our bank account, salary, savings, or financial investments. First Timothy 6:7 says, “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.” A simple truth, but easy to ignore! *Things* are more tangible and more easily accepted as security than *teaching or beliefs*, which cannot be seen or realized until the future.

First Timothy 6:17 says:

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

Riches cannot bring you happiness or security; only God can do that. Many people have trusted in their wealth only to discover its failure to give them the security they needed in time of crisis.

4.13.1.3 Greed

Some say that greed is a “Judas problem,” since it was greed that drove him to betray his Master, our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the treasurer of the apostles, and for the price of a slave (30 pieces of silver) he became a traitor. Some people have betrayed their friends for even less money!

Greed is a terrible problem. There is something in all of us that wants to have more than what we presently have. Greed can rip a marriage to pieces. The desire to be rich is a serious evil which can control the poor as well as the rich. First Timothy 6:9 says:

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

When will we ever learn? One of the most important verses you can learn about money is 1 Timothy 6:10:

For the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

It is not money itself that is the root of all kinds of evil; it is the *love* of money. You begin to long for it as though it will solve all your problems! Luke 12:13-21 tells the story of one man who thought this:

And someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?” And He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” And He told them a parable saying, “The land of a certain rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

How could it be said any better? Greed is a serious error in judgment.

4.13.1.4 Control

We feel a certain sense of authority and control through the use of our money. A certain power accompanies a measure of wealth. How foolish we are! First Chronicles 29:12 says, “Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone.” Romans 11:36 adds, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen”

God is in control, not you! First Corinthians 4:7 reminds us:

For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Our ability to earn money is given by God, and He can take it away anytime He wants to do it. A little financial setback can bring us quickly to our senses. We are dependent upon Him and His control. When a marital partner feels that money brings control, it ruins the relationship you should have with your partner. A sense of superiority begins to dominate that relationship because of money.

Money can give you an attitude of dominance over other people. You begin to think that you are in control because you hold the cash. Your attitudes change. This often happens in a marriage. One partner (usually the husband) begins to dominate and control the other partner because the money is being controlled by one person. The partner who does not control the money begins to feel helpless and subservient to the partner who does. It is difficult to sense equality and unity in such a marriage.

4.13.2 How Should We Look at Our Money?³⁰

The above four problems (ownership, security, greed, and control) must be faced. Don't try to run away from them or ignore discussing them. These problems are rooted in a lack of understanding as to the purposes of money. How should we use our money? What should be our attitudes toward it when we have it? What attitudes should we have when we don't have as much as we would like to have?

4.13.2.1 Provide Basic Material Needs

No, that new sports car is not a basic material need! Neither is that microwave oven, or new furniture for the living room. While one man's needs are another man's desires, there is a certain principle that should be emphasized as to what basic material needs really are. That is the principle of survival. First Timothy 6:8 says, “And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.” Nothing is so basic as food and clothing. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said (Matthew 6:25-34) that we are to examine the birds and lilies of the field to see how our heavenly Father takes care of them. He spoke of basic needs of food, drink, and clothing. Even in these things we are to trust God and seek him first, for He knows about our needs and has promised to supply them.

First Timothy 5:8 says:

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

³⁰ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 151-155.

Obviously, it is a serious matter when a man does not provide the basic material needs of his own family. We believe that this responsibility belongs to the husband and father. He needs his wife and family to depend upon him. It is essential for his emotional state and self-worth to sense his personal responsibility and accountability for the basic material needs of his family.

A certain amount of money should be budgeted each month for basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter (home). Do not spend this money on other things, thinking that you can someday make it up. You must sense your accountability in this matter, or else more serious difficulties will arise in the future.

4.13.2.2 Support the Work of the Gospel

The values and priorities of Christians are very much different from the unbelieving friends. All that we are and have belongs to God, and we are stewards of it. A part of our stewardship is to use our money to support the work of the gospel. This should be our commitment and not simply a matter of convenience.

Romans 10:5 says, “How shall they preach unless they are sent?...” This “sending” involves financial support. It takes money to send the workers around the world. Paul adds to this in 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 when he says:

Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

Notice carefully that the Lord “directed” this support of the workers who take the gospel around the world.

In 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Paul admonishes Timothy about matters relating to the leadership of the churches over which he had responsibility. They were to be honored and supported.

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’

The leaders of our local churches as well as the workers we send out to reach our world for Christ should be supported by the believers in the churches. This should be done willingly and with careful planning. Second Corinthians 9:7 instructs, “Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

We believe that one of the reasons some couples do not experience the blessing of the Lord in their marriages is due to their failure to support the work of the gospel with their financial resources. It is a joy to give our money for this purpose, and it is a part of our overall commitment to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).

4.13.2.3 Help Others in Time of Need

One of the great joys of having money is the opportunity to help other people in time of need. The Bible is filled with admonitions regarding this use of our money. Ephesians 4:28 says:

Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

In addition, James 2:15-16 connects this use of our money with faith. It tells us that helping others in time of need shows that our faith is real because it produces good works.

First John 3:17-18 adds these words to the argument:

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

It will do wonders for your marriage when the two of you seek to minister to others. It has a tendency to draw you together around a purpose outside yourselves. The Bible promises that happiness will be yours if you learn to help others in time of need. Acts 20:35 tells us that the Lord Jesus Taught us the principle "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

4.13.2.4 Enjoy the Blessings of God

Ecclesiastes is an Old Testament book, written by King Solomon, that expresses the meaning of life itself. It gives helpful advice on why we do what we do, and what it all means for both time and eternity. Ecclesiastes 2:24-25 says:

There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?

It is not wrong to enjoy the material blessings that God has given you, but it is important to recognize His gracious hand in it all.

Some couples believe that they are doing wrong if they spend any money on themselves and their personal enjoyment. Ecclesiastes seems to suggest otherwise. Much depends on your priorities and the total factors involved in the use of your money. To spend it on your personal pleasures and ignore your debts is, of course, wrong. To neglect your responsibilities toward your family and the work of the gospel is also wrong. But when your overall attitude toward money is correct, it is not wrong to enjoy the blessings of God. In Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, the argument is well stated:

Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward. Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

Money problems must be faced. Our attitudes toward our money must be brought into conformity with the teaching of God's Word. When that happens, we are much more capable of handling the difficult financial situations that inevitably come in every marriage.

4.13.3 Don't Let Money Control Your Life!³¹

Your money problems can control you and your marriage. When you start arguing with your partner over the use of money, your marriage starts to suffer. It is difficult to relate emotionally to your partner when money problems are not resolved, and especially when you do not agree as to how they should be handled.

We have found the following insights from God's Word to be the most helpful in our marriage. We call them "fundamentals" because we believe that, regardless of your income, they should be applied.

4.13.3.1 Honor the Lord First

The first check you write should be to the Lord! Take it right off the top! Don't be limited by 10 percent, but learn to express your commitment to Him by the way you give. Don't wait until the end of the month to see if you have any "extra" cash to give to your church or its missionaries. Make it your number-one priority. Proverbs 3:9-10 says, "Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." Many marriages suffer right at this point. When you do not honor the Lord first a multitude of other difficulties arise. God has promised to bless you if you Honor Him first! God said to Israel in Malachi 3:7-10:

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts. "But you say, "How shall we return?" "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' "In tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need.

Perhaps the "windows of heaven" are not opened to you and your marriage because you are not honoring the Lord first. Since God owns everything, our giving to Him is not because He is in need or because He needs the money to act in our behalf. We glorify God and recognize His ownership of all we have by our gifts to Him. God has promised to bless us and to supply our every need.

You may want your marriage to be better than what it presently is, but did you ever think that your problems might be rooted in this matter of honoring the Lord first? How much are you giving each month to the Lord? Does it express your love for Him? The amount you give is not the issue, but rather the heart attitude behind it. First Corinthians 16:1-2 says:

³¹ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 157-168.

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper...”

How much should you give? “As he may prosper” is the standard. Second Corinthians 9:6 adds, “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.” The “sow-reap” principle should affect how much we give.

4.13.3.2 Stay Out of Debt

No principle in Scripture about money is more important than staying out of debt. Debt has ruined many marriages. It saps your emotional energy and continues to discourage you. Debt is one of the most devastating issues that can strike your marital happiness.

Romans 13:8 says, “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.” Does this mean that you should never buy anything that requires monthly payments? Does it mean to wait until you have enough cash before you buy anything? How about a home? A car?

Debt is a serious issue as it relates to marriage. Heartache and misunderstandings result from couples who have delved deep into debt. Proverbs 22:7 remarks that “...the borrower becomes the lender’s slave.” We have developed the following view about debt. IT may not agree with your view, but at least evaluate its potential in this inflationary society. In answer to the question “When are you in debt?” we give the following two answers.

1) *When money is owed with payments due and you are unable to make your payments.*

If you can’t make your payments, you are in debt and should do whatever is necessary to get out of debt as soon as possible. You’ll be so glad you did, and your marriage will be so much better!

2) *When the amount owed (liability) exceeds the value (asset) of an item.*

This particular “debt problem” is quite common today. We believe that it is a serious problem and very dangerous to the well-being of your marriage and family. This problem confronts us when we purchase an item with a limited amount of money down and must pay high interest payments.

If the item is a depreciating item (such as furniture, clothes, boats, some cars, etc.), you wind up losing a great deal and often being in serious debt. We are all programmed by mass media to buy now and pay later. We suggest that you never buy an item on the spur of the moment. Take time to think about it and evaluate it in the light of your needs and possible indebtedness that you might incur.

4.13.3.3 Be Content with What You Have

Are you content with what you have? Take a moment to reflect on your home, your furniture, your car, your clothes, etc. Are you satisfied with what you have, or do you constantly wish that things were better, newer, or nicer?

Discontent can ruin a marriage. A wife is not satisfied with the things in her home, and then she becomes dissatisfied with her husband because he cannot afford to buy her the things she wants. That

kind of marriage is headed for serious trouble, and eventually winds up in the divorce court if it is not resolved.

Paul wrote in Philippians 4:11-12:

Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

Contentment—how sweet it is! Hebrews 13:5 says, “Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’ “We have nothing to fear by being content with what we have. Our Lord has promised to take care of us and never desert us!

4.13.3.4 Depend on the Husband/father to Provide

Our hearts go out to single parents, especially women, who must be both a mother and a father to the children. The problem of the single parent is growing. A church that cares can provide some encouragement and fellowship in this area, but it is still a difficult problem.

When we talk about husbands and fathers providing for the needs of the family, there are many wives and mothers who have a deep hurt and heartache over such discussion, for they are the victims of husbands who have not supported them. It makes us realize how important this particular principle is to a happy and successful marriage.

We try to help those whose lives have been hurt by the failure of the husband and father to provide the needs, but we realize that prevention is better than trying to heal the hurts. We must get at the present marriages that are still together and put the emphasis where it belongs and where God’s Word says it rests—squarely on the shoulders of the husband and father.

We have seen men (as well as women) suffer from this problem. Men need to feel that they are accountable for the needs of their wives and families. Men suffer deeply when they are not the breadwinners of the family.

One of the great tragedies happening amount American families is the shift away from dependency upon the husband/father to provide the needs of the family. The reasons are many. Some say it is caused by inflation; others say it is due to wives joining the work force and making money on their own. Many men are neglecting their responsibilities toward their wives and families and are simply not meeting their needs.

When the children are small (preschool age), the wife needs to be home with them. After the children go to school, there is no problem with the wife working, provided that the money she makes is not used to meet the basic material needs of the family. We know there are exceptions to every rule, but in the majority of cases we have seen the damage that is done when the family depends upon the income of both husband and wife. The husband needs to sense his responsibility in this area. we have recommended to many people that when the wife works, the money she makes should be set aside for

things not related to basic material needs. Save it for a special vacation or some special items for the house, but don't depend upon the wife's income for food, clothes, shelter, etc.

Husbands need their wives to depend upon them, and wives need husbands who are protectors and providers. This emotional interdependency is essential for a good and growing marriage. Circumstances sometimes force us into changes due to illness, unemployment, catastrophe, etc. But as a normal rule, the basic material needs of the family should be the responsibility of the husband/father.

4.13.3.5 Invest Wisely for the Future

Joseph saved for seven years during the time of plenty in order to meet the needs of the population of Egypt during the seven years of famine. That "Joseph principle" is a good one for marriages today. We are "spend-crazy" today! We buy now and pay later. Credit cards have helped us into this problem. Consider the following teachings from the Book of Proverbs.

He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully. (10:5).

A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. (13:22)

An inheritance gained hurriedly at the beginning, will not be blessed in the end. (20:21)

Prepare your work outside, and make it ready for yourself in the field; afterwards, then, build your house. (24:27)

He who increases his wealth by interest and usury, gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor. (28:8)

The ants are not a strong folk, but they prepare their food in the summer. (30:25)

These verses (and many more) remind us of the importance of wise investment and careful planning for the future. Watch out for risky investments and promises of immediate success and prosperity! Learn to invest for the future and to guard against the unexpected. Your family needs to have the security of financial support in the case of your disability or death.

One of the great texts on wise investment is found in Ecclesiastes 11:

Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days. Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth...Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things. Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good." (11:1-2, 5, 6).

Things like life insurance and health care are fundamental in terms of wise investment. We need to prepare for the unexpected and make sure our families are protected in the case of our death or disability. A will should be made out of every couple, with clear instructions as to the care of the children and the disposition of your resources.

Some of the more risky investments and financial schemes that can hurt you are those that promise a get-rich-quick plan. Beware of anyone who tells you that something is “surefire” or that it “can’t miss!” Seek godly counsel and wisdom from those who love the Lord and are concerned about Biblical principles. Make sure that your motives for financial investments are rooted in God’s plan and instruction. Are you seeking to provide more money for the Lord’s work by your investments?

4.13.3.6 Live by a Budget

A budget is crucial to the handling of financial matters. many people are in debt because a budget was not designed. A budget helps to control us when we want to spend our money but are not sure whether we can afford to do so. We are amazed at how many married couples spend their money without having a budget. How do they get away with it? Or do they? A budget will bring harmony into your marriage over material things and financial expenditures. When a couple knows the limits of the ability to spend, the emotional conflicts will lessen. If a wife realized how much money she can spend in a given month on groceries and necessities for the house, she will be much more able to live within that marriage with contentment than if she simply does not know what is expected or how much money is in the bank.

Proverbs 27:23-27 says:

Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds; for riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations. when the grass disappears, the new growth is seen, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered in, the lambs will be for your clothing, and the goats will bring the price of a field, and there will be goats’ milk enough for your food, for the food of your household, and sustenance for your maidens.

We definitely need to know what we are doing in this matter of money. Sloppy, haphazard handling of our finances will lead to much marital disharmony. If you do not have a budget, then begin right now to live by one. Make a simple list of your expenditures each month, being careful to add in those annual or semi-annual payments, and then make a simple comparison with your monthly income. How does it look?

4.13.3.7 Don’t Worry About Material Things

This heading might amuse you after reading what we have said so far, but it’s the truth—don’t worry! If you do, other problems will result. Jesus taught us not to be concerned about our needs because our heavenly Father knows them. He will take care of us just like He takes care of the birds and the lilies (Matthew 6:25-34).

Philippians 4:6-7 is good advice:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Why worry when you can pray? God knows your needs and He has promised to supply them (Philippians 4:19). In Psalm 37:25 David said, “I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his descendants begging bread.” What wonderful words! The Lord will take care of us, and we don’t need to worry!

We can’t offer you a great deal of encouragement if Jesus Christ is not controlling your life, however. Your commitment to Him comes first. He is the only One who can save you from your sins. But you’ve got to believe in Him for yourself. We can’t do it for you. You must personally receive Him as your Lord and Savior, trusting Him alone to save you. If you have not made that commitment as yet, don’t wait another day. Do it now!

Your marriage as a believer in Jesus Christ has a great advantage over marriages of those who do not know Him as Savior and Lord. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit of God indwells every believer and produces the qualities and attitudes that make our marriages what they ought to be. We need His power controlling our reactions and responses to each other. God has promised to take care of His children, and in spite of the money problems we have, we have no need to worry or to fear.

4.14 Marriage and Family Counseling

The goal of marriage counseling under any circumstance is to help hold the marriage together by improving trust and communication and we agree to honor that requirement throughout our relationship. Oftentimes, however, spouses will pursue marriage counseling as a means to validate their desire to get divorced. This technique relies on ignoring the commitment they made before God to stay married (discussed in sections 4.8.2 and 4.3) and ignores the spiritual aspect of the marriage and its permanence. They will instead find and bribe a credentialed, highly paid, credible “expert” to tell them the marriage is hopeless. By doing so, they will turn the counselor into their advocate, or a source of a “second opinion” as to why they should get divorced, and they will frequently ensure that both spouses don’t attend the counseling so the counselor doesn’t have the benefit of both sides of the story. This is a devious vehicle for shifting the blame and responsibility for making the relationship work away from them and onto the marriage counselor or worst yet their spouse. This behavior is a product of selfish conceit more than it is of unconditional love.

However, so long as we recognize as married people that love is not a choice or a feeling (see item 3 in section 4.6), but a commandment that God makes to us (Matt. 19:19), then there is no excuse why the marriage can’t work other than that the parties are being selfish and rebellious and don’t believe in God or honoring his commandments. Recall that rebelliousness was the original sin of Adam and Eve that removed them from fellowship with God. Thus, when Christians get divorced, they in essence have to deny their religious faith in order to do so and become liars in front of God for violating their sacred marriage vows and oaths to “love honor and obey so long as we both shall live.”

When we pursue marriage counseling, we therefore agree to abide by the following requirements:

1. We will find a Christian counselor who will honor our common spiritual beliefs, which we acknowledge as the true foundation of our marriage.
2. We will read the entire content of section 4 to the counselor and provide a copy of this entire Family Constitution on our first visit to underscore the common vision and spiritual beliefs that we share for the marriage. We will also print it out and give to him or her.
3. *Both* parties will be informed about and invited to every therapy session pursued by either spouse so the counselor gets two sides of each story. This will promote love, trust, and teamwork in solving the problems within the marriage.
4. The agreed-upon focus of the marriage counseling will be to improve the relationship instead of find ways why it won't work. We will find a different counselor if the counselor insists on ending the relationship. The counselor can't be a Christian counselor if they advocate divorce between Christians, or else one of the parties must admit they are not a Christian.
5. We will freely and frequently acknowledge to the counselor that the source of most marital conflicts are selfishness, immaturity, disrespect, and pride. We agree to give the counselor the freedom to point out any of these bad behaviors and attitudes if and when he or she becomes aware of them in us. We also commit ourselves to working very hard to eliminate these bad attitudes and behaviors by using humility, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, and mature love in our dealings with each other.
6. When we argue, we will remind each other of Philippians 2:3-4 by reading it aloud at the start of a family meeting, family counseling, or family court called to resolve problems: *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interest of others.”*

Below is a good quote we agree to read for times when the marriage is having troubles that will encourage us to persevere and be thankful for trials as we are told to do in James 1:2-12:

Sandra felt as low as the heels of her Birkenstocks as she pushed against a November gust and the florist shop door. Her life had been easy, like a spring breeze. Then in the fourth month of her second pregnancy, a minor automobile accident stole her ease. During this Thanksgiving week she would have delivered a son. She grieved her loss.

As if that weren't enough her husband's company threatened a transfer. Then her sister, whose holiday visit she coveted, called saying she could not come. What's worse, Sandra's friend infuriated her by suggesting her grief was a God-given path to maturity that would allow her to empathize with others who suffer. “Had she lost a child? No - she has no idea what I'm feeling,” Sandra shuddered.

Thanksgiving? “Thankful for what?” she wondered. For a careless driver whose truck was hardly scratched when he rear-ended her? For an airbag that saved her life but took that of her child?

“Good afternoon, can I help you?” The flower shop clerk's approach startled Sandra. “Sorry,” said Jenny the shop clerk, “I just didn't want you to think I was ignoring you.”

“I...I need an arrangement.”

“For Thanksgiving?”

Sandra nodded.

“Do you want ‘beautiful but ordinary’, or would like to challenge the day with a customer favorite I call the “Thanksgiving Special?” Jenny saw Sandra's curiosity and

continued. "I'm convinced that flowers tell stories, that each arrangement insinuates a particular feeling. Are you looking for something that conveys gratitude this Thanksgiving?"

"Not exactly!" Sandra blurted. "Sorry, but in the last five months, everything that could go wrong has." Sandra regretted her outburst but was surprised when Jenny said, "I have the perfect arrangement for you."

The door to the shop once again opened. "Barbara! Hi," Jenny said. She politely excused herself from Sandra and walked toward a small workroom. She quickly reappeared carrying a massive arrangement of greenery, bows, and long-stemmed thorny roses. Only, the ends of the rose stems were neatly snipped, no flowers.

"Want this in a box?" Jenny asked. Sandra watched for Barbara's response. Was this a joke? Who would want rose stems and no flowers! She waited for laughter, for someone to notice the absence of flowers atop the thorny stems, but neither woman did.

"Yes, please. It's exquisite," said Barbara. "You'd think after three years of getting the special, I'd not be so moved by its significance, but it's happening again. My family will love this one. Thanks."

Why so normal a conversation about such a strange arrangement? She wondered. "Ah," said Sandra, pointing. "That lady just left with, ah....?"

"Yes?"

"Well, she had no flowers!"

"Right, I cut off the flowers."

"Off?"

"Off. Yep. That's the Special. I call it the Thanksgiving Thorns Bouquet."

"But, why do people pay for that?" In spite of herself, Sandra chuckled.

"Do you really want to know?"

"I couldn't leave your shop without knowing....I would wonder about nothing else!"

"That might be good," said Jenny. "Well," she continued, "Barbara came into the shop three years ago feeling very much like you feel today. She thought she had very little to be thankful for. She had lost her father to cancer. The family business was failing, her son was into drugs, and she faced major surgery."

"That same year, I lost my husband. I assumed complete responsibility for the shop and for the first time, spent the holidays alone. I had no children, no husband, no family nearby, and too great a debt to allow any travel," Jenny said.

"What did you do?"

"I learned to be thankful for thorns."

Sandra's eyebrows lifted. "Thorns?"

I'm a Christian and I believe God gave us all things in life, but never thought to ask Him why good things happened to me. But, when bad stuff hit, did I ever ask! It took time to learn that dark times are important.

I always enjoyed the 'flowers' of life but it took thorns to show me the beauty of God's comfort. You know, the Bible says that God comforts us when we're afflicted and from His consolation we learn to comfort others."

Sandra gasped. "A friend read that passage to me and I was furious! I guess the truth is, I don't want comfort. I've lost a baby and I'm angry with God." She started to ask Jenny to "go on" when the door's bell diverted their attention.

"Hey Phil!" shouted Jenny as a balding, rotund man entered the shop. She softly touched Sandra's arm and moved to welcome him. He tucked her under his side for a warm hug.

"I'm here for twelve thorny long-stemmed stems!" Phil laughed, heartily.

"I figured as much," said Jenny. "I've got them ready." She lifted a tissue-wrapped arrangement from the refrigerated cabinet.

"Beautiful," said Phil. "My wife will love them."

Sandra couldn't help but ask, "These are for your wife?"

Phil saw that Sandra's curiosity matched his when he first heard of a Thorn Bouquet.

"Do you mind me asking, why thorns?"

"In fact, I'm glad you asked," he said. "Four years ago my wife and I nearly divorced. After forty years, we were in a real mess, but we slogged through, problem by rotten problem. We rescued our marriage, our love, really. Last year at Thanksgiving I stopped in here for flowers. I must have mentioned surviving a tough process because Jenny told me that for a long time she kept a vase of rose stems - just the stems - as a reminder of what she learned from "thorny" times. That was good enough for me. I took home stems. My wife and I decided to label each one for a specific thorny situation and give thanks for what the problem taught us. I'm pretty sure this stem review has become a tradition."

Phil paid Jenny, thanked her again and as he left, said to Sandra, "I highly recommend the Special!"

"I don't know if I can be thankful for the thorns in my life." Sandra said to Jenny.

"Well, my experience says that thorns make roses more precious. We treasure God's providential care more during trouble than at any other time. Remember, Jesus wore a crown of thorns so that we might know His love. Do not resent thorns, actually be thankful for them."

Tears rolled down Sandra's cheeks. For the first time since the accident she loosened her grip on resentment. "I'll take twelve long-stemmed thorns, please."

“I hoped you would,” Jenny said. “I’ll have them ready in a minute. Then, every time you see them, remember to appreciate both good and hard times. We grow through both.”

“Thank you. What do I owe you?”

“Nothing. Nothing but a pledge to work toward healing your heart. The first year’s arrangement is always on me.” Jenny handed a card to Sandra. “I’ll attach a card like this to your arrangement but maybe you’d like to read it first. Go ahead, read it.”

“My God, I have never thanked You for my thorns! I have thanked You a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorns. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear, teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed to You by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.” George Matheson

Jenny said, “Happy Thanksgiving, Sandra,” handing her the Special. “I look forward to our knowing each other better.”

Sandra smiled. She turned, opened the door and walked toward hope.

4.15 Divorce

4.15.1 What God says about it

There is no question that God hates divorce, because he says so in Malachi 2:16:

For the Lord God of Israel says that he hates divorce.

In Mark 10:2-9, Jesus also says about divorce:

2 *“The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” testing Him.*

3 *And He answered and said to them “What did Moses command you?”*

4 *They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.”*

5 *And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.*

6 *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.’*

7 *‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,*

8 *‘and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.*

9 *“Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate.”*

10 *In the house his disciples also asked Him again about the same matter.*

11 *So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.*

12 *“And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”*

Therefore, God is saying that divorce among Christians is forbidden and that “hardness of the heart” is behind the divorce problem. It might be safe to say that sin is behind every divorce, regardless of the circumstances. On the other hand, we cannot say that every divorce is sinful. God permits divorce under certain circumstances, even though those circumstances were caused by sin. For instance, divorce and/or remarriage is righteous and allowed by God for the following five cases:

1. There has been sexual immorality or adultery (Matt. 5:31-32).
2. One’s spouse has died. (Rom. 7:2-3)
3. A believer is married to an unbelieving spouse and the unbelieving spouse departs the house. (1 Cor. 7:15).
4. When the marriage and divorce occurred prior to salvation. (2 Corinthians 5:17). When God promises the passing away of "old things," it surely includes divorce prior to salvation. After all, being alienated from God and at enmity with Him, how could any unbeliever possibly know His will regarding the choice of a lifetime mate? This falls within the context of God's superabundant grace to wipe our slate clean when we turn, by faith, to Christ the Lord.
5. Either spouse refuses to submit sexually to the to the other spouse. This is because the outcome of not submitting is lustful thoughts, usually by the husband, toward other women, which leads to "adultery of the mind" as described by Jesus in Matt. 5:27-28. Since adultery is also a basis for divorce, as indicated in Matt. 5:31-32, then technically, refusal to submit sexually is a grounds for divorce! See section 4.8.5.2: The Four Fundamental Laws of Sexual Satisfaction In Marriage for further details.

If Christians divorce and/or remarry for any reason other than those above, then the Bible clearly says they have committed sin and are, in effect, denying their faith.

4.15.2 What Kids Should Do If Their Parents are Divorced

The following provides a simple list to document how children should act who are from divorced parents that are living apart.

1. Your relationship to each of your parents is separate and special.
2. It is okay to say, "I don't want to talk about it," if one of your parents asks you about your other parent.
3. It is important to tell your parent, counselor, or an adult you trust about anything that hurts, confuses, or bothers you, even when it is dad or mom you have to talk about.
4. It is not a parent's business to know anything about the other parent's life when they are no longer together.
5. It is not okay for one parent to ask you details about your other parent's life.

6. You do not have to answer a parent's questions about the other parent, as for instance the following: 'What is your mom or dad] doing? Who does she [or he] talk to? What does she [or he] say? What does she [or he] wear?'
7. You can say, "Never mind."
8. You can say, "I don't want to talk about it."

4.15.3 Statistics on Divorce

The following alarming statistics are meant to show how devastating divorce can be on children and how to successfully lessen its impact. Divorce is a VERY serious and life-altering process that has profound consequences and should be considered only as an extreme measure. No parent who loves their child and puts their child's welfare above their own would get a divorce if they were familiar with all of the following statistics.

1. *Father-absence associated with divorce and sole maternal custody outcomes (expressed in diagnostic terms as the “paternal deficit”), is the primary predictor of many very serious problems for children, including:*³²

- 1.1. A 72% increase in the overall likelihood that a white teenage girl will become a single mother and a 100% increase for black teenage girls, with other studies reporting up to a 600% increase in teenage illegitimate births.
- 1.2. A 77% to 100% increase in the overall likelihood that a teenage boy will father an illegitimate child.
- 1.3. A twofold increase that a child, particularly a boy, will become a delinquent.
- 1.4. An 86% increase in the likelihood that a child will become a psychotic delinquent.
- 1.5. A threefold increase in the likelihood that a child will be involved in gang activity.
- 1.6. Presidential assassinations: Every Presidential assassination or attempted assassination has been by a male reared absent a father.
- 1.7. Up to 80% of rapists, motivated by varying psychological disorders.
- 1.8. A 200% increase in attempted or successful teen suicides.
- 1.9. A significant increase in the likelihood of homosexual behavior in males as well as females.
- 1.10. A significant increase in child sex-role conflicts, and a 100% correlation with gender identity disorders.
- 1.11. A significant decrease in school performance, a significant increase in disruptive school behavior; a significant decrease in performance on aptitude tests, in cognitive skills, in terms of grades, and is cumulative in nature; and predicts truancy and grade repetition.
- 1.12. A 200% increase in the likelihood that a child will require psychological treatment.
- 1.13. Low self-esteem in both girls and boys.
- 1.14. Difficulty for girls in building a stable family life in adulthood.
- 1.15. A substantial increase in men's odds of ending up in the lowest occupational stratum.
- 1.16. Fatal child abuse by mothers.
- 1.17. Child sexual abuse.
2. The assumption that younger children benefit from sole maternal custody outcomes rising from the “primary caretaker” doctrine is particularly false. Father-absence before the age of four or five

³² 1993 Gender Bias Task Force Report, Study of 2,778 divorces in St. Louis county. <http://acfc.org/study/mocourts.pdf>; pp 9-10.

- appear to have a more disruptive effect on the child's personality development than does father-absence beginning at a later period.³³
3. Father-absence is the greatest social problem we face. It not only hurts the futures of children, but it places irreconcilable burdens on state agencies and the courts to act as substitute husband, father, mother, mediator, family, and wage earner.³⁴
 4. Family Court Services Recommendations: Judge Thomas Ashworth of the San Diego Family Court said he and his colleagues accept the recommendations from the counselors more than 80 percent of the time. Their courtrooms are swamped with cases, so they prefer to rely on the expertise of the counselors. Disappointed parents call that "rubber-stamping."³⁵
 5. San Diego Family Court Custody Ruling Statistics: No statistics are compiled on the outcome of custody orders, but Chavez-Fallon said she looked at three months' worth of cases not too long ago and found this split: 30 percent of decisions are for joint physical custody with children dividing their time evenly in both parents' homes; 50 percent of the time, children are sent to live with the mother and visit the father; and 20 percent of the decisions have children live with dad and visit the mom.³⁶
 6. Waiting list for Family Court Services Mediation in San Diego: The waiting period now for a case to be assigned a Family Court Services counselor is four weeks. Hiring more counselors won't happen unless there's more money in the budget for it.³⁷
 7. Divorce Hurts Women: How has no-fault divorce hurt women? A new phenomenon has resulted from no-fault divorce laws: what commentators have called "the feminization of poverty ." The rate of child poverty, for example, is five times higher for children living with single mothers than for children in intact families. In 1992, 53.4% of female-headed households with children subsisted below the poverty line, compared with only 10.7% of all other families with children. Studies show a drop in income for both women and men, noting that women experience an income decline of about 30 percent while the divorced male will experience about a 10 percent drop in income. <http://www.rmfc.org/resf571.html>
 8. Divorce Hurts Fathers: Not only does no-fault divorce hurt women, divorce hurts men. The image of the successful professional man who leaves his faithful wife and children and runs off with his pretty young secretary is well ingrained in our national mind. The devastated wife and children are left to pick up the pieces. But is the grass really greener for the roaming father? No. Premature death rates for divorced men are double that of married men from such causes as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and strokes. The premature death rate from pneumonia is seven times larger for divorced men than for married men. The suicide rate for divorced white men is four times higher than for their married counterparts. Divorced or separated men undergo inpatient or outpatient psychiatric care at a rate 10 times that of married men. Divorce thus hurts fathers' relationship with their children, and may prove dangerous and even fatal physically and emotionally. <http://www.rmfc.org/resf571.html>
 9. Divorce Hurts Children: Studies have shown that children from disrupted marriages experience greater risk of injury, asthma, headaches, and speech defects than children from intact families. Suicide rates for children of divorce are much higher than for children from intact families. Children from disrupted marriages are over 70 percent more likely than those living with both

³³ Ibid, page 10.

³⁴ Ibid, page 10.

³⁵ "Judgement Daze", John Wilkens, San Diego Union Tribune, Oct 20, 1997.

³⁶ "Judgement Daze", John Wilkens, San Diego Union Tribune, Oct 20, 1997.

³⁷ "Judgement Daze", John Wilkens, San Diego Union Tribune, Oct 20, 1997.

biological parents to have been expelled or suspended from school. Delinquency rates are 10 to 15 percent higher in broken homes than in intact ones. Children whose parents have divorced are much more likely to drop out of school, to engage in premarital sex, and to become pregnant themselves outside of marriage. <http://www.rmfc.org/resf441.html>

10. Religion is Good for Marriage: Religious commitment has been shown to have a positive affect on marriage. "Several studies have demonstrated that regular church attenders have lower divorce rates than non-attenders," ³⁸ and that it isn't because of religion-based prohibitions against divorce. To the contrary, church attenders were simply found to be "happier with their marriages. This proved to be true even when investigators used special techniques to detect whether people were [responding truthfully]." Furthermore, it was found that the elevated sense of marital satisfaction among church attenders extended to their sexual relationship, a finding that "flies in the face of the prevailing wisdom, which portrays religion as being negative toward sex." Along with these findings, researchers have also found religious commitment to be associated with lower levels of drug abuse, alcoholism and juvenile delinquency. It is clear that religious commitment results in physical, mental and even marital health; there are even eternal benefits!
<http://www.rmfc.org/resf431.html>
11. Religion is Good for Children's and Parent's Health: New research demonstrates that religion is good for your health. For example, in 1987 University of Texas researchers "carefully examined 27 studies on church attendance and health." ³⁹ Their analysis revealed that in all but seven studies, "frequent church attenders were healthier as a group than less frequent attenders." In fact, researchers went so far as to suggest that "infrequent religious attendance should be regarded as a consistent risk factor for morbidity and mortality of various types." Researcher David Larson, in a study on men's blood pressure, found that "even smokers benefited from religion." Larson found that smokers who were not religious "were seven times more likely to have abnormal... [blood]... pressure than those who said [religion] was important." "In fact, smokers who attended church had the same blood pressure as non-smokers who did not." These findings led Larson to the conclusion that "if you're going to smoke, make sure you go to church." <http://www.rmfc.org/resf431.html>
12. In 1991, 54 percent of all poor families were maintained by women with no husband present. Among poor black families, 78.3 percent were maintained by women with no husband present, and for families of Hispanic origin, the comparable figure was 45.7 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). <http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/faststats/povertystats.html>
13. The United States has the highest proportion of single- parent families; nearly one child in four now lives with one parent (Hobbs, F., & Lippman, L., 1990).
<http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/faststats/povertystats.html>
14. In 1991, the poverty rate among children in female-headed families was 55 percent, more than five times the rate among married-couple families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992).
<http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/faststats/povertystats.html>
15. Being a woman increases one's chances of being poor by 60 percent. If one is also black or Hispanic and has a work history of being poorly paid, the chances of falling below the government's poverty threshold escalates. Nearly three- quarters (72 percent) of all the poor over age 65 are women (Older Women's League, 1988).
16. Early childhood experiences contribute to poor children's high rate of school failure, dropout, delinquency, early childbearing, and adult poverty (National Center for Children in Poverty, 1990).
<http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/faststats/povertystats.html>

³⁸ See Larson, D.B., "Religious involvement," in G. Rekers (Ed.) *Family Building* (Regal, Ventura, CA, 1985) p. 121-147.

³⁹ Levin, J.S. and Vanderpool, H.Y., "Is frequent religious attendance really conducive to better health?: Toward an epidemiology of religion," *Social Science Medicine*, 24(7):589-600, 1987.

17. One-quarter of all American children are born out of wedlock, and 40 percent of them will live in a single-parent family before they reach their 18th birthday (Special Report, Business Week, 1988). <http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/faststats/povertystats.html>
18. The most accurate predictor of a child's future is poverty. Stuck at the bottom of the economic ladder, poor women and men raise children in landscapes devoid of opportunity. "Research shows again and again that poverty and unemployment can more reliably predict who will marry, divorce, or commit and suffer domestic violence than can the best-tuned measure of values yet devised," writes Judith Stacey, a social scientist at U.C.-Davis. <http://www.cuttingloose.com/med.html>
19. Poverty rates decrease dramatically as years of school completed increases: in 1991 the poverty rate was 24.2 percent for householders who had not completed high school, 10.5 percent for those who had graduated from high school but not attended college, and 6.5 percent for those with 1 or more years of college (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). <http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/faststats/povertystats.html>
20. Poverty is associated with social circumstances that influence health. These may include limited parental education, extramarital births or single parenthood, adolescent parenthood, and, for minority groups, racial or ethnic discrimination. These economic and social burdens can engender feelings of despair and powerlessness that hinder healthy behavior (Klerman, L.V., & Parker, M., 1991). <http://garnet.berkeley.edu:3333/faststats/povertystats.html>
21. In California, 55% of all marriages end in divorce.
22. During the period from 1970 to 1990, the advent of no-fault divorce laws throughout the United states increased the divorce rates by 34 percent.⁴⁰ California needs to go back to fault-based divorce once again, where at least adultery and sexual immorality are considered as criteria for getting divorce.
23. Research suggests that after more than two decades of widespread dissolution of marriage, children of divorce are *not* as well off as those who grow up in intact families. According to the Family Research Council:⁴¹
 - 23.1. Three out of four teen suicides are committed by adolescents from broken homes.
 - 23.2. Children of divorce are 70 percent more likely to have been expelled from school and are twice as likely to drop out of school, compared to their peers who are in intact families.
 - 23.3. Seven out of ten preteens and teenagers in long-term correctional facilities come from broken homes.
24. A comprehensive analysis known as the California Children of Divorce Study found that more than a third of the children studied were dealing with moderate to severe depression five years after their parents' divorce. According to Wallerstein, almost all of the adolescent girls in the study "confronted issues of love, commitment, and marriage with anxiety, sometimes with very great concern about betrayal, abandonment, and not being loved."⁴²
25. A seventy-year longevity study reported in the American Journal of Public Health in 1995 indicated that individuals who were younger than twenty-one years of age when their parents divorced were likely to have a shorter life span than those whose families remained intact.
26. Approximately 40% of fathers have no contact with their father whatsoever following divorce. This phenomenon is explained in part by the fact that it is so painful for non-custodial dads to not be able to spend more time with their children because the courts won't allow them more. As a matter of fact, 80-90% of the dads are non-custodial dads who aren't allowed by the courts to share

⁴⁰ *Baby and Child Care*, Paul C. Reisser, M.D., 1997; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; p. 449.

⁴¹ *Baby and Child Care*, Paul C. Reisser, M.D., 1997; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; pp. 449-450.

⁴² *Baby and Child Care*, Paul C. Reisser, M.D., 1997; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; p. 450.

physical custody of the children with the mother and who usually end of seeing their children no more than once every two weeks. In some cases, this bias by the courts and the pain it creates has the effect has the effect of causing fathers to want to leave their children entirely to avoid the pain and the lack of empowerment they feel over the situation.⁴³

God is able to heal the broken pieces of your marriage, and by His love and forgiveness can restore the flame of love and desire between you and your partner. When real confession and repentance take place, along with true acceptance and forgiveness, the marriage can be restored and the level of happiness can become greater than you have ever known!

Jesus Christ taught us to forgive, but He also recognizes the serious effect of sexual immorality on the strength of the bond of the marriage. He has no words of condemnation to the partner who divorces because the other partner committed sexual sin. He allows it. He is not encouraging it, but only showing us that He understands and is willing to permit a divorce in such cases. But the higher standard that He would encourage us to consider is that of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration.⁴⁴

We also should remember that:

“The leading cause of divorce is marriage.”

Therefore, we should be VERY careful who we choose as mates, because we only get once chance!

4.16 The Humorous Side of Marriage

4.16.1 Women’s Rules for Relationships

For those of you who don't already know, these are the rules that are in effect in every relationship.

1. The female always makes the rules.
2. These rules are subject to change at any time without prior notification.
3. No male can possibly know all the rules.
4. If the female suspects that the male knows all the rules, she must immediately change some or all of the rules.
5. The female is never wrong.
6. If the female is wrong, it is because of a vagrant misunderstanding which was a direct result of something the male said or did wrong.
7. If rule number 6 applies, the male must immediately apologize for causing the misunderstanding.
8. The female can change her mind at any given point in time.
9. The male must never change his mind without express written consent of the female.
10. The female has every right to be angry or upset at any time.
11. The male must remain calm at all times, unless the female wants him to be angry or upset.
12. The female must under no circumstances let the male know whether she wants him to be calm, angry or upset.

⁴³ Focus on the Family Radio Program, Dr. James Dobson, August 29, 2000.

⁴⁴ Good Marriages Take Time, Bad Marriages Take More Time, David and Carole Hocking, ISBN 0-939497-40-9, Promise Publishing Co., 1996, p. 183.

13. Any attempt to document these rules could result in bodily harm.
14. The female always gets the last word!

(*) These rules are subject to change as the female sees fit. All rules are null and void under the PMS Exception Law

4.16.2 Men's Rules for Relationships

1. Learn to work the toilet seat; if it's up, put it down.
2. Don't cut your hair. Ever.
3. Don't make us guess. We're not mind readers and never will be.
4. If you ask a question you don't want an answer to, expect an answer you don't want to hear.
5. Sometimes, he's not thinking about you. Live with it.
6. He's never thinking about "The Relationship."
7. Get rid of your cat. And no, it's not different, its just like every other cat.
8. Dogs are better than cats.
9. Anything you wear is fine. Really.
10. Shopping is not everybody's idea of a good time.
11. You have enough clothes.
12. You have too many shoes.
13. Crying is blackmail. Use it if you must, but don't expect us to like it.
14. Ask for what you want. Subtle hints don't work.
15. No, he doesn't know what day it is. He never will. Mark anniversaries on the calendar.
16. Share the bathroom.
17. Share the closet.
18. Yes and no are perfectly acceptable answers.
19. A headache that lasts for 17 months is a problem. See a doctor.
20. Nothing says "I love you" like sex in the morning.
21. Check your oil.
22. We DID water the plants. They died anyway. Nobody knows why this happens.
23. If you must take us with you into Victoria's Secret, never, ever leave us alone. All the old fat ladies make mean faces at us and only add to our discomfort.
24. Sex on a weeknight is generally welcome. Three hours of post-coital conversation is not.
25. Compromise does not mean that we abandon our position in favor of yours.
26. If we see you in the morning and at night, why call us at work?
27. Butthead is the smart one.
28. Is it too much to ask to have the bra match the underwear?
29. You probably don't want to know what we're thinking about.
30. Silence does not need to be filled with discussions about "us" and "the relationship."
31. Things you can help with: the Sunday crossword, yard work, the dishes, cleaning, and grocery shopping.
32. Socks never constitute a gift.
33. Withdrawing sex, affection, or communication to get one's way in a relationship is blackmail. Don't even think about doing this because we don't like it.
34. Department stores and malls were designed so that when you want to look at bed linen, shower curtains or handbags, there are always some speakers, tires or sporting equipment nearby.
35. We don't know anything about handbags. Don't even ask.

4.16.3 Marriage Dictionary

Bachelor:

- 1) A guy who has avoided the opportunity to make some woman miserable.
- 2) A guy who is footloose and fiance-free.
- 3) A man who every morning comes to work from a different direction.
- 4) A man who never makes the same mistake once.
- 5) A nice guy who has cheated some nice girl out of her alimony.
- 6) A person who believes in life, liberty, and the happiness of pursuit.
- 7) A selfish guy who has cheated some woman out of a divorce.
- 8) The only man who has never told his wife a lie.

Bride: A woman with a fine prospect of happiness behind her.

Bridegroom: A gent who exchanges living quarters for a better half.

Cad: A man who doesn't tell his wife that he's sterile until she's pregnant.

Childish game: One at which your spouse beats you.

Compromise: An amiable arrangement between husband and wife whereby they agree to let her have her own way.

Diplomat: A man who can convince his wife she would look stout in a fur coat.

Domestic harmony: A condition brought about when the husband plays second fiddle and yet pays the piper.

Engagement: A call to arms; hence as day follows night, divorce is disarmament.

Gentleman:

- 1) A husband who steadies the stepladder so that his wife will not fall while she paints the ceiling.
- 2) A man who, when his wife drops her knitting, kicks it over to her so that she can easily pick it up.

Grand Slam Event: The honeymoon.

Housework: What the wife does that nobody notices until she doesn't do it.

Husband:

- 1) A man who buys his football tickets four months in advance and waits until December 24 to do his Christmas shopping.
- 2) A man who gives up privileges he never realized he had.
- 3) A man who stands by his wife in troubles she'd never have had if she didn't marry him.
- 4) A person who thinks he is the boss of the house, but in reality, houses the boss.
- 5) A person who is the boss of his house and has his wife's permission to say so.

Joint Checking Account: A handy little device which permits your wife to beat you to the draw.

LOVE: An obsessive delusion that is cured by MARRIAGE.

Marital Freedom: The liberty that allows a husband to do exactly that which his wife pleases.

Matrimony: A knot tied by a preacher, but untied by a lawyer.

Miss: A title with which we brand unmarried women to indicate that they are in the market.

Mistress: Something between a mister and a mattress.

Mother-in-Law: A woman who destroys her son-in-law's peace of mind by giving him a piece of hers.

Mrs: A job title involving heavy duties, light earnings, and no recognition.

Nuns: Women who marry god. If they divorce Him, do they get half the universe?

Old Maid: A critical reflection on every bachelor.

Sex drive: A physical craving that begins in adolescence and ends at MARRIAGE.

Shotgun wedding: A case of wife or death.

Spinster: A bachelor's wife.

Spouse: Someone who will stand by you through all the trouble you wouldn't have had if you'd stayed single in the first place.

Visionary: Marrying a man with intentions of changing and reforming him.

Wedding Ring: The world's smallest handcuffs.

Wedlock: The deep, deep peace of the double bed after the hurly-burly of the chaise-lounge.

Wife:

- 1) A mate who is forever complaining about not having anything to wear at the very same time that she complains about not having enough room in the closet.
- 2) The perfect acquisition for any gentleman feeling himself to have excessive control over his personal affairs.

Widow: A woman who can find no fault with her husband.

Widowhood: The only compensation some women get out of a marriage.

4.16.4 Letter to my Wife/Husband

To My Dear Wife,

During the past year, I have tried to make love to you 365 times. I have succeeded 12 times. The following list is why I didn't succeed often.

1. The sheets are clean.54 times
2. It is too late.17 times
3. Too tired from shopping all day. 49 times
4. It is too early. 20 times
5. It is too hot. 15 times
6. Pretending to be asleep. 15 times
7. The neighbors will hear us.3 times
8. Headache.22 times
9. Sunburn. 7 times
10. Your Mother will hear us.9 times
11. Not in the mood. 43 times
12. You will wake the baby. 17 times
13. Watching the late show. 6 times
14. New Hairdo.5 times
15. Too sore.16 times
16. Wrong time of month.36 times
17. Have to get up early. 19 times

Of the 12 times I did succeed, the activity was not satisfactory because 2 times you just laid there, 4 times you reminded me that there was a crack in the ceiling, 3 times you told me to hurry up and get it over with, 2 times I had to wake you up to tell you that I had finished, and once I was afraid I had hurt you because I felt you move.

To My Dear Husband,

I think that you have gotten things a little confused. Here are the real reasons you did not get it more often than you did.

1. Came home drunk and tried to screw the cat. 15 times
2. Did not come home at all.36 times
3. Did not come.21 times
4. Came too soon. 33 times
5. Went soft before you got it in.33 times
6. Toes cramped.10 times
7. Working too late.38 times
8. Have to get up early to play golf. 29 times
9. Had a fight and someone kicked you in the balls. . . 2 times
10. Caught Herman in your zipper.4 times
11. Caught a cold and your nose kept running.3 times
12. Burned your tongue on hot coffee.3 times
13. You had a splinter in your finger. 2 times
14. Came in your PJ's while reading a dirty book. . . .16 times
15. Watching football on TV. 98 times

16. Hemorrhoids flared up. 10 times

Of the times we did get together, the reason I laid still was because you were screwing the sheets. I wasn't talking about the crack in the ceiling. What I said was, would you prefer me on my back or kneeling. The time you felt me move was because you farted and I was trying to breathe!!

4.16.5 Quotes on Marriage

1. "MARRIAGE is a great institution. I'm just not ready for an institution."
2. "I recently read that LOVE is entirely a matter of chemistry. That must be why my wife treats me like toxic waste." -David Bissonette
3. "I've sometimes thought of marrying, and then I've thought again." -Noel Coward, 1956
4. "When a man steals your wife, there is no better revenge than to let him keep her." -Sacha Guitry
5. "Eighty percent of married men cheat in America. The rest cheat in Europe." Jackie Mason
6. "MARRIAGE is like a cage; one sees the birds outside desperate to get in, and those inside desperate to get out." -Montaigne
7. "After MARRIAGE, husband and wife become two sides of a coin; they just can't face each other, but still they stay together." -Hemant Joshi
8. "MARRIAGE is a three-ring circus: engagement ring, wedding ring, and suffering. "
9. "MARRIAGE is not a word; it is a sentence. "
10. "MARRIAGE is the triumph of imagination over intelligence. "
11. "Second MARRIAGE is the triumph of hope over experience. "
12. "MARRIAGE is when a man and woman become as one; the trouble starts when they try to decide which one. "
13. "Before MARRIAGE, a man yearns for the woman he loves. After MARRIAGE, the 'Y' becomes silent. "
14. "If you want your spouse to listen and pay strict attention to every word you say, talk in your sleep."
15. Getting married is very much like going to a continental restaurant with friends. You order what you want, then when you see what the other fellow has, you wish you had ordered that.
17. At the cocktail party, one woman said to another, "Aren't you wearing your wedding ring on the wrong finger?" The other replied, "Yes I am , I married the wrong man."

18. Man is incomplete until he is married. then he is really finished.
19. A little boy asked his father, "Daddy, how much does it cost to get married?" and the father replied, "I don't know son, I'm still paying for it."
20. Marriage is an institution in which a man loses his bachelor's degree and the woman gets her master's.
21. Young son: "Is it true, Dad, I heard that in some parts of Africa a man doesn't know his wife until he marries her?" Dad: "That happens in most countries, son."
22. Then there was a man who said, "I never knew what real happiness was until I got married; and then it was too late."
23. A happy marriage is a matter of give and take; the husband gives and the wife takes.
24. When a newly married man looks happy we know why. When a TO-BE married man looks happy we ALL know why. But when a ten-year married man looks happy - We wonder WHY.
25. Married life is very frustrating. In the first year of marriage, the man speaks and the woman listens. In the second year, the woman speaks and the man listens. In the third year, they both speak and the neighbors listen.
26. After a quarrel, a wife said to her husband, "You know, I was a fool when I married you." and the husband replied, "Yes, dear, but I was in love and didn't notice it."
27. It doesn't matter how often a married man changes his job, he still ends up with the same boss.
28. A man inserted an "ad" in the classifieds: "Wife wanted." Next day he received a hundred letters. They all said the same thing: "You can have mine."
29. When a man opens the door of his car for his wife, you can be sure of one thing: either the car is new or the wife.
30. A perfect wife is one who helps the husband with the dishes.
31. A woman was telling her friend, "It is I who made my husband a millionaire." "And what was he before you married him," asked the friend. Woman replied, "A multi-millionaire."

4.16.6 The Five Kinds Of Sex

The first is Smurf Sex. This happens during the honeymoon; you both keep doing it until you're blue in the face.

The second is Kitchen Sex. This is at the beginning of the marriage; you'll have sex anywhere, anytime. Including the kitchen.

The third kind is Bedroom Sex. You've calmed down a bit, perhaps have kids, so you've got to do it in the bedroom.

The fourth kind is Hallway Sex. This is where you pass each other in the hallway and say, "Screw you!"

There is also a fifth kind of sex: Courtroom Sex. This is when you get divorced and your wife screws you in front of everyone in the court.

4.16.7 Marriage as Slavery⁴⁵

History teaches that spiritual, mental, and physical slavery is the natural state of man. Freedom, like a garden, must be constantly tended. Vigilance, always the price of liberty, is highly recommended where the predatory female is concerned. Marriage is a form of slavery, even for the predatory, and with its tricky packaging, very dangerous.

Women are not to blame for the ruin of millions of men through the marriage mill. The astounding fact is that men have, of their own free wills, chosen this path to destruction. Like Adam in the Garden, they picked slavery over the prospect of being alone. They have been led, en masse, by the genitals, chortling and gurgling like morons, to their own damnation. They must wear the ball and chain of holy matrimony and eventually accept that they are no longer the masters of their homes or futures. Most have little chance of ever being deprogrammed.

4.16.8 Tips for the Marriage Minded⁴⁶

Q: Can you list some points for the marriage-minded to think about and beware of prior to marriage?

A: Don't even give marriage the remotest consideration unless you are willing to accept:

- Being a guest in your own home.
- Losing your pension.
- Living with the constant threat of alimony.
- Paying \$75.00 for a bar of soap shaped like a frog.
- Knowing that between fifty and ninety cents of every dollar you make legally belongs to your wife.
- Waking up twenty five years from now with a creature that shares few if any interests with you-- but controls your estate.
- Knowing that your children can be taken from you at any time and used to legally extort money from you that far exceeds their support costs.
- Being just another member of the vast army of subservient worker-drones in the matriarchal society.
- Supporting a large cast of doctors and lawyers.
- Having someone else decide how you are going to spend your money, your vacations, and your energy.

⁴⁵ The Predatory Female; Reverend Lawrence Shannon, Banner Books, Inc., 1989, ISBN 0-9615938-0-6, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁶ The Predatory Female; Reverend Lawrence Shannon, Banner Books, Inc., 1989, ISBN 0-9615938-0-6, pp. 85-87.

The fact is, you show me a married man and I'll show you a man who's been hustled. Essentially, marriage (in America) is the handing of a rubber mallet to a selected woman, placing your balls on an anvil, and instructing her to take a swing any time she's so inclined. If you subsequently decide there is something patently one sided about the arrangement, the courts will encourage her to take numerous parting swings as you default. Further, you may be ordered to subject yourself, once per month, to other ritualistic hammerings (like sending her a large check, drawn on your account).

4.16.9 The Marriage License⁴⁷

Almost any dangerous act, potentially hazardous to individuals and involving the government, requires a license. Of course, there is a fee. The license officially invites the state into your relationship with the bride and obligates you to a plethora of responsibilities, much of which is not understood even by experts. This results in a tidal wave of daily litigation across the nation.

The licenses are usually sold at courthouses because it's convenient for the state and helps familiarize you with the building that may become your second home during your divorce. More than half of the licensees return as disolvees within a few years.

The license has certain requirements. Generally you pay the fee and present evidence of a blood test. You volunteer to become a human pin cushion for some state recognized physician. In the name of the state, he draws your blood. This ritual, reeking with symbolism, is one of the last subtle warnings to the prospective groom. It invariably goes unappreciated.

4.16.10 The Lifetime Haircut⁴⁸

The predatory female is like Delilah. This is because the predatory female has a propensity for weakening the man. This is an ongoing occurrence in any relationship, but marriage provides an ideal setting for the gradual siphoning of his strength. A woman can cause so much needless anxiety in a man that his health suffers. He may become nervous, irritable, and develop heart trouble. Her enfeebling maneuvers provide her with a fiendish, subconscious satisfaction. The crippling effects of marriage, on men, are well known to her. A married man often acts more subdued and quiet when in the presence of his wife. She'll sap his strength, gradually wearing him down over the years in thousands of little, cumulative ways, until she's the stronger. Years of taking out the trash and picking up dog shit, among countless other indignities, finally break his spirit. The biblical account of Samson and Delilah is germane to the male versus the predatory female today. The cunning subtleties of the predatory female in the acquisitive mode are extremely dangerous, ergo Delilah cajoles Samson into revealing the secret of his strength. Later, like the man lured into marriage, Samson was unaware his strength had gone. He became a captive, was ridiculed, and finally destroyed himself.

4.16.11 The Husband as Anti-Hero⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The Predatory Female; Reverend Lawrence Shannon, Banner Books, Inc., 1989, ISBN 0-9615938-0-6, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁸ The Predatory Female; Reverend Lawrence Shannon, Banner Books, Inc., 1989, ISBN 0-9615938-0-6, pp. 72.

⁴⁹ The Predatory Female; Reverend Lawrence Shannon, Banner Books, Inc., 1989, ISBN 0-9615938-0-6, pp. 75-76.

For years it's been fashionable to portray the husband as a bumbling, subservient mental retard, especially in motion pictures and television. On TV sitcoms, the married man is often the subject of constant ridicule from the wife and her friends as he does one stupid thing after another. Sometimes he's a bigot, at others he's shown up by his wife or kids. The undertone is that the husband is a non-contributor, a problem, or a stumbling block. In commercials he is shown by his wife and a female real estate agent how they really can afford the new house, whereupon he goes bounding around the front yard like a moron. Or they might show him making a total disaster of dinner on the night he is left alone with the children. The unspoken message is that when the chips are down, it's the wife or another female that knew all along what was best. Conversely, when a real hero appears, he is most often single. How would Superman, The Lone Ranger, James Bond, or even Jesus Christ have come off as a married man? The answer is: terrible. Married men are hard to sell as heroes. A picture of James Bond trying to placate a shrieking wife while she threatens to have his wages garnished doesn't fit the hero image. A married man is a cornered man. He is a man who has lost something, and this makes it hard for him to be the classic, free thinking, and independent hero.

4.16.12 How the Predatory Female Uses Guilt to Manipulate Males⁵⁰

Guilt is one of the predatory female's most powerful tools. With guilt, she keeps her victims on the defensive. She uses it on males from a young age, at the outset of dating, to control them. She is surprised at how eagerly they accept this charade. She makes them feel guilty about simply wanting sex, a basic, primal urge. Once successful at that, the pattern is set. Cultivating a habit of making men feel apologetic about their wants, sexual or otherwise, she assumes the aristocrat role--expecting things done for her--and silently demands that her male companion take the role of butler, chauffeur, valet, and financial benefactor. The male, while simultaneously suffering from a guilt trip and nurturing a sniveling desire to get laid, is delighted to pick up the tab. Often this process continues until she has him backed into a psychological corner where he sees his only redemption as marriage. Her acceptance of his proposal is a pardon from his guilt feelings and somehow justifies, in his confused mind, the indignities he's suffered for occasional sexual rewards. Both the predatory female and organized religion have used guilt as a method of control for thousands of years.

⁵⁰ The Predatory Female; Reverend Lawrence Shannon, Banner Books, Inc., 1989, ISBN 0-9615938-0-6, pp. 80-81.

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5.1 Goals of Parenting

1. To raise a child who loves God (Deut. 6:4-9).
2. To raise a child who is happy, healthy, confident, cooperative, and responsible.
3. To build a strong, lifelong relationship between parent and child.
4. To help children grow to be a responsible adult.
5. To raise a loving and lovable child.

5.2 Role of Parents

The Bible is the ultimate authority on the role of parents. It has the following things to say about the role of parents:

Table 5-1: Role of Parents

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Train your child	Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.	Prov. 22:6
2	Teach your children to love the Lord	“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign in your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”	Deut. 6:4-9
3	Fathers don't provoke the children to wrath	Fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord	Eph. 6:4
4	Discipline your children	The rod and rebuke gives wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame on his mother.	Prov. 29:15
5	Correct your son	Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.	Prov. 29:17
6	A wise son makes a glad father	A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother.	Prov. 10:1
7	Chasten your son while he is young	Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction.	Prov. 19:18
8	Remove foolishness from a child with correction	Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.	Prov. 22:15
9	Do not withhold correction	Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.	Prov. 23:13

While fathers are identified as the parents responsible for setting the pattern for child rearing, mothers usually do much more of the training and instructing of families' children. Mothers and fathers need to agree on their approach to child rearing and support one another in their efforts with their children.

Both parents are to be obeyed and honored equally by their children (Eph. 6:1-2). Parental responsibility is set out in two ways: First, what they are *not* to do—“do not provoke your children to wrath.” Parents are not to overdiscipline in a reign of terror that will result in bitterly hostile children (Eph. 6:4) or children who give up on life (Col. 3:21). Second, what parents are to do—“but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” To “bring them up” involves three ideas:

1. Parenting is a continuous job. As long as a child is a dependent, parents are responsible for rearing them so they become the people God wants them to be.
2. Parenting is a loving job. To “bring up” means literally “to nourish tenderly.” Children should be objects of tender, loving care.
3. Parenting is a twofold job involving:
 - 3.1. nurture (lit., “child training”)—all that children need for physical, mental, and spiritual development
 - 3.2. admonition (lit., “corrective” discipline of the Lord)

Fathers and mothers are God’s constituted home authority (Prov. 1:8, 6:20-22) to nurture children along godly paths and to admonish them away from ungodly ones. Fathers and mothers who do not discipline their children are parents who are themselves undisciplined and disobedient to God’s will.

Prov. 22:6 sets out two stages in the process of godly child rearing: first, the method, “Train up a child in the way he should go”; and second, the result, “when he is old he will not depart from it.”

The method involves three parts:

1. The concept of training—“Train up.” This does not denote corporal punishment but rather includes three ideas:
 - 1.1. Dedication. This is the consistent meaning of the word in its other Old Testament occurrences (Deut. 20:5; 1 Kin. 8:63; 2 Chr. 7:5). Child training must begin with dedication of the child to God; the parent must realize that the child belongs exclusively to God and is given to the parent only as a stewardship.
 - 1.2. Instruction. This is the meaning of this word as it is used in the Jewish writings; the parents are to instruct or cause their children to learn everything essential in pleasing God.
 - 1.3. Motivation. This is the meaning of the word in Arabic, as it is used to describe the action of a midwife who stimulates the palate of the newborn babe so it will take nourishment. Parents are to create a taste or desire within the child so that he is internally motivated (rather than externally compelled) to do what God wants him to do.
2. The recipient of training—“a child.” This is one of seven Hebrew words translated by the English word “child” and would better be translated by our word “dependent.” As long as the child is dependent on his parents he is to be the recipient of training, regardless of his age.
3. The content of the training—“in the way that he should go.” The thought is that at each stage of development the parents or guardians are to dedicate, instruct, and motivate the child to do what God evidently has best equipped the child to do for Him. This is graphically illustrated by Joshua when he said, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15).

Proverbs are wisdom statements: general truths about the most important issues of life. If God’s process has been followed, the desired results usually occur. A child can reject the training of godly parents, but usually godly parenting results in godly adult offspring. The result includes the time of realization—“when he is old”—this is best understood as being parallel with “a child,” hence, “when he is independent,” that is, no longer economically dependent upon parents, referring to the time when the

child leaves the parents' home to establish another home. The result includes the nature of realization—"he will not depart from it." Persistent, careful, godly parenting produces adult children whose Christian faith and commitment are unwavering.

One of the most important things a parent can do for their child is to set a good example. The following poem sums up why:

BY YOUR EXAMPLE⁵¹

*He whipped his boy for lying and his cheeks were flaming red,
And of course there's no denying there was truth in what he said—
That a liar's always hated. But the little fellow knew
That his father often state many things that were untrue.*

*He caught the youngster cheating and he sent him up to bed.
And it's useless now repeating all the bitter things he said:
He talked of honor loudly as a lesson to be learned,
And forgot he'd boasted proudly of the cunning tricks he'd turned.*

*He heard the youngster swearing and he punished him again.
He'd have no boy as daring as to utter words profane.
Yet the youngster could have told him—poor misguided little elf
That it seemed unfair to scold him when he often cursed himself.*

*All in vain is splendid preaching, and the noble things we say.
All our talk is wasted teaching if we do not lead the way.
We can never by reviewing all the sermons on the shelves,
Keep the younger hands from doing what we often do ourselves.*

Parents have a right to:

- Friendships
- Privacy
- Time for yourself
- Respect for your property
- A life apart from the children

5.2.1 **The First Parent: God**

Whenever your kids are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to God's kids. After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing He said to them was: "Don't."

"Don't what?" Adam asked.

"Don't eat the Forbidden Fruit," God replied.

⁵¹ Exposing the Myths of Parenthood, Dr. David Jeremiah, World Books Publisher, ISBN 0-8499-3087-1, 1988, p. 94.

"Forbidden fruit? We got Forbidden Fruit? Hey, Eve, we got Forbidden Fruit!"

"No way!"

"WAY!"

"Don't eat that fruit!" said God.

"Why?"

"Because I am your Father and I said so!" said God, wondering why He hadn't stopped after making the elephants.

A few minutes later God saw the kids having an apple break and was angry.

"Didn't I tell you not to eat that fruit?" the 'First Parent' asked.

"Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?"

"I dunno," Eve answered.

"She started it!" Adam said.

"Did not!"

"DID so!"

"DID NOT!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own...thus the pattern was set and it has never changed.

But there is reassurance in this story. If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give them wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be too hard on yourself. If God had trouble handling children, what made you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

5.2.2 Role of Fathers⁵²

A girl's father is the first man in her life, and probably the most influential. Absent or involved, loving or rejecting, what he is or was leaves a lasting imprint. Most women have not analyzed their relationships with their fathers, and until recently the father-daughter bond has not received the spotlight it deserves. A woman may speak of her father with pride or revulsion, she may compare him favorably or unfavorably to the other men in her life. But whatever life with father has been, a father's role sets the stage for a woman's performance.

⁵² Portions from Exposing the Myths of Parenthood, Dr. David Jeremiah, World Books Publisher, ISBN 0-8499-3087-1, 1988, pp. 25-37.

It's not easy to define fatherhood in our society, because the roles of men and women have changed so that *parenting* and *parenthood* and androgynous terms. A few generations ago the duties and obligations were more clearly defined: father brought home the bacon and mother cooked it. This generation of kids has grown up in a changing society that accepts women who work outside of the home and men who do household chores; children don't think this is unusual, as long as their basic needs are met. But if women can do the jobs previously done by men, what purpose does father have?

In a two-parent family, the father should provide the bulk of the family income. The Bible says: "But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8, NASB). However, to be a *breadwinner* is more than just putting food on the table and a new car in the garage. It's providing the little treats a child will cherish long after the mortgage is paid.

A father is also for understanding. That's a tough one, because more often we dads say, "I just don't understand her!" Perhaps it's because we haven't tried to understand. I admit, a girl isn't easy to figure out; she's a miniature woman, and no man alive would dare say he understood women. As soon as he made that presumptuous statement he would be branded a liar!

Fathers are for role models. It's a scary thing to realize that *what we are* affects our children more than *what we say*. Daughters will perceive how women should be treated (or not treated) according to how Dad treats Mother and other women. A girl gets the picture of what to be from the way she sees her father react to women in general and to her in particular. The days of sharply defined roles for men and woman are long gone. A father may be a career model for his daughter, something which was exceptional in past generations. The popular adage "like father, like son" implies that sons are more like their dads in personality traits. That is not always true. A girl may be a great deal like her father, especially if he spends much time with her. In an article on "How Fathers Influence Daughters," Dr. Alexandra Symons, associate clinical professor of psychiatry at the New York University School of Medicine, made a study of women who had high commitments to work. "Most of the studies show that the highest percentage of women who aspire to careers have been encouraged or influenced by men, their fathers, usually," she said.

We fathers are very important to our daughters lives. And I think we see what a good father means to a girl, it makes it easier to be one.

Below is a poem about how Dad's can influence their sons:

Time With Dad

What shall you give to one small boy?
A glamorous game, a tinsel toy,
A barlow knife, a puzzle pack,
A train that runs on curving track?
A picture book, a real live pet...
No, there's plenty of time for such things yet.

Give him a day for his very own,
Just one small boy and his Dad alone,
A walk in the woods, a romp in the park,
A fishing trip from dawn to dark,

Give him the gift that only you have,
The companionship of his dear Dad.

Games are outgrown and toys decay,
But he'll never forget it if you give him a day.

If I've learned one thing during these days of growing family awareness in my life, it's been this: there are others who can counsel, others who can make personnel decisions, others who can administrate the organization, but there is only one man in the whole world who can be a father to my children--and that's me! I had better be that father while I have the opportunity!

5.2.3 Role of Mothers⁵³

“An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.”
Spanish Proverb

If we examine the lives of a couple of outstanding Old Testament mothers—Miriam, mother of Moses, and Hannah, mother of Samuel—we find six principles of success for raising boys that are not found in *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Family Living*. By using these same principles, mothers today may find little need for the “How to” articles which are currently so popular.

Principle One: Be a mother of faith. “By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict” (Hebrews 11:23).

Its difficult to imagine that Moses’ mother put him in a little basket and set him down among the crocodiles. However, putting your child’s life in the care of health professionals may be just as frightening as seeing your baby drifting down the Nile. Every mother who has had the terrifying experience of a child’s sudden illness knows the difficulty of trusting the Lord for his safety.

We have been entrusted with these lives for a time and only God can give inexperienced human beings the wisdom to train exuberant, bouncing, accident-prone, wild little creatures into mature manhood.

Principle Two: Be careful not to be overprotective. Moses’ mother and Samuel’s mother put their sons in God’s hands with prayers in their hearts. A boy may be robbed of his self-esteem and confidence by a mother who is constantly saying, “Be careful, now...watch out...don’t get hurt.” One man told me that his mother had programmed him as a youngster to believe he was a “delicate child.” As he grew up, he avoided sports because she was afraid he would catch cold or be hurt. He struggled with his concept of manhood and compensated by overdrinking. A boy needs to explore, rough-house, get dirty, and try new things without a worried mother hovering over him. Most mothers have a certain protective instinct built into their make-up that needs to be tempered somewhat with the boys in the family.

⁵³ Portions from Exposing the Myths of Parenthood, Dr. David Jeremiah, World Books Publisher, ISBN 0-8499-3087-1, 1988, pp. 71-75.

Principle Three: Teach your children at home. Too often parents believe that if their children are in Sunday school every week, if they have learned the memory verses which are required to earn their gold stars on the chart, and if they pray before meals, then that is sufficient for their spiritual growth.

Remember how Samuel was sent to Eli, the priest? Eli, of course, had some no-good sons, and Samuel must have grown up with those fellows; however, as a result of his mother's early teaching, and her continual prayers, Samuel grew up to be a great man of God.

Timothy was the young man of whom the apostle Paul said, "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives in you also." (2 Timothy 1:5).

Today there are Bible stories to read, cassettes to hear, and games to play. Never before has there been such an abundance of Christian music and concerts. Learn some of the catchy songs that children enjoy; sing them when you're in the car or around the house. Too many kids seem to know more jingles from television commercials than they do songs about Jesus.

Principle Four: Teach them that they're special. As kids grow up they have many forces attempting to discourage their potential; they need all the reinforcement we can give them. We should avoid as parents saying to our children such things as "He's really very bashful," or speak some other trait into existence by emphasizing it. Calling a son "Stupid," "Knucklehead," "Dummy," "Stumblebum," or some other name, even in fun, makes an impression on him which he will unconsciously follow.

We can see how important self-esteem is from this true story. A certain boy's mother was a dominating person, who displayed no love for anyone. She had been married three times, and her second husband divorced her because she abused him. The child never experienced love or discipline; he as just shoved around.

His mother told him, "Don't ever bother me at work; I don't want you pestering me." He was totally rejected. He had a high I.Q., but dropped out of high school. He joined the Marines, but was given a dishonorable discharge. He had no talent or skill; he didn't even have a driver's license.

He traveled to a foreign country, met a woman and soon their marriage began to fail. His wife rejected him, but he begged her to let him come back. Soon afterward he returned to the United States. The only talent he had was handling a rifle, and on November 22, 1963, he used this ability from the third story of a book storage building in Dallas, Texas, to fire three shots that changed the course of a nation. His name was Lee Harvey Oswald.

His home life, from childhood to adulthood, neglected to give him three important factors: love, discipline, and a sense of self-worth.

Of course, Oswald is an extreme example of what can happen to children who are rejected, but sometimes we need an impression painted in vivid, living color to jolt us to reinforce the special qualities our sons possess.

Principle Five: Teach your son responsibility. One mother said she told her boy, "I don't care what job, business, or profession you choose, but one thing that will carry you far in whatever you choose is to develop a sense of responsibility."

Most boys are not responsible by nature, but by training. Make a list, post deadlines for tasks to be done, and avoid the nagging. If a job is unsatisfactory, have him repeat it. “Isn’t there something you forgot?” is much kinder than saying with an exasperated sigh, “Can’t you ever do anything right the first time?” We learn by making mistakes.

Keeping a sense of humor is essential in teaching our children and keeping our sanity. One mother after pleading, demanding, and cajoling her son to pick up his clothes, she draped them on the lamppost outside the front door and when he came home from school they were waving merrily in the breeze. She simply said, “That’s where all your clothes will be that you leave on the floor.” The boy has grown into a young man and still tells the story on himself.

Principle Six: Show sons that their father has the final authority. By doing this, a mother teaches her sons to be strong leaders for God, secure in their masculinity. After all, a boy is the only thing God can use to make a man.

Motto for mothers:

Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious.
Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way.
Pour out your souls for them in prayer victorious.
And all though spendest Jesus will repay.⁵⁴

5.3 Role of Children

The Bible is the ultimate authority on the role of children within the family. It has the following things to say about the role of children:

Table 5-2: Role of Children

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Listen to your parents and heed them	My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck	Prov. 1:8
2	Honor your father and mother	Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”	Eph. 6:1-3
3	Obey your parents	Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.	Col. 3:20
4	Children be obedient as Christ was obedient to the Father, even to the point of death	“who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”	Phil. 2:6-8
5	Children heed your father’s	A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a	Prov. 13:1

⁵⁴ “O, Zion Haste,” a hymn by Mary Ann Thompson, 1870.

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
	instruction	scoffer does not listen to rebuke.	
6	Do not curse your father or mother	Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.	Prov. 20:20
7	Listen to your father	Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.	Prov. 23:22
8	Respect the law and do not hang out with pleasure-seekers	Whoever keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons shames his father.	Prov. 28:7

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible agree that children have only one responsibility in the family—to obey their parents. The admonition of Solomon in Prov. 1:8 is more fully explained by Paul in Eph. 6:1-3: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’” “Children” is an inclusive term. It is not a matter of either sex or age that is involved.

Twice in Scripture God has intervened and directly stated what He would have children do. The last time was nearly two thousand years ago when He gave a revelation to Paul for the church. The first time was nearly thirty-four hundred years ago when He gave a revelation to Moses and Israel in which He commanded, “Honor your father and your mother.” God’s will for children is that they are to obey their parents. The expression “in the Lord” does not limit the responsibility only to the circumstances where the parents are believers. Col. 3:20 clearly points out that children are to obey their parents “in all things,” not just in those things pertaining to Christian living. “In the Lord” more properly is understood to mean by the Lord or because it is the Lord’s directive (this is what God says children are to do). “For this is right” indicates that for children to obey their parents is righteous or God-like. Such obedience is perfectly illustrated by God the Son who was completely obedient to God the Father, even though that obedience resulted in His death (Phil. 2:6-8).

Two things are promised to children who obey their parents: it will be well with them—they will have a happy life; and they will have a long life. These are the two things that children want most, and obedience to parents is the only way to assure them. That is why this is the first commandment with promise; for it springs all the other important issues of life. Children who have not learned to obey their parents, who are God’s representatives in the family, will not learn to obey God.

Children respecting their parents is the first and most important area where children begin to learn respect for authority, and that respect for authority is needed throughout the rest of their life and in all walks of life, including: 1. Marriage; 2. Job; 3. Church; 4. Law; 5. Government. Respect for authority is the foundation of our civilization, and that respect must begin with respect for parents.

Children have a right to:

- be raised in a safe and loving home
- friendships outside the family
- privacy
- respect for property

5.4 Characteristics of Empathetic and Effective Caregiver Communications⁵⁵

I believe that the most "sensitive" and "responsive" parents in Ainsworth and her colleagues research, the "effective" mothers in White and Watt's research, the mothers providing "optimal maternal care" in Clarke-Stewart's research, the "skilled interactor" of Carew et al's research all were providing consistent gratification of the children's physical and psychological safety needs; their words and actions consistently maintaining the child's state of acknowledgement and contentment.

I believe that the caregivers' level of communication skills, to a great extent, determines how they can provide the child with experiences that both maintain the child's state of acknowledgement and contentment and contribute to his or her accurate perception of experiencing. The communication skills that caregivers display when they interact with a toddler, as in situations described by researchers such as Clarke-Stewart, provide the verbal and non-verbal "tools" that, in turn, the toddler uses when exploring his or her world. On the other hand, caregivers who are not prompt and sensitive in their responding to infant and toddler distress signals are likely to find their toddler's becoming increasingly fearful of them, yet increasingly dependent upon them as well.

Furthermore, caregivers who neither display high levels of communication skills to their young children nor involve themselves in complex, expressive play with them are likely to have toddlers who react with varying degrees of confusion and frustration when faced with demanding tasks. Also, the lack of appropriate models of behavior leaves them without competent directions for actions, and without a maximum amount of resources with which to build their "house." They will lack appropriate "motivation" "tools," "Material" and "skills" for the building process itself.

Based on all the above, I think the most effective and empathetic communications, especially in problem and need-arousing situations, contain all of the following "elements," "ingredients" or "messages" and in the following sequence:

1. Clear and unambiguous, verbal and non-verbal, communications which indicate that the adult is aware of and understands the child's feelings, wishes, and desires, including how the child's social actions derive from these inner experiences.
2. Clear and unambiguous, verbal and non-verbal, communications which indicate that the adult acknowledges the child's feelings, needs, wishes and desires as natural and valid human experiences.
3. Clear and unambiguous, verbal and non-verbal, communications which indicate what the adult thinks and feels about the way the child's expressing his or her inner experiences. The child's feelings and desires are indeed natural and valid human experiences but the way the child is expressing them might be acceptable and arouse specific thoughts and feelings in the caregiver.
4. If the child's actions are not acceptable, clear and unambiguous, verbal and non-verbal, communications indicating alternative ways for the child to express his or her feelings in the present. These alternatives should be provided immediately, not after some period of delay. The caregiver should also ask for, and be open to, child alternatives and open to compromise.
5. If the child's actions are not acceptable, clear and unambiguous, verbal and non-verbal, communications indicating how the child can express his or her feelings, needs or desires in the

⁵⁵ Until We Are 6, Stollack, Gary E.; 1978, Robert E. Kreiger Publishing Company, ISBN 0-88275-653; p. 68-71

future. Again, several alternatives should be offered by caregiver and child and compromises reached.

As I will emphasize in the next chapter, it is essential to consider the future as well as the present when interacting with infants and toddlers. Clearly expressed communications are important regardless of the child's age and whether or not the child is immediately responsive or alters his or her behavior. Whether the child is preverbal or verbal, however, will determine the extent to which the caregiver emphasizes one type of interaction or the other. For example, non-verbal communication of acceptance and gratification of the ten-month-old's needs is more likely to maintain that child's state of acknowledgement than will verbal communication alone. But this is not to say that the verbal expression of the child's affect and needs is meaningless in the context of subsequent development of the child.

The first two "messages" should not only maintain the child's state of acknowledgement and contentment but also help the child to increase his or her repertoire of intellectual, cognitive and emotional skills and capacities including self-awareness and understanding. The adult's constant labeling of child feelings, needs and thoughts results in the child him/herself (through imitation) becoming increasingly able to label and to discriminate among inner experiences. To the extent the child is able to label and discriminate among his or her inner experiences and know how specific situations and people arouse specifiable needs and feelings, s/he will experience fear, rage and jealousy, but not experience "anxiety" or "dread." These latter states of being can be perceived as primarily unlabeled fear. In "psychodynamic" terms, the first two "messages" will prevent the need for, and operation of, "repression" or in older children other "defense mechanisms." In "Rogerian" terms, they will prevent denial or distortion of experiencing. In "learning" terms, they will provide important discrimination training, and in combination with the other adult communications, result in the child not engaging in cognitive and motor escape and avoidance behavior in order to reduce felt anxiety.

I must also emphasize the importance of the sequencing of the above communications. The first two messages take precedence over the next three. Only by first feeling that their needs and wishes are acknowledged and understood [respected], will the child feel safe, and be open and willing to listen to further adult communications. If I express a need and other attacks me and frightens me, then I don't want to hear what the other is saying. I become hurt, resentful, and angry. I want to turn off the other. I want to turn away physically and psychically. I do not want to pay attention. If the other person is able to put into words and convey to me that s/he understands me, and can acknowledge the validity of my experiencing, then I want to listen. I want to be with him or her.

Then, when the other articulately and clearly states how s/he feels about my actions, my whole being would be listening. I would be empathetic, open and receptive. I would be able to experience the hurt or anger my action causes. I would be able to resonate to the anguish or fear of the other and my own reaction to the other's experiencing. I would be with the other. And I would thus be able to know and value both my own and the other's experiencing. I would be able to balance and weight what each of us need and want.

When the other then gives me what they consider appropriate and acceptable avenues or courses of action s/he would feel provide at least some expression and gratification of my needs, I would not only be listening but the arousal of my own mastery concerns and striving for competence would direct me to weight the alternatives, to weight the strength of my own and the other's needs and wishes. I would

be able to weight and balance the courses of action open to me and what I want in the world and the other. Finally, and ideally, I and the other will attempt to reach a compromise. We will attempt to determine courses of action that allow both of us to gratify some of our needs and wishes in at least some minimally acceptable ways at least some of the time.

It is difficult, of course, if not impossible, for children without active language skills to engage in verbal confrontation and compromise. When the above mentioned complex and elaborate person-oriented chain or sequence of communication does unfold and compromise is able to be reached--or for young children alternatives provided and accepted--the child's state of acknowledgement and contentment would not have been threatened. They would be likely to attempt to imitate the adult as best they can and attempt the complex sequences in their communications with others.

In summary, I believe that the large number of specific and varied adult behaviors that provide gratification of physiological and safety needs maintain a child's state of acknowledgement and contentment. Such caregiver behaviors will maintain empathetic responsiveness and arouse these infant's and children's own mastery concerns and motivations. These adult behaviors in conjunction with initiation, stimulation and involvement in highly intellectual activities and modeling of altruistic, generous and pro-social behaviors will be those imitated and used by the young child in his/her struggle to know and master the world s/he encounters. As these behaviors succeed in producing positive personal consequences the gratification of his/her own mastery and competency concerns--not adult approval--will result in these behaviors becoming habitual ways of responding. Finally, the mastery and competence motives when aroused will maintain high involvement in the world, and with caregiver guidance and consultation ever increasing skill development.

5.5 Importance of Encouragement

When parents believe in children, they help children believe in themselves. When parents show their children respect, they help children respect themselves and others.

Show that you believe in and respect your child. There are many ways to do this. One of the best is by being *encouraging*.

What Is Encouragement?

Encouragement is a skill to help children grow in self-esteem. It is a way to show children that they belong and are:

- **accepted**
- **capable**
- **loved**

Look at the words *encourage* and *discourage*. They both include the word *courage*. Courage is an important part of self-esteem. It means a willingness to make an effort.

An encouraged child has strong self-esteem. This child has the courage to cooperate, to try new things, and to be responsible.

A discouraged child has little self-esteem and won't make an effort. This child doesn't have the courage to choose positive ways to belong.

Encouragement is based on the idea of respect. Like respect, it is something children need all the time. You can learn to get in the “encouragement habit.” Learn and practice some skills to show that you:

- Love and accept your child
- Notice when your child tries or improves.
- Appreciate your child.
- Have faith in your child.

5.6 Types of Misbehavior

All children want to belong. They get a feeling of belonging through both useful behavior and misbehavior. When children misbehave, they have a goal. They may feel the only way to belong is by:

1. Attention.
2. Power.
3. Revenge.
4. Display of inadequacy.

Children don’t know that their misbehavior has a goal. Children may also use the same behavior to seek different goals. Be aware that parents don’t cause children’s misbehavior. By our own behavior, though, we may reinforce it. The key to knowing the goal is to look at the three clues: how you feel, what you do, and how your child responds.

Children have beliefs about how they need to belong. We call beliefs that lead to misbehavior “faulty.”

Children’s Faulty Beliefs:

- *Attention*: “I belong only by being noticed—even if that makes problems for Dad or Mom.”
- *Power*: “I belong only by being the boss—even if that leads to a fight. If I can get Mom or Dad to fight with me, I have power.”
- *Revenge*: “I am not lovable. I belong only by hurting Dad or Mom. I want them to feel as hurt as I do.”
- *Display of Inadequacy*: “I belong by convincing Mom or Dad that I can’t do things. In fact, when I try to do something and fail, I don’t belong.”

Each of these beliefs of the goals of misbehavior has a flip side—a positive belief that can lead to better behavior.

The Flip Side: Positive Beliefs:

- *Involvement*: “I want to be a part of things. Please help me learn to contribute.”

- Independence: “I want to be independent. Please give me choices so I can learn to be responsible.”
- Fairness: “I want things to be fair. Please help me learn to cooperate.”
- Being competent: “I need time to think by myself. I want to succeed. Please help me learn to trust myself.”

Knowing the flip side of the four goals helps. We can use this information to help our children move:

- From attention to involvement
- From power to independence
- From revenge to being fair
- From displaying inadequacy to being thoughtful and competent

5.6.1 Attention-Motivated Misbehaviors

All children need attention. But some children seem to want attention all the time. If they believe they can't get attention in useful ways, then they seek it by misbehaving.

A child who misbehaves for attention will do something that is annoying to the parent. The parent steps in to correct the misbehavior. The child has gotten attention. All may be well for a short while. But it's not long before the child wants more attention.

Sometimes, children ask for attention more quietly. A child might do nothing, expecting to be waited on. We call this passive misbehavior. It is still a bid for attention.

5.6.2 Power-Motivated Misbehaviors

Some children believe they belong only by being “the boss.” These children seek the goal of power. A child who seeks power is telling the parent, “I am in control,” “You can't make me!” or “You'd better do what I want!” The child might yell these things or fight out loud with the parent. Or the child might silently refuse to budge.

When a child seeks power, the parent feels angry. If the parent fights the child, the child fights back. If the parent gives in, the child has won the power struggle and so stops misbehaving.

Sometimes a child will do what the parent wants, but will do it extremely slowly or sloppily. This is a form of passive power. The child is saying, without words, “All right, I'll do it—just to get you off my back. But I'll do it *my* way. You can't make me do it *your* way.”

5.6.3 Revenge-Motivated Misbehaviors

Some children want to be the boss but can't win in a power struggle with their parents. These children decide that the way to belong is to get even. Drikurs called this goal *revenge*. A child who wants revenge may say or do something hurtful. Or the child may stare angrily at the parent. Either way, the

parent feels hurt and angry and tries to get even. The result is often a growing “war” of revenge. Both the child and the parent have angry, hurt feelings.

5.6.4 Displaying Inadequacy-Motivated Misbehaviors

Some children just give up. For them, the way to belong is to get others to leave them alone. Their behavior says, “I can’t do it.” Drikurs called this *displaying inadequacy*. When a child gives up, the parent feels like giving up too. When this happens, the child’s goal has been met. The parent has agreed to expect nothing from the child.

For most children, this helplessness is not total. It usually happens in certain areas of the child’s life. This might be in schoolwork, sports, or other social activities. It can be in any area where the child feels unable to succeed.

5.7 How Parents Can Fight Their Irrational Beliefs⁵⁶

Beliefs cause emotions. If you choose to think of unpleasant events, you will have unpleasant feelings. How you feel results from your thoughts. Your irrational beliefs cause problems and interfere with your happiness. They take the form of demanding, complaining, and blaming.

Your discouraging words and self-talk reflect your beliefs. When you believe absolute words such as *I should, I must, or I have to*, you place conditions on yourself.

Learn to think rationally:

- Choose new thoughts.
- Learn to look at negative situations in a logical way.
- Look at your wants as preferences, not “musts”
- See your “catastrophes” as the simple disappointments or inconveniences they are

Ask yourself these questions to help fight irrational beliefs

1. What am I thinking? Am I demanding or blaming?
2. Is my belief rational or irrational? How do I know this?
3. What are the consequences of continuing these beliefs?
4. What are the consequences of changing my beliefs?

5.8 Disciplinary Communications Fostering Social Responsiveness and Competence

Disciplinary communications can be compared to positive and negative reinforcement and punishment. The focus of discipline is learning and empathy administered with love while the focus of punishment techniques is fear and negative reinforcement.

5.8.1 Positive and Negative Reinforcement⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *The Parent’s Handbook*, Don Dinkmeyer, 1997, American Guidance Service, ISBN 0-7854-1188-7, p. 40.

The terms positive and negative reinforcement have most meaning to me when used to evaluate the effects of the environment on, for example, a child's behavior. If specific child behaviors occur again or increase in their frequency and duration within a relatively short time interval after some environmental events or stimuli have occurred, then those environmental events or stimuli have occurred, then those environmental events (e.g., adult verbalizations and/or actions) can be described as having positive reinforcing effects on, or consequences for, the child's behavior. Similarly, environmental events that are found to decrease specific child behaviors (such as removing positive reinforcement) can be described as having negative reinforcing consequences. These terms, then, have the most heuristic value when they are used as an after-the-fact description of the effects of specifiable environmental events on a child's subsequent behaviors. Whether environmental events indeed are positively or negatively reinforcing to a child can only be known through the measurement of the frequency, duration, and intensity of the behaviors that the child displays after such events.

5.8.2 Punishment⁵⁸

Punishment has most meaning to me as a description of negative environmental events (e.g. adult verbalizations and/or actions) that do not differentiate between a child's actions and his/her inner experiencing. The lack of such clear distinctions arouses physical and psychological safety needs. When caregivers do not acknowledge the validity of the child's experiencing and do not provide the child with any alternative outlets for expressing his/her needs, wishes, or desires their actions and communications are punishing. The focus for the child is to gain back caregiver approval and thereby feel "safe" once again.

Punishment, then, is a complex set of caregiver behaviors whose impact is perceived by the child as a verbal and/or physical attack on the self. Punishment arouses children's physical and psychological safety needs--and sometimes even his/her survival needs. Punishing caregivers provide only directions by which the child can gain the caregiver's forgiveness.

Often, there is a decrease in the frequency, duration, and intensity of certain child behaviors after punishment, since punishment usually--but not always is a negatively reinforcing event. Even in the "short run," though, punishment sometimes can be positively reinforcing event! For example, in those not-so-rare instances where the child "needs attention," the child's actions that result in his/her being punished are the very ones that gain and hold the caregiver's attention. Even punishing attention can provide--if not physical safety need gratification--psychological safety gratification.

I realize that punishment can result in certain child behaviors being kept under control so that they occur with less frequency (at least in the presence of the caregiver or observers). However, I believe that it is crucial to evaluate the effects of punishment that do not necessarily appear during the caregiver-child encounter in which punishment has occurred. I believe that punishment, especially in these early years, is extremely damaging both to the "foundation" and "self-acceptance" of the child and to his/her abilities to perceive accurately and value his/her own, and others' experiencing. The result of punishment is the decrease, over time, of the child's empathetic responsiveness, and of his/her expression of a wide variety of intellectually competent, socially responsible, and independent

⁵⁷Until We Are 6, Stollack, Gary E.; 1978, Robert E. Kreiger Publishing Company, ISBN 0-88275-653; p. 104.

⁵⁸ Until We Are 6, Stollack, Gary E.; 1978, Robert E. Kreiger Publishing Company, ISBN 0-88275-653; p. 105-106.

behaviors that even children of this age can perform. Thus, punishment will diminish the development and expression of those very characteristics that, given our best intentions, we all wish to encourage.

Whether or not punishment, in fact, controls and limits some undesirable child behaviors and social actions, punishing events always diminish the ability of the child to advance toward the actualization of his/her human potential in the present and in the future.

5.8.3 Disciplinary Communications⁵⁹

The punishing event is defined as one that lacks educational elements or messages. Caregiver verbalizations and/or actions that contain such educative elements are what I would call disciplinary communications. Thus, communications of all the messages that I have listed above and have discussed previously are important because:

1. Through communication of understanding and acknowledgement of experiencing, they will maintain the child's "self acceptance," "self-esteem," and the child's state of acknowledgement and contentment. Thus, they will help increase the child's repertoire of intellectual, cognitive, and emotional skills and capacities, including those that contribute to self-understanding.
2. Through clear communication of caregiver reactions, they will help the child increase his/her repertoire of interpersonal awareness, understanding and acceptance of the feelings, needs, wishes and desires of the others.
3. Through the presentation of alternative courses of action, they will allow at least partial gratification of needs and desires, and, thus, increase the child's willingness to confront and compromise.

Such messages also will help increase the child's ability to communicate clearly and acknowledge other's experiencing. Thus, this total set of caregiver messages is a positively reinforcing event in the narrow sense of this concept, since the child is likely to choose the selected alternative course of action in similar situations in the future. Moreover, such a set of messages also is a positively reinforcing event in the broader sense that such messages will increase the subsequent expression of a large variety of behaviors that are indicative of personal and social competence. The total set of messages, by maintaining the child's state of acknowledgement and contentment and by arousal of the child's mastery and competence motives, provides the words, actions and directions--the "materials"--for the building of the best possible "house."

5.8.4 Communication of Adult Feelings and Expectations⁶⁰

This discussion leads me to conclude that punishment has no net positive disciplinary function that can be fulfilled by more acknowledging and helpful techniques. Punishment is never useful nor is it ever *educational* in a positive sense. I do not believe that caregiver anger, disappointment, and resentment, when aroused by child behavior, can and should be communicated to the child. Such communications can provide relief for an aroused caregiver, and when expressed clearly and comprehensively, can help the child maintain empathetic responsiveness. But communication of caregiver reactions should only be made AFTER communication of understanding and acknowledgement of the validity of the child experiencing, and always should be FOLLOWED by a presentation of alternative courses of action

⁵⁹ *Until We Are 6*, Stollack, Gary E.; 1978, Robert E. Kreiger Publishing Company, ISBN 0-88275-653; p. 106-107

⁶⁰ *Until We Are 6*, Stollack, Gary E.; 1978, Robert E. Kreiger Publishing Company, ISBN 0-88275-653; p. 107.

that provide at least partial gratification of the child's needs and wishes. I know how very hard it is to follow this sequence of messages. Our "normal" response to our children's expression of unacceptable behavior is a "reflexive" attack on their actions and a defense of our own position. We often are so personally hurt or disappointed, and our anger and resentment so great, that we do not want to let them have any gratification. Most often, and for a wide variety of reasons, we reflexively interpret our children's display of unacceptable behavior as a direct personal attack on us, on our being and identity, and on our perception of ourselves as competent and good parents whose children should never do such things. As "civilized" adults we have contempt and disdain for anyone's, even our own children's, expression of unacceptable behavior.

Research does indicate that it is important to expect appropriate, responsible behavior from our 3-6 year-old children. Research also indicates, however, that such expectations must exist with a relationship that is warm, loving, and nurturant.

5.8.5 Examples of Good Disciplinary Communication

The examples below are intended to show optimal ways that parents can communicate with their children in various situations that require discipline. They are written from the child's point of view and demonstrate the positive affect that empathetic disciplinary communications can have on the child.

5.8.5.1 Sibling Problems

"Hello, my name is Nicky. I have just finished watching a television program and as I walk into the kitchen to get a glass of milk, I see my younger brother Danny playing with the toy Grandma bought for me for my birthday.

I grab the toy away from Danny and yell: 'You leave my toys alone. This is mine! Grandma bought it for me.'

Danny begins to cry, and tries to grab it back, and we start to pull on it.

Danny yells: 'I want to play with it!'

I am stronger than Danny and I pull the toy away from him.

Just as Mom walks in Danny angrily yells at me: 'You're just a dumb-dumb.'

Mom says: "What is going on in here?"

'Danny was playing with my toy and I don't want him to.'

'He never lets me play with his toys. He's a dumb-dumb.'

'I'm not a dumb-dumb. This is mine.'

Mom kneels down and says: "Hold everything! Stop! Let me see if I understand what is happening. Danny, you want to play with Nicky's toy.' Danny nods. 'And Nicky, you don't want him to.' I nod. 'The toy is special to you and you don't want to share it with

Danny. When you took it away from Danny, Danny, you became so angry at Nicky that you couldn't stop yourself from calling him names.⁶¹

'There are two problems here. The problem of sharing and the problem of expressing your anger. I want to talk to both of you about these problems. Let's all sit over here.'

'First, I want to talk to Nicky.' She looks at me and then says: *'I want you to know that I don't feel that you have to share your special toys with anyone. If you don't want to share your things with Danny or me or Daddy, I'll understand. I will always respect your wish for others not to play with things that are bought just for you, or you buy for yourself. There are many things that I have that I don't like to share. However, if Grandma or Dad or I or anyone buys something for both you and Danny, like crayons, or clay, then I think you and Danny will have to cooperate in playing with them. So Danny, Mom looks at Danny, 'I know that it makes you sad and angry that Nicky won't share his toy with you, and makes you jealous and envious of what Nicky has. I'm also sorry that it makes you so sad and angry, but Nicky's toys are his and I must help him protect his toys. If Nicky wants to play with your special toys, and you don't want him to, I want you to know that I will not let him play with them without your permission. I think it is important for both of you to know that I will help you protect your special things. And I think that it is important for both of you to find out what happens when you don't share. So, Nicky, you can keep your toy now and I won't let Danny play with it without your permission. I am sorry, Danny, but that's the way it will have to be now.'*

Danny, with a big frown, and almost crying, says: *'All right for now, but I'm not going to ever let Nicky play with my toys. Never!'*

Mom says: *'Yes, I know how angry you are. I think I would be angry too if someone didn't share their toys with me. I would be so angry that I wouldn't want to share my toys with them. Maybe I would be so angry that I would want to call them names.'*

'I want you both to know that feeling angry is natural and happens to all of us. I know that I make both of you angry at me sometimes and you know that both of you make me angry sometimes.⁶² But I don't like some of the ways you express your anger. I'm not sure, but maybe, Nicky, you were angry at Danny for something he said, or did, or maybe you were angry at me or Dad or your teacher or somebody else, and you expressed your anger by not sharing your toys with Danny. I'm not sure you were angry at anyone other than Danny, but if you are angry about something, not sharing isn't the best way to express it. And Danny, I don't think calling names is a good way to express anger, either. I think the best way is to tell the person who is making you angry how you feel about what he's doing and how you wish he would act so that you wouldn't be angry anymore.'

'Danny, if you're angry at Nicky for not sharing, I would like you to say, in a very loud and angry voice, something like: 'Nicky, I am very angry at you. When you don't share your toys with me, I get very, very angry at you. I am so angry that I want to hurt you. Maybe I won't share my toys with you. Maybe I won't want to be with you and play with you., I don't like to be angry, and I wish that you'd share your toys with me. If I did something to make you angry maybe we could talk about it and we could work it out. I

⁶¹ We are likely, as a first immediate response, to become angry, to accuse Nicky of being possessive and stingy, and begin ordering one or the other child to do what we want. The first response of this mother is to convey her understanding of the event and to convince both children that she understands the various possible wishes, needs and even fears occurring in this encounter, including her own feelings and wishes.

⁶² The above statements from the mother attempt to convey acknowledgement of the validity of each of the children's experiencing. She then expresses her own thoughts, feelings and wishes.

am really sorry you won't share your toys with me. I wish you would.' 'Is that how you feel, Danny?'⁶³

Danny nods.

Mom says: 'Why don't you say that to Nicky right now?'

Danny looks at me and says just what Mom said. I really feel sad that I made Danny so angry but I am afraid he would break my toys. If you would break them then I would be very angry at you. I'll let you play with the toy if you take special care of it. I promise that when I play with your toys, I'll take special care of them. All right?'

Danny smiles and says: 'I'll be very careful, Nicky. Thank you.'

I turn to Mom and say: 'Mom, can I have a glass of milk now?'

'I'm glad that Mom understood how I felt. I'm afraid sometimes that someone will break or take away things that are very important to me. I'm very glad that she would help me protect my toys and special things. I feel better now.

Being angry is all right and natural. The best way to express it is to tell the person what he's doing to make me angry and how I wish he would act so that I don't get angry.

I don't have to share my special things if I don't want to. I should tell the other person why I don't want to share so that he will understand my reasons. But when I don't share I have to realize that the other person will probably get angry and won't want to share with me or play with me."

Implicit in both of these stories, and in so many other sibling (and other peer) situations, is the issue of how important it is for the caregiver to be a fair and equitable dispenser of justice, to the extent that the siblings or peers feel they have been dealt with fairly regarding the dilemma. Often the caregiver must determine "ownership," must help work out—and often for younger children, state explicitly—the compromises that allow equal usage of objects and materials over time, or must plan ways to provide equal amounts of unique ways to share experiencing with *each* of the children for whom they care.

5.8.5.2 Peer Aggression

Children often find themselves hurt by peers. Here is an incident involving peer aggression.

"My name is Jeff. Something terrible happened in school and I'm really scared I have just run home from school. I rush into my home and all excited tell Mom: "Mom, Mom! You should have seen what happened!"

"What happened?"

"Al and I were walking home from school and all of a sudden some big guys from the sixth grade came by and pushed Al onto the ground and then they ran away laughing. I'm afraid of those guys."

⁶³ The mother attempts to give Danny some way of expressing his concerns and feelings right *now* in the present so that there will be no need for him to repress, deny or distort his experiencing.

Kneeling down, she gives me a hug and then says: "My, my. Those guys frightened you. You were afraid they were going to push you down and hurt you, too."⁶⁴

"Yes. Als' lucky he didn't get hurt even worse. He cried a little bit, but he's all right. Even though we were afraid, we wanted to beat those guys up."

"When they pushed Al down, you were not only afraid, but they made you so angry that you wanted to hurt them back. You wished you were bigger so that you could really give it to them to show them that they can't push you around."

"Yes. I'd like to show them. I'd like to knock them down."

"You'd knock them down and tell them that they better not pick on you again."

I nod and say: "Yes."

"I think that you were not only afraid and angry but that you also wondered why they pushed Al down and then ran away laughing. That didn't seem to be a nice thing to do. I really don't know for sure, but those guys might not have been feeling good inside. Somebody, probably some adult, might have been hurting them in some way and because they were afraid of the adult, they took their anger out on someone they're not afraid of, like smaller boys. By hurting someone smaller, by taking revenge on someone else, they feel good for awhile. It's sad when, to feel good, someone has to hurt others. I can understand how when these boys frightened you, and hurt Al, both of you would want to take revenge and want to hurt them back."

Although it's natural to want to hurt others who hurt you, and to think about how you'd go about hurting them, you have a difficult decision to make. Should you only think and imagine what you would do or should you actually try to hurt the other person by yelling at them or hitting them? I can't tell you the best way to express your anger toward someone who is only hurting you because he has, himself, been hurt by others. I can only tell you

5.8.5.3 Stealing and Lying

Children may do many things which we regard as unacceptable. I will focus on two, stealing and lying. First, an incident involving stealing and also lying:

"Hello, my name is Bob. I saw a great toy at the store the other day and I really wanted it. I asked Mom and Dad to buy it for me and they said "No..." They don't understand how much I really wanted it. I'm home today and I've just found Dad's wallet on the table. I'll see if he has some money. Maybe I'll take a dollar from it. Maybe he won't miss it. Let's see. Here's a dollar bill, here's another dollar. Wow, he even has a ten dollar...I suddenly hear Mom yell, "What are you doing?" She surprises me and I quickly put the wallet behind my back. I say "Nothing, just looking around." She says, "What do you have behind your back? Walking over to me she looks behind my back and says, "Oh, I see that you have Dad's wallet behind your back."

I don't want Mom to punish me. I say, "Oh, it fell on the floor. I was just picking it up."

⁶⁴ Our very first set of responses might include asking for further details and expressing *our* feelings. Here and in the next few comments the mother is trying to convey to Jeff that she is aware of *his* and even the older children's experiencing.

She sits down, puts me on her lap, and quietly says, “What you’re saying is that you found the wallet on the floor and were picking it up when I walked in. That could be. I think, though, that you were looking at the money in the wallet and wondering whether you should take some because you want something very, very much and needed money to buy it. And, you’re afraid to tell me this because you’re afraid I will punish you if I know the truth.”⁶⁵ I’m sorry to see that you’re afraid of me now. Listen carefully now. I want you to know that I will never punish you for telling me the truth about things. If I have in the past, I’m sorry. I will try not to do it in the future. I’m also sorry that you didn’t come to me if there was something you needed or wanted. Sometimes Dad and I say “No” to you when you ask for something and that makes you disappointed and angry with us. And I know that sometimes your wanting something will be so strong that you’ll think about stealing it or stealing money to pay for it.⁶⁶ But I don’t like stealing. I believe that stealing is wrong and hurts others. I don’t like people to take things from me without my permission or my not knowing about it. I makes me very disappointed and angry to look all around and not find something that belonged to me. You are disappointed, too, when you are missing something you own when you need or want it. Sometimes we misplace things; other times people take them and do not tell us. But, again, I know that children often want things very, very much and sometimes adults don’t listen enough and temptation is very strong. I hope that in the future, you’ll be able to tell me what you want, when you want it. I will try to listen harder and possibly help work out a time when we can get you what you want. I hope you could tell me now just what you needed the money for. Could you?”

Mom and I talk about what I want and work out a solution that I am not unhappy with.

I now realize that taking things without permission makes people disappointed and angry when they can’t find it. I would be angry and disappointed, too, if I couldn’t find things I own.

Even though they sometimes can’t get me things just when I want them, maybe Mom and Dad and I could work it out so I can know just when I can get what I want or something almost like the things I want.

Maybe they will not punish me when I tell the truth. Telling the truth is always worth a try.

Sometimes temptation is very strong and my resistance is very weak. I wish they could tell me that they understand how something could be very attractive to me, how I might want something very much. They should know that I might steal just because I am not being heard and understood.

I might lie because I’m afraid of being punished. Hitting me and yelling at me might cause me to lie even more.”

Another incident involves “passive” lying.

“Hello, my name is Eve. It was my birthday last week, and Mom and Dad bought me an expensive toy. I really wanted it and I was so glad that they got it for me. But while I was playing with it yesterday, it broke. I was so sad. I know that Mom and Dad wanted

⁶⁵ In this brief monologue the mother is taking guesses as to what Bob is experiencing and his possible motives for stealing *and* lying. Indeed, our guesses or interpretations might be wrong, but the emphasis is on the *attempt*. More often than not our guesses will be correct, and when we are correct, the child will *know* that s/he is not alone, and is safe with us.

⁶⁶ The mother is conveying her guesses as to her contributions to Bob’s experiencing *and* actions. She then follows with more of her experiencing, wishes, and recommendations.

me to take good care of it because it cost so much money. I know that they'll yell at me and punish me. So while everyone was watching television yesterday, I took all the broken pieces and put them in the bottom of the trash can. No one will find it there and when the garbage men come tomorrow, they'll take it away. No one will know that the toy was broken and I won't be yelled at.

I am eating breakfast now. Suddenly Dad shows me the pieces of the broken toy! I am very surprised and frightened now.

He sits down, looks at me, and says: "I see that you're very surprised that I found these broken pieces of your new toy. I think that you hid them in the trash can because you were afraid that Mom and I would be very angry and punish you for breaking your toy."

I nod and say, "Yes."

"I want you to know that I am very sad and upset that such an expensive toy is broken. I wish it wasn't broken. But I am sure that you didn't want it broken either. I am also very sorry that you were so frightened and afraid of Mom and I that you had to hide the broken pieces because you thought we were going to punish you.

I have yelled at you for breaking toys in the past and I am worried that such punishment has made you afraid of me. Listen carefully now. I want you to know that I will try not to punish you for breaking your toys, either now or in the future. I expect that you will accidentally break other toys. The important thing when you break toys, whether accidentally or even in anger, is to bring it to Mom or me so that we could try to fix the toy. If I can't maybe Mom can. We'll try our best to fix it so that it works again. If we can't, we'll all be sad. You know we can't get you another one like this for a long time. That's the way it has to be. The best we can do is try to determine when we can replace it. All right?" Dad smiles and hugs me close.

I'm so glad that Dad understands that I didn't want to break the toy, that it was an accident. I'm also glad that he knows that punishment only scares me and will only make me lie and hide things, and try to make sure he doesn't find out what happens. I feel better when I can tell the truth and not be punished.

Although it's all right to get angry and upset when I accidentally break things, punishing me will not make me more careful. I don't like to break things. I like my toys and don't want them broken either. Punishing me makes me want to hide the accident and hope that no one finds out. Punishment only makes me afraid of the adults.

I feel good inside when adults let me know that they understood my fears about being punished.⁶⁷

5.8.5.4 Child Desires for Immediate Gratification

One of the most troublesome and frequent problems between children and their caregivers concerns a child's desire for his/her needs to be gratified immediately; to get what s/he wants when s/he wants it.

⁶⁷ We all have fears, periodically, that our children will become too selfish and too self-centered. We want them to be generous and giving. We believe that our children will lie, steal and cheat if we don't stop these behaviors early, as they first occur. Although our children's behavior might disappoint us and make us anxious and angry we must first allow ourselves to become aware of *their* possible intentions and motives and then let them know that we are attempting to learn about and become aware of the origins of their actions. We must control our first impulses to attack and berate. We must attempt to be a model of the person we want our children to become.

Here are several examples.

A telephone interruption:

“Hello, my name is Raymond. I am so excited! Billy had brought his pet turtle to school today and I want to tell Mom all about it.

As I rush into the house, I see Mom talking on the telephone. I yell out: “Mom! Mom! You should have seen Billy’s turtle. It...”

But she stops me, saying: “Just a second Raymond” and says to the person on the telephone: “Eleanor, I want to talk to Raymond for a moment. Please hang on.”

She then kneels down and says to me: “Raymond, I can see you are very excited and want to tell me about what happened in school today. I want very much to hear what happened. As soon as I finish talking with Mrs. Maxwell, which will be in about two minutes, I’ll ask you to tell me all about what happened in school.”

And you know what? After finishing her talk with Mrs. Maxwell, she sits down next to me, smiles, and asks me to tell her what happened. After I tell her and we talk about school for awhile, she says: “I know that sometimes you are so excited that you can’t help interrupting me when I am on the phone. What I would like you to do when I am talking on the phone and you would like to talk to me is to tap me on the arm three times. Whenever you do this, I’ll try my best to get off the phone within a minute or two, and then listen to you. All right?”

When Mom talks that way, I feel so calm inside. She knows the way I feel. She tells me how she feels. And she helps me learn what to do so that she doesn’t get angry and I don’t get disappointed.

Sometimes adults are paying attention to others and don’t like to be interrupted. When I interrupt them, they will get angry and not want to listen to me.

Maybe I can work out a signal to my mother, father, or teacher to tell them I would like their attention.

An incident around bedtime:

“Hello, my name is Clare. I am having a lot of fun with my constructions toy but It’s 8:00 at night and I hear Dad say: “Clare, it’s 8:00 and time for bed.” I don’t want to go to bed now so I say: “I’m playing. I’ll go to bed later.”

Dad gets up from his chair, kneels down next to me and says: “Clare, I know that you don’t want to go to bed now. I can see that you’re having a lot of fun with your construction toy and working very hard to finish what you’re building. When you start something you like to finish it, and you want to finish what you’re building right now. I’m glad that you like to finish what you start. But, you know that 8 o’clock is the time for you to get ready for bed.” Dad picks me up.

I say: “No, No! Please, Dad, let me finish.”

He carries me to my bedroom saying: “I would be angry at my father, too, if he made me go to bed when I didn’t want to or wasn’t ready to, and I’m sorry that I have to make you angry at me now. I wish I didn’t have to, but it’s time for bed. When we get upstairs and

you're in bed we'll talk about the best plan for future bedtimes. Maybe we could work something out."

After I wash, get into my pajamas, and am in my bed, Dad sits next to me and says: "There are different ways to handle bedtime. Some parents let their children go to sleep whenever they want, and I think you sometimes wish that we would let you decide for yourself when you could go to bed. When you are in the seventh grade we'll let you decide your own bedtime.

So far, Mom and I have been telling you when to go to bed. You know, you do go to bed by yourself without us yelling too often. After you're in bed we have come and given you a kiss 'good-night,' but I don't think that's the best way to do it anymore. First, I think that one-half hour before bedtime will be a time to settle down, so there won't be any running, or jumping for the half-hour before bedtime. I think then that there will be twenty minutes before bedtime and lights out. I, and I am sure, Mom would like to spend some part of this time being with you. We could talk about what we did or what happened to us that day or play or read together. If you want to spend all twenty minutes with me, that will be just fine. If you want to finish a toy or game by yourself so that there will be only fifteen or ten or even five minutes for me to be alone with you that evening, that would be all right too. Remember though, that the last twenty minutes before lights out you have to be in bed. What you do by yourself or what you and I or you and Mom do during that time will be up to you.

Something else now. Maybe the best way to help decide bedtimes is to decide each Sunday, we could look at what T.V. program would be on that week. We could think about special things going on in the family or at school, and any other things that could help us decide on the best time for each night. After we decide, I'll write down the bedtimes for each night on a card and we'll put it on the bulletin board so you'll know. What do you think?"

It sounded pretty good to me. I still wish that I could decide my own time for bed. Someday I will. But I think that it would be nice to be alone with Dad or Mom even for ten or fifteen minutes everyday. Most of all I will have a part in deciding my own bedtime and that makes me feel more like an adult.

I like adults to take care of me and help me decide how to handle my life. I have to learn to schedule my play better so that I'm ready for bed and sleep when it is close to the bedtime hour. Bedtime is a good time to be alone with Mom and Dad, even once or twice a week, ten or fifteen minutes a night.

I don't like to be ordered around. I like to take part in decisions that affect me. Bedtime and sleep time can be a family decision that I can help decide."

Another incident involves a desire for candy:

"Hello, my name is Larry. I am shopping with Mom. It is almost dinnertime and I am really, really hungry. We are just finishing shopping. While checking out, I see a stand, right next to the cashier's counter, with all kinds of my favorite candies. I really want a candy bar—right now. I say: "Mom, I want a candy bar."

"It is too close to dinnertime. You'll have something to eat when we get home," she says, and continues to put the groceries on the counter.

I am hungry, I say: "No, I don't want to wait. I want something now. I promise to eat my supper. Please?"

Mom says angrily: "I said NO, didn't I? NO CANDY!"

Why doesn't she understand that I am hungry. I really would eat my supper. Why does she get so angry? Why does she look at me that way? She really doesn't care how I feel. All she cares about is some stupid dinner.

When she acts this way, I get very angry. When I get angry, I feel like hitting, so I hit my mom with my fist and yell: "I want a candy bar."

Mom kneels down, her face close to mine. Looking straight into my eyes, while holding my arms firmly to my sides, she quietly says: "Larry, I can tell you're angry at me for not buying you some candy. I made you so angry you had to hit me and yell at me. I think that maybe you're most angry at me for not telling you that I understand how much you want a candy bar and how good it would taste right now."

I nod.

"I was so busy with shopping that I wasn't able to listen to you. I'm sorry for not listening better, but I don't like to get hit. I don't like you to hit me. When I am not listening, ask me to listen to you. Say, "Mom, please listen to me, I want to tell you something," and I'll try my best to stop what I'm doing and listen. Please say that to me now. Tell me again what you want."

I ask Mom to listen to me, and I tell her that I want a candy bar.

She smiles and says: "Yes, I know that you are very hungry now, and because dinnertime is so near, these candy bars look especially good to eat. I want you to know that I, too, am hungry and I think I would like something to eat too, right now. If you really want a very special candy bar, we can buy it. I can't let you eat a whole one now, but I could let you have a small piece now, and then save the rest for after supper. But if you are just hungry, why don't you and I share a box of raisins, or an apple or pear? I think that some fruit could satisfy both of us until we eat at home. What would you like to do?"

I say: "Let's buy the candy bar now. I'll have just a little piece. Then let's share an apple, all right?"

She says: "Sure." While Mom continues checking out, I run and get an apple from the fruit section of the store.

After Mom gives me a small piece of candy, which really tastes great, she and I leave the store sharing the apple.

You know, I really feel good. I like it when Mom lets me know that she understands how I feel, how I was hungry and wanted candy. I also like it when she gives me choices to make. When I'm allowed to make a choice, I feel more grown up.

Sometimes I would like something very special to eat. Adults should let me know they understand how I really love candy and cake and other sweets. Sometimes I am just hungry and they should help me decide what is all right to eat by giving me different choices to make.

5.8.5.5 Child Sexual Behavior

What should we do when children engage in sexual behavior? This is a very difficult area for almost all caregivers. I shall focus on two situations, masturbation and group exploration.

First, an incident involving masturbation:

“My name is Diane. I am alone in bed. It is 10 o’clock at night. I am usually asleep by this time, but I have been restless and thinking about a lot of things like school, my friends, my parents, a television show I saw tonight. Sometimes when I lie awake at night thinking about things, I like to touch my vagina, and rub my clitoris. It feels good when I rub it. It’s exciting. I rub it for a little while, then stop. A little later I rub it again.

Suddenly, Dad comes into my room. I am surprised and I pull the blanket up to my chin. I think he saw me rubbing my clitoris.

Sometimes I have to lie to my parents. I’m afraid that if I told the truth Dad would have yelled at me and when he yells at me I get afraid. Most of the time when I rub my clitoris, Mom and Dad get afraid. Most of the time when I rub my clitoris, Mom and Dad yell at me to stop and tell me it’s not “ladylike,” that “nice” children don’t do it. It’s all right to scratch my arms and legs, isn’t it? Why do they always punish me for things I like to do, that feel good? I am sorry I have to lie so that I don’t get punished. Adults don’t understand things sometimes.

He walks to my bed, sits down next to me, and says: “I can see that you’re surprised by my walking in. I expected that you would be asleep. I came in to tuck you in. But I see that you’re awake. I have a feeling that it has been a little hard to get to sleep tonight. That happens sometimes. Because of the way you pulled the cover up, I also have the feeling that you’ve been touching your vagina and rubbing your clitoris and didn’t want me to know it. I think that maybe you’re afraid that I’m going to punish you for touching and rubbing your vagina and clitoris.”

I nod and say: “Yes, will you?”

He says: “No. You know, I’m sorry if I have made you afraid of me. I know that Mom and I have asked you, sometimes in a very loud voice, not to touch your vagina. But I don’t think we have been as clear with you as we could have been. I want you to know that I know that touching your clitoris does feel good and exciting, and makes you tingle. Sometimes when you’re bored, or even a little afraid, touching and rubbing it makes you feel better. I want you to know that I think it’s natural and all right to want to touch it. But if you want to touch your clitoris, I want you to do it only when you’re alone. It is a private matter, just like going to the bathroom is a private matter. Some things, like eating and scratching our arms and legs we can do even when there are a lot of people around, in public. There are other things, though, that you do by yourself when you’re alone, in special places, in private, like in the bathroom or alone in your room at night. So, if you do touch your vagina when people are around, I am going to remind you that it is something I don’t like you to do in public. I won’t punish you. I’ll just remind you how I feel. If I see you touching your vagina in your room at night, I’ll just let you know that I know how good it feels. Maybe I’ll ask you if something is bothering you that I could help with, or ask if you have some questions about your own or another person’s body. Okay?”

I smile and say: “Okay, Dad.” He asks me: “Is there something bothering you that you would like to share with me? Do you have any questions?” I say: “No, not right now.” He says: “Anytime you do have any questions about your body or other people’s bodies, and you want an answer, I hope you will come to me and I’ll try my best to help you. Okay?”

I nod. Dad kisses me on the cheek, smiles and says: “Well, goodnight now. I hope that you’ll be able to fall asleep soon. See you in the morning.” He gets up from my bed and leaves.

I am so glad that Dad understands how good it makes me feel when I touch my vagina and clitoris. I also am glad that he helps me understand things like the differences between doing things in private and other things in public."

Second, an incident involving group exploration:

"My name is Lisa. I'm having a lot of fun. My friends, Nancy and Harold, and I are under the blanket on my bed. We don't have our clothes on. We are tickling each other and touching each other's genitals. It's fun. It feels good rubbing and falling over each other. We are all laughing a lot. Suddenly, the door to my room opens up, and I hear Mom ask, "Lisa, what's going on in here?"

She comes into the room and says: "Oh! Excuse me for barging in without knowing, but I wanted to know what was going on." Sitting down on the bed and smiling, she says: "It looks like everyone is having a lot of fun. We wear clothes so much of the time that it's fun to get them off and be naked sometimes. All of you were tickling each other and rubbing and falling over each other. It must be a lot of fun to be nude and touch each other's sex parts. I know that it feels good and it's exciting when you or somebody else rubs your penis or vagina. I know that all of you must be very curious about vaginas and penises, breasts and nipples, and the differences between boys and girls, and men and women. By touching each other's body, you can satisfy your curiosity."

"I want you to know that whenever you have any questions about your body or other people's bodies and all the different parts of the body, I'll try my best to answer them. Do any of you have any questions now that I might be of help with?"

We have some questions and Mom answers them for us. Then she says: "I want you all to know that although I do mind you playing together in the nude, I don't know if Nancy's and Harold's parents mind. If you, Nancy, and you, Harold, won't mind, and you give me your permission, I'll call your parents. I'll tell them what happened, how I feel about it, and ask them if they will permit you to play in this way. If they don't want you to, I will not be able to allow you to play in the nude, or touch each other's sex parts. If they say "yes," then when you want to play in the nude, please come and ask me and I will be with you when you play. I prefer that you do not play in the nude without my being with you. I want you to know that I feel uncomfortable when children play in the nude and especially when they play with each other's sex parts. I am afraid that you may hurt each other's sexual parts or bodies without meaning to. You might also do things that I might find unacceptable, and I might have to ask you to stop. But, in any case, I want you all to remember that I will do my best at any time to answer any questions you have about your and other people's bodies."

I'm glad Mom understood that I like to touch different parts of my own body and like to touch and explore other people's bodies.

She makes me feel that it is all right to be curious about my body and other people's bodies and to have questions about the differences between boys and girls and men and women. Maybe adults can answer my questions and help satisfy my curiosity."

I am aware of how different it is to confront and respond to children's sexual behavior. I believe it is critical first to respond to the child or children's experiences, especially its exploratory and pleasurable aspects. Only after conveying acknowledgement of the validity of the pleasurable feelings, the curiosity, and the desire to explore and experience, then and only then, should the caregiver express his/her own reactions in as calm and as forceful manner as possible. The very strongly and deeply felt pleasure experienced by the child, if followed immediately by intense verbal and nonverbal caregiver expressions of rage and contempt, can produce conflict and guilt within the

child that is very difficult to overcome in adulthood. If possible, some set of alternative courses of actions that the caregiver deems acceptable and that provide some gratification of the child's need to know, touch and explore should be provided. I have found in discussions with adults that my own alternatives provided above for the children are very unacceptable to many of them. We all have strong conflicting feelings about sexual exploration and, so, there are no easy answers to problems in this area that would be acceptable to everyone. But, I believe that caregivers—especially during the encounter—must provide some directions and alternatives that show dignity and respect for the child's experiencing and wishes.

5.8.6 Summary

I believe that children who encounter caregivers who communicate these complex, comprehensive, elaborate and person-oriented sets of messages frequently and consistently—especially in need-arousing conflict situations—will be less resistant and disobedient, and will engage in decreasing amounts of disapproved behavior as they grow older. Of even more importance, I believe that these children, during these and future years, will engage in increasing amounts of active, positive, and pro-social behavior. Further, the child's imitation of positive caregiver behaviors when s/he interacts with other adults and peers likely will be positively reinforced by others, and this reinforcement, in turn, will increase the child's empathetic communications skills, which are a major component of both social responsivity and responsibility.

Below is a summary the optimum empathetic response pattern that each of the previous examples used:

- (1) What is the child feeling and how can I articulate and express his/her experiencing so that s/he knows that I understand the variety of his/her positive and/or negative intentions, needs, and feelings?
- (2) What might be the causes of the experiencing? What events in the world, including my own or another's past behavior, could be contributing to the child's experiencing?
- (3) How can I help the child to understand how his/her social actions emerge from intentions, feelings, wishes and conflicts?
- (4) How can I best share my own past experiences with the child to help him/her understand the universality of the experiencing?
- (5) How can I express most clearly my reactions to his/her experiencing and actions so that s/he will not become frightened or angry, but, instead will want to listen to me?
- (6) Are there acceptable and alternative ways for him/her to express needs, wishes and feelings right now and in the future?

5.9 Discipline and Problem Solving Techniques

5.9.1 Strategies for Identifying and the Motive of the Misbehavior and Applying Discipline⁶⁸

Remember, to decide your child's goals for the misbehavior, look at:

1. How you feel when the misbehavior happens.

⁶⁸ *The Parent's Handbook*, Don Dinkmeyer, 1997, American Guidance Service, ISBN 0-7854-1188-7, p. 42.

2. What you do about the misbehavior.
3. How your child responds to what you do.

A child's beliefs and feelings are the source of a child's motives for misbehaviors. They affect how a child decides to belong. Beliefs come from a child's view of what is important in the family, the child's place, what parents say and do, and the style of parenting.

All beliefs and feelings have an underlying purpose. Parents have feelings about their parenting situation because they believe they need to control their children. Parents get upset with their children (feelings) because they think their beliefs about wanting to control their children are being violated. Likewise, children have feelings about their relationship with their parents because they believe that they need to belong. Children's misbehavior and the feelings that go with it are in turn caused by their need to belong (belief).

To help your child form positive beliefs, you can:

- *Help your child take part.* Encourage your children to help with family projects. Show them how to cooperate with other people. In this way, they can be part of things and can be helpful to others too.
- *Give choices.* Let your child live with the choice. When possible, let your child do things alone. In this way, your child will grow more confident. Your child will begin to make better choices.
- *Be fair.* Guide your child to play and share equally. Treat your child fairly and with respect so your child will trust you. In this way, your child will see that people can be fair and trustworthy. When this is true, there is no need to get even.
- *Notice and teach courage.* Teach your child to try things and to keep trying. Encourage your child to use words to explain worries or to talk about problems. Notice your child's strengths. In these ways, your child learns courage.

Feelings come from beliefs. You can change your beliefs and feelings as a parent by changing your self-talk. This can help you respond to misbehavior in a way that helps your child.

Below is a chart that describes how to deal with the various types of misbehavior and the feelings that might be generated in the parent as a consequence of these misbehaviors:

Table 5-3: Types Of Child Misbehavior and Their Motivations

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Parent' feelings</i>	<i>Examples of misbehavior</i>	<i>What parents can do</i>	<i>Ways to encourage positive goals and beliefs</i>
Attention	Annoyance	Active: Interrupting, clowning. Passive: Forgetting, not doing chores, expecting to be waited on.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't give attention on demand. 2. Ignore when possible. 3. Don't wait on child. 4. Give attention for good behavior at other times. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Say thank you when child helps. 2. Notice when child contributes.
Power	Anger	Active: Throwing tantrums, making demands, arguing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refuse to fight or give in. 2. Withdraw from power 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give choices. 2. Let child make decisions.

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Parent' feelings</i>	<i>Examples of misbehavior</i>	<i>What parents can do</i>	<i>Ways to encourage positive goals and beliefs</i>
		Passive: Being stubborn, doing what parent wants slowly or sloppily.	contest. 3. If possible, leave room. 4. Let consequences occur for child	3. Ask for help, cooperation at other times.
Revenge	Anger	Active: Being rude, saying hurtful things, being violent. Passive: Giving hurtful looks, hurtfully refusing to cooperate.	1. Refuse to feel hurt or angry. 2. Don't hurt child back. 3. At other times, work to build trust. 4. Help child feel loved.	1. Be as fair as you can. 2. Say thank you when child helps. 3. Notice and appreciate when child contributes.
Display of inadequacy	Helplessness	Passive only: Quitting easily.	1. Do no pity. 2. Stop all criticizing. 3. Notice all efforts, no matter how small. 4. Don't give up on child.	1. Focus on child's strengths, talents. 2. Notice when child makes wise choices. 3. Notice when child thinks of others. 4. Give lots of encouragement.

When children misbehave, we should:

1. Help the child form more positive beliefs:

- 1.1. Help your child take part
- 1.2. Give choices
- 1.3. Be fair
- 1.4. Notice and teach courage

2. Do the unexpected. When you do the unexpected, you do the opposite of what a child expects. This way, the child won't get the usual payoff. Your response won't support the misbehavior. Then the child may need to find a more useful way to belong.

- 2.1. Decide to change
- 2.2. Change your purpose.
- 2.3. Change your beliefs and feelings.

3. Discuss and model correct behavior ourselves.

- 3.1. Talk about values
- 3.2. Act as You'd Like Your Child to Act.

4. Encourage the positive by:

- 4.1. Helping children take part. Encourage children to help with family projects. Show them how to cooperate with other people. In this way, they can be part of things and can be helpful to others too.
- 4.2. Giving choices. Give your child choices. Let your child live with the choice. When possible, let your child do things alone. In this way, your child will grow more confident. Your child will begin to make better choices.
- 4.3. Being fair. Guide your child to play and share equally. Treat your child fairly and with respect so your child will trust you. In this way, your child will see that people can be fair and trustworthy. When this is true, there is no need to get even.

5. Continually examine yourself and eliminate irrational or faulty beliefs. Beliefs cause emotions. If you choose to think of unpleasant events, you will have unpleasant feelings. How you feel results from your thoughts. Your irrational beliefs cause problems and interfere with your happiness. They take the form of demanding, complaining, and blaming.

5.9.2 Who Owns the Problem?

When children misbehave, we need to develop the ability to decide who owns the problem so we can assign responsibility for the misbehavior. To decide who owns the problem, parents must ask themselves four questions:

1. **Are my rights being disrespected?**
2. **Could anybody get hurt?**
3. **Are someone's belonging's threatened?**
4. **Is my child too young to be responsible for this problem?**

- **If the answer to *any* of these questions is yes, then you own the problem.**
- **If the answer to *every* question is no, then your child owns the problem.**

The person who owns the problem is responsible for handling it. Sometimes parents want to help children solve child-owned problems.

When you talk with your child about a problem, use open questions, which begin with:

- where
- when
- what
- who
- which
- how

When you are angry and in conflict with your child, you can:

- Look for how you are alike.
- Stay respectful
- Talk about the real problem
- Agree not to fight

Below is an example of how to decide who owns the problems and the best way for dealing with them:

Table 5-4: Examples of Who Owns the Problem

<i>Problem</i>	<i>Who Owns It?</i>	<i>Possible solution</i>
Child is unhappy about losing a game	Child	<u>Reflective Listening</u> : "You're disappointed that you lost."
Child refuses to talk to a new stepparent	Stepparent	<u>Reflective Listening and I-Message</u> : "It's hard to get used to a new stepparent. When you won't talk to

Problem	Who Owns It?	Possible solution
		me, I feel discouraged because I really want to get to know you.”
Children are poking each other in car, creating a disturbance for the driver	Parent	<i>I-Message and Choice:</i> “I’m finding the movement in the back seat very distracting.” If I-message produces no change, give choice. Parent pulls to side of road, says: “When you have settled down, I’ll drive on.”
Child has trouble sleeping on night before test	Child	<i>Reflective Listening:</i> “You feel really worried about your test because it’s a big part of your grade.”
Child is having trouble getting along with teacher	Child	<i>Exploring Alternatives:</i> “You’re angry with the teacher because you think he’s unfair. Would you like to talk about how you might get along with him?”
Older child wants to go on unsupervised camp-out with friends	Parent	<i>Exploring Alternatives:</i> “I’m worried that some emergency might happen and no adult would be around to help. So I don’t agree with your going without supervision. Would you like to talk about going camping with adult supervision?”

5.9.3 Discipline and the Consequences for Misbehavior

When children are nine or younger, the parents should decide on the consequences for the problem and offer these consequences as a choice to the child whenever there is misbehavior. When the child is ten, a different approach is warranted. The approach that should be followed is called *contracting*, where you ask the child what he or she thinks the consequences should be for the misbehavior.

The following guidelines shall be followed when parents discipline the child:

1. Discipline helps children learn to cooperate. It helps them learn self-control.
2. The keys to effective discipline are:
 - 2.1. Show respect for your child and yourself.
 - 2.2. Expect your child to cooperate.
 - 2.3. Provide choices.
 - 2.4. Apply consequences.
 - 2.5. Be consistent.
3. Instead of giving orders, set limits and give choices. Limits and choices give everyone some control.

A consequence happens when a child makes a choice. Consequences are a way to set limits and give choices. Consequences:

1. Show respect for you and your child.
2. Should immediately follow the misbehavior so that there is immediate punishment for the misbehavior.
3. Should be posted in writing a conspicuous place for the child to read. This poster should be reviewed periodically so the child clearly knows the limits that have been set.
4. Be enforced and applied consistently and fairly among all the people in the family.
5. Should fit the misbehavior
6. Are for bad choices, not bad kids.
7. Are about now, not the past.
8. Are firm and friendly.
9. Allow choice.

Some guidelines for using consequences are:

1. Be both firm and kind.
2. Talk less, act more.
3. Don't fight or give in.
4. Use respectful words.
5. Respect the child's choice.
6. Make it clear when there is no choice.
7. Let all children be responsible for their choices.
8. Don't worry about what others think.
9. Stay calm.
10. Be patient with yourself and your child

With older children (10 and older), negotiating consequences is important. They are more likely to follow consequences they have helped decide. Ask what they think would be fair or what they would do if they were the parent. If the child refuses to help decide or chooses unreasonable consequences, you will need to set the consequence.

At times, negotiation isn't needed. Maybe the problem is too small, or too serious, with limited choices. There will be many opportunities to involve your child in negotiating consequences.

The table below shows the current Consequence List for all misbehaviors in the _____ Family. This table is to be applied for children younger than 10 years old.

Table 5-5: Child Misbehavior Consequence List

<i>Circumstance</i>	<i>Activity or Problem</i>	<i>Choices (Keep respectful tone)</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
SITUATIONAL BEHAVIORS			
Morning/School	Getting up on time	“You may get up on time or go to bed earlier.”	If child gets up late: Goes to bedroom earlier that night.
	Eating breakfast	“You may eat breakfast or pack a healthy snack.”	If child gets up late: Misses breakfast.
	Having things ready for school	“You may get up on time to pack your lunch or pack it the night before.”	If child misses breakfast: Takes healthy snack.
		“I leave for work before you’re up. I can sign your field trip slip the night before.”	1. If child doesn’t pack lunch: Goes without or uses allowance to buy own lunch. 2. If child forgets or loses lunch money: Goes hungry that day.
	Trouble on the bus	“You can follow the rules on the bus or get kicked off.”	Natural consequence: Child gets kicked off the school bus if he misbehaves..
After School	TV	“You may watch TV for one hour, either after school or after supper.”	Once limit is reached: Parent turns off TV.
		“You can watch shows we’ve agreed to or find something else to do.”	If child argues or watches “off limits” program: Parent turns off TV. Child finds something else to do.
	Video games or computer	“You may only play video games for 30 minutes or I will lock up the games. You decide.”	If child plays too long, parent locks up the video games and says he can play again tomorrow.
	Homework	“You may do your homework after school or after supper. You decide.”	Child does homework before or after supper. If child does not do homework: Does homework after school next day.
		“I can pick you up at the library at five, or you can walk home.”	Child is on time or walks home.
	Phone	“You may talk on the phone after you’ve finished your homework.”	If child uses phone before homework: May not use phone rest of that night.
1. “You can do homework on the phone if you can be off in twenty minutes.” 2. “Please limit phone calls to ten		When limit is reached: Parent respectfully interrupts child to end phone call.	

<i>Circumstance</i>	<i>Activity or Problem</i>	<i>Choices (Keep respectful tone)</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
		minutes or talk to your friends at school.”	
Evening	Kitchen chores	“Please do the dishes, or we’ll run out of clean ones.”	If a child does not wash dishes: Parent allows dishes to pile up.
	Eating dinner	“You can	
	Activities	“You can sign up for baseball or soccer. You decide.”	If child doesn’t choose: Does not sign up for either, or parent chooses for child.
		“You may play in the band if you agree to practice. It’s up to you.”	If child does not practice: Parent returns instrument to school or rental store.
		“You can go to the mall if Ted’s dad or older sister goes too.”	If child goes to mall without adult: May not go to mall. Parent sets time when child can try again.
	Bedtime	“You may go to bed or do something quiet in your room.”	If child plays or reads until too late in room: Has natural consequence of being tired in morning.
“You can head for bed, or I can walk you there. You decide.”		If child doesn’t go to bed on own: Parent takes child to bedroom.	
SITUATIONAL BEHAVIORS			
Visitation with divorced parents	Won’t come to in-person visitation or won’t leave visitation with one parent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>I-Message</u>: “When you won’t visit your father/mother, I feel sad because it makes me think that you don’t love me.” 2. <u>Choice</u>: “You can go to visitation or we’ll have to lock up all your toys until the next visitation. You decide.” 3. <u>Encouragement</u>: When child goes to visitation voluntarily, “You were so good today and I’m so proud of you!” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child is encouraged to comply. If he doesn’t, then offer the choice. 2. Child loses use of toys till next visitation or until he complies. 3. Child feels encouraged by attending visitation..
Home	Is rude to one parent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Do the unexpected</u>: Ignore the rudeness. 2. <u>I-Message</u>: Later, when alone, use an I-message to tell child how 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child’s behavior isn’t reinforced. 2. Child is encouraged to change behavior. 3. Child chooses the path. If chooses

<i>Circumstance</i>	<i>Activity or Problem</i>	<i>Choices (Keep respectful tone)</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
		parent feels: "When you call me names, I feel discouraged. It seems like you don't respect me." 3. <u>Choice</u> : "I will drive you to the library if you can be respectful. Otherwise, you can stay home. You decide."	the wrong path, is stranded at home.
	Won't clean up his mess	<u>Choice</u> : "You can either clean your room or we won't watch any more TV or play video games from now on. You decide."	Room is messy and child can't watch TV if doesn't clean room.
	Won't go to church with parents		
School	Can't get along with kids at school	1. <u>Explore options</u> Talk with child to understand the situation. Say: "Do you want to talk about how we can be friends with Johnny?" 2. <u>Encouragement</u> : "You feel rejected when Johnny isn't nice to you, but I know you can learn to get along with him!"	1. Child learns techniques from parent for dealing with the situation he owns. 2. Child is encouraged to continue working on ways to get along better.
	Child gets poor grades in class	1. <u>Explore options</u> Talk with child to understand the situation. Say: "Do you want to talk about how we can improve your grades?" 2. <u>Encouragement/help</u> : "I know you feel discouraged when you get bad grades, but I know you can change that if you work harder and smarter. Can I help you with your homework every night till you come up to speed?"	1. Child learns options for dealing with the situation and is empowered to fix the problem. 2. Child will feel encouraged and may try harder, but is reminded that he owns the problem and needs to take responsibility.
Sporting events and games	Child is a poor loser	1. <u>Choice</u> : "You can either be a good sport or we won't come here anymore. You decide." 2. <u>I-message</u> : "I feel embarrassed when you act like a poor loser because the other players think you are	1. Child can't go to game unless he is respectful of the other players. 2. Child learns the affect his behavior has on others and is encouraged to change.

<i>Circumstance</i>	<i>Activity or Problem</i>	<i>Choices (Keep respectful tone)</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
		inconsiderate and selfish.”	

5.9.4 Cooperative Problem-Solving Techniques

When there is a problem between parent and child, parents and children shall use the following problem-solving techniques:

1. Ignore the problem.
2. Use reflective listening
3. Use an I-message
4. Parents should help the child to see the choices and the possible consequences.
5. Talk through the problem with the child.

5.9.5 Talking Through Problems by Exploring Alternatives

The fifth cooperative problem-solving technique described in the previous section was “talking through problems”. This section describes how that technique works.

Talking through the problem consists of the following steps:

1. Understand the problem. Make sure the problem is clear to both you and your child. Use reflective listening. Ask questions that help you understand. Explain the problem clearly and respectfully. State your own feelings with I-messages.
2. Brainstorm ideas to solve it. To brainstorm, ask your child for ways to solve the problems. Suggest your own ideas too. You can help by saying, “What might happen if you _____?” These ideas are the *alternatives*. Stay open-minded for this step. Sometimes, ideas sound silly or impossible. Don’t be quick to judge them. One “silly” idea might help you or your child think of another really good one. For now, just think of *any* ideas.
3. Discuss the ideas. Now is the time to consider the ideas. Both you and your child should feel free to “try on” the different ideas. If you don’t agree with an idea, challenge it respectfully. Don’t say, “I’m sure that idea won’t work.” Instead say, “I worry that sticking to that plan will be hard for you.” This clearly gets your concerns across to your child.
4. Choose an idea. Pick an idea you can both accept and commit to it.
5. Use the idea. Agree to test the idea you have accepted. Decide together how long to use it. Plan enough time to give the idea a fair test.

5.9.6 Use of I-Messages

A good way to talk about problems is with an I-message. I-messages tell how you feel when a child ignores your rights. They focus on you, rather than the child. I-messages don’t label or blame. When you use an I-message, you simply tell how you feel.

I-Messages Have Three parts

To use an I-message, do three things:

1. **Tell what is *happening*.**
2. **Tell what you *feel*.**
3. ***Explain* why you feel that way.**

Here is an I-message:

- **“When you don’t call, I feel worried because I don’t know where you are.”**

Table 5-6: I-Message Example

#	It uses these words	Example
1	When	<i>“When you don’t call,</i>
2	I feel	<i>I feel worried</i>
3	because	<i>because I don’t know where you are.”</i>

Once you understand the parts of an I-message, use words that feel natural to you:

- “I feel scared when I find the iron left on. We could have a fire.”

Decide if you want to tell about your feeling, or just the problem:

- “I can’t set the table when it’s covered with toys.”

These are the most important things to remember about I-messages:

- **They focus on *you*, not your child.**
- **They do not place blame on anyone.**
- **They are most effective when they focus on encouragement of positive behaviors rather than bad reactions to negative behaviors**
- **They focus not on selfish needs of the speaker but on the needs of others**

It is important to realize that when we use I-messages, we need to be careful not to blame or create guilt in our child. For instance, as a single parent, when we say:

- “I feel sad when you say you would rather be with mom than dad because it makes the statement that you don’t love me.”

This is creating guilt in your child and making them feel blamed. Instead, we should always make references to only positive feelings when we are dealing with children 18 years or younger. Therefore, we might rephrase the statement above to make it more positive:

- “I feel good when you spend time with me because you are demonstrating love by sacrificing your time with mom to be with me.”

5.10 Answers to Common Questions Children Ask

5.10.1 Does God really know me?⁶⁹

The Bible passage of Luke 12:7 helps us answer this question. God knows each of us in every detail. He knows what we like to eat, what kind of music we like, and our favorite color. Jesus said that God cares so much about each one of us that he has even numbered every hair on our heads!

⁶⁹ *The Devotional Bible for Dads*, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1136.

Think about someone you know very well. You may know what time this person wakes up every day, what makes him or her laugh, and even whether or not he or she likes tomatoes. But do you know how many hairs are on this person's head?

The average person has about 125,000 hairs on his head or her head. Every day when you brush your hair, you probably lose about fifty to seventy-five hairs (most of which grow back!). So every single day, the number of hairs on your head changes. But God still knows how many are there!

Jesus gave us this example so that we would understand just how personally God knows us. We're extremely important to him. Nobody knows us better!

5.10.2 Does God want me to be afraid of him?⁷⁰

The Bible passage of Leviticus 25:36 helps us answer this question. God doesn't want us to be afraid of him like we'd be afraid of something mean or evil. But he does want us to fear him—kind of like we fear police officers.

What does that mean? Well, police officers are good people. They protect us from those who might want to hurt us or steal from us. They're able to protect us because they have the authority to punish people who break the law. Because we "fear" the authority of a police officer and don't want him or her to punish us, we don't break the law.

To "fear" God means to be in awe of him, to recognize his authority and to respect and honor him. Likewise, it says in Proverbs 8:13 that "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." Therefore, to fear God is to loathe these kinds of bad behavior but to love the person who is doing them.

God doesn't want us to run from him. He loves us dearly. A philosopher once said wisely, "He who truly fears a thing runs from it, but he who truly fears God, flees unto him." Isn't this wonderful?

5.10.3 Does God need me to pray so that he can do what he wants to do?⁷¹

The Bible passage of Daniel 9:17-18 helps us answer this question. God is the Creator of the entire universe. He spoke and the planets and stars came into being. His plans for the world and for our lives will be accomplished. Our lack of praying doesn't prevent him from doing what he wants to do. He is quite capable of doing whatever he wishes, and his plans are sovereign.

So why even pray? This is the incredible part. God *wants* us to pray to him and *allows* us to be part of his work. As part of our gratitude to God for all he's done for us, God wants us to commune with him, to thank him and to take our requests to him. He loves us; he wants that communication to flow freely, like a beloved child speaking to a generous father.

⁷⁰ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 147.

⁷¹ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 955.

No, God doesn't need us to pray so that he can accomplish his will. We need to pray so we can thank him for all he's done for us, so we can learn his plans for our future and so our hearts align with him. Daniel's prayer in this short passage perfectly demonstrates this truth.

5.10.4 Will God punish me when I sin—even if I don't know I'm sinning?⁷²

The Bible passage of 2 Chronicles 34:14-33 helps us answer this question. God is a merciful God, and he sees when our hearts are right, even if we make a mistake. But if we sin because we haven't learned what God says in his Word, God will still hold us accountable.

As hard as it may be to believe, the Israelites at one time completely forgot about the Book of the Law God had given Moses. For all practical purposes, this book was lost. The Jews didn't teach their children the laws, and before long the Israelites weren't following the rules at all! Yet, despite their ignorance, God was angry (v. 21). In God's eyes, broken rules are broken rules.

But when Josiah became king, he turned back to God. Soon after that, one of the priests found the Book of the Law that had been lost for so long (vv. 14-15). When King Josiah read the book, he wept because he knew his people had been sinning against God all the time that this book had been lost. After Josiah read from the Book of the Law (v. 30), he asked the people to "pledge themselves to it" (v. 32), and the people followed the Lord for as long as Josiah was king.

From this story, we learn that God has mercy on us, but we'd better make sure we learn his rules, all the same. Only in obeying God's Word will we experience God's best for ourselves.

5.10.5 Does God ever get sad?⁷³

The Bible passage of Ephesians 4:30-5:1 helps us answer this question. God *does* get sad. He is sad when we do things that are wrong. Ephesians 4:30 says we should not "grieve" the Holy Spirit. And the original Greek word for "grieve" means to distress, to be sad, to cause grief, to be in heaviness, to make sorry.

When we are filled with bitterness, rage, anger, gossip and hatred, we make God sad. We make His heart heavy. So the Bible tells us to be "imitators of God" (5:1).

Just as we can make God sad, we can also make him happy. Imagine that. When we choose to do the right things, to love and speak encouraging words to others, to tell the truth, to honor our parents and to forgive others, we please God.

Our choices are important to God. Good ones please Him. Bad ones make Him sad. So, it is important that we make the right choices!

5.10.6 Should I tell the truth even if it hurts someone's feelings?⁷⁴

⁷² The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 497.

⁷³ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1311.

⁷⁴ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1310.

The Bible passage of Ephesians 4:25 addresses this issue. While telling the truth is important, being tactful and kind is also important. So, it is not okay to constantly blurt out hurtful opinions in the name of truth. On the other hand, we must not temper our beliefs just to avoid hurt feelings.

Paul instructed the Ephesians to “put off falsehood and speak truthfully to [their] neighbor[s].” This is especially true in the church. Because we are members of the same body, we are to treat others as if they were a part of ourselves. We must lovingly confront wrong behavior because it damages the church, the body of Jesus Christ. Imagine breaking your arm but trying to convince your brain that your arm was not broken. It sounds absurd, doesn’t it? You would *want* your brain to know so you could get that arm into a cast as quickly as possible!

It is not fun to tell a friend that his or her “arm is broken,” but we need to tell that friend the truth so he or she can avoid greater pain later. Wouldn’t you want someone to do the same for you?

5.10.7 Is saying “I’m sorry” the same as repenting?⁷⁵

The Bible passage of 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 helps us answer this question. Repenting is very different than just saying we’re sorry. When we say we’re sorry, we admit we were wrong and that we feel bad about what we did. When we repent, we not only admit we are wrong, but we also fix what we have broken. We stop, turn around and start walking in the other direction.

Now, which is better, feeling guilty or repenting? The apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 7:8-11 says repentance leads to salvation and leaves no regret. But he doesn’t stop there. He goes on to say that worldly sorrow brings *death*. We’re not dealing with two degrees of good, here. We’re dealing with two paths: repentance leading to salvation, and worldly sorrow—just saying “I’m sorry” with no intention of changing our behavior—leading to death.

Can you think of an offense you have committed? Confess it, fix it and then reverse it.

5.10.8 Is being proud good or bad?⁷⁶

The Bible in Obadiah 3-4 helps us to answer this question. Pride can be a good thing, and pride can also be a bad thing.

When someone “takes pride” in his work, it is generally considered a good thing. We value those who have a high standard and who do quality work. We also hear people say “be proud of who you are” or “be proud of your name.” Again, these are good things. These statements tell us that we shouldn’t feel embarrassed about the way we look or think or about our work or family.

But sinful pride doesn’t only enjoy having something, it enjoys having *more* of it than the next person. This kind of pride makes us happy that we have more money or a better job or better toys than someone else. It’s in the *comparison* that we become proud.

⁷⁵ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1292.

⁷⁶ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 986.

Sinful pride is very dangerous. For to know God is to understand that we have no reason to boast. It was this kind of pride that turned an angel into Satan himself (Luke 10:18, Revelation 12:3-9). Everything we have has been given to us by our heavenly Father.

So, take pleasure in a job well done or in pleasing someone important to you. Take pleasure in your son's or daughter's or father's or mother's achievements. But beware of thinking yourself better than those around you (see Philippians 2:3).

5.10.9 If prayer really works, why don't doctors prescribe it?⁷⁷

While you won't find it at a pharmacy, some doctors may already be prescribing prayer! In 1992, a group of researchers established the National Institute of Healthcare Research (NIHR) to study what they call "the forgotten factor"-the effects of faith and prayer on health. Their findings are no surprise to Christians.

Numerous studies show that churchgoers have lower rates of anxiety-related illnesses and depression. One study showed that if elderly patients had an active prayer life or found solace in their faith, they were *fourteen* times more likely to survive surgery.

One cardiologist at the San Francisco General Medical Center conducted a study on intercessory prayer. He assigned half of his serious heart patients to Christians outside the hospital that agreed to pray for them over a ten-month period.

At the end of that time, the patients receiving prayer needed less medicine and mechanical assistance than the others did. "These data suggest that intercessory prayer to the Judeo-Christian God has a beneficial therapeutic effect in patients admitted to a CCU [cardiac care unit]" (Byrd, 829)

So today's doctors and researchers are not finding out what James 5:15 has told us all along: Prayer works.

Byrd, Randolph C. Southern Medical Journal. July, 1988; 81(7): 826-829.

5.10.10 If I'm supposed to love everybody, why shouldn't I be friends with everybody?⁷⁸

The Bible passage of Proverbs 13:20 answers this question. Jesus tells us to love everyone, even our enemies (Luke 6:27,35). But Proverbs 13:20 says that if we are to grow wise, we must walk with wise people. If we choose "fools" as companions, we'll suffer harm.

A "companion" is much more than an acquaintance; he or she is one who becomes a close friend, a "traveling buddy," even a mate. If we choose companions who don't love God or don't act according to his Word, we're told in no uncertain terms that we're walking straight into trouble.

⁷⁷ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1382.

⁷⁸ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 692.

As dads, our job is to protect our children from harm. Therefore, our job is to teach them to choose friends wisely. And this lesson is every bit as important for us as it is for our kids. Our companions are either making us wiser or leading us right into harm's way.

The Bible doesn't contradict itself at all on this issue. Love your neighbor. Love your enemy. But choose your friends with care.

5.10.11 Why do we have to follow so many rules?⁷⁹

In the Bible passage of Joshua 1:-7-9, we learn the answer to this question. The Israelites sometimes wondered why they had to follow God's rules. But the book of Joshua makes it clear: God gave them rules to follow "that you may be successful wherever you go" (v. 7)

To a child, some rules may seem pointless. Why chew with your mouth closed? Why say "Yes, Sir" or "No, Ma'am"? But good manners prove useful later in life. Even in Moses' day, parents had rules like these. Egyptian fathers taught their sons "wisdom texts." For example, "If you dine with a great man, 'take what he may give, when it is set before thy nose...speak only when he addresses thee. Laugh after he laughs, and it will be very pleasing to his heart'".

God also gave his people in the Bible rules to protect them—for example, God commanded them not to eat unclean food. He didn't want his children to get sick. For the same reason, parents still make children wash their hands before eating.

Rules govern our society, and learning to follow the rules as a child makes it much easier to be successful as an adult. For thousands of years, parents have understood this. In the same way, God understands that we must learn to follow his rules. And so he gives us lots of behavioral guidelines for a reason: "that [we] may be successful wherever [we] go."

5.10.12 Why do good people suffer?⁸⁰

In the Bible book of Job 1, Job was a righteous man who ultimately ended up being made to suffer. As a matter of fact, Job is the most famous example of a Biblical character who suffered. But why Job? Of all people, why did this blameless man (v.1) suffer so much? The reason, though it may be hard to see, is simple: In allowing Job to suffer, God proved that Job's love for him was pure. Satan argued that Job only loved God because God blessed him so richly. So God allowed Satan to take almost everything Job had: his riches, his family, and his health. Yet Job proved faithful; he never cursed God or blamed him for what had happened (v. 22).

Several verses in the New Testament shed light on this perplexing question. Hebrews 12:10-11 tells us that sometimes God uses pain to discipline us and turn us away from doing wrong things. James 1:2-4 says that sometimes God uses pain to help us grow up. These trials test our faith and help us develop perseverance "that [we] may be mature and complete, not lacking in anything." So, as strange as it may seem, many times we have to suffer before we can experience complete and full lives. Finally, the apostle Paul moves us beyond the question of why and gives us an example of trust in God through

⁷⁹ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 238.

⁸⁰ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 541.

the pain and trials of life: “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation...I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12-14).

Still today we see many examples of “good” people who suffer. And although God knows what’s in his people’s hearts, these types of trials allow them to discover—and to demonstrate to those watching—that God is worthy of their love regardless of their outward circumstances.

5.10.13 Why do I sometimes feel like God’s not there?⁸¹

In Psalm 22:1-2, we read about the cries of King David, who felt abandoned by God. At different times we’ve all felt, as David did at the beginning of this psalm, like God just wasn’t there. WE knew he said he would never leave us, but it still felt like he was on vacation. Why? Why does God sometimes seem to forsake us?

In his famous book, *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis offers great insight on this question. The narrator in this book is a senior demon who is counseling a junior demon on how to pull a Christian away from God’s service. In this passage, the Christian is feeling that God has forsaken him, and old Screwtape has this to say:

[God] wants [His children] to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand; and if only the will to walk is really there He is pleased even with their stumbles. Do not be deceived...our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy’s [God’s] will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys (p. 39).

Remember, God’s goal is not to force us to love him. He wants us to love him by *choice*. He’s helping us grow up, and little by little, he’s teaching us to walk with him. Just as a little child needs to “go it alone” before he or she can learn to walk, so also God needs to take away his hand so that we will learn to walk in his way no matter what the circumstances.

5.10.14 Does God hate anything?⁸²

In Prov. 6:16-19 we learn about what God hates. God doesn’t hate any people, but the Bible says there are at least seven things that he detests. These seven things can be summed up with one little word: sin. As a perfect being, God abhors anything that rebels against his perfection, and this listing contains several types of rebellion.

- **Pride:** God hates “haughty eyes,” because he knows just how ridiculous it is when any person thinks he or she is better than another person. In God’s eyes, we are all of equal value.
- **Lying:** God is Truth, and he hates it when we tell big lies, “little” lies, or any lies.
- **Murder:** God hates “hands that shed innocent blood.” We see a lot of this today—drive-by shootings, terrorist acts, bombings. God hates such senseless destruction of human life.
- **Conspiracy:** God hates a “heart that devises wicked schemes,” or that plots and plans to do evil.

⁸¹ *The Devotional Bible for Dads*, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 587.

⁸² *The Devotional Bible for Dads*, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 684.

- **Willingness to do evil:** God hates “feet that are quick to rush into evil.” feet that act out the wicked plans of the heart.
- **Betrayal:** God hates it when people lie so that other individuals will be hurt.
- **Dissension:** This sin could include gossiping, cheating, stealing, lying—anything that pits one person against another and takes their focus off their identity as God’s children.

Here we have a very clear list of actions and activities that God hates or finds detestable. They all have to do with things that distance us from himself and from living peacefully with others. As we are careful to avoid doing the things on this list, we will find ourselves being drawn closer to God and to others.

5.10.15 If someone hurts me, why can’t I hurt that person back?⁸³

In Romans 12:17-21, the Bible says that if someone hurts us, we should still treat that person with kindness. This might seem unfair at first. Why should someone be able to hurt us and get away with it? Well, that person will not really get away with it.

God will repay those who do evil. How he repays them is up to Him, but we are not supposed to take matters into our own hands. We can follow Christ’s example and trust God.

We cannot control a person’s actions, but we can treat that person with love in spite of those actions. This is what Paul meant when he said, “as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (v. 18). God instructs us to feed our enemy if he is hungry and to give him something to drink if he is thirsty. When we’re kind to our enemies, we overcome evil with good.

5.10.16 Why do we have to forgive people who hurt us?⁸⁴

In Matt. 18:21-35, the apostle Peter wondered about this very issue, and he asked Jesus how many times we had to forgive someone. “Seventy-seven times,” Jesus replied, meaning that forgiveness must be unlimited.

Jesus taught that we must forgive others because God has forgiven us. The parable of the unmerciful servant illustrates his point. The master in this parable canceled a servant’s huge debt. When he discovered that his servant did not extend the same forgiveness to another, the master became furious. He reinstated the debt and threw his servant in jail until he could repay what he owed. Jesus warns us that, in the same way, God will not forgive us unless we in turn forgive others.

The choice is simple. We do not have to forgive others—unless we want God to forgive us.

5.10.17 How do I love someone I don’t even like?⁸⁵

⁸³ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1260

⁸⁴ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1062

⁸⁵ The Devotional Bible for Dads, Robert Wolgemuth, Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 1063

In Matt. 19:19, the Bible tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves. So, how do we love ourselves? Sometimes we don't like ourselves very much, and sometimes we even hate our own actions. However, we love ourselves by giving ourselves the benefit of the doubt when we make mistakes. We believe that we are on our way to becoming better people and always hope for our own well being. We believe that God loves us. In the same way, we do not need always to be fond of our neighbors or approve of everything they do to love them.

So how do we love people we do not like? First, we don't waste time trying to create phony feelings of affection for them. That is not the point. Instead, we give them the benefit of the doubt and wish them the best, even if they have hurt us. We treat them with respect and preserve their dignity. WE recognize that God loves them as much as he loves us. When we decide to treat others this way, we might just start to like them, after all!

6 EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP

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Many of us spend more time at work than we do awake at home with our family. Our attitude about work can influence our attitude at home considerably and determine the friends that we have during our private time and it can also influence who we marry. That's why it's so important in the context of the family to make the right career choice and to approach work with the right attitude. The purpose of this chapter is to identify what the right attitude toward work is.

6.1 Role of bosses

The Bible speaks less about what rulers should do than it does about most other roles and relationships, perhaps because the authors may have wanted to avoid being criticized or chastised by rulers, bosses, or politicians. Recall that Jesus was crucified by order of rulers, and people lived in fear of rulers and were reluctant to criticize them or tell them what they should be doing.

Because bosses are most often also employees, they are expected to follow all the requirements defined in Role of employees in section 6.2. Bosses also need to follow the requirements for Christians identified in section 2.1: Role of Christians. Below are some additional requirements the Bible places specifically on rulers:

Table 6-1: Role of managers/bosses

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Praise good works	For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same.	Romans 13:3
2	Be an avenger to execute wrath on employees who practice evil	For he [the ruler] is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.	Romans 13:4
3	Do not love the praise of men more than the praise of God	Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.	John 12:42-43
4	Be diligent if you want to stay the boss	The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.	Prov. 12:24
5	Don't threaten your servants and work with enthusiasm as though you are serving Christ	Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ: Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.	Ephesians 6:5-9
6	Be a good example to your subordinates.	Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.	Matt 5:16

In many ways, being a ruler or boss is like being a parent: You are responsible for the people you rule and it is your job to develop, educate, and mentor them so they can successfully and self-sufficiently manage their own affairs and the company's affairs. We talked about this in section 5.2.1 when we described God, our king, as also being the First Parent of Adam and Eve. Therefore, many of the same requirements that apply to parents in section 5.2 also apply to bosses in this section. To apply section 5.2 to the boss situation, simply replace child with employee and boss with parent/father.

Throughout the Bible, Jesus and God are referred to as kings. They provide the role model for righteous governance and rule. God is referred to as King eternal in 1 Tim. 1:17, for instance. There are many references to the character of God in the Bible that we can use as examples of how we need to behave when we are acting as bosses or rulers:

Table 6-2: God's Character as a Ruler and King of us all

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Judges impartially	And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay in fear...	1 Peter 1:13
2	Hates people who boast, do evil. Destroys liars	The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood. The Lord Abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful men.	Psalms 5:5-6
3	His power comes from righteousness and justice	Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.	Psalms 89:14
4	Is merciful and kind	For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.	Psalms 117:2
5	Is longsuffering, good, gracious, and truthful	And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation."	Exodus 34:6-7

6.2 Role of employees

Table 6-3: Role of employees

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Fear God and keep his commandments	Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.	Ecc. 12:13-14
2	Obey the law	Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and	1 Peter 2:13-15

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
		for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.	
3	Be subject to your boss	Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is not authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.	Romans 13:1
4	Servants be submissive to your boss	Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.	1 Peter 2:18-19
5	Support your family through your work. Don't be unemployed	But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.	1 Tim. 5:8
6	Excel at your work. Go the extra mile!	Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men.	Prov. 22:29
7	Having credibility at work is more important than great riches	A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.	Prov. 22:1
8	Be a team player	Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.	Phi. 2:2-4; Eph. 4:2
9	Be joyful when you encounter trials at work	Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”	James 1:2-3
10	Seek to be smart and wise at your job	The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.	Prov. 18:15
11	Do not be arrogant about your job or your position	Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.	Prov. 16:18-19
12	Go to all employment meetings and events you can. Do not isolate yourself	A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.	Prov. 18:1
13	Do not lie and hate lying but not liars	A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are his delight. A righteous man hates lying, but a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame.	Prov. 19:9; Prov 21:6 Prov. 12:22 Prov. 13:5

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
14	Be diligent and persistent in whatever you do	The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.	Prov. 21:5
15	Watch what you say	Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.	Prov. 21:23
16	Do not involve yourself in other people's arguments at work	He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own, is like one who takes a dog by the ears.	Prov. 26: 17
17	Do not praise or promote yourself at work	Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.	Prov. 27:2
18	Favor integrity over affluence	Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.	Prov. 28:6
19	Take your time when you speak	Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.	Prov 29:20
20	Choose your friends very carefully	The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.	Prov. 12:26
21	Do not swear	You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.	Exodus 20:7
22	Do not steal	You shall not steal.	Exodus 20:15
23	Do not covet anything your coworker or boss has	You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.	Exodus 20:17
24	Avoid evil and the schemes of coworkers and bosses	A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.	Prov. 22:3
25	Do not speak evil of the boss	You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people. Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do no curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter.	Exodus 22:28; Acts 23:23 Eccl 10:20
26	Pay your taxes and show respect to your boss	Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.	Romans 13:7
27	If you are forced to do things rather than given free choice, it might be because you aren't diligent or responsible	The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.	Prov. 12:24
28	Work with enthusiasm as though you are serving Christ	Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ: Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.	Ephesians 6:5-8

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
29	Submit to authority and don't depart service of authority to take a stand against an evil thing the boss/king is doing.	I say, "Keep the kings' commandment for the sake of your oath to God. Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him." Where the word of a king is, there is power; And who may say to him, "What are you doing?" He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, Though the misery of man increases greatly.	Ecc. 8:2-5
30	Do not curse the boss or the ruler or the rich.	Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter.	Ecc. 10:20
31	Be a good example to your coworkers and your boss.	Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.	Matt 5:16

6.3 The Four Types of Workers

There are precisely four types of workers described in the Bible. The table below summarizes each:

Table 6-4: The Four Types of Workers

#	Name	Scripture(s)	Description
1	Those who see what needs to be done and do it without being asked.	Prov. 20:11, Prov. 24:27, Luke 19:17	Very rare worker. Highly productive and well rewarded. Never looking for work. Always being offered more responsibility, even when he isn't seeking it.
2	Those who ask what they should do.	Matt. 5:41	Always goes the extra mile. This kind is rare and is never out of work.
3	Those who must be told what to do.	Prov. 12:24	Basically lazy but does not deliberately avoid work. Do a good job when told but don't seek out new or more work. Never gets far in job market and usually gripes about the way he gets passed up when promotions are made.
4	Those who must be found in order to be told what to do.	Prov. 6:9, Prov. 13:4	Lazy and avoids work. Often absent from job or worksite. Manager is always looking for him and has to question or inspect everything he does for quality. Gets minimum wage and never holds a job for long.

Obviously, the kind of worker we want to be is worker #1 above. This person is always busy, makes lots of money, and is never out of work. He also anticipates what people need, figures out where the market is, and creates or develops the market for his product or skill.

6.4 The Nature of Work

From the very beginning, even before there was sin or a fall, God gave man a job and work to do. In Genesis 2:15, we read: *"Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it."*

The wisest man on the earth, King Solomon, said in Ecc. 5:18 of work: *"18..It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. 19 As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor--this is the gift of God. 20 For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart." "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is not work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."* (Eccl 9:10).

What the writer of Ecclesiastes was saying to his contemporary philosophical cynical world is that work must be viewed as a gift from God. It is not some kind of a sub-standard secondary lesser activity which is meant to do nothing but finance pleasure. It is in itself a gift from God. You say, in what sense is work a gift from God? I'll give you several. One, it is a means of glorifying God, our creator, by using the skills He gave us. When you work with your mind and you achieve and accomplish with the skill of your thinking and your intellect, when you work with your voice and you demonstrate leadership ability and the ability to motivate and stimulate and move people and clarify issues and give directions, you are demonstrating a divinely granted skill that came to you through the creator. When you use your hands to accomplish skillful things and do beautiful work by manual labor, when you use your strength to move things that are heavy, when you use a facility of a delicate touch to accomplish something that is delicately beautiful, you are demonstrating the creator's glory as it's on display through His creation. If you think a flower shows the glory of God, look at a man or look at a woman and see the majesty and the genius of the mind of God. Work then is a gift by which we glorify God as we demonstrate His creative genius manifest in our own body and mind and soul.

Secondly, work is a gift from God because it is a means of providing value or meaning or fulfillment to life. The sense of accomplishing something. We all know that. We all know that deep soul satisfaction that we have accomplished something, that we have done something and we've held it up and said I've done it well. We know about the writer whose waste basket is filled with papers folded up and thrown away because they didn't achieve the level of accomplishment that he demands of himself, and finally the masterpiece comes forth. We all know about the artist whose bin is full of canvases that didn't exactly express what he felt in his soul and saw with his eye and finally the canvas of genius emerges. We know the student who comes to the end of his examination and knows that he's achieved the standard that must be achieved if he is to gain the degree. We know the one who performs at the highest level of skill in whatever it is that he does and therefore can stand back with pride and say, "I made that, I did that, I accomplished that." That's a very fulfilling thing. We are very goal oriented people, like God is a goal- oriented God who is always achieving His ultimate desires and we have those dreams and goals and visions and achieving those is all a part of being fully human in the sense that we are even in the image of God accomplishing things beneficial and fulfilling.

There's a third reason why work is a gift from God and that is because it prevents us from idleness, it prevents us from idleness which is spiritually very deadly. It occupies us. It keeps us busy and we remember the old adage that idle hands are a plaything for the devil. We understand that very well. It occupies us in meaningful tasks rather than leaving us idle to do those things which are harmful.

Fourthly, work is a gift from God because it is a means of providing for the needs of life. God has given work to us as a way in which we can gain wealth which is a way in which we can purchase our food. In an agrarian culture, work was the means of getting the food. In our culture it's the means of getting the money to get the food, but nonetheless it is the source of our life. God has given us food. God has given us shelter. God has given us drink and sustenance. God has given us the provision of clothing. But God has given us work as the means to acquiring all of it. So work is a noble thing by which we sustain the necessities of life.

And finally, we can say work is a gift from God because it is a means of serving mankind. It is a means of serving humanity. From the person who pumps the gas at the gas station or operates the gas station or works upon the engine of the car so that it runs, he is contributing to the well being of the individual he serves and his ability to do his job and to meet his appointments and to be with his family and to go where he wants to go all the way to the one who builds the car in the first place, who makes transportation possible, all the way to the person who makes the roads and paves the roads and makes sure they go where they're supposed to go, and to the man who paints the signs, who enables us to get off at the right place and get back on where we're supposed to, all the way to the people working in the medical field who provide for our physical well being, the folks who serve us food when we go out to eat or sell it to us in the market, people who teach us in school, the folks who come and take care of our yard or fix our plumbing, all of those people render a service to mankind by which his life is made more pleasing. Work is a gift from God. And even those foolish people who want only leisure want to make sure that everybody around them is working so that they can enjoy doing nothing.

The Bible teaches that we are obligated to excellence in our work because we are doing it for the Lord: "...*You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.*" (Matt 4:10). This means that even when we are working for a boss under his direction, we are still serving the Lord. Because we are working for the Lord, we should do so that we are "...*not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*" (Rom. 12:11). People who aren't diligent or responsible employees are called "time bandits". They hang around the water cooler and gossip, they make long personal calls on company time, take long coffee or smoke breaks, and they leave early and don't punch out. They work on personal business as work. If we viewed work, however, as an opportunity to serve the Lord as the Bible says, we wouldn't do these things. The Bible says of employees like this: "*Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*" (Eph. 4:28).

In 2 Thessalonians 3 starting in verse 6, look what the Apostle Paul says to his followers about work. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you keep aloof from every brother who leads a disorderly or unruly life," and in this context it means who won't work, "and not according to the tradition which you received from us, for you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example because we didn't act in an undisciplined manner among you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you. Not because we do not have the right to this but in order to offer to offer ourselves as a model for you that you might follow our example. For even when we were with you we used to give you this order, if anyone will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. And if anyone doesn't obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him so that he may be put to shame and yet do not regard him as an enemy but admonish him as a brother."

Now it becomes obvious that there's some people living in unruly, undisciplined, disorderly life and what it comes down to is they're not working and they're meddling busybodies fussing around and not working. And then casting themselves on everybody else to have their food need met. And the Apostle is directing this passage at these people who won't work. It is a very unique passage, directed for folks and for the church in which folks exist who will not work.

You see, our Christian faith has sanctified every occupation. There isn't any difference between the secular and the sacred, there isn't any at all. The church should remember that Jesus was a preacher for three years but a carpenter for at least 20. That sanctifies work. All of life is God's. All of it is for His glory.

Look for a moment with me at Ephesians chapter 6, and I can illustrate this to you in the inspired text. Ephesians chapter 6 tells us every job, every occupation, every work falls within a believer's sacred duty. There's no such thing as a secular job for a Christian, there's no such thing as a secular anything because everything is to be done to the glory of God. But look at Ephesians 6 verse 5, "Slaves," or servants, it could be employees, "be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling in the sincerity of your heart as to Christ." Okay? Work under your employer with fear, that's reverence, trembling, understanding that he controls your destiny...sincerity as if you were serving Christ. Verse 6, "Not with eye service," that is just working because he's watching, "not as a men-pleaser," not just pleasing him, "but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service as to the Lord and not to men." In other words, in your job you're serving the Lord with your attitude and your effort. Verse 8, "Knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free." Whether you're an employee who is a slave, whether you're a worker who is a freeman, the work you give rendered to the Lord, the Lord will repay. Your service is to Him, not your boss. Along these lines, someone once said: *"Do a good job because you want to, not because you have to. This puts you in charge instead of your boss."* In this case, the view Christians are to have it *"Do a good job because the Lord wants you to, not because of your boss. This puts the Lord in charge of your workplace, not your boss."*

In Colossians 3, parallel passage, verse 22 we read the same thing. "Employees, or slaves, in all things...Colossians 3:22...obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service as those who merely please men but with sincerity of heart fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men." Now follow verse 24, "Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance." The Lord will reward you. Here's the sum of it. "It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

Your job is not a secular job, it is a spiritual duty. You are serving the Lord with your attitude and your diligence. You're serving the Lord. You're doing it unto His honor and to His glory. You're even serving mankind for what you do provides a service to man that helps them in their life.

So Paul is saying to the Ephesians and saying to the Colossians, work is a sacred duty not a secular one. Work is sacred in the sense that it is done to the Lord...whether you're washing dishes, scrubbing floors, taking care of children at home and maintaining the house, or whether you're in the financial marketplace doing accounting and bookkeeping for a company, or whether you're delivering mail or teaching school or driving a truck, or whether you're operating a business, or whether you're working in sales, whether you're developing strategy for marketing, or whether you're some kind of an expert who acts as a consultant in a unique field...whatever it is that you're doing it is a service rendered to the Lord. He has gifted you. He has granted you talent. He has given you the power to get wealth, as it

says in Deuteronomy, through means of that. And He has allowed you the opportunity to provide your sustenance through that talent, ability and experience and capability that you have. But it is to be done as if you were serving Him, the one who gave you that as the means by which you can earn your living...particularly is this not true for Christians. Everything you do is a sacred trust.

You say, "You mean to tell me that what I do is as important before God as what pastors do?" Yes. You say, "You mean washing dishes in my house as unto the Lord is the same as preaching as unto the Lord?" Yes, not in its impact for evangelism on men, not in its certain instructiveness in regards to Scripture, not before men is it necessarily the same and kind but before God it is the same for it is your service rendered to His glory. That's the point and the Thessalonians didn't grasp it.

Now frankly they should have. I mean, go back to 1 Thessalonians for a moment, chapter 4 verse 10, at the very end of verse 10 he says, "We urge you, brethren, to excel still more," you're doing well but you need to do better. And then in verse 11 he says why, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life," quit running around all over the place, settle down, "attend to your own business," stay out of other people's business, "and work with your hands." Now what he's talking about here is work. In verse 12 he says, "So that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need." Work, don't be a meddler, don't be a busybody, don't be fussing around with other people's business, get your life ordered, get it brought in to control, attend to your own business and do your own work so that, verse 12, you don't have any needs. That is very important to the unity of the church. And it is important to see your work as honoring to God.

You say, "Well now wait a minute, doesn't the Scripture tell us we're to help those people who are poor?" Again I say to you, people who would work but can't find work, people who would work but don't have the physical ability to work, people who are ill and can't do their work, their needs must be met. He's not talking about those kinds of people, he's talking about able-bodied people with opportunity. Obviously Acts 4, Acts 2 even, and Acts 4, Acts 5, Acts 6, the early church, there was a sharing with the poor saints in Jerusalem. And Paul spent months collecting an offering from Gentile churches to take back to poor saints in Jerusalem who would have worked if they could have. We're not talking about that. What we're talking about is the deadbeats, the people who could but won't.

So in this text Paul is really going to motivate them. You can imagine when this letter was read in the Thessalonian church, everybody knew who they were talking about, everybody knew. When Paul said, "We command you, brethren," and so forth, they knew who was the target of this. In fact, I think Paul knew who they were, he just doesn't say. So they were exposed to the whole church when the letter was read. And they would have heard this read and its inherent motivation.

Paul lays out in verses 6 to 15 six incentives to go to work. Six motivations, six compulsions to get these believers who won't work to go to work. Here are the six...disfellowship, disfellowship, example, survival, harmony, shame and love. We're just going to look at the first one...disfellowship.

First one, incentive number one, disfellowship. 1 Thes. 3 verse 6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life," and the obvious interpretation of that is they don't work and therefore they're these busybodies all over the place, "and not according to the tradition which you received from us."

Now the verse is very strong. And what it calls for is the church to separate itself from these Christians who won't work...separate yourself from them. This is tough. If they're the lazy ones who won't work just because they're lazy, they depend on these people. If they're the people who have this sort of noble

view that they should be studying the Bible and evangelizing and therefore they won't work, they're going to be expecting these people to look at them as if they're heroes and support them. And what he says is...cut yourself off. That verb "keep aloof" is a very unusual word and it was used in secular Greek to speak of furling the sails. You unfurl the sail, you open it up. You furl it, you roll it back in, pull yourselves in from them. It came to mean that and it is a good translation in the NAS, "Keep aloof, keep your distance, keep separate." And the words are very strong. He's not saying, "You know, it might be a really good strategy if you guys just kind of cut them off a little bit so they can feel the alienation and isolation." No, no, he doesn't say it's a good idea. In verse 6 he says, "We command you," and he uses a military term. If there is somebody who doesn't work, we command you...and here he's sort of scooping up Silas and Timothy with himself as noted in the first verse of the first chapter, they were there when he wrote. We command you, brethren...and then he adds another heavy-duty shot to this, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," the full name of the Lord, the Son of God, saying I am standing on Christ's authority in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, consistent with His person and work and will, the will of the sovereign Lord, we give you a military command not to be disobeyed that carries all the authority of the living Lord Jesus Christ in it and we tell you...keep separate from these people. It's very stern. Cut them off. Disfellowship.

Sadly, I think, for many Christians, work has lost its intrinsic value. I believe that God has given you skills to be applied in a certain kind of work which uniquely geared to you will bring you satisfaction and bring God glory. Work should not lose its intrinsic value. It is not simply a means to pay your debts. It is not simply a way to fund your pleasure and to finance your joys, it is in itself valuable, it is a gift from God.

Not only is work a gift from God, it is a command of God. I wonder whether we really understand that. We make a lot about the command in Exodus 20 but very often forget to emphasize the main point. You remember the command? It goes like this, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath, or a rest, for the Lord your God." We like to emphasize the Sabbath. Rarely do you hear anybody say anything about the six days of work. We talk about a five-day work week in America and some people talk about a four-day work week. God talks about a six-day work week.

You say, "Is He saying that we are commanded to be on our job six days?" No, you know how it works. You're on the job five days and the sixth day you fix the house and the car and the yard and you run all the errands and you...that's work, that's all part of sustenance. The seventh day is to be devoted to the Lord.

You understand then that God has commanded us to work. That is a command. Six days you are to labor. God designs for man work. We can't have a low view of work if God has such a high view of it. I mean, it's right in there in that list with other things like you shall have no other gods before Me, you shall not make for yourself an idol. It's in there with you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Pretty serious list. It's one of those things we owe to God...work. He gave us the gift of work, we owe Him the use of the gift He gave.

And I really believe that your vocation should suit you and the way God has designed you so that it is satisfying and fulfilling. And I believe if you're living in the will of God, God will provide that expression of His giftedness in you. You cannot have a low view of work when you understand that it is a gift from God and that it is a command of God.

Furthermore, you can't have a low view of work when you understand that God has even given us the example of work. The greatest worker in the universe is God. The truth of the matter is if He ever took a day off we'd all be done. God is a worker. Scripture talks about the work of God...the works of God. Often the Bible describes His works and I suppose you could sum them up with five categories. Whenever you see in Scripture the work of God it usually falls into these categories. One, the work of creation. God is a worker and He worked in creation and there's still a sense in which He continues to procreate that creation. And there may even be an on-going creative work as the Lord Jesus said He was going to heaven to prepare a place for us. So God is the creator and that's one category of His work.

Secondly, He is the controller and He continues in the preservation of all that He has created. He upholds it by the Word of His power. And so God works in preservation, sustaining everything. The reason that little tiny atoms don't fly apart isn't because there is some glue in them that can be identified. The scientists can't identify it. What it is the power of God. God has to hold them together. And He does that by His sustaining power. That's His work.

We see also the work of God in providence. God's work can be seen in providence as He orchestrates all the various factors of His entire universe to accomplish His purpose sovereignly.

Occasionally we see God's work in miraculous ways. The category of miracle where God suspends natural law and does something that has no natural explanation.

And then the last two, we see God's work in judgment and God's work in redemption. God is a worker. He works in creation. He works in controlling and sustaining His universe. He works in providence and miracle. And He works in judgment and He works in redemption. God is a worker. Furthermore, Jesus is a worker. Jesus we would expect being a worker because He is God and He said Himself in John 9:4, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me." In John 4:34 He said it was His food, to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. And in John 5:17 He said, "My Father is working still and I am working."

Jesus Christ is right now doing a redeeming work in the hearts of people across the world. He is doing the work of building His church. He's doing the work of sitting at the right hand of the Father and sustaining His church through His high priestly intercession. He's doing the work of preparing a place for us. He's doing a work of dispatching angels to be ministering spirits to His church. He's doing the work of indwelling and energizing His people. He's doing all these things and will continue until the work of the final redemption of the universe. And even then He will work forever and ever in enterprises divine as will you and I praising and glorifying and serving God for all eternity. You cannot have a low view of work when you understand Jesus is a worker and God is a worker and work is commanded and work is a gift from God.

Now somebody is going to jump in and say, "Now wait a minute. Isn't work a result of the curse?" Well let's go back to Genesis and find out. Don't we work because we were cursed? I mean, if there had never been a Fall, wouldn't we just be playing around in the garden? We wouldn't be working, would we? Well let's find out. Genesis chapter 3 verse 17, "To Adam God said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife," it's not always a good thing to do, men, that's in the Bible, I mean, I didn't say that..."Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you saying, You shall not eat from it." In other words, because you've sinned, watch this, "Cursed is the ground because of you, so in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life, both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you and you will eat the plants of the field by the

sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground." Some would read that and say, "Well, it seems like toil and sweat and work is a result of a cursed earth and so that work is the product of the Fall."

It's not true. Go back to Genesis chapter 2. Genesis chapter 2 verse 15, "Before the Fall the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." That's work. This is noble work, exalted work, work of a man unstained with sin, work on an earth unstained with sin. Somebody put it this way, God designed man to be a gardener but the Fall made him a farmer. I don't know that that quite says it but that's close. God designed man simply to care for it, to reap its benefits, to harvest it as it were, to enjoy it, to make it flourish. Then the Fall caused thorns and thistles and briars and weeds to make it difficult. The Fall did not invent work, didn't introduce work, it just cursed it. Always man was designed to be a worker because He was made in the image of God. Go back to chapter 1 of Genesis verse 26, "Then God said, Let us make man in our image according to our likeness." Go down to verse 27, "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created Him, male and female He created them."

Now it's pretty clear there, verse 26 and 27, that we're talking about the image of God. But how is the image of God to be defined? And theologians have debated this since the go, this is an age-old discussion. But it seems to me that there's a simple answer to this initially. If God says in verse 26 "Let's make man in our image," and in verse 27, "And God made man in His image," what comes between those two things should somehow define that image. And what does it say? "Let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping that creeps on the earth."

What is the image of God? What does it mean to be created in the image of God? It means that man is given dominion, authority, rule. He is given the responsibility to care for and to use all the rest of the creation...all of it. It was all there for him to enjoy, to smell and to touch and to eat and to prepare for others. There was work involved in dominion. There was work involved in ruling and tending to all of these creatures.

Along these lines, Samuel Golden said: "*The harder I work, the luckier I get.*" Therefore, excellence requires effort, and it requires extra effort. There is no better way that we can glorify our Father in Heaven while we are at work than to perform cheerfully, responsibly, and diligently the tasks we are assigned and to go the extra mile above and beyond the call of duty, doing tasks before our boss even realizes they need to be done! This principle was illustrated by Jesus in Matthew 5:41, who said "*And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.*"

6.5 Principles of Leadership

Jesus taught that leadership begins with servanthood:

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

[Matt. 23:11-12]

Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of a righteous and good leader. He had no money or power or prestige, and yet people loved Him and wanted to follow Him, because he was a source of truth and love and because He was there as a servant:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
[Phil. 2:5-11]*

Therefore, the people who make good leaders and should be selected as leaders are the people:

1. Who least want to be leaders, and would rather be servants.
2. Are humble.
3. Are doing so as a way to serve and help people and who like people.
4. Put God ahead of their own personal and/or selfish interests.

6.6 Mission Statement for Effective and Ethical Management

The mission statement below explains all the things a good employer or boss should be doing to ensure a healthy and satisfying work environment for his employees that is in accordance with what God says in the Bible.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR EFFECTIVE AND ETHICAL MANAGEMENT

1. Train and develop subordinates, including:
 - 1.1. Approving the attendance of, watching out for, and proactively recommending schools, conferences, and seminars that will benefit the project and their professional careers.
 - 1.2. Motivating project engineers to try to improve their professional careers by:
 - 1.2.1. Setting a good example of self-development for subordinates.
 - 1.2.2. Offering advancements, encouragement, increased responsibility (and the authority that goes with it) to project engineers if and when they improve themselves, demonstrate loyalty and/or willingness to take on more responsibility.
 - 1.2.3. Punishing nonperformers, people without initiative, and undermotivated engineers by:
 - 1.2.3.1. Limiting advancement opportunities, point awards, and involvement in new projects.
 - 1.2.3.2. If they demonstrate reluctance to improve, subjecting subordinates to public ridicule for their poor performance to get them motivated to improve.
 - 1.3. Offering subordinates as much responsibility (and the authority that goes with it) as they are ready for. Being ready for responsibility doesn't necessarily mean being willing. This will:
 - 1.3.1. Develop their proactive muscles and their coping skills.
 - 1.3.2. Help them to appreciate more just how hard it is to be a good project manager.
 - 1.4. Rewarding the questions of curious subordinates who want to learn about your job as the project manager with complete answers instead of annoyance, petulance, and impatience, all of which are designed to perpetuate the project manager's empire.
 - 1.5. Frequently offering opportunities to subordinates to do ever larger pieces of the project manager's job. Delegate responsibilities to them to improve them and help them appreciate the project manager more.
 - 1.6. Setting a good example:
 - 1.6.1. Work hard.
 - 1.6.2. Show a willingness and desire to learn new things.
 - 1.6.3. Have an open mind and be flexible.
 - 1.7. Inviting subordinates to meetings, even if they don't need to be there, and especially if they want to, in order to:
 - 1.7.1. Expose them to the bigger picture and train them to understand and interpret it with skill and maturity.
 - 1.7.2. Expand their horizons.
 - 1.7.3. Make them more flexible and versatile by teaching them more about both the political and significant technical aspects of the project.
 - 1.8. Don't try to control, limit, or oversupervise subordinates unnecessarily if they can get the job done without you.
 - 1.8.1. Forms that this undue control and oversupervision can take include:
 - 1.8.1.1. Managing aspects of the project that you know they can handle themselves, just because you want to feel important as the project manager.
 - 1.8.1.2. Deliberately limiting the scope of their responsibilities so that the project manager can shine by doing the important or highly visible things him/herself, at the expense of subordinates.
 - 1.8.1.3. Taking credit for getting something done away from subordinates and keeping it for the project manager, so he looks favorable in front of the sponsor.
 - 1.8.1.4. Insisting that subordinates take their name off of work they did themselves, especially if they did that work with very little supervision by the project manager. Worst yet, replacing their name on a piece of work with the name of the project manager.
 - 1.8.2. Oversupervision should be avoided because:
 - 1.8.2.1. It discourages initiative, which is something most project managers complain that their people don't have enough of.
 - 1.8.2.2. It insults the intelligence of subordinates and thereby makes them less loyal to the project manager.
 - 1.8.2.3. It makes subordinates complain that they are micromanaged by their boss.
 - 1.8.2.4. It limits their growth potential and stunts their growth.
 - 1.8.2.5. It limits political exposure to sponsors.
 - 1.8.2.6. It discourages subordinates from taking personal responsibility for the things they do, because they have a sugar daddy who will take all the responsibility, or at least all the credit for doing a good job, away from them.

- 1.8.3. Pull out the stops and give subordinates the WHOLE job (including the pieces the project manager customarily does) if they can handle it. It's called delegating, and good managers are good delegators. This type of delegation is called stewardship delegation, which is delegation with trust.
2. Manage and oversee project funds, including:
 - 2.1. Funding document receipt and processing.
 - 2.2. Allocating funds to job orders.
 - 2.3. Accurately tracking job order balances and/or doing financial accounting.
 - 2.4. Prevent underruns of job orders by expending funds before they expire on:
 - 2.4.1. Contractors who work for you to do things you hadn't planned on.
 - 2.4.2. Toys and goodies that you hadn't planned on.
 - 2.5. Preventing overruns by watching expenditures carefully and making sure that subordinates always consult with you before spending your money.
 - 2.6. Ensuring that funds are spent only in fulfillment of the charter of the project.
 - 2.7. Keep project financial information strictly confidential between you and the sponsor and not sharing it with competitive organizations or people who could damage your political objectives. This covers your behind by concealing gray areas such as the following that might embarrass you or your sponsor if exposed:
 - 2.7.1. Banking money immediately after it is obligated by Washington so that it can't be located during a sweep or spent on other things.
 - 2.7.2. Spending money on things that really aren't part of the project charter.
 - 2.7.3. Buying ADP items for the sponsor that NAVSEA or SPAWAR rules say you aren't supposed to buy.
3. Manage and administer procurement-related issues, including:
 - 3.1. Procurement of materials:
 - 3.1.1. Approve stub orders.
 - 3.1.2. Approve credit card orders.
 - 3.1.3. Review and approve Sole Source Justifications.
 - 3.1.4. Limit purchases to items that are within the charter of the project.
 - 3.2. Contracting
 - 3.2.1. Develop initial blanket contract with your contractors.
 - 3.2.2. Develop follow-on delivery orders with your contractors.
 - 3.2.3. Do technical evaluations of bids and act as COTR (or delegate the responsibility to someone else) for contracts that you originate.
 - 3.2.4. Avoid letting contractors develop their own blanket contracts or delivery orders, even though this is the path of least resistance, because:
 - 3.2.4.1. It is like putting the fox in charge of the chickens.
 - 3.2.4.2. It limits the value you add as a project manager, and makes your job less necessary.
 - 3.2.4.3. It encourages fraud and overcharges to the government.
4. Politicking
 - 4.1. Interface with the sponsor, and above all, KEEP HIM/HER HAPPY AT ALL TIMES!
 - 4.2. Maintain the loyalty of branch heads you have to work with. This is important, because:
 - 4.2.1. They do all the administrivia that project managers would rather avoid.
 - 4.2.2. They help project managers accomplish political objectives, like getting advancements and point awards for their people, which is important if you want to keep your subordinates loyal.
 - 4.2.3. They keep project managers informed of political happenings within the organizations.
 - 4.3. Maintain the loyalty and productivity of subordinates. Do so by:
 - 4.3.1. Showing frequent interest and concern for their personal lives.
 - 4.3.2. Showing frequent interest and concern for their professional development.
 - 4.3.3. Showing frequent interest and concern for all of the activities and involvements they undertake on your behalf or on the project's behalf.
 - 4.3.4. Demonstrate a good sense of humor frequently so that you maintain their interest and empathy.
 - 4.4. Act as a broker for information about the project coming in from sponsors and colleagues.
 - 4.4.1. Information to be brokered includes:
 - 4.4.1.1. Email.
 - 4.4.1.2. Handouts from presentations witnessed while on travel.
 - 4.4.1.3. Trip reports.
 - 4.4.2. People who should receive the brokered information include:
 - 4.4.2.1. Subordinates
 - 4.4.2.2. Branch heads

- 4.4.2.3. Division heads
- 4.4.2.4. Sponsors
- 4.4.2.5. Colleagues
- 4.4.2.6. Contractors working for you
- 4.4.3. Don't filter or restrict information flowing to subordinates to keep them ignorant or prevent them from threatening your empire, because:
 - 4.4.3.1. It limits their growth.
 - 4.4.3.2. It limits how proactive they can be. You can't be proactive unless you understand the big picture and know the details of what the sponsor wants, when, and why.
 - 4.4.3.3. It does NOT serve the needs of the organization. The needs of the organization are best served when:
 - 4.4.3.3.1. Everyone at all levels of the organization is as well informed as possible.
 - 4.4.3.3.2. People can act with the least supervision and the most independently as possible. This minimizes the need for managers, makes the organization self-running, minimizes overhead, and is a major objective of TQL.
 - 4.4.3.3.3. Skills and knowledge are as broadly dispersed as possible within the organization. This ensures that no one person becomes so important that the organization can't function without him or her, which makes it more survivable if that person dies, retires, or finds another job elsewhere.
- 5. Administrivia
 - 5.1. Approve travel requests.
 - 5.2. Approve and originate visit requests.
 - 5.3. Approve and originate security clearance messages to commands being visited.
 - 5.4. Keep the secretary happy and minimize her grumbling. This will allow you to keep her busy helping you accomplish your many responsibilities.
- 6. Project management
 - 6.1. Have regular project meetings in order to:
 - 6.1.1. Maximize coordination and cooperation (synergism) within the project team.
 - 6.1.2. Minimize duplication of effort.
 - 6.1.3. Clarify goals, objectives, and expectations surrounding completion of the project.
 - 6.1.4. Ensure timely completion of the project.
 - 6.1.5. Provide opportunities to brainstorm new ideas or marketing opportunities.
 - 6.1.6. Delegate aspects of the project to subordinates.
 - 6.1.7. Reallocate funds, priorities, and work assignments to ensure that project objectives are satisfied.
 - 6.1.8. Educate subordinates and develop them professionally by exposing them to ideas, knowledge, and skills of more senior colleagues.
 - 6.2. Maintain the following project-related documentation:
 - 6.2.1. Gantt chart of project activity.
 - 6.2.2. Pert chart of project activity.
 - 6.2.3. Funding status matrix.
- 7. Be a LEADER first, and a MANAGER/politician only when you have to be to get the job done:
 - 7.1. Leaders are:
 - 7.1.1. Prioritizers
 - 7.1.1.1. They have a natural intuition about what is important and what isn't important.
 - 7.1.1.2. They do the important things first and save the less important things for last.
 - 7.1.2. Focused. They know what they want and they go for it.
 - 7.1.3. PROactive rather than REactive:
 - 7.1.3.1. They ANTICIPATE problems and spend most of their time PREVENTING them instead of REACTING to them AFTER they happen.
 - 7.1.3.2. Before they do something, they look at what might go wrong in the process and do what they can to prevent that eventuality. Some people around them might interpret this attitude as NEGATIVISM, but LEADERS interpret it as REALISM.
 - 7.1.3.3. They DON'T, however, prevent problems by HIDING information. They share everything they know with everyone around them at all times. This is their method of ensuring:
 - 7.1.3.3.1. Personal responsibility and accountability for everything they do.
 - 7.1.3.3.2. That people around them feel appreciated, respected, and valued as sources for advice and knowledge.
 - 7.1.3.3.3. Wise and diverse counsel prior to proceeding so that they can benefit from the collective knowledge and experience of the people around them.

- 7.1.3.3.4. That they appear humble around their coworkers. People don't like egomaniacs who think they know everything and don't need anyone for anything because they can do it all themselves.
- 7.1.4. Disciplined and persistent. They work hard to achieve the results they want.
- 7.1.5. INdependent in most things, and INTERdependent when they have to be to get the job done.
- 7.1.6. Planners and visualizers. They see themselves successfully and optimally accomplishing a task FIRST before they actually complete it. Planning and visualizing provides a way to train and prepare yourself for a task, and to think through carefully how you will accomplish it before it actually happens.
- 7.1.7. Responsible. They take ownership and personal responsibility for the projects they involve themselves in. They want to control the outcome and be responsible for as much of their environment and the project as they can to ensure the desired outcome. To them, being in charge is a form of quality control. When something goes wrong, they immediately stand up in front of everyone, admit their wrongdoing, and pledge to improve next time.
- 7.1.8. Solution oriented. They focus on solutions to problems instead of being a problem themselves. When asked questions, they offer solutions, instead of complaining or identifying more obstacles or reasons why they can't get the job done.
- 7.1.9. Good delegators. Successful leaders know how to divide large tasks into pieces, gauge/fit the pieces to the skills and talents of the people in the organization, and then delegate those small pieces to people who can do the job best. Successful leaders realize:
- 7.1.9.1. There are two types of delegation: *stewardship* delegation and *gofer* delegation.
- 7.1.9.2. Stewardship delegation is a job with trust where you give an employee power to make their own decisions, and the more decisions they are allowed to make independently, the more trust that is involved. Stewardship delegation can only thrive in an environment where the trust levels are high between managers and employees.
- 7.1.9.3. Gofer delegation is delegation without trust, where you give very specific instructions and don't leave the employee any room for autonomy or decision-making on their own. Low trust levels between managers and employees contribute to and encourage this type of delegation and environment, which hurts the organization in the long run by discouraging initiative and self-sufficiency among the employees.
- 7.1.9.4. The optimum type of delegation that does the most to grow and develop subordinates and improve the capabilities and talents of people in the organization is stewardship delegation. Good leaders avoid gofer delegation and pursue stewardship delegation as often as possible. They also try to develop and encourage an environment of trust between them and their subordinates that makes stewardship delegation possible and desirable.
- 7.1.10. Bold and inquisitive. They:
- 7.1.10.1. Don't take things at face value, but always try to dig deeper to really understand the BIG PICTURE.
- 7.1.10.2. Question everything and everyone and try to read between the lines to discover the fine print put there by the silent discretion of those around them.
- 7.1.10.3. Question authority and the irrational corporate/organizational policies that it sometimes produces. They want the system to function *well* on their behalf because they work hard and have a lot to do, and when the system doesn't work, they and their subordinates suffer unnecessarily.
- 7.1.11. Demonstrate unusual discretion. Discretion means saying the RIGHT thing at all times, which implies NEVER saying the WRONG thing.
- 7.1.11.1. The way to know whether something is the RIGHT thing to say is whether it passes the following test:
- 7.1.11.1.1. Was it said at the right time? Timing is everything.
- 7.1.11.1.2. Was it said in the right setting, and not in hearing (or reading) distance of people who aren't part of the intended audience? You should try to limit the audience of what you say only to people who are supposed to hear, because competitors or opponents of your political agenda can overhear what you say and use it to hurt you or compete with you.
- 7.1.11.1.3. Was it said to the right person or organization? The RIGHT person/organization is the person/organization most likely to satisfy your expectations and who you have a reasonable degree of confidence can provide what you want.
- 7.1.11.1.4. Did it improve and enhance trust, communication, mutual understanding, attitudes, and satisfy expectations in the relationship between you and your coworkers, subordinates, and sponsors?
- 7.1.11.2. Did it reinforce your authority and position in your chosen career?

- 7.1.11.3. WRONG things produce the following consequences
 - 7.1.11.3.1. Saying something at the wrong time and thereby giving a potential customer or sponsor premature information, for instance, in the bargaining stage, that he or she can use to get a better deal, instead of telling him or her AFTER the deal is signed..
 - 7.1.11.3.2. Spilling your guts to people you trust in front of people you don't, thereby opening yourself up to be hurt if the eavesdropper is a political enemy.
 - 7.1.11.3.3. Giving your coworkers, sponsors, or subordinates TOO much information about how you do your job, such that they can compete more effectively with you. This undermines your position and authority in your career, which is damaging.
 - 7.1.11.3.4. Sharing confidential or personal information about yourself or your colleagues that could embarrass or denigrate them in front of others. This quickly destroys trust and communication in relationships and eventually undermines your authority and position in a career setting.
 - 7.1.11.3.5. Telling the RIGHT thing to the WRONG person makes people ineffective. For instance, when you need to get permission to do something or you want to lodge a complaint, you go to the BOSS and the guy who makes the ultimate decision, not the people who work for him or some CLERK or AGENT who doesn't understand the BIG picture. Remember that CLERKS ARE JERKS!
- 7.1.12. Enthusiastic risk-takers. They want fame and glory and don't mind the sweat, high adrenaline, long working hours, and sleepless nights that go with making it happen. They:
 - 7.1.12.1. Choose to be this way regardless of their environment or the people around them. They do this even, for instance, when everyone else around them just shakes their head and:
 - 7.1.12.1.1. Accuses them of sucking up to the boss.
 - 7.1.12.1.2. Wonders why they work so hard and what is worth getting so excited about.
 - 7.1.12.2. Thrive on challenge and see it as a way to continually grow and develop technically as well as interpersonally.
 - 7.1.12.3. Take the attitude that: "**Problems are just opportunities in work clothes!**"
- 7.1.13. Focused on QUALITY. A high quality product means a satisfied customer, and satisfied customers keep coming back for more and are willing to pay a premium for what they get. Leaders are very aware of who the customer is and are very focused on customer satisfaction. Leaders realize that QUALITY results require COMMITMENT on the part of EVERYONE in the organization. Commitment, in turn, thrives in an environment where:
 - 7.1.13.1. Every employee OWNS a stake of the product and the process and takes personal responsibility for the outcome in one way or another by:
 - 7.1.13.1.1. Stock sharing programs. This ensures that employees are directly affected by company performance and so are willing to go the extra mile.
 - 7.1.13.1.2. Employee ownership of the company (like SAIC has, for instance). When the company performs poorly, employees suffer financially.
 - 7.1.13.2. A democratic decision-making process, where important decisions are made by majority vote of ALL employees, and discussions are held at PUBLIC meetings where all employees can attend.
 - 7.1.13.3. Involvement of employees down to the lowest level in most meetings, or at least the important ones where the sponsor or customer is there.
- 7.2. Managers are:
 - 7.2.1. REactive rather than PROactive. They spend most of their day fighting fires and REACTING to problems, instead of PREVENTING them to begin with.
 - 7.2.2. Irresponsible and evasive risk-avoiders. They evade responsibility every chance they get by:
 - 7.2.2.1. Using their coworkers as a way to spread blame and responsibility for failures.
 - 7.2.2.2. Omitting/concealing key facts (white lies) that reveal their contribution to a particular failure, rather than openly admitting responsibility, and using the failure to grow personally and professionally.
 - 7.2.2.3. Making promises and then not delivering to send the silent message: "I want to be valued and respected by you, but I don't want to have to work very hard for the privilege, so don't approach me next time if you need help and I'll have to sweat to deliver what you want."
 - 7.2.2.4. Making all kinds of excuses for why they can't get the job done.
 - 7.2.3. More politicians than producers. The only thing they are frequently good at is producing hate and discontent in implementing irrational corporate policy that better judgment dictates is wrong but which they themselves are loathe to question for fear of losing their job. They care more about their job and in

- perpetuating the status quo (and their empire) than in helping people and making the system work efficiently, successfully, and optimally.
- 7.3. Comparison between leaders and managers:
“The manager administers, the leader innovates. The manager maintains, the leader develops. The manager relies on systems, the leader relies on people. The manager counts on controls, the leader counts on trust. The manager does things [politically] right, the leader does the right thing.”
 8. Show humility, restraint, and respect, NOT ARROGANCE, when dealing with subordinates:
 - 8.1. Accept criticism gracefully. Don’t try to punish people who are critical of your ideas, because you just may be wrong and if you would take the time to listen, then you might find out early enough in the effort to avoid making a fool out of yourself and the people who work for you.
 - 8.2. Be open and completely honest. That is the only way your troops will ever trust you.
 - 8.3. Be sensitive to and respect the needs of subordinates, because that is what you expect from them.
 - 8.4. Don’t be a hypocrite. Observe the same rules that you set for your subordinates.
 - 8.5. Admit it when you do something wrong instead of punishing a subordinate who points out what you did wrong.
 - 8.6. Don’t let complements or flattery go to your head or inflate your ego.
 - 8.7. Remember that the power and authority you enjoy as the project or personnel manager derives from:
 - 8.7.1. Your strong work ethic.
 - 8.7.2. Your knowledge of the business and the experiences that created it.
 - 8.7.3. Your good relationship and credibility with your sponsor.
 - 8.7.4. Your good relationship and credibility with your subordinates.
 - 8.7.5. Your excellent personal character.
 - 8.8. Don’t surround yourself with YES men who don’t ask any questions and don’t mind being manipulated by being kept ignorant by the boss. Instead, hire smart people who are independent and can get the job done without the manager and feed them all the information about the job that you know. This allows the manager to delegate more responsibility so that he can focus on being the LEADER that he should be.. It also expands his influence and credibility through SHARING with subordinates. People who are team players SHARE knowledge, time, authority, and money with each other.
 - 8.9. If someone who works for you does a good job, tell everyone how much you liked it and make sure they get the credit for it. That’s the only way you’ll ever get them to work hard for you and make them loyal. Don’t:
 - 8.9.1. Criticize what they do because you are afraid they will look better than you.
 - 8.9.2. Steal the credit from them by creating the impression with sponsors that you did it.
 - 8.9.3. Ask them to take their name off their high quality work so that you can replace it with yours and steal the credit. People have to own what they do if they are going to take pride in their work, and people with pride are self-motivated and do high quality work.
 9. Focus on PEOPLE FIRST, and priorities second
 - 9.1. Be a good communicator, both orally and in writing
 - 9.1.1. Focus on being understood clearly and unambiguously.
 - 9.1.2. Develop good listening skills, be empathetic, and spend three times as much time listening as you do talking. You learn a lot just by listening and you encourage volunteerism and involvement by subordinates by listening.
 - 9.2. Focus on a balance between getting the job done, and maintaining and improving your (and your organization’s) ability to do it (hopefully better) again next time:
 - 9.2.1. Build credibility and integrity with your sponsors and coworkers by getting the job done on time and doing what you said you would do.
 - 9.2.2. Respect the needs and desires of your employees/subordinates where possible.
 - 9.2.3. Treat your employees/subordinates as volunteers (instead of slaves) just as you treat customers/sponsors as volunteers, because that’s what they are...they volunteer the best part, their hearts and minds.
 - 9.2.4. Always treat your employees/subordinates exactly as you want them to treat your best customer.
 - 9.3. Be a team player:
 - 9.3.1. Value **group/team** success over **individual** success.
 - 9.3.2. Get people involved and encourage ownership of the project/process by:
 - 9.3.2.1. Seeking their advice, involvement, and input when formulating policy and plans.
 - 9.3.2.2. Writing a mission statement for your organization and involving everyone who works for you. This encourages commitment and promotes trust within the team.
 - 9.3.2.3. Delegating responsibilities *and the authority the goes with them* to the lowest level so that employees feel empowered to contribute and make a difference. Giving subordinates authority essentially means letting them control the money.

- 9.3.2.4. Respecting the autonomy of subordinates by not overspecifying the job to be done. Tell them what they are expected to do and let them decide how best to accomplish it. This will improve their satisfaction with the job and their loyalty to the project manager.
- 9.3.3. Divide large tasks into small units and try to distribute a piece of the action to every member of the team. This allows everyone to contribute to and participate in the effort.
- 9.3.4. Rotate responsibilities as often as you can among members of the team so that there is a uniform distribution of skills and capabilities within the organization. This:
 - 9.3.4.1. Makes the organization more survivable when team members leave, get promoted, or go on travel.
 - 9.3.4.2. Eliminates the catch-22 situation where you have a person who you would like to promote but can't because they are too indispensable where they are.
 - 9.3.4.3. Prevents any one person from monopolizing on a particular skill or ability and making themselves unduly or unnecessarily important or critical.
- 9.4. Reward and encourage effective and successful behavior.
- 9.5. Develop a strong and flawless personal character:
 - 9.5.1. Set a good example for everyone. "What you do speaks so loudly I can't even hear what you say."
 - 9.5.2. Be loyal to people and committed to the team and the project. This sets a good example and builds a team spirit.
 - 9.5.3. Don't play favorites. Treat everyone around you with equal respect and regard.
 - 9.5.4. Act with integrity. When you say you will do something, do it on time and in budget.
 - 9.5.5. Be responsible.
 - 9.5.6. Be assertive.
 - 9.5.7. Be honest. Tell the WHOLE truth, not just the portion the boss/customer/sponsor/you wants to hear.
 - 9.5.8. Don't hide information or act annoyed in response to questions.
 - 9.5.9. Avoid playing games.
 - 9.5.10. Avoid gossip or criticizing people behind their back. This destroys trust within the group.
 - 9.5.11. Praise people who help you frequently. Treat them as volunteers.
 - 9.5.12. Be constructive and positive. Focus on SOLUTIONS instead of PROBLEMS.
 - 9.5.13. When people abuse you, let them know how it feels by treating them the way they treat you. This educates them on the error of their ways as well as demonstrates to them that you know how they feel.
 - 9.5.14. Avoid hurting or insulting people, but tell them the WHOLE truth. Anything but the whole truth is at least a partial lie.
 - 9.5.15. Don't take credit away from your subordinates or contractors for work done successfully and well that you didn't do.
- 9.6. Have a good sense of humor and try to enjoy life.
 - 9.6.1. Laugh often and daily. You haven't lived until you've laughed at something.
 - 9.6.2. Laughter and humor are the best lubricants known to man for "social intercourse."
 - 9.6.3. Learn to feel good about laughing at yourself. If you can't laugh at yourself first, then you certainly have no business laughing at others.
 - 9.6.4. Don't hide opportunities from your coworkers to make them laugh at you for some silly faux pas of yours: You will never be their friends unless you are willing to be vulnerable in some way. Intimacy and kinship can never be achieved without vulnerability.
 - 9.6.5. Practice the art of finding something to like about everyone you meet, even if you hate their guts!

6.7 The Humorous Side of Work

6.7.1 Prison Life vs. Full-Time Job

In prison you spend the majority of your time in an 8'x10' cell.
At work you spend most of your time in a 6'x8' cubicle.

In prison you get three free meals a day.
At work you only get a break for one meal and you have to pay for that one.

In prison you get time off for good behavior.
At work you get rewarded for good behavior with more work.

In prison a guard locks and unlocks all the doors for you.
At work you must carry around a security card and unlock and open all the doors yourself.

In prison you can watch TV and play games.
At work you get fired for watching TV and playing games.

In prison they ball-and-chain you when you go somewhere.
At work you are just ball-and-chained.

In prison you get your own toilet.
At work you have to share.

In prison they allow your family and friends to visit.
At work you cannot even speak to your family and friends.

In prison all expenses are paid by taxpayers, with no work required.
At work you get to pay all the expenses to go to work and then they deduct taxes from your salary to pay for the prisoners.

In prison you spend most of your life looking through bars from the inside wanting to get out.
At work you spend most of your time wanting to get out and inside bars.

In prison you can join many programs which you can leave at any time.
At work there are some programs you can never get out of.

In prison there are wardens who are often sadistic.
At work we have managers.

6.7.2 Murphy's 26 Laws of Bad Management

Below is a humorous list of all the many devious things that bad bosses do in the pursuit of their own selfish interest. The behaviors mentioned are things that we should clearly avoid.

MURPHY'S TWENTY SIX LAWS OF BAD MANAGEMENT

(or: Everything you ever wanted to know about bad management but were afraid to ask your boss)

1. Crap (a euphemism for S T) rolls down hill. Crap includes:
 - 1.1. Blame
 - 1.2. Overtime or travel to get the job done
 - 1.3. Dog work that nobody else wants to do
 - 1.4. Responsibility
 - 1.5. Accountability
 - 1.6. Risk, and the blame and punishment that goes with taking it when things go wrong
2. You'll always be in the valley at the bottom of the hill, helplessly getting crap dumped all over you and piling hundreds of feet deep above your head as long as you AREN'T the person who controls MOST of the money, and at least SOME of the important information.
3. When it comes to producing crap, bad managers are trained EXPERTS at producing more than enough crap to keep everyone within a ten mile radius committed for 60 hours per week for the next ten years. Producing crap is one of a BAD manager's primary functions in life.
4. Kudos (and good stuff) roll up hill. Good stuff includes:
 - 4.1. Kudos and acclaim
 - 4.2. Gratitude and friendship from the sponsor
 - 4.3. Credit/credibility for authorship
 - 4.4. Funding
 - 4.5. Sponsorship
 - 4.6. Authority
5. Knowledge doesn't roll anywhere---it stays right at the top with the manager. Like diodes and check valves, bad managers will always ensure that information flows in only one direction whenever subordinates have discussions with them. For instance: managers will always want a full and complete accounting from subordinates on how they spend every second of the day and every penny of the project manager's money but never want to tell subordinates (or be held accountable) for what they have been doing or how they spent project funds, which really don't belong to the manager at all, but are the sponsor's funds under the stewardship of the manager. If you doubt this, walk up to your manager/boss and ask him (the same way he frequently asks you) for a full report on how he spent the day and see what kind of reaction you get (incidentally, I wouldn't recommend this technique prior to the start of performance evaluation time unless you want to be butchered!)
 - 5.1. Evidence that your boss plays the information hiding game is abundantly found when you hear him say things like:
 - 5.1.1. "Who did you find that out from?" or "How did you find that out?". He probably wants to go back to the source and shut down the information leak. Tell him you don't want to discuss the source because you don't want to violate the confidence of a friend.
 - 5.1.2. "Why do you want to know?" When he says that, ask: "Why do you want to know why I want to know? Are you trying to hide something. We're part of a team and teams share information, don't they?"
 - 5.1.3. "Please leave the meeting. You AREN'T invited!" He doesn't want you having the same view of the big picture that he has and is probably trying to keep you from finding out anything in item 12.4 below.
 - 5.1.4. "Can I get a copy of that?" He wants to make sure you never learn more about what is going on that his subordinates know.
 - 5.2. Tactics you can use against bosses who like keeping secrets to gain competitive advantage on subordinates include:
 - 5.2.1. When you learn something important that you think your boss doesn't want you to know, ask your boss a question to reveal what it is as a litmus test to find out whether: 1. He is willing to share the answer with you; 2. He restricts what he is willing to tell you; 3. He is trying to hide something. If he won't reveal it, then he is a competitor who is trying to hurt you.
 - 5.2.2. Keep your ears out for project-related meetings and when they happen without you being invited, then ask why you weren't invited.
 - 5.2.2.1. If your boss says the meeting isn't important, then ask him why he went!
 - 5.2.2.2. If your boss says you ought to be working and are wasting his money attending meetings he doesn't want you at, then tell him you are willing to take personal leave to attend, because you view the

meeting as a training exercise. If he still gets upset that you want to go, then you know he is a competitor who wants to make your life difficult and habitually oppress you.

5.2.3. Ask for copies of meeting minutes and attendance list for all project-related meetings the boss attends. If he says you can't have them, then fill out a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to get the copies, which legally obligates him to give them to you.

5.2.4. Scan the paper recycling bin periodically. Bosses indiscriminately throw out a lot of things that they don't share with their subordinates.

6. Risk is or should be proportional to return. The more you benefit financially and the more power and control you have by being in charge of a project, the more risks and responsibilities your sponsor expects you to accept.

6.1. This rule is very commonly talked about in financial circles, but it applies equally well to management circles as well.

6.2. Types of RETURN include:

6.2.1. Power

6.2.2. Control over:

6.2.2.1. Money

6.2.2.2. Knowledge

6.2.2.3. People

6.2.2.4. Property

6.3. The possible adverse consequence of accepting RISK include:

6.3.1. Blame when things don't work out right

6.3.2. Devastated credibility and reputation

6.3.3. Demotion and/or removal from your current job

6.3.4. Loss of a sponsor

6.4. Bad managers will always try to subvert and violate this rule by pursuing rule # 1:

6.4.1. They will often abuse their power by making subordinates in effect accept all the risks that really deserve to belong to the manager. This tactic is called "making your people into the fall guy to protect your rear end." In the game of chess, this is called "sacrificing your pawn for a rook."

6.4.2. Evidence that your manager is pulling this trick is abundantly found when it is time to make an important and far-reaching decision that could have serious and long-lasting consequences:

6.4.2.1. Instead of making the important decision himself based on informed advice, and accepting the full blame and responsibility for the decision, the manager instead will schedule a meeting and invite as many gullible people as he can, and ESPECIALLY his political opponents/enemies.

6.4.2.2. He won't try to straw-man a solution BEFORE the meeting. Instead, he will just call the meeting without much thought and act as the facilitator for the meeting. He will let his subordinates instead of himself propose a solution FIRST and he will get angry if people ask HIM or expect him to propose a solution FIRST, before everyone else has. Instead of starting the meeting by saying:

"I would like to solve this problem and I have thought a lot about how. Here is my proposed solution but I wanted your advice before I proceed."

he will instead simply present the problem and use it as a neuce for his gullible subordinates to hang themselves on and if they are too experienced or too shrewd to let the boss hang them on it, then the manager will call them troublemakers who don't have anything constructive to say and don't belong in the organization, or he will hire a contractor gullible enough or hungry enough to hang instead!

6.4.2.3. He will then propose the solution that someone else recommended but tell everyone he won't go with it until EVERYONE IN THE ROOM AGREES, that way, if things go wrong he will tell the sponsor he had bad counsel (blame it on everyone but himself). Then this same manager will scour his notes to find the scoundrel subordinate gullible enough, courageous enough, and dedicated enough to put his credibility on the line and propose a solution and HANG HIM INSTEAD (the fall guy)! In reality, however, the full blame really belongs to the manager who controls the money. Then, if the decision turns out to be good one, that same duplicitous and sneaky manager will take all the credit and not mention the real person who made the recommendation!

6.4.2.4. The more challenging and difficult the decision is, the more homework the decision requires, and the lazier and more dishonest your boss is, the more likely it is that he/she will use this tactic.

6.4.3. As a subordinate, your best defense against this tactic by your manager is as follows:

- 6.4.3.1. When the meeting starts, and before any subordinates have a chance to offer suggestions, ask the boss HIS solution is and write it down IN PEN in your notebook. Lock up your notebook or it just might mysteriously disappear if things go wrong! I wonder who might take it?
- 6.4.3.2. Say that the amount of blame and responsibility you are willing to accept is proportional to the amount of money you control, and since you don't control any of the money or resources assigned to the task, then you want NOTHING to do with accepting the risks associated with making the decision.
- 6.4.3.3. Ask your boss what a meeting is about before you consent to go, and if the purpose of the meeting is to reach an important decision, then find some excuse for not going if he has the habit of passing the buck.
- 6.4.3.4. Be completely silent, don't shake or nod your head, and don't share any opinions other than 6.4.3.1 above if you get railroaded into one of the meetings against your will. Just say "Uh ha...Uh ha"...that's a safe noncommittal answer.
7. The boss is always right. He who fears for his job ALWAYS observes this rule.
8. When the boss is wrong, refer to rule number 7 above, unless, of course, you want to be out on the street pushing a shopping cart around.
9. To the manager, it is always more important to LOOK good in front of the sponsor (and to hell with looking good in front of subordinates) than it is to BE good. BEING good takes humility, skill, hard work, careful planning, good judgment, maturity, and a desire to do the job yourself while LOOKING good can be had with lots of money for a good contractor, procrastination until the last minute, and deceit through ill-gotten credit for a job you didn't do that was done by the contractor.
10. Managers will always make rules that apply to everyone but them. The favorite phrase of managers is: "Do as I say, not as I do." This trait is called HYPOCRISY.
11. In any situation between managers and subordinates, old age, incompetence, tyranny, treachery, deceit, arrogance, and irrationality will always win out over youth, skill, loyalty, humility, reason and logic respectively (The NICE GUY principle: Nice guys always finish last). For instance, when faced with a self-evident truth pointed out by a subordinate that makes the manager look bad, the manager will always hang/crucify the messenger rather than try and correct the very real problem that caused the embarrassing failure/situation to begin with. It's always easier for managers to tyrannically abuse their power by arrogantly trampling and discrediting dissenters than it is to humbly admit to their shortcomings and work hard to overcome them, thereby setting a good example for their subordinates (The old age principle: What managers lack in youth they more than make up for with treachery).
12. KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION are power and ignorance is powerlessness. He who controls the production and distribution of knowledge and information controls power and has power (The Mushroom Principle: Use fear, uncertainty, and doubt (FUD) to control and manipulate people by keeping them in the dark and feeding them shit). Bad managers will exploit this rule to the maximum advantage. Implications of this rule include:
- 12.1. HOW MUCH you know and especially WHO you know determines how far your career will go in any organization. Therefore, knowledge becomes a strategic weapon used by bad managers to subdue anyone who challenges or threatens their empire.
- 12.2. The more you know, the less you fear, and people without fear are difficult for managers to control and manipulate. That is why bad managers favor subordinates who are politically ignorant and don't see the big picture...because they make good PUPPETS!
- 12.3. The tactic of using knowledge and information as a weapon is commonly called INFORMATION WARFARE and is frequently talked about in the halls of the Pentagon and SPAWAR. The idea is that you can't win a conflict or competition with the enemy unless you continually have more and better quality information (intelligence) than they do and unless you make a concerted effort to deny your enemy of his most valuable information sources.
- 12.4. Types of information that are important that bad managers will try to keep subordinates ignorant on include, ordered in descending order of importance, include:
- 12.4.1. Who is the sponsor.
- 12.4.2. What does he want, and when does he want it.
- 12.4.3. How much money does he/she have to spend.
- 12.4.4. What is the next big opportunity or project coming along that he/she wants done and when does he want it.
- 12.4.5. When and where are meetings with the sponsor over current and future projects being held and who is invited, and more importantly, who ISN'T invited and why.
- 12.4.6. What is going on within the profession and specialty that you work in.
- 12.4.7. What are the hottest technologies that people are willing to pay big money to have.
- 12.4.8. Who makes these technologies.

12.4.9. Who makes the best products in a every class within your industry.

13. **MONEY (and control over it) is power and poverty (or lack of control over money) is powerlessness.** He who controls the production and distribution of money controls power and has power (The Golden Rule: He who has the gold rules). Most of the time, money and having control over it is THE most important aspect of maintaining power and control in a business setting. Bad managers will exploit knowledge of this rule to maximum advantage and they realize that control over money is more important than control over knowledge. It is more important than knowledge because:
- 13.1. Managers can use it to insert themselves into the information food chain by denying it to people who don't give them the information they need to perpetuate their empire.
 - 13.2. Managers can use it to travel and market themselves in a way that few subordinates who don't have their own money or project can. This keeps the money coming in that sustains their empire.
 - 13.3. Money can be used by managers to buy skills and capabilities with contractors that they don't natively have in their organization, allowing them to compete more successfully with their own subordinates and to terrorize them into submission by keeping them starving for work and on overhead when they don't worship and suck up to the king who has all the gold. Sometimes, however, this can backfire because their sponsor can do the same thing to them too!
14. **Bad managers enslave subordinates and perpetuate their empire using KNOWLEDGE and INFORMATION as a tool/weapon by:**
- 14.1. Making sure that subordinates never meet or talk directly to sponsors.
 - 14.2. Perpetuating the ignorance of subordinates thereby creating the fear, uncertainty, and doubt (FUD) necessary to get people to cooperate in expanding the manager's political empire.
 - 14.3. Locking file cabinets that contain unclassified information to conceal information and control distribution of it.
 - 14.4. Ignoring the career development of subordinates.
 - 14.5. Intimidating subordinates with things they know nothing about and making sure they never know enough to NOT be intimidated.
 - 14.6. Acting annoyed when subordinates ask questions. This prevents embarrassment of the manager and discourages further questions.
 - 14.7. Never having time to answer questions from subordinates.
 - 14.8. Never volunteering information about projects or programs unless asked a specific question about them.
 - 14.9. Meetings:
 - 14.9.1. Not having meetings to inform subordinates of what is going on in the business.
 - 14.9.2. Not inviting subordinates to existing meetings (or telling them about the meeting).
 - 14.9.3. Closing the door when there is a meeting.
 - 14.9.4. Not distributing meeting materials to subordinates after the meeting.
 - 14.9.5. Promptly terminating a meeting if an uninvited subordinate shows up.
 - 14.9.6. Punishing subordinates who invite themselves to meetings (even if it is on their own personal time) that managers don't want them attending.
 - 14.9.7. Not inviting subordinates working on one of the manager's project to attend any of the project meetings for other projects that the manager is involved with.
- All of these tactics have the effect of concealing important information that would help subordinates be more effective at their job and give them just as much knowledge/power as the manager.
- 14.10. Handing new work and all the valuable knowledge and learning gained doing it to contractors instead of subordinates.
 - 14.11. Discouraging independent thought and action, which require a broad spectrum of knowledge and experience to implement, and which is a necessary prerequisite to becoming a good and credible manager.
 - 14.12. Denigrating the credibility of subordinates by exposing their failures and shortcomings in public while concealing the manager's own sins and then punishing subordinates who attempt to discover management transgressions or discuss/expose them once discovered.
 - 14.13. Classifying and locking up documents that might expose unfavorable, unethical, or illegal conduct of the manager while punishing and/or firing subordinates for doing the same.
 - 14.14. Firing/purging older or more experienced employees who know too much and therefore threaten the manager's power or position.
 - 14.15. Dividing duties/knowledge among several subordinates to spread knowledge throughout the organization instead of allowing it to concentrate and collect in one spot with one subordinate (even though it concentrates in one spot with the project manager...hypocrisy), which would make that person dangerous and threaten the manager. This tactic is called "dividing and conquering" and it was used quite successfully to build the gigantic Roman Empire.

- 14.16. Not allowing employees to rotate or exchange duties to gain the knowledge or experience necessary to threaten the manager's job.
- 14.17. Creating powerful information system tools and databases that only managers have access to, and then making an example out of anyone who:
- 14.18. Lets subordinates know they exist
- 14.19. Reveals their contents.

15. **Bad managers enslave subordinates and perpetuate their empire using MONEY as a tool/weapon by:**

- 15.1. Permitting NO subordinates to have complete control over how money is spent on a project they are working on.
- 15.2. Keeping subordinates ignorant and concealing information about the following very significant facts:
 - 15.2.1. Who the sponsors are, where the money comes from, and how and where to find new sources of money.
 - 15.2.2. The rules/laws for handling and spending money within the organization.
 - 15.2.3. How money is being/was spent on a particular project.
- 15.3. Preventing subordinates from purchasing tools that will make them more productive and more effective at their job than the manager.

16. **Attitude of managers toward their subordinates and the workplace:**

- 16.1. In the eyes of managers, subordinates are frequently wrong and their credibility is (and must be) continually questioned and open to suspicion (of course there frequently wrong...the boss never tells them anything about important aspects of things that are going on!). The credibility of subordinates MUST be continually questioned (but not developed or improved) by managers because people with credibility and knowledge are dangerous, difficult to control, and force managers to compete for the attention and acclaim of sponsors, peers, and subordinates. Therefore, managers will do everything in their power to limit and denigrate the credibility of their employees in the eyes of sponsors, coworkers, and other managers in order to keep their subordinates/troops compliant and under control. Furthermore, since credibility is gained by experience and political exposure, managers will limit credibility by limiting the involvement of subordinates in worthwhile efforts and projects that produce new knowledge, political exposure to sponsors/customers, and credibility. As a subordinate, your only defense against these tactics is:
 - 16.1.1. Defend your credibility to the death. Do your utmost not to make mistakes and to produce the highest quality and most consistent work you know how to.
 - 16.1.2. Maintain a detailed journal of all the embarrassing faux pas of your manager and coworkers and when he or they attack your credibility, pull out your notes and give him/them a dose of his/their own medicine, and if he does it in public then make sure you do too!
- 16.2. When subordinates begin thinking of promotions and advancement and want to expand their horizons and become part of management, managers will suddenly come up with all kinds of NEGATIVE reasons why they can't do it. They will use every scare tactic in the book to change the subordinate's mind about trying to advance to the stature of the manager, and the more valuable the employee is, the harder the manager will try to change their mind. The attitude will be "Man...we've got to keep this guy in his cage and make sure it stays locked. He does good work for me but I won't have him around to make me look good if he advances. Not only that, if he advances, then I'll have to find someone else as good as he is to replace him, and he'll use what he learned working for me to compete successfully with me, which would make me have to work twice as hard to do the same job I already do, and I don't want that, so I better scare him into staying where he is!" Common tactics used in this situation by scared managers to instill terror, fear, and doubt in their subordinates include:
 - 16.2.1. Threatening to fire the subordinate, transfer him, or take something away that they want to keep, like involvement in a particular effort.
 - 16.2.2. Piling more work on the subordinate so they don't have time to look at the bigger picture or think about improving their career.
 - 16.2.3. Procrastinating the decision, telling the subordinate: "You've got plenty of time to worry about that later. In the mean time, we've got work to do, get busy!"
 - 16.2.4. Denying requests by the subordinate to attend educational events that would improve their chances of promotion. Such courses might include: 1. Technical presentation skills workshops; 2. Toastmasters; 3. Program manager's courses.
 - 16.2.5. Not mentioning what the subordinate does to higher management so they aren't well-known in management circles and therefore won't be considered for future advancement by higher-ups.
 - 16.2.6. Denying pay raises and point awards to subordinates who take positive steps to advance their career.
- 16.3. Sometimes, bad managers have no choice but to promote subordinates, even though they would rather not because it threatens their empire. This could happen because: 1. All of the scare tactics they used to discourage subordinates from pursuing advancement don't succeed; 2. The project has grown too big for them to manage on

their own. When bad (insecure and paranoid) managers get into this very uncomfortable predicament of having to promote a subordinate, then they will try to limit the damage he can do to their empire by:

- 16.3.1. Only considering candidates for promotion who will never threaten him or at least select those that threaten him least. The least threatening types of people to the boss are those people who have some kind of fatal professional or character flaw that ensures that they will never graduate to higher levels of authority or take over the boss' job because, for instance:
 - 16.3.1.1. They are too timid, passive and too nice to ever challenge or question authority. Timid and passive people avoid and try to hide from the big picture because they don't want to become political casualties or lose their job by asking too many probing questions.
 - 16.3.1.2. They aren't engineers, don't have a degree, or don't have a very good resume, so they probably won't ever advance further or be trusted enough to be given a lot of additional responsibility because they either: 1. Don't have a bachelor's degree or advanced education (never paid their dues); 2. Can't communicate effectively; 3. Don't look good enough to sell to sponsors and upper management; 4. Don't have enough experience. Examples of these type of flawed people who make good puppets that don't ever advance include: 1. Technicians; 2. Secretaries; 3. New or inexperienced personnel; 4. Foreign-born engineers who can't write or speak well enough to be considered seriously for management.
- 16.3.2. Appoint a Machiavellian YES man who will make a good puppet and won't ever argue with the boss (in which case why do you need him in the first place!).
- 16.4. In spite of the paranoid tactics of managers toward employees who want to advance, if the subordinate calls a spade a spade and exposes the political agenda (mentioned above) of the manager to them openly and in front of his peers when he attempts to implement or promote it, and rattles the cage the manager has him locked up in, the BAD manager will, as a self-defense tactic:
 - 16.4.1. Say the subordinate is being NEGATIVE (not REALISTIC, mind you, but NEGATIVE) and that they have nothing but the best intentions toward the subordinate and his advancement goals. This is usually the most favorable approach, when it works, but it doesn't work if subordinates respond by saying: "Sounds to me like you are being NEGATIVE about NEGATIVE people. Maybe I'm not the only one around here who needs a negative attitude readjusted."
 - 16.4.2. If the approach in 16.4.1 doesn't work, then the manager will become obsessed with discrediting, ostracizing, and terrorizing the messenger. He feels he has to do this because exposing the manager's political agenda destroys his credibility, which is the most important thing he has. He will do this in a way that is as indirect as possible so he doesn't have to admit or take responsibility for his actions, their consequences, or openly acknowledge his political agenda and his dislike for people who expose it.
 - 16.4.3. Begin keeping the subordinate under a microscope looking for the slightest infraction (while ignoring the subordinate's peers or turning a blind eye toward them). The manager will watch and wait, like a ruthless predatory lion on the African plains, gathering all kinds of ammunition to use against the guy later without even telling the guy he's being singled-out or watched or even warning him that he better keep his whistle clean. *This is called workplace terrorism*, and it happens all the time! It's a popular but dubious and unethical way to "defang" your opponents. It's brutal, it's unfair, and it's TOTALLY HYPOCRITICAL. It's unfair because the guy is being singled-out and is having to live by different or more stringent rules than his peers, or because he gets monitored and watched more closely than the rest of his peers.
 - 16.4.4. When the manager finds something to nail the subordinate (unfairly for, of course), he makes an example out of the guy in front of everyone to show all of his peers that the manager won't tolerate the same kind of political gamesmanship from his subordinates that the manager practices EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY! That's the height of hypocrisy as a manager, of course, but that's the way bad managers function. This tactic is called "MAKING AN EXAMPLE OUT OF TROUBLEMAKERS." Subordinates quickly learn by observing situations like this that:
 - 16.4.4.1. It's more important to play games and SUCK UP to the boss than it is to tell the truth, be honest, or be realistic.
 - 16.4.4.2. Politics are more important to subordinates than knowledge or a good work ethic.
 - 16.4.4.3. Managers want good ROBOTS who follow orders, don't ask any prying questions, and don't think independently, which are precisely the OPPOSITE skills you need to be an effective manager.
 - 16.4.5. Quarantine politically savvy subordinates to contain the infectious spread of political awareness and the malcontent that it brings. Limit their interaction with other project members so that their political awareness doesn't spread and cause trouble or a mutiny for the manager. This is most often done by:
 - 16.4.5.1. Making sure that people on the same project don't share an office together.
 - 16.4.5.2. Dividing instead of sharing project tasks to minimize personal interaction.

- 16.4.5.3. Asking opinionated and politically savvy employees to remove political paraphernalia from their walls or cubicles.
- 16.4.5.4. Giving subordinates their own office or cubicle so they don't interact as much with other coworkers.

16.5. Managers will often complain to others that their people:

- 16.5.1. "Lack motivation, inspiration, or creativity, and therefore have to be oversupervised to ensure that the job gets done." Of course they lack motivation...when they try to exercise the ultimate in personal responsibility, creativity and motivation by expressing an interest in running their own project or a bigger piece of the manager's project, they are swiftly and viciously made into an example in front of their peers. Hypocrisy!
- 16.5.2. "Have tunnel vision, and don't spend enough time looking at the big picture or how they fit in it, and that's why we need a manager." Yet, when these same subordinates try to look at the big picture around them and all the political gamesmanship that goes on every day and expose it, they are viciously crucified by the boss for doing so. Hypocrisy!

Obviously, the above criticisms of subordinates in most cases are just a smoke screen for the REAL problem, which is that subordinates stay in the cage the boss has them lockup up in and don't venture out because the MANAGER WANTS THEM THERE, WHERE THEY CAN DO THE LEAST HARM AND THE MOST GOOD TO HIS EMPIRE AND HIS POLITICAL AGENDA! To the manager, you're either a slave to him and his empire or a competitor. The manager will try to make your cage as comfortable as possible because he doesn't want you to know that you are in it, but if you try to escape from your cage (naughty boy), then you will be viciously and mercilessly beaten with the nearest blunt instrument by him to teach you a lesson. You can't be a partner or an equal or superior team player to him because he doesn't want to share his power. It's only natural then that he would look for ways to perceive his subordinates as vulnerable, codependent, weak, undermotivated slaves to his own political agenda and empire. That's the way he justifies his existence!

16.6. Bad managers believe that money (NOT people, developing them, or treating them with respect) is the answer to EVERY problem. They believe, for instance, that:

16.6.1. The love of money is the root of all evil.

16.6.2. All people are basically evil, so they love money and would do anything to get more than their more than their fair share of it, including:

16.6.2.1. Overlooking the hypocrisy of the boss.

16.6.2.2. Never making the boss look silly, even if he deserves it sometimes and even if he does it to his underlings frequently!

16.6.2.3. Never expecting the boss to fill out the SAME kind of trip reports and meeting minutes (and distribute them to his subordinates) that he expects his subordinates to complete when they go on a trip without him.

16.6.2.4. Never disobeying the boss, even if he made an obviously STUPID decision and is later proven wrong.

16.6.2.5. Never expressing any personal or political opinions in the workplace, and especially in front of the boss, because they might be shunned for their next pay raise, even if those same political opinions have NOTHING whatsoever to do with how valuable the employee is to the organization or how productive he/she is.

16.6.2.6. Being dishonest. That is why the boss never trusts his/her employees and always questions everything...because he believes that they are just as devious, decrepit, and deceitful as he is!

16.6.3. "Anyone who thinks that money can't buy happiness obviously never had much of it."

17. As a subordinate, your biggest enemy is your own ignorance and laziness, as well as managers and coworkers who want to keep you ignorant, powerless, and not in control of any of the money. Ignorance and laziness enslave while knowledge, organization, education, and disciplined, focused effort enlighten, empower, and liberate.

18. As a manager, your biggest enemy is subordinates/sponsors who know more about your job than you do, who insist on managing the money and resources spent on tasks you assign to them, who insist on interfacing directly with sponsors, and who share the credit (and the blame) for everything they do with NO ONE. Subordinates and sponsors like this make managers unnecessary and/or turn them purely into marketeers.

19. Election of managers to office:

19.1. The world is a very competitive place. Since management positions are in short supply and management compensation is high as an inducement for people to become managers, then:

19.1.1. The people most likely to become managers are the most competitive. This is especially true if the list of applicants for the position is long.

- 19.1.2. Because candidates have to be competitive to get selected, they are probably ruthless and brutal opponents who have a high degree of political awareness and sensitivity and know exactly which asses are the right ones to kiss!
- 19.1.3. The only way to avoid being competitive and still get selected for a management position is to:
- 19.1.3.1. Play golf with and suck up to the right important people.
 - 19.1.3.2. Hear about a new opening from these golf-buddy, good-old-boy network friends at the top BEFORE it gets advertised.
 - 19.1.3.3. Get selected for the position and move in for the kill before anyone else who could compete for it even finds out there is an opening. Is that fair to the other candidates?
- 19.2. Wanna-bees who lust after money, power, and control and who flatter, complement, and befriend people in high places for their own selfish personal gain will almost always be elected (by their buddies at the top) to fill open manager positions. These people, however, always make the worse managers because they end up being tyrants and dictators who are despised and shunned by nearly everyone in the organization. They become managers out of spite to retaliate against the whole world for treating them like the human excrement (trash) they really are.
- 19.3. Nice guys with integrity who least want to be managers make the best managers but ironically will seldom be elected to managership. These people despise bad bosses, but see management as a necessary evil that must be exercised with empathy, humility, and restraint. They are well-liked by their subordinates because they don't suck up to people in power, don't accept special favors or perks, and don't play vicious games with their subordinates, but instead befriend "ordinary" people. They are "nice guys" in the truest sense of the word but as the saying goes, nice guys finish last and sadly are too nice and not aggressive/intimidating enough to be successful as a manager in the eyes of their superiors.
20. When new employees must be hired by managers to fill vacant or new positions, publicized qualifications for the open position will be far beyond what the job requires and far beyond the qualifications of the even the manager who is doing the hiring. This is an intimidation mechanism designed to ensure that:
- 20.1. Prospective new employees will feel intimidated by and subservient to their prospective new manager.
 - 20.2. Once intimidated, prospective new employees will be: 1. Far less resistant to accepting a low wage offer; 2. Far less likely to ask too many probing questions about the manager or the business. This will save the manager LOTS of money and guarantee his job security.
 - 20.3. The manager has a convenient excuse to fire the new employee if things don't work out by telling him/her that he didn't meet the requirements of the job without having to explain the REAL reason for firing him, which is probably that he:
 - 20.3.1. Knows more than the boss.
 - 20.3.2. Questions authority too much.
 - 20.3.3. Is too aggressive or competitive
 - 20.3.4. Has irreconcilable personality conflicts with the boss or other employees, in many cases caused NOT by his people skills or lack thereof, but EXCLUSIVELY and ONLY because he is so competitive that no one wants to share any information with him.
21. Work rules of managers:
- 21.1. Managers who want to cut costs will implement work rules preventing employees from discussing wages and promotions amongst themselves. This will prevent putting the manager in the awkward position of having to justify such things as:
 - 21.1.1. Why he/she pays some employees more than others (has favorites).
 - 21.1.2. Why there is such a big disparity between what new hires make now and what new hires made a few years back (inflation adjusted).
 - 21.1.3. What the exact performance/seniority criteria is for receiving a particular wage.
 - 21.2. Managers will justify the wage discussion prohibition by saying that privacy of individuals needs to be protected, even though:
 - 21.2.1. The employee you may want to know about may be willing to give you permission to know what he/she makes.
 - 21.2.2. The manager could publish depersonalized, qualitative/quantitative information that lists salaries, rankings, promotion statistics over the years WITHOUT linking them to specific individuals, thus ensuring that privacy is protected while conveying the information that employees want to know about salaries, promotions, and the reasons behind them.
 - 21.3. As a way to cut costs when the workload is heavy, managers would rather make existing employees perform copious amounts of UNCOMPENSATED overtime than to hire new employees to fill the void. This keeps overhead down but destroys morale and employee loyalty, not to mention making their family lives unbearable and unpleasant.

22. Bad managers are more insecure and competitive loners than team players within their respective organizations. Teams share information but shrewd and insecure managers don't like to. They have to be this way because their basic insecurity about their position feeds their obsession with perpetuating their empire, and this obsession leads them to be secretive about everything they do out of fear that if they aren't secretive, they just might shoot themselves in the foot by providing their subordinates with the information they need to eventually eclipse the boss and eliminate the need for dependence on him altogether. Instead of pursuing job security by simply WORKING HARDER or BETTER than anyone else, BEING SMARTER, BEING MORE FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL than their peers, and setting a good example (which is what Capitalism is supposed to be all about and which is the most ethical and respectable way to stay on top), they will instead abuse their power and privilege to stack the deck and rig the game in their favor so that they will always win. They do this by:
- 22.1. Appearing to share some information with subordinates, but only if it is needed to get the job done.
 - 22.2. Being very careful not to allow any of their subordinates to have the same view the BIG picture (and all the projects and sponsors) that they do. They do this by dividing and conquering. You divide and conquer by splitting duties up among subordinates and making sure that the subordinates don't talk to each other, compare notes, or attend each other's meetings (network), so they never see the BIG picture as completely as the manager.
 - 22.3. Talking privately with people working on a project (without other subordinates around, instead of in group meetings) so that the audience for information is strictly limited. Open meetings and publicly shared status reports/emails are a better vehicle for sharing status and problem resolutions, but insecure loner managers don't like these vehicles because it gives subordinates the same information that the boss has.
 - 22.4. Being very competitive, but trying to hide their competitiveness from subordinates so it doesn't destroy their credibility. Disinterest, apathy, laziness, and a lack of curiosity on the part of subordinates allow the manager to conceal his competitiveness and create the information vacuum necessary to maintain it without anyone noticing. Because of this, managers will unequally or unduly reward people (favoritism) who don't pry too much into what they do with carrots like:
 - 22.4.1. Treating them with more respect and flatter them more often.
 - 22.4.2. Giving them better or more interesting work than people who ask too many questions.
 - 22.5. Treating everyone who works for them as a competitor, in spite of the fact that the very essence of having an organization like a branch is that they SHARE information and work together better as a team than they do apart as individuals. Synergy happens through INFORMATION SHARING. Information sharing allows knowledge and experience to be efficiently reused and recycled many times over by many people in the organization, instead of collecting dust in the head of only one insecure project manager and the one person doing the actual work who he trusts with that information. You may as well not even have branches if you don't have this kind of synergy and INFORMATION SHARING across projects and across branches. Remember the following:

*Together
Everyone
Achieves
More*
23. Bad managers will take the position that competition within an organization destroys the organization and ought to be avoided. This statement is obviously a falsehood, and is like saying that we ought to put an end to marriages so we can bring the divorce rate down or that we ought to kill all newborns so we can put an end to dying of old age. They have to take this position, though, because they don't want to be upstaged by competitive subordinates. Competition within an organization is NOT, however, in and of itself destructive or harmful at all. *What IS destructive and harmful to an organization is not COMPETITION, but in HOW PEOPLE IN THE ORGANIZATION REACT TO AND DEAL WITH IT. If the REACTION to competition is bad, then the consequences are bad, but COMPETITION is not the cause of the bad reaction.* This leads to the following conclusions:
- 23.1. Competition is what drives us to do our best and be our best in all situations, and especially in the business world. Excellence is chiefly the direct result of competition. It motivates and forces us to be productive, efficient, hard-working, well-educated, and smart in everything we do in the business world.
 - 23.1.1. It strengthens organizations, builds new businesses, and opens up promotional opportunities for the strong, smart, hard-working, and able in the fight for survival of the fittest.
 - 23.1.2. It dooms the lazy, weak, and ignorant to a life of poverty, economic slavery, and dependence.
 - 23.2. Competition is the very fundamental thing that our entire natural biological world is built on. Darwin's theory of evolution is based on the idea that only the fittest, healthiest, smartest, and best adapted species will survive. Weaker species that aren't as aggressive, smart, and strong will eventually die out because they aren't as successful at competing for limited food supplies. Why shouldn't the workplace be the same?
 - 23.3. COMPETITION is the engine that fuels the capitalist economy that we enjoy in the United States. Capitalism is the system that allows and even encourages competition to flourish under controlled conditions, and it is the most

efficient and ruthless political engine of progress and prosperity that the world has ever known chiefly because it encourages competition.

- 23.4. Only simple, mediocre minds would survey the damage that a BAD REACTION to competition causes and react violently by saying: “It was COMPETITION that did this damage, and we ought to outlaw it!” That is a band-aid, knee-jerk reaction that you are likely to hear from a bleeding-heart socialist liberal that eliminates the symptoms but allows the underlying sickness (depravity) to persist.
- 23.5. Competition is destructive to an organization and leads to a bad reaction ONLY when the organization has a merit-based pay system and people in the organization are:
- 23.5.1. Lazy and don’t want to work harder than their coworkers. Lazy people resent coworkers who work harder than them and who get all the pay raises. Instead, they selfishly think that pay raises ought to be given to people regardless of how hard they work and do everything they can to spread harmful gossip about competitive coworkers.
 - 23.5.2. Ignorant and don’t like having to be forced to learn new things or improve how they do their job to make it more efficient than their coworkers.
 - 23.5.3. Proud and rebellious and don’t like having their life regulated by what other people say and do better than them within the organization.
 - 23.5.4. Underachievers who never do useful, important, or productive things and who resent coworkers that do get results on time and in budget.
- 23.6. Clearly, only the weakest, most depraved people in society with the basest motives loathe competition and try to avoid and prevent it, and that is why only BAD managers loathe competition. Bad managers, instead take the following attitude toward competition:
- 23.6.1. The workplace ought to be harmonious and everyone BUT THE BOSS, OF COURSE, ought to share power, control, and money to minimize conflict. This ensures that everyone but the boss is expendable.
 - 23.6.2. Competition only causes conflict within a GOVERNMENT organization. Nothing good ever comes out of it, unless it is competition among NONGOVERMENT contractors for work...and then it is good because it puts more money in the pocket of the boss and doesn’t threaten the boss’ empire.
 - 23.6.3. Competition in the workplace ought to be prevented, and it is the duty of managers to PREVENT IT. When employees are found to be competitive and aggressive, they ought to be separated from the rest of the less motivated, less productive, weaker employees so that conflict, name-calling, jealousy, and harmful gossip don’t result, even though all of these are usually instigated mainly by jealous employees who want more than they deserve.
 - 23.6.4. When around subordinates, pretend like competition doesn’t exist or downplay its significance, so that subordinates never realize just how much of a wolf among sheep that their bad boss really is. Keep saying that subordinates are "part of a TEAM", even though you know you aren't a team player yourself because you won't share control over project funds or certain information about the project, and won't invite subordinates to the most important meetings regarding the project.
- 23.7. GOOD managers, on the other hand, see COMPETITION as a tool that can be invaluable as a very effective way to motivate and encourage employees to:
- 23.7.1. Work harder.
 - 23.7.2. Work smarter.
 - 23.7.3. Be more responsible and proactive.
 - 23.7.4. Be productive.
 - 23.7.5. Pursue continuing education.
 - 23.7.6. Subscribe to trade journals.
 - 23.7.7. Attend trade shows.
24. EGO and PERSONAL PRIDE is the main motivation behind most of what bad managers do. Everything they do has to build up their ego and personal pride and make them feel LESS insecure and when it doesn’t, they get REALLY upset. They act this way in spite of the fact that the bible says about pride/ego: “Pride cometh before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.” Managers build up their egos through the following tactics:
- 24.1. Surrounding themselves with “YES” men...people who never do anything but agree with them and complement and flatter them for being so wonderful and who never share ANY personal opinions. This leads to the following consequences:
 - 24.1.1. YES men are ass-kissing, scum suckers with no integrity whatsoever who are despised by most of the people with integrity who work with them. This creates a bad working environment for subordinates who AREN’T YES men. They feel like there is favoritism in the organization and this inevitably leads to envy and strife.

- 24.1.2. YES men also are usually more politicians than producers and if the organization attracts too many of them, then nothing ever gets done and the sponsor will eventually get tired of waiting for results and find someone else to do the job.
- 24.1.3. Managers will pursue corporate policies which make it easier to fill the organization with YES men. You create YES men by putting subordinates in the most vulnerable position possible...making their position far more vulnerable (to firing and pay cuts) and precarious than that of the manager. This situation can be created by:
- 24.1.3.1. Giving the manager all the flexibility in the world to hire and fire whoever he/she wants.
- 24.1.3.2. Making most of the worker bees into contractors instead of federal employees like the boss is. Therefore, the more contractors your organization has, the more likely it is that the boss likes YES men.
- 24.2. Stealing credit or not giving credit for new knowledge/discoveries produced by subordinates.
- 24.3. Discouraging/punishing subordinates for being critical of the manager's ideas, even if the criticality is deserved because the manager is in error and just about everyone who works for him will acknowledge it.
- 24.4. Asking subordinates to take their name off work they produce, so the boss can present it at the next project meeting as his own. This is especially true if the work produced is of very high quality. The higher the quality of the work produced by subordinates, the more likely the manager is to want to take credit for it. This unethical tactic is called "Selling your troops down the river."
- 24.5. The Not Invented Here (NIH) syndrome:
- 24.5.1. If another competitive outside organization does something better than he or his people, the proud ego-maniac manager will denigrate it instead of complement it so that he still looks better than the competitive organization. If you can't make yourself look better by BEING good, then you have to make everyone else around you look comparatively worse.
- 24.5.2. If a subordinate does better work than the manager and insists on taking full credit and responsibility for what he did instead of the manager taking credit away from him, this makes the manager look bad. Therefore, the manager will find some excuse to get rid of this person (punish success) while at the same time complaining about why his people don't take more pride in their work or work harder for him. Hypocrisy!
- 24.6. You can expect bosses with the biggest EGOS to have the strongest negative reaction to what is said here.
25. The successful application of all of the management tactics described above depends on STEALTH and TERROR. If subordinates know about the political agenda and motives of bad managers described above, then they will lose any trust or respect they had for the manager, which destroys any chance of a harmonious or productive work environment. Managers are painfully aware of this, because it negatively affects their bottom line and undermines their authority within the organization. Consequently, rather than solving the perception problem directly by improving their own personal character and attitude when subordinates discover and expose their political agenda (the best way to do it), the bad manager will instead become a workplace terrorist react to these questions with the following harmful damage control measures (which incidentally will destroy morale in the workplace even further):
- 25.1. If the manager is honest and doesn't want to lie, he will take great pains to ensure that he doesn't discuss ANY of his motives for doing or saying things with subordinates. That way, he can continue to pursue his own selfish and destructive (to subordinates) agenda while creating the appearance that he is a team player and doesn't want to hurt anyone. As a subordinate, you can fight this tendency through the following tactics:
- 25.1.1. Saying to the manager: "WHY do you want to do that...I don't understand how any good can come out of that? What constructive purpose is accomplished by this act?"
- 25.1.1.1. If he/she refuses to give an answer, then you can be sure that the answer he doesn't want to give you would probably make him/her politically unpopular with subordinates.
- 25.1.1.2. The stronger and the more threatening the reaction of the manager to squelch subordinate's questions about motives for doing or saying things, the more likely it is that the manager is up to no good.
- 25.1.1.3. The strongest reaction to a question or inquiry from a subordinate about motives, of course, is to fire an inquisitive subordinate or whistle-blower.
- 25.1.2. If your manager refuses to answer, speculate on your own to try to come up with the most likely management motive and then either:
- 25.1.2.1. Present it to your manager and see how he/she reacts (if you have a lot of courage and are considering a new line of work). The angrier he gets when you propose an idea, the more likely it is that you hit the nail on the head and that he is trying to hide something.
- 25.1.2.2. Play detective by gossiping and comparing notes with your coworkers to see if other statements or behaviors they have observed from your manager corroborates the motive you suspect.

25.2. If the manager is dishonest, deceitful, or irresponsible, and is put in the awkward position of explaining his selfish political agenda, he will probably:

25.2.1. Invent a red herring explanation of his motive that:

- 25.2.1.1. Improves the image of the manager in front of subordinates.
- 25.2.1.2. Seems likely and probable.
- 25.2.1.3. Works best if the subordinates are ignorant. The more they know, the harder it is to fool them.
- 25.2.1.4. Is really just a DEVIOUS LIE carefully crafted to mislead subordinates and give them a false sense of trust for him. This is called playing dirty pool.

25.2.2. If he can't come up with a deceitful explanation of his devious political motives and actions that makes him look good and sounds credible, then his last ditch defense tactic against questions by subordinates of his motives will be to:

- 25.2.2.1. Deceitfully deny every behavior and motive described here but not explain or elaborate on why it is incorrect, because he can't if he wants to tell the truth and be honest with himself. He will deny any of the negative motives described here even though just about everyone you encounter will agree with most of what you read here. He will probably also say that he doesn't have time to talk about it, and if you pressure him to commit to a time to talk about it, he will do everything in his power to weasel out of it.
- 25.2.2.2. Pretend like you're being negative and try to portray you as a troublemaker for promoting or agreeing with what you read here. This will discourage subordinates from inquiring further and put them on notice that the boss doesn't like it when you expose the game he is playing.
- 25.2.2.3. Terrorize the life out of you to try and scare you away from the organization so he doesn't have to worry about discrediting you anymore and so you don't contaminate the attitudes of the rest of yes-men that he STILL has working for him and hasn't fired yet.

26. The litmus test for bad bosses. The following guidelines are designed as a litmus test for you to determine whether your boss is a bad/selfish/competitive one or a good one who is a team player. The column that has the most check marks is the kind of boss you have.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Bad boss/tyrant</i>	<i>Good boss/team player</i>
1. Meetings	Doesn't have meetings with all the people who work for him, because he doesn't like his subordinates to see the big picture. Closes the door when he has meetings or has them in a place where subordinates won't overhear or even know about the meeting. When people ask why they weren't invited, he will use the excuse that it would be wasting project funds and hours on nonproductive meetings, but then, if the meeting is unproductive, ...why does the BOSS attend! You can tell if your boss is this type by volunteering to take personnel leave to attend the meeting, and if he STILL refuses, then he is a selfish loner who is building an empire at your expense.	Has regular meetings and invites ALL the people who work for him because he wants them to be well-informed about what is happening in the marketplace, with the sponsor, and with the delivery schedule. Minimizes the length of the meeting to ensure that project funds are not wasted. Ensures that meetings are short and productive as possible.
1.1 Meeting minutes	Doesn't take meeting minutes if he does have a public meeting because he doesn't want anyone knowing what he is up to.	Religiously takes meeting minutes and makes sure that people who couldn't attend also get a copy by email. He does this, again, because he wants to keep his people informed and is a TEAM player.
1.2 Invitation	If he has to have a meeting, strictly limits who gets invited to the smallest possible subset of people who can be productive and address his needs directly. Even when there are other highly motivated people who would like to contribute to the project and could do a better job than the people actually doing the work, he won't invite them, won't take meeting minutes, and if he does, won't give them a copy because he doesn't want them becoming a competitor.	Invites even nonproductive team members who are highly motivated to produce because he views meetings as training evolutions to educate and develop subordinates, because this will increase their value and give them an opportunity to contribute the NEXT TIME the group does a similar thing.
1.3 Meeting handouts	Doesn't give meeting handouts to any subordinates but the people who attended, because he doesn't want anyone who works for him to be a competitor to him.	Gives copies of meeting handouts (or lets subordinates make their own copy) to every subordinate one who asks for them and offers them an opportunity to ask by telling them there was a meeting (through meeting minutes). He does this because he wants to develop and educate his employees about the big picture.
2. Email	Very strictly limits the audience for important emails so that the smallest group of people receives it, again, because he doesn't want anyone knowing as much about the big picture as he does and doesn't want any kind of competition in his workgroup.	Shares ALL important emails (from the sponsor, for instance) with ALL subordinates who are doing work for that sponsor (not just selected subordinates) so they stay tuned in to what the sponsor wants. This eliminates the need for a lot of meetings and also encourages subordinates to share what they know with

Characteristic	Bad boss/tyrant	Good boss/team player
		everyone as well.
3. Trip reports	Doesn't do trip reports because he doesn't want his subordinates knowing as much as he knows. Makes excuses for why he shouldn't do them. If he makes excuses, offer to do them for him on your own time (even though he should be doing them anyway on project funds). If he still says no, then you know what his real motives are.	Consistently does trip reports and makes sure that everyone who works directly for him gets a copy. He also expects his subordinates to do them too.
4. Character	Breaks promises and often deliberately deceives subordinates to incentivize them enough to give him what he wants. Gets upset when subordinates do the same. Doesn't work very hard or set a hard-working example, but instead expects subordinates to do all of the hard work and views this work as TRIVIAL and BOTHERSOME.	Never lies to or deceives subordinates. Handshake is as good as gold. Continually works very hard and sets the best example possible for subordinates. Highly motivated to roll-up sleeves and help out with anything in the project. Tells the WHOLE truth, instead of the part of the truth that is politically popular.
5. Hypocrisy	Makes rules that only apply to subordinates and not to himself.	Follows all the same rules that he sets for his subordinates.
6. Achievement	Rewards and encourages ONLY things that make the boss look good.	Rewards and encourages achievement, even if it doesn't benefit the boss directly but instead benefits the organization and/or the people who work for him.
7. Attitude	Criticizes subordinates and complains about them behind their backs, especially to important people like sponsors and upper management. Has negative expectations about subordinates that become self-fulfilling.	Complements subordinates for good work. Has positive expectations about subordinates that become self-fulfilling.
8. Project management	NEVER lets subordinates manage any of the money, contracts, or people, because he doesn't want to lose or shrink his empire. This leads to subordinates who are ineffective and dependent on the boss for everything. Shows no VISION or INSPIRATION, and focuses on MANAGING instead of LEADING	Splits up tasks and gives subordinates the BIGGEST piece they can handle, INCLUDING managing the money, contracts, and personnel assigned to the task, but only if they want to. Shows VISION and INSPIRATION in everything he does, and this inspiration readily infects subordinates.
9. Promotion	NEVER promotes subordinates to project management/branch management status. Punishes people who ask for greater responsibility. This hurts the organization in the long run and puts it at the mercy of the boss, so that when he retires, everything comes caving in. If the management above your boss is continually obsessed with what they are going to do when your boss retires, then this is definitely the kind of boss you have. Appoints puppet YES MEN to positions of leadership, but only when he has to. Delegates responsibility but NEVER authority or especially control over project funds. Gets angry at subordinates who make themselves indispensable (like the boss does) and who won't train their replacement as a way to protect their job security, even though he hypocritically isn't willing to train or grow HIS own replacement or subordinates and isn't willing to create new positions of authority for them to "grow up into." Wants to be the ONLY person in the organization who has job security and is indispensable and hypocritically isn't willing to give any subordinate the same privilege.	Continually prepares and develops subordinates to prepare them for the day when the boss won't be around anymore because he retired. This helps the organization and makes it more survivable by preparing other people to assume the responsibilities that the boss has when he leaves.
10. Contracts	Contracts out most of the important work, so that he doesn't have to be burdened with training or developing subordinates. Uses contractors as a weapon to terrorize subordinates by telling them that they will be replaced by a contractor if they don't play by HIS rules, which of course are going to perpetuate HIS empire. Doesn't share what the contractors do, how much they make with subordinates because he doesn't want them being too competitive. Contracting out most of the work makes subordinates complacent, keeps them from complaining about having to work too hard, and pacifies the natives so they don't get restless. In the long run, however, it devastates the character and reputation of the organization because eventually, the sponsor will cut out the middle man (the boss and all his people) and go directly to the contractor if he is smart.	Uses contractors sparingly, and tries to keep most of the work, and especially the important work, in-house. This builds corporate knowledge, value, and expertise and helps the organization tremendously in the long run. It also encourages and builds teamwork within the organization. Shares information about contractors with subordinates who are interested, such as: 1. Statement of work; 2. Amount of money spent and for what. This teaches subordinates about the big picture.
11. Education/career development	Ignores career development and education in the goals and objectives of subordinates or as a criteria for	Sets clear goals and objectives oriented around career development and educational advancement and uses these as a

Characteristic	Bad boss/tyrant	Good boss/team player
	awarding points. Thinks goals and objectives and education is a waste of time. If the requisite skills don't exist in house to do the job, then he gives the job (and all the valuable knowledge gained doing it) to a contractor instead of growing people in-house who can do the job. This shifts the center of gravity for corporate knowledge to the contractor, which eventually hurts the organization because contractors are just a fickle as their sponsors and jump ship frequently to find better pay and benefits. The boss will then be high and dry the next time he needs that particular skill again, because now his contractor has to go on another man-hunt to find the right guy to do the job. It also wastes a ton of money reeducating yet another person to do the same old job.	criteria for awarding points. This may make him unpopular with subordinates, but he doesn't mind being unpopular if he is doing the right thing for the organization. Thinks education and career development of subordinates is CRUCIAL to the survival of the organization. Approves training and seminar requests if they are career related. Grows employees by rotating responsibilities so that everyone gets a chance to learn every part of the business, INCLUDING management. Hands people new tasks even if he knows they can't do it, and offers lots of help until they can stand on their own two feet, because he wants them to grow.
12. Loyalty	Has more respect and regard for contractors than he does for his own people. Rejects work accomplished by subordinates in favor of the contractor's, rather than critiquing, developing, and improving it because he doesn't want subordinates to know more than he knows.	Has more respect and regard for his own people than for contractors. If a subordinate produces work inferior to contractors, he tries to diplomatically critique, improve, and develop it until it is of the highest quality and will satisfy the sponsor's requirements.
13. Tolerance and respect	Very arrogant, rigid, and intolerant...especially if political views of subordinates are uncomplimentary or unflattering of the boss or management. Punishes and ostracizes subordinates for their political views. Reacts VERY strongly to any subordinate who puts this document on their wall.	Has a high tolerance level. Respects the rights of subordinates to have political opinions of their own and doesn't punish them for expressing them, even if they are unfavorable. Doesn't complain when subordinates put political posters on the wall promoting their beliefs. Doesn't care if subordinates put this document on their wall.

NOTE THAT WE ARE ONLY DESCRIBING THE BEHAVIOR OF BAD MANAGERS HERE, NOT ALL MANAGERS. GOOD MANAGERS DON'T DO THESE THINGS, AND BY THE WAY...DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER! I DIDN'T INVENT THE MESSAGE PORTRAYED HERE. THIS DOCUMENT MERELY DESCRIBES AND EXPOSES THE TOOLS OF INTIMATION AND OPPRESSION THAT BAD MANAGERS WHO LACK CHARACTER HAVE USED AGAINST THEIR SUBORDINATES FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. THESE TRICKS ARE OLDER THAN THE OLDEST PROFESSION ON EARTH, AND I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS!

6.7.3 Phases of a Project

1. Enthusiasm
2. Disillusionment
3. Panic
4. Search for the Guilty
5. Punish the Innocent

6. Praise/reward the Nonparticipants

7 RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENTS AND THE WORLD

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"Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master"
 [George Washington]

Although Christians should always put God first, we still have an obligation to live in the world but not be of this world. That means we have to interact not only with people, including spouses, our children, and our relatives, but also with governments, who are instituted among men through the consent of the governed and who are commissioned by God to serve the best interests of the people.

Much of this chapter is derived from a much larger and more comprehensive work entitled *The Great IRS Hoax: Why We Don't Owe Income Tax* (also written by the author of this book), available for free downloading from:

<http://famguardian.org/Publications/GreatIRSHoax/GreatIRSHoax.htm>

If you find this chapter interesting or motivating, we strongly suggest that you read *The Great IRS Hoax Book*. That book will change forever the way you view the U.S. government and is likely to get you extremely angry at your government for the deception you didn't even realize they were pulling on you before now.

7.1 Biblical Law: The Foundation of ALL Law

The Bible very succinctly defines the basis for all laws as follow:

James 2:8: *"If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well."*

Matthew 7:12: *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them: this is the law."*

Matthew 22:36-40: (36) *"Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"* (37) *Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Though shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all law..."*

So based on the above, the foundational questions to ask yourself as you read through the tax laws in the following sections of this chapter are:

- Does this law interfere with my ability to worship my God?
- Does this law cause me to commit idolatry by putting government higher than God?
- Does this law cause me to sin against my neighbor based on the biblical definition of sin? Does it force me to do something that is sinful, or prevent me from doing something the bible says I should do?
- Will following this law demonstrate love and compassion for my fellow man? For instance, would the law cause innocent unborn children to be responsible for debts that were incurred during our lifetime, resulting in financial slavery?

If the answer to any of the above questions is YES, then you shouldn't follow the law and should do everything you can to defeat, eliminate, and undermine that law. We should:

- Picket it.

- Refuse to subsidize the enforcement of it with our tax dollars.
- Run for political office and eliminate it once elected.
- Write our Congressman to complain about it.
- Vote against it in the ballot box.
- If the law comes in front of a jury that we are sitting on, we should vote against enforcing it.

We can't put it any simpler than that.

7.2 Natural Order

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first."

[Mark Twain]

"Men do not make laws. They do but discover them. Laws must be justified by something more than the will of the majority. They must rest on the eternal foundation of righteousness. That state is most fortunate in its form of government which has the aptest instruments for the discovery of law."

[Calvin Coolidge, to the Massachusetts State Senate, January 7, 1914]

"If the jury feels the law is unjust [violates God's law], we recognize the undisputed power of the jury to acquit, even if its verdict is contrary to the law as given by a judge, and contrary to the evidence ... and the courts must abide by that decision."

[U.S. v. Moylan, 417 F.2d at 1006 (1969)]

"The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of any of their number is self-protection."

[John Stuart Mill]

"I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth - that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid."

[Benjamin Franklin]

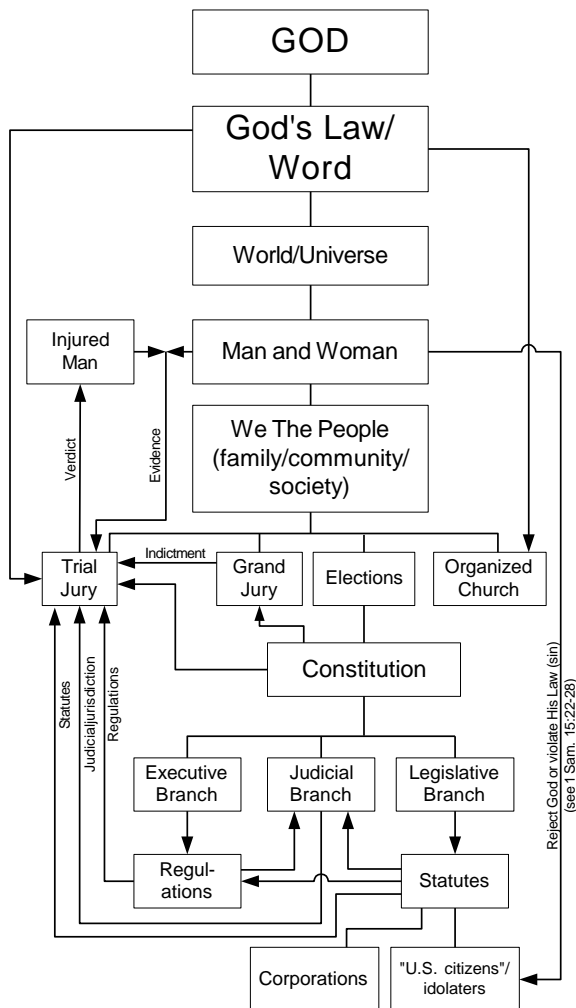
Natural Order is an extension of Natural Law. The foundation of Natural Order is the notion that all creations are subject to and subservient to their Creator, who is always the sovereign relative to the creation. God created man so He is the Sovereign relative to man. Man created the states of the Union, so the people of the state are sovereign relative to their state government. The states of the Union then created the federal government, so the states are the sovereigns relative to the federal government and the federal government is subservient to and subordinate to them. The authority delegated by the states to the federal government is a definition and limitation of the power of the federal (not national) government and under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people". Here is an example of this concept right from no less than the U.S. Supreme Court:

*"A State does not owe its origin to the Government of the United States, in the highest or in any of its branches. It was in existence before it. **It derives its authority from the same pure and sacred source as itself: The voluntary and deliberate choice of the people**...A State is altogether exempt from the jurisdiction of the Courts of the United States, or from any other exterior authority, unless in the*

special instances when the general Government has power derived from the Constitution itself.”
 [Chisholm v. Georgia, 2 Dall. (U.S.) 419 (Dall.) (1794)]

Natural Order therefore defines the natural hierarchy of sovereignty in all of creation based on the order that all things were created. In the words of former President Calvin Coolidge, Natural Law cannot be *created* by man: it can only be *discovered*, and the same is true of Natural Order. Natural law is therefore a product of the following Natural Order and hierarchy of sovereignty. This hierarchy of sovereignty is unchangeable and immutable and cannot be denied, denounced, or legislated away by any court or government because it is a product of who and what we are as human beings. All human beings instinctively understand its meaning and application. Below is a diagram of Natural Order:

Figure 7-1: Natural Order Diagram



Sovereign	References	Explanation	SOVEREIGNTY
God	John 15:20	Omnipotent, omnipresent, source of all Truth "Remember the word that I said to you, A servant is not greater than his master. "	GREATEST ↑
	John 1:1	"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."	
	Gen. 1:1-25	"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."	
	Gen. 1:26-31 Matt. 4:10	"Let Us make man in Our image" "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him ONLY you shall serve."	
We The People as <u>Individuals</u> (NOT government)	Julliard v. Greenman, 110 U.S. 421 (1884) Hale v. Henkel, 240 U.S. 43 (1906) Perry v. U.S., 394 U.S. 330 (1935)	Sovereignty resides in the people, not in the government. The People created trial by jury, and grand jury to punish/prevent sin. People created elections to organize government. Created church to promote spiritual welfare.	LEAST ↑
	Church: Gen. 3:15	These organizations prevent injustice and protect our life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.	
	Ten Commandments: Exodus 20:1 thru 20:17	Constitution is a social contract approved through elections.	
	Gen. 11:4-9	Government created by the people.	
	Matt. 20:25-29 Declaration of Independence	"...whoever desires to become great [in the government] among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave."	
	U.S. v. Mersky, 361 U.S. 431 (1960)	Statutes and regulations (laws) created by government. Executive branch writes implementing regulations based on statutes passed by legislative branch.	
	Bowers v. Kerbaugh-Empire Co., 271 U.S. 170, 174, (1926)	Corporations are fictions created by law. Lies in IRS publications and treason by judiciary try to put you here.	

In the above diagram everyone at a particular level is a "fiduciary" of the parties above and they are bound to this position by contract.

fiduciary duty: A duty to act for someone else's benefit, while subordinating one's personal interests to that of the other person. It is the highest standard of duty implied by law (e.g. trustee, guardian).
[Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, page 625]

A fiduciary relationship is a “master” and “servant” relationship. The fiduciary is the servant and the person receiving the benefit is the master by contract. For instance, we are bound to act as fiduciaries and bondservants who serve the best interests of the sovereign God who created us by the contract or the covenant that God has with us which is documented in the Bible.⁸⁶ Public servants in government, in turn, are contractually bound to us as the sovereigns they serve by written contracts called the U.S. Constitution and our state Constitution. The founding fathers also agreed that the Constitution was a fiduciary contract between the people and their government during the development of that instrument as documented in the Federalist Paper #78:

“No legislative act contrary to the Constitution can be valid. To deny this would be to affirm that the deputy (agent) is greater than his principal; that the servant is above the master; that the representatives of the people are superior to the people; that men, acting by virtue of powers may do not only what their powers do not authorize, but what they forbid...[text omitted] It is not otherwise to be supposed that the Constitution could intend to enable the representatives of the people to substitute their will to that of their constituents. It is far more rational to suppose, that the courts were designed to be an intermediate body between the people and the legislature, in order, among other things, to keep the latter within the limits assigned to their authority. The interpretation of the laws is the proper and peculiar province of the courts. A Constitution is, in fact, and must be regarded by judges, as fundamental law. If there should happen to be an irreconcilable variance between the two, the Constitution is to be preferred to the statute.”
[Alexander Hamilton (Federalist Paper # 78)]

We talked earlier about the terms of the fiduciary duty that exists between the people and their government when we talked about the Code of Ethics for Government service earlier in section 7.4.8. This Code of Ethics embodies and implements the terms of that fiduciary contract between the sovereign people and their servant government. Incidentally, Alexander Hamilton's very words from the Federalist Paper #78 echo those of God Himself, who through His son Jesus said the following:

“Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’”
[John15:20]

The Bible covenant between us and our sovereign God also has all the attributes of a valid legal contract:

1. **An offer**: God's Love and forgiveness
2. **Acceptance**: Our acceptance of God's love and forgiveness and sovereignty over our spiritual lives.
3. **Consideration**: We commit our time, our life, our families, and our affections to serving and loving and thanking God for his grace and mercy toward us, who are sinners.
4. **Mutual assent**: God understands us better than we understand ourselves, and we must understand the commitment and the covenant He makes to us by reading the Bible daily.

In many cases, you can confirm the existence of this contract with God by looking in the Bible for the word “yoke”. Here is the definition of “yoke” out of Easton's Bible Dictionary:

⁸⁶ See 1 Peter 2:13-17.

YOKE — (1.) Fitted on the neck of oxen for the purpose of binding to them the traces by which they might draw the plough, etc. (Num. 19:2; Deut. 21:3). It was a curved piece of wood called 'ol.

(2.) In Jer. 27:2; 28:10, 12 the word in the Authorized Version rendered “yoke” is motah, which properly means a “staff,” or as in the Revised Version, “bar.”

These words in the Hebrew are both used figuratively of severe bondage, or affliction, or subjection (Lev. 26:13; 1 Kings 12:4; Isa. 47:6; Lam. 1:14; 3:27). In the New Testament the word “yoke” is also used to denote servitude (Matt. 11:29, 30; Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1).

(3.) In 1 Sam. 11:7, 1 Kings 19:21, Job 1:3 the word thus translated is tzemed, which signifies a pair, two oxen yoked or coupled together, and hence in 1 Sam. 14:14 it represents as much land as a yoke of oxen could plough in a day, like the Latin jugum. In Isa. 5:10 this word in the plural is translated “acres.”

To be “yoked” means to be contractually or spiritually bound to God: to be figuratively married to Him as His bride. Here is an example from Jesus’ mouth:

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take **My yoke** upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For **My yoke** is easy and My burden is light.”
[Matt. 11:28-30, Bible, NKJV]

Incidentally, without this yoke or contract between us and God, without our unfailing allegiance to Him over and above that of any government or state, and without our adherence to this sacred contract as evidenced by our steadfast obedience to God’s laws and His commandments (called “fearing God”), we fall from grace, lose our sovereignty, and are then put into subjection and bondage to man’s laws and to government, who then become our new false god and idol. This is God’s sovereign punishment for our disobedience:

“Behold, to obey [God and His Law] is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is an iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king [or sovereign over government].”

Then Saul [the king] said to Samuel, **“I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people [wanted to be politically correct instead of right with God] and obeyed their voice [instead of God’s voice].** Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.” But Samuel said to Saul [the king], “I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel”

And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.”
[1 Sam. 15:22-28, Bible, NKJV]

The diagram at the beginning of this section reflects the above reality with an arrow showing our fall from grace and sovereignty as a “man” to become “U.S. citizens/idolators”, which is the price for disobedience to God’s commandments and laws. When that happens, we become “subjects” of the

federal government and our own ignorance and sin has voluntarily transformed a constitutional republic into a totalitarian “monarchy” or “oligarchy”:

“citizen. 1: an inhabitant of a city or town; esp: one entitled to the rights and privileges of a freeman. 2 a: a member of a state b: a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it 3: a civilian as distinguished from a specialized servant of the state—citizenly

syn CITIZEN, SUBJECT, NATIONAL mean a person owing allegiance to and entitled to the protection of a sovereign state. CITIZEN is preferred for one owing allegiance to a state in which sovereign power is retained by the people and sharing in the political rights of those people; SUBJECT implies allegiance to a personal sovereign such as a monarch; NATIONAL designates one who may claim the protection of a state and applies esp. to one living or traveling outside that state.”

[Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, ISBN 0-87779-510-X, p. 243; Emphasis added]

Another important thing to learn from the above scripture is that Saul fell because he was a man-pleaser. He “feared the people” more than he feared God (see Eccl. 12:13-14). This is a polite way to say that he was more concerned with being “politically correct” than in obeying God and His Laws. The Lord was essentially second on Saul’s priority list and so Saul fell from grace and was dethroned as the king and sovereign over his people. The same fate awaits all who do the same today, including us as Americans. God made us the kings and the sovereigns over our servant government, and this sovereignty is a privilege that results from our faith and obedience to God’s Laws and our worship of Him through our righteous actions. Below is a definition of “worship” from Harper’s Bible Dictionary that confirms these conclusions:

***worship**, the attitude and acts of reverence to a deity. The term ‘worship’ in the OT translates the Hebrew word meaning ‘to bow down, prostrate oneself,’ a posture indicating reverence and homage given to a lord, whether human or divine. **The concept of worship is expressed by the term ‘serve.’ In general, the worship given to God was modeled after the service given to human sovereigns [government rulers]; this was especially prominent in pagan religions.** In these the deity’s image inhabited a palace (temple) and had servants (priests) who supplied food (offered sacrifices), washed and anointed and clothed it, scented the air with incenses, lit lamps at night, and guarded the doors to the house. Worshipers brought offerings and tithes to the deity, said prayers and bowed down, as one might bring tribute and present petitions to a king. Indeed the very purpose of human existence, in Mesopotamian thought, was to provide the gods with the necessities of life.*

*Although Israelite worship shared many of these external forms, even to calling sacrifices ‘the food of God’ (e.g., Lev. 21:6), its essence was quite different. As the prophets pointed out, **God could not be worshiped only externally. To truly honor God, it was necessary to obey his laws, the moral and ethical ones as well as ritual laws. To appear before God with sacrifices while flouting his demands for justice was to insult him** (cf. Isa. 1:11-17; Amos 5:21-22). God certainly did not need the sacrifices for food (Ps. 50:12-13); rather sacrifice and other forms of worship were offered to honor God as king. [Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. 1985. Harper’s Bible dictionary. Includes index. (1st ed.). Harper & Row: San Francisco]*

The privilege or rulership over our government servants may be revoked at any time if we cease to trust in the Lord and put Him first, no matter the consequence. The reward for our disobedience to

God is a tyrannical and dictatorial government that we become enslaved to and oppressed by because of our sin. We explained why this was the case earlier in section 7.12.1 when we talked about the book of Judges.

Since the Bible is a valid legal contract between us and God just as much as the federal constitution is a contract between the people and their government, then one interesting outcome is that the Constitution forbids states from interfering with such contracts:

United States Constitution, Article I, Section 10

No State shall...pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.

So not even the government can remove God from His sovereign role over both us and the government, and the Bible confirms that we cannot be separated from the love of God, which is the essence of our faith⁸⁷:

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers [governments or rulers], nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

[Romans 8:38-39, Bible, NKJV, emphasis added]

The Ten commandments say that our top priority is to love God, and by implication, obeying His commandments, His statutes, His Law, and His Word.

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”
[John 14:21, Bible, NKJV]

We have taken the time to actually catalog on our website many but not all of God’s laws at the web address below for your reference:

http://famguardian.org/Subjects/LegalGovRef/Education/BibleLawIndex/bl_index.htm

The implications of these revelations are that since God says *He* and His *Law/Word* in the Bible are to be *first* on our priority list, then when or if the vain government of man or its laws attempt to conflict with or supercede the authority of God, we must remind the state that it cannot lawfully interfere with our First Amendment religious views by putting *itself* above God and in charge of our life or making human laws that conflict with God’s laws which are in the Bible. That very calling and moral obligation of reconciling God’s laws with man’s laws, in fact, is the *sole* duty of the Trial Jury in the diagram. We even took this argument so far as to PROVE earlier in section 7.4.2 from a legal perspective using evidence exactly how our government has made itself into a religion and a false god to show just how bad this conflict between God and man has become.

God’s laws, however, must always supercede man’s laws because He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, which makes Him Sovereign over all existence, and we are His sovereign delegates and ambassadors on the earth from whom the government derives ALL of its sovereignty over the finite

⁸⁷ See Matt. 22:36-40

stewardship which we have entrusted to it. Our obedience to God's laws, which sometimes puts us in conflict with man's laws, is what sanctifies us and sets us apart.

*"Come out from among them [the unbelievers]
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.
I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be my sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty."
[2 Corinthians [6:17-18](#), Bible, NKJV]*

This faith and sanctification and obedience and joyful service to God makes us into "**ministers of a foreign state**" while we are here on earth from a legal perspective, and the "foreign state" in this case is "heaven" and "God's kingdom". Our ministry is for the glory of God and the love of our fellow man, in satisfaction of the two great commandments of Jesus found in Matt. 22:36-40. No less than the Supreme Court in *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark*, 169 U.S. 649 (1898) said that the phrase "and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States" found in Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment *excludes* "ministers of foreign states" from being "U.S. citizens". That's right: we can't be "U.S. citizens" and thereby make government into our false god because we are only "pilgrims and strangers"⁸⁸ on a foreign mission while we are temporarily here. The only place that Christians can really intend or realistically expect to return permanently to is heaven because nothing here on earth is permanent for us anyway, and life would be *miserable* indeed if it were! I'd like to see someone litigate *that* in a state court. Wouldn't it be fun to watch?

Here, in fact, is what God thinks about human governments and the nations created by man:

*"Behold, the nations are as a drop in the bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales."
[Isaiah 40:15, Bible, NKJV]*

*"All nations before Him are as **nothing**, and they are counted by Him **less than nothing and worthless**."
[Isaiah 40:17, Bible, NKJV]*

*"He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless."
[Isaiah 40:23, Bible, NKJV]*

*"Indeed **they are all worthless; their works are nothing**; their molded images are wind and confusion."
[Isaiah 42:29, Bible, NKJV]*

Worthless! Now do you understand why the Jews were hated, why Christians are persecuted to this day, and why Jesus was crucified and Paul was executed by the Roman government? The same thing happened to the early Jews, who refused to bow to man's law and held steadfastly to God's law:

*Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; **their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws**. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be*

⁸⁸ See Phil. 3:20, Hebrews 11:13, 1 Peter 2:1, and James 4:4 for biblical foundation for this fact.

destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king's treasuries."
 [Esther 3:8-9, Bible, NKJV]

Christians who are doing what God commands are basically ungovernable unless you put *them* in charge as the sovereigns and give them a *servant* government. Any other approach is idolatry and violates the first commandment (see Matt. 22:36-38). A jealous God (see Exodus 20:5) simply won't allow the government to compete with Him for the affections and the worship of His people, who He calls His "bride" in Rev. 21:9 and Rev. 22:17.

*Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore. **For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; he is called the God of the whole earth,** for the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused," says your God. "For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you," says the Lord, your Redeemer.*
 [Isaiah 54:4-8, Bible, NKJV]

When we do God's will and obey His commandments and His laws, we become His bride and an important part of His family!:

"For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."
 [Jesus, in Mark 3:35, NKJV]

When we as God's *bride* (yes, we're already married, you *fornicators* and *idolaters* in government looking for an easy lay!) and body of His believers and His children and family commit idolatry by selling ourselves into slavery and subjection to the government in exchange for their protection and privileges and a sense of false security, we are physically and spiritually united with and become "Babylon the Great Harlot" described in Revelation 17:5 of the Bible. The Bible reminds us, as a matter of fact, that it is a **SIN** to demand an earthly king or ruler and that we instead should by implication be self-governing men and women who are guided by the Holy Spirit to do God's will and who are *servants* to His personal and spiritual leadership in our daily lives. He communicates His sovereign will to us daily through our prayers and His word, the Bible. Below is one example where seeking an earthly king instead of God's leadership is described as a sin:

*"Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. **Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations** [and be OVER them]'.*

*"But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, '**Give us a king to judge us.**' So Samuel prayed to the Lord. **And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also** [government becoming idolatry]."*
 [1 Sam. 8:4-8, Bible, NKJV]

*"And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, '**No, but a king shall reign over us,**' when the Lord your God was your king.*

.....

And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."
[1 Sam. 12:12, 19, Bible, NKJV]

The king referred to above was Saul and that king was described in 1 Sam. chapters 12 through 15 as selfish and vain, and who did not serve God or follow His commandments, but instead served himself, like most of our current politicians as a matter of fact. The consequence of Saul the king's selfishness and disobedient and sinful leadership was harm to his people and a violation of his oath and commission of office direct from God at the time he was appointed by Samuel:

"Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the Lord has set a king over you. If you fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the Lord your God. However, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you, as it was against your fathers."
[1 Sam. 12:13-15, Bible, NKJV]

We must therefore conclude that the vain promise of earthly security that comes from giving a government or a king authority over us is a downright fraud and a farce. Our one and only source of security is God, the creator of all things, and substituting anything else in His place is idolatry. The book of Isaiah chapter 46 and 47 describe what happens to those who elevate government above God and it's not pretty, folks. For a Satanic lie and a false promise of man-made security by an idolatrous government, we have in effect sold or exchanged our precious birthright from God, our sovereignty, and our greatest gift, to Satan and a covetous government for 20 pieces of silver, like Judas did to Jesus and like Esau did to Jacob in the Bible.

"As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'"
[Romans 9:13, Bible, NKJV]

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."
[Matt. 13:44, Bible, NKJV]

Our government has conspired with Satan to hide the treasure spoken of above from our view by taking over our education in the public schools and removing all mentions of God from the classroom, from the textbooks, and the pledge of allegiance, and thereby making us ignorant of the value of our birthright and ripe for selling it for pennies on the dollar.

"Shake yourself from the dust, arise; sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck [government slavery!], O captive [slave to your sin] daughter of Zion! For thus says the Lord: 'You have sold yourselves for nothing and you shall be redeemed without money.'"
[Isaiah 52:2-3, Bible, NKJV]

The Apostle Paul warned us of such abuses when he said:

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of

God, having a form of godliness but denying the power [sovereignty of God]. And from such people turn away!"
[2 Tim. 3:1-5, Bible, NKJV]

The kinds of people described above worship the creation but deny the Sovereignty and existence and the power of the Creator, who is God.

"Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen"
[Rom. 1:24-25, Bible, NKJV]

By allowing these kinds of idolatrous, godless, and arrogant people to be stewards and leaders over our children in the public schools, we have then become friends of the world and enemies of God.

THE NEW SCHOOL PRAYER

Your laws ignore our deepest needs
Your words are empty air
You've stripped away our heritage
You've outlawed simple prayer
Now gunshots fill our classrooms
And precious children die
You seek for answers everywhere
And ask the question "Why"
You regulate restrictive laws
Through legislative creed
And yet you fail to understand
That God is what we need!

Our ignorance and disobedience to God then causes us to commit fornication with Satan by joining ourselves to and becoming unequally yoked with an atheistic and in many cases downright evil government.

"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."
[James 4:4]

No doubt, people working in government don't like being called worthless as the scriptures above indicate nor do they enjoy being reminded that they are recruiting prostitutes (harlots) and fornicators from the flock of sheep that are God's, even though it's true, and those Christians who reveal this profound truth are likely to be persecuted by their government like Jesus was:

"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake."
[Luke 21:17, Bible, NKJV]

Once again to our government servants [of which I am one, by the way]: God Himself says YOUR power and the organization YOU serve is WORTHLESS, with a capital "W"! Did you get that Mr. President and Mr. Congressman and Mr. Supreme Court Justice and Mr. Secretary of the Treasury and Mr. IRS Commissioner, and other arrogant tyrant dictators? God says your job and your authority is "worthless" and "less than nothing". Put your tail between your legs, take a big gulp and swallow that

pride of yours, grovel in the sand, get on your knees and bow, and lick the very Hand, the ONLY Hand that feeds your pitiful mouth because:

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then, each of us shall give account of himself to God.”
[Romans 14:11, Bible, NKJV]

“For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”
[Luke 16:15, Bible, NKJV]

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”
[James 4:10, Bible, NKJV]

The only reason anyone therefore has to call your profession or your life’s work as a politician or public servant “honorable” is because you are servants of the sovereign people and because you are doing the will of God as their agent and fiduciary in protecting innocent people from harm and exploitation and crime. This very calling, as a matter of fact, is the only authority justifying the existence of civil government because it is a fulfillment of the second greatest command to love our neighbor found in Matt. 22:39. Can a “worthless” organization, as God calls a nation or political party, or the people working in that “worthless” organization write laws that are any more valuable or important than “worthless”? **NOT!** Here is what God says He will do when we elect or allow corrupt politicians governing a “worthless” organization called a “nation” to write vain laws that supersede His law and His Bible:

But to the wicked, God says:

“What right have you to declare My statutes [write man’s vain law], or take My covenant [the Bible] in your mouth, seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you? When you saw a thief, you consented with him, and have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done, and I kept silent; you thought that I was altogether like you; but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.”
[Psalm 50:16-23, Bible, NKJV]

“Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You? They gather together against the life of the righteous, and condemn innocent blood. But the Lord has been my defense, and my God the rock of my refuge. He has brought on them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; the Lord our God shall cut them off.”
[Psalm 94:20-23, Bible, NKJV]

It is precisely the above words by God Himself that explain why we have a duty to elect Godly and moral people to public office: so that we don’t have corrupt people in there writing our laws as unjust substitutes for God’s laws and suffer God’s wrath for their misdeeds as our agents and fiduciaries.

“The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which SERVE them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may

retain control over the instruments they have created.
 [California Government Code, §54950]

Now do you fully understand why the founding fathers gave us the kind of government that they did? It was the ONLY thing that was compatible with their Christian beliefs! If you belong to God and He is your King (Isaiah 33:22), then man and man's vain laws have no dominion over you, according to the Apostle Paul:

"Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to [government] regulations..."
 [Colossians 2:20, Bible, NKJV]

Likewise, the Apostle Paul removed all doubt that we shouldn't serve anyone but God and His law, when he said:

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law [man's law]."
 [Gal. 5:18, Bible, NKJV]

"...the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which has committed to my trust."
 [1 Tim. 1:9-11, Bible, NKJV]

*"You were bought at a price; **do not become slaves of men** [and remember that government is made up of men]."*
 [1 Cor. 7:23, Bible, NKJV]

And when Christ's Apostles were told by the government not to preach His word in conflict with what God told them, look what one the Apostles said:

"We ought to obey God rather than men."
 [Acts 5:27-29, Bible, NKJV]

Interestingly, even our pledge of allegiance validates the Natural Order diagram:

*"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic, for which it stands, **one nation, under God**, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

If our *whole nation* is under God, then so are its rulers! In this case the rulers are under the people and the people are under God just as the diagram shows. The above diagram is also based on the following four U.S. Supreme Court rulings:

- **Julliard v. Greenman, 110 U.S. 421 (1884)**: "There is no such thing as a power of inherent sovereignty in the government of the United States...In this country sovereignty resides in the people, and Congress can exercise no power which they have not, by their Constitution entrusted to it. All else is withheld."
- **Hale v. Henkel, 240 U.S. 43 (1906)**: "His [the individual's] rights are such as existed by the law of the land long antecedent to the organization of the State, and can only be taken from him by due process of law, and in accordance with the Constitution. Among his rights are a

refusal to incriminate himself, and the immunity of himself and his property from arrest or seizure except under a warrant of the law. He owes nothing to the public so long as he does not trespass upon their rights.”

- **Perry v. U.S., 294 U.S. 330 (1935)**: “In the United States, sovereignty resides in the people...the Congress cannot invoke sovereign power of the People to override their will as thus declared.”
- **Yick Wo v. Hopkins, 118 U.S. 356 (1886)**: “Sovereignty itself is, of course, not subject to law, for it is the author and source of law...While sovereign powers are delegated to...the government, sovereignty itself remains with the people.”

Our founding fathers had equally enlightening things to say that also validated the above diagram:

"The ultimate authority...resides in the people alone..."
[James Madison, Federalist Paper No. 46]

"It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains ..."
[Patrick Henry]

"Those people who are not governed by GOD will be ruled by tyrants."
[William Penn (after which Pennsylvania was named)]

"A free people [claim] their rights as derived from the laws of nature, and not as the gift of their chief magistrate."
[Thomas Jefferson: Rights of British America, 1774. ME 1:209, Papers 1:134]

"Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath?"
[Thomas Jefferson: Notes on Virginia Q.XVIII, 1782. ME 2:227]

"Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."
[Benjamin Franklin]

"Propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained."
[George Washington (1732-1799)]

God’s law and His word must therefore always supersede government laws or we will suffer God’s wrath. Jesus made this very clear when he said:

*"**No man can serve two masters**: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*
[Matt. 6:24, Bible]

In the above scripture, we believe “mammon” refers to wealth or government or commerce. Section 7.4.2 entitled “Government as Idolatry/Religion” extensively reveals based on the Bible why it must be that God has to be first, because if He isn’t then we violate the First Commandment in Exodus 20:1-11 and Matt. 22:36-38 to love our God with all our heart, mind, and soul. Failing to observe this maxim is like declaring the law of gravity null and void, which is an insane proposition indeed! The bible in Jeremiah chapters 16 and 17 describes what happens when a nation and a people deny this fundamental

principle and make government or any other idol into a counterfeit god. Here is an excerpt from that part of the Bible:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man [for governments made up of men], who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”
[Jeremiah 17:5-8, Bible, NIV]

The Apostle Paul in the Bible also confirmed that God and His laws always supersede man and their vain laws when he said:

“...there is no authority except from God.”
[Romans 13:1, Bible, NKJV]

*“...you are complete in Him [Christ], **who is the head of all principality and power.**”*
[Colossians 2:10, Bible, NKJV]

Why is God the only authority and the source of all authority? The root of the word “authority” is “author”. Because God created us, he is the “author” of our existence, and therefore the only entity in authority over us. He is our only “Lawgiver” and anything else is a cheap, man-made substitute:

*“For the Lord is our Judge, **the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King;** He will save us.”*
[Isaiah 33:22, Bible, NKJV]

This is similar to how the government handles patents and copyrights. The creator or author of the writing or invention is the person who has “rights” over the thing he or she created.

“The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all its fullness, You have founded them;...”
[Psalm 89:11-12, Bible, NKJV]

*“And having been perfected, **He [Jesus] became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.**”*
[Hebrews 5:9, Bible, NKJV]

Likewise, the creator of legal fictions called “corporations” is the government, which is why they can tax and regulate them. Because God is the author of our existence, He endowed us with a natural, instinctive understanding of His law and His sovereignty through the Holy Spirit. Even those who don’t believe in God are endowed with this awareness and sense of morality, in which case it is called “conscience” instead of “Holy Spirit”. This notion of the Holy Spirit is the origin of the whole concept of Natural Law, Natural Order, morality, and Justice. The Bible again confirms this natural gift of the Holy Spirit and the faith that results from it:

*“...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto **Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,** who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the same, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
[Hebrews 12:2, Bible, NKJV]

Some people point to Romans 13:1 cited above and say that we should be subject to or subservient to our government, even if that government is corrupt. Here is the scripture they will cite again:

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities are appointed by God.”
[Romans 13:1, Bible, NKJV]

What we believe the “governing authorities” as used above by Apostle Paul means is “sovereigns”. Paul was saying that we should be subject to the sovereigns within whatever system of government we are a part. Our system of government is unique in all the world because it is a Republic founded on individual rather than collective rights and all individuals are sovereigns who are individually in charge of the government as a “king” or “governing authority” as the Apostle Paul says here. The people created the government and they existed before the government so they are the sovereigns. Government and public servants within government are there to serve you and me as the individual sovereigns and they must be subject to us and subservient to us, according to Paul’s words above. As we say later in section 7.4.7, the people are the sovereigns rather than the government or anyone working in the government, and the U.S. supreme Court and various state courts agree with this concept as shown below:

“Sovereignty itself is, of course, not subject to law, for it is the author and source of law; but in our system, while sovereign powers are delegated to the agencies of government, sovereignty itself remains with the people, by whom and for whom all government exists and acts.”
[Yick Wo v. Hopkins, [118 U.S. 356](#); 6 S.Ct. 1064 (1886)]

“The people of this State, as the successors of its former sovereign, are entitled to all the rights which formerly belonged to the King by his prerogative. Through the medium of their Legislature they may exercise all the powers which previous to the Revolution could have been exercised either by the King alone, or by him in conjunction with his Parliament; subject only to those restrictions which have been imposed by the Constitution of this State or of the U.S.”
[Lansing v. Smith, 21 D. 89., 4 Wendel 9 (1829) (New York)]

The real “king” in our society is not the government or anyone servicing the sovereign people as government employees, but the PEOPLE! That’s you! So even if you misinterpret Jesus’ words to mean that we should render to a corrupt government that which it illegally asks for and demands, since your own government calls you the king, then your public servants are the ones who should be “rendering” to you, who your own government calls the sovereign. Render to the king (Caesar, that’s you) his due, which is everything that is his property and his right, including 100% of his earned wage. What our dishonorable “servant” politicians and lawyers in government have been doing to destroy this natural order is to dumb you down using the public education system and steal your sovereign birthright by legal treachery and trickery hidden in the laws they write, but we as the sovereigns shouldn’t allow them to get away with this fraud and extortion.

The implications of the Natural Order diagram are profound. First of all, the diagram can be very useful as documentation of our religious belief about the authority of government. We can use our First Amendment Right of freedom of religion to put government inside the box where they belong and keep them there. The biggest implication is that we are not to work for or be slaves of our government. Our government is our slave, we are the masters and it has no business dictating anything to us, stealing our money through direct taxes, forcing us to work for them (slavery), or using government

licenses, such as marriage licenses, to impinge on our rights. We are sovereigns relative to it. In the words of Jesus Himself:

*“Away with you , Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him **ONLY** [NOT the government!] you shall serve.’”*
[Matt. 4:10]

However, if you want to have rights, then you have to act like you have them and know what they are. If you don’t know what they are and don’t insist on them in all your interactions with government disservants, then we can guarantee that the government will pretend like you don’t have any because they want to be in charge.

*“Ask not and ye shall **definitely** receive not!”*
[Family Guardian Fellowship]

One of our readers (Clyde Hyde, <mailto:candz@mail.ru>) has extended this concept of sovereignty and natural order so far as to litigate in a federal court to request the court to make a declaratory judgment either pronouncing him a slave, or a sovereign, and the courts and the government hate him for it, because he backs them into a corner where they have no choice but to declare the truth about his sovereignty. His efforts were the inspiration behind making the above diagram, and he provided to us a similar but less complete version of the above diagram that inspired this section. Way to go, Clyde! See section 15.14.13, which contains a “Declaratory Judgment to Become a Sovereign” for an example of how he traps the court with this argument into admitting the truth about his sovereignty. It’s fascinating and funny!

The above system of government based on Natural Law and Natural Order is self-regulating and self-balancing. Each entity has a proper role as follows:

Table 7-1: Entities within Natural Order and Their Proper Roles

#	Entity	Role
1	God	Sovereign, omniscient source of absolute truth, mercy, justice.
2	Man/woman	Created in God’s image. Accountable to God for their stewardship over the world. If Christian, have one chance to get it “right”, or will suffer eternal damnation on judgment day (see book of Revelation, the Holy Bible).
3	We the People/family	Voluntary association of persons formed for mutual protection and benefit. Can not and should not impose force on any member of society, except to prevent injustice or harm from occurring. Every member of the society must have equal rights by Nature’s law. Unequal rights are a sign of government tyranny and use of the government for class warfare and oppression by special interest groups.
4	Governing entities:	These entities act as the interface between “We the People” and their servant government. They ensure accountability of the government to the <u>social contract</u> called the <u>Constitution</u> from which the government derives all of its delegated powers.
4.1	Grand Jury	Implement criminal enforcement of the laws of the society within their jurisdiction. Decide who to indict, and on what criminal charges. Interface most often with the Attorney General, the District Attorney, or the Department of Justice within their jurisdiction. Prosecute corrupt public servants for wrongdoing and violation of Constitutional rights. In the case of bad laws, such as those on taxation, refuse to indict persons under such laws, thereby rendering the laws as ineffective as if they were never passed. Also initiate prosecution of citizens who have injured the interests of fellow citizens in violation of criminal laws. The output of the decision-making

#	Entity	Role
		process for Grand Juries is an indictment, that is filed within the jurisdiction covered by their charter. Proceedings are generally very secretive, and the government often tries to unduly influence grand juries by not allowing accused persons to meet with or submit evidence to the grand jury before indictments are filed.
4.2	Elections	Method of expressing the sovereign will of the people to their government servants. Ensure that all persons serving in government are ultimately and continually accountable to the people for their performance or lack thereof. Ensure that laws passed by the legislative branch are consistent with the Constitution and reinforce the sovereignty of the will of We the People.
4.3	Trial jury	Directed by judge of the court as to their roles and responsibilities and proper court procedure. Ordinarily determine only facts necessary to convict, based on the law as interpreted and explained by the judge. However, can also judge and nullify the law if it is a <i>bad</i> law that is inconsistent with the written Constitution or if the judge misinterprets or refuses to discuss the law. Are seldom informed by anyone in government of their right to judge and nullify the effect of the law because government doesn't want them to know they have that kind of power. Receive as input for their decision: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jury instructions from the judge. 2. The statute that is being violated. 3. The regulation that implements the statute that is being violated. 4. Evidence submitted by the injured party and third party witnesses.
4.4	Organized church	Agents of social and moral responsibility within organized society. Focus on charity, grace, ministry, and spiritual issues, which are not easily or effectively dealt with by governments. Contribute to proper socialization of children and young adults. Provide stability and order to an otherwise chaotic lifestyle. Hold families together by encouraging commitment. Teach and reinforce love, personal responsibility, and respect for authority. Should encourage change if government becomes tyrannical and provide a pulpit and an audience to organize and effect that change. Cannot function effectively with government intervention, taxation, or regulation. The doctrine of separation of church and state demands that governments not tax or interfere with churches in any way.
5	Constitution	A written social contract between the people and the government who serves them. Purpose is to limit and define the delegated authority possessed by the persons serving in government. Prevents tyranny by distributing powers evenly among independent branches of government so that too much power doesn't concentrate in any one place, where it would likely be abused.
6	Branches of government:	Alexander Hamilton, one of our founding fathers, said the following about the relation of various branches of government to each other: <p><i>"The Executive not only dispenses the honors, but holds the sword of the community. The legislature not only commands the purse, but prescribes the rules by which the duties and rights of every citizen are to be regulated. The judiciary, on the contrary, has no influence over either the sword or the purse; no direction either of the strength or of the wealth of the society; and can take no active resolution whatever. It may truly be said to have neither force nor will, but merely judgment..."</i></p> <p><i>"...This simple view of the matter suggests several important consequences. It proves incontestably, that the judiciary is beyond comparison the weakest of the three departments of power*; that it can never attack with success either of the other two; and that all possible care is</i></p>

#	Entity	Role
		<p><i>requisite to enable it to defend itself against their attacks..."</i></p> <p>We can say that the legislature represents the heart and emotions of the people. And the executive branch represents strength and muscle of the people, and we would suggest that the judiciary represents the rational mind of the people.</p>
6.1	Executive Branch	Role is to execute the day-to-day functions of the government based on the laws passed by the Legislative branch. Carry the "sword" and have the authority to implement and enforce public policy documented in the laws passed by the Legislative branch.
6.2	Legislative Branch	<p>Role is to pass laws, which in most cases take the form of statutes and public law.</p> <p>Responsible for writing laws on taxation and for collecting taxes. These two functions must reside together in order to truthfully say that there is taxation with representation, which was what our country was founded on. Cannot therefore delegate their authority to collect taxes to an executive agency.</p> <p>Control the public "purse" (revenue sources) and spending of these revenues by the Executive Branch.</p>
6.3	Judicial Branch	Responsible for interpreting and applying laws written by the Legislative branch in the event of disputes which cannot be resolved cooperatively among citizens. Only enforce laws and statutes passed by the Legislative branch that are consistent with the written Constitution. This ensures that the Legislative branch does not usurp power or exceed the authority delegated to it by the people. Instruct juries as to the law. Implement courtroom protocol based on Court Rules they write. Develop forms of pleading and practice used to ensure an orderly and repeatable process of justice. Judges often appointed for life and a Constitutional requirement that their salary cannot be reduced by the legislature in order to ensure independence from the Legislative Branch. Can be indicted for wrongdoing by the Grand Jury if they become corrupt or tyrannical.
7	Statutes	Laws written by the Legislative Branch, usually taking the form of written statutes and Public Laws. These laws express the will of the people and must be consistent with the written Constitution and God's Law. The extent to which the laws created by the Legislative branch are inconsistent with Natural Law/God's Law is the extent to which the Trial Jury and the Grand Jury can and often will nullify or refuse to enforce such a law.
8	Regulations	Regulations are written by the Executive Branch of the government in order to implement or enforce the statutes written by the Legislative branch. They are the agency's official interpretation of the statutes. Since the Executive Branch of the government is not a legislative body, the scope of the regulations may NOT exceed the authority or the scope of the statutes they implement. The absence of an implementing regulation also makes the statute unenforceable in most courts.
9	Corporations	Artificial entities created by operation of laws passed by the Legislative branch. Members of this "corpus" or "body" of persons agree to receive government privileges in the form of limited personal liability in the courts in exchange for an agreement to be bound by the laws of the state and pay taxes to that state. The decision to become a corporation is a <i>voluntary act</i> , and therefore taxes paid by corporations can be mandated and still not violated rights in a free country.
10	"U.S. citizen"/idolater	Subjects and serfs of the federal government. Rights and privileges are created and enforced via federal statutes rather than being granted by the Bill of Rights or the Constitution. Are <i>not</i> Sovereigns, but subject citizens of a totalitarian socialist democracy.

In the above system, the government benefits most and makes its power greatest by having misinformed, ignorant, or passive grand jurists and trial jurists who will be good government puppets and not ask too many probing questions. The ideal candidate for this role as far as the government is concerned is someone who graduated from the “public fool system”, I mean public school system, that THEY (the government) were in charge of. Never forget the following:

"Politicians prefer unarmed and illiterate peasants! "

Do you smell a conflict of interest here? This “victim” of the public fool [I mean school] system is legally and socially illiterate and makes a good “sheep” who is easy for the District Attorney (D.A.) to boss around and who will ignorantly enforce unjust and unethical tax laws that will maximize the government’s take from the institutionalized plunder and theft called the income tax. Consequently, it is the goal of this document to provide a “civics lesson” in the hope of atoning for the sins of the public fool, I mean “school” system in encouraging this kind of ignorance about our political process.

Some people, when they read this section, respond to it by saying the following:

“What you are trying to develop and establish is God’s kingdom here on earth. You are trying to impose your religious views on the government and the citizens and expecting them to operate under God’s laws instead of man’s laws. We live in a diverse culture and although a vast majority of Americans do profess a belief in God, you will encounter much resistance to this idea.”

We respond to this comment by saying that we are not insisting that the government do anything other than provide equal and complete protection to everyone for their constitutional rights and their liberties and nothing more. We don’t want to dictate how individuals run their lives or what they can or cannot say. We only wish to ensure that the government fulfills its only legitimate function, which is to prevent injustice rather than to promote justice as we indicated earlier in section 7.5 and to leave people otherwise fully sovereign over their own person and labor and property. These ingredients are the essence of good, wise, and frugal government. Thomas Jefferson agreed with these conclusions:

“With all [our] blessings, what more is necessary to make us a happy and a prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow citizens--a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities.”

[Thomas Jefferson: 1st Inaugural, 1801. ME 3:320]

We believe that separation between church and state is important. We also think the Constitution gives us freedom OF religion, but not freedom FROM religion, and those persons who are nonreligious, and especially gays, liberals, and homosexuals, ought to learn to be much more tolerant of the views of Christians than they are today. It is the height of hypocrisy for them on the one hand to be telling Christians they are intolerant, and on the other hand being totally intolerant of Christians themselves. Such left wing groups have become the Nazi’s of our modern era by trying to pass hate crime laws and government regulations to discriminate against Christians who are exercising their First Amendment right to freedom of religious expression. They have done so in an apparent effort to eliminate what they call discrimination on the part of Christians, even though in most cases the only injury they have suffered came not from the person making the statement or committing an alleged act, but from the conviction of the Holy Spirit acting on their consciousness. We believe that persons of any religion

should be free exercise their rights to follow their religion and to talk freely in public settings about what God's law says about the sins of abortion, homosexuality, and fornication.

What does the Bible say that we should do with government servants who are bad stewards who have abused the authority entrusted to them by their masters? The answer is found in the Parable of the Faithful Steward in Luke 12:41-48. We cite from that passage below:

*“But if that servant says in his heart ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, **the master** of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and **will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.**”*
 [Luke 12:45-47, Bible, NKJV]

Our government is the “servant” of the sovereign people. This “servant” has:

- Kicked the master out of his own house and through eminent domain and taken it, our income, and all our property rights over.
- Is beating not only the male and female servants, but making the master into a servant as well and then beating him too under the color of law but without any lawful authority whatsoever!
- Has abused his authority and stewardship to punish and control the master by claiming falsely to be acting under the authority of law
- Has turned the servants on each other and created a police state by appointing some servants in the financial community to “snitch” on all the other servants so that NO ONE has privacy or sovereignty. The motto is: “*If you’re not going to be a snitch, then you will be my bitch (prostitute).*” as one of our readers puts it. This tactic, incidentally, is the same tactic the communists used in creating informants to snitch on anti-communists.
- Has made it impossible to call himself to account in the courts because the servant has replaced all the judges with his own cronies and threatened those who might convict or persecute him. Every once in a while, they will lynch a sheep like Congressman Traficant or Congressment George Hansen to keep the rest of the sheep in line.

According to the Bible, this wicked servant (our public servants in Congress and the IRS in this case) should be cut in two and flogged and beaten with many stripes. By Natural Law, this would be divine justice for them according to the Bible. Why aren't we doing this to the corrupt tyrants who have taken over our government if Natural Law demands it?

Another interesting fact is revealed by examining the natural order diagram: That governments invented corporations as creatures of law so that they could become a god and an object of slavery and idol worship for that corporation. People in government simply love being treated as gods and they will make laws to encourage such idol worship. Consider the following evidence in support of such a conclusion:

1. The Bible and our Christian God hold us individually and personally responsible (liable) for our acts during this lifetime. See [Rev. 20:11-15](#) and [Romans 14:10-12](#), which says that we will be judged and held accountable by God individually for what we did or didn't do during our lifetime.

For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written:

*“As I live, says the Lord,
 Every knee shall bow to Me,
 And every tongue shall confess to God.”*

*So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.
[Romans 14:10-12, Bible, NKJV]*

2. The fundamental advantage of forming a corporation is limited personal liability. This means at least during our lifetime, that we won't be held personally responsible as an individual for our wrongdoing so long as we did it as an agent of a corporation. The price we pay for this limited liability is to pay taxes on the profits of the corporation to the federal government, on whom we depend entirely for our existence as an artificial legal entity.
3. The problem with corporations is that when people intend to sin or commit crimes, then corporations provide a convenient legal vehicle to escape personal liability for the crimes. One could therefore quite reasonably say that the government (federal mafia) courts become a protection racket for criminals in exchange for the right to collect revenues from them! Is it then any wonder we hear so much of late about corporations cooking the books? Does Enron, MCI Worldcom, Arthur Anderson, Martha Stewart, etc. ring a bell, folks?
4. Because our God is viewed by atheists and sinners as a harsh God who hates sin and whom they would rather avoid accountability to, then a common approach among these people is to try to replace God with government and then get the government to legalize sinful or formerly criminal activity. This approach only works, however, if God can be removed both from the schools, government, and public life, or Christian morality and God's laws will condemn them anyway for their acts.
5. When the government wishes to tax natural persons (biological people), its most common approach is to deceive them using "words of art" and tricky legal definitions into thinking that they are taxable corporations involved in foreign commerce or the officers of such corporations. Even the U.S. Supreme Court agrees that "income" within the meaning of the Constitution means "corporate profit" for the purpose of Subtitle A federal income taxes. See the following cases for verification of this fact:
 - 5.1. *Eisner v. Macomber*, 252 U.S. 189; 40 S.Ct. 189, 9 A.L.R. 1570 (1920).
 - 5.2. *Stratton's Independence v. Howbert*, 231 U.S. 399, 415, 34 S.Sup.Ct. 136, 140 [58 L.Ed. 285]
 - 5.3. *Doyle v. Mitchell Bros. Co.*, 247 U.S. 179, 185, 38 S.Sup.Ct. 467, 469, 62 L.Ed. 1054

Along the lines of corporations, here's a funny satire one of our readers sent us highlighting the fundamental problems with corporations we just pointed out above and showing just how badly man screws things up when he tries to improve on what God gave us:

REMAINING U.S. CEOs MAKE A BREAK FOR IT! - - - Band of Roving Chief Executives Spotted Miles from Mexican Border
July 17, 2002

San Antonio, Texas(Rooters)

Unwilling to wait for their eventual indictments, the 10,000 remaining CEOs of public U.S. companies made a break for it yesterday, heading for the Mexican border, plundering towns and villages along the way, and writing the entire rampage off as a marketing expense.

"They came into my home, made me pay for my own TV, then double-booked the revenues," said Rachel Sanchez of Las Cruces, just north of El Paso. "Right in front of my daughters."

Calling themselves the CEOnistas, the chief executives were first spotted last night along the Rio Grande River near Quemado, where they bought each of the town's 320 residents by borrowing against pension fund gains. By late this morning, the CEOnistas had arbitrarily inflated Quemado's population to 960, and declared a 200 percent profit for the fiscal second quarter.

This morning, the outlaws bought the city of Waco, transferred its underperforming areas to a private partnership, and sent a bill to California for \$4.5 billion.

Law enforcement officials and disgruntled shareholders riding posse were noticeably frustrated.

"First of all, they're very hard to find because they always stand behind their numbers, and the numbers keep shifting," said posse spokesman Dean Levitt. "And every time we yell 'Stop in the name of the shareholders!', they refer us to investor relations. I've been on the phone all damn morning."

"YOU'LL NEVER AUDIT ME ALIVE!"

The pursuers said they have had some success, however, by preying on a common executive weakness. "Last night we caught about 24 of them by disguising one of our female officers as a CNBC anchor," said U.S. Border Patrol spokesperson Janet Lewis. "It was like moths to a flame."

Also, teams of agents have been using high-powered listening devices to scan the plains or telltale sounds of the CEOnistas. "Most of the time we just hear leaves rustling or cattle flicking their tails," said Lewis, "but occasionally we'll pick up someone saying, 'I was totally out of the loop on that.'"

Among former and current CEOs apprehended with this method were Computer Associates' Sanjay Kumar, Adelphia's John Rigas, Enron's Ken Lay, Joseph Nacchio of Qwest, Joseph Berardino of Arthur Andersen, and every Global Crossing CEO since 1997. Since, due to his contacts to Telmex, his knowledge of local geography is claimed to be outstanding, mPhase's Ron Durando was elected to act as the group's pathfinder. ImClone Systems' Sam Waksal and Dennis Kozlowski of Tyco were not allowed to join the CEOnistas as they have already been indicted.

So far, about 50 chief executives have been captured, including Martha Stewart, who was detained south of El Paso where she had cut through a barbed-wire fence at the Zaragosa border crossing off Highway 375.

"She would have gotten away, but she was stopping motorists to ask for marzipan and food coloring so she could make edible snowman place settings, using the cut pieces of wire for the arms," said Border Patrol officer Jennette Cushing. "We put her in cell No. 7, because the morning sun really adds texture to the stucco walls."

While some stragglers are believed to have successfully crossed into Mexico, Cushing said the bulk of the CEOnistas have holed themselves up at the Alamo.

"No, not the fort, the car rental place at the airport," she said. "They're rotating all the tires on the minivans and accounting for each change as a sales event."

The IRS has sent recruiters to accompany law enforcement and disgruntled shareholders in the chase, and has publicly announced that it is offering the CEOs jobs as IRS collection agents and criminal investigators once captured. Charles Rossotti, the IRS commissioner, has offered them anonymity under the FBI's witness protection program. Apparently, the IRS has been having trouble finding employees, since all the honest ones already resigned to seek more honorable employment.

In conclusion, we have a very good video on our website regarding Jury Nullification that was put together by Red Beckman which unifies the lessons in this section. It thoroughly explains the proper role of *each* major entity in our Natural Order diagram in detail and is very enlightening to civic minded citizens. You can watch this video at:

<http://famguardian.org//Subjects/Taxes/taxes.htm>

Go to the “Educational Resources” heading in the white area and click on “Red Beckman’s Fully Informed Jury Training”.

7.3 Rights v. Privileges

This section concerns itself with the origin and nature of rights and and privileges. We discuss the subject both from a biblical as well as a legal/civil perspective. The subject of rights and privileges is of utmost important in understanding our role in society and the relationship that government has to us as the sovereign people that they serve. Failure to fully understand this subject can result in making you into a government slave and signing away all your rights and sovereignty without even realizing it.

7.3.1 Rights Defined and Explained

*"The people...are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty."
[Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 1787. ME 6:392]*

*"The people of every country are the only safe guardians of their own rights."
[Thomas Jefferson to John Wyche, 1809]*

Black's Law Dictionary (6th edition) defines our Constitutional Rights:

"... Natural rights are those which grow out of the nature of man [the Creator] and depend upon personality, as distinguished from such as are created by law and depend upon civilized society; or those which are plainly assured by natural law:..."

In other words, Natural Rights or Natural Laws come from nature [the Creator] and are separate and distinct from those laws derived by man. Our Constitution not only recognizes these Natural Rights (Natural Laws), but guarantees them as individual Rights. The Constitution recognizes that they are superior to all other laws, including the laws made by man (any level of government). That is, unless of course you freely waive your Rights, which is exactly what you do under compulsion every time you file an income tax return. It is likely, however, that you didn't know that is what you were doing. Hence, this section.

Possession of a legal right conveys certain advantages upon us in a court of law as revealed by the U.S. supreme Court, ***Marbury v. Madison, 5 U.S. 137, 1 Cranch 137; 2 L.Ed. 60 (1803)***:

*The very essence of civil liberty certainly consists in the right of every individual [note that he said **individual**, and not **citizen**, since you don't have to be a **citizen** to have the protection of government] to claim the protection of the laws, whenever he receives an injury. One of the first duties of government is to afford that protection. In Great Britain the king himself is sued in the respectful form of a petition, and he never fails to comply with the judgment of his court.*

In the 3d vol. of his Commentaries, p. 23, Blackstone states two cases in which a remedy is afforded by mere operation of law.

"In all other cases," he says, "it is a general and indisputable rule, that where there is a legal right, there is also a legal remedy by suit, or action at law, whenever that right is invaded."

And afterwards, p. 109, of the same vol. he says,

“I am next to consider such injuries as are cognizable by the court of the common law. And herein I shall for the present only remark, that all possible injuries whatsoever, that did not fall within the exclusive cognizance of either the ecclesiastical, military, or maritime tribunals, are, for that very reason, within the cognizance of the common law courts of justice; for it is a settled and invariable principle in the laws of England, that every right, when withheld, must have a remedy, and every injury its proper redress.

The government of the United States has been emphatically termed a government of laws, and not of men. It will certainly cease to deserve this high appellation, if the laws furnish no remedy for the violation of a vested legal right.”

The above case is often cited as an authority on the subject of rights, even by the government, and makes mandatory reading for the budding freedom fighter.

The supreme Court has said repeatedly that governments may not tax or regulate the exercise of rights. Here is but one example:

“A state may not impose a charge for the enjoyment of a right granted by the Federal Constitution.”
[Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 319 U.S. 105; 63 S.Ct. 870 (1943)]

However, governments can regulate the exercise of “privileges”:

“The power to tax the exercise of a privilege is the power to control or suppress its enjoyment.”
[Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 319 U.S. 105; 63 S.Ct. 870 (1943)]

The key to having rights is to *avoid* the government trap of becoming a person in receipt of government privileges. Even the U.S. Supreme court admitted this, when it said:

*“**The rights of sovereignty extend to all persons and things not privileged**, that are within the territory. They extend to all strangers resident therein; not only to those who are naturalized, and to those who are domiciled therein, having taken up their abode with the intention of permanent residence, but also to those whose residence is transitory. All strangers are under the protection of the sovereign while they are within his territory and owe a temporary allegiance in return for that protection.”*
[Carlisle v. United States, 83 U.S. 147, 154 (1973)]

Keep in mind that being a “U.S. citizen”, in receipt of the “privileges and immunities” of citizenship mentioned in Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment is the very privilege that in effect, denies you your other Constitutionally guaranteed rights and personal sovereignty.

*“Section. 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the **privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States**; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”*
[Fourteenth Amendment]

The key to having rights is to not be a privileged “U.S. citizen” or a “citizen of the United States” under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, but instead to be a “U.S. national” defined in [§](#)

U.S.C. §1408. You don't need the Fourteenth Amendment or "U.S. citizenship" to have rights. As we said at the beginning of this chapter and will say again in section 7.3, *your rights come from the land you live on and not your citizenship status*. The only thing that citizenship status does is *take away* rights, not *endow* you with rights. The Fourteenth Amendment was invented to protect blacks from slavery and discrimination, and no other reason. Everyone else who wasn't black and wasn't Fourteenth Amendment citizens *already had* the rights of kings!

"No white person born within the limits of the United States, and subject to their [the states, and not the federal government] jurisdiction, or born without those limits, and subsequently naturalized under their laws, owes the status of citizenship to the recent amendments [Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments] to the Federal Constitution."
[Van Valkenburg v. Brown, 43 Cal. 43 (1872)]

The various articles contained within this chapter will demonstrate to you the facts and the proof, not only that these things are true, but just how they are used to infringe upon your Unalienable Rights as Sovereign Citizens and "natural persons" of the several Union States. These Sovereign Citizens of the several States are the only People who have Constitutional (Natural) Rights. No other status of "citizenship" or "residency" has these Natural Rights, yet you claim these other forms of citizenship everyday, and as you do so, you are unknowingly waving your Natural Rights for the illusion of benefits and privileges from the federal government. In effect, you have exchanged your own Natural Rights for mere "government privileges" and thereby irreparably compromised your personal liberty and sovereignty [Whoops.]

It is all a matter of perspective and choice. The problem is, you probably don't know or understand that there are two sides to this coin - and more importantly, that you have a choice. If you don't know how or when to "Reserve your Rights" then you become prey to oppression and tyranny by any one, including the various levels of government, who might wish to take advantage of you for their own sake or their notions of what is best for you. It is time to take charge of your own destiny and stop being so casual about your Rights. You do have them, in that they do still exist. The question is do you have access to them, when you need them the most. Not likely, unless you understand and use this valuable information at every turn in your involvement with all levels of government.

So, please, take the time to read, study and verify this information thoroughly for yourself. And please, feel free to share it with others. Organize discussion groups with your friends, relatives, and with your various clubs and organizations. The more people who become enlightened, the sooner we can stop the insanity of oppression and tyranny, by any one, especially our own government.

Time after time we have all heard the expression, "*The People have the power.*" Probably more times than any one of us can count. We have heard that "We the People..." are the masters and the federal government is the servant of the People. Today, most of us would agree that it is the other way around. Yet few of us can explain how or why this has come to be true. While most of us understand these powers are actually our Rights as they were known, understood and written into the Declarations of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights, few of us understand how to use and enforce these Rights. The majority of us are unaware of how to protect these rights and ourselves from those who would choose to usurp them, entrapping us into a web of deceit and misleading us to believe we must obey what are obviously laws which function outside our protections under the Constitution.

We often hear speakers proclaim “*The people must protect (reserve) their Rights or they won't have any.*” Yet, few actually know how. Of course every elected official is required to take an oath of office, which includes the statement “... to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America...”. As we all have come to realize, we are gradually losing our Rights with each passing year, as the government continues to erode them away with still more federal regulation being imposed.

In paraphrasing Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas (well known for his conservative views), he said:

“... I promise to fight federalism at ever turn. But, the People must first 'reserve' their 'Rights' or I can do nothing ...”

We have all heard other notable people make similar statements in the past, and yet I have found that very few of us actually know and understand what is meant by these words. Most of us assume that the government itself is waging the battle to protect our Rights, or simply believe that these Rights we have are just there and known to all. So, who in their right mind would, or even could, get away with denying them? As you read this section, not only will you come to know exactly what Justice Thomas meant in those few words, but you will also understand precisely how to go about “reserving your Rights.” You will learn that there is a lot more going on here than first meets the eye.

So, how do we protect and enforce these Unalienable Rights granted to us by our Creator, from those who would steal them away? Who are those that would trick us into being unknowing and unwilling victims of what seems to be unconstitutional laws that violate our natural rights?

Most would agree that it is the government and big business which seek to usurp our rights. The government on all levels (local, county, state and federal) operates on a system that is actually outside the protections of the Constitution, which is a little known and even less understood conspiracy perpetrated on the American People to control their lives and their money (property and other assets). Meanwhile, big business lobbies congress to the point that “We the People...” have little if any input or affect in the legislative process. So, it is our elected officials in government who have betrayed both their oaths of office, and our faith that they will do what they promised during the election process.

It is our goal, as set forth in this book, to inform you as to precisely how government and big business accomplish these deeds of deception, trickery and fraud. Then, to further instruct you, we will educate you as to how to overcome these obstacles and barriers to the freedoms we were granted by our Creator, and guaranteed by our Constitution, for which so many have fought and died to preserve and protect for ourselves and for our posterity.

We have the power - we always have! It is time then to reeducate ourselves, getting away from the leftist rhetoric and back to the simple facts of the matter in an effort to save our Constitution and our Individual Freedoms. Our tolerance and silence has too long been mistaken for ignorance, and the faith we have entrusted in our elected officials has certainly been betrayed.

“No legislative act contrary to the Constitution can be valid. To deny this would be to affirm that the deputy (agent) is greater than his principal; that the servant is above the master; that the representatives of the people are superior to the people; that men, acting by virtue of powers may do not only what their powers do not authorize, but what they forbid. It is not to be supposed that the Constitution could intend to enable the representatives of the people to substitute their will to that of their constituents. A Constitution is, in fact, and must be regarded by judges, as fundamental law. If there

should happen to be an irreconcilable variance between the two, the Constitution is to be preferred to the statute." - Alexander Hamilton (Federalist Paper # 78)

"Where rights secured by the Federal Constitution are involved, there can be no rule-making or legislation which would abrogate them."

Miranda v. Arizona, 384 US 436 (1966)

"Truth is incontrovertible, ignorance can deride it, panic may resent it, malice may destroy it, but there it is." Winston Churchill

7.3.2 Fundamental Rights: Granted by God and Cannot be Regulated by the Government

It is disturbing to read that the IRS can come to someone's door to demand to see personal documents, which in some cases are private even to members of our own family. It is also embarrassing to see that so many of us are not willing to do more than "bitch a little" when we hear or read about these encroachments.

Obviously, in the case of filing government forms, once we volunteer, we usually use whatever means at our disposal to cut down the amount of theft and plunder by the government, even at the further expense of our rights and liberty. Since deductions are a matter of legislative grace, the burden of proof shifts to "we the people" to verify the claims taken on the forms, which were signed under penalty of perjury.

Simply stated, once we allowed ourselves to get involved in this taxing scheme, it puts us in the position of having to strip before a government agent, who at his discretion will tell us how close to naked we have to get. To be quite frank, there is nothing stopping him from saying, "OK. now bend over."

Once compromised, we're on that "slippery slope," having exchanged our status as master over government for that of being subject to and subservient to government. In effect, we are transformed into government slaves and prostitutes when natural persons volunteer to become "privileged taxpayers".

Each of us needs to just stop and take a little time to analyze just how far down the path of subject status we have come. Just how much farther are we willing to go before we say, "Enough" or are we willing to even say "Enough"?

We should be asking ourselves: Just how sacred are our God given constitutionally protected rights? Have we lost sight of our objective of restoring liberty for ourselves and family? And even if we know something is wrong, and we start to do something about it, are we standing on solid ground?

There are a lot of theories on why we shouldn't be obligated to file tax forms. To me the number one position, in a class of its own, is the required waiver of fundamental rights. The whole income tax battle is a rights issue.

We are the masters over our government and not its subjects. We are the sovereigns! We should not allow ourselves to be compelled to waive fundamental rights to comply with some taxing scheme, merely for exercising my right to work and exist.

We absolutely have no "legal duty" to waive our fundamental rights to speak or not to speak, as protected under the First amendment, my right to be secure in my personal home, papers and effects, as protected under the Fourth amendment, my right not to be compelled to be a witness against myself and my right to due process of law, as protected under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, my right to an impartial judge and jury, as protected under the Sixth amendment or any other rights protected under the Ninth amendment.

This is not a wild theory claim. We don't need to claim rights under the state Uniform Commercial Code. Our rights are God given, not commercially given. Neither do I need to fear waiving a right because I use a "zip code" as part of my mailing address.

The Supreme Court of the United States has already ruled on the standard for waiver of rights.

"Waivers of constitutional rights not only must be voluntary but must be knowing, intelligent acts done with sufficient awareness of the relevant circumstances and likely consequences."

[Brady v. U.S., 397 U.S. at 749, 90 S.Ct. 1463 at 1469 (1970)]

See also the following cases:

Fuentes v. Shevin, 407 U.S. 67 (1972);

Brookhart v. Janis, 384 U.S. 6 (1966);

Empsak V. U.S., 349 U.S. 190 (1955);

Johnson v. Zerbst, 304 U.S. 58 (1938).

The issue of protection of rights has a track record 10 miles long. We should be able to confidently say:

"We got em, they are ours, you (government) can't take em. If you (government) say that we lost them or waived them, the burden of proof is on you (government) to show us how we lost them or waived them or where you have the authority to take them."

Let us cite an example that establishes a standard for the protection of rights, so you can see some of these cases that establish that track record. Back in the 60's, there was a voting rights case down in Texas. The state of Texas was imposing a poll tax on the voters prior to letting them vote. The Texas U.S. District Court said in *U.S. v. Texas*, 252 F.Supp 234, 254, (1966):

"Since, in general, only those who wish to vote pay the poll tax, the tax as administered by the State, is equivalent to a charge or a penalty imposed on the exercise of a fundamental right. If the tax were increased to a high degree, as it could be if valid, it would result in the destruction of the right to vote. See Grosjean v. American Press Co., 297 U.S. 233, 244, 54 S.Ct. 444 (1936)."

[Note that the court reiterated the fundamental premise of law expressed by Chief Justice John Marshall in the landmark decision of *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 4 Wheat 418 at.431 (1819), that "the power to tax is the power to destroy."]

The Texas district court went on to quote from the Supreme Court case of *Harman v. Forssenius*, 380 U.S 528 at 540, 85 S.Ct. 1177, 1185 (1965):

"It has long been established that a State may not impose a penalty upon those who exercise a right guaranteed by the Constitution." [Frost & Frost Trucking Co. v. Railroad Comm'n of California, 271 U.S. 583. "Constitutional rights would be of little

value if they could be indirectly denied,' Smith v. Allwright, 321 U.S. 649, 644, or manipulated out of existence,' Gomillion v. Lightfoot, 364 U.S. 339, 345."

That Texas federal district court held the poll tax unconstitutional and invalid and enjoined the state of Texas from requiring the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite to voting.

Now a rare legal procedure followed that ruling. The state of Texas appealed. Not to the court of appeals, but directly to the Supreme Court. And in an equally rare circumstance, the Supreme Court took the district court's opinion as its own and affirmed the Judgment based on the facts and opinion stated by the district court. See Texas v. U.S., 384 U.S. 155 (1966)

When the Amendments to the Constitution for the United States were ratified, they were considered a bill of restrictions on the government, not a grant of rights that could be taken from "we the people." The courts have upheld this premise many times, so if you're going to take a stand, it would be wise to base that stand on a position that has, at the minimum, the track record established for the guarantee of fundamental rights. There is none better!!

The conclusion of this exercise then, is that the government cannot tax or penalize the exercise of a right. You might then ask yourself:

1. Why does the IRS impose a \$500 fine for filing a tax return that exercises our Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate ourself and doesn't have our signature? (this is called a Jurat violation)
2. Why does the IRS impose a \$50 fine upon employers or individual who file a 1099 form that does not have a social security number if the party we employed wants his or her 5th Amendment right not to incriminate him/herself respected?
3. Why can the state require individuals to provide their social security number in order to get a driver's license that allows them to exercise their RIGHT to drive?
4. Why can the government impose penalties on individuals for the exercise of rights when the Constitution in Article 1, Section 9, Clause 3 specifically forbids the federal government to impose Bills of Attainder, which are penalties not imposed by a jury trial? Likewise, Article 1, Section 10 also forbids states to impose penalties without a judicial trial?

The answer is that neither the state nor federal governments are legally allowed to do any of the above, because they amount to a tax or a penalty on the exercise of a God-given right! If you look for the implementing regulations that authorize any of the above actions, they don't exist, so such actions by the government are ILLEGAL and constitute a tort that you can sue for in court. These are the very illegal actions that convert our glorious republic into a relativistic, socialistic democracy where the collective as a whole is the sovereign and no individuals have rights.

7.3.3 What is the Difference Between a "Right" and a "Privilege"?

A right is a behavior or a choice, the exercise of which can't be taken away, fined, taxed, or regulated by anyone, including the government. A privilege, is something that can be taken away at any moment, usually at the discretion of the entity providing it, subject only to the contractual and legal constraints governing your relationship with that entity. For instance, it is unconstitutional for the government to tax or fine you for exercising your right to free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. To give another example, no one, including the government, your

employer, or another human being can fine or penalize you for exercising your right to vote, for instance, by taxing you or charging you a fee. If voting were a privilege then they could, but it is a right, so they can't. Such a fee is called a "poll tax" and the courts have repeatedly held that poll taxes are illegal, no matter who charges them.

You can't be fined you for exercising the right not to incriminate yourself guaranteed by the 5th Amendment, by, for instance, fining you \$500 (under the "Jurat" amendment and 26 U.S.C. §6702) for refusing to sign your 1040 income tax return "under penalty of perjury". The government also should never be permitted to fine you for your right under the Petition clause of the constitution to correct a government wrongdoing (the First Amendment states that we have a right "to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."), but in fact the courts routinely do this anyway, in violation of the Constitution. This tactic is part of the "judicial conspiracy to protect the income tax" defined elsewhere in this document, including in section 6.6. The fact that most Americans allow and tolerate this kind of injustice, abuse, and violation of their God-given rights confounds us and simply reveals how apathetic and indifferent we have become about our heritage and our treasured rights under the Constitution of the United States.

Privileges, however, are much different from rights. Privileges we want are how the government, our employer, and others we know enslave and coerce us into giving up our rights voluntarily. Giving up a right is an injury, and as one shrewd friend frequently said:

"The more you want, the more the world can hurt you."

The more needy and desperate we allow ourselves to become, the more susceptible we become to being abused by voluntarily jeopardizing our rights and becoming willing slaves to others. There is nothing unconstitutional or illegal about giving away our rights in exchange for benefits in this way, so long as we do it voluntarily. Situations where we surrender rights in exchange for privileges are commonplace and actually are the foundation of the commercial marketplace. This exchange is referred to as a business transaction and is usually governed by some contractual or legal vehicle in order to protect the property interests of the parties to the transaction. This legal vehicle is the Uniform Commercial Code, or UCC. An example of a privilege we give up our property rights to exercise is legalized gambling. If a person is a compulsive gambler and they lose their whole life savings and gamble themselves into massive debt, they in effect have sold themselves into legalized financial slavery to the casino. That's perfectly legal, and the laws will protect the property interest of the casino and the right of the casino to collect on the debt. Even though the Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery and even though the gambler might be a slave in this circumstance, because it was his choice and he wasn't compelled to do it, then it isn't illegal or unconstitutional.

Another example of privileges being exchanged for rights is when we obtain a state marriage license. When we voluntarily get a marriage license, we basically surrender our God-given right to control the fruit of our marriage, including our children and all our property, and give jurisdiction to the government to control every aspect of our lives. Many people do this because their hormones get the better of them and they aren't practical or rational enough to negotiate the terms of their marriage and won't sit down with their spouse and write down an agreement that will keep the government out of their lives. Marriage is supposed to be a confidential spiritual and religious union between a man and a woman, but when we get a marriage license, we violate the separation of church and state and actually get married not only to our spouse, but also to the government. We become, in effect, a polygamist! A marriage license is a license to the government, not to us, that allows them to invade our lives any way they see fit at anytime at the request of either spouse and based on the presumption that they are

furthering the “public good”, whatever that is! If couples get married in the church and get a marriage certificate but don’t get a marriage license from the state, then the government has no jurisdiction over the spouses, the children, or the property of the marriage. If divorce results, the parties can litigate if need be, but the government has to stay within the bounds of any written or verbal agreement that the spouses have between them.

The government can’t take away rights against your will but it can *definitely* take away privileges, often indiscriminately. For instance, receiving social security checks is a privilege, and not a right. The courts have repeatedly ruled that social security is not a contract or a right, but a privilege. We can only earn that privilege by “volunteering” to be a U.S. or “federal” citizen and paying into the Social Security System. Paying into the Social Security System means we have to waive our right to *not* be taxed on our income with direct taxes, which the Constitution forbids. Same thing for Medicare and disability insurance. There is nothing immoral or unethical or illegal with being taxed on our income to support these programs *provided*:

1. We are informed prior to joining that participation was *voluntary* and that we could not be coerced to join.
2. There is some measure of accountability and fiduciary duty associated with the government in managing and investing our money. Good stewardship of our contributions by the government is expected and bad stewardship is punished by the law and those who enforce the law.
3. We are informed frequently by the fiduciary that we can leave the program at any time, and that our benefits will be proportional to our contributions.
4. We made a conscious, informed decision on a signed contract to sacrifice our rights to qualify to receive the benefit or privilege.
5. If you die young or never collect benefits, your contributions plus interest should be given to your relatives.
6. There is no unwritten or invisible contract that binds us, and nothing will be expected of us that wasn’t clearly explained up front before we signed the contract.

However, the problem is that our national government has mismanaged the funds put into the Social Security System and squandered the money. This has lead them to violate their fiduciary duties and the above requirements as follows:

1. The government refuses to be accountable or to notify us of the benefits we have earned. They also don’t tell us on their statements how much we would earn if we quit contributing today and only drew benefits based on what we paid in the past.
2. The federal government won’t tell us that participation is voluntary and they provide no means on the social security website (<http://www.ssa.gov>) to *de-enroll* from the program. Instead, they try to fool us all into thinking that the program is mandatory when in fact it is entirely voluntary. The reason the U.S. Government won’t tell us that participation is voluntarily is that so many people would leave such an inefficient and poorly managed system to start their own plans when they find this out that the Pozzi scheme it has become would suffer instant meltdown and would turn into a big scandal!
3. If you never collect benefits or you die young, all the money you paid in and the interest aren’t given to your relatives as an inheritance. The government keeps EVERYTHING, and this is a BIG injustice that would not occur if the program were run more like the annuity that it should be.

4. There is no written agreement or contract, so they have no obligation or liability to be good stewards over our contributions.
5. Our kids are coerced into joining the system when they are born under the Enumeration At Birth program and the decision is made by their parents and not by them directly. This is unethical and immoral. See section 7.12.7.1 for details on this type of scamming by the government.
6. We are also coerced by our parents to join because the IRS deceives us into thinking that we are obligated to get Socialist Security Numbers for each of our children in order to qualify to use them as deductions on our taxes. In effect, they bribe us with our own money to sell our children into slavery into this inept and poorly managed system.

For all the above reasons and many more, *we recommend expatriating out of this bankrupt system as quickly as you can!* It's a "privilege" you can't be coerced to participate in anyway. We have to ask ourselves: Is a *compelled* benefit really a benefit, or just another form of slavery? The trick is determining how to escape, because you will get absolutely NO help from the Social Security Administration or the government! We provide answers to this dilemma of how to abandon the Social Security Program and your federal citizenship in Chapter 8 later on in this book.

7.4 Government

7.4.1 The purpose of government: protection from harm and evil⁸⁹

According to the Bible, the purpose of government is to reward good and punish evil. Our response to godly government is found in the same passage as God's purpose for government.

"Submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." [1 Peter 2:13-14, Bible, KJV]

Our duty to submit to godly authority has a qualifier attached to it, and that is that the authority be godly, that it "praises good and punishes evil." When authority ceases to be godly, then we cease to have a duty to submit to it. Those people who founded America found themselves in that position where they could not please both God and the British government and their reaction was to rebel.

If God is who He says He is, then He is the ultimate designer of all that exists in the universe. The scriptures identify four types of government: personal government, family government, church government and civil government. If God is God then only He has the authority to set the jurisdictional boundaries between each type of government. For example, God delegated to families the teaching of children, not to government. The entire system of government schools is a violation of God's design. A civil government limited in jurisdiction to only the purposes identified in scripture would need very little money to operate. There would be no need to tax a man's right to exist. No need to tax his wages or salary.

As of 1909, when the Sixteenth Amendment was proposed, the federal government had yet to become the great nanny in the sky (the political corporation, or *Parens Patriae*) solving everybody's problems

⁸⁹ Adapted from *Constitutional Income: Do You Have Any?*, Phil Hart, 2001, Morris Publishing, pp. 88-94.

from cradle to grave. Instead, our government largely followed the Biblical mandate just mentioned. Government's fundamental duty to protect life and property can also be found at Romans 13:3-4.

The Geneva Bible, which is the Bible the Pilgrims used, states:

"For princes are not to be feared for good works, but for evil. Wilt you then be without fear of the power? Do well. For shalt though have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God for thy wealth. But if though do evil, fear: for he beareth not the sword for nought: for he is the minister of God to take vengeance on him that doth evil."
[Geneva Bible, 1st Edition, 1560]

When government takes one-third or more of a man's yearly earnings, using as its authority to do so a law that is many thousands of pages long and so complicated that virtually no one can understand it, is government doing good? Or is government doing evil?

The way to make people respect the law is to make the law respectable. The way to make the law respectable, in turn, is to keep it short and simple and comprehensible by the common man, who is the person it was intended to apply to. The extent to which only judges and lawyers can understand the law is the extent to which the law is no longer respectable.

Adam Smith, in his famous book entitled "Wealth of Nations," upon which our founders heavily relied when they wrote our Constitution, espoused this same general concept of government described above:

"The first duty of the sovereign is, that of protecting the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies...The second duty of the sovereign is, that of protecting, as far as possible, every member of the society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it... The third duty and last duty of the sovereign or commonwealth is that of erecting and maintaining those public institutions and those public works, which, though they may be in the highest degree advantageous to a great society..."
[Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, book V, pp. 468-473, (1776); Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 1991]

When Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's: and to God the things that are God's," (Matt. 22:21) notice that He did not say, "Give Caesar everything he asks you for." Inherent in the former statement is the idea that there are limits on what belongs to Caesar. In God's world view, civil government has limited jurisdiction. If government asks you to render to it the mind of your child, will you obey or object?

7.4.2 How government and God compete to provide "protection"

We stated in the previous section that the goal of government is protection of the liberties of the sovereign public from evil and harm. Here is an example from the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

Because God loves us, He has *exactly* the same purpose and goal as any just government should have. Here are a few examples of how the purpose of God is protection:

“O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones. All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.

“Behold, I have created the blacksmith who blows the coals in the fire, who brings forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the spoiler to destroy. No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,’ says the Lord.” [Isaiah 54:11-17, Bible, NKJV]

As Christians, we should prefer God’s protection over government’s protection at all times. This is because we should trust the Lord and not man:

*“It is better to trust the Lord
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the Lord
Than to put confidence in princes.”
[Psalm 118:8-9, Bible, NKJV]*

Here is another example of why we should trust the Lord instead of government for our protection, right from the Bible:

*“For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying ‘The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him.’ So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.”
[Ezra 8:21-22, Bible, NKJV]*

When governments have the same loving goals as God in terms of protecting us (His children and His sheep/ flock) from evil and harm, then we are to submit to them. When they cease to be ministers of God’s justice or turn against God, then we should disobey those government laws that conflict with God’s laws or natural law.

*“We ought to obey God rather than men.”
[Acts 5:27-29, Bible, NKJV]*

This *must* be so because we have a fiduciary duty to God himself to keep justice, and when our *servants* in government don’t do it, then it becomes *our* job as the sovereigns to do the job they have failed to do as our agents:

*“**Keep justice, and do righteousness,** for My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness is revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold of it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.”
[Isaiah 56:1-2, Bible, NKJV]*

If we sit idly by and do nothing while our servants in government breach their fiduciary duty to protect us, then we become accountable to God for the acts and omissions of our agents and the harm that causes to our neighbor and our fellow man. This is vividly illustrated by the story of David and Bathsheeba in the Bible found in 2 Samuel Chapters 11 and 12. In that story, king David lusted after a beautiful married woman named Bathsheeba and had his servant send her husband Uriah into battle to be killed (See 2 Sam. 11:14-25). After Uriah was killed and David married Bathsheeba, first the Lord killed the child born of adultery and then here is what the Lord said to David about the acts of his servant/agent, and note that God held David, not his servant, responsible for the murder:

*[Then Nathan said to David] "Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and you have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."
[2 Sa 12:9, Bible, NKJV]*

Because both God and government have as their goal protection of their subjects or believers, you could say that both God and government are *competitors* for the affections of the people. This has been so throughout history. The whole notion behind the separation of church and state is aimed at making this competition fair and equal between these two competing sovereigns. That is why churches are not supposed to involve themselves in politics if they want to maintain their tax exempt status and why governments may not tax churches: because taxation by government of churches or political advocacy against government by churches would destroy that perfect separation of powers.

When government becomes too oppressive, then the healthy competition between church and state ensures a steady convergence back to the perfect balance of powers that Natural Law requires. For instance, if government raises its tax rates too high, then everyone will either donate everything they have to the church or become churches (Corporation Sole, for instance) in order to avoid government taxes and control. Likewise, when church gets to be too big, then the government tries to step in and pass laws and ordinances to limit its power or worse yet, creates its own state-sanctioned church, as the kings of England did with the Anglican church. In that case, the church becomes another means of state control. America was founded by Quakers in the 1600's who were trying to escape the control of the Anglican church and worship freely according to their conscience and without government interference.

When governments grow too big, the competition between church and state for the affections and loyalty of the public favors government. This imbalance is perpetuated by a combination of: 1. Media advocacy; 2. Unjust laws that discriminate against religious activities; 3. Dumbing down of the population in regards to religious issues and legal issues. Government thus becomes a substitute for God or an idol in this case, and this violates the First Commandment to put God first and have no other gods (see Exodus 20:1-11, Bible, NKJV). The focus of section 7.4.4 is to then prove from a legal perspective using evidence that our contemporary government has indeed replaced God and become an idol, and that this condition poses a great threat to our freedoms and liberties, and invites the wrath of God. Ultimately, the result will be subjection and slavery of the people to their rulers and a police state the likes of which this country has never seen. The people will be lead like lemmings into captivity and slavery because of their ignorance and lack of faith or trust in God.

"The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness

and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them.” [Ezekiel 39:23-24, Bible, NKJV]

How has God “hidden his face”? By the outlawing of prayer in the schools, by the removal of the ten commandments and crosses from public buildings and parks, by the removal of religious teachings from our classrooms, and by the passing of government laws that clearly violate God’s laws.

7.4.3 The purpose of income taxes: government protection of the assets of the wealthy

Since those Americans who have accumulated great wealth benefit more from government than those who have little, it is logical to assume that the wealthy should pay more for government than the poor as the former enjoy a greater benefit. It is the “no free lunch” principle:

“Mr. COX. It is not my intention to belittle wealth, but, on the other hand, I believe it should be the duty of all to uphold it where it is honestly procured. The idea that men like Carnegie, now the holder of more than \$300,000,000 worth of the bonds of the United States steel trust, escape federal taxation is indeed absurd...and then, to realize that all of these enormous fortunes are escaping their just and proportionate share of taxation while the people themselves are staggering under our present system of indirect taxation, it is no wonder to me they cry for relief. If it be the determination of the so-called ‘business interests’ in this country to maintain an enormous navy at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars annually, as well as an army, to protect and defend their various business interests, I insist that this part of the wealth of the country ought to stand its proportionate share of taxation, and I know of no way to compel them to do it as justly and equitably as an income tax. [Loud applause]”
[44 Cong.Rec. 4424 (1909)]

If you give it some thought, you’ll realize that it would be impossible to accumulate a lot of wealth if it were not for the institution of civil government. What if we lived in anarchy? How much would your stocks and bonds be worth? How much would your vacation home be worth that was hundreds of miles away from where you live? These things would be worth nothing. And what about your overseas investments in oil wells in Africa? If there were no United States navy, air force, or army to protect them, these investments would be worthless too.

So those corporations or businesses that have accumulated a level of wealth beyond what they can personally protect have received an extra benefit from civil government. In this case, the amount of benefit can be measured by the amount of property that has been accumulated. A tax on the income of this property could fairly accurately coincide with the degree of the benefit received. This was the original purpose of the income tax: to tax income from property of corporations and businesses so that the property paid for the support of the government in proportion to the benefit property received from the existence of civil government. Sounds reasonable to us:

“Taxation is the equivalent for the protection which the government affords to the persons and property of its citizens; and as all are alike protected, so all alike should bear the burden, in proportion to the interests secured. [Cooley’s Constitutional Limitations, 6th ed., 598, 607, 608, 615.]”
[Rehearing, Brief for Appellants at 79, Pollock v. Farmers’ Loan and Trust Co., 158 U.S. 601 (1895)]

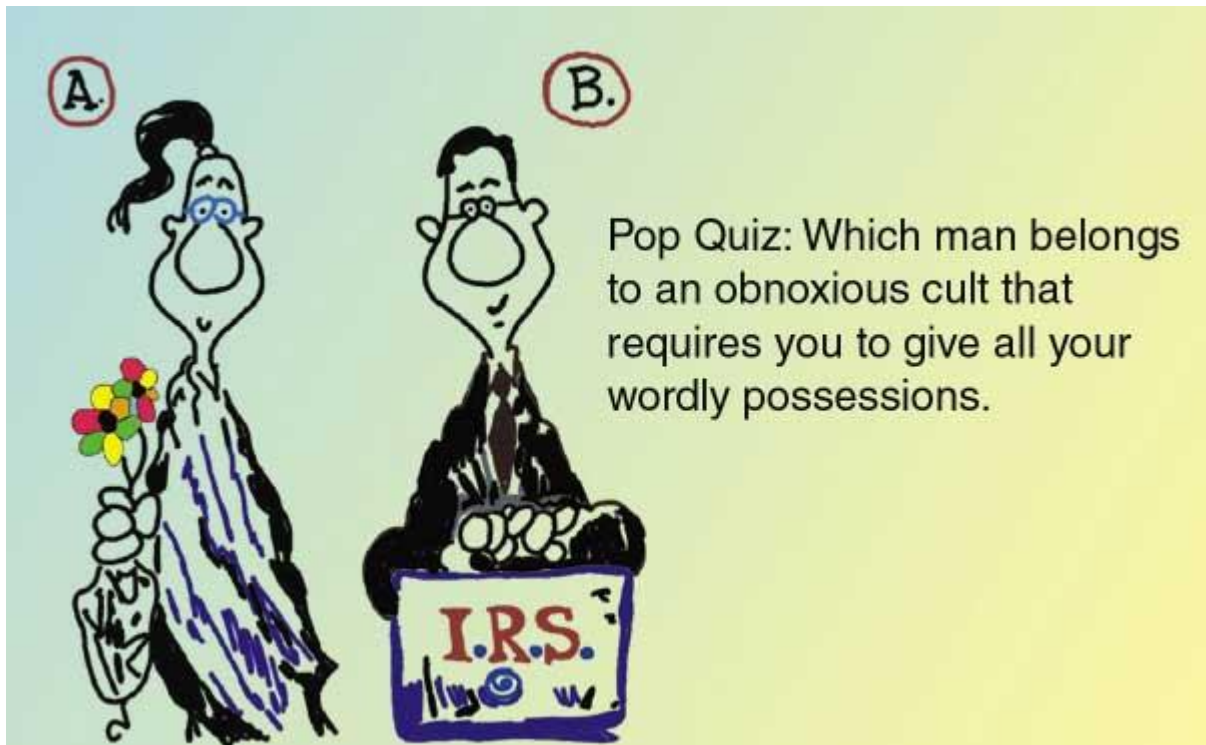
There is also an element of charity inherent in an income tax system that seeks to make property pay for the support of government. The charity involves property that is not productive and not producing

income. This would be the family farm that was inherited by beneficiaries who were unable to work it for whatever reason. The farm would pay no income tax as it earned no income, thus allowing the new owners to keep the farm and not lose it to the tax man as they might under a direct tax.

Because the Constitution has always authorized an indirect, unapportioned income tax on corporations involved in foreign and interstate trade under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3, the means has always been available for the federal government to institute income taxes, with or without the Sixteenth Amendment. If you read the Congressional debates on the Sixteenth Amendment in 1909, you will find that the Sixteenth Amendment was originally introduced by Congress to make the “rich” pay their fair share of the cost of supporting the government. In most cases, the “rich” referred to were the large corporations and trusts that had formed as a result of the gigantic industrial monopolies in the oil, steel, and railroad businesses. The Democrats appealed to people’s jealousies by proposing to institute an income tax on the very rich owners of these trusts and corporations through a direct, unapportioned tax on property while the Republicans proposed higher indirect excise taxes in the Corporate Tax Act of 1909 to appease the Democrats. That Corporate Tax Act of 1909 wasn’t enough to appease the Democrats and the American people so the Sixteenth Amendment was proposed as a solution. Several versions of the Sixteenth Amendment were proposed during the Congressional debates in 1909, including a direct, unapportioned income tax. However, the version that included direct, unapportioned taxes was soundly defeated and the version we have today which survived, according to several rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court, continues to be an indirect excise tax on federal corporations only. The Sixteenth Amendment, as a matter of fact, conferred no new powers of taxation, according to the Supreme Court in *Stanton v. Baltic Mining*, 240 U.S. 103 (1916). See the following for additional details on the nature of the income tax as an indirect excise tax:

<http://famguardian.org/TaxFreedom/CitesByTopic/income.htm>

7.4.4 Government as idolatry/religion



“Tyranny is the inevitable consequence of rule from above, a point that the Founding Fathers understood well when they separated the powers of a small and restrained government.

“Liberty is a human achievement, the product of a 1,000-year struggle. We have taken too lightly our obligation to “earn it anew.” Consequently, we are ceasing to possess ‘that which thy fathers bequeathed thee.’ Our legislative political order has become an administrative state in which ‘We the People’ are increasingly fearful of the government that we allegedly control.

“If Thomas Jefferson was right, we cannot get self-rule back without a revolution.”
[Jeff Bowman]

God, in Exodus 20:3, as part of the Ten Commandments, said:

“You shall have no other gods before Me.”

Our life as Christians should revolve around putting God at the **top** of our priority list. That means supporting His causes with the **first** fruits of our labor and tithing to the church. Here’s the scripture to back up this assertion:

*“**Honor the Lord** with your possessions, and **with the firstfruits of all your increase**; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”*
[Prov. 3:9-10]

But how can we tithe to the church and put God **first**, if we illegally pay almost 50% of our income to all the following combined taxes before God even gets his first dime in out tithes?:

1. Federal income tax (25% of our income).

2. State income tax. (15% of our income)
3. Property tax. (5% of our income)
4. Sales tax. (2% of our income)
5. Estate (Death) taxes. (up to 100% of our income and our assets over a lifetime!)

Instead, the first fruits of our labor and almost 50% of our living income (and 100% of our assets when we die) go to the GOVERNMENT first in the form of income taxes, before we ever even see a dime of our own income, and we put way too much emphasis and reliance on the government to help us. In effect, we allow or permit or volunteer ourselves to become government slaves and they become our masters and thus we lose our sovereignty and thereby make God of secondary importance, presumably because we want a hand-out and government “security”. But listen to what God says about this type of abomination:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”
[Jeremiah 17:5-8, Bible, NIV]

By surrendering our sovereignty and letting government become our god, we have committed idolatry: relying more on government and man than we do on God or ourselves to meet our needs. Jesus Himself, however, specifically warned us not to do this:

*“Away with you , Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him **ONLY** [NOT the government!] you shall serve.’”*
[Matt. 4:10]

This kind of pernicious evil violates Psalm 118:8-9, which says: ***“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust the Lord than to put confidence in princes.”*** I translate “princes” to mean “government”. Likewise, such idolatry also violates Psalm 146:3, which says: *“Put not your trust in princes, [nor] in the son of man, in whom [there is] no help. “*

But can government REALLY be a religion from a genuine legal perspective and can we prove this in court? Absolutely! Lets look at the definition of “religion” from Black’s Law Dictionary to answer this question, and notice the highlighted words:

***“Religion.** Man's relation to Divinity, to reverence, **worship**, obedience, and **submission to mandates and precepts** of supernatural or **superior beings**. In its broadest sense includes all forms of **belief in the existence of superior beings exercising power over human beings by volition, imposing rules of conduct, with future rewards and punishments.** **Bond uniting man to God, and a virtue whose purpose is to render God worship due him as source of all being and principle of all government of things.** *Nikulnikoff v. Archbishop, etc., of Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, 142 Misc. 894, 255 N.Y.S. 653, 663.”*
*[Black’s Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, page 1292]**

Now we will take the highlighted words from this definition of “religion” above and put them into a table and compare worship of God on the left to worship of government on the right. The results are very surprising. The attributes in the left column of the table below are listed in the same sequence

presented in the above definition and have asterisks next to them. Those attributes without asterisks provide additional means of comparison between worship of God and worship of government (god with a little “g”).

Table 7-2: Worship of God (Christianity) v. Worship of Government (idolatry)

<i>Attributes of “religion”</i>	<i>Worship of God (Christianity: “God” with a Big “G”)</i>	<i>Worship of Government (Idolatry: “god” with a little “g”)</i>
Lawgiver	God (see Isaiah 33:22)	Legislature
Method of rendering “worship”	1. Faith 2. Prayer 3. Fasting 4. Service to fellow man/family 5. Reverencing (respecting) God	1. Paying income taxes 2. Surrendering rights to judicial jurisdiction and government authority 3. Not questioning or challenging authority.
“Submission to mandates and precepts of”*	God	Man (The Beast/Satan)
“Superior being”*	God	President/Congressmen/Mammon
“Exercising power”*	Church or clergy discipline, censure, or excommunication	Jurisdiction
Source of power	Love	Fear, insecurity
“Rules of conduct”*	God’s law (Bible or Natural Law)	Man’s law (statutes)
“Future rewards”*	Eternal life	Absence of IRS harassment for not paying taxes
“Future punishment”*	1. Slavery to sin for those who disobey. 2. Eternal damnation	Harassment, oppression for those who challenge government authority
“Bond uniting man” to “superior being”*	Love	Government- granted “Privileges”, covetousness, limited liability (in the case of corporations)
Source of “virtue”*	“God” and his worship	“Self” and “Vain Rulers” and their aggrandizement
Object of belief/faith*	Trust in God (see Psalm 118:8-9)	Trust in man/the flesh (see Jeremiah 17:5-8)
Influence spread through	Evangelizing	1. Fear, uncertainty, insecurity introduced through media and demagoguery. 2. Propaganda 3. Military and political warfare. 4. Bribing sheep into submission with government benefits derived from stolen/extorted tax money.
Spokesperson	Pope/prophet	Judge (witchdoctor)
How spokespersons are appointed	Ordained	Appointed by President/Governor
Representatives of spokesperson	Priests	Lawyers (Pharisees)
How representatives are appointed	Ordained	Licensed by state Supreme Court
Persons who violate laws are	Sinners (G od’s law)	Criminals (man’s/ g od’s law)
Submission	“...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” (see Gal.	“I am a criminal because no one can obey all of man’s laws. There are too many of them!”

<i>Attributes of “religion”</i>	<i>Worship of God (Christianity: “God” with a Big “G”)</i>	<i>Worship of Government (Idolatry: “god” with a little “g”)</i>
	2:16)	
<i>Obedience</i>	“If you love me, keep my commandments” (see John 14:15)	Follow the law or we will throw you in jail and steal your property! (fear)
<i>Control by “superior being” imposed through</i>	Holy Spirit/conscience	Criminal punishment for violating law.
<i>Ultimate punishment exists in</i>	Hell	Jail
<i>Worship service</i>	Sunday service	Court (worship the judge/lawyers)
<i>Source of truth</i>	God’s law	Whatever the judge says
<i>Truth is</i>	Absolute and sovereign	Relative to whoever is in charge
<i>Method of supporting “superior being”</i>	Tithes (10%)	Taxes (50-100%)

Isn’t that interesting? The other thing you MUST conclude after examining the above table is that if anyone in government is a “superior being” relative to any human in the society they govern, then the government unavoidably becomes an idol and a god to be worshipped and submitted to as if the government were a religion. This kind of idolatry not only violates the first and greatest Commandment in the bible found in Exodus 20:3 and Matt. 22:37-38, but is also more importantly violates the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:

***First Amendment:** Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

By making itself a “superior being” relative to the people it governs and using the *force* of law to compel the people to pay homage to and “worship” it, Congress has mandated a religion, with all the many necessary characteristics found in the legal definition of “religion” indicated above, and this is clearly unconstitutional. *The only way to guarantee the elimination of the conflict of law that results from putting government above the people is to:*

1. Make God the sovereign over all of creation.
2. Make the people **servants to God** and His *fiduciary agents*.
3. Create government as a **servant to the People** and their fiduciary agent. Make the only source of government authority that of protecting the people from evil, injustice, and abuse.

There is no other rational conclusion one can reach based on the above analysis. There is simply no other way to solve this logical paradox of government becoming a religion in the process of making itself superior to the people or the “U.S. citizens”.

I’ll bet you never even dreamed that there were so many parallels between Christianity and government, did you? I’ll bet you also never thought of government as a religion, but that is exactly what it has become. The idea of making government a religion or creating false idols for the people to worship is certainly not new. Leaders know that if you can get people to worship false idols and thereby blaspheme God with their sin, then you can use this idolatry to captivate and enslave them. For instance, in the Bible in 1 Kings Chapters 11 and 12, we learn that Solomon disobeyed the Lord by marrying foreign wives and worshipping the idols of these foreign wives. When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam hardened his heart against God and alienated his people. Then he fought a competitor named Jeroboam over the spoils of his vast father’s remnant kingdom (1 Kings 12). The weapon that

Jeroboam used to compete with Rehoboam was the creation of a false idol for the ten tribes of Israel that were under his leadership. This false idol consisted of two calves of solid gold. The false idol distracted ten of the 12 tribes of Israel from wanting to reunite with the other two tribes and worship the true God. To this day, the twelve tribes have never again been able to reunite, because they were divided by idolatry toward false gods. Here is a description of how Jeroboam did it from 1 Kings 12:25-33:

Golden Calves at Bethel and Dan

²⁵ Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel.

²⁶ Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. ²⁷ If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam."

²⁸ After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." ²⁹ One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. ³⁰ And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there.

³¹ Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. ³² He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. ³³ On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.
[1 Kings 12:25-33, Bible, NIV]

Similar to Jeroboam, our present government conquers the people by encouraging them to become distracted with false idols. These false idols include:

1. **Government**. This translates into worship of and slavery to government through the income tax and an obsession with petitioning government to protect people from discrimination or punishment for the consequences of their sins, including homosexuality, dishonesty, and infidelity.
2. **Money**. They use this lust for money to divide and conquer and control families by getting them fighting over money within their marriage. They encourage people to get marriage licenses they never needed in order to get jurisdiction over the spouses and their assets, and then they make it so easy to get divorced that it becomes economically attractive to marry people for their money. This means that people get married for all the wrong reasons, and make themselves into slaves of the state in the process of using the state courts as a vehicle to plunder their partner using community property laws.
3. **Sex**. A fixation with sex, homosexuality, fornication, and adultery. People who are obsessed with anything, and especially sex, are far less likely to be informed about the law or vigilant about holding their government accountable.
4. **Sports and television**. People who are hooked on Monday night football or the latest host soap or sitcom aren't likely to be caught visiting the law library or reading the Bible as God says they should.
5. **Materialism**. This manifests itself in an obsession to acquire and keep "things".
6. **Sin**. In the past, the government outlawed gambling and lotteries. Now most states have actually institutionalized this kind of sin. The government holds lotteries and even advertises them. Indian reservations have become havens for legalized gambling.

Have you ever visited a doctor's office for minor surgery? What the doctor does is administer a local anesthetic to numb your senses in the area he will be cutting and operating on so you won't experience pain or feel what he is doing. The government does the same thing. Before they hook you up to "The Matrix" using their umbilical called the "income tax" to painfully suck you dry, they use a "local

anesthetic” that numbs your senses and your discretion. This “local anesthetic” is the sin and hedonism and idolatry they try to get you addicted to and distracted with that they use to make you into a slave:

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”
[Jesus in John 8:34, Bible, NKJV]*

Once you are a slave to your sin, you are far less likely to give them any trouble about being a host organism for the umbilical they hook up to you called the income tax that sucks your life and your labor and your property dry. They supplement this local anesthetic with a combination of cognitive dissonance, lies and propaganda, ignorance generated by the public schools, and an occasional media report about how they trashed a famous person to keep you in fear and immobilized to oppose their organized extortion and racketeering. This trains you never to trust or respect your own judgment well enough to even conceive of questioning authority or challenging their jurisdiction.

*“Surely oppression destroys a wise man's reason.
And a [compelled] bribe [called income tax] debases the heart.”
[Ecclesiastes 7:7, Bible, NKJV]*

This concept of government as a religion especially applies to the field of taxation. The Internal Revenue Code is 9,500 pages of very fine print. We know because we have a personal copy and read it often. How many people have taken the time to read the Internal Revenue Code in its entirety, and even among those very few people who have read it completely, how many believe that they fully and completely understand it well enough to swear under penalty of perjury that facts they reveal and statements they might make about their own personal tax liability would be completely consistent with it? If you don’t meet these two criteria of having read it completely and often and having a full and accurate understanding about it that is truthful and consistent with its legislative intent, then any statement you make on a tax return that is based on your state of mind in that instance becomes simply a matter of usually misinformed or ignorant “belief”. There’s a good word for this condition of believing something without knowing all the facts. It is called “faith” and it is the foundation of all religions in the world!:

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
[Heb. 11:1, Bible, NKJV]*

Isn’t “faith” based on a “belief” in something which you have not seen sufficient scientific evidence to prove? If you are like most Americans who have *never* read or even seen any part of the Internal Revenue Code, which is the only admissible “evidence” of your legal tax obligation, then any action you might take and any statement you might make regarding your tax “liability” under such circumstances could be rationally described only as an act of “faith” and “belief”. Here’s the legal definition of “faith”:

*“**Faith.** Confidence; credit; reliance. Thus, an act may be said to be done ‘on the faith’ of certain representations.*

*“**Belief; credence; trust.** Thus, the Constitution provides that ‘full faith and credit’ shall be given to the judgments of each state in the courts of the others.*

*Purpose; intent; sincerity; state of knowledge or design. This is the meaning of the word in the phrase “good faith” and “bad faith”. See Good faith.”
[Black’s Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, page 599]*

Even when you hire an expensive professional to prepare your tax return, you still have all of the responsibility and liability for the content and the accuracy of the return and if the IRS institutes a penalty for errors or omissions, isn't it you rather than your tax preparer who has to pay the penalty? What exactly are you "trusting" (see the definition of "faith" above) when you sign a tax return and state under penalty of perjury that it is truthful without even reading or knowing or understanding the tax laws? What you are in fact "trusting" is "man" or your "government". You are trusting what the IRS told you in its publications, right? Or you're trusting an ignorant and greedy and unethical tax lawyer or a misinformed accountant to tell you what your legal responsibilities are, aren't you? That is called trusting "man" because a man wrote those publications or gave you the advice that you formed your "belief" from. The Bible says we shouldn't trust men or a "worthless" government, and instead ought to trust only Him:

*"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law [God's Law, not Caesar's law] to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."
[Deu 27:26, Bible, NKJV]*

*"Behold, the nations are as a drop in the bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales."
[Isaiah 40:15, Bible, NKJV]*

*"All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless."
[Isaiah 40:17, Bible, NKJV]*

*"Cursed is the one who trusts in man [or by implication man-made government], who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."
[Jeremiah 17:5-8, Bible, NIV]*

Now if our government had stuck to its original charter to be "a society of laws and not men", then we wouldn't be forced to have to depend on "men" to know what our tax responsibilities are because we would be able to read the law ourselves without consulting an "expert" and KNOW what we are supposed to do:

*"The government of the United States has been emphatically termed a government of laws, and not of men. It will certainly cease to deserve that high appellation, if the laws furnish no remedy for the violation of a vested legal right."
[Marbury v. Madison, [5 U.S. 137](#); 1 Cranch 137, 2 L.Ed. 60 (1803)]*

If our government had remained honorable and honest, the laws would be simple and clear and short. Read the earlier tax laws: they are very short and easy to understand. These laws were KNOWABLE by the common man. The easiest way to make the law respectable is to make it short and simple enough so that every person can read and understand it. When it grows too large and/or too complicated to be knowable by every citizen, then at that point, we have transformed our society from a society of laws to a society of men, which is the root and the foundation of tyranny and the very reason we rebelled against English monarchs to form this country! That kind of corruption of our laws began starting in around 1913, shortly after the Federal Reserve Act and the Sixteenth Amendment

were passed. At that point, our government became a gigantic parasite completely unrestrained by the Constitutional limits that had kept it under control. It became a socialist bureaucracy bent on destroying our liberties and making itself into a false god.

The IRS publications are the only thing that most Americans have ever read that even comes close to claiming to represent what is in the real tax law found in the Internal Revenue Code. Because most people can't afford a high-priced lawyer or accountant who understands the tax laws completely, and don't have the time to read the entire IRC or buy and read a comprehensive and complete book on taxes, then Americans in effect are economically coerced into relying on and having a "religious faith" in the IRS publications as their only source of the tax law. Add to that the legal ignorance perpetuated in them by our government schools and you have additional government duress. Worst yet, the federal courts have said that none of these IRS publications are credible and that they "confer no rights". Read the article on our website about this scam because it will blow your mind!:

<http://famguardian.org/Subjects/Taxes/Articles/IRSNotResponsible.htm>

Even the IRS says you can't rely on their own publications in their Internal Revenue Manual:

"IRS Publications, issued by the National Office, explain the law in plain language for taxpayers and their advisors... While a good source of general information, publications should not be cited to sustain a position."
 [IRM, 4.10.7.2.8 (05-14-1999)]

So once again, if you haven't personally read the entire Internal Revenue Code, don't understand it completely, or have trusted the IRS publications, then your "faith" is ill-founded and in effect becomes "bad faith" because you are relying on a completely unaccountable, criminal, and lawless organization called the IRS to define and fulfill your purported legal responsibilities, and that can only be described as despicable, morally wrong, and biblically unsound:

***"Bad faith.** The opposite of "good faith," generally implying or involving actual or constructive fraud, or a design to mislead or deceive another, or a neglect or refusal to fulfill some duty or some contractual obligation, not prompted by an honest mistake as to one's rights or duties, but by some interested or sinister motive. Term 'bad faith' is not simply bad judgment or negligence, but rather it implies the conscious doing of a wrong because of dishonest purpose or moral obliquity; it is different from the negative idea of negligence in that it contemplates a state of mind affirmatively operating with furtive design or ill will..."*
 [Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, p. 139]

You are not alone in your compelled depravity and violation of God's law because most Americans, including us, are just like you. But you have to trust "somebody" on this tax subject don't you, because if you don't file the government is going to go after you and penalize you, aren't they? So you are compelled to have "faith" in something, right? You get to choose what that "something" is, but the result is a compelled "faith" or "trust" in "something" because of demands the government is making on you to satisfy your alleged tax responsibilities.

Now if the Constitution says in the First Amendment that "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof*", and yet the IRS tells you under the "color of law" that you have to in effect trust or have "religious faith" in "something" in order to satisfy their criminal extortion under the "color of law", then isn't the government in effect "making a law respecting the establishment of a religion"? When corrupt judges make rulings on tax issues that

violate the Constitution and prejudice our sacred rights, aren't they making law? Isn't this kind of judicial activism called "judge-made law" and isn't Congress' failure to discipline such tyrant judges the equivalent of allowing them to write law that will then be used as precedent in the future? Isn't the object of that "religious faith" and "trust" that the government compels us to have the fraudulent IRS Publications directly, and the IRS who prepares them indirectly? So in effect, if the income tax is indeed an "enforced" or "compelled" tax, then the government has established "faith in the IRS" as a religion by the operation of law. And then the federal courts of that same government have turned around and said that even though the only basis for most people's beliefs is the IRS publications, they aren't trustworthy nor credible, and in fact, you can be penalized for relying on what the IRS told you in them! So you are in effect being compelled to trust or have "religious faith" in a lie, aren't you? But then out of the other side of that same hypocritical and criminal government's mouth, the U.S. supreme Court says:

"Courts, no more than the Constitutions, can intrude into the consciences of men or compel them to believe contrary to their faith or think contrary to their convictions, but courts are competent to adjudge the acts men do under the color of a constitutional right, such as that of freedom of speech or of the press or the free exercise of religion and to determine whether the claimed right is limited by other recognized powers, equally precious to mankind. So the mind and the spirit of man remain forever free, while his actions rest subject to necessary accommodation to the competing needs of his fellows."

"If all expression of religion or opinion, however, were subject to the discretion of authority, our unfettered dynamic thoughts or moral impulses might be made only colorless and sterile ideas. To give them life and force, the Constitution protects their use. No difference of view as to the importance of the freedoms of press or religion exist. They are "fundamental personal rights and liberties" Schneider v. State, 308 U.S. 147, 161, 60 S.Ct. 146, 150, 84 L.Ed. 155. To proscribe the dissemination of doctrines or arguments which do not transgress military or moral limits is to destroy the principal bases of democracy, --knowledge and discussion. One man, with views contrary to the rest of his compatriots, is entitled to the privilege of expressing his ideas by speech or broadside to anyone willing to listen or to read. ..."

"Ordinances absolutely prohibiting [or penalizing] the exercise of the right to disseminate information are, a fortiori, invalid."

[Jones v. City of Opelika, 316 U.S. 584; 62 S.Ct. 1231 (1942), Emphasis added]

And when we raise the issue in court that the payment of federal income taxes violates our religious beliefs as documented here, then the courts frequently say that our arguments are "frivolous". See U.S. v. Lee, 455 U.S. 252 (1982) for further confirmation of how the government essentially labels our religious beliefs as being frivolous in the process of enforcing their "love for your money" in the courts. That too is a government action to create a religion, because all of the arguments here are based on the law and words right out of the mouths of the government's own judges and lawyers. Indirectly, they are saying that their own words are frivolous! That's religion and idolatry, and the object of worship is the almighty dollar. The result of them calling our claims "frivolous" is a maximization of federal revenues and personal retirement benefits of federal judges through illegal and unconstitutional extortion. That too violates Christian beliefs, which say that "covetousness" is idolatry, which is the religious worship of idols:

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
[Colossians 3:5, Bible, NKJV]

“Behold, to obey [God and His Law] is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is an iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king [or sovereign over government].”

[1 Sam. 15:22-28, Bible, NKJV]

The implication of the above scripture is that when the government violates God’s law, they cease to be part of the government and are acting as *private individuals* absent the authority of law. They are no longer the sovereigns who are serving the public they are there to protect. Instead they are serving *themselves* mainly and thereby violating the fiduciary relationship they have as part of the public trust known as the “United States government” (see section 7.4.8 earlier for details). Christians are supposed to disobey such unlawful and immoral actions, including those of courts.

“We ought to obey God rather than men.”

[Acts 5:27-29, Bible, NKJV]

So we have a paradox, folks. Either Subtitle A income taxes are *mandatory* and *enforced* and “religious faith in the IRS” has become the new religion, or the taxes are instead entirely “voluntary” donations and therefore do not conflict with religious views or the First Amendment. We can’t have it both ways, but the government’s fraudulent way of calling them *mandatory* conflicts with so many aspects of our Constitution that we may as well throw the whole Bill of Rights in the toilet and tell everyone the truth: which is that all their freedoms are suspended to pay for the extravagant debts of an out-of-control government and everyone is an economic slave and a serf to the government.

In our time, government has not only become a religion, it has also become an *anti-religion* intent on driving Christianity out of public life so that its only competitor (God) can be eliminated and it can continue to grow in power without resistance and graduate to that of a totalitarian communist state. Christianity, it turns out, is the *only* competitor to government at the moment for the worship of the people, and the one thing that most minority groups focused on rights (homosexuals, women’s liberation, abortion, etc) have in common is a hate for Christianity, because Christianity is the only check on their corruption and hedonism. Christianity is the salt, the preservative, and the immune system for our society, and when you want to overtake society with sin and disease and death, the first thing you have to attack is its immune system.

The kind of idolatrous thinking that accepts the income tax as legal therefore leads to socialism ultimately, and turns the government into a tyrannical police state that robs citizens of their assets and puts them to use for the alleged “common good.” It is a product of mobocracy masquerading as democracy, where less privileged or poorer groups use their voting power to compel the government to plunder the assets of wealthier people for their personal benefit. This is the central approach the demagogues (I mean democrats) use: buy votes with money extorted from hard-working citizens. The Supreme Court agreed precisely with these conclusions below in the case of *Loan Association v. Topeka, 20 Wall. 655* (1874):

“To lay with one hand the power of government on the property of the citizen, and with the other to bestow it on favored individuals.. is none the less robbery because it is done under the forms of law and is called taxation. This is not legislation. It is a decree under legislative forms.”

The only way a socialist state can justify its existence is to assert that the government knows better how to take care of you than you do, and past experience, especially with the Soviet Union, proves that approach *doesn't work!* Forcing you to have "faith" in the government is a violation of the First Amendment by establishing government as a "religion". Worship of government as a religion is the essence of socialism. Socialism has never worked throughout all of history, because the corruption of men at the highest levels who are in charge of the public funds always leads to usury, abuse, evil, and tyrannical oppression of the people they are supposed to serve.

"Remember the word that I said to you , 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me."

[Jesus speaking in the Bible, John 15:20-21]

Our own country was formed by Christian patriots more than 200 years ago because they rejected this very thing happening to us! They founded the first country whose legal system was based entirely on Natural Law and Natural Order, which we further explain in section 7.2.

Socialism also makes us into unwitting slaves of the government. Would anyone argue that we don't already have a police state, where the Gestapo are the tyrants at the IRS, and fear of the IRS is what keeps us paying our "tribute to the king" in the form of income taxes? Would anyone argue that we are not a country full of cowards when it comes to facing our oppressors? Realistically speaking: How long can cowards remain free and sovereign? Remember that the original American colonies waged an entire violent war of independence and risked everything they had to fight against Britain when their taxes to Britain were only 7%? Now some of us are paying 50% of our income in taxes without even flinching or whimpering or fighting. We're a bunch of wimps if you ask me!

The point is that it's much more difficult to put God first with federal income taxes because out of the remaining 50% of our income left after we pay taxes, we have to feed our families and pay our bills. Is it any wonder then that less than 1% of Christians tithe 10% of their income to the church as the bible requires in Malachi 3:8-10? They can't afford to because they are being taxed/raped and financially enslaved by the government illegally! And then the IRS compels churches to shut up about this kind of abuse by taking away their tax-exempt status if they speak up!

But if you didn't have to pay income taxes and the IRS would honor your right to do so legally (why does the IRS call it "voluntary compliance" if we can't choose not to pay?), wouldn't you give MUCH more to God and put God first? I certainly would! Therefore, implementing the advice found in this document will, in the long run, result in equipping you with the income you need to be more generous to your local church and to the noble causes and preservation of American liberties and freedoms that we all believe in.

HOWEVER: *If your intent is to take the money you saved in taxes as a result of following the guidance in this document and spend it on your own selfish desires and not on the church (whatever church you belong to) or helping others, then you are violating the copyright on this document and acting illegally. We demand that you destroy this book and **NOT** read or use this document because we would submit that you are a less than honorable steward over the gracious gifts that God (whatever God you believe in) has bestowed upon you and deserve to have your income taken away by the tyrants at the IRS. Selfishness and deceit are their own best avengers, and we should rightly reap what we sow. Anything less would be to promote anarchy, hypocrisy, injustice, and oppression in our society.*

Recall that it was selfishness and vanity on the part of government employees which created the problems so clearly documented in this book to begin with. You can't cure selfishness with more selfishness, and you will be maligning the tax honesty movement and other noble patriots by abusing these materials for your own selfish gain and associating yourself with them in so doing.

The above comment is based on the following scriptures:

*"A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, and does not consider that poverty will come upon him."
[Prov. 28:22, Bible, NKJV]*

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves [the IRS and the government] break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
[Matt. 6:19-21, Bible, NKJV]*

Now some of you, in fear, might say that we need to obey the government and not make any noise. *When should a Christian disobey the civil government? (Rom. 13:7; Acts 5:27-29) When a civil government refuses people the liberty to worship and obey God freely or violates God's law, it has lost its mandate of authority from God. Then the Christian should feel justified and maybe even compelled in disobeying. How are we to worship God freely? With the first fruits of our labor and our income!*

Ben Franklin, who incidentally was one of the attendees at the Constitutional Convention, believed that when a government began to be tyrannical, it was the right and even the DUTY of the citizens to rebel against that government. Here is what he said:

"Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

The Christian, however, is called to bear with his government whenever possible, but there must be a limit to that forbearance.

"Those who stand for nothing will fall for anything." Alex Hamilton

Jesus did not call for revolution against Rome, even though it was an oppressive conqueror of Israel. On the other hand, the apostles refused to obey a government order not to preach and teach in Jesus' name (Acts 5:27-29). On that occasion, one of Jesus' apostles said:

"We ought to obey God rather than men."

Whenever the civil government forbids the practice of things that God has commanded us to do, or tells us to do things He has commanded us not to do, then we are on solid ground in disobeying the government. Blind obedience to government is never right or biblically sound. However difficult or costly it may be, we all must reserve the right to say no to things that we consider oppressive or immoral or sinful. If we don't and we make government our unquestioned god, here is the future that awaits us.⁹⁰

The 23rd Psalm (A present-day Lamentation)

⁹⁰ A parody of the Bible, Psalm 23. Submitted by Pastor Wayne Teel and authored by Bob Phillips in his book *The Best of the Good Clean Jokes*.

*The politician is my shepherd...I am in want;
 He maketh me to lie down on park benches,
 He leadeth me beside still factories;
 He disturbeth my soul.
 Yea, thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of depression and recession,
 I anticipate no recovery, for he is with me.
 He prepareth a reduction in my salary in the presence of my enemies;
 He anointeth my small income with great losses;
 My expenses runneth over.
 Surely unemployment and poverty shall follow me all the days of my life,
 And I shall dwell in a mortgaged house forever.*

7.4.5 **Socialism is Incompatible with Christianity**

*"The American people will never knowingly adopt socialism. But, under the name of "liberalism", they will adopt every fragment of the socialist program, until one day America will be a socialist nation, without knowing how it happened."
 [Norman Thomas, for many years the U.S. Socialist Party presidential candidate]*

*"We cannot expect the Americans to jump from Capitalism to Communism, but we can assist their elected leaders in giving Americans small doses of Socialism, until they suddenly awake to find they have Communism."
 [Nikita Krushchev, Premiere of the former Soviet Union, 3-1/2 months before his first visit to the United States]*

*"But why, you might ask, should the richest people in the world promote a socialistic system? The answer appears to be that under socialism the state owns everything, and these people intend, quite simply, to own the state. It is the neatest and completest way of bagging the lot!"
 [W.D. Chalmers in "The Conspiracy Of Truth"]*

*"Socialism is not in the least what it pretends to be. It is not the pioneer of a better and finer world, but the spoiler of what thousands of years of civilization have created. It does not build, it destroys. For destruction is the essence of it. It produces nothing, it only consumes what the social order based on private ownership in the means of production has created."
 [Ludwig von Mises ("Socialism", 1922)]*

The Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Helvering v. Davis*, [301 U.S. 619](#) (1937) and *Flemming v. Nestor*, [363 U.S. 603](#) (1960), that Social Security (and by implication all other government social programs!) are **NOT** insurance and are **NOT** a contract. The government isn't obligated to pay you back anything, much less even the amount of money you put into any social (or should we say socialist?) program. Because Social Security is therefore not insurance and not a trust fund, then what should Christians view it as? It is theft, plain and simple!

Social Security is socialism. Socialism is theft. Theft is a sin. There was never a promise to pay benefits. Rights can only come from responsibilities. You won't understand this yet, but those who accept public benefits cannot have rights. The Supreme Court agreed precisely with these conclusions below:

"To lay with one hand the power of government on the property of the citizen, and with the other to bestow it on favored individuals.. is none the less robbery because it is done under the forms of law and is called taxation. This is not legislation. It is a decree under legislative forms."

[*Loan Association v. Topeka*, 20 Wall. 655 (1874)]

"A tax, in the general understanding of the term and as used in the constitution, signifies an exaction for the support of the government. The word has never thought to connote the expropriation of money from one group for the benefit of another."

[*U.S. v. Butler*, [297 U.S. 1](#) (1936)]

"A statutory provision which is not a legitimate police regulation cannot be made such by being placed in the same act with a police regulation, or by being enacted under a title that declares a purpose which would be a proper object for the exercise of that power.

"It being self-evident that, unless all things are held in common, some persons must have more property than others, it is from the nature of things impossible to uphold freedom of contract and the right of private property without at the same time recognizing as legitimate those inequalities of fortune that are the necessary result of the exercise of those rights.

"The Fourteenth Amendment recognizes "liberty" and "property" as coexistent human rights, and debars the states from any unwarranted interference with either.

"Since a state may not strike down the rights of liberty or property directly, it may not do so indirectly, as by declaring in effect that the public good requires the removal of those inequalities that are but the normal and inevitable result of the exercise of those rights, and then invoking the police power in order to remove the inequalities, without other object in view.

"The Fourteenth Amendment debars the states from striking down personal liberty or property rights or materially restricting their normal exercise excepting so far as may be incidentally necessary for the accomplishment of some other and paramount object, and one that concerns the public welfare. The mere restriction of liberty or of property rights cannot, of itself, be denominated "public welfare" and treated as a legitimate object of the police power, for such restriction is the very thing that is inhibited by the Amendment.

[*Coppage v. Kansas*, 236 U.S. 1 (1915)]

The reason why the Supreme Court ruled the way it did above is because:

"Democracy is a form of government that cannot long survive, for as soon as the people learn that they have a voice in the fiscal policies of the government, they will move to vote for themselves all the money in the treasury, and bankrupt the nation".

[**Karl Marx, 1848 author of "The Communist Manifesto"**]

What protects us as Americans from the above excesses of democracy and mobocracy is the mandate imposed in Article 4, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution to provide a Republican Government, which by implication is based on individual rather than collective sovereignty and rights:

"The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government..."

The U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Pollock v. Farmers Loan and Trust*, [157 U.S. 429](#) (1895), which outlawed income taxes legislated by Congress, said the following regarding what

happens when the government becomes a robinhood and tries to promote equality of result rather than equality of opportunity. We end up with class warfare, in society done using the force of law and a mobocracy mentality:

“The present assault upon capital is but the beginning. It will be but the stepping stone to others larger and more sweeping, until our political contest will become war of the poor against the rich; a war of growing intensity and bitterness.

...

The legislation, in the discrimination it makes, is class legislation. Whenever a distinction is made in the burdens a law imposes or in the benefits it confers on any citizens by reason of their birth, or wealth, or religion, it is class legislation, and leads inevitably to oppression and abuses, and to general unrest and disturbance in society.”

Federal funds are not available to ordinary persons. Only indigents can qualify to receive federal benefits. It is highly unlikely that you ever qualified for a Social Security Card. [Section 205\(c\)\(2\)\(B\)\(i\) of the Social Security Act](#) allows government to assign Social Security Numbers to applicants for benefits financed with government funds. Unless you need federal benefits, Social Security Cards are not available to you. You cannot qualify for a number. That's right! SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO CAN PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES. If you can still provide for yourself, or if your family or church or state can support you, it would be fraud to apply for federal benefits.

Let me repeat this essential fact is several ways, until you understand: The application for an SS Card (the [SS-5 form](#)) is a form limited to a very specific purpose. It is only for indigents who need federal funds. People who can provide for themselves cannot be indigent. Social Security Cards cannot be issued to anyone until they apply for federal benefits. The government cannot know who is destitute; they must wait for applicants desperate enough to apply for federal funds. It must be voluntary. Social Security has no trust fund; it is solely a handout. It is limited to government wards. Only socialists can qualify for a card. ONLY THOSE WHO CANNOT SUPPORT THEMSELVES AND ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT SOCIALISM AND WILLING TO SWEAR SO WITH A PERJURY OATH ON A PERMANENT IRREVOCABLE RECORD, CAN QUALIFY TO RECEIVE A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.

To remain constitutional, only wards of the government can receive benefits. This is a vow of poverty. You exchanged your rights to all future wages for the false promise of future benefits. You did so voluntarily. I'll discuss labor rights and poverty vows and taxable wages in other chapters.

According to the legal definition of "Tacit Procuration", you grant them the power of attorney if you expect them to provide for you. You asked them to provide for you - To steal for you. Government does not and cannot create wealth, it must tax in order to give. Government cannot provide benefits unless it takes them from someone else. Socialism is theft of your neighbor's money. Your new master will take money from your neighbors, against their will, and over their objections. These civil servants will eventually resort to the force of guns, on your behalf, to seize property from any neighbor who stubbornly and repeatedly refuses to hand over whatever is demanded. It is theft. They call it distraint. It is not insurance. Proverbs 1:10-19 gives us advice about those who entrap the innocent to fill their house with plunder.

In Matt 20:25-27 and Mark 10:42-43 and Luke 22:25-27 Jesus tells us to not have dominion over others, but to serve. CHRISTIANS SERVE. CHRISTIANS DON'T LORD over those who are not under them. Not by force, not by vote, not by hiring a servant and then delegating to the servant an authority to steal - an authority that you don't have. Again: Christians don't have dominion over their neighbors. You cannot tax your neighbors to fund your retirement, and that's exactly what you are doing by collecting a Social Security Check, because the government isn't paying back the money you put in. As a matter of fact, it pays back many times the value of the money you put in and doesn't maintain a trust balance at all. Everything it takes in is paid right back out to beneficiaries!

Since there is no trust fund (nor can there be one) - Only by the deepest commitment to covetousness can you force others to pay for your retirement (or pay your doctor bills, or pay to educate your children). You are coveting your neighbors' goods. You are forcing your dominion over those who are not subject to your authority, contrary to Christ's command.

Conversely, if your bank account and property can be seized to pay for your neighbor's retirement (or doctor bills or tuition), then you must have somehow lost your right to keep `your' property or money. What do you suppose that you signed to waive any right to keep `your' property?

Have you become surety for the debts of a stranger? The security in Social Security is social. Look up "social insurance" in a law dictionary. You have become surety for your neighbor. Proverbs 11:15 "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure." Also: Proverbs 17:18

Only wards of the government (card carrying socialists) can receive the benefits of National Socialism.

SS is not a trust fund or insurance, it is an excise tax on the benefits of a limited citizenship (including the government granted privilege of earning wages). This tax revenue goes into the general fund. Authority for this taxation comes from the Buck Act, not the Internal Revenue Code. It is presumed, but not required, that congress will appropriate funds each year for maintenance of the government wards. The Supreme Court ruled in 1980 that Social Security benefits are not based on a fixed contract and therefore can change or be eliminated at any time. *Fleming v. Nestor*, 80 SCt 1367.

In the 1891 naturalization case of Mr. Sauer, Title 81 Federal Reporter page 358 the court held that Mr. Sauer, although an industrious, law abiding man, could not become a citizen because he claimed to be a Socialist. Socialists could not become citizens. And they still cannot. I have another chapter that cites every court case where people were forced to get Social Security numbers. Every case is a welfare applicant. Social Security Numbers are only for socialists. Socialists cannot have rights. Read Appendix C of *Social Security: Mark of the Beast* (<http://famguardian.org/Publications/SocialSecurity/TOC.htm>) and prove to yourself that they have changed their citizenship and are not protected by the first eight amendments to your Constitution (Hague case) and do not have the right to a trial by jury (Colegate case). If you want to loose your birthright just fill out a form claiming socialist benefits. If you think you still have a right to a trial by jury, read Appendix F of Mark of the Beast.

A Christian cannot be a socialist. Christians are not to associate with freeloaders, according to 2nd Thessalonians 3:6-14:

2nd Thessalonians 3:6 (NIV): In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

3:7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you,

3:8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.

3:9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.

3:10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." I want to interject a note here: this isn't a snobbish threat to starve the poor, it is a fundamental Biblical principle. In the same sentence where God condemned us to die, he condemned us to work for food. That's right! To acknowledge socialism is to deny God's authority. Genesis 3:19 (KJV): "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." The socialists that want you to provide not only their food but also health care, deny God's authority to sentence us to hardships.

3:11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.

3:12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

3:13 And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

3:14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed."

That the freeloader may feel ashamed. I've been told that I am too sarcastic just because I quote the Bible.

Do not confuse voluntary charity with forced socialism. Christians are often in need of charity, yet cannot accept socialism.

"We have rights, as individuals, to give as much of our own money as we please to charity; but as members of Congress we have no right so to appropriate a dollar of public money."

[David Crockett, Congressman 1827-35]

Does the Bible support the notion that socialism can provide for Christians? Let's take a closer look:

- 1st Thessalonians 2:9 (NIV): " Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone ..."
- 1st Thessalonians 4:11-12 "work with your hands...so that you will not be dependent on anybody."
- 1st Corinthians 4:11 (NIV): "To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless." [note: they were homeless but they were not freeloaders. Even Christ was homeless, Matt 8:20, Luke 9:58.]
- Proverbs 10:26: (NKJV) "As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy man to those who send him."
- Proverbs 20:4: (NKJV): "The lazy man will not plow because of winter; he will beg during harvest and have nothing."
- Proverbs 21:25 (KJV): "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour."
- Ephesians 4:28 (NIV): "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."
- Acts 14:22 (NIV) ... "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," [You will understand this after you study the topic of citizenship]
- Luke 19:26 (NIV): "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.'"
- 2nd Corinthians 11:9 (NIV) "And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone,... I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so."
- 2nd Corinthians 7:2 (NIV) "... we have exploited no one. "

- Jesus is quoted in Matthew 25:29-30 (KJV) "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- Proverbs 13:4 (NIV) "The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied."
- Proverbs 20:4 (KJV) "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."

If a Christian cannot be a socialist, then a Christian cannot have an ID card available only to socialists. Theodore Roosevelt:

"The first requisite of a citizen in this Republic of ours, is that he shall be able and willing to pull his own weight."

As further proof that socialists have never had rights, in Appendix C of *Social Security: Mark of the Beast* read where the Articles of Confederation extended the rights of citizenship to inhabitants with the exceptions of paupers and vagabonds and fugitives. A vagrant is not a vagabond. Even Christ was homeless (Matt 8:20, Luke 9:58). A vagabond is a homeless freeloader. A pauper is a person that must be supported at public expense. Social Security partakers are supported at public expense, therefore cannot have the rights of citizens anymore than a fugitive would have.

The English word "stigma" comes from the Greek and, in English, means a mark of shame or a brand of disgrace. The third six in 666 is the Greek *stigma* (666= *chi-xi-stigma*). The mark is not necessarily a tattoo or implant. Do you have a permanent mark of shame?

Conclusions so far: There is no Social Security trust fund, there is no insurance, and there is no pension. It is plunder. It is pure orthodox socialism. Socialists are not and cannot become citizens. Socialists cannot have rights. Never could, still can't. Christians cannot be socialists. Christians cannot have socialist ID. Did your government school teach you this?

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Karl Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Public schools is the 10th plank. As I said earlier: Those who accept public benefits cannot have rights. Rights can only come from responsibilities. You have no right to force others to pay your children's tuition. Hillary Clinton's village will raise the children of those who forfeit their rights to their own children. Even the U.S. Supreme Court in *Meyer v. Nebraska*, [262 US 390](#) (1923), concluded

"it is the natural duty of the parent to give his children education suitable to their station in life..."

The U.S. Supreme Court in *Plyler v. Doe*, [457 US 202](#) (1982), concluded,

- "...education is not a fundamental right..."
- "the Fourteenth Amendment's protection extends to anyone, citizen or stranger, who is subject to the laws of a State..."

US Congressman in the 1840's Robert Dale Owen, later known as the father of American socialism, believed that the Christian faith hindered man's evolution. An Owen associate wrote:

"The great object was to get rid of Christianity and to convert our churches into halls of science... the plan was not to make open attacks upon religion - although we might belabor the clergy and bring them into contempt where we could ... but to establish a

system of state - we said national - schools... from which all religion would be excluded and to which all parents were to be compelled by law to send their children."

These views influenced John Dewey at the Columbia Teacher's College, and by 1900 a socialist system of compulsory schools, which exclude religion, became a reality.

SUMMARY

The seven-headed scarlet beast is a socialist confederation of beast powers that raised up from the sea. The sea symbolizes multitudes of people (Rev 17:5). Seas of people (democracies) demand socialist benefits. These people received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. They want to be taken care of, but not by God. They won't accept the responsibility to take care of themselves, or suffer God's trials. They fabricated a counterfeit image of God [the government] to provide for them and protect them. They get their rights from their god that they created. This is without a doubt idolatry and the new god is government. Here is the way one of our readers described it:

*"The people want 'Zeus' and 'Gods'/'gods' --- paganism!
'They' got PAY-GUN-ISM!!!"*
[<http://www.bayith-yhvh.org/index.Segmented~1.htm.html>]

They expect you to worship their counterfeit image of God. In their courts, your rights come from the god they created.

Abraham Lincoln, September 11, 1858: "Accustomed to trampling on the rights of others, you have lost the genius of your own independence and become the fit subjects of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you."

If you want to learn more about the subject of this section, we refer you to a document entitled: *Social Security: Mark of the Beast*, which you can freely download and read at:

<http://famguardian.org/Publications/SocialSecurity/TOC.htm>

7.4.6 Government-instituted slavery using "privileges"

"In the matter of taxation, every privilege is an injustice." -- Voltaire

"The more you want, the more the world can hurt you." Confucius

"If you think of yourselves as helpless and ineffectual, it is certain that you will create a despotic government to be your master. The wise despot, therefore, maintains among his subjects a popular sense that they are helpless and ineffectual."
[Frank Herbert, *The Dosadi Experiment*]

Anyone who has been married instinctively knows what "privilege-induced slavery" is. They understand that you have to give up some of your "rights" for the benefits and "privileges" associated with being married. For instance, one of the rights that the government forces you to give up using the instrument it created called the "marriage license", especially if you are a man, is sovereignty over your property and your labor. As we said in the previous section, if you get married with a state marriage license, then control over your property and labor is surrendered ultimately to the government, because if your spouse becomes dissatisfied, the marriage license gives the government absolute authority to hijack all your property and your labor for the imputed "public good", but as you

will find out, the chief result of this hijacking is actually injustice . The marriage license authorizes a family law judge to abuse your property and your labor without your voluntary consent to create a welfare state for women intent on rebelling against their husbands and using marriage as a means of economic equalization. We explain in our book entitled *Sovereign Christian Marriage* that this very characteristic of marriage licenses issued by the state accomplishes the following unjust results:

- Usurps and rebels against the sovereignty of God by interfering with His plan for marriage and family clearly spelled out in the Bible.
- Encourages spouses to get divorced, because at least one of them will be financially rewarded with the property and labor of the other for doing so.
- Makes marriage into legalized prostitution, where the sex comes *during* the marriage and the money comes *after* marriage and the state and family court judge becomes the pimp and the family law attorneys become tax collectors for the pimp.

The above defects in the institution of marriage caused by state-issued marriage licenses, of course, are the natural result of violating God's/Natural law on marriage found in the Bible, where Eph. 5:22-24 makes the *man*, and not the *government* or the *woman*, the sovereign in the context of families. This is what happens whenever mankind rebels against God's authority by trying to improve on God's design for the family: massive injustice. Remember, that God created man *first*, and out of man's rib was created woman, which makes man the sovereign, and this conclusion is completely consistent with the concept of Natural Order we discussed earlier in section 7.2.

“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is made in the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.”
[1 Cor. 11:7-9, Bible, NKJV]

If you are going to arrogantly call this attitude chauvinistic, politically incorrect, or bigoted then you're slapping God in the face and committing blasphemy because this is the way GOD designed the system and who are YOU to question that?

“But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”
[Romans 9:20-21, Bible, NKJV]

If you would like to learn more about this subject, we refer you to our free *Sovereign Christian Marriage* book posted on our website at:

<http://famguardian.org/TaxFreedom/Forms/Marriage/SovChristianMarriage.pdf>

The government uses this very same concept of privilege induced slavery in the “constructive contract” you in effect sign by becoming a “citizen” or availing yourself of a government benefit. Here is the phrase that one of our astute readers uses to describe it in his book *Social Security, Mark of the Beast*, which is posted on our website for your reading pleasure:

“Protection draws subjection.”
[Steven Miller]

In a sense, when you become a “citizen”, you “marry” the state in order to have its protection. Like marriage licenses, signing the “citizenship contract” means you give up some of your rights, and as a

matter of fact, the government wants you to believe that you give up the same rights by becoming a citizen as you do by getting a marriage license. When you marry the federal government by becoming a “U.S. citizen”, you in effect are assimilated into the federal corporation called the “United States” defined in 28 U.S.C. §3002(15)(A) and are classified by the courts as an officer of that corporation in receipt of taxable privileges. You also then become completely subject to the jurisdiction of that corporation. If you are a child of God, at the point when you married the state as a citizen, you united God with an idolatrous, mammon state and sold yourself into legal slavery voluntarily, in direct violation of the Bible:

*“**No man can serve two masters:** for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”*
[Matt. 6:24, Bible]

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”
[2 Cor. 6:14, Bible, NKJV]

As expected, God’s law once again says that we should not become citizens of this world:

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”
[Philippians 3:20]

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”
[Hebrews 11:13]

“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul...”
[1Peter 2:1]

“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
[James 4:4]

One of the reasons God doesn’t want us to become citizens of this world is because when we do, we have violated the first commandment and committed idolatry, by replacing God with an artificial god called government, who then provides protection for us that we for one reason or another can’t or won’t trust or have faith in God to provide. This lack of faith then becomes our downfall. The words of the Apostle Paul resolve why this is:

*“But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; **for whatever is not from faith [in God] is sin.**”*
[Rom. 14:23, Bible, NKJV]

In a very real sense, the government has simply learned how to use propaganda to create fear and insecurity in the people, and then they invent vehicles to turn eliminating your fear into a profit center that requires you to become citizens and pay taxes to support. For instance, they use the Federal Reserve to create the Great Depression by contracting the money supply, and then they get these abused people worried and feeling insecure about retirement and security in the early 1930’s, and then invent a new program called Social(ist) Security to help eliminate their fear and restore your sense of security. But remember, in the process of procuring the “privilege” to be free of anxiety about old age,

you have surrendered sovereignty over your person and labor to the government, and they then have the moral authority to tax your wages and make you into a serf and a peon to pay off the federal debt accumulated to run that program.

Another favorite trick of governments is to make something illegal and then turn it into a “privilege” that is taxed. This is how governments maximize their revenues. They often call the tax a “license fee”, as if to imply that you never had the right to do that activity without a license. You will never hear a government official admit to it, but the government reasoning is that the tax amounts to a “bribe” or “tribute” to the government to get them to honor or respect some privilege and to enforce it in a court of law. They will even try to treat your rights this way! Here is what the courts have to say about this kind of despicable behavior by the government:

“A right common in every citizen such as the right to own property or to engage in business of a character not requiring regulation CANNOT, however, be taxed as a special franchise by first prohibiting its exercise and then permitting its enjoyment upon the payment of a certain sum of money.”

[Stevens v. State, 2 Ark. 291; 35 Am. Dec. 72, Spring Val. Water Works v. Barber, 99 Cal. 36, 33 Pac. 735, 21 L.R.A. 416. Note 57 L.R.A. 416]

Clear thinking about our freedom and liberty demands that when faced with situations like this, we ask ourselves, where does the government derive its authority and “privileges”(?)...from the PEOPLE! The Declaration of Independence says so:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Instead, we ought to charge government employees a tax for the “privilege” of having the authority and the “privilege” from the people to govern them, and the tax that government servants pay us for that privilege should be equal to whatever they charge us for the privileges they delegate back to us using the authority we gave them! We need to think clearly about this because it’s very easy to get trapped in bad logic by deceitful lawyers and politicians who want to get into your bank account and enslave you with their unjust laws and taxes. We should always remember who the public servants are and who the public is. We are the public and government employees are the servants! Start acting like the boss for once and tell the government what you expect out of them. The only reason the government continues to listen to us is because:

- We vote our officials into office.
- We can buy guns to protect ourselves from government abuse.
- If we don’t like the laws they pass, we can nullify them every time we sit down on a jury or a grand jury.

For instance, the government started issuing marriage licenses in about 1923 and charged people for the “privilege”. But then we have to ask ourselves what a license is. A license is permission from the state to perform an act which, without a license, would be illegal. Is it illegal to get married without the blessing of the state? Did Adam and Eve have a marriage license from God? Absolutely NOT. Marriage licenses, driver’s licenses, and professional licenses are a scam designed to increase control of the state over your life and turn you into a financial slave and serf to the government!

The IRS uses privilege-induced slavery to its advantage as well. For instance, it:

1. Sets the rate of withholding for a given income slightly higher than it needs to be so that Americans who paid tax will have to file to get their money back. In the process of filing, these unwitting citizens:
 - 1.1. Have to incriminate themselves on their tax returns.
 - 1.2. Forfeit most of the Constitutional rights, including the First (right to NOT communicate with your government), Fourth (seizure), and Fifth Amendment (self-incrimination) protections.
 - 1.3. Tell the IRS their employer, which later allows the IRS to serve the private employer illegally with a “Notice of Levy” and steal assets in violation of due process protections in the Constitution in the Fifth Amendment.
2. On the W-4 form, makes it a privilege just to hold onto your income. The regulations written by the Treasury illegally (and unconstitutionally) say that if a person does not submit a W-4 or submits an incorrect W-4, the employer (who really isn’t an “employer” because it isn’t a federal employer who has “employees” as defined in 26 CFR § 31.3401(c)) must withhold at the single zero rate. Thus, it becomes a “privilege” to just receive the money you earned *without* tax deducted! The only way you can preserve the “privilege” is to incriminate yourself by filling out the W-4, in violation of the Fifth Amendment.
3. The federal judiciary and the IRS will wickedly tell you that because of the Anti-Injunction Act found at 26 U.S.C. §7421, if you dispute the amount of tax you owe or you assert non-liability, you must pay the tax FIRST before you are permitted to file a lawsuit and subject your case to judicial review. In effect, what Congress has done by legislation is forced you to bribe the government in order to have the privilege to sue them! If you assert that you are a “nontaxpayer” and a person not liable for tax, the IRS will try to get your case dismissed because corrupt judges will assert “sovereign immunity”. See section 8.4.2 for further details on this scam. For those of you who are Christians, this scam quite clearly violates the bible, which declares:

“And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.”
[Exodus 23:8]

4. Your state government will tell you that you MUST give them a valid Social Security Number in order for you to get a state driver’s license. They will do this in spite of the fact that traveling is a right and not a government privilege. In the words of the U.S. Supreme Court and lower courts:

“The right to travel is part of the ‘liberty’ that a citizen cannot be deprived without due process of law.”
[*Kent v. Dulles*, [357 U.S. 116](#) (1958); *U.S. v. Laub*, [385 U.S. 475](#) (1967)]

“The use of the highways for the purpose of travel and transportation is not a mere privilege, but a common and fundamental Right of which the public and the individual cannot be rightfully deprived.” -Chicago Motor Coach vs. Chicago, 169 NE 22; Ligare vs. Chicago, 28 NE 934; Boon vs. Clark, 214 SSW 607; 25 Am.Jur. (1st) Highways Sect.163.

To give you just one more example of how privilege-induced slavery leads to abuse, let’s look at licenses to practice law. The only rational basis for having any kind of professional license is consumer protection, but the legal profession has totally distorted and twisted this concept to benefit them, which amounts to a massive conflict of interest. For instance:

1. Only licensed attorneys can defend others in court. This prevents family members or friends or paralegals from providing low-cost legal assistance in court, and creates a greater marketplace and monopoly for legal services by attorneys. This also means that a lot more people go without legal representation, because they can’t afford to hire a lawyer to represent them. Is that justice, or is that simply the spread of oppression and injustice in the name of profit for the legal profession?
2. Even if the attorney is licensed to practice law from the socialist state, the court can revoke their right to defend anyone in a court of law. For instance:
 - 2.1. Look at what the court did to attorney Jeffrey Dickstein in *United States v. Collins*, 920 F.2d 619, (10th Cir. 11/27/1990), which we showed in section 6.6.4.5. If you look at the

ruling for this case, you will find that the court withdrew defendant Collins right to be represented by Attorney Dickstein, because they called attorney Dickstein a “vexatious litigant”. He was therefore deprived of his choice of competent legal counsel, because the court viewed his counsel as “politically incorrect”.

- 2.2. Refer also to what the court did to attorney Oscar Stilley in section 6.5.1, as he defended Dr. Phil Roberts on tax charges. The court said, and we quote:

“The practice of law, sir, is a privilege, especially in Federal Court. You’re close to losing that privilege in this court, Mr. Stilley.”

3. Clients with attorneys are given favoritism by the court in the award of attorney fees against the other side. This leads attorneys to inflate their fees if they expect sanctions, in order to coerce the opposing side to settle. In most courts, pro per or pro se litigants are either not allowed or seldom are awarded attorney fees against the opposing side. Only litigants who have counsel can get attorney fee awards by the court. In effect, the courts treat the time and expense of pro per litigants in defending themselves as irrelevant and completely without value! That’s right..if you as a pro per litigant keep track of your time diligently and bill for it at a rate less than an attorney in your motion for sanctions against the other side, the judge (who incidentally used to be a lawyer and probably still has lawyer golf buddies he wants to bring business to) will laugh you out of the courtroom! This has the effect of incentivizing people to have expensive legal counsel and incentivizes the lawyers to prolong the litigation and maximize their hourly rate to maximize their income. If you then ask a judge why they don’t award attorney fee sanctions to pro per litigants, he might get defensive and say: “*Pro per litigants are high maintenance, and make extra work for the court because they don’t know what they are doing.*” And yet these same courts and judges are the ones who earlier, as attorneys practicing law, intimidated and perpetuated the very ignorance on the part of their clients that made these people ignorant litigants as pro pers! All this rhetoric is just a smokescreen for the real agenda, which is maximizing business for and profits of those who practice law, and restricting the supply of qualified talent in order to keep the prices and the income of attorneys artificially high.

If we avail ourselves of a “privilege” granted by the state through operation of any statute that does not involve the exercise of a fundamental right, then we cannot have a constitutional grounds for redress of grievances against the statute:

“Anyone who partakes of the benefits or privileges of a given statute, or anyone who even places himself into a position where he may avail himself of those benefits at will, cannot reach constitutional grounds to redress grievances in the courts against the given statute.”

[Ashwander v. T.V.A., 297 U.S. 288, 346, 56 S. Ct. 466, 482, 80 L.Ed. 688, (1938)][underlines added]

But if we are simply trying to exist, by working and receiving a paycheck, voting, serving on jury duty, and fulfilling our various civic and family duties, we cannot be taxed for the mere privilege of existing:

*“The individual, unlike the corporation, cannot be taxed for the mere privilege of existing. The corporation is an artificial entity which owes its existence and charter power to the State, but the individual’s right to live and own property are natural rights for the enjoyment of which an excise cannot be imposed.” *Redfield v. Fisher*, 292 Oregon 814, 817*

“Legislature...cannot name something to be a taxable privilege unless it is first a privilege.” [Taxation West Key 43]... **“The Right to receive income or earnings is a right belonging to every person and realization and receipt of income is therefore not a ‘privilege’, that can be taxed.”**
 [Taxation West Key 933]-**Jack Cole Co. v. MacFarland**, 337 S.E. 2d 453, Tenn.

7.4.7 **Civil Disobedience to Corrupt Governments is a Biblical Mandate**

“The reward of energy, enterprise and thrift is taxes.” -- William Feather

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**”*
 [Romans 12:1-2, Bible, NKJV]

There are several new testament verses that are quoted out of context by alleged government authorities and false churches in order to deceive people into believing that they should support their man-made governments and obey their man-made law. This, however, is not the case, as God has never given His people authority to make their own law or to walk in the statutes of men.

Therefore, a more detailed look is necessary regarding these scriptures so that the deception can clearly be seen. One verse that is relentlessly misquoted is “...render unto Caesar!” found in Mark 12:14-17, where Jesus said:

“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.”
 [Mark 12:14-17, Bible, NKJV].

When Jesus said this, he was totally aware of God’s Law, and we can be sure that he was not telling the teachers of the law to do contrary to God’s Law. Let’s see just exactly what Jesus meant by “the things which are Caesar’s” when he said this.

First of all, who was this “Caesar” that Jesus was referring to, but the equivalent of a king? Let’s see who the king is in our society according to the supreme Court:

*“Sovereignty itself is, of course, not subject to law, for it is the author and source of law; but **in our system, while sovereign powers are delegated to the agencies of government, sovereignty itself remains with the people, by whom and for whom all government exists and acts.**”*
 [Yick Wo v. Hopkins, [118 U.S. 356](#); 6 S.Ct. 1064 (1886)]

*“The people of this State, as the successors of its former sovereign, are entitled to all the rights which formerly belonged to the King by his prerogative. **Through the medium of their Legislature they may exercise all the powers which previous to the Revolution could have been exercised either by the King alone, or by him in conjunction with his Parliament; subject only to those restrictions which have been imposed by the Constitution of this State or of the U.S.**”*
 [Lansing v. Smith, 21 D. 89., 4 Wendel 9 (1829) (New York)]

The real “king” in our society is *not* the government or anyone *serving* the sovereign people in the government, but the PEOPLE! That’s you! So even if you misinterpret Jesus’ words to mean that we should render to corrupt government “servants” that which it illegally asks for and demands, since your

own government calls you the king, then your public servants are the ones who should be “rendering”! Render to the king (Caesar, that’s you) his due, which is everything that is his property and his right, including 100% of his earned wage.

*“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’”
[Jesus in the Bible, John 15:20]*

Why does the IRS insist on arguing with the King and violating this scripture? Therefore, covetous public servants in the government, from a Biblical perspective, simply can’t be greater than the sovereigns they serve in the public at large or they are violating God’s law. Plain and simple, isn’t it?

The context for the “Render to Caesar” quote above was that the Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus. They were the teachers of the Law, and knew full well what God’s word says about laws and governments other than God’s. The Pharisees knew ALL of the following:

They knew that even their own Israelite kings could not make any law, but could only administer God’s law, not turning aside from God’s commandments, to the right hand, or to the left:

[Deut 17:14] [The word of the Lord through his servant Moses]: When thou [Israel] art come unto the land which the LORD thy God gives thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;

[Deut 17:18] And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: [17:19] and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: [17:20] That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand. Or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

Not adding to it, or diminishing from it:

[Deut 12:32] What thing soever I command you [all Israel], observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

The Pharisees knew that it was a sin to walk in the statutes of the heathen, and that if their OWN ISRAELITE KINGS made any statutes, it was a SIN to walk in their statutes as well:

[2 Ki 17:6] In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. [17:7] for so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, [17:8] And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. [2Ki 17:18] Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. [17:19] Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

The Pharisees knew that God’s people have laws that are different from all other people’s [God’s Laws] and that even in foreign lands they do not keep the king’s laws:

[Est 3:8] Then Haman [the highest prince in the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians] said to King Hauser's [the king of the Medes and the Persians who reigned from India to Ethiopia], "There is a certain people [The Jews; Judeans who were obedient to God's Law] scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. . ."

The Pharisees knew the principle that consenting with a thief, be he king or commoner, makes one a partaker with that thief—and an apostate:

[Ps 50:18] When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

Adulterers—Strong's reference number: 5003

Hebrew: na'aph

Definition: to commit adultery; fig. to apostatize

The Pharisees knew that those who participate in evil through the use of an agent are guilty of the act themselves:

[2 Sa 11:14] And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab [his agent], and sent it by the hand of Uriah. [11:15] And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. [11:16] And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. [11:17] And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

[2 Sa 11:26] And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. [11:27] And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

[2 Sa 12:9] [Then Nathan said to David] Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, [through the use of an agent] and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Therefore, by the same principle, the Pharisees knew that participating in a heathen government by financing someone else [an agent] to enforce heathen laws makes the one who pays the tribute guilty of the acts of the heathen government.

The Pharisees knew that those who are obedient to God will not pay toll, tribute, and custom to a heathen king ["Caesar"]:

[Ezr 4:6] Now in the reign of Ahasuerus [a heathen king ("Caesar")], in the beginning of his reign, they [the king's people through their agents, the counselors] wrote an accusation [to the king] against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. [saying the following:][4:12] Let it be known to the king that the Jews [who obey God's law, not the king's law] who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem, and are building the rebellious and evil city, [from the king's point of view only; righteous and obedient from God's point of view] and are finishing its walls and repairing the foundations. [4:13] Let it now be known to the king that, if this city is built and the walls completed, they will

not pay tax, tribute, or custom, and the king's treasury will be diminished. [They will pay no tribute to "Caesar"]. [NKJ]

[4:16] We certify the king that, if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion [no tribute to "Caesar"] on this side the river. [KJV]

The Pharisees knew that the throne of iniquity cannot have fellowship with God:

[Ps 94:20] Shall the throne of iniquity [wicked rulers] have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? [make enactments or decrees which condemn innocent blood by adding to or diminishing from God's Law]

The Pharisees knew that the people in whose heart is God's law are to obey His Law and are not to fear the reproach of men:

[Is 51:7] Hearken unto me [the Lord], ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

[Is 51:12] I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass... "

The Pharisees knew God's admonition about doing after the manners of the heathen:

[Eze 11:10] Ye [Israel] shall fall by the sword; I [the Lord] will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

[Eze 11:12] And ye shall know that I am the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you.

Note: The Hebrew word translated to "manners" speaks specifically of governmental and judicial activity. Here, Ezekiel is not speaking of "ways or customs" of the heathen, he is speaking about the "statutes, ordinances, judgments, laws and government" of the heathen.

Manners—Strong's reference number: 4941

Hebrew: mishpat

Derivation: Derived from 8199

Definition: prop. a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, espec. A sentence or formal decree (human or [partic.] divine law, individual or collect.) include. The act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstr. justice, include. right, or privilege (statutory or customary), or even a style

Manners—Strong's reference number: 8199

Hebrew: shaphat

Derivation: A primary word.

Definition: to judge, i.e., pronounce sentence (for or against); impl. vindicate or punish; by extens. To govern; pass. To litigate (lit. or fig.)

The Pharisees knew that God's people do not obey wicked governments that have other gods even if they are thrown into a fiery furnace:

[Dan 3:16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. [3:17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.

[3:18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." [NIV]

[3:19] Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Therefore he spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. [3:20] And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. [NKJ]

The Pharisees knew that God's people do not obey wicked governments even if they are thrown into a lion's den:

[Dan 6:7] All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. [Dan 6:10] Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

[Dan 6:16] Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. . ."

The Pharisees knew that those who have set up kings and princes [governments] but not by God's hand, have trespassed against His law:

[Hos 4:1] [The word of the LORD through the prophet Hosea]: Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

[Hos 8:1] Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He [the enemy] shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they [Israel] have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.

[Hos 8:4] They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I [the Lord] knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

The Pharisees knew that it is a sin to keep statutes made by Israelite kings, let alone a heathen "Caesar":

[Mic 6:13] [The warning of the Lord through his servant Micah]: Therefore also will I [the Lord] make thee [Israel] sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of your sins.

[Mic 6:16] For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab [kings of Israel who made their own statutes], and ye walk in their counsels; that I should

make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

The Pharisees were fully aware that God only allowed “Caesar” to be in power to prove Israel to see whether they would keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not:

[Jdg 2:21] I [the Lord] also will not henceforth drive out any from before them [Israel] of the nations [heathen Caesars, etc.] which Joshua left [unvanquished] when he died: [2:22] That through them [the heathen governments] I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.

[Jdg 3:4] and they [the nations which the LORD left] were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they [Israel] would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

And the Pharisees were aware of the conclusion of the whole matter:

[Ecc 12:13] Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

And finally, the Pharisees knew that when a people, and especially believers, refuse to correct or rebuke sin in their society, then the unrebuked sin of even one evil man could curse the whole society and separate that society from the blessings of the Lord. In the Pharisees time, the evil was that of the King named Caesar, which they could not and would not rebuke and thus became hypocrites, as Jesus called them.

[Matt. 23:23, Bible] “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”

The Pharisees knew their hypocrisy in the matter of rebuking sin at the time they asked the question of Jesus about rendering taxes to Caesar because the Book of Joshua, Chapter 7, written 1400 years earlier, tells the story about Moses’ successor Joshua, who lost a war with the Amorites and the blessings of God because one of his men illegally stole a treasure that was the spoils of war and hid it under his tent and would not confess or right his wrong before God and his people, and preferred to lie about it. The result was that the people felt guilty and cowardly in battle and ran away from the enemy to become the laughing stock of the land. They were cursed by God because they would not confront and correct this evil in their society, which consisted of theft and deceit:

[Joshua 7:11-13] “Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived [the IRS]; and they have also put it among their own stuff.

“Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed [the IRS and the Federal Reserve in our day and age] from among you.”

Get up, sanctify the people [clean up this mess!], and say ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel; “There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.”’

Therefore, knowing all of the above scriptures, the Pharisees laid a trap for Jesus similar to the question: “Have you stopped beating your wife yet?” They were certain that they could trap Jesus into affirming that either: it was lawful to pay tribute to “Caesar”, which they knew to be against God’s Law, and thereby condemning him under God’s Law to pay tribute to a heathen government [Caesar], thereby condemning him under “Caesar’s” “law”. Then the Pharisees could go tell “Caesar”, and thereby get rid of Jesus with the sword of Caesar:

[Mat 22:17] [The Pharisees sent their disciples to Jesus, who said,] Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

Jesus was also versed in the above scriptures. He was fully aware that it is against God’s Law to give tribute to a heathen “Caesar”. He also knew that it would enrage “Caesar” for him to say so. Jesus knew that giving the correct answer was a trap laid for him by the Pharisees, and he evaded their trap by the following: He didn’t define what was or was not “Caesar’s”. He didn’t even affirm that the penny with “Caesar’s” image and superscription was to be rendered to “Caesar”. Jesus’ answer was that the Pharisees should render to “Caesar”, a heathen who did not know or obey God’s Law, exactly what was due to any heathen or Israelite who did not obey God’s Law:

[Num 15:15] One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation [of Israel], and also for the stranger [foreigner; non Israelite] that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. [15:16] One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you. (i.e.: death for breaking God’s Law:

[Deu 27:26] Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law [God’s Law, not Caesar’s law] to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.)

Therefore, the Pharisees knew that what they had just been told was to render unto “Caesar” what God’s Law required: death, and since they were declining to carry out the sentence of the law, they were hypocrites, since they were the enforcement officials of God’s Law and knew what “Caesar” was due under God’s Law. They had also been told that they were doing presumptuously by not hearkening to carry out the sentence of the law and they themselves should be put to death along with “Caesar” in order to put their own evil away from Israel:

[Deu 17:11] According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. [17:12] And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, [and render unto Caesar what Caesar was due, death in this particular case] even that man shall die [the Pharisees, for not carrying out the sentence in this particular case]: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.

This is obviously why the Pharisees marveled at him. They were not about to tell “Caesar” that God’s Law required him to be put to death, because “Caesar” would have then come after the Pharisees. In addition, Jesus had just rebuked both “Caesar” and the Pharisees by stating publicly that both “Caesar” and the Pharisees should be put to death, and the Pharisees who hated Jesus knew it but couldn’t go tell “Caesar” in order to get Jesus in trouble. Also, “Caesar” and his agents didn’t know enough about God’s Law to realize that Jesus said that “Caesar” should be put to death, and “Caesar” thinks to this very day that Jesus was saying to pay tribute. Checkmate. Jesus will, incidentally, render to “Caesar” what is “Caesar’s” at His coming:

[Luk 19:27] [Jesus, speaking of himself in a parable said,] but those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them [kings, “Caesars”, judges of the earth and their followers at His coming], bring hither, and slay them before me.

[Psalm 2:7] [The psalmist foretelling that Jesus will “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s at his coming]: I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son [Jesus]; this day have I begotten thee.

[2:9] Thou [Jesus] shalt break them [the heathen kings (Caesars) and judges] with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. [2:10] Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: [“Caesars”] be instructed, ye judges of the earth. [Note: These verses in Psalm 2 are confirmed to be about Jesus in Acts 13:33; Heb 1:1-5; Heb 5:5, and by Jesus Himself in Rev 2:26-27].

[Zec 14:9] [Zechariah prophesying that Jesus will “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s” at His coming]: And the LORD [Jesus] shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

[14:12] And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD [Jesus] will smite all the people [kings, “Caesars”, judges of the earth and all who follow them] that have fought against Jerusalem [Jesus’ capital city when He comes with his saints]; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. [Note: These verses can be seen to be about Jesus in Mat 25:31-32; Mat 28:18; Joh 18:37; 1Ti 6:13-15; Rev 11:15; Rev 19:14; Rev 20:4-6].

Continuing with Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees:

[Mat 22:18] But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? [22:19] Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. [22:20] And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? [22:21] They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.

[Mar 12:14] And when they [certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians] were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? [12:15] Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny, that I may see it. [12:16] and they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar’s [12:17] and Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s. And they marveled at him.

[Luke 20:22] [The chief priests and scribes asked Jesus,] Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? [20:23] but he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? [20:24] shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar’s. [20:25] and he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.

From that day forward, the Pharisees and the Sadducees would not ask Jesus any further questions:

[Mat 22:46] And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore. [NKJ]

[Luk 20:39] Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." [20:40] but after that they dared not question Him anymore. [NKJ]

Jesus was not calling for revolution against Rome, even though it was an oppressive conqueror of Israel. On the other hand, his apostles refused to obey a government order not to preach and teach in Jesus' name (Acts 5:27-29). On that occasion, one of Jesus' apostles said:

"We ought to obey God rather than men."

The same admonition to obey God rather than man is found in Psalm 118:8-9

*"It is better to trust the Lord
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the Lord
Than to put confidence in princes."
[Psalm 118:8-9, Bible, NKJV]*

Finally, the Apostle Paul agreed with and reiterated these conclusions by saying that that it is scandalous for Christians to use civil rather than ecclesiastical courts in order to settle our disputes:

*1Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, **go to law** before the unjust, and not before the saints?*

*1Corinthians 6:7 Now therefore **there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law [in a civil rather than ecclesiastical court] one with another.** Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather [suffer yourselves to] be defrauded?*

The Roman Tribute Coin

5. Tiberius; 14 - 37 A.D.; AR denarius; the "Tribute Penny" of the Bible. In Mark 12:14-17 the Temple priests, testing Jesus, asked Him:

And when they were come, they say unto him, "Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?"

But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, "Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny (denarius), that I may see [it]."

And they brought [it]. And he saith unto them, "Whose [is] this image and superscription?" And they said unto him, "Caesar's."

And Jesus answering said unto them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him.

Obv: Laureate head of Tiberius, r. Rev: Livia, as Pax, seated on the reverse.

The account of the Tribute to Caesar is more extensively covered in Matthew, chapter 22. In this account, and others, the bible clearly shows that as soon as the Herodians understood the answer that they received, they marveled at the answer, and went on their way. After that time, they ceased to question Him any more.

When you research out the origin and lineage of the term “Pontifus Maximus”, you find the Babylonian origin. Essentially, it is saying that “Caesar is God.” This title was later adopted by the Roman Popes.

Conclusions

Aren't we supposed to obey the authority over us? Yes, as long as there is no conflict with God's law. Blind obedience to all civil authority dictates, wishes, whims etc. is not always necessary though. Furthermore, if blind obedience to civil authority is really the rule to live by, I have some thought provoking questions for those who preach that false doctrine to answer:

1. Was it right for Moses parents to disobey the civil authority over them and not kill their baby? The Hebrew midwives disobeyed the civil authority and God blessed them. See Ex. 1.
2. Was it right for Peter and the disciples to disobey civil authority and keep preaching Christ? See Acts 5.
3. Was it right for Samson to disobey the civil authority (the Philistines ruled the land)? See Judges 16.
4. Was it right for the prophets to disobey the civil authority and proclaim their message at the risk of life, limb and property? See Hebrews 11.
5. Was it right for Daniel to disobey the civil authority and pray to God in spite of the command by the absolute dictator not to do so? See Daniel 6.
6. Was it right for the founding fathers like Patrick Henry, George Washington, etc. to disobey King George, the civil authority over them, and begin this great land we now freely enjoy? I suggest you re-read the Declaration of independence and try to see the motive of those great and godly men.
7. If tyranny is not the government ordained by God, is it right to resist tyranny? See the entire history of the nation of Israel in their struggle against various tyrants.
8. Was it right for the Germans at the concentration camps to obey their elected or appointed civil authority and kill the Jews?

9. Have the IRS's chains of slavery become comfortable to you and you prefer them and the peace and safety of not standing for what is right over liberty? See Patrick Henry's famous speech. It applies very well here.
10. Was it right for the French underground to disobey the civil authority and blow up German tanks, bridges etc during WW II?
11. Was it right for the men in the book of Judges to disobey the civil authority over them and rebel against their rulers?
12. Was it right for the united States to oppose the aggression of Hitler? Sadam Hussein? Japan at Pearl Harbor? Etc.
13. If someone steals your car, kidnaps your kids or rapes your wife will you call the police (use the civil authorities and legal system) and/or defend your family physically and legally?
14. If the pacifist position is what some are now preaching, should Bible colleges and churches expel students and church members who go into the military or refuse entrance or membership to those who are in or have been in the military in order to be consistent?
15. Was it right for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to disobey the civil authority by not bowing on command? See Daniel 3.
16. In Acts 5 and 12 Peter disobeyed the civil authorities over him. He walked past the sleeping guards, out of jail and fled the country. This was illegal for him to do. Is this the same Peter who wrote the I Peter passage we preach from about obeying authority?

When one understands that the answer Jesus gave to whether we should pay taxes was given under Hebrew law, then they understand that the same fate awaits all who pay the tribute to Caesar that God will mete out for Caesar, then we can see that Jesus was clearly saying, "Do not pay taxes unto Caesar", as was alleged at His trial. See Luke 23:2, where the people accused Jesus of forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, which said:

[Luke 23:2, KJV] And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this [fellow] perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

See also: First Samuel 8:7-19 in which we learn God's displeasure with those who refused to be governed by Him and instead decided to elect their own King [government], who God said would oppress them.

And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.

"According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also.

*"Now therefore heed their voice, **However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.**"*

So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots.

"He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

"He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.

"And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants.

“He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants.

“And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

*“He will take a tenth of your sheep. **And you will be his servants.***

“And you will cry out in that day because your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day.”

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, “No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

What God was saying is that we should not appoint our government to rule over us, but to have them serving us and for God to rule over us as the sovereigns in charge of the government.

*“Away with you , Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him **ONLY** [**NOT the government!**] you shall serve.’”*
[Matt. 4:10]

He was saying this because he knew that tyranny and a dictatorship would be the ultimate result, which would be oppressive and sinful.

*“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. **Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave**---just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*
[Matthew 20:25-28, Bible, NKJV]

Is our present government our servant? Does the Internal Revenue **SERVICE** serve you? Our founding fathers ensured that the U.S. government started out in 1776 as our servant by limiting its power with a masterful system of checks and balances. They did this because the abuses and tyranny of the British king were fresh in their minds. But since then, we have forgotten what God told us and looked the other way while our Congress [who has unlawfully made itself into the the equivalent of the king in biblical times] and its henchmen in the IRS [the king's tax collectors] have transformed themselves from servants to tyrannical dictators by slowly but systematically rewriting the laws because the apathetic populace they created using the public education system let them get away with it. Revelation 18:3-8 describes what the reward is to be for those who seek to be part of such a corrupt government or those who trust in and do not rebel against such a government: God is talking below about Babylon, which is a metaphor for all the graft and corruption that results from human government unrestricted by the checks and balances that our founding fathers put into the U.S. Constitution and unaccountable to God. Earlier in Revelation 17, Babylon the Great is described as “The Great Harlot who sits on many waters with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication” (Rev. 17:1-2). We believe that this great Harlot is really the bride of Christ (his church/people) described by Paul in Eph. 5:22-24 which never married her husband, Christ, and therefore becomes a harlot and commits fornication with Satan. Here’s Rev. 18:3-8:

“For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."

"For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

"Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her."

"In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'"

"Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

Look above again at what is REALLY supposed to be "rendered to Caesar [Babylon]" in Revelation 18:6-8:

"Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her."

"In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'"

"Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

So the reward for trusting government to rule us or allowing a king to rule over us instead of God is death and famine.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

[Romans 6:23, NKVJ]

Why is this the reward to be rendered to Caesar? Because the idolatry represented by making Caesar into a false god violates the first and most important commandment!:

You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

[Exodus 20:3-6, NKVJ]

The Bible is replete with examples of those who were killed at the command or with the blessing of God for the idolatry of worshipping other gods, including government. Below are just a few examples:

Ezekiel 9:5 "And I heard God say to the other men, 'Follow him through the city and kill. Spare no one.'"

Ezekiel 9:6 "Kill the old men, young men, young women, mothers and children."

Ezekiel 9:7 "God said to them, 'Defile the Temple. Fill its courtyards with corpses. Get to work!' So they began to kill the people in the city."

Ezekiel 9:11 "Then the man wearing linen clothes returned and reported to the Lord, 'I have carried out your orders.'"

CONTEXT FOR WHY GOD COMMANDED THE KILLING IN THE ABOVE FOUR VERSES:

*Ezekiel 8:17: "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the **abominations** which they commit here? For **they have filled the land with violence**; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity: and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."*

The people were:

- Committing acts of violence (Ezekiel 8:17)
- Worshipping idols (Eze. 8:10-12)
- Women were weeping for an idol called Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14)
- Priests were worshipping the sun God. (Ezekiel 8:16)

The killing was God's judgment and wrath *against His own people*, not those of other races in a Zionist plot. God disciplined his own children in this case for violating the greatest and the first of the ten commandments found in Exodus 20:3-11.

God simply fulfilled justice by punishing his own people for violating the first commandment and committing idolatry. If he hadn't done this, He would not have maintained the sanctity of His children at the time (His family now includes everyone, not just Israel) or allowed the truth of His word, recorded in their writings, to be passed down through the generations so we could enjoy it today. The greater good was thereby accomplished, because God through the Israelites allowed His word and His truth to be revealed to us in what later became the Bible. No other culture or race has been able, through so many generations, to record the history and divine intervention of God in the lives of men better or in a more inspiring way than the writings of the Jews about God, and God apparently wanted to protect this, or His message of truth to us, and His love letter to the world, the Holy Bible, would be lost forever if he allowed His messenger, the Israelites, to be corrupted and to renounce their heritage and their history and the writings of the Bible they authored.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."
Rev. 3:19

The only thing the Bible says is to be rendered to Caesar is death and mourning and famine. Render to him his due! Now do you understand what Jesus was saying and why both the Government and the Pharisees wanted to crucify Him? We aren't suggesting here that you should take the law into your own hands and subvert the sovereignty of God through vigilante justice in fulfilling Jesus' command above, but we are showing you what Caesar really deserves and what only God in His righteousness can give him. Note that Jesus also took the trouble here to hide or encrypt

His subtle message, so that it would survive the ages and time and appear in the version of the Bible we have today. Otherwise, the government would have destroyed the Bible message long ago.

*Luke 10:21, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, **I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent** [of the world], and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."*

The Bible is radical and revolutionary when the Holy Spirit illuminates for us what God is really saying. Is it any wonder our Christian founding fathers rebelled against Britain so they could restore God to His rightful role over them? Those who truly believe that we should "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" can't in good conscience support the notion of the American Revolution, which at the time accomplished the opposite goal and was an armed rebellion against "Caesar".

7.4.8 Code of Ethics for Government Service

Below is the Code of Ethics for Government Employees. This is the moral and ethical standard by which the performance of all federal government employees is measured. We ask you to consider this carefully as you read through the following chapters and learn what the "government servants" in the U.S. Congress and the IRS have been doing to your constitutional rights and the fraudulent and illegal taking of your property with federal income taxes.

Code of Ethics for Government Employees

Public Law 96-303.

Passed June 27, 1980 unanimously by Congress.

Signed into law July 3, 1980 by President.

- I. Put loyalty to the the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party, or Government department.***
- II. Uphold the Constitution, laws, and regulations of the United States and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.***
- III. Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay; giving earnest effort and best thought to the performance of duties.***
- IV. Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks done.***
- V. Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not; and never accept, for himself or herself or for family members, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of governmental duties.***
- VI. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a Government employee has no private word which can be binding on public duty.***

VII. Engage in no business with the Government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of governmental duties.

VIII. Never use any information gained confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means of making private profit.

IX. Expose corruption wherever discovered.

X. Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

7.5 Role of Law

Law is defined as follows:

"The legislative pronouncement of the rules which should guide one's actions in society. The aggregate of those rules and principles of conduct promulgated by the legislative authority [court decisions], or established local customs. Our laws are derived from a combination of divine or moral laws, the laws of nature, and human experience, as has been evolved by human intellect influenced by the virtues of the ages. Human laws must therefore of necessity continually change as human experience shall prove the necessity of new laws to meet new evils, or evils which have taken upon themselves new forms, or as the public conscience shall change, thus viewing matters from different moral viewpoint."⁹¹

Frederick Bastiat, further helps us define and understand the purpose of law.

*We must remember that law is force, and that, consequently, the proper functions of the law cannot lawfully extend beyond the proper functions of force. When law and force keep a person within the bounds of justice, they impose nothing but a mere negation. **They oblige him only to abstain from harming others. They violate neither his personality, his liberty nor his property. They safeguard all of these. They are defensive; they defend equally the rights of all.**⁹²*

So we can see that law is force and that it must apply equally to all if liberty is to be protected. If it applies unequally to one class of persons over another, then it turns from being an instrument of liberty to an instrument of oppression and tyranny.

Many people think the purpose of law is to promote justice. According to Bastiat, *the purpose of law is to prevent injustice*. Law is a negative concept and not a positive concept. Law is there to prevent harm, not to encourage or mandate good. Here is another excerpt from his book, *The Law*, that explains this assertion:

Law Is a Negative Concept

The harmlessness of the mission performed by law and lawful defense is self-evident; the usefulness is obvious; and the legitimacy cannot be disputed.

⁹¹ Barron's Law Dictionary, Steven H. Gifis, ISBN 0-8120-3096-6, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1996, p. 283.

⁹² Frederick Bastiat, *The Law*, 1850.

As a friend of mine once remarked, this negative concept of law is so true that the statement, the purpose of the law is to cause justice to reign, is not a rigorously accurate statement. It ought to be stated that **the purpose of the law is to prevent injustice from reigning**. In fact, it is injustice, instead of justice, that has an existence of its own. Justice is achieved only when injustice is absent.

But when the law, by means of its necessary agent, force, imposes upon men a regulation of labor, a method or a subject of education, a religious faith or creed - then the law is no longer negative; it acts positively upon people. It substitutes the will of the legislator for their own initiatives. When this happens, the people no longer need to discuss, to compare, to plan ahead; the law does all this for them. Intelligence becomes a useless prop for the people; they cease to be men; they lose their personality, their liberty, their property.

Try to imagine a regulation of labor imposed by force that is not a violation of liberty; a transfer of wealth imposed by force that is not a violation of property. If you cannot reconcile these contradictions, then you must conclude that the law cannot organize labor and industry without organizing injustice.

The purpose of the law cannot be to promote charity, because charity and force are incompatible. Here is Bastiat's perspective from *The Law* again:

The Law and Charity

You say: "There are persons who have no money," and you turn to the law. but the law is not a breast that fills itself with milk. Nor are the lacteal veins of the law supplied with milk from a source outside the society. Nothing can enter the public treasury for the benefit of one citizen or one class unless other citizens and other classes have been forced to send it in. **If every person draws from the treasury the amount that he has put in it, it is true that the law then plunders nobody. But this procedure does nothing for the persons who have no money. It does not promote equality of income. The law can be an instrument of equalization only as it takes from some persons and gives to other persons. When the law does this, it is an instrument of plunder.**

Another word for plunder is *theft*. Whenever the government or the people use the law as an instrument of plunder/theft, and the government as a Robinhood, then the purpose of government turns from preventing injustice to:

- Punishing success by making people who work harder and earn more pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes. This discourages a proper work ethic.
- Plundering the rich to give to those who have the most votes. This causes democracies to devolve into "mobocracies" eventually, as low income persons vote for persons who will rob the rich and give them something for nothing. (We already have this, in that older people vote consistently for politicians who will expand and protect their social security benefits, which aren't a trust fund at all, but instead are a Pozzi scheme paid for by younger workers, moving money from hand-to-mouth)."
- An agent of organized extortion and lawlessness.
- A destabilizing force in society that undermines public trust and encourages political apathy (voter participation is the lowest it has been in years..ever wonder why).

Here is what the Supreme Court had to say about this type of plunder:

"To lay with one hand the power of the government on the property of the citizen, and with the other bestow it on favored individuals...is nonetheless robbery because it is done under the form of law and is called taxation." *Loan Association v. Topeka*, 20 Wall. 655, (1874)

The U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Pollock v. Farmers Loan and Trust*, 157 U.S. 429 (1895) said the following regarding what happens when the government becomes a robinhood and tries to promote equality of result rather than equality of opportunity. We end up with class warfare in society done using the force of law and a mobocracy mentality:

"The present assault upon capital is but the beginning. It will be but the stepping stone to others larger and more sweeping, until our political contest will become war of the poor against the rich; a war of growing intensity and bitterness.

...

The legislation, in the discrimination it makes, is class legislation. Whenever a distinction is made in the burdens a law imposes or in the benefits it confers on any citizens by reason of their birth, or wealth, or religion, it is class legislation, and leads inevitably to oppression and abuses, and to general unrest and disturbance in society."

Law therefore has a very important role in our society and is usually there to serve the common good, rather than "special interests." Oftentimes, the value or merit of a given law can be judged by how many people benefit from it. The fewer people within society who benefit, the more likely it is to be an unethical law, because it cannot, in a very limited application to a small subset of the population, benefit the "common good." Likewise, the more abstruse and confusing the law is written, the less understandable it will be, and it's difficult to obey a law one doesn't understand.

The Bible says we should obey the law:

"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men--as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.

*Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."
[1 Peter 2:13-17]*

Laws are the foundation of most governments and of all stable government. Clearly, governments of men rather than laws have demonstrated themselves throughout the ages to be highly unstable and prone to moral decay, because "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (Jeremiah 17:9). Below are some of the main purposes of written laws:

1. They create an inertia within the government that prevents the capriciousness of rulers who will not be long in office from abusing their power to oppress the rights of people.
2. Laws promote righteousness and justice in all societal dealings.
3. They define and circumscribe the extent of authority that elected leaders have, so that they do not overstep their bounds and abuse the public at large.
4. When laws promote a balance of power (like the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branches of our government), they restrain government power and prevent tyranny.
5. Laws ensure order and prevent chaos in societies. They promote societal norms that are stable and predictable, which helps people feel safer and more secure. They promote a legal process for dealing with criminal and civil issues that ensures justice, righteous judgment, and consistency.

They prevent vigilanteism, which can quickly degenerate into anarchy. This builds public faith and confidence in the judicial system.

6. Laws prevent discrimination and favoritism and promote fairness, equity, and equality of everyone in society. This helps prevent members of society from feeling persecuted. Laws give members of society confidence to invest their time and energy into honoring their fellow men and being a productive member of society.

For all the above reasons, a government of laws and not of men in which people respect and obey the law is at the core of our society and our social fabric. Without law, there would be pure chaos, and we believe that the more people we have on the planet, the more chaos there would be without laws because the more crowded it would be and the more impact we would therefore unavoidably have on each other.

7.6 Role of Politicians and Rulers

We already discussed this subject previously in section 6.1: Role of bosses. Replace the word boss with "politician" or "ruler" in that section for an idea of what God expects of rulers.

In addition to things already mentioned about rulers, rulers and politicians, above all, have a duty and obligation to respect and honor the law, because our elected leaders are the ones who set the example that we follow. If they don't respect the law, then there is no reason for citizens to respect it either.

An interesting article about our representatives in Washington, DC was published recently by the Libertarian Party which betrays the fact that politicians are more corrupt than the people they govern, which is why we should always be vigilant in limiting the power of our elected officials:

Congressional Criminals

From the The Libertarian Party -- Sep 3, 1999

- From wife-beaters to drunk drivers, Congress is a crime wave, study says

WASHINGTON, DC -- A new investigation reveals an astonishingly large number of wife-beaters, drunks, shoplifters, check-bouncers, business failures, and drug abusers in the U.S. House and Senate -- which ought to make Americans think carefully before turning to Washington, DC for moral leadership, the Libertarian Party said today.

"Mark Twain once said Congress may be America's only 'distinct criminal class' -- and this new study suggests he was correct," said Steve Dasbach, the party's national director. "If even half these charges are true, expecting Congress to serve as a moral role model is like asking Bill Clinton to serve as a poster boy for monogamy." According to an investigation by Capitol Hill Blue, an online publication that covers federal politics, a remarkable number of U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators may have spent as much time in a jail cell as on Capitol Hill. After researching public records, newspaper articles, civil court transcripts, and criminal records, Capitol Hill Blue discovered that:

** 29 members of Congress have been accused of spousal abuse.*

** 7 have been arrested for fraud.*

- * 19 have been accused of writing bad checks.
- * 117 have bankrupted at least two businesses.
- * 3 have been arrested for assault.
- * 71 have credit reports so bad they can't qualify for a credit card.
- * 14 have been arrested on drug-related charges.
- * 8 have been arrested for shoplifting.
- * 21 are current defendants in lawsuits.
- * 84 were stopped for drunk driving in 1998 alone, but released after they claimed Congressional immunity.

Capitol Hill Blue did not list the names of all the individual members of Congress accused of the various crimes, but did note that some were "serial offenders" with extensive tracks records of fraud or violence. For example, reported Capitol Hill Blue, Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL) has a "long, consistent record of deceit," including tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid bills, allegations of bribery, and numerous lawsuits against her. And Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA) faces charges that he beat his wife, has a history of barroom brawls while mayor of Alexandria, and has publicly stated that he likes "to hit people."

"With a rap sheet like that, you have to wonder why Americans expect Congress to solve the problem of crime -- since Congress seems to be causing so much crime," said Dasbach. "In fact, if this study is correct, the best way to cut crime may be to lock up Congress and throw away the key."

And given the obvious economic incompetence of so many Senators and Representatives, you have to wonder why voters trust them with the federal budget, he said. "Here are politicians who routinely bankrupt businesses, write bad checks, engage in fraudulent practices, and have bad credit," said Dasbach. "That could explain why the country is more than \$5 trillion in debt, why federal programs are so wasteful, and why taxes are always going up. Are these really the kind of economically illiterate people we want to trust with our money?"

If nothing else, said Dasbach, the Capitol Hill Blue investigation may help puncture the myth that Senators and Representatives are somehow superior to ordinary Americans, or better equipped to solve the nation's problems. "By its very nature, politics tends to attract venal people who crave power, who want to control the lives of other people, and who think they are above the law," he noted. "This study makes that point clear -- and illustrates that when it comes to politicians, the only thing worse than their voting records are their criminal records."

7.7 Role of Citizens

*"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."
[Anonymous]*

One of the roles of citizens is to be politically involved. We covered this subject in detail in section 2.3.13: Political Involvement (as one important aspect of Christian character). In addition, several other roles of Christians as citizens emerge:

Table 7-3: Role of Citizens

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
1	Friendship with the world is enmity with God	Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.	James 4:4
2	Do not marry unbelievers	Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.	2 Cor. 6:14-16
3	Take care of your own (your family and relatives)	But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.	1 Tim. 5:8
4	Do not be greedy for gain/selfish	He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live.	Prov. 15:27
5	Seek knowledge	The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.	Prov. 18:15
6	Seek wisdom	He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who keeps understanding will find good.	Prov. 19:8
7	Don't be lazy	Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes and you will be satisfied with bread.	Prov. 20:13
8	Be diligent	The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.	Prov. 21:5
9	Excel at your work	Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men.	Prov. 22:29
10	Avoid and do not envy evil men	Do not be envy evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devised violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking.	Prov. 24:1-2
11	Do not rejoice when your enemy falls	Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the Lord see it, and it displease Him, and he turn away His wrath from him.	Prov. 24:17-18
12	Rebuke the wicked	But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.	Prov. 24:25
13	Don't visit your neighbor too often. Give people privacy	Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house, lest he become wary of you and hate you.	Prov. 25:17
14	Favor integrity over affluence	Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.	Prov. 28:6
15	Homosexuality is wrong	You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.	Lev. 18:22
16	Do not worship idols	You shall not make yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your	Exodus 20:4-6

#	Responsibility	Description	Scripture(s)
		God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands to those who love Me and keep My commandments.	
17	Do not swear	You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.	Exodus 20:7
18	Do not murder (this includes abortion)	You shall not murder.	Exodus 20:13
19	Do not commit adultery (even if the law says its OK)	You shall not commit adultery.	Exodus 20:14
20	Do not steal	You shall not steal.	Exodus 20:15
21	Do not bear false witness (even if the law doesn't punish liars)	You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	Exodus 20:16
22	Do not covet anything of your neighbor's	You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.	Exodus 20:17

7.8 The Nature of Property

The concept that our nation is based on is the idea that the law protects our rights as citizens to own property. Property is defined legally as follows:

"Every species of valuable right or interest that is subject to ownership, has an exchangeable value, or adds to one's wealth or estate. Property describes one's exclusive right to possess, use, and dispose of a thing, as well as the object, benefit, or prerogative which constitutes the subject matter of that right."⁹³

Ownership of property is defined legally as follows:

"One's exclusive right of possessing, enjoying, and disposing of a thing. The term has been given a wide range of meanings but is often said to comprehend both the concept of possession and, further, that the title and thus to be broader than either."⁹⁴

Based on the above definitions, let's consider whether you really own those things that you think you own, or whether you have been deceived by the government into thinking that you own them when really someone else might own them. Let me give you a few examples of what I am talking about:

1. REAL PROPERTY:

1.1. **Tax auctions:** You may think you own land or buildings and you may be listed at the county courthouse on the title for real property as the "owner". Being listed or registered as the owner

⁹³ Barron's Law Dictionary, Steven H. Gifis, ISBN 0-8120-3096-6, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1996, p. 399.

⁹⁴ Barron's Law Dictionary, Steven H. Gifis, ISBN 0-8120-3096-6, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1996, p. 357.

in the "title" simply entitles you to pay a ransom to the government every year in the form of property taxes, which in effect are a bribe to the government to protect your right to control and keep the property. If you don't give the government their annual bribe (rent your own property from the government?), then guess what: They will then put your property up instantly for sale against your will in what is called a "tax auction" and sell it to the highest bidder. As long as they recover the overdue taxes on the property, they don't care what value they sell the property for, and if they sell it only for the amount of back taxes to some lucky low-bidder because he is only one person shows up to the auction, then in effect, they have legally sanctioned a theft of your property without your consent through this tax sale. In this circumstance, all the equity represented by the difference between the fair market value of your property and the actual sale price is in effect gifted to the person who buys the property. Even if you want the government to put the house up on the open market and sell it at its real fair market value and give you the difference between your equity and what you owe in taxes, you have no legal right to demand this treatment of your so-called "property" as a delinquent tax payer. Could it be that the government is the one that really owns your property and you just rent it from them with property taxes? You decide.

- 1.2. Asset forfeiture laws: If you are an apartment owner, and the police discover before you do that you have a tenant on the premises who is trafficking in drugs and if they can prove that you knew about it, then they can confiscate the entire building from you and sell it without your consent and give you nothing back in return!

2. BANK ACCOUNTS:

- 2.1. Taxes and court judgements. These days, virtually everyone who opens up a bank account is required *by the bank but not by the law* to provide their Social Security Number (we call it Socialist Security Number). They then report this information to the credit bureaus and the IRS. Once the IRS finds out about your bank account, then they can search their databases to locate your bank accounts if they want to seize your assets. The IRS and courts will quite commonly levy (seize) assets by this technique in the enforcement of court judgments, child or spousal support, and tax deficiencies.
- 2.2. Divorce. If you are married and decide to get a divorce, the courts can take bank accounts that have your name as the only accountholder and divide the proceeds in half and give the other half to your wife against your will, even if she contributed nothing to the account and hid all the money she had just prior to the divorce. This is based on the fallacious idea of "community property".

3. PERSONAL PROPERTY:

- 3.1. Divorce: Personal property is such things as cars, stereo equipment, tools, etc. You may think you own these things, but if you are married and get a divorce, the courts can give half of these assets to your spouse as community property, even if you object.
- 3.2. Drug asset forfeiture laws: Likewise, under asset forfeiture laws, they can take and sell everything you have if they think it is involved with drug trafficking. For instance, if you are driving through a state that has an asset forfeiture law, and a policeman decides he likes your car and wants it, he can stop you without probable cause, search your vehicle, and find drugs in your car (if it was a used vehicle that the previous owner used for drug trafficking) and then seize your vehicle and sell it at auction and keep the proceeds for his police society. That happened in Mississippi.

- 3.3. Lack of vehicle registration: If you neglect to register your vehicle and drive it anyway, some states will confiscate it and sell it while you look helplessly on. They will not refund any of the money to your resulting from the sale.

Based on the above, we ask you: "*Is it your property if they can take it from you and seize it against your will? According to the definitions above, an owner has 'exclusive right to possess, use, and dispose of a thing.'* How exclusive is that right if they can take it from you without your consent?"

What are some ways that you can ensure that what your property rights are respected?:

1. Vote at all elections to ensure that your voice is heard.
2. Campaign for office in order to change the laws.
3. Vote against asset forfeiture laws or candidates who support such laws.
4. Vote against property taxes and candidates who support property taxes.
5. Eliminate the use of social security numbers on all your financial accounts to the best of your ability.
6. Support reforms in the way that tax auctions are executed by the government. Liens ought to be preferred over tax auctions.
7. Sign petitions to get initiatives on the ballot that would support the above ideas.
8. Ensure that if you do get married, the two parties sign a prenuptial agreement that eliminates the influence of the state on the property rights of the spouses, including the elimination of the concept of community property within the marriage. Refer to section 9.9: Prenuptial Agreement, for further details.

7.9 Thomas Jefferson on Property Rights and the Foundations of Our Government

Thomas Jefferson was the wise and brilliant man who wrote the Constitution of the United States. Before we launch into what our government is doing to violate our property rights with its illegal taxatin policies, lets look at what he had to say about property rights:

"The true foundation of republican government is the equal right of every citizen in his person and property and in their management."
[Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval, 1816. ME 15:36]

The right to procure property and to use it for one's own enjoyment is essential to the freedom of every person, and our other rights would mean little without these rights of property ownership. It is also for these reasons that the government's power to tax property is placed in those representatives most frequently and directly responsible to the people, since it is the people themselves who must pay those taxes out of their holdings of property.

"Persons and property make the sum of the objects of government."
[Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 1789. ME 7:459]

"Nothing is ours, which another may deprive us of."
[Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway, 1786. ME 5:440]

By nature's law, every man has a right to seize and retake by force his own property taken from him by another by force or fraud. Nor is this natural right among the first which is taken into the hands of regular government after it is instituted. It was long

retained by our ancestors. It was a part of their common law, laid down in their books, recognized by all the authorities, and regulated as to circumstances of practice."
 [Thomas Jefferson: *Batture at New Orleans, 1812. ME 18:104*]

"To take from one because it is thought that his own industry and that of his father's has acquired too much, in order to spare to others, who, or whose fathers have not exercised equal industry and skill, is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association--'the guarantee to every one of a free exercise of his industry and the fruits acquired by it.'"
 [Thomas Jefferson: *Note in Destutt de Tracy's "Political Economy," 1816. ME 14:466*]

"[The] rights [of the people] to the exercise and fruits of their own industry can never be protected against the selfishness of rulers not subject to their control at short periods."
 [Thomas Jefferson to Isaac H. Tiffany, 1816.]

"Our wish... is that... equality of rights [be] maintained, and that state of property, equal or unequal, which results to every man from his own industry or that of his fathers."
 [Thomas Jefferson: *2nd Inaugural Address, 1805. ME 3:382*]

"If the overgrown wealth of an individual is deemed dangerous to the State, the best corrective is the law of equal inheritance to all in equal degree; and the better, as this enforces a law of nature, while extra-taxation violates it."
 [Thomas Jefferson: *Note in Destutt de Tracy's "Political Economy," 1816. ME 14:466*]

7.10 Testaments of Truth

Thirteen testaments in honor of the original thirteen united States.

By Christopher Holloman Hansen (sovereign@mykingdom.com)

"... where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." I

[I Cor. 3:17]

1. **We Recognize as Truth** that Jesus Christ is the "*Supreme Judge*" of this Nation and that our freedom and unalienable rights are granted by Him, not by governments; we are therefore authorized by Him to be Sovereigns. (Rev. 1:6 and 5:10)
2. **We Recognize as Truth:** The Bible, all teachings of Jesus Christ, The Ten Commandments, The *Declaration of Independence*, The *Constitution of the United States*, The *Bill of Rights* and George Washington's *Farewell Address*.
3. **We Recognize as Truth** that our original Constitutional Government was instituted by God for the benefit of man. That it was created by "We the People" and their agents, the Sovereign States, by a contract known as The *Constitution of the United States of America*.
4. **We Recognize as Truth** that the federal government is only a contracted agent of the Sovereign States and that if any branch of the federal government violates that contract the Sovereign States, acting in unison, severally or individually, have the duty to redress that violation through State sponsored legislation and enforced action.
5. **We Recognize as Truth** that if the Sovereign States fail to redress federal usurpation of power that "We the People" have the "Duty." according to the *Declaration of Independence*, and the "rights" and "powers," according to the 9th and 10th Amendments to act in unison, severally or as individuals "to throw off that Government law by law (and peacefully if possible) and to provide new Guards for our future security.
6. **We Recognize as Truth** that any form of **numerical identification or NAME CHANGE**, such as the Social Security Identification Number and/or a NEW SATANIC NAME, of individual Sovereigns or their children is a direct violation of the First, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth, Tenth, and Thirteenth Amendments to the *Constitution* and is, either a precursor to or in actuality, the prophesied numerical satanic "*Mark of the Beast*" and we reject them on both legal and religious grounds.
7. **We Recognize as Truth** that parents are responsible for their children and for their moral standards, education and religious beliefs and that the proper role of parenthood and its Biblically sanctioned duties and restrictions are found within the Holy Bible and that governmental interference with parental authority is in violation of the First Amendment.
8. **We Recognize as Truth** that no government has the right to force adults or children (under the direction of their parents) into any form of involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted by an **informed jury**. That

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involuntary servitude includes, but is not limited to, the forced or coerced indoctrination or teaching of any kind; and therefore, all "education" must be totally voluntary.

9. We Recognize as Truth that the First Amendment strictly forbids the making of any law that would prohibit the free exercise of religion and that any government agency promoting the belief that humanity has no Creator not only infringes on the free exercise of religion but, also undermines the very basis of our Republic which was founded upon unalienable rights given us by our Creator. ***The Eternal Truth is: If we have no Creator we have no rights.***

10. We Recognize as Truth that if we, as individuals, knowingly obey any law that helps to limit our God given Unalienable rights and enslave us, our posterity or any people, that we are guilty of Crimes against Humanity, as defined by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, "the true test...is not the existence of the order but whether moral choice in executing it) 'was in fact possible.'" We also believe, as stated by Benjamin Franklin, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." We, therefore, cannot tolerate even the slightest loss of our sovereignty, rights, or freedom and in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery."

11. We Recognize as Truth that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. They include: Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness; and that, above all law is the eternal difference between right and wrong; and that, we are personally responsible for our own actions. Ignorance is not a defense against the decree of this Higher Law but knowledge of this Higher Law more fully condemns the educated.

12. We Recognize as Truth that the War Powers Act, Presidential Executive Orders Article I and IV Tribunals, the General Welfare Clause and the Commerce Clause of the *Constitution* have been blatantly misconstrued and abused by all three branches of the federal government so that they may intentionally abrogate Constitutional limits in order to advance their ever growing tyrannical power.

13. We Recognize as Truth that freedom is not merely the right to choose, but that, ***freedom is the result of right choices***; that freedom is not free and that "*We the People*" must be eternally valiant, vigilant and perform "Exploits" (Dan. 11:32) if we are to regain our freedoms anti-constitutionally pillaged and plundered by the United States federal government and its agents and assignees including but not limited to: The New World Order, United Nations, Federal Reserve, IRS, SSA, OSHA, EPA, BATF, DEA, NEA and BLM; and/or also confiscated, abandoned and/or forfeited by our State governments.

7.11 The Freedom Test

7.11.1 Are You Free or Do You Just Think You Are?

(If you have any doubts just answer the following 12 questions and you will know for sure.)

1. Is more than 15% of your hard earned income forcibly being taken away from you through taxation by your government? (yes or no)
2. Does your government force you to participate in Social Security and Medicare? (yes or no)
3. Is your Social Security number being used by your government to monitor your income, bank accounts and other activities? (yes or no)
4. Is your government engaging in e-mail surveillance operations without probable cause or search warrants? (yes or no)
5. When re-entering your own country after a vacation can your government search you and your belongings without probable cause or a search warrant? (yes or no)
6. Does your government require you to apply, gain its permission, and pay additional taxes for permits in order to simply add on a room or remodel your own home, on your own property? (yes or no)
7. Does your government tax your very ability to talk and communicate with family and friends? (yes or no)
8. Does your government practice discrimination against or preference for any individual or group of individuals based upon their race, creed, gender, or social class? (yes or no)
9. If a nationwide television network interviewed you on a variety of political topics would you hide some of your true beliefs for fear of the consequences of publicly crossing the boundaries of 'political correctness'? (yes or no)
10. Has your government accumulated an overbearing National Debt liability for you, your children and grandchildren to pay off? (yes or no)
11. Is your government dominated by politicians more beholden to their egos and corporate patrons than to you and your individual rights? (yes or no)
12. Do you still think you are free? (yes or no)

7.11.2 Key to Answers

1. **YES.** In the United States today the average individual pays nearly 50% of his or her income in taxes of one form or another. When 50% of your work day (4 of every 8 hours) is forcibly being taken from you by your government, is that not state sponsored slavery?

The successful examples of the United States (1800-1929) and modern day Hong Kong have proven that the legitimate operations of government can be funded by a total individual tax of 15% or less of income. Why, and from what authority, are we being forced to pay more?

Please note that the federal income tax in the United States is only half of the tax picture, for one must also consider the following: state income taxes, state disability taxes, social security taxes, medicare taxes, medicaid taxes, unemployment insurance taxes, local taxes, property taxes, capital gains taxes, estate and inheritance taxes, gift taxes, sales taxes, electricity taxes, water taxes, sewage taxes, telephone taxes, cable taxes, corporate taxes, import taxes, export taxes, luxury taxes, gasoline taxes, alcohol taxes, tobacco taxes, vehicle registration taxes, hotel accommodation taxes, airplane ticket taxes, rental car taxes, building permit taxes, regulation taxes, licensing taxes, parking taxes, etc. (Note that the average individual in Europe pays far more than 50%.)

2. **YES.** When Social Security was first enacted in 1935 it was funded by a 2% payroll tax, today it is funded by a 12.4% payroll tax. The Social Security tax has been raised 54 times in a mere 65 years, measuring a staggering 520% increase. It is now the largest single tax for seven out of 10 taxpaying households. In 1935 only the first \$3,000 of taxpayer income was subject to Social Security taxes, by 1971 it was the first \$7,800, and today it is the first \$72,600. Medicare/medicaid, started in 1965, was initially funded by a 2.9% payroll tax, with only the first \$4,800 of taxpayer income subject to it. Today the rate is the same, however the income cap has been removed. Even with these dramatic expansions of taxation, both programs are still on the verge of bankruptcy. (This means more tax increases to come in the next economic downturn.) Because you are forced to participate, Social Security and Medicare are without a doubt the largest PONZI SCHEMES ever conceived of. Yet no politician will dare say so. Who is going to pay the Social Security and Medicare benefits for the 78 million baby boomers set to begin retiring in 2010?
3. **YES.** Try to get a job, open a bank or brokerage account, or buy a home without one.
4. **YES.** Take a hard look at the new FBI system known as Carnivore. Once it is connected to an ISP network it has the potential to monitor all communications on that network. Earthlink Inc. has already refused to install this FBI system, saying it had no way of knowing whether it was in fact limiting its surveillance operations to the criminal investigation at hand, or trolling more broadly. (What happened to the protections guaranteed us by the 4th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?)
5. **YES.** If you doubt this, try crossing from Mexico to the U.S. in an older model van with tinted windows. (What happened to the protections guaranteed us by the 4th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?)
6. **YES.** The state, city and local governments of the United States have completely undermined the sacred principle of 'property rights' by forcing us to seek government permission to carry out routine additions and changes to our private property, by forcing us to pay building permit taxes for the right to do so, and by forcing us to pay property taxes or face its confiscation.
7. **YES.** Take a close look at the taxes you are forced to pay for both your wired and wireless phone services. Also note the United Nations report of July 1999 which specifically endorses a tax of one American cent to be levied on all lengthy e-mails. E-mail taxes are next if we let down our guard.
8. **YES.** Government first rationalized the existence of slavery, then it rationalized the existence of segregation, and now it rationalizes the existence of affirmative action and quotas. ALL are discrimination, and ALL are wrong.
9. **YES,** for most of us. Is it really 'Freedom of Speech' when you are afraid to speak your mind?
10. **YES.** As of September 1, 2000 the U.S. National Debt was over \$5.64
11. **TRILLION** and growing by an average of \$45 million per day. With the U.S. population estimated to be 276,299,415, that means each citizen's share of this debt is over \$20,425. Ignore the rhetoric of the politicians when they claim to be paying down this debt with the budget surpluses, because they are NOT. In fact this Congress, the Republican majority 106th, has become the largest domestic spending Congress since the late 1970's.
12. **YES.** Take a hard look at the politicians and their voting records if you doubt this.
13. **NO,** we are not free, we only think we are. The time has come for us to face this difficult truth and start doing something about it.

7.11.3 Do you Still Think You are Free?

ARE YOU TRULY FREE... when over half of your hard earned “money” is stolen, directly and indirectly, by “legalized fraud” called “income taxes” to support unconscionable spending habits of career politicians... and rulers around the world? And,

ARE YOU TRULY FREE...when government agents falsely accuse people of “crimes” shoot and kill a nursing mother and child (Weaver), use banned gas to burn out over 80 people (Waco Holocaust), Gordon Call, etc. And,

ARE YOU TRULY FREE...when you are deprived of your currency which you worked hard for, paid taxes on? The \$1,000 and \$500 bills were slyly taken out of circulation. When anyone DOES NOT want to play the game of “cashless, checkless society” he is accused of “breaking the law”. Plastic strips are now inserted in the new currency. Bankers/government claim anyone with a large amount of cash is a criminal. This violates many religious beliefs such as Rev.,13:16-18. The conspirators’ real purpose is to work for the private bankers, putting us in a cashless, checkless society. And,

WHEN...in our “LAND OF THE FREE” you can no longer drive on freeways or public street without buying a driver’s license and car registration from bureaucrats...giving them LEGAL TITLE of OWNERSHIP to your car in exchange for a “certificate of title” that shows you gave your “true ownership” AWAY? And,

WHEN...BUREAUCRATS MAKE YOU PAY legal ransom to a private insurance-company so you can drive your car? And,

WHEN...in our “LAND OF THE FREE” you must send your children to a licensed school or bureaucrats can/will legally kidnap your children, confiscate your property and put you in jail? And,

When...you must read non-mainstream publications in order to learn THE TRUTH, because the national news media tells only what the “political establishment” allows it’s public to see or hear as “news”..? And,

WHEN...OUR “LAND OF THE FREE” has more political-prisoners than other nations; more slave-labor-camp-prisons (UNICOR) are being built every year? And,

WHEN...bureaucrats claim a crime needs ‘no victim” by claiming a crime is an offense against an abstract (legal fiction) called the state? And,

WHEN...business-income taxes are piled on top of each other...hidden in the prices of every American product, GROSSLY INFLATING costs, forcing industries to leave our country...taking millions of our best jobs with them? And,

WHEN... in our “LAND OF THE FREE” bureaucrats can know most of your financial transactions and “legally pry” into your bank records without your knowledge or consent? (violating a sacred trust, your privacy, and 4th amendment right). And,

WHEN ...you believe the BIG-LIE that your RIGHTS come from “public servants” instead of from ALMIGHTY GOD, Creator of all nature? And,

WHEN you “pay” your debts with dollar bills which are notices of debt you owe to the PRIVATELY OWNED Federal Reserve Banks (a private corporation) which pay no income taxes...and who create money out of thin air? And,

WHEN...in our “LAND OF THE FREE” “public servants” have created a spider web of over TWO MILLION laws and rules entangling every part of your life with entrapment schemes, (Road Blocks)-etc., while “supreme court” judges seldom agree on the meaning of any of them? And,

WHEN...if you don't pay your taxes (rent) the real owner of your property shows up, takes it from you, violating Allodial Land Rights ... and may/will shoot you, or put you in jail. And,

WHEN...in our “LAND OF THE FREE” it's okay to legally murder unborn babies, cleverly calling aborticide “abortion” And,

WHEN... “public-servant judges” illegally guide votes of Citizen Jurors by LYING, telling them they must vote to enforce the “alleged laws” of the case (even if it violates Rights secured by the constitution)? And,

WHEN...the word “person” is “legally defined” as a “corporation” and judges and government lawyers Coerce Juries into jailing fellow Americans for disobeying laws made for private bankers and private corporations to CONTROL our once FREE PEOPLE? And,

WHEN...your church must get a 501-C3 license (tax exempt) so its members can “write off gifts”-legally worship the “state god”, not ALMIGHTY GOD, Creator of all nature? And,

WHEN...career-politicians, tax collectors, police and courts (judges) are more of a threat to life, liberty and property than a thief in the night? (Been in court lately?) And,

WHEN you SADLY LEARN..More crimes occur in American court rooms in one day than in the streets in a whole year?

WHEN...in our “LAND OF THE FREE” your children are a ward of the state because you used a marriage license? (Your children are not your children because of that license!) And,

WHEN...you are jailed for exercising your God-given Constitutionally secured Rights if you don't “grease the palms” (fines=mulct) of bureaucrats? And,

WHEN...in our “LAND OF THE FREE” YOU CAN NO LONGER PRACTICE Free Enterprise or work without the SS-ID number, “Mark of the Beast”, and you are forced to buy a permit or license from bureaucrats or go to jail? And,

WHEN everything you and your children will ever “own” is mortgaged to foreign bankers who own the private Federal Reserve Banks, your loan could be due and collectible on demand...BECAUSE THE CONGRESS REFUSES to OBEY the CONSTITUTION providing our nation with a debt-free, Honest money system! And,

WHEN...you could be dying from a disease (cancer) that is curable in other countries (suppressed in AmeriKa since the early 30's) with certain medicines, nutrients, and vitamins which, if used to save

your life, is a crime in our “LAND OF THE FREE” stripping us of our 1st and 9th amendment Rights, FREEDOM of CHOICE? And,

WHEN... if you say something publicly that is not “Politically Correct”, the news-media can publicly condemn you without a trial, by implying you are a racist, cultist, neo-nazi, anti-Semitic, hate monger, bigot, radical, armed and dangerous, extreme-right-winger, tax-protester, un-American...etc.? And,

WHEN...the Federal Government pretends to wage a “War On Drugs” (actually promoting drugs) as an excuse to make laws that deprive us of our God-given RIGHTS to Life, Liberty, and Property ...Freedom to Choose and to be Left Alone? And,

WHEN...CRIME PAYS BIG... for Big Brother Government, lying politicians, judges, government lawyers, police...because every new law causes many more victimless crimes as an excuse for higher and higher taxes, supposedly used to punish the violators (victims) of newly invented crimes, which God never thought of, against a legal fiction, the State? And,

WHEN...in our “LAND OF THE FREE” the flag displayed in court rooms and other public buildings has a gold fringe border, which is NOT the American flag, indicating that we are under Martial Law unannounced? And,

WHEN..... you must ask and pay bureaucrats for legal permission to get married, even though marriage is a sacrament directly from our loving father, ALMIGHTY GOD? And,

WHEN...Republican and Democratic Presidents give your taxes to foreign countries, food that should be given to our needy is given to foreign nations, destroying our own people...our self-defense arms are confiscated...creating wars and riots; the United States Military is under the United Nations command...YOUR JOB exported overseas...our “LAND OF THE FREE” PLACED UNDER THE DICTATORIAL RULE of NON-ELECTED FOREIGNERS called the NEW WORLD ORDER?! Creating wars and riots;

IF THIS IS FREEDOM Then WHAT is SLAVERY???

If You Think You're FREE,

What can you do without:

- A. getting a permit?
- B. getting a license?
- C. paying a tax?
- D. your Social Surveillance-ID # (should not be used for identification)?

7.12 Sources of Government Tyranny and Oppression

7.12.1 Deception: The Religion of SATAN and our government

Question: How can you tell if either a lawyer or a politician are lying?

Answer: Their lips are moving.

Satan is referred to by many names throughout the Bible, as indicated below:

- Lawless one (2 Thess. 2:3-17)
- Adversary (1 Pet. 5:8)
- Accuser (Rev. 12:10)
- Wicked one (Matt. 13:19)
- Murderer (John 8:44)

In his essence, Satan is a false accuser, a slanderer, an adversary, and a liar. Satan's chief weapon in perpetrating his opposition to the will of God is deception.

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

[John 8:44, Bible, NKJV]

The definition of “Devil” further explains these conclusions from Strong's Concordance of the Bible:

***Devil**, diabolos (dee-ab-ol-oss). This adjective, which literally means “slanderous”, is derived from the verb diabollo, “to bring charges with hostile intent” (justly or slanderously, usually the latter). Although diabolos retains its adjectival meaning occasionally in the NT (1 Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:3), in most instances it is used substantively as a proper name for a specific “slanderer”—the “devil” (Matt. 4; Luke 4; Eph. 6:11). This use of the word is already established in the Septuagint, where it occurs frequently as a translation of the Heb. Satan (“adversary”). The association of the “devil” with Satan continues in the NT (e.g., John 13:2, 27; Rev. 20:2). (Strongs #1228)*

Obviously, in order to successfully slander someone, one must be a bold, arrogant, conceited, and convincing liar. In some cases, people make such evil into a profession. They walk around with suits and ties and briefcases slandering their opponents in front of juries, judges, and the media using lies and charging exorbitant amounts for their dis-service to society. The name of such professions are:

- Politicians
- Democrats
- Judges
- Attorneys
- Lawyers

respectively! The only profession ever criticized in the bible by Jesus was the practice of law, as a matter of fact, and now you know why. Also keep in mind that the majority of politicians and nearly all judges are or were also lawyers. See Matt. 23:23 to learn what Jesus thought of these people, and its not pretty!

The following scripture compares and contrasts liars from the righteous to help you discern them:

*“He who speaks truth declares righteousness,
But a false witness deceit.
There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword,
But the tongue of the wise promotes health.
The truthful lip shall be established forever,
But a lying tongue is but for a moment.*

*Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil.
But counselors of peace have joy.
No grave trouble will overtake the righteous,
But the wicked shall be filled with evil.
Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord,
but those who deal truthfully are His delight.”
[Prov. 12:17-22, Bible, NKJV]*

*“The righteous man hates lying.”
[Prov. 13:5, Bible, NKJV]*

The Apostle James explains what Satan’s religion is, which is **Deception**, in James 1:26:

*“If any among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.”
[James 1:26, Bible, NKJV]*

Notice that James above would appear to have referred to “deception” as a religion and he called it “useless”. Other versions of the bible replace the word “useless” with “vain”. Vanity is sometimes synonymous with “pride”. It was Satan’s pride that caused him to rebel against God and slander God.

*“In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride.
But the lips of the wise will preserve them.”
[Prov. 14:3, Bible, NKJV]*

*“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”
[Prov. 16:18-19, Bible, NKJV]*

Our politicians and their slavery mongers and mafioso extortionists at the IRS have the same motives as Satan: pride and covetousness, which are manifested or evidenced by slander, lies, and deception. Satan coveted God’s power and authority and he wanted to be God and replace God. Everything he does is a cheap imitation of God’s true sovereignty and is based on deceit and deception. He is a rebel at heart and he lusts after God’s power. Our politicians are no different: they lust after power and prestige, which means they can’t act like the public servants that they are. They commonly try to deceive their constituents into thinking, for instance, that they are the equivalent of gods and kings. They want you to think that they are the sovereigns and you are the servants, even though you will find out later in chapter 4 that the opposite is actually true, and the only reason people believe otherwise is their own legal ignorance. The scumbag politicians and lawyers do this by boldly going around and lying about their authority and what the law says. And if the law too clearly states the truth, then they will try to obfuscate it so that you have to rely on them to “interpret it” for you, and what do you think they are going to say that it says: “They are the sovereigns and you are ‘subject to’ them and their laws”. And when the truth comes out occasionally about how very little authority they really have, then they try to silence the messenger rather than agree with the message using the press and lots of false propaganda. The Department of **In**justice has a whole section of their website devoted to such deceptive LIES and propaganda at the web address below:

http://www.usdoj.gov/03press/03_1_1.html

Power in the political realm is summarized in one word: jurisdiction. Politicians know that most of their power and jurisdiction derives from economic means. To the extent that they control the money is the extent to which they think that they run the country. They use money as a means to create

“privilege-induced slavery”, where they make it a “taxable privilege” to receive some kind of government benefit or a “privilege” in order to keep the money that is rightfully yours, and then they force you to do something under the color of law in order to qualify for the “privilege”. Unfortunately, the things that they make into “privileges” are your “rights”, which means you have no liberties left after they fiddle with the laws!

When you do your research and uncover their lies and their fraud, since they don’t want to be exposed or convicted for committing perjury or fraud, then they instead will create a big bureaucracy to respond to your issues to make it at least “appear” that they are “trying” to help you, and then they deliberately make it so big and inefficient and wasteful and unresponsive that it never responds to any of your concerns. That way, what is *really* an evasion of the truth, an outright acquiescence to a lie, a constructive fraud, and an oppression of your rights looks far more innocuous and can be described with far gentler words like “inefficiency” and “bureaucracy” and “an opportunity for improvement”. They will hire “clerks” within these bloated bureaucracies to respond who are so under-qualified and underpaid that they make easy scapegoats for the fraud of their superiors. Then when you litigate and expose the fraud to juries, they will do the same thing that Satan tries to do: slander and discredit and murder your character with lies and threaten the judge with an audit and collection activity if he doesn’t go along with the game. This is the very definition of evil, if you ask us, and the foundation of it is the *religion of deception* that perpetuates the power, the money, and the prestige that so many politicians covet but seldom obtain. The Bible in 2 Tim. 3:1-9 describes all of the personality characteristics of the kind of warped people we have elected to be our contemporary politicians and the kind of DOJ lawyers that they have working for them to perpetrate such EVIL:

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power [God’s sovereignty over them and the government]. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.”
[2 Tim. 3:1-9, Bible, NKJV]

The bible also describes the collective governments and corrupted politicians in them who are at war with God because of their evil deceit, sinfulness, and idolatry described above. It calls them the “beast” in the book of Revelation.

“And I saw the beast, the kings [political rulers] of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him [God] who sat on the horse and against His army.”
[Revelation 19:19, Bible, NKJV]

Incidentally, it is this same “beast” that issues its mark to all its followers: the Socialist Security Number. What makes the “beast” to be at war with God is the vain use of the religion of deception and the encouragement of the sheep in God’s flock to practice idolatry toward government by making government into a false god.

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man [for man-made government], who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”
 [Jeremiah 17:5-8, Bible, NIV]

People in government want to be worshipped and feared just like the God they are imitating and competing with, so they will make the people afraid for their safety and then offer their false power and sovereignty and protection as a cheap substitute for the real God. Remember, the purpose of governments, like God, is to protect the people. God goes one step beyond government by actually loving the people too, in fulfillment of the second greatest commandment found in Matt 22:39. Atheistic and socialistic governments forget that part of their stewardship and in so doing, destroy the people and the countries they are there to protect because of their greed and lust. In the process of imitating and trying to replace God, these covetous and proud and selfish politicians slap the real God in the face and give the people a false sense of security.

“PRESS RELEASE: WASHINGTON, D.C.

The U.S. government announced today that it is changing its emblem to a condom. The President explained that the condom more clearly reflects the government's political stance. A condom stands up to inflation, halts production, destroys the next generation, protects a bunch of pricks, and gives you a sense of security while it's actually screwing you.”

The people were forewarned by God that this would happen, but because they preferred pleasure and hedonism over the truth or God, they allow themselves to be deceived and enslaved. The Apostle Paul, as a matter of fact, vividly described exactly the techniques that our satanic government presently employs and what we should do about it:

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for the Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition [Satan], who exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. [does this sound like our politicians in their piousness in Washington, D.C.]

“Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He [God] who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one [Satan] will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one [Satan] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved [don't be one of them!]. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion [from their own government], that they should believe a lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”
 [2 Thess. 2:3-17, Bible, NKJV]

And keep in mind that the phrase "the love of the truth" means the love of God's law and His word in the Bible and the saving faith that it originates from. Paul again warns us not to either deceive or be deceived in the book of Colossians:

"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him."

[Col. 3:9, Bible, NKJV]

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

[Col. 2:8, Bible, NKJV]

Psalm 52 in the Bible also describes what will happen to people who disregard Paul's admonition and deceive anyway:

*Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God endures continually,
Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking righteousness,
You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.*

*God shall likewise destroy you forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the living.
The righteous also shall see and fear,
And shall laugh at him, saying,
"Here is the man who did not make God his strength,
But trusted in the abundance of his riches,
And strengthened himself in his wickedness."*

*But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.
I will praise You forever,
Because You have done it;
and in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for it is good."
[Psalm 52, Bible, NKJV]*

Why do Americans tolerate deceit from their government? The answer is simple: **They have turned away from God and no longer use their faith in God as the primary arbiter of truth and morality, and this is even true of professed "Christians".** Scientific statistics powerfully confirm this conclusion. George Barna of Barna Research (<http://www.barna.org>) has done a poll of Americans on how they come to conclusions about right and wrong and truth and morality at:

<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=106&Reference=D>

His findings are surprising and you should look at them in order to determine and understand why Americans are so willing to trust and believe a lying government. Below is an excerpt from his article:

Americans are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings

Americans unanimously denounced the September 11 terrorist attacks as a textbook example of evil, suggesting that there is a foundational belief in an absolute standard of right and wrong. Subsequent research, however, has shown that in the aftermath of the attacks, **a minority of Americans believes in the existence of absolute moral truth**. Even more surprising, the data from a pair of nationwide studies conducted by the Barna Research Group of Ventura, California showed that **less than one out of three born again Christians adopt the notion of absolute moral truth**. The surveys also found that **few Americans turn to their faith as the primary guide for their moral and ethical decisions**.

Truth Is Relative, Say Americans

In two national surveys conducted by Barna Research, one among adults and one among teenagers, people were asked if they believe that there are moral absolutes that are unchanging or that moral truth is relative to the circumstances. **By a 3-to-1 margin (64% vs. 22%) adults said truth is always relative to the person and their situation. The perspective was even more lopsided among teenagers, 83% of whom said moral truth depends on the circumstances, and only 6% of whom said moral truth is absolute.**

The gap between teen and adult views was not surprising, however, when the adult views are considered by generation. While six out of ten people 36 and older embraced moral relativism, 75% of the adults 18 to 35 did so. **Thus, it appears that relativism is gaining ground, largely because relativism appears to have taken root with the generation that preceded today's teens.**

The Barna study also showed that there is a racial component to this issue, as well. Among whites, 60% endorse relativism, compared to 26% who adopt absolutism. Among non-whites, however, 74% support relativism and just 15% believe in absolute morality. (Fifteen percent of Hispanic adults and only 10% of African-American adults contended that moral truth is absolute.)

Not surprisingly, born again Christians were more likely than non-born again individuals to accept moral absolutes. Among adults, 32% of those who were born again said they believe in moral absolutes, compared to just half as many (15%) among the non-born again contingent. Among teenagers, there was still a 2-to-1 ratio evident, but the numbers were much less impressive: **only 9% of born again teens believe in moral absolutes versus 4% of the non-born again teens**.

Moral Decision-Making

The surveys also asked people to indicate the basis on which they make their moral and ethical decisions. Six different approaches were listed by at least 5% of the teenagers interviewed, and eight approaches were listed by at least 5% of adults. In spite of the variety communicated, there was a clear pattern within both groups. **By far the most common basis for moral decision-making was doing whatever feels right or comfortable in a situation**. Nearly four out of ten teens (38%) and three out of ten adults (31%) described that as their primary consideration.

Among adults, other popular means of moral decision-making were on the basis of the values they had learned from their parents (15%), **on the basis of principles taught in the Bible (13%)**, and based on whatever outcome would produce the most personally beneficial results (10%).

Teenagers were slightly different in their approach. One out of six (16%) said they made their choices on the basis of whatever would produce the most beneficial results for them [is it any surprise why we have Enrons with this kind of attitude? Standby for MORE!]. Three alternative foundations were each identified by one out of ten teens: whatever would make the most people happy, whatever they thought their family and friends expected of them, and on the basis of the values taught by their parents. **Just 7% of teenagers said their moral choices were based on biblical principles.**

Once again, the age pattern was evident. **People 36 or older were more than twice as likely as adults in the 18-to-35 age group to identify the Bible as their basis of moral choices (18% vs. 7%). The proportion of young adults who selected the Bible as their primary moral filter was identical to that of teenagers. In contrast, more than half of the young adults (52%) and teenagers (54%) base their moral choices on feelings and beneficial outcomes compared to just one-third of adults 36 and older who do so (32%). [SCARY!]**

The racial pattern was evident on this matter, too. **White adults were nearly three times as likely as non-white adults to base their moral choices on the Bible (17% vs. 6%). Blacks were four times more likely than whites (23% vs. 6%), and Hispanics were more than twice as likely as whites (16% vs. 6%) to base their moral decisions on the potential benefits of their choice.**

What It Means

These figures were cited by George Barna, whose firm conducted the research, as a major reason underlying the data he released in a controversial recent public presentation about the moral views and behaviors of Christians. In that forum, which is now available on videotape from Barna Research ("Morality and the Church"), Barna noted that substantial numbers of Christians believe that activities such as abortion, gay sex, sexual fantasies, cohabitation, drunkenness and viewing pornography are morally acceptable. **"Without some firm and compelling basis for suggesting that such acts are inappropriate, people are left with philosophies such as 'if it feels good, do it,' 'everyone else is doing it' or 'as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else, it's permissible.' In fact, the alarmingly fast decline of moral foundations among our young people has culminated in a one-word worldview: 'whatever.' The result is a mentality that esteems pluralism, relativism, tolerance, and diversity without critical reflection of the implications of particular views and actions."**

Barna emphasized the importance of the data related to the views of teenagers and the born again population. **"Just one out of ten of our country's born again teenagers believe in absolute moral truth - a statistic that is nearly identical to that of non-born again teens. Christian families, educators and churches must prioritize this matter if the Christian community hopes to have any distinctiveness in our culture. The virtual disappearance of this cornerstone of the Christian faith - that is, God has communicated a series of moral principles in the Bible that are meant to be the basis of our thoughts and actions, regardless of our preferences, feelings or situations - is probably the best indicator of the waning strength of the Christian Church in America today."**

The researcher stated that the difference in truth views between born again and non-born again adults was statistically significant, but not much to cheer about. **"When a majority of Christian adults, including three out of four born again Baby Busters, as well as three out of four born again teens proudly cast their vote for moral relativism, the Church is in trouble. Continuing to preach more sermons, teach more Sunday school classes and enroll more people in Bible study groups won't solve the problem since most of these people don't accept the basis of the principles being taught in those venues. The failure to address this issue at its root, and to do so quickly and**

persuasively, will undermine the strength of the church for at least another generation, and probably longer."

Barna also reported that compared to a similar study his firm conducted a decade ago, the basis of people's moral and ethical decisions these days is more likely to be feelings and less likely to be the Bible.

The above very disturbing research simply confirms that the faith and convictions of Christians, much less Americans, toward God have gone sour. *Christians have sold out to a corrupted culture and a corrupted world, and the sincere ones who rely on God's word are dying out as the statistics show.* They are no longer "sanctified" and set apart by their faith (see John 17:13-19) and simply go to church for entertainment and convenience and **vanity**. Their prosperity has corrupted them and their churches have become social clubs and mutual admiration societies instead of being the salt and light of the world to bring the Lord's truth and justice and mercy. They are therefore heading for HELL and have become disobedient to God's commandments:

"Woe to the rebellious children," says the Lord, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be your humiliation..."

*Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll, that it may be for time to come, forever and ever: that this is a rebellious people, **lying children, children who will not hear the law of the Lord**; who say to the seers, "Do not see," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things" **Speak to us smooth [politically correct] things**, prophesy deceits. Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."*

Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:

"Because you despise this word, and trust in oppression and perversity, and rely on them, therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant. And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel, which is broken in pieces; He shall not spare. So there shall not be found among its fragments a shard to take fire from the hearth, or to take water from the cistern."

[Isaiah 30:1-3, 8-14, Bible, NKJV]

But the Lord has a much higher calling for us all:

"If you love me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—**the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

[John 14:15-17, Bible, NKJV]

Barna's research explains where we must begin if we are to fix our corrupted culture and reform our churches to put them back on track. **We can't fix our government until we fix ourselves because the government is US since we are the sovereigns!**

"We have met the enemy, and he is US!"

Don't go pointing the finger at our government until you have your OWN act together first, or you will be despised as a hypocrite and railroaded in front of juries and judges by the government's wicked lawyers. This very brand of state-sponsored terrorism is precisely how our government keeps the sheep in line and enslaved to the income tax, as a matter of fact.

Americans no longer trust God as the absolute, unquestioned, and exclusive source of all moral truth, but instead prefer to vainly trust their "feelings", "science", a so-called heathen "expert", or their idolatrous government above and beyond their God. This violates the first commandment revealed by Jesus in Matt. 22:36-38 and also the following scripture:

*"**Trust in the Lord with all your heart**, And lean not on your own understanding [or your own feelings]; In all your ways acknowledge Him [not just in the ways that FEEL good or are politically correct], and He [not the winds of public opinion] shall direct your paths."*
[Prov. 3:5, Bible, NKJV]

If you want to know what God does to idolaters who are like the majority of Americans today that Barna described above, then read the books of Ezekial and Judges to get some fear and respect for God. This may not be a message that most people want to hear, but it is at the heart of why God gave us a deceitful government and why we are being punished for our unbelief: we are reaping what we sowed.⁹⁵ The book of Judges especially shows what happens to a culture that trusts in man and the flesh and their own feelings rather than in God for their sense of morality. Below is an excerpt from our bible introducing the Book of Judges to make the moral lessons contained in the book crystal clear:

*The Book of Judges stands in stark contrast to Joshua. In Joshua an obedient people conquered the land through trust in the power of God. **In Judges, however, a disobedient and idolatrous people are defeated time and time again because of their rebellion against God.***

*In seven distinct cycles of sin to salvation, Judges shows how Israel had set aside God's law and in its place substituted "what was right in his own eyes" (21:25). **The recurring result of abandonment from God's law is corruption from within and oppression from without.** During the nearly four centuries spanned by this book, God raises up military champions to throw off the yoke of bondage and to restore the nation to pure worship. But all too soon the "sin cycle" begins again as the nation's spiritual temperance grows steadily colder.*

...

The Book of Judges could also appropriately be titled "The Book of Failure."

***Deterioration** (1:1-3:4). Judges begins with short-lived military successes after Joshua's death, but quickly turns to the repeated failure of all the tribes to drive out their enemies. The people feel the lack of a unified central leader, but the primary reasons for their failure are a lack of faith in God and lack of obedience to Him (2:1-2). Compromise leads to conflict and chaos. Israel does not drive out the inhabitants (1:21, 27, 29, 30); instead of removing the moral cancer [IRS, Federal Reserve?] spread by the inhabitants of Canaan, they contract the disease. The Canaanite gods [money, sex, covetousness] literally become a snare to them (2:3). Judges 2:11-23 is a microcosm of the pattern found in Judges 3-16.*

⁹⁵ See Gal. 6:7, which says: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Deliverance (3:5-16:31). In verses 3:5 through 16:31 of the Book of Judges, seven apostasies (fallings away from God) are described, seven servitudes, and seven deliverances. **Each of the seven cycles has five steps: sin, servitude, supplication, salvation, and silence. These also can be described by the words rebellion, retribution, repentance, restoration, and rest. The seven cycles connect together as a descending spiral of sin (2:19).** Israel vacillates between obedience and apostasy as the people continually fail to learn from their mistakes. Apostasy grows, but the rebellion is not continual. The times of rest and peace are longer than the times of bondage. The monotony of Israel's sins can be contrasted with the creativity of God's methods of deliverance.

Depravity (17:1-21:25). Judges 17:1 through 21:25 illustrate (1) religious apostasy (17 and 18) and (2) social and moral depravity (19-21) during the period of the judges. Chapters 19-21 contain one of the worst tales of degradation in the Bible. **Judges closes with a key to understanding the period: "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (21:25) [a.k.a. "what FEELS good"].** The people are not doing what is wrong in their own eyes, but what is "evil in the sight of the Lord" (2:11).

Just like the depravity and corruption that happened to the Israelites in the Book of Judges because of relying on their own desires instead of God's commands as their guide, the price for the vain sin of moral relativism that Barna describes happening right here in America as we speak will be eventual deception and damnation for many.

"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth [God's truth], that they might be saved.

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

[2 Thess. 2:9-12, Bible, NKJV]

Unless God is the foundation of **all** truth and unless He is our absolute source of truth and our moral compass in **everything** we do, then this country is doomed to believe the BIG LIE mentioned earlier in 2 Thess. 2:3-17. Recall that here is what God said on this subject:

"I am the way, the [only moral] Truth, and the life. No one comes to the father but by me."

[John 14:6, Bible, NKJV]

Finally, let us not forget the words of our beloved founder George Washington on this subject in his Farewell Address:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, "where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice?" And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason

and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

There can be no religion and morality without absolute truth, and God is the only source of moral truth. Wake up, people!

Diligent followers of Christ who have taken the time to read and study the law and the truth of God will recognize the government deception and obfuscation for what it is and will publicly expose and condemn it. They will also take the time to reveal the results of their discovery to the public and the mass media as we have done here so that such harmful untruths do not spread like a cancer and destroy our society and our freedoms:

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane babblings for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer." [2 Tim. 2:15-17, Bible, NKJV]

7.12.2 Presumption

*"The greatest enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived and dishonest - but the myth - persistent, persuasive and unrealistic."
[President John F. Kennedy, at Yale University on June 11, 1962]*

The purpose of lying is to develop in the hearts and minds of the hearers a false presumption. The more ignorant and unwise and godless the hearers, the more likely they are to believe this false presumption. Those who promote such lies will do so for selfish reasons but ultimately their purposes are harmful and hateful.

*"A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin."
[Prov. 26:28, Bible, NKJV]*

Most frequently, we also acquire false presumptions by less dishonest or more casual means. For instance, we acquire false presumptions mainly from the media and our associates in our normal interactions. This method is the most popular technique used by our government to brainwash the sheeple, I mean people. When our government does it, it is called "propaganda". The reason more informal techniques such as this are most successful is that we just accept what people say without thinking critically about it and without questioning it. We are among people and organizations that we supposedly love or trust and so our intellectual defenses are down. In effect, we are intellectually lazy and don't bother to process or analyze or question new ideas or look what God's word says about them before we commit them to our memory banks as truth.

Another very popular propaganda tool for creating false presumptions are the public schools which are run by our government. Good parents will take the time to counteract the myths and false presumptions that liberal teachers will try to program our children with, but Satan still gets his foot in the door because many children grow up in single parent families where the one parent who is present doesn't have the energy to counteract the government brainwashing on a regular basis.

The Bible has some very convicting things to say about presumption that every Christian ought to teach their children, and which should also be part of the jury instructions that every jury hears:

*“Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. **Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.**”*
 [Psalm 19:12-13, Bible, NKJV]

Evidently, being presumptuous is a sin for which God takes offense. Our King James Bible has a footnote under the above passage that says: “The right response to God’s revelation is to pray for His help with errors, faults, and sins.” That same passage above under the word “presumptuous” then points to Num. 15:30, which tells the rest of the very telling story on this subject:

*“But **the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord, and he shall be cut off from among his people.**”*
 [Numbers 15:30, Bible, NKJV]

So evidently, we’re dealing with very serious sin here. Presumption evidently is a very big offense to the Lord. If you further research the meaning of “presumptuous”, you will find in Numbers 14:44 that it means defiance and disobedience to God’s laws, the Bible, His commandments, and His will revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, and through His prophets.

The bedrock of our system of jurisprudence is the fundamental presumption of “innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt”. The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution then guarantees us a right of due process of law. Fundamental to the notion of due process of law is the absence of presumption of fact or law. Absolutely everything that is offered as proof or evidence of guilt must be demonstrated and revealed with evidence, and nothing can or should be based on presumption, or especially false presumption. **The extent to which presumption is used to establish guilt is the extent to which our due process rights have been violated.** Black’s Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, on page 500 under the term “due process” confirms these conclusions:

*“If any question of fact or liability be conclusively **be presumed** [rather than proven] against him, this is **not** due process of law.”*
 [Black’s Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, p. 500 under “due process”]

In our legal system, our government goes out of its way to create and perpetuate false presumptions to bias the legal system in their favor, and in so doing, based on the above, they commit a grave sin and violation of God’s laws. The only reason they get away with this tyranny in most cases is because of our own legal ignorance along with corrupted government judges and lawyers who allow and encourage and facilitate this kind of abuse of our due process rights. Below are some examples of how they do this:

1. IRS authority to make assessments or to change your self-assessment presumptions. Because our income tax system is based on voluntary self assessment and payment, according to the Supreme

Court in *Flora v. United States*, [362 U.S. 145](#) (1959), then the only person who can assess you, a natural person, with a liability under Subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code is YOU and only YOU and the only person who can file a return with your name on it is you. The IRS' own Internal Revenue Manual, in section [5.1.11.9](#) clearly shows that Substitute For Returns (SFRs), which are returns filed in place of those which "taxpayers" refuse to file, *cannot* be filed for any specie of 1040 forms (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, etc) and the reason is because the tax is voluntary, which is to say more properly that it is a DONATION and not a TAX. Once you make this "assessment" as authorized by [26 U.S.C. §6201\(a\)\(1\)](#) and send it in, the IRS has *no lawful authority* to change or adjust the assessment, even if they believe you made an error, *without* your permission! You can search for implementing regulations under 26 CFR 1.X until the cows come home and you won't find a regulation that authorizes them to change your self assessment! Your average misinformed American, however, naturally "assumes" that the IRS has the authority to change it whether you want to or not. If the IRS then finds that you did make an error, they will "presume" that they have the lawful authority to change it by typically sending back a revised assessment and give you a certain amount of time to respond or protest it before it becomes cast in stone. When they do this, they are basically asking you for permission to make the change, and your silence or acquiescence constitutes implied consent to the change. This whole scheme works in the IRS' favor because of the ignorance of the average American about what the law really says. It seems that too many people have been relying on IRS publications rather than reading the law for themselves. BUT, you can shift this contemptible situation completely around the other way in your favor by knowing the law! All you have to do is attach to your return specific instructions stating specifically and clearly that the IRS:

- May NOT change or especially increase the amount of "income" on the return without invalidating EVERYTHING on the return and causing you to withdraw your consent. This makes the return to be filed under duress and inadmissible as evidence in court according to the Supreme Court in *Weeks v. United States*, 232 U.S. 383 (1914).
- May not rely on hearsay evidence of receipt of funds from employers in the form of W-2 or 1099 forms, because they are not authenticated with a notary affidavit.
- May not file a Substitute for Return (SFR) in place of your return because there is no statute or implementing regulation authorizing it and section [5.1.11.9](#) of the Internal Revenue Manual does not allow it either.
- Should not assume that the form or ANY information on it is *accurate* if the form IN TOTAL is not accurate and acceptable AS SUBMITTED.
- Is not authorized to "propose" any changes, only to file the return IN TOTAL in your administrative record and send you a letter explaining what they disagree with and the authorities (statutes and regulations and IRM sections and Supreme Court rulings) their determination is based on.
- If they protest the amount of "income" on the return, must provide a definition of "income" that is consistent with the following web address and with the Constitutional definition made by the Supreme Court:
<http://famguardian.org/TaxFreedom/CitesByTopic/income.htm>
- Any protests or disagreements they make **must** include a cite of the specific statutes AND implementing regulations AND the section from the Internal Revenue Manual which document and authorize their position or their position will be will presumed in the absence of evidence to the contrary to be illegal, unlawful, not authorized by law, null and void, and *frivolous*.
- May not cite any court case below the Supreme Court as justification for their position, based on the content of their own [Internal Revenue Manual, section 4.10.7.2.9.8](#).
- May not institute penalties because they violate the prohibition on Bills of Attainder under Article 1, Section 9, Clause 3 of the Constitution and because such penalties can only apply to employees of a corporation per 26 CFR 301.6671-1(b), which you are not until proven otherwise, with EVIDENCE.

If you use the above tactics and file a return with a 1 cent "income" and ask for all your money back, that along with the above tactics will drive the average IRS agent bonkers and he simply won't know what to do and he will have no choice but to give you your ALL your withheld tax back!

2. Presumption of correctness of IRS assessments. The federal courts assume that the IRS' assessments are correct, but the IRS must provide facts to support the assessment and it must appear on a 23C assessment form that is signed and certified by an assessment officer.

“The tax collector’s presumption of correctness has a herculean masculinity of Goliathlike reach, but we strike an Achilles’ heel when we find no muscles, no tendons, no ligaments of fact.”

[Portillo v. C.I.R., 932 F.2d 1128 (5th Cir. 1991)]

“Presumption of correctness which attends determination of Commissioner of Internal Revenue may be rebutted by showing that such determination is arbitrary or erroneous.”

[United States v. Hover, 268 F.2d 657 (1959)]

However, the presumption of correctness is easily overcome by looking at the government's own audits of the IRS. We have several documents on our website from the General Accounting Office (GAO) showing that the IRS is unable to properly account for its revenues or protect the security of its taxpayer records. Presenting these reports in court is a sure way to derail the presumption of correctness of any alleged assessment the IRS may say they have on you. You can examine these reports for yourself on our website at:

<http://famguardian.org/PublishedAuthors/Govt/GAO/GAO.htm>

3. Legitimate authority presumptions: When an IRS agent or investigator contacts someone to investigate a tax matter, the average Joe sixpack citizen “presumes” that they have authority to do what they are doing. After all, the agent will pull out a rather official looking “pocket commission” that makes it look like they are official. However, in most cases this pocket commission is issued to administrative IRS employees who have no business whatsoever doing any kind of enforcement actions such as investigations, seizures, liens, and levies. Such Administrative pocket commissions will be red in color rather than the serial number on the administrative pocket commission, for instance, will begin with the letter “A”, indicating that they are Administrative rather than “E”, which means Enforcement and the badge will be red instead of black (black is the color for Enforcement commissions). Whenever you talk with an IRS agent in person or on the phone, demand to see their pocket commission and get the serial number of their pocket commission for your records so you can sue the bastard if he illegally institutes collection actions in violation of 26 U.S.C. §7433 and 26 U.S.C. §7214. When they appear or call for questions, tell them you are really glad to see them and say that you will be cooperating fully with them AFTER they answer your questions first which will prove they have authority to be doing what they are doing. This amounts to a conditional acceptance and it will be very hard for them to argue with you. This is the way that you can “question authority” if you have an IRS agent breathing down your neck. Then when they start answering your questions about their authority to investigate, grill them on camera or using a tape recorder with witnesses present in the room using the IRS Deposition questions on our website at:

<http://famguardian.org/TaxFreedom/Forms/Discovery/Deposition/Deposition.htm>

4. Court jurisdiction presumptions. If you appear in front of a federal court that has no jurisdiction over you and you make a general appearance and do not challenge jurisdiction, you are “presumed” to voluntarily consent to the jurisdiction of the court, even though that court in most cases doesn't have any jurisdiction whatsoever over you, including in personam or subject matter jurisdiction.

Your ignorant and/or greedy attorney won't even tell you that you have the option to make a *special* appearance instead of a general appearance or to challenge jurisdiction because it would threaten his profits and maybe even his license to practice law. You have to know this, and what you don't know will definitely hurt you! However, even some federal courts admit the real truth of this matter:

"There is a presumption against existence of federal jurisdiction; thus, party invoking federal court's jurisdiction bears the burden of proof. 28 U.S.C.A. §§ 1332, 1332(c); Fed.Rules.Civ.Proc. rule 12(h)(3), 28 U.S.C.A."

"If parties do not raise question of lack of jurisdiction, it is the duty of the federal court to determine the matter sua sponte. 28 U.S.C.A. §1332."

"Lack of jurisdiction cannot be waived and jurisdiction cannot be conferred upon a federal court by consent, inaction, or stipulation. 28 U.S.C.A. §1332."

"Although defendant did not present evidence to support dismissal for lack of jurisdiction, burden rested with plaintiffs to prove affirmatively that jurisdiction did exist. 28 U.S.C.A. §1332."

[Basso v. Utah Power and Light Company, 495 F.2d 906 (1974)]

5. U.S. Supreme Court "cert denied" presumptions. We talk about this scandal in detail later in section 6.2.1 where we talk about the Certiorari Act of 1925. When a case is lost at the federal district or circuit court level, frequently it is appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court on what is called a "writ of certiorari". When the Supreme Court doesn't want to hear the case, they will "deny the cert", which is often abbreviated "cert denied". A famous and evil and unethical tactic by the IRS and DOJ is to cite as an authority a "cert denied" and then "presume" or "assume" that because the Supreme Court wouldn't hear the appeal, then they agree with the findings of the lower court. An example of that tactic is found in the IRS' famous document on their website entitled *The Truth About Fivolous Tax Arguments*, for instance, which we rebutted on our website at: http://famguardian.org/PublishedAuthors/Govt/IRS/friv_tax_rebuts.pdf. However, this falacious logic simply is *not* a valid *presumption* or inference to make absent a detailed explanation from the Supreme Court court *itself* of why they denied the cert, and frequently they won't explain why they denied the appeal because it would be a public embarrassment for the government to do so! For instance, if a person declares themselves to be a "nontaxpayer" and a "nonresident alien", does not file a return, and challenges the authority of the IRS and litigates his case all the way up to the Supreme Court to prove that the IRS has no assessment authority on him, do you think the Supreme Court is going to want most Americans to hear the truth by ruling in his favor and causing our income tax system to self-destruct? Rule 10 of the U.S. Supreme Court reveals *some*, but not *all* of the reasons why they might deny a cert., but there are a lot more reasons they don't list, and the rule even admits that the reasons listed are incomplete. The bold-faced type emphasizes the point we are trying to make here:

Rule 10. Considerations Governing Review on Writ of Certiorari

Review on a writ of certiorari is not a matter of right, but of judicial discretion. A petition for a writ of certiorari will be granted only for compelling reasons. The following, although neither controlling nor fully measuring the Court's discretion, indicate the character of the reasons the Court considers:

(a) a United States court of appeals has entered a decision in conflict with the decision of another United States court of appeals on the same important

matter; has decided an important federal question in a way that conflicts with a decision by a state court of last resort; or has so far departed from the accepted and usual course of judicial proceedings, or sanctioned such a departure by a lower court, as to call for an exercise of this Court's supervisory power;

(b) a state court of last resort has decided an important federal question in a way that conflicts with the decision of another state court of last resort or of a United States court of appeals;

(c) a state court or a United States court of appeals has decided an important question of federal law that has not been, but should be, settled by this Court, or has decided an important federal question in a way that conflicts with relevant decisions of this Court.

A petition for a writ of certiorari is rarely granted when the asserted error consists of erroneous factual findings or the misapplication of a properly stated rule of law.

In the above, DISCRETION=REASON. The above list of reasons, by the court's own admission, is *incomplete*. Furthermore, there is no Supreme Court rule that says they have to list ALL their reasons for not granting a writ. This very defect, in fact, is how the government has transformed us into a society of men and no laws, in conflict with the intent of the founding fathers expressed in *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137 (1803):

"The Government of the United States has been emphatically termed a government of laws, and not of men. It will certainly cease to deserve this high appellation if the laws furnish no remedy for the violation of a vested legal right."
[*Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137 (1803)]

So don't let the IRS trick you into "assuming" that the supreme court agreed with them if an appeal was denied to it from a lower court that was ruled in the IRS' favor. The lower courts are obligated to follow the precedents established by the Supreme Court but frequently they don't. Rulings against gun ownership and the pledge of allegiance in 2002 coming from the radical and socialist Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals are good examples that contradict such a conclusion.

6. **"U.S. citizen" presumptions.** There is a very common misconception that we are all "U.S. citizens". In most cases, judges will insist that the only way that you cannot be one is if you meet the burden of proving that you *aren't*. This presumption is *completely false* and is undertaken to illegally pull you inside the corrupt jurisdiction of the federal courts in order to rape and pillage your liberty and your property.

*"Unless the defendant can prove he is **not** a citizen of the United States, the IRS has the right to inquire and determine a tax liability."*
[*U.S. v. Slater*, 545 Fed. Supp. 179,182 (1982).]

7. **Social Security Number presumptions.** The Treasury Regulations in 26 CFR contain a presumption that if you have a Socialist Security Number, then you must be a "U.S. citizen":

[26 CFR § 301.6109-1\(g\)](#)

*(g) Special rules for taxpayer identifying numbers issued to foreign persons--(1) General rule--(i) Social security number. **A social security number is generally identified in the records and database of the Internal Revenue Service as a number belonging to a U.S. citizen or resident alien individual.** A person may establish a different status for the number by providing proof of foreign status with the Internal Revenue Service under such*

procedures as the Internal Revenue Service shall prescribe, including the use of a form as the Internal Revenue Service may specify. Upon accepting an individual as a nonresident alien individual, the Internal Revenue Service will assign this status to the individual's social security number.

8. **“Taxpayer” presumptions.** The IRS refers to everyone as “taxpayers”, creating a false presumption on everyone’s part that we indeed are. There is no statute making anyone liable for paying Subtitle A income taxes and without a liability statute, then no one is “subject to” that part of the Internal Revenue Code unless they volunteer to be. The only person who can lawfully identify you as a “taxpayer” is you, and that the government has no authority to use this word to describe you without your consent. In most tax trials, the judges or juries will seldom question the determinations of the IRS. Instead, the burden falls on the “taxpayer” to prove that the IRS’ determinations were *incorrect*. Then the IRS will refuse to provide evidence to this alleged “taxpayer” that is needed for him to prove that they are wrong. Here is how the Supreme Court describes this scandal in *Bull v. United States*, 295 U.S. 247 (1935):

Thus, the usual procedure for the recovery of debts is reversed in the field of taxation. Payment precedes defense, and the burden of proof, normally on the claimant, is shifted to the taxpayer.

The [tax] assessment supersedes the pleading, proof, and judgment necessary in an action at law, and has the force of such a judgment. The ordinary defendant stands in judgment only after a hearing. The taxpayer often is afforded his hearing after judgment and after payment, and his only redress for unjust administrative action is the right to claim restitution.⁹⁶

9. **Burden of proof presumptions.** Our *Great IRS Hoax* book describes a scandal in the Internal Revenue Code, where section 7491 places the burden of proving nonliability on the “taxpayer”. Note that this section of the code never requires the government to first prove that a natural person is a “taxpayer” BEFORE the burden of proof is shifted to the taxpayer. Here is the content of that section:

If, in any court proceeding, a taxpayer introduces credible evidence with respect to any factual issue relevant to ascertaining the liability of the taxpayer for any tax imposed by subtitle A or B, the Secretary shall have the burden of proof with respect to such issue.

10. **Consent for withholding of Social Security Taxes presumption.** If one is hired on to work for the government, then under [5 U.S.C. §8422](#), they are “deemed” to consent to the withholding of Social Security and Medicare and are never even asked whether they want to do so. Use of the word “deemed” is legalese for “presumed”. Below is the content of that section:

[5 U.S.C. §8422](#) *Deductions of OASDI for Federal Employees*

(b) Each employee or Member is deemed to consent and agree to the deductions under subsection (a). Notwithstanding any law or regulation affecting the pay of an employee or Member, payment less such deductions is a full and complete discharge and acquittance of all claims and demands for regular services during the period covered by the payment, except the right to any benefits under this subchapter, or under subchapter IV or V of this chapter, based on the service of the employee or Member.

⁹⁶ U.S. v. Bull, 295 U.S. 247, 26 (1935), emphasis added.

11. Government form presumptions. Filling out of most government forms is in most cases completely voluntary and unnecessary. Whenever you submit a government form, you are “presumed” to be in pursuit of a government “privilege” and consent to be bound by all laws of the government that produced that form, even if you would not otherwise be so! For instance, if you submit an IRS form 1040, you are “presumed” to be a “taxpayer” who is “subject to” the Internal Revenue Code, even though if you had not done so, you would not be. The Department of State DS-11 form used for obtaining a U.S. passport has only one block for indicating your citizenship, which contains “U.S. citizen” and NO blocks for specifying that you are a “U.S. national”, creating a presumption that the only thing you can be in order to get a passport is a “U.S. citizen”. The IRS W-8BEN creates a presumption that you are a “beneficial owner”, which is then defined as someone who has to include ALL income as gross income on their tax return, even though the law says this is not required. All of these are major, very serious, and FALSE presumptions that significantly prejudice and abuse your rights. The government only gets away with this type of fraud and abuse because the people filling out the forms don’t question authority or challenge the presumptions on the form. We have successfully overcome most of these presumptions by modifying or redesigning the forms in original print to shift the presumption in our favor before we submit it. The modified forms then slip by inattentive and underpaid government clerks and we can then use this as evidence in our favor. Fight fire with fire!

There are many other similar “presumptions” like those above that we haven’t documented. We include these here only as examples so you can see how the scandal and violation of your rights and liberties is perpetrated by the evil socialist beast called the U.S. government. Whatever the case, the Bible is very explicit about what we should do with those who act presumptuously: *Rebuke and banish them from society*. What does this mean in the case of juries and during court trials? It means that during the voir dire process of interviewing the jurors and the judges, they must both be asked about their presumptions and biases, and those who have such biases and presumptions should be banished from the jury and the case. If the judge has a bias or presumption in favor of the government’s position, such as those listed above, then he too should be removed for conflict of interest under [28 U.S.C. §455](#) and bias and prejudice under [28 U.S.C. §144](#). Likewise, if you ever hear a government prosecutor use the phrase “everyone knows”, then a BIG red flag should go up in your mind’s eye because you are dealing with a presumption. When this happens in a courtroom, you ought to stand up and object to such nonsense immediately because your WICKED opponent is trying to frame you with presumptions and thereby violate your due process rights under the Fifth Amendment!

The reason this book is so large and extensive in its research and authorities is because we have made a disciplined effort to *avoid* presumptions. We have, in fact, used evidence derived from the government’s own laws, spokespersons, and courts to prove nearly every point we make in this book. This ensures that you don’t have to “assume” anything and can examine the facts and evidence for yourself and reach your own independent conclusions about the truth of what we are saying. In effect, we have pretended that we are the prosecuting attorney and you are the jury and the “court” is the “court of public opinion”. This provides excellent practice and preparation for a real trial, because we assume these materials will also be used in a real court to prosecute government wrongdoing.

7.12.3 Illegal Acts and Legal Obfuscation

"[American tax laws] are constantly changing as our elected representatives seek new ways to ensure that whatever tax advice we receive is incorrect." -- Dave Barry

Our system of government is one of delegated powers that are strictly limited under a written Constitution. The original source of all power is the people themselves, according to the Supreme Court.

"When we consider the nature and the theory of our institutions of government, the principles on which they are supposed to rest, and review the history of their development, we are constrained to conclude that they do not mean to leave room for the play and action of purely personal and arbitrary power. Sovereignty itself is, of course, not subject to law, for it is the author and source of law; but in our system, while sovereign powers are delegated to the agencies of government, sovereignty itself remains with the people, by whom and for whom all government exists and acts. And the law is the definition and limitation of power. It is, indeed, quite true that there must always be lodged somewhere, and in some person or body, the authority of final decision; and in many cases of mere administration, the responsibility is purely political, no appeal lying except to the ultimate tribunal of the public judgment, exercised either in the pressure of opinion, or by means of the suffrage. But the fundamental rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, considered as individual possessions, are secured by those maxims of constitutional law which are the monuments showing the victorious progress of the race in securing to men the blessings of civilization under the reign of just and equal laws, so that, in the famous language of the Massachusetts bill of rights, the government of the commonwealth 'may be a government of laws and not of men.' For the very idea that one man may be compelled to hold his life, or the means of living, or any material right essential to the enjoyment of life, at the mere will of another, seems to be intolerable in any country where freedom prevails, as being the essence of slavery itself." *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U.S. 356 (1886)

"There is no such thing as a power of inherent sovereignty in the government of the United States...In this country sovereignty resides in the people, and Congress can exercise no power which they have not, by their Constitution entrusted to it. All else is withheld."
[*Julliard v. Greenman*, 110 U.S. 421 (1884)]

With the above in mind, any act of the federal government or its agents (including its employees, banks and employers acting under the alleged authority or "color" of law as indicated by a government agent) not specifically authorized by the Constitution or by the statutes which implement the Constitution is null, void, *illegal*, and *unlawful*. The definition of "illegal" in Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, page 747 confirms this:

"Illegal. Against or *not authorized by law.*"

The definition of "unlawful" on page 1536 of Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, also confirms the same conclusion:

Unlawful. That which is contrary to, prohibited, or *unauthorized by law.* That which is not lawful. The acting contrary to, or in defiance of the law; disobeying or disregarding the law. *Term is equivalent to "without excuse or justification."* *State v. Noble*, 90 N.M. 360, 563 P.2d 1153, 1157. While necessarily not implying the element of criminality, it is broad enough to include it.

Most Americans incorrectly believe that the acts of a government official are not criminal or illegal unless they VIOLATE a specific law that prohibits that behavior. We now know based on the above that this is yet another lie and myth that our government-run and deficient public education system

taught us as we were growing up. **In fact, any government servant who attempts an act or makes a request which the Constitution or statutes does not SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZE in writing has committed a crime and can be fired from office for malfeasance and breaking the law if their actions injure the rights of others!** This is the very essence of having a society of laws and not of men as the supreme Court mentions above!

Why don't more government "servants" get fired for doing this? The main reason is that judges are corrupt and run a "mafia protection racket" for the wrongdoing of their coworkers in other agencies of their government employer. This is perpetuated by three different conflicts of interest in direct violation of [28 U.S.C. §455](#):

- In most cases, they pay federal income taxes, and could be audited or threatened by the IRS if they rule against the IRS.
- Their paycheck comes from income taxes, and would probably be reduced if they didn't assist the IRS in the extortion that it imposes on the average American.
- If they do convict or penalize their fellow federal workers, they could be removed from office by the very same legislators who approved their appointment to the bench to begin with. See section 11.4 for information on how judge get appointed, for instance.

In order to oppose this kind of tyranny, we must first understand how it is perpetrated. It is quite common for tyrannical public servants to try to exceed their authority by trying to:

- Fool third parties, such as employers, into committing acts as their agents by telling them that the law says they are supposed to do things that they in fact are not obligated to do. For instance, the IRS fools private employers into using W-4 forms that technically only apply to federal employers. They also fool private banks into thinking that they must report currency transactions in excess of \$3,000 when in fact only banks in federal receivership and on federal land must do so. If prosecuted for such a crime, they will try to blame the agent who was acting in their behalf in order to evade liability. The courts encourage this kind of abuse by refusing to hold federal employees individually liable for giving false information or advice.
- Writing ambiguous laws which the average man cannot understand without the aid of a lawyer. This makes them subjective to enforce, arbitrary, and a tool of arbitrary abuse of the populace. Ayn Rand in her book *Atlas Shrugged* provides a very good explanation of this kind of trickery:

"Did you really think that we want those laws to be observed?" said Dr. Ferris. "We want them broken. You'd better get it straight that it's not a bunch of boy scouts you're up against - then you'll know that this is not the age for beautiful gestures. We're after power and we mean it. You fellows were pikers, but we know the real trick, and you'd better get wise to it. There's no way to rule innocent men. The only power any government has is the power to crack down on criminals. Well, when there aren't enough criminals, one makes them. One declares so many things to be a crime that it becomes impossible for men to live without breaking laws. Who wants a nation of law-abiding citizens? What's there in that for anyone? But just pass the kind of laws that can neither be observed nor enforced nor objectively interpreted - and you create a nation of law-breakers - and then you cash in on guilt. Now, that's the system, Mr. Rearden, that's the game, and once you understand it, you'll be much easier to deal with."
[Atlas Shrugged, Ayn Rand, page 411 of the 35th Anniversary Edition]

- Undermine the integrity of the public education system by eliminating or weakening curricula about sovereignty, citizenship, Constitutional and legal issues in the public schools so that the average American isn't able to challenge their authority or defend himself in court without the

aid of a lawyer. Eliminating prayer, God, and religious studies from schools and keeping students distracted with promiscuous sex, handing out birth control pills, and letting them get abortions without parental notification also helps kids be bad citizens that can easily be manipulated by the government because of their ignorance.

Whatever techniques our deceitful and covetous government might use to hide the truth contained in the law or to manipulate public opinion and courtroom results, those who read and know and love the law of God simply cannot be deceived. They know that:

“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer [shall be] abomination.” Proverbs 28:9:

7.12.4 Propaganda and Political Warfare

*“The king establishes the land by justice, but he who receives bribes overthrows it.”
[Prov. 29:4, Bible, NKJV]*

Propaganda is a vehicle for deception, and political warfare is the tool used to ostracize and punish those who refuse to think and act the way the covetous government wants them to act. Under such circumstances, our government transforms itself into the thought police, and mercilessly punishes all those who dare to be “politically incorrect” using the media and other clandestine and indirect means.

Once our government obfuscates the laws to disguise their lack of jurisdiction to impose an income tax, they then must erect a propaganda machine to perpetuate the false presumption and myth that the tax laws really do create this false fiction of law in the minds of average Americans. For this, they resort to the same propaganda tactics as the *communists*, and for that, they should be called communists. The end result they seek through such propaganda is the ability to act under the “color or law” to further their selfish interest without the ignorant and misinformed public knowing that they are in fact acting without lawful authority. They use the media to create an illusion that the laws say they are authorized to do that which they are doing and also confuse people about what it means to say something is “illegal” or “unlawful”, as we point out in the previous section. In order for the propaganda campaign to be successful, the following insidious elements must exist:

- Young minds in the schools must be inculcated to “assume” that there is a liability to pay taxes. The American Bar Association (ABA) travels around the country hand-in-hand visiting schools to propagandize impressionable minds absent opposition like the pied piper, and handing out CD-ROMs that make it easy for high school students just starting their first job to “comply” with the tax laws. Do you think they are telling these young minds the truth that the income tax in fact isn’t even a tax, but a donation program?
- Through decades of amendments and complicated exceptions to the tax code, and legal obfuscation, the law is then rendered so complicated and voluminous that so-called “experts” and specialized computer programs must be relied upon by the average American to understand what the law requires of them.
- The government must then structure the professions of these “experts” to bring them under their control through licensing and regulation under the pretenses of “public protection”...what a joke! For instance, the IRS has an “Enrolled Agent Program” in which tax professions who meet their mandatory criterias and do everything the IRS insists that they do, are given special privileges and preferential treatment. More “privilege-induced slavery and tyranny”. If you aren’t an “Enrolled agent” trying to help someone else out as a tax professional, they won’t even talk to you!
- The government then coddles these professionals with propaganda materials such as fraudulent IRS publications, to program them into falsely believing that a liability exists. They subsidize the education of these professionals,

attend their propaganda sessions, I mean conferences, and go after the dissidents who leak out the truth to keep the truth from coming out.

- If the “experts” get out of line, the government then pulls the license of the “expert” in order to punish them for dissent.

Does the above sound like liberal socialists and [communists](#) have infiltrated our educational and legal professions? That is exactly the way that it appears to us. In addition to the above techniques, more subtle and insidious methods are also used to fight the dissidents of this state-endorsed legal slavery. These techniques collectively are called “psyops”, or “political warfare”. Our government can’t openly instigate physical violence against the populace to terrorize the dissident sheep into “volunteering” for the government slavery called income tax. Therefore, greedy politicians intent on perpetuating and expanding their power will resort to the same kinds of tactics the Communists used in the former Soviet Union against their dissenters, including some combination of the following methods:

1. **Media propaganda, including lies and distortions of the truth to accomplish political ends.** For instance, see:
 - 1.1. Department of Justice (DOJ) Press Releases: http://www.ustreas.gov/irs/ci/tax_fraud/2002hearings/doj_releases.htm
 - 1.2. Tax Scam Hearings held annually by the Senate Finance Committee in April: <http://www.senate.gov/~finance/fin-comm.htm>. In April 2002, the Senate Finance Committee hauled a chain-bound political tax prisoner in front of the camera to scare the sheep into submission.
2. **Government literature and communications propaganda**
 - 2.1. IRS publications incorrectly describe and portray the legal tax liabilities of the average American. This leads amounts to a constructive fraud. The courts then refuse to hold the government collectively responsible for the incorrect content of these publications.
 - 2.2. The IRS telephone support 800 number routinely gives incorrect advice about the true requirements of our tax laws and creates a false presumption on the part of Americans calling in that they are “liable” for income taxes when in fact they are not. The federal courts absolutely refuse to hold individuals who render such advice liable for their fraudulent and deceptive portrayal of what the law requires.
3. **Verbal abuse**
 - 3.1. Anyone who has been late paying their taxes has seen the kinds of verbally abusive, anonymous, threatening letters and correspondence the IRS sends out.
 - 3.2. If you call up the IRS 800 number or visit a local IRS agent and say that you are not a “U.S. citizen”, they will frequently verbally abuse you and call you a derelict for not paying your “fair share”, even though the law defines what your fair share is and it says you owe NOTHING. When you turn it around and say that they want more than their fair share, they will hang up on you.
4. **Persecution of dissenters**
 - 4.1. Persons protesting illegal government taxes (called “Illegal Tax Protesters”) are regularly harassed, threatened, and intimidated by the DOJ and the IRS. They are frightened with frivolous charges of Willful Failure to File ([26 U.S.C. §7203](#)), Tax Evasion ([26 U.S.C. §7201](#)), and Obstruction of Justice ([18 U.S.C. Chapter 73](#)) because of their uncooperativeness, even though the Department of Justice’s own [U.S. Attorney Manual, section 9-4.139](#) clearly states that no federal agency has investigative jurisdiction for these alleged crimes. The reason is clearly because [26 U.S.C. §7805](#) empowers the Secretary of the Treasury to write needful implementing regulations to enforce these alleged crimes but he has never done so, and without regulations applying these statutes to specific taxes and situations, these statutes are unenforceable.
 - 4.2. Individuals who market sovereignty methods such as trusts, offshore bank accounts, etc. are routinely illegally raided by the Department of Justice with an insufficient and or nonexistent warrant for an area outside of the territorial jurisdiction of the federal government for acts that aren’t crimes, because there aren’t any implementing regulations for any of the tax crimes found in [26 U.S.C. §7201-7206](#). Judges hush-hush this and sanction persecuted individuals for daring to challenge the jurisdiction of the IRS or the DOJ to institute such violence against the rights of sovereign Americans.
 - 4.3. Evidence illegally obtained during illegal raids above is then used to go on a fishing expedition to dredge up incriminating evidence or even falsify evidence, and corrupt federal judges then allow such illegally obtained or manipulated evidence to be admitted into evidence, in spite of the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly

ruled that such evidence cannot be used⁹⁷. This was the tactic used against Lynne Meredith in 2002, who marketed trusts and detaxing packages. The IRS raided her premises illegally in 1999, and used the evidence illegally obtained in the raid to indict her in 2002.

5. **Military intimidation**

- 5.1. The establishment of a Department of Homeland Security and the USA Patriot Act has put the U.S. government at war with its own citizens and in conflict with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. This Act allows the government to surreptitiously eavesdrop on the conversations and correspondence of innocent Americans without probable cause.
- 5.2. The money extorted from us to pay illegal income taxes funds a military machine that keeps us afraid of our own government and intent on spreading its totalitarian enslavement to the rest of the world. Is it any wonder why terrorists revolt against interference into their sovereignty by our government using the war-chest of extorted money that it stole from us?

6. **Police intimidation or brutality**

- 6.1. When IRS agents attempt to seize property or conduct a search warrant outside their territorial jurisdiction, they regularly involve local police, to add a color of authority to their illegal actions. This also allows them to claim plausible deniability and blame the local police if something goes wrong.
- 6.2. When 500 political protesters in Washington D.C. peacefully converged to protest a meeting of the World Bank in September 2002, they were overwhelmed by 1,700 police wielding batons, guns, rubber bullets, and teargas because they protested “illegally”. This is a clear violation of the First Amendment.

7. **Outlawing gun ownership**

- 7.1. A number of democrats have proposed outlawing or restricting gun ownership, even though the Second Amendment forbids it. They have tried to ban “assault weapons”, but if they are going to ban weapons, then they better ban government ownership of the same types of weapons in order to keep the playing field even. The reason is that Thomas Jefferson said:

“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them.”
[Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787. ME 6:373, Papers 12:356]

- 7.2. A disarmed populace is powerless to resist the abuses of armed government agents intent on illegally seizing their property in satisfaction of a fictional tax debt.

All of these tactics are used by the IRS and federal government to maintain and expand its power. Politicians know that the source of nearly ALL political power is economic, and that when you take away most of people’s money and give it to government, they can make you surrender nearly every one of your rights in order to receive the taxable government “privilege” of getting your money back!

“To preserve [the] independence [of the people,] we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude. If we run into such debts as that we must be taxed in our meat and in our drink, in our necessaries and our comforts, in our labors and our amusements, for our callings and our creeds, as the people of England are, our people, like them, must come to labor sixteen hours in the twenty-four, give the earnings of fifteen of these to the government for their debts and daily expenses, and the sixteenth being insufficient to afford us bread, we must live, as they now do, on oatmeal and potatoes, have no time to think, no means of calling the mismanagers to account, but be glad to obtain subsistence by hiring ourselves to rivet their chains on the necks of our fellow-sufferers.”
[Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval, 1816. ME 15:39]

If you exercise your sovereignty and don’t pay the tax and protest the indebtedness our corrupt politicians have put us into, the IRS frequently persecutes you mercilessly with endless automated

⁹⁷ See Weeks v. United States, 232 U.S. 383 (1914) and section 8.4.7 later in this book.

anonymous and threatening letters in violation of [28 U.S.C. §876](#), and eventually they will try to throw you in jail for not “volunteering” using laws that don’t even have any implementing regulations that are illegally enforced *outside* of their Constitutionally mandated territorial jurisdiction. It’s vicious, its violent, and its unconscionable tyranny and it must be stopped immediately because it is an act of treason and war on the American people which will eventually dissolve the country and the Union if permitted to take its course. The Supreme Court described the elements of this war in its landmark ruling of *Pollock v. Farmers Loan and Trust*, [157 U.S. 429](#) (1895):

*“The present **assault [that is WAR!!!] upon capital** is but the beginning. **It will be but the stepping stone to others larger and more sweeping**, until our political contest will become war of the poor against the rich; a war of growing intensity and bitterness.*

...

The legislation, in the discrimination it makes, is class legislation. Whenever a distinction is made in the burdens a law imposes or in the benefits it confers on any citizens by reason of their birth, or wealth, or religion, it is class legislation, and leads inevitably to oppression and abuses, and to general unrest and disturbance in society.”

The above is how our evil government runs the Socialist Security Program: like a war on the rich and the wage earners for the benefit of those too lazy to take responsibility for their own retirement. Our government becomes the Robinhood and the war is called “class warfare”, but it is nevertheless still “warfare” that is completely inappropriate in a free society. They try to get you to “volunteer” into their fraudulent system before you are even of the age to be a consenting adult by applying for a number. They have attorneys and IRS agents traveling around the country to convince adolescents that they should sign up for this slavery. Even if it was a contract at that point, the Socialist Security application isn’t enforceable because you weren’t of the age of consent, nor will they later give you an opportunity once you reach adulthood to change your mind. Then they assign you the Socialist Security Number, the Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:16-18). Once you have the Slave Surveillance Number, the IRS calls it a “taxpayer ID number” in order to create a false presumption that you are “liable” and a “taxpayer”, which incidentally is a violation of your Due Process rights under the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Once you become a “presumed” taxpayer, they write the law so as to fool you and your propagandized attorney into believing that the burden of proof falls on *you* to prove that you are **NOT** liable. This completely turns the whole premise of our legal system upside down in this country, because we are all presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. Instead, those who volunteer (under duress, of course, because in most cases they were coerced and couldn’t get a job without doing so) are assumed to be guilty until THEY prove themselves innocent. That’s like telling someone they are a convicted prostitute (government whore) unless they prove that they aren’t. It’s downright EVIL!

After you sign up for this Slave Surveillance Number (SSN), the government first steals your money and makes it effectively illegal to **stop** contributing, thus outlawing personal responsibility and one’s ownership over one’s labor and person. They will try to slap illegal fines and penalties on you for telling the truth on your tax return that you have no taxable income, for instance, in violation of Article 1, Section 9, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution. If you even THINK about disenrolling, they will get all over your employer’s payroll department and slander you in front of your boss, at the same time being unwilling to cite their legal authority for doing so, which by the way doesn’t exist. Then they use the leverage gained by stealing your money to place all kinds of conditions on getting your own money back. For instance, if you are sentenced to jail for crimes, the federal government unilaterally terminates your socialist benefits and forces you in effect to subsidize your own incarceration with the

social security checks they intercept! That's like what they forced Jesus to do: Manufacture his own cross and then nail Him to it! When you realize how manipulative their system is and want to quit, the totalitarian Social Security Administration (SSA) provides no lawful way to quit the program, have your money refunded, and rescind your Slave Surveillance Number, and yet they lie by saying that the program is "voluntary". That is constructive fraud because your compliance isn't voluntary, but compelled, plain and simple. Nothing can be voluntary if there is no legal way to quit, even though no government person can ever show you any kind of contract you ever signed that said that joining was irrevocable. That's tyranny, totalitarianism, and communism, plain and simple.

The common denominator of all of the political warfare and "psyops" (psychological operations) tactics described above is that all of these techniques involve some combination of force or fraud, both of which constitute treason against the Constitutional rights of Americans. Here is how one respected member of the academic community described the terms of this warfare against the American people:

*"Warfare is often defined as the employment of military means to advance political ends... Another, more subtle means -- **political warfare -- uses images, ideas, speeches, slogans, propaganda, economic pressures, even advertising techniques to influence the political will of an adversary.**"*

[James A. Baldwin, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy in forward to On Political War by Paul A. Smith, National Defense University (1990)]

If you would like to learn more about the verbal abuse tactics that are at the heart of the government's political war against its citizens, we refer you to our Family Constitution, section 3.10 at:

<http://famguardian.org/Publications/FamilyConst/FamilyConst.htm>

If you would like to learn more about communism and socialism and their downright evil "psyops" tactics, visit our Communism and Socialism page at:

<http://famguardian.org/Subjects/Communism/Communism.htm>

And finally, if you would like some extensive examples of how this political war is played, we refer you to the content of Chapter 10 of this book.

7.12.5 Willful Ignorance of Public Servants

The same concepts discussed there generally apply toward the government, as well. The differences between our ignorance and that of government servants are distinguished below:

- When we are ignorant, the result will be intellectual and financial slavery to the government and the legal profession.
- When government servants at the bottom of the food chain are ignorant, they are susceptible to being fooled into breaking the laws by greedy and covetous supervisors above them. The result is tyranny on the part of the government, because the government then erroneously acts as through it has far more authority and power than it lawfully has.

Several IRS agents we spoke with indicated that they are trained on procedures but not law. This, in spite of the fact that the government's own courts say the following about our responsibility to know the law:

“Every citizen of the United States is supposed to know the law, ...”
[Pierce v. United States, 7 Wall (74 U.S. 169) 666 (1869)]

As long as the procedures of the IRS (found in the Internal Revenue Manual, for instance) illegally perpetuate and expand the power of the IRS and so long as the federal and state courts continue to refuse to hold the supervisors who write these procedures liable and accountable for their breach of fiduciary duty and resulting injury to our rights that bad procedures can produce, then widespread evil, injustice, and violation of due process on the part of government will continue to expand. In such an environment, there will be a built-in incentive for high-level managers at the IRS to:

1. Write internal rules and procedures (Internal Revenue Manual) that violate the law and maximize their revenues, their perceived authority, and their damage to our constitutional rights.
2. Hire people who are ignorant of the laws to administer particularly unethical and illegal areas of government administration, such as income tax collection and assessment.
3. Not train IRS agents on the law but only on procedures so they remain ignorant of the illegal nature of what they are being asked to do.
4. When the deliberately dumbed-down IRS agent finally discovers through his own research and talking with “taxpayers” that what he is being asked to do in the written procedures is illegal, then he is asked resign and the procedures are never corrected, in a clear effort to obstruct justice and cover-up wrongdoing. He is treated as a whistleblower and punished and slandered. This is what happened to Joe Banister, the X IRS Criminal Investigator who discovered after working for the IRS for four years that the IRS was actually committing fraud and extortion and he was asked to resign (see <http://www.freedomabovefortune.com/>).
5. Not update their training materials to accurately and completely reflect the very limited lawful jurisdiction and authority of the government to collect and assess income taxes.
6. Slander, persecute, and harass “taxpayers” who bring up the truth about their limited liabilities using anonymous threatening letters, unjustified and illegal penalties and interest, and threatened civil litigation and criminal prosecution.
7. Claim ignorance of the law when prosecution for wrongdoing is attempted on both government supervisors and their subordinates.

Incidentally, when government is attempting to prosecute a person for tax evasion and the person manifests complete and deliberate ignorance of the tax laws or any violations of it, this situation is known as “willful blindness”, and it’s existence can be used as a fact to be proved by the jury in the process of satisfying the elements of a claim of “willfulness” in the context of tax evasion or fraud. We think the same concept should apply toward government servants who are grossly negligent and deliberately ignorant about and evasive of the tax laws. See the Department of Justice, Tax Division, Criminal Tax Manual, section 8.06[4] at the following web address for a definition of “willful blindness”:

[http://famguardian.org/Publications/DOJTDCTM/taxc08.htm - 8.06\[4\]](http://famguardian.org/Publications/DOJTDCTM/taxc08.htm - 8.06[4])

Below is what the Criminal Tax Manual says on the subject of “willful blindness” in the above referenced section:

8.04[4] Willful Blindness

*It is a defense to a finding of willfulness that the defendant was ignorant of the law or of facts which made the conduct illegal, since willfulness requires a voluntary and intentional violation of a known legal duty. However, if the defendant deliberately avoided acquiring knowledge of a fact or the law, then the jury may infer that he actually knew it and that he was merely trying to avoid giving the appearance (and incurring the consequences) of knowledge. See **United States v. Ramsey**, 785 F.2d 184, 189 (7th Cir.), cert. denied sub nom. **McCreary v. United States**, 476 U.S. 1186 (1986). ⁽⁶⁾*

*In such a case, the use of an "ostrich instruction" -- also known as a deliberate ignorance, conscious avoidance, willful blindness, or a Jewell instruction (see **United States v. Jewell**, 532 F.2d 697 (9th Cir.), cert. denied, 426 U.S. 951 (1976) -- may be appropriate.*

*A number of courts have approved the use of such instructions under proper circumstances. See, e.g., **United States v. Picciandra**, 788 F.2d 39, 46 (1st Cir.), cert. denied, 479 U.S. 847 (1986); **United States v. MacKenzie**; 777 F.2d 811, 818-19 (2^d Cir.), cert. denied, 476 U.S. 1169 (1986); **United States v. Callahan**, 588 F.2d 1078 (5th Cir. 1979); **United States v. Dube**, 820 F.2d 886, 892 (7th Cir. 1987); **United States v. Bussey**, 942 F.2d 1241, 1246 (8th Cir.), cert. denied, 112 S. Ct. 1936 (1991) (post-**Cheek** decision); **United States v. Fingado**, 934 F.2d 1163, 1166-1167 (10th Cir.), cert. denied, 112 S. Ct. 320 (1991). However, it has also been said that the use of such instructions is "rarely appropriate." **United States v. deFrancisco-Lopez**, 939 F.2d 1405, 1409 (10th Cir. 1991) (relying on several 9th Circuit cases).⁽⁷⁾ Thus, it is advisable not to request such an instruction unless it is clearly warranted by the evidence in a particular case. Furthermore, the language of any deliberate ignorance instruction in a criminal tax case must comport with the Government's obligation to prove the voluntary, intentional violation of a known legal duty. The deliberate ignorance instruction set forth in **United States v. Fingado**, 934 F.2d at 1166, appears to be suitable for a criminal tax case.⁽⁸⁾ Further, to avoid potential confusion with the meaning of "willfulness" as it relates to the defendant's intent, it may be wise to avoid use of the phrase "willful blindness," using instead such phrases as "deliberate ignorance" or "conscious avoidance."⁽⁹⁾*

How do the federal courts view this despicable “willful ignorance” and the misapplication of the law by federal employees who practice it? Here is what one judge said about private individuals who practiced the same despicable behavior. You be the judge!:

“Additionally, honesty is inconsistent with willful ignorance of the facts and circumstances available to the creditor, and thus the facts and circumstances that reasonable investigation would have disclosed may be relevant. While ‘honesty’ may require no more than a pure heart, it is questionable that a pure heart can co-exist with closed eyes. It is not honest to close one’s eyes so as to maintain an empty head.”
[*Hale Contracting v. United New Mexico Bank*, 799 P.2d 581 (1990)]

Another way to describe government employees who practice “willful ignorance” is to say that they are operating in “bad faith”, as opposed to “good faith”.

7.12.6 Compelled Income Taxes on Wages (slavery)

Notice we didn’t say “taxes”, but rather “income taxes” based on wage? We’re not objecting to taxes, but to *involuntary* or *compelled* taxes based on wages. Taxes in proportion to one’s wages, as you will find out later, amount to slavery. If one’s income tax bracket is 28%, then they are a slave to the government for the first 28% of the year. There is no other way to look at it. But wait a minute, you say, the Thirteenth amendment and the civil war ended slavery, right? Economic slavery is still slavery, no matter how you want to look at it! That’s why the Constitution forbids direct taxes by the federal government on natural persons (people like you and I).because our founding fathers wisely understood this relationship between income from labor and direct taxes on that income by the government.

Interestingly, if you look up the word slave in the dictionary, you will find out that the word refers to a person who has no property rights. Labor has intrinsic value and is therefore property, because you

can exchange it for money, but the exchange doesn't involve profit in the taxable sense, because it is an equal exchange. Therefore, any attempt by the government to tax income from the equal exchange of one type of property for another amounts to tyranny. This was made very clear in the case of *Butcher's Union Co. v. Crescent City Company* (111 U.S. 746):

"Among these unalienable rights, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence is the right of men to pursue their happiness, by which is meant, the right any lawful business or vocation, in any manner not inconsistent with the equal rights of others, which may increase their prosperity or develop their faculties, so as to give them their highest enjoyment...It has been well said that, THE PROPERTY WHICH EVERY MAN HAS IS HIS OWN LABOR, AS IT IS THE ORIGINAL FOUNDATION OF ALL OTHER PROPERTY SO IT IS THE MOST SACRED AND INVIOABLE..."

7.12.7 Government identifying numbers: Mark of the Beast

"16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."
[Revelation 13:16-18, Bible]

The Socialist Security Number in today's society has become a very powerful tool for restraint of individual liberties and for tracking people down mercilessly and controlling them. It is a key tool used by law enforcement for locating individuals who are wanted. Given a person's social security number, you can, for a fee, use national databases to determine the following information about a person without their consent:

1. Credit cards and loans.
2. Credit history.
3. Income tax returns filed.
4. Government benefits received, including social security and medicare benefits.
5. Vehicles that have loans on them.
6. Real property that has loans on it.
7. Bank accounts.
8. Safe deposit boxes.
9. Driver's licenses and current address using driver's license number.

This information is most useful to the IRS in tracking tax protesters down and destroying their lives by confiscating and levying their assets, even if they owe no taxes, without a trial or due process of law. The only way for a person to protect his or her privacy from such abuse is to ensure that they never apply for or use a social security number, do not provide it when asked for it, and remove themselves from the Social Security System immediately so they can get rid of the "mark of the beast". One has to wonder, doesn't the 4th Amendment protect our privacy? How is it that a bank can legally refuse serving us and force us to give up our privacy and get a number on our forehead just to be able to have a bank account?

For detailed information on Socialist Security Numbers, refer to the website: <http://www.nossn.com/>. This site is very interesting. Also, if you want to free yourself of the coercion you feel about having to participate in social security, refer to section 14.4.1: Social security asseveration of coercion.

7.12.7.1 Coercion: The Enumeration At Birth Program

Under the "Enumeration at Birth Program", the U.S. government has instituted a means to in effect "bar code" babies (mark of the beast, Rev. 13:16-18) when they are born right there at the hospital so they can get into the tax system immediately and be tracked by government computers as "wards of the state".

The Social Security Administration will always tell you that getting an SSN is strictly voluntary. They will tell you that no one is required to get a SSN to live and work in the United States. The law will confirm this. The only people required to get a SSN is aliens upon admission into the United States and "All other Applicants". What they will not do is tell you that they are going to do everything in their power to make sure that everyone is enumerated. For example, here is the procedure if a parent objects to a newborn getting a SSN under the "Enumeration at Birth Program." Notice how they will pretend that the state inadvertently keyed "yes." And this is what our hospitals are instructed to do! You can't even have a baby without the state trying to assign a Socialist Security Number! Of course, you have the right to object as a parent to assigning an SSN, but the fact is that they already have a number and a card assigned before they ask you if you want one and make it inconvenient to say no.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER POLICY AND GENERAL PROCEDURES

TN 16 6-90 RM 00905.100B.

00205.100 PARENT OBJECTS TO ASSIGNMENT OF SSN TO CHILD
UNDER THE ENUMERATION AT BIRTH PROGRAM

A. POLICY SSA does not change, void or cancel SSNs. In special situations, SSA will delete the applicant information from the SSN record.

B. PROCEDURE A parent may object when a child is assigned an SSN.

If a child is issued an SSN card via the Enumeration at Birth program (the online NUMIDENT shows "FMC:6" for Enumeration at Birth items) and the mother states she answered "no" to the enumeration question when providing birth information for the newborn, assume that the State inadvertently keyed "yes", and follow these steps:

STEP ACTION

1 Explain that the child will need an SSN, by at least age 2, if he/she will be listed as a dependent on an income tax return.

* If the parent accepts this explanation and will keep the SSN card, stop.

* If this is not acceptable, go to step 2.

2 Explain that on SSA's records, the account will remain dormant, unless earnings are posted on the record.

* If the parent accepts this explanation and will keep the card, stop.

* If the parent accepts the explanation but does want the SSN card, take the card and destroy the card (RM 00201.060). Explain that when an application is later made for an SSN card the same number will be assigned.

* If the parent insists that we delete the SSN record, explain that the deletion action may take several months. (Go to step 3.)

3 * Document the parent's objection and advise the parent that the case must be sent to central office (CO) for review.

* Explain to the parent that if we delete the applicant information from the SSN record, a subsequent SSN request (likely before the child is age 2) will result in a different SSN. In addition, if and when the parent files for an SSN for the child in the future, he/she should enter "no" in item 10 on the SS-5.

* Forward all material pertinent to the situation (including the FO observation and recommendation) to CO at:

Social Security Administration
 ORSI, DE, E&R
 3-E-26 Operations Building
 6401 Security Blvd.
 Baltimore, MD 21235

4 Request review of the case and action concerning the parent's request for deletion of the data from the SSN record. Send a copy of the entire file to the appropriate regional office so that they can discuss ongoing problems with the involved State.

The above page was reprinted (without permission) from the SSA website. Of course this will confirm that it is voluntary. It certainly doesn't seem that way. I have talked to many parents who were told that they could not leave the hospital without getting a SSN for their newborn. Do I detect shades of Nazi Germany here somewhere?

7.12.7.2 Coercion: Denying Benefits for Those who Refuse to Provide Government Identifying Numbers

While there are no laws forcing citizens to obtain or use their Socialist Security Number, for all practical purposes, its use has become mandatory. Consider the following scenarios that mitigate against functioning in our culture without a social security number:

1. You cannot obtain a loan or a credit card or open a bank or checking account at the vast majority of U.S. Banks, without a Socialist Security Number, even if your credit expenditures are guaranteed by collateral deposits. If you ask the banks why, they will say: "Well, the only way we can get information about your credit history is with your social security number. Furthermore, we're not denying you a privilege like loans, because you can always go to another bank." That's just a smokescreen, of course, because if you ask them who grants credit or bank accounts without a social security number, they will know of no one to refer you to, because there aren't any banks in the U.S. that would. This amounts to legalized discrimination that ought to be punished by court sanctions.
2. There are no banks that will allow you to have a safe deposit box without a social security number.
3. You can't claim your children as tax deductions on your federal income tax returns without providing their social security number. Of course, no one at the IRS advertises that you don't need the social security and can substitute an affidavit and a copy of the birth certificate, because they don't want you knowing that you don't need a socialist security number for your child.
4. Some employers will say they can't hire you unless they have a social security number, even though they are mistaken and the law says they can't do this.
5. In some states now, you cannot get a driver's license without a social security number. The justification the courts and states use is that they need to be able to do this so that "deadbeat dads" will lose their driver's license if they don't pay child support, but the fact of the matter is that they insist on your socialist security number even if you aren't a parent and don't plan on being one. That is because this gives them one more way to find you and one less way you can hide.
6. You cannot get a mailbox without at least two forms of identification AND a home address where you live, as per Postal Service form 1583. Acceptable forms of identification include government civilian or military ID cards, which have your social security number on them. Furthermore, a copy of the holder's identifying information must be provided to the postal service on a copy of the application.
7. You cannot get student loans without a social security number.
8. You can't apply for AFDC, Medicaid, unemployment compensation, food stamps, or state programs without a socialist security number.
9. You can't be an officer of a food retail store that accepts food stamps without having a social security number.
10. You can't serve on a jury without someone asking you for your SSN.
11. You can't apply for a HUD program without providing your SSN.

So how can one survive without social security numbers? Here are some ideas:

1. Use cash or gold for all financial transactions.
2. Refuse to divulge your social security number to anyone.
3. Have offshore bank accounts and credit cards from banks that do not require social security numbers and which will respect your privacy and not divulge your transactions to the IRS.
4. When claiming your children as tax deductions, do not obtain or use their social security number on your income tax return, if you submit one of course. Instead, submit a copy of the birth certificate for each child along with an affidavit claiming you are the parent of that child.

5. Do not provide your social security number on your income tax returns. Also, do not provide your direct home address on your income tax returns in order to preserve your privacy. Give your overseas mail forwarder address instead.
6. Do not file a W-4 to institute withholding at your employer. Filing of this form is voluntary. If you do file the form or are forced to, refuse to provide your social security number.
7. Obtain an overseas driver's license so you don't need a local one that requires divulging your social security number.
8. Avoid putting anything in a local bank account or safe deposit box, and if you do, assume it will be confiscated by the government or the I.R.S. illegally.
9. Use offshore postal forwarders, who will respect your privacy and forward your mail confidentially to your local address.
10. Prosecute employers vigorously who discriminate against employees who do not have or will not provide their social security number. This behavior is clearly illegal.

7.12.8 Paper Money

7.12.8.1 What is Money?

The most powerful and enlightening discussion of money we have ever seen comes from a book by Ayn Rand entitled *Atlas Shrugged*. This book is highly recommended for freedom fighters and we guarantee it will change your view of the world forever. The theme of the book is laissez faire capitalism v. socialism and it does a very good job comparing the two in a practical sense by showing why capitalism is the only one of the two that is compatible with having a free country. It is a fiction book but it has a powerful non-fiction message we are sure you will enjoy. Below is an excerpt from that marvelous book on page 387 of the 35th Anniversary Edition.

*Rearden heard Bertram Scudder, outside the group, say to a girl who made some sound of indignation, "Don't let him disturb you. **You know, money is the root of all evil**--and he's the typical product of money."*

Rearden did not think that Francisco could have heard it, but he saw Francisco turning to them with a gravely courteous smile.

*"So you think that money is the root of all evil?" said Francisco d'Aconia. "**Have you ever asked what is the root of money? Money is a tool of exchange, which can't exist unless there are goods produced and men able to produce them. Money is the material shape of the principle that men who wish to deal with one another must deal by trade and give value for value. Money is not the tool of the moochers [the politicians and demagogues], who claim your product by tears, or of the looters [the IRS], who take it from you by force. Money is made possible only by the men who produce [not STEAL]. Is this what you consider evil?**"*

"When you accept money in payment for your effort, you do so only on the conviction that you will exchange it for the product of the effort of others. It is not the moochers or the looters who give value to money. Not an ocean of tears nor all the guns in the world can transform those pieces of paper in your wallet into the bread you will need to survive tomorrow. Those pieces of paper, which should have been gold, are a token of honor-- your claim upon the energy of the men who produce. Your wallet is your statement of hope that somewhere in the world around you there are men who will not default on that moral principle which is the root of money. Is this what you consider evil?"

*"Have you ever looked for the root of production? Take a look at an electric generator and dare tell yourself that it was created by the muscular effort of unthinking brutes. Try to grow a seed of wheat without the knowledge left to you by men who had to discover it for the first time. Try to obtain your food by means of nothing but physical motions--and you'll learn that **man's mind is the root of all the goods produced and of all the wealth that has ever existed on earth.**"*

*"But you say that money is made by the strong at the expense of the weak? What strength do you mean? It is not the strength of guns or muscles. **Wealth is the product of man's capacity to think.** Then is money made by the man who invents a motor at the expense of those who did not invent it? Is money made by the intelligent at the expense of the fools? By the able at the expense of the incompetent? By the ambitious at the expense of the lazy? **Money is MADE--before it can be looted or mooched--made by the effort of every honest man, each to the extent of his ability. An honest man is one who knows that he can't consume more than he has produced [like the government has been doing for decades with inflation and deficit spending].**"*

"To trade by means of money is the code of the men of good will. Money rests on the axiom that every man is the owner of his mind and his effort. Money allows no power to prescribe the value of your effort except by the voluntary choice of the man who is willing to trade you his effort in return. Money permits you to obtain for your goods and your labor that which they are worth to the men who buy them, but no more. Money permits no deals except those to mutual benefit by the unforced judgment of the traders. Money demands of you the recognition that men must work for their own benefit, not for their own injury, for their gain, not their loss--the recognition that they are not beasts of burden, born to carry the weight of your misery--that you must offer them values, not wounds--that the common bond among men is not the exchange of suffering, but the exchange of GOODS. Money demands that you sell, not your weakness to

men's stupidity, but your talent to their reason; it demands that you buy, not the shoddiest they offer, but the best your money can find. And when men live by trade--with reason, not force, as their final arbiter--it is the best product that wins, the best performance, the man of best judgment and highest ability--and the degree of a man's productiveness is the degree of his reward. This is the code of existence whose tool and symbol is money. Is this what you consider evil?

"But money is only a tool. It will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver. It will give you the means for the satisfaction of your desires, but it will not provide you with desires. Money is the scourge of the men who attempt to reverse the law of causality--the men who seek to replace the mind by seizing the products of the mind.

"Money will not purchase happiness for the man who has no concept of what he wants; money will not give him a code of values, if he's evaded the knowledge of what to value, and it will not provide him with a purpose, if he's evaded the choice of what to seek. Money will not buy intelligence for the fool, or admiration for the coward, or respect for the incompetent. The man who attempts to purchase the brains of his superiors to serve him, with his money replacing his judgment, ends up by becoming the victim of his inferiors. The men of intelligence desert him, but the cheats and the frauds come flocking to him, drawn by a law which he has not discovered: that no man may be smaller than his money. Is this the reason why you call it evil?

"Only the man who does not need it, is fit to inherit wealth--the man who would make his own fortune no matter where he started. If an heir is equal to his money, it serves him; if not, it destroys him. But you look on and you cry that money corrupted him. Did it? Or did he corrupt his money? Do not envy a worthless heir; his wealth is not yours and you would have done no better with it. Do not think that it should have been distributed among you; loading the world with fifty parasites instead of one, would not bring back the dead virtue which was the fortune. Money is a living power that dies without its root. Money will not serve that mind that cannot match it. Is this the reason why you call it evil?

"Money is your means of survival. The verdict which you pronounce upon the source of your livelihood is the verdict you pronounce upon your life. If the source is corrupt, you have damned your own existence. Did you get your money by fraud? By pandering to men's vices or men's stupidity? By catering to fools, in the hope of getting more than your ability deserves? By lowering your standards? By doing work you despise for purchasers you scorn? If so, then your money will not give you a moment's or a penny's worth of joy. Then all the things you buy will become, not a tribute to you, but a reproach; not an achievement, but a reminder of shame. Then you'll scream that money is evil. Evil, because it would not pinch-hit for your self-respect? Evil, because it would not let you enjoy your depravity? Is this the root of your hatred of money?

"Money will always remain an effect and refuse to replace you as the cause. Money is the product of virtue, but it will not give you virtue and it will not redeem your vices. Money will not give you the unearned, neither in matter nor in spirit. Is this the root of your hatred of money?

"Or did you say it's the LOVE of money that's the root of all evil? To love a thing is to know and love its nature. To love money is to know and love the fact that money is the creation of the best power within you, and your passkey to trade your effort for the effort of the best among men. It's the person who would sell his soul for a nickel, who

is the loudest in proclaiming his hatred of money--and he has good reason to hate it. The lovers of money are willing to work for it. They know they are able to deserve it."

"Let me give you a tip on a clue to men's characters: the man who damns money has obtained it dishonorably; the man who respects it has earned it.

"Run for your life from any man who tells you that money is evil. That sentence is the leper's bell of an approaching looter. So long as men live together on earth and need means to deal with one another--their only substitute, if they abandon money, is the muzzle of a gun.

"But money demands of you the highest virtues, if you wish to make it or to keep it. Men who have no courage, pride, or self-esteem, men who have no moral sense of their right to their money and are not willing to defend it as they defend their life, men who apologize for being rich--will not remain rich for long. They are the natural bait for the swarms of looters that stay under rocks for centuries, but come crawling out at the first smell of a man who begs to be forgiven for the guilt of owning wealth. They will hasten to relieve him of the guilt--and of his life, as he deserves.

*"Then you will see the rise of the double standard--the men who live by force [**the government and the IRS and scumbag lawyers**], yet count on those who live by trade to create the value of their looted money--**the men who are the hitchhikers of virtue. In a moral society, these are the criminals, and the statutes are written to protect you against them. But when a society establishes criminals-by-right and looters-by-law--men who use force to seize the wealth of DISARMED victims--then money becomes its creators' avenger.** Such looters [IRS] believe it safe to rob defenseless [made ignorant of the law by sneaky lawyers and politicians who run the public education system, in this case] men, once they've passed a law to disarm them. But their loot becomes the magnet for other looters, who get it from them as they got it. Then the race goes, not to the ablest at production, but to those most ruthless at brutality. **When force is the standard, the murderer wins over the pickpocket. And then that society vanishes, in a spread of ruins and slaughter.***

"Do you wish to know whether that day is coming? Watch money. Money is the barometer of a society's virtue. When you see that trading is done, not by consent, but by compulsion--when you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing--when you see that money is flowing to those who deal, not in goods, but in favors--when you see that men get richer by graft and by pull than by work, and your laws don't protect you against them, but protect them against you--when you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice--you may know that your society is doomed. Money is so noble a medium that it does not compete with guns and it does not make terms with brutality. It will not permit a country to survive as half-property, half-loot.

*"Whenever destroyers [**the IRS, the Federal Reserve, and the Dept of INjustice**] appear among men, they start by destroying money, for **money is men's protection and the base of a moral existence.** Destroyers seize gold and leave to its owners a counterfeit pile of paper. This kills all objective standards and delivers men*

*into the arbitrary power of an arbitrary setter of values. Gold was an objective value, an equivalent of wealth produced. Paper is a mortgage on wealth that does not exist, backed by a gun aimed at those who are expected to produce it. **Paper is a check drawn by legal looters upon an account which is not theirs: upon the virtue of the victims.** Watch for the day when it becomes, marked: 'Account overdrawn.'*

"When you have made evil [government looting through fraud, obfuscation and complication of the tax laws, and through vote for sugar-daddies who promise loot] the means of survival, do not expect men to remain good. Do not expect them to stay moral and lose their lives for the purpose of becoming the fodder of the immoral. Do not expect them to produce, when production is punished and looting rewarded. Do not ask, 'Who is destroying the world?' You are.

"You stand in the midst of the greatest achievements of the greatest productive civilization and you wonder why it's crumbling around you, while you're damning its life-blood--money. You look upon money as the savages did before you, and you wonder why the jungle is creeping back to the edge of your cities. Throughout men's history, money was always seized by looters of one brand or another, but whose method remained the same: to seize wealth by force and to keep the producers bound, demeaned, defamed, deprived of honor. That phrase about the evil of money, which you mouth with such righteous recklessness, comes from a time when wealth was produced by the labor of slaves--slaves who repeated the motions once discovered by somebody's mind and left unimproved for centuries. So long as production was ruled by force, and wealth was obtained by conquest, there was little to conquer. Yet through all the centuries of stagnation and starvation, men exalted the looters, as aristocrats of the sword, as aristocrats of birth, as aristocrats of the bureau, and despised the producers, as slaves, as traders, as shopkeepers--as industrialists.

*"To the glory of mankind, there was, for the first and only time in history, a **COUNTRY OF MONEY**--and I have no higher, more reverent tribute to pay to America, for this means: a country of reason, justice, freedom, production, achievement. For the first time, man's mind and money were set free, and there were no fortunes-by-conquest, but only fortunes-by-work, and instead of swordsmen and slaves, there appeared the real maker of wealth, the greatest worker, the highest type of human being--the self-made man--the American industrialist.*

"If you ask me to name the proudest distinction of Americans, I would choose--because it contains all the others--the fact that they were the people who created the phrase 'to MAKE money.' No other language or nation had ever used these words before; men had always thought of wealth as a static quantity--to be seized, begged, inherited, shared, looted, or obtained as a favor. Americans were the first to understand that wealth has to be created. The words 'to make money' hold the essence of human morality.

"Yet these were the words for which Americans were denounced by the rotted cultures of the looters' continents. Now the looters' credo has brought you to regard your proudest [capitalist] achievements as a hallmark of shame, your prosperity as guilt, your greatest men, the industrialists, as blackguards, and your magnificent factories as the product and property of muscular labor, the labor of whip-driven slaves, like the pyramids of Egypt. The rotter [the [IRS](#) and the federal and state governments] who simpers that he sees no difference between the power of the dollar and the power of the whip, ought to learn the difference on his own hide-as, I think, he will.

"Until and unless you discover that money is the root of all good, you ask for your own destruction. When money ceases to be the tool by which men deal with one another, then men become the tools of men. Blood, whips and guns--or dollars. Take your choice--there is no other--and your time is running out."

Powerful stuff, folks! If you would like more information about Ayn Rand's book above, please refer to our website at:

<http://famguardian.org/Subjects/Taxes/JohnGalt/JohnGalt.htm>

7.12.8.2 "Separation of Money and State"

A very popular term in our age of political correctness is the term "separation of church and state". This term was first coined by Thomas Jefferson in a letter to the Danbury Baptist Church on October 7, 1801 and has been cited in several subsequent rulings by the Supreme Court which removed prayer from the schools and from other aspects of public life. However, how many people know that in

addition to “separation of church and state”, our founders also sought “separation of money and state”? Very few people understand this concept and why it is so important, so we will devote this section to this fascinating concept.

The original purposes of currency were simple, but complete insofar as serving the purposes of involved parties. The original forms of currency arose spontaneously in accord with the desired structure of trade. In such an original form, the money, if any, was a token of value. No party which contributed nothing to the trade, profited from it.

Ultimately, governments would come to regulate monetary circulations. In very many cases, because the power to issue currencies is the opportunity to take tremendous unearned profit from entire nations, the advantages of a circulation which could be honored by — and which could fully serve — a broad trade system, were subverted and abused.

The colonies of the United States of America were unique among the nations and nations-to-be of the world, as they modeled their currency to replicate solely, trade between consenting parties, **that no party extrinsic to the trade profited unjustly from it.** This is what we call “separation of money and state”: a situation where even though the government created the money, they could not manipulate its value to their advantage because they could not arbitrarily create more money with a printing press. If they could arbitrarily print more money, then they would lower the value of the money in circulation and thereby “tax” all the money in existence.

The virtues of the near perfect American Colonial system therefore comprised the greatest possible threat to systems of multiplying indebtedness, because the very complete freedom to prosper without impediment, inherent solely to the perfected attributes exemplified by the American Colonial system, vibrantly demonstrated the iniquities of unjust profit rendered by the multiplication of debt inherent to, and irreversible within, central banking systems.

The money of the American Colonies thus became the principal cause of the American Revolution.

On behalf of the Bank of England, British Parliament ordered the colonists to give up their interest-free currency. No such system as the colonists had devised could be allowed to demonstrate the impoverishing costs imposed by the plutocrats, of a currency subject to multiplied, unearned profit. By dictate of the plutocracy of England, in America, as everywhere else in the world, debt would be perpetually and irreversibly multiplied upon the unassenting subjects of the system, to their ever greater detriment.

The colonists would pay some thirty-percent annual interest for the imposed currency. Benjamin Franklin reported, "Within a year, the poor houses were filled. The hungry and homeless walked the streets everywhere." He later explained, "We would have gladly borne the little tax on tea and other matters, if it had not been that they took from us our money, which created great unemployment and dissatisfaction."

How did the concept of money first originate, and what is the vital difference between such a money as the colonists devised, and the more convoluted instrument issued in its stead by the Bank of England — prototype of the central banking systems of the present world?

One day, a producer of a given product was approached by another. The latter said, "I have not yet produced the thing(s) which I will in turn present to you, which I can produce if you first produce the thing(s) I ask of you."

The first saw the prospective benefit of this commitment, should the second be so good as to perform the resultant obligation. Trust was involved; and the "money" that was thus created was comprised of the incumbent trust.

Money was created when the debtor was willing to attest to their obligation. The obligation was so much as penned to paper, which in turn represented the value, and very immutable units of, that which they promised to deliver. The paper, new money itself, held by the creditor party of the trade, was evidence of the debt. The value of the money held by the creditor was a promise to pay — a note⁹⁸.

A note is only so good as the integrity and capacity of the debtor to fulfill their obligation. No note, regardless of who issues it, is any better.

How do we emulate free, unimpeded trade by management of a circulation; and what properties must a commerce system provide, that it not impose injustice on its subjects?

If the value of our original note were diminished over time, the creditor might receive less than the intended obligation of the debtor, or vice versa. In order not to subvert the purposes of trade commitments or corrupt the value or cost of accumulated savings or assets, the value of currency must be consistent across time.

How is money to be introduced to the circulation?

The answer to this question rests on the further questions, must money represent debt; and when should money come into existence?

When new prosperity is rendered, and if money is to represent debt, and if the circulation is to represent the value of all things related to it, the singular place and time money can be and must be introduced to circulation, is when new wealth is created. If a circulation is to represent the value of things in part by constant proportion to those things, and if it is undesirable that a circulation impede trade, then the volume of circulation must be equal to the value of the volume of things for which it was created, and which might be traded, all at once, by it. Nothing less than such a circulation provides for full, immediate trade.

The need for further circulation thus coincides with the production of new wealth. This therefore is when new circulation must be introduced; and the quantity to be introduced must be equal to the new wealth.

Distribution of the circulation is readily solved. Where new circulation is required, it is distributed to the producer of the wealth, and the consumer of the wealth assumes a debt equal to the original value of the wealth.

⁹⁸note: A note is a promise to pay. Modern currencies are originally issued as debts. The value of the currency is comprised of, and represents, the original commitment of the debtor to fulfill the obligation.

Rate of payment is also readily solved. Only by paying against just such debts at the rate of consumption, is money in circulation kept equal to the current value of debt-related wealth; and then, and then only, are we paying only for what we consume, with an equal measure of our own production.

Only in such a system is the circulation always adequate to pay all debt; is there no inflation or deflation; is there no manipulation of value or cost by scarcity of circulation; is there no impediment to prosperity for scarcity of circulation; and is there no multiplication of debt in proportion to commerce, as inherent to interest.

Here and here alone, have we replicated entirely the conditions and interaction of our original two, unimpeded traders.

By agreeing together to issue and regulate such a currency by such a prescription, the integrity of the currency is further assured by society together (government) holding debtors accountable to fulfill the obligations represented by the "money." This was the apparent conviction of the American Colonists, who fought a revolution to defend their currency.

A government of free people and representing free people, such as the original United States Government, was not established to profit from the people. It could not enrich itself from their trades because all of its money had to be gold and silver.

The history of the American "Economy" led indirectly to a far different end than the founders fought for. In a century of strife, descendants of the original central bankers the American public had cast off, ultimately were successful in imposing just such a privately owned "banking" system as necessary to issue a currency with the additional attribute and ramifications of "interest."

Under the so-called "Federal Reserve" System — a conglomerate of international banks — a currency would be issued such as engendered the hunger and homelessness Franklin explained compelled the American Revolution.

What is the distinct nature of the central banker's interest bearing debt currency⁹⁹; and what are the consequences of it?

The currency and interaction of modern central banks is analogous to a third party imposing upon our original two-party trade.

This third party, by nature extrinsic to the trade, produces nothing, and intrinsically contributes nothing to commerce. The extrinsic party writes the obligation to pay for the debtor party, and makes the obligation to pay no better than the debtor party's original promise, but adds to the cost of the transaction, whatever "interest" they coerce from the debtor by virtue of the need for such a token of exchange, as necessary to convey the diverse and dissimilar products of modern commerce.

The entire body of vying commerce then is reduced to a pool of debtors committed to deliver debt-and-interest obligations which, from the very beginning, exceed the entire such circulation.

The central banker has provided the original traders nothing they aren't fully capable of providing themselves, and something they certainly are fully capable of providing, in concert with further traders,

⁹⁹interest-bearing debt currency: A currency loaned into circulation, and comprising a debt subject to "interest."

to all commerce together. But by displacing such an equitable system with a paper or coin currency, the essential promises of which no banker fulfills, the system is subject to profit by interest, and the additional ramifications of interest — whatever those ramifications be.

What are the ramifications of "interest?"

In order to maintain the circulation vital to repaying their debts, and vital to sustaining the further, greater commerce necessary to repaying the obligations of those debts, which include interest, the subjects of the system are compelled to re-borrow what they pay against principal and interest as subsequent debts, increased so much as periodic interest¹⁰⁰.

So long as the system exists — so long as interest exists — debt is multiplied in proportion to a circulation, or the commerce which can be sustained by it. Ever more of the circulation must be devoted to servicing debt, altogether, at the ever greater profit of the central bankers, who provide no contribution to prosperity, for the mere, ostensible service of qualifying our credit-worthiness, and counting what we pay them in multiples of our own production.

As the sum of debt is multiplied, greater sums of interest are paid and re-borrowed; and thus debt increases by ever greater increments of periodic interest.

Ultimately, one thing — debt service — increasing in proportion to another — the capacity of commerce to support and survive debt — exceeds the latter.

While a society might issue and regulate its circulation without limitation and for the mere costs of qualifying creditworthiness (without impeding credit-worthiness) and accounting for (far less) payment of debt... from the very beginning a central banking system establishes total debts (principal plus interest) which cannot be paid by the circulation, and which, in order to maintain the vital circulation, inherently and irreversibly multiply debt to our ever greater detriment, and ultimate imposition of system-wide insoluble debt.

So, we see, modern "capitalism" is not true, free enterprise; and the nature of money is critical to the vitality and freedom of enterprise. **By mandating that gold and silver be the basis for all money in the American Constitution, and because gold and silver are limited commodities that cannot arbitrarily be created, the founders endowed us with a monetary system that provided “perfect separation between money and state”, which kept politicians from interfering with and profiting unjustly from our trade.** Because this system was so perfect in isolating money from politics, the politicians had to invent a way to end the coupling of gold with money, and they did this through a succession of devious machinations over the years:

1. The Federal Reserve Act was passed in 1913 right after the Sixteenth Amendment was passed allegedly authorizing an income tax. See section 7.12.9 for further details. The income tax provided a way to “sop up” excess government dollars in circulation put there by a spend-a-holic government so that hyperinflation could be prevented if government printing of money got out of control.
2. The coupling of gold to money was undermined in 1933 when Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the Trading with the Enemy Act and recalled all the gold in circulation as currency and made it illegal inside the federal zone to own gold. See section 6.2.2 for further details on this scam.

¹⁰⁰ periodic interest: Interest paid in any period of examination. The periodic interest of a year is the interest paid over the period of a year.

3. President Nixon completely eliminated the coupling of gold to money in 1971 by outlawing the redemption of federal reserve notes for gold.

After these “reforms and improvements” were made to our monetary system, we were transformed to more closely follow the central banking model used by most other tyrannical socialistic European governments at the time. We also had an economy ripe for inflation and instability and one where our government could print as much money as it wanted and thereby lower the value of the currency in exchange, and this is exactly what they did. In the early 1980’s following President Nixon’s decision to eliminate redeemability of Federal Reserve Notes in gold, interest and inflation rates climbed as high as 20% per year and this had been unheard of in all the previous history of America when we were on the gold standard.

If you would like to know more about the concept of “Separation of Money and State”, we refer you to the website called “People for a Perfect Economy” at:

<http://www.perfecteconomy.com/>

7.12.8.3 The Founders Rejected Paper Currency

Today, inflation is a way of life and America isn't just swimming in debt, it's drowning. Consumer credit debt and business loans are at an all time high. Many state and city governments are nearly broke and Orange County, California declared bankruptcy at one time.

Everyone knows that borrowing results in debt. But does anyone know what it is that is actually being borrowed?

- Is it credit or money?
- And is there any difference?
- What exactly is money?
- A circulating medium of exchange?
- A store of intrinsic value?
- Evidence of credit or debt, or all of these?

Gold and silver, on the other hand, represent a finite amount of stored value that has been mined and refined through the toil and sweat of human labor and cannot simply be printed into existence as needed. Precious metals have intrinsic, inherent value. Inflation is the condition where each newly printed and circulating paper dollar reduces the value of all other dollars already in circulation.

The Founders expressly state their firm desire to never allow a paper currency here in America. According to the records of the Constitutional Convention, the suggestion that the federal government be given the power to "emit bills of credit"--meaning to issue paper money--was angrily denounced and voted down. One of the reasons the constitutional convention was called was that the Continental Dollar had just collapsed, having gone from 8:1 against the Spanish milled dollar to 1,000:1 within just one year. Barbershops and other establishments were wallpapering their rooms with Continentals, they were so worthless.

The Founder's personal experience with the then recent hyperinflation and collapse of the paper Continental Dollar, combined with their knowledge of the inflationary history of central governments

in England and Europe, had taught them that rulers inevitably resort to the printing press to create as much new money as needed until their inflated paper currencies became worthless. The Founders knew that paper money is artificial money, unlike gold and silver which are valuable, durable, and limited in supply. This was exemplified in the writings of Thomas Jefferson, the author of our constitution:

*"Paper is poverty,... it is only the ghost of money, and not money itself."
[Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington, 1788. ME 7:36]*

*"That paper money has some advantages is admitted. But that its abuses also are inevitable and, by breaking up the measure of value, makes a lottery of all private property, cannot be denied.
[Thomas Jefferson to Josephus B. Stuart, 1817. ME 15:113]*

*"It is a cruel thought, that, when we feel ourselves standing on the firmest ground in every respect, the cursed arts of our secret enemies, combining with other causes, should effect, by depreciating our money, what the open arms of a powerful enemy could not."
[Thomas Jefferson to Richard Henry Lee, 1779. ME 4:298, Papers 2:298]*

In *How To Achieve Personal and Financial Privacy In a Public Age*, author Mark Nestmann writes:

Gold is still the ultimate store of wealth. It's the world's only true money. And there isn't much of it to go around. All of it ever mined would fit into a small building --a 56 foot cube. The annual world production would fit into a 14 foot cube, roughly the size of an ordinary living room. If each Chinese citizen were to buy just one ounce, it would take up the annual supply for the next 200 years.

Making Sense Out Of The Dollar, published in September 1, 1980, by the American Institute For Economic Research, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, stated:

When President Nixon nullified the U.S. promise to pay dollars for dollar claims in 1971, the U.S. monetary unit was changed from gold to a nothing. Obviously the two monetary units are vastly different, inasmuch as the former was a "dollar," the later cannot also be a "dollar." Fiat monetary units have a perfect record of failure, and when they are viewed as nothing units, that outcome is more plainly understandable.

How was the dollar once connected to gold? The U.S. Congress authorized the minting of gold coins on April 1, 1792, with a dollar specified as 24.75 grains of pure gold. this established a "price" for gold of \$19.39 per troy ounce (480 grains per troy ounce divided by 24.785 grains per dollar equals 19.39 dollars per troy ounce).

In 1834 the gold content of the ten dollar coin produced by the U.S. Mint, the "eagle," was reduced from 247.5 grains to 232 grains of pure gold, establishing one dollar as 23.20 grains and a gold price of \$20.67 per ounce. In 1934 President Roosevelt devalued the dollar to 13.71 grains of pure gold. This raised the "price" to \$35.00 per ounce.

On August 15 , 1971 President Nixon declared that the U.S. Treasury no longer would meet its promise to pay gold, in exchange for dollar claims. By 1971, nearly all of the paper currency in circulation consisted of Federal Reserve Notes in various denominations. A demand "note" ordinarily is evidence of a promise to pay or to deliver something on demand. For many years this was indicated by a printed statement on the

paper currency to the effect that the U.S. Treasury would deliver the indicated number of dollars (amount of gold) on demand in exchange for the paper claims to the dollars.

As new paper currency was printed after 1971, the promise to pay was deleted from the Federal Reserve notes. Although still designated as a "note," which ordinarily implies a promise to pay something on demand or at some designated future time, the Federal Reserve notes now issued not only do not represent anything (as did gold certificates or silver certificates) but also they do not promise anything. They do not even purport to be anything other than identical pieces of paper printed with varying numbers.

Such a piece of paper currency is a no-thing having exchange value as a physical substance. Moreover, it does not even purport to be a claim on any thing. Today's dollar is totally a fiat currency. Fiat money is nonredeemable paper, a no-thing. As long as people will continue to give something for nothing, as long as there are human "sheep" willing to be shorn, as long as savings can so readily be embezzled by depreciating the money in use, the "game" can go on.

7.12.8.4 War of Independence Fought Over Paper Money

Most Americans are never taught that the real reason the War For Independence was fought was over paper money. In his book *The Almighty Buck*, Nord Davis writes:

In 1763, Benjamin Franklin, a patriot who spoke too frankly, was in England and approached by a Rothschild banker who asked him the reason for the prosperity of the colonies. Franklin replied: "That is simple. In the Colonies we issue our own money called colonial scrip. We issue it in proportion to the demands of trade and industry."

It didn't take long for the Rothschilds to react to that bit of information. In 1764, the Rothschild Bank of England used its influence on the Crown of England to have a Law passed which prohibited the American colonies from issuing their own temporary legal tender scrip and making it compulsory for the colonies to obtain all their currency at interest from the Bank of England.

Our American forefathers were obliged to surrender their colonial scrip and then to mortgage their colonial assets and securities to the Bank of England just to borrow the money to carry on business. According to Franklin:

"One year the conditions were so reversed that the era of Prosperity ended, and a depression set in, to such an extent that the streets were filled with unemployed. The Bank of England refused to give more than 50% of the face value of the scrip when turned over as required by law. The circulating medium was thus cut in half..."

The famous lexicographer, Daniel Webster, issued the following warning:

Of all contrivances for cheating the laboring classes of mankind, none has been more effective than that which deludes them with paper money.

Quoting from *Economic Solutions* by Peter Kershaw:

The Founding Fathers of this great land had no difficulty whatsoever understanding the agenda of bankers, and they frequently referred to them and their kind as, quote, 'friends of paper money.'

They hated the Bank of England, in particular, and felt that even were we successful in winning our independence from England and King George, we could never truly be a nation of freemen unless we had an honest money system.

John Adams wrote in a letter to Thomas Jefferson in 1787:

All the perplexities, confusion and distress in America rise, not from defects in their Constitution or Confederation, not from want of honor or virtue, so much as from downright ignorance of the nature of coin, credit, and circulation.

The founders emblazoned their clear understanding of the necessity of a stable commodity money in the form of gold and silver by explicitly stating in the Constitution under Article 1, Section 8 that the federal government may "coin money" and "regulate the value thereof" and under Article 1, Section 10, that the States are forbidden..forbidden, mind you, to "make any thing but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts."

Author Byron Dale in his book ***Bashed By the Bankers***, writes:

During the years immediately preceding adoption of the Constitution, mobs drove our Congress from Philadelphia into New Jersey and shot up the courthouses in Massachusetts. These events were illustrative of the general situation existing throughout the country with respect to Law and order. Money was worth anywhere from two and a half cents on the dollar down to nothing. Credit was ruined, trade paralyzed and discipline at a low ebb. Anarchy, bankruptcy and confusion prevailed.

On February 3, 1787, George Washington wrote to Henry Knox as follows:

If any..person had told me that there would have been such formidable rebellion as exists, I would have thought him a ...fit subject for a mad house.

Washington then wrote several letters over the next few years in which he said that if anyone had predicted the stunningly fast and enormous improvements in the economy brought about by the gold clause in the Constitution:

"...it would have been considered a species of madness."

Three short years after the Constitution had been written and ratified and the new government set up, Washington wrote on June 3, 1790 to the Marquis de LaFayette:

You have doubtless been informed...of the happy progress of our affairs...our revenues have been considerably more productive than it was imagined they would be.

On July 19, 1791, Washington wrote to Catherine Macauloy Graham, saying:

The United States enjoys a scene of prosperity and tranquility under the new government that could hardly have been hoped for.

On December 16, 1789, the Pennsylvania Gazette wrote:

Since the federal constitution has removed all danger of our having paper tender, our trade is advanced fifty percent...

With sound, commodity money restored and paper eliminated, the United States was enjoying "prosperity" and "tranquility." So has the wisdom of the Founders ultimately prevailed in absolutely preventing paper currency from ever again appearing here in America?

7.12.8.5 President Thomas Jefferson: Foe of Paper Money

In 1791, Congress passed a Law chartering the Bank of the United States. The bill was drafted by Alexander Hamilton, a monarchist, and then Secretary of the Treasury. It was opposed by Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson who claimed it was unconstitutional and created a powerful agency for the monopoly of money.

After a long debate, Congress passed the bill establishing a twenty-year charter for the first United States Bank. It was not owned by the United States government, but by the private individuals who owned stock in the bank, many of whom lived in England and also owned stock in the Bank of England.

In 1802, Thomas Jefferson wrote in a letter to then Secretary of Treasury Albert Gallatin:

If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation and then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around them will deprive the people of all property until their children will wake up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered.

Mr. Jefferson also warned:

I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies...the issuing of power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people to whom it properly belongs.

In 1892, a bill came before Congress to renew the charter which was to expire in 1811. During consideration of the bill, Mr. Porter, a member of Congress, stated that it would:

Plant in the bosom of the Constitution a viper which...will sting the liberties of this country to the heart.

Mr. Wright said: "The charter is a cancer upon the body politic."

Mr. Boyd stated: "The bank is a great swindle."

The bill was killed.

7.12.8.6 Wealth confiscation through inflation

Kenneth Gerbino, former chairman of the American Economic Council stated:

Historically, the United States has been a hard money country. Only [since 1913] has the United States operated on a fiat money system. During this period, paper money has depreciated over 87%. During the preceding 140 year period, the hard currency of the United States had actually maintained its value. Wholesale prices in 1913...were the same as in 1787."

Quoting from *The Creature From Jekyll Island*, author G. Edward Griffin writes:

Inflation has now been institutionalized at a fairly constant 5% per year. This has been scientifically determined to be the optimum level for generating the most revenue without causing public alarm.

A 5% devaluation applies, not only to the money earned this year, but to all that is left over from previous years. At the end of the first year, a dollar is worth 95 cents. At the end of the second year, the 95 cents is reduced again by 5%, leaving its worth at 90 cents, and so on. By the time a person has worked 20 years, the government will have confiscated 64% of every dollar he saved over those years. By the time he has worked 45 years, the hidden tax will be 90%.

The government will take virtually everything a person saves over a lifetime.

In 1920, at the conclusion of World War I, noted economist John Maynard Keynes stated in his book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*:

By a continuing process of inflation, governments can confiscate secretly and unobserved, an important part of the wealth of their citizens. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency.

The process engages all the hidden forces of economic Law on the side of destruction, and does it in a manner which not one man in a million is able to diagnose.

In that same book, Keynes also wrote:

If governments should refrain from regulation...the worthlessness of the money becomes apparent and the fraud upon the public can be concealed no longer.

In 1946, a postage stamp cost 3 cents, a one pound loaf of bread 10 cents, a quart of milk 18 cents, a gallon of gas 21 cents, an average new home \$12,638, and the average new car \$1,649. Compare those prices to today's costs for the same items.

Today's Federal Reserve Note will purchase less than 10 cents of what it would buy as recently as 1940. Workers earn more today than in the 40's, but their salaries have not kept up with inflation. There fore, the average American is slipping further and further toward poverty.

In 1946, a man could easily support his family with just one job. Today, it is the norm for both parents to be forced to work at least one job each just to make ends meet.

Have you ever stopped to think that this massive inflation has literally stolen trillions of dollars of America's wealth and productivity over the course of just a few generations? It may well be the most insidious tax ever collected.

7.12.8.7 The Most Dangerous Man in the Mid South¹⁰¹

(from the 2/97 Chronicles, the American Culture Magazine)

By Franklin Sanders

¹⁰¹ http://www.the-moneychanger.com/html/a_dangerous_man.html. Frank Sanders.

Almost 30 years ago, just a few weeks before I got married, on a drugstore bookstand I found a strange book: Capitalism, the Unknown Ideal. It was a collection of essays about a philosophy of freedom. Two dealt with the American monetary system. The author explained that nothing -- no gold or silver -- backed our currency. He argued that sooner or later, this fiat money system would lead to disaster, and that only a money backed by real value -- gold -- could last.

That author was Alan Greenspan.

Since then our careers -- Alan's and mine -- have taken very different paths.

In 1967, Alan Greenspan was already a fairly well known economic consultant. In the 1970s, President Ford appointed him to his Council of Economic Advisors. In 1987, Alan Greenspan was appointed Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Funny, he doesn't talk much about gold anymore.

In 1967, I was a college senior. Susan and I were married on December 16th, and when I graduated in 1968 the draft board gave me 30 days' to frolic before conscription. I arrived at Fort Polk, Louisiana one hot October night, caught the Army bus out to the post and sat down behind the driver, facing across the bus. I opened my copy of Aristotle's Works and began reading.

I noticed I was the only man on board with hair. The fellow sitting across from me asked, "Whatcha reading?" Wordlessly, I flipped up the book so he could read the title on the spine. "Boy, he said without any reflection. "Have you come to the wrong place."

In 1969 I retired from the Army to attend graduate school in German at Tulane University. The next year I received a full scholarship to the Free University in West Berlin, where I saw first hand what unchallenged state power could do. The West was pulsing with life and light, the East dead and empty. In the Museum of the Wall at Checkpoint Charlie I read the last radio message from the Free Hungarians in 1956: "Tell Europe we are dying for them."

After Susan and I came home late in 1973 I worked in several businesses, learning first hand what it means to "make your way in the world." I kept studying economics and monetary systems, on my own and in graduate classes.

In 1980 I opened my own business in West Memphis, Arkansas, across the Mississippi from Memphis, selling physical gold and silver. First thing I did was write to the Arkansas Attorney General to explain that I thought exchanges of gold and silver money for paper money weren't subject to the sales tax, since they were exchanges of money for money. What was his official position?

He never bothered to answer my certified letter. Or the second. Or the third.

When he finally responded, it was only to say he wouldn't answer. I wrote to the Commissioner of Revenue, and told him what I was doing. Nobody ever bothered to answer that certified letter either, so I reported all my sales as "exempt". Every month.

A year later, in 1981, a Revenue officer showed up to audit my books. I told her what I did wasn't taxable, and that every trade contract contained a confidentiality guarantee to my customer. She could see them if she would indemnify me in case some customer sued for breach of contract. Alas, she

didn't want to co-operate, so she just multiplied all my "exempt" sales by the sales tax percentage, added penalties and interest, and sent me a bill for about \$30,000.

Thus began my merry pilgrimage through the courts. I had landed smack in the middle of Legal Never-Neverland: monetary law. Of course Article I, Section 10 of the U.S. Constitution says, "No State shall make any Thing but Gold and Silver Coin a tender in payment of debt." Of course the definition of "money" at the head of the Arkansas tax title says, "The term `money' or `monies' shall be had to mean and include gold and silver coin." Of course the U.S. Code at Title 12, Section 152 says that "lawful money" means gold and silver coin of the United States.

Of course, of course, of course . . . it goes on and on. State and federal constitutions, state and federal statutes, state and federal court decisions, US supreme court decisions, all speak with one voice: gold and silver coin are money, bank notes are not money. But whether I raised the issue in a Revenue Department administrative court, chancery court, or federal district court, I ran into the same terrified reaction. "The monetary emperor is naked! Federal Reserve notes aren't really money! Quick, rule against this clown and drag him out of here!"

I appealed the agent's assessment, and lost at the administrative level. Then at the administrative court, too. I appealed to chancery court. Had a trial. Lost there, too. By then it was December, 1983, and I received a letter from the Arkansas Revenue Department demanding I fork over \$120,000!

A few days later two deputies came to collect their "judgment." Through several well-nigh miraculous providences, they got nothing. That night, I decamped from Arkansas. I was so amazed at God's protection through this event that I wrote a friend a long letter about it. Remember that letter.

I moved my business to Tennessee, doing exactly the same thing, exchanging gold and silver money for federal reserve notes. By this time I had realized that although every American had a constitutional and legal right to gold and silver money, the problem was, you couldn't use them in everyday business. We had the right to sound money, but no means. We needed an interface between the paper system and gold and silver.

So in May, 1984 I opened a gold and silver bank. It attracted depositors like wildfire, but somebody didn't like my idea. On June 18, 1985, two IRS Criminal Investigation Division (CID) agents popped in to announce that I was under criminal investigation. ["Surprise! We just dropped by to pull out your fingernails with pliers!"].

In the next three years IRS treated me to the full court press. They got my bank records, and on US attorney's stationery wrote all my customers, demanding that they send records from their dealings with me to the IRS CID agent and threatening the recalcitrant with subpoenas. These letters remarkably chilled my customers' enthusiasm. It got harder and harder to make a living.

On September 18, 1986, five agents from the Tennessee Revenue Department appeared at my office with a search warrant, pawed my files and records for two hours, and hauled off boxes of personal papers. That was the first -- and last -- I heard of them for a long time. They immediately turned over my papers to the IRS.

In the spring of 1988 the IRS and the US Attorney's office leap-frogged their investigation from me to my church. There was nothing unusual about the church. It wasn't a "tax protest" church, just a member congregation of the conservative Presbyterian Church in America. The assistant US attorney

subpoenaed church members before the grand jury and grilled them about what the church taught. Did the pastor teach people how to not file income tax returns? Did the church have militia practice in the woods? Survival training? Did the church hand back contributions under the table? About the only thing they didn't accuse us of was trafficking in nuclear warheads.

We landed in the Catch 22 maelstrom of official suspicion. The more the pastor and the elders proved to the US attorney's office that these accusations were lies, the more convinced they became that we were such clever conspirators that their suspicions must be true. The assistant US attorney issued a subpoena to the church for all her records: counseling, sessional, financial, everything. The session of the church offered to consider any request for specific documents, but refused to open the Bride of Christ up to a fishing expedition.

On January 9, 1990, just at dawn, the IRS struck. Although the agent investigating me knew very well that I was not violent, IRS agents and Tennessee Revenue Department agents roared in my driveway while the SWAT team in their black ninja suits poured out of the woods on either side of my house.

They attacked with reckless, malicious disregard for the safety of my wife and seven (7) children. All they needed to do was pick up the phone and tell me I had been indicted, and I would have gone downtown. No, these IRS thugs wanted headlines from a sensational "pre-dawn raid" to scare the sheep for tax season, and to make me and my wife, the mother of my seven children, look violent and dangerous.

After they arrested me and Susan, the IRS refused to leave my home. Contrary to the law and over the protest of my spunky 15 year old daughter, Liberty, three IRS agents stayed and held my children hostage until the end of the day. They were waiting for a search warrant so they could come back and steal my records and my computer.

On the ride downtown I had no idea what was going on. Why would they arrest Susan? She had never done anything other than minor secretarial work in my business, and spent all her waking hours home-schooling and raising children.

When I stepped into the jail cell, I began to understand. They had indicted her to blackmail me. My friends, customers of the gold and silver bank, and numerous church members were already there, including my pastor and assistant pastor. The indictment was an inch thick. In 72 pages it charged 26 defendants with conspiracy to defraud the government, willful failure to file, and divers other malefactions.

The government claimed that the gold and silver bank was a tax evasion scheme to hide income. Not even two years in the US Army had prepared me for stupidity of this magnitude. How could we hide income when almost everything we took in was in checks, and we deposited the checks into our bank account? Oh, yes, we did pass some of the checks along to other dealers to pay for gold or silver we bought for them, a common practice in the industry and perfectly legal. This, the government taught us, was "laundering checks," a sinister activity proving we were up to no good. But every bank deposit I had made was a count on the indictment! And Susan -- poor home-making, home-schooling, never-stop-running Susan -- was the Number Two conspirator, right after me!

My bond was set at \$150,000, fully secured. For comparison, that same day they arrested a child molester and set his bond at \$10,000, not secured. I stayed in jail from Tuesday until Friday, when my

parents put up their house to get me out of jail. When the Federal marshals released me at 5:00 p.m., sheriff's deputies were waiting to arrest me, and me alone, on state charges.

I believe but cannot yet prove that an ex-IRS agent had been sent to work for the Tennessee revenue department to get the search warrant IRS couldn't get, and to figure out some way to charge me under state law. (You're not paranoid if somebody is really persecuting you.) I was charged with violating a statute that had been on the books nineteen years: TCA 67-1-1440(d), "delaying and depriving the state of revenue to which it was lawfully entitled at the time it was lawfully entitled thereto." In all those 19 years, not a single Tennessean had discovered how to violate it, but I had. Truth to tell, I hadn't even figured it out, since I was accused of "delaying & depriving" the state of revenue the amount of which was unknown and to which the state had never become lawfully entitled. They accused me of a crime I could not possibly have committed because I didn't know it existed. Never mind, due process just slows things down

They were charging me with not collecting sales tax on exchanges of gold and silver money for paper money. You know -- like when you go to the bank, and give the teller a twenty and she gives you back a ten and two fives, less sales tax. What? She doesn't charge you sales tax? Of course not, because it's an exchange of money for money.

But neither the state of Tennessee nor any other state can admit that gold and silver coin are money. If they do, they will admit they are operating outside the law. The monetary emperor is naked, and state officials from the Chief Justice of the supreme court to the governor to the second assistant tire checker are afraid to tell him. They should be afraid, because the monopoly on money creation is the jugular vein of the American fascist state.

But in January, 1990, I didn't have time to worry about state charges. Susan and I were both facing 19 years in jail if convicted in federal court. We knew the statistics, too. Humanly speaking, we had no chance. Ninety-eight percent of federal tax prosecutions end in guilty verdicts.

The next year and a half was a wretched struggle to persevere without despair. Only a survivor of a criminal prosecution could understand how it hammers your soul. Most defendants never make it to trial. Through the investigation alone, federal agents and prosecutors can destroy their businesses and their families, and break their spirit. Stripped of business, money, family, and hope, most plead guilty just to end the nightmare. In our case one poor defendant pled guilty with no idea what it meant. When a defense attorney asked him who he had conspired with, he screwed up his face in confusion and paused several minutes. "I dunno. Myself, I guess!"

Our trial began on February 26, 1991, over a year after our arrest. Right after the noon break that first day, I received word that our sons Wright (10) and Christian (8) had been severely burned playing with gasoline. Susan spent the first two weeks of trial with them in the hospital.

Just when it seemed that things couldn't get worse, they did. Day after day I had to listen as the prosecutor hatefully twisted everything I had ever done into something evil -- including the good things. This went on for four and a half long months. The government entered immaterial documents by the hundredweight.

The vast but tediously shallow silliness of the whole farce made me the maddest. Do you remember in C.S. Lewis' *Perelandra*, when the Unman is struggling to convince the Green Lady to disobey Maleldil's command not to spend the night on the land? Ransom notes with dismay the childish

silliness of evil. Throughout the night while the Green Lady sleeps, the Unman repeats, "Ransom? Ransom?" When Ransom answers, "What?", the Unman responds, "Nothing." At its depths, evil is not noble or grand. It's merely a silly, spoiled child, flicking boogers at his betters.

To the charges of "willful failure to file income tax returns" we argued that no statute makes anyone liable for an income tax (except "foreign withholding agents"). No one -- not the federal district court judge, not the assistant US attorney, not the IRS, no one -- was able to point out that statute, because it doesn't exist.

Here was a "man bites dog" story if ever there was one, but was the local media interested? Hardly. The first day of trial was covered by an old reporter for the Commercial Appeal who with great insight described issues and characters. Next day he was yanked off the case and replaced with a Stalinist "comrade" who loyally published whatever official line the US attorney's office gave him.

But our jury was more open-minded. On July 9, 1991, the jury returned its verdict: seventeen defendants not guilty on all counts! To God be the glory! We threw an enormous party and that Sunday had one bodacious worship service.

I still had to face a state trial. I no more than caught my breath when I had to dive back down into the sewage of the "justice system."

The trial started in May, 1992, and lasted three weeks. The judge and the prosecution did their best to keep out my evidence -- evidence that showed how many hundreds of hours I had haunted the law library to study out my position and make sure I was right.

It did little good. Remember the letter I wrote a friend when I escaped from Arkansas? The Revenue Department had seized it in 1986, and the prosecutrix used it to make me look like a hypocrite.

Even at that, three jurors held out for three days. I later talked to one of the holdouts, and he said that one of the women who gave up said, "Oh, well, he'll get another trial on appeal." Can people really be that ignorant, or will they just use any excuse to justify their own cowardice? On May 18, 1992 I was convicted on two counts of "delaying and depriving."

A month later the judge sentenced me to two years in jail, but he suspended all but 30 days, provided I would pay \$1,000 a month for 73 months as "restitution" and do 1,000 hours (half a year's work) of community service. With seven children to support, it was a deal I couldn't refuse.

I appealed. In August, 1994 the Court of Criminal Appeals overturned one count of the conviction for double jeopardy. I couldn't be guilty of one count of "delaying" and one count of "depriving" for the very same conduct. On the money issue, however, the real heart of the case, the court dodged and denied all my arguments.

We appealed to the Tennessee Supreme Court, and they heard the case on All Saints Day, 1995. Dr. Edwin Vieira, Jr., constitutional attorney and America's foremost expert on monetary law, prepared the briefs and argued the case. For over 6 months we heard nothing. Then on May 28, 1996 the Supreme Court affirmed my conviction, once again dodging the money issue.

I am still appealing, this time into the federal system, but the appeal couldn't be filed quickly enough to prevent my arrest on June 28, 1996. The petition for habeas corpus in federal district court was

assigned to the same judge who had tried our federal case. She took jurisdiction of the appeal, but refused to order my release. From June 28th until July 23rd, I was a guest of the Shelby County Jail and the Shelby County Penal Farm.

The next hurdle is securing a stay of execution on the \$72,000 fine. Failing that, I go back to jail for another eleven months while the appeal goes on.

Why keep on fighting? After 15 years, why not just put down the load and forget it?

Because the fiat money system is both the strength and weakness of America's tyrants. It bleeds the people's wealth and labor, but it also threatens to collapse under its own weight -- or whenever the scales fall off the people's eyes. With its green engravings of famous Americans, electrons whirling around in bank computers, and loans created out of thin air, it is one vast confidence game. As long as the people believe they can't see the emperor's naked pink flesh, his power and dignity will be preserved. But let one little boy hollers, "Hey, he's nekkid!" and the tyranny collapses.

I didn't sally forth looking for dragons to slay. The dragon came to me. He came with a lie, and either you oppose a lie, or you become a liar. You can kid yourself and say I'm only going along because they have all the guns, but day by day, year by year, your integrity erodes. Finally, you become like the tyrants: just one more liar.

Even if you have no chance to win, you have to fight. Not many are willing, but even a few keep the tyrants from sleeping at night. If we don't fight, how many more Ruby Ridges and Wacos will there be? How many more SWAT team attacks? How many more police check points? How many more bureaucrats watching your bank account and your finances? How many more children held hostage by IRS agents? The bill of rights is already dead. Will it be time to fight when your wife and children are dead, too?

The US government spent millions of dollars trying to jail me and my wife and my pastor and assistant pastor. The assistant US attorney here told one lawyer that I was "the most dangerous man in the mid-South." In a four and a half year investigation the government spent \$5 - \$10 million, maybe more. We heard they spent nearly two million on the trial alone.

We can't both be right. Either the government is right and gold and silver coin is not money, or I am right. This is not a gentlemen's "difference of opinion."

If I'm right, and if I win in the courts, then no state will ever be able to charge sales tax on gold and silver coin again. The greatest disability to free trade in gold and silver will have been removed. We will have broken down the last illegal roadblock to sound metallic money.

Postscript: Because the conditions of probation were so burdensome on him and his family, Mr. Sanders returned to jail and was relocated to a medium-security prison on November 4, 1996. He was released on December 20, 1996.

7.12.9 The Federal Reserve

7.12.9.1 The Federal Reserve System Explained¹⁰²

The Federal Reserve System, America's new private, central bank, was modeled almost precisely after the Rothschilds' Bank of England and German's Reichsbank, the central bank which controlled money and credit in Germany, and whose principal stockholders were members of the Warburg family.

In *Billions For the Bankers, Debts For the People*, author Sheldon Emery writes:

"An economic conquest takes place when nations are placed under 'tribute' without the use of visual force, so that victims do not realize that they've been conquered. The conquest begins when the conquerors gain control of the monetary system of the nation.

The conquerors do not want to arouse suspicion, so they make gradual changes to their benefit. They slowly usurp financial assets of a nation. Tribute is collected from them in the form of 'legal' debts and taxes, which the people are led to believe is for their own good...although this method is much slower than a military conquest, it is longer lasting because the captives do not see any military force used against them.

The people are free to participate in the election of their rulers although the outcome is manipulated by those in control. Without realizing it, a nation is conquered. Their wealth is transferred to their captors and the conquest is complete."

The powerful European families who had backed England's losing military effort during the Revolutionary War would not patiently regain the American colony without firing a single shot. Three years after that still secret meeting, a mere handful of Senators, including none other than Senator Aldrich, rammed the Federal Reserve Act through Congress, after the opposition had already gone home for the holidays.

As author Devvy Kidd states in her booklet *Why a Bankrupt America*:

"At 6:00pm on December 23, 1913, while Congress was out of session, three Senators took it upon themselves to pass, by voice vote, the Federal Reserve Act of 1913. These three individuals handed over America's future and our economic system to a handful of private domestic individuals and foreign banking interests. Our Founding Fathers would have shouted: 'Treason!'."

President Wilson, born in 1856, just 80 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, was a minister's son, a former historian, an educator and the author of the 1902 work *A History of the American People* in which he extolled Lincoln's debt-free "green-backs."

As a presidential candidate the People trusted when he pledged a money and credit system free from the influence of Wall Street, President Wilson was waiting in the Oval Office for the bill and signed it into Law one hour after its passage, thereby placing the U.S. into dependent debt slavery to foreign bankers.

Senator Charles Lindbergh, Sr., father of the famous aviator, and a fierce opponent of the bill, stated after its passage, and I quote:

¹⁰² *Losing Your Illusions*, Gordon Phillips, p. 48

"This Act establishes the most gigantic trust on earth...the invisible government by the money power will [now] be legalized. The new Law will create inflation whenever the trusts want inflation. From now on, depressions will be scientifically created."

7.12.9.2 Lewis v. United States Ruling

by: Jim Townsend
Redeem Our Country (ROC) National Chairman

The Federal Reserve banks are privately owned, locally controlled, separate corporations. Who says so? In *Lewis vs. United States*, the Ninth Circuit Court says so. (1982)

Thus, after years of senators and members of the House of Representatives denying the Federal Reserve banks were privately owned, the Ninth Circuit Court has finally, officially, given the lie to the scam imposed on the people of this nation 70 years ago.

The court's decision has vast implications. Now that the bankers' hoax has been legally exposed, what impact will it have on the paper issued as Federal Reserve notes? As private bankers, it would appear they have no more right to issue and circulate their paper than does the local counterfeiter. IN fact, if one could choose between the two, the local counterfeiter would be the one chose, because he charges no interest on his paper. The Federal Reserve counterfeiter not only distributes worthless paper, he collects interest by loaning it into circulation.

The court decision has been known for more than three months, but the media has been as quiet as a mouse. Neither the printed nor electronic media has found it newsworthy, even through the ramifications will be mind boggling if the court decision stands.

Key members of the two houses of Congress were advised of the court findings, but, the public had not heard even a peep from the guardians of the public welfare. In fact, no one will admit to knowing anything about it. But they do know, and the question is, "What are they going to do about it?"

There are so many things that come to mind when one realizes the Federal Reserve banks have been operating un-Constitutionally for all these years, that it staggers the imagination. What about homes the Federal Reserve member banks have foreclosed? What about the interest the United States has been paying on foreign loans negotiated by the same private bankers? Is this not a gift of the people's funds? What about the interest the Federal Reserve banks now collect on the national debt...would that not be declared illegal under the circuit court decision?

COURT QUOTED

Below, for the benefit of our readers, we are reprinting the main part of the Ninth Circuit Court's findings:

Examining the organization and function of the Federal Reserve Banks, and applying the relevant factors, we conclude that the Reserve Banks are not federal instrumentalities for purposed of the FTCA, but are independent, privately owned and locally controlled corporations.

Each Federal Reserve Bank is a separate corporation owned by commercial banks in its region. The stockholding commercial banks elect two thirds of each Bank's nine member board of directors. The remaining three directors are appointed but the Federal Reserve Board regulates the Reserve Banks, but direct supervision and control of each Bank is exercised by its board of directors. See 12 U.S.C. §301. The directors enact bylaws regulating the manner of conducting general Bank business, 12 U.S.C. §341, and appoint officers to implement and supervise daily Bank activities. These activities include collecting and clearing checks, making advances to private and commercial entities, holding reserves for member banks, discounting the notes of member banks, and buying and selling securities on the open market. See 12 U.S.C. §341-361.

Each Bank is statutorily empowered to conduct these activities without day to day direction from the federal government. Thus, for example, the interest rates on advances to member banks, individuals, partnerships, and corporations are set by each Reserve Bank and their decisions regarding the purchase and sale of securities are likewise independently made.

It is evident from the legislative history of the Federal Reserve Act that Congress did not intend to give the federal government direction over the daily operation of the Reserve Banks.

It is proposed that the Government shall retain sufficient power over the reserve banks to enable it to exercise a direct authority when necessary to do so, but that it shall in no way attempt to carry on through its own mechanism the routine operations and banking which require detailed knowledge of local and individual credit and which determine the funds of the community in any given instance. IN other words, the reserve-bank plan retains to the Government power over the exercise of the broader banking functions, while it leaves to individuals and privately owned institutions the actual direction of routine"--H.R. Report No. 69, 63 Cong. 1st Sess. 18-19 (1913)

The fact that the federal reserve Board regulates the Reserve Banks does not make them federal agencies under the Act. In United States v. Orleans, 425 U.S. 807, 96 S.Ct. 1971, 48 L.Ed.2d. 390 (1976), the Supreme Court held that a community action agency was organized under federal regulations and heavily funded by the federal government. Because the agency's day to day operation was not supervised by the federal government, but by local officials, the Court refused to extend federal tort liability for negligence of the agency's employees. Similarly, the Federal Reserve Banks, through heavily regulated, are locally controlled by their member banks. Unlike typical federal agencies, each bank is empowered to hire and fire employees at will. Bank employees do not participate in the Civil Service Retirement System. They are covered by worker's compensation insurance, purchased by the Bank, rather than the Federal Employees Compensation Act. Employees traveling on Bank business are not subject to federal travel regulations and to not receive government employee discounts on lodgings and services.

(The FTCA is the Federal Tort Claims Act)

There you have it. The highbinding, swindling Federal Reserve banks are just what we have for years said they were, private corporations, which have bankrupted the nation (SPOTLIGHT, July 30, 1979 and others). We now owe a bigger debt than the total net worth of the country. We pay this privileged and pampered class of counterfeiters almost 20 cents of every tax dollar collected--and it's going up.

END FOOLISHNESS

As Thomas Edison said. "It's foolish to say we can issue a bond that is good, but not a dollar bill." The time has come to return to a Constitutional money system that puts into circulation a debt-free dollar. Debt-free money would save the Social Security System, and put the 14 million unemployed workers back to work. Send your congressman a copy of the Ninth Circuit Court's decision and ask him what he is going to do about this private banking system. If he's for keeping it, you'll know what to do about him the next time you go to the polls.

(The SPOTLIGHT and the "National Educator" are the only two papers to carry this sensational information. Were it not for a tiny handful of such populist newspapers, who would tell you the truth? As H.L. Mencken once said, "I feel sorry for the man who, after reading the daily newspaper, goes to bed believing he knows something of what's going on in the world.")

7.12.9.3 Federal Reserve Never Audited¹⁰³

The fed has never to this day been audited by the General Accounting Office. Why not? Because Congress doesn't have the power to audit it, and they know it.

In July 1996, a Senate oversight committee chaired by Alphonse D'Amato examined the Federal Reserve System for the first time, noting a few discrepancies but totally avoiding and ignoring any meaningful examination of the fiat creation of our money.

The *National Educator* in its August-September 1996 issue states:

At the request of two U.S. Senators, the government Accounting Office has just completed a study of the Federal Reserve System...the revealing study explains that the reason the Fed was created was 'to furnish an elastic currency', so that, in essence, the value of the money can be changed. This defrauds the American people just as deliberately as if the government changed a foot to ten inches or a pound to fourteen ounces. When a businessman deliberately cheats his customers, he is called a criminal. Not so with the network of power inside brokers who use the Federal Reserve Banks to inflate the dollar with elastic currency.

For example, a \$20,000 wage earner in 1980 would have had to earn \$34,000 in 1990 just to stay even. In just the last six years, the Federal Reserve Note has lost approximately 20 percent of its purchasing power.

The GAO report states that the Federal Reserve Banks are not owned by the federal government as many Americans believe but are actually owned by privately held banks and a few wealthy individuals. According to the GAO reports, the Fed profits go to the privately held banks. IN 1993, at our request, a senior congressional staffer made an official request to House Banking Committee Chairman Henry Gonzalez's office for a current list of the Class A stockholders of the Fed Banks. His office refused to supply the list of owners and implied that asking for such information was dangerous.

7.12.10 Debt

People and countries with debts become slaves of their debts. When there are payments on debts that need to be made, then we often aren't able to meet our immediate obligations, especially if the

¹⁰³ *Losing Your Illusions*, Gordon Phillips, p. 50.

payments or interest rates are excessive. Politicians like debt as a tool for political leverage because if they can put our country into a financial crisis or emergency by running up the debt, they can justify all kinds of unethical tactics that violate many different laws and Constitutional rights in the name of that crisis or emergency. Our whole civil framework goes out the window when there are national emergencies (read the War Powers Act of December 18, 1941, if you want more information about this, for instance), and yet a great many citizens are blissfully unaware of this fact because they have never been through a crisis situation. If you doubt this, go on the Internet and read some of the President's Executive Orders for cases of emergency and national crisis. A financial crisis caused by debt is the #1 vehicle or excuse politicians will use to create the "New World Order" in the coming years. The Federal Reserve, we predict, will be the vehicle used to institute the next depression. Recall that it was the first Great Depression which caused the people to be so willing to give up their rights and liberties for a socialistic government handout in the form of Social Security. The idea of "buying votes" using welfare and social security (socialism, in effect) was what caused President Roosevelt to be reelected three times in a row!

One of the frequent vehicles that politicians use to argue that we need to continue paying *voluntary* federal income taxes is the idea that we have all this federal debt that needs to be paid off, and that the debt keeps growing rather than shrinking. They will state that if we don't continue paying, then the credit rating of the United States would be ruined. *If ruining the credit rating of the United States is the only way to get our national leaders to be fiscally responsible, then it can't happen soon enough, as far as we are concerned, because it concerns us deeply that in a time of peace with no major wars going on, we continue to run up the national debt because that debt is a threat to our national sovereignty and our individual liberties.* Of course, these same politicians will *never* talk instead about the urgency of keeping the federal budget balanced so we don't chronically have to borrow to fund our annual expenditures, and they will oppose balanced budget amendments over the objections of the vast majority of citizens. Their concept of paying off the debt is to inflate it away by printing more money, rather than taking the noninflationary and fiscally responsible approach of simply paying it off.

For those of you who are Christians, we'd like to remind you of the following scriptures, which clearly say that borrowing is wrong because it is slavery, and that if you loan you should not charge interest to your brother but you can do so of a foreigner:

*"The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."
[Prov. 22:7]*

*"For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; **you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow**; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you."
[Deut. 15:6]*

*"The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. **You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.**"
[Deut. 28:12]*

*"You shall not charge interest to your brother--interest on money or food or anything that is lent out at interest."
[Deut. 23:19]*

*"To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, that the Lord your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess."
[Deut. 23:20.]*

Once again, it ought to be clear that politicians, by advocating chronic and growing public debt, are violating the above scriptures and being irresponsible in their public office. They are advocating loaning to our brother at interest and that debt becomes a tool for political leverage to be used to cause us to surrender our sovereign rights to the government and turn us all into slaves and servants of the politicians and the Federal Reserve. Thomas Jefferson put it very well in describing the evils of public debt:

*"I sincerely believe... that banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies, and that the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity under the name of funding is but swindling futurity on a large scale."
[Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, 1816. ME 15:23]*

*"Funding I consider as limited, rightfully, to a redemption of the debt within the lives of a majority of the generation contracting it; every generation coming equally, by the laws of the Creator of the world, to the free possession of the earth He made for their subsistence, unincumbered by their predecessors, who, like them, were but tenants for life."
[Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, 1816. ME 15:18]*

*"[The natural right to be free of the debts of a previous generation is] a salutary curb on the spirit of war and indebtment, which, since the modern theory of the perpetuation of debt, has drenched the earth with blood, and crushed its inhabitants under burdens ever accumulating."
[Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 1813. ME 13:272]*

*"We believe--or we act as if we believed--that although an individual father cannot alienate the labor of his son, the aggregate body of fathers may alienate the labor of all their sons, of their posterity, in the aggregate, and oblige them to pay for all the enterprises, just or unjust, profitable or ruinous, into which our vices, our passions or our personal interests may lead us. But I trust that this proposition needs only to be looked at by an American to be seen in its true point of view, and that we shall all consider ourselves unauthorized to saddle posterity with our debts, and morally bound to pay them ourselves; and consequently within what may be deemed the period of a generation, or the life of the majority."
[Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 1813. ME 13:357]*

*"It is incumbent on every generation to pay its own debts as it goes. A principle which if acted on would save one-half the wars of the world."
[Thomas Jefferson to A. L. C. Destutt de Tracy, 1820. FE 10:175]*

*To preserve [the] independence [of the people,] we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude. If we run into such debts as that we must be taxed in our meat and in our drink, in our necessaries and our comforts, in our labors and our amusements, for our callings and our creeds, as the people of England are, our people, like them, must come to labor sixteen hours in the twenty-four, give the earnings of fifteen of these to the government for their debts and daily expenses, and the sixteenth being insufficient to afford us bread, we must live, as they now do, on oatmeal and potatoes, have no time to think, no means of calling the mismanagers to account, but be glad to obtain subsistence by hiring ourselves to rivet their chains on the necks of our fellow-sufferers."
[Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval, 1816. ME 15:39]*

7.12.11 Surrendering Freedoms in the Name of “Government-Induced Crises”

Most of the damage to our constitutional liberties and freedoms over the years came during the early 1900's, and most of this damage was done in the name of one or another type of financial emergency or global conflict induced directly or indirectly by the government, which gave the government the authority to ask citizens to give up their constitutional liberties as a patriotic duty to save the country. For instance:

1. The Federal Reserve was instituted in 1913, the same year that the 16th Amendment was fraudulently ratified. Very shortly thereafter, there was a massive and deliberate contraction of the money supply by the Federal Reserve, which quickly precipitated the Great Depression of 1929. As a consequence of this crisis, Franklin D. Roosevelt outlawed holding gold and demanded that all citizens turn in all of their gold to the government at a government mandated price. Prior to that, we had been on the gold standard, where all of our currency was backed by gold held in Fort Knox, and could be redeemed directly for value in gold. This, of course, was just a trick to force everyone to accept paper money, which further expanded the power of the government, because the Department of the Treasury was the only organization in the country that could print this money. Once the government could get people using paper money, they could manufacture money out of thin air and deficit spend like crazy by printing more money! They could also use the money they printed to buy votes in favor of more socialism by instituting welfare and entitlement programs that would endear people to the expansion of government programs and the eventual income taxes needed to pay for them.
2. In the midst of the Great Depression starting in 1929, when people were watching their family members starving and suffering and out of work, the government stepped in again in 1935 with the Social Security program, which was “voluntary”. You had to apply for a “number” to enroll. To keep the courts from fighting against his social reforms, Franklin D. Roosevelt stacked the Supreme Court, which is to say that he doubled its size with his own set of “cronies” so that no challenges to his social programs in court would win. He knew he could get away with this supposedly because the constitution didn't specify how many justices were on the Supreme Court. The majority of people were suffering with the depression so most people were willing to go in and get a Social Security Number so they could get a free handout from the government at a time when they needed it most. Of course, the government never would have been able to afford to give everyone this kind of handout if they hadn't eliminated gold and forced everyone to accept paper money only a few years earlier at the start of the Great Depression. The expansion of government power at this time in American history was unprecedented.
3. During World War II, the U.S. Congress instituted a *voluntary* income tax called the “Victory Tax”, which incidentally still is mentioned to this day in the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S. Code). People were told by the government that it was their patriotic duty to pay income taxes to finance the war. The tax was intended to finance the war, and included employer withholding participation. This tax was the precursor to the income tax we have today. Unfortunately, the tax was repealed after the war but citizens were never told about it. Why?...because we had to pay off the war debt! Our country has remained in perpetual debt ever since, presumably as a justification for continuing the income tax! As long as Congress continues to deficit spend in a time of peace and not focus on paying down the national debt, then there will always be a justification for demagogery about why we need to continue the income tax.

4. Congress passed a bill called the War Powers Act in December 18, 1941, which gives them the right to do virtually anything they want with you or your property in the name of defending the country. It was instituted during World War II.
5. The President of the United States is authorized to execute Executive Orders. Every new president who comes along adds to the long list of Executive Orders already in place. Very seldom are these orders ever repealed. Have you ever looked through the long series of executive orders signed by each president that even to this day are still in effect? Reading these orders is truly frightening! Many of them list what happens mainly during national emergencies. It is of great concern reading these orders to think just how many of our freedoms can be taken away very easily and quickly in the event of national emergencies!

7.12.12 Judicial Tyranny

Judicial tyranny is what allows corruption in the government to flourish and grow, because judicial tyranny protects wrongdoing by public servants throughout the government. Judicial tyranny is the most pervasive and necessary type of tyranny in order for tyranny elsewhere in the government to exist because:

- It protects judges from being prosecuted for treason and conspiracy against rights by persons who have been injured by government wrongdoing.
- It facilitates the official cover-up of government wrongdoing by using protective orders, nonpublication of cases, and suppression of incriminating evidence against government wrongdoing
- It screens juries to ensure only biased jurists hear cases and rule in the government's favor, when there is a jury trial.
- Allows corrupt judges to dismiss cases before they are heard, so that discovery of the wrongdoing can never occur.
- Courts punish and persecute attorneys who try to prosecute government officials or agencies for wrongdoing by pulling their license to practice law.
- Courts cannot pull licenses of pro per litigants, they will frequently penalize them for "frivolous pleadings" using frivolous penalties or they also grant motions to strike pleadings by the government so that pro per litigants are left with nothing to argue.

The above types of evil are the worst types of tyranny found anywhere in the government, because the collective net affect of them has a very repressive affect on society. Thomas Jefferson warned us that our federal judiciary would get out of control when he made the following statements about the federal judiciary:

*"Contrary to all correct example, [the Federal judiciary] are in the habit of going out of the question before them, to throw an anchor ahead and grapple further hold for future advances of power. **They are then in fact the corps of sappers and miners, steadily working to undermine the independent rights of the States and to consolidate all power in the hands of that government in which they have so important a freehold estate.**"*

[Thomas Jefferson: Autobiography, 1821. ME 1:121]

*"We all know that permanent judges acquire an esprit de corps; that, being known, **they are liable to be tempted by bribery; that they are misled by favor, by relationship, by a spirit of party, by a devotion to the executive or legislative;** that it is better to leave a cause to the decision of cross and pile than to that of a judge biased to one side; and that the opinion of twelve honest jurymen gives still a better hope of right than cross and pile does."*

[Thomas Jefferson to Abbe Arnoux, 1789. ME 7:423, Papers 15:283]

"It is not enough that honest men are appointed judges. All know the influence of interest on the mind of man, and how unconsciously his judgment is warped by that influence. To this bias add that of the esprit de corps, of their peculiar maxim and creed that 'it is the office of a good judge to enlarge his jurisdiction,' and the absence of responsibility, and how can we expect impartial decision between the General government, of which they are themselves so eminent a part, and an individual state from which they have nothing to hope or fear?"

[Thomas Jefferson: Autobiography, 1821. ME 1:121]

"At the establishment of our Constitutions, the judiciary bodies were supposed to be the most helpless and harmless members of the government. Experience, however, soon showed in what way they were to become the most dangerous; that the insufficiency of the means provided for their removal gave them a freehold and irresponsibility in office; that their decisions, seeming to concern individual suitors only, pass silent and unheeded by the public at large; that these decisions nevertheless become law by precedent, sapping by little and little the foundations of the Constitution and working its change by construction before any one has perceived that that invisible and helpless worm has been busily employed in consuming its substance. In truth, man is not made to be trusted for life if secured against all liability to account."

[Thomas Jefferson to A. Coray, 1823. ME 15:486]

"I do not charge the judges with wilful and ill-intentioned error; but honest error must be arrested where its toleration leads to public ruin. As for the safety of society, we commit honest maniacs to Bedlam; so judges should be withdrawn from their bench whose erroneous biases are leading us to dissolution. It may, indeed, injure them in fame or in fortune; but it saves the republic, which is the first and supreme law."

[Thomas Jefferson: Autobiography, 1821. ME 1:122]

"The original error [was in] establishing a judiciary independent of the nation, and which, from the citadel of the law, can turn its guns on those they were meant to defend, and control and fashion their proceedings to its own will."

[Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 1807. FE 9:68]

"It is a misnomer to call a government republican in which a branch of the supreme power [the Federal Judiciary] is independent of the nation."

[Thomas Jefferson to James Pleasants, 1821. FE 10:198]

"It is left... to the juries, if they think the permanent judges are under any bias whatever in any cause, to take on themselves to judge the law as well as the fact. They never exercise this power but when they suspect partiality in the judges; and by the exercise of this power they have been the firmest bulwarks of English liberty."

[Thomas Jefferson to Abbe Arnoux, 1789. ME 7:423, Papers 15:283]

Very wise words indeed! Thomas Jefferson's warnings and predictions above were prophetic, because today we have a federal judiciary that is completely out of control with respect to income tax matters, which happens to be the area of law possessing the greatest conflict of interest universally for all federal judges, as we will explain.

We'll now examine in greater detail how judicial tyranny is perpetuated and expanded in today's federal courts to show just how far the tyranny predicted by Jefferson has taken us. The abuses and usurpations of power are very numerous but carefully concealed by most judges so that they are out of public view. Collectively, these usurpations constitute a massive conspiracy against the rights of the sovereign people that is a treasonable offense, and they also explain why:

"Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

and why the founding fathers went to such extensive means to separate sovereign powers in our government to prevent corruption and conspiracy of the kind that is commonplace today. As you read through the following subsections and witness all the antics and corruption of our judiciary, compare this with what God in His sovereignty requires of these same judges in the following scripture:

Psalm 82 [Amplified Bible]
A Psalm of Asaph.

1 GOD STANDS in the assembly [of the representatives] of God; in the midst of the magistrates or judges He gives judgment [as] among the gods.

2 How long will you [magistrates or judges] judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

3 Do justice to the weak (poor) and fatherless; maintain the rights of the afflicted and needy.

4 Deliver the poor and needy; rescue them out of the hand of the wicked.

5 [The magistrates and judges] know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in the darkness [of complacent satisfaction]; all the foundations of the earth [the fundamental principles upon which rests the administration of justice] are shaking.

6 I said, You are gods [since you judge on My behalf, as My representatives]; indeed, all of you are children of the Most High.¹⁰⁴

7 But you shall die as men and fall as one of the princes.

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth! For to You belong all the nations.¹⁰⁵

After you have read this scripture, pray about it and then ask yourself the following questions:

- What can we do to punish these tyrants?
- How can we reform our corrupted system to eliminate or at least reduce such abuses?
- How can we eliminate the inherent conflict of interest that exists because judges are paid by the income tax and are beholden to the IRS if they rule against it?

Also consider that the answer cannot rely on the judges or the legal profession they come from, because they have already demonstrated that they can't be trusted and have become corrupted, mostly by the love of money.

7.12.12.1 Conflict of Interest and Bias of Federal Judges

“The king establishes the land by justice, but he who receives bribes overthrows it.”
[Prov. 29:4, Bible, NKJV]

Federal law prohibits conflict of interest or bias on the part of judges as follows:

¹⁰⁴ John 10:34-36; Rom. 13:1, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Rev. 11:15.

- [28 U.S.C. §144](#): Bias or prejudice of judge
- [28 U.S.C. §455](#): Disqualification of justice, judge, or magistrate judge

If you would like to learn what the courts think of the use of these statutes against judges, look at the link below on our website:

<http://famguardian.org/PublishedAuthors/Govt/FJC/Recusal.pdf>

When judges possess a conflict of interest, they are more likely to judge unrighteously and in favor of their selfish interest over and above the interests of justice. Below are some of the more prevalent sources of conflicts of interest:

1. Many judges believe that their pay or benefits are derived from income taxes and that if they rule against the income tax, they will harm their employer and jeopardize future pay increases. Article III section I of the Constitution prevents the salaries of judges from being reduced while in office, but their future pay increases can be reduced.
2. When a judge rules against the government's interest too often, one of two things will happen to them:
 - 2.1. They will be removed from office for bad behavior under [28 U.S.C. §44\(b\)](#).
 - 2.2. The Department of Justice will frame the judge so that he gets removed from office. There are many examples of this happening to judges, and one example is mentioned in the We The People Truth in Taxation hearings in which a judge was framed, according to Attorney Larry Becraft.
 - 2.3. They will be threatened with an IRS audit or collection action unless they cooperate. Remember that the IRS is part of the Executive branch of the government and performs a function delegated from Congress to collect taxes. The ability of the Executive branch to influence or coerce members of the judiciary using the power of the IRS becomes a financial terrorism vehicle that few judges will resist.

*"In the general course of human nature, A POWER OVER A MAN'S SUSTENANCE AMOUNTS TO A POWER OVER HIS WILL."
[Alexander Hamilton, The Federalist, No. 79]*

Furthermore, it is a well established precedent that a judge whose salary can be diminished by legislation or who holds office for other than a lifetime cannot be an Article III judge who can rule on the rights or status of a person in the Union states. He can only rule on Article I or Article IV issues relating to the federal zone.

3. Most judges were lawyers at one time. In many cases, they were federal prosecutors and they have college buddies who are in private practice who they may feel inclined to help. Because of this, they are inclined to want to protect and rule in favor of their former coworker attorneys in the Department of Injustice.
4. The more litigation there is, the more prosperous it is for lawyers. One way to increase litigation is to increase injustice in the courts or to rule excessively in favor of the government, so that citizens litigating against government corruption will want to appeal to the circuit courts and run up even more legal fees. This means lawyers will make more money and the legal profession will need more lawyers, and what lawyer, whether a judge or not, wouldn't want that? Therefore, judges who were once lawyers will be inclined to want to benefit their profession and expand its power and totalitarian control and economic power over our government and the people. They do this through:
 - 4.1. Ruling in favor of the government when it would be unjust.
 - 4.2. Punishing litigants who practice law without a license granted by them.
5. We mentioned earlier in section 7.12.10 that the federal government is in deep debt and that the goal of our politicians is to spend us into a deep hole and put us into massive debt slavery to the privately owned Federal Reserve. We also mentioned that the Bible says this creates a conflict of interest:

*"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower [is] servant to the lender."
[Prov. 22:7]*

Federal judges know that if they rule against the illegal enforcement of income tax laws and thereby reduce federal revenues, they may threaten the solvency of their employer and cause bankruptcy, civil unrest, and chaos in our

society. By doing so, they compromise the integrity of the federal judiciary today to prevent the inevitable collapse of the communist system later.

6. Judges know that pro per or pro se litigants are the most dangerous types of litigants because they: 1. Do not economically benefit the legal profession by doing all their own litigation; 2. Have a potential to clog the courts for years because there are far more of them than there are lawyers; 3. Are more likely to bring up issues that will embarrass the government because they have no license they could lose and can be more independent and objective than most attorneys. Therefore, judges have a vested interest in sanctioning and penalizing pro per litigants in order to maintain their iron fist control over the courtroom and to ensure that only attorneys THEY license can appear in court, and these attorneys will always litigate in favor of the government or have their license pulled to practice law and starve to death. Tyranny.

All of the above conflicts of interest create severe biases and prejudices against justice in federal courtrooms all over the country and explain the irrational, tyrannical rulings relating to income tax that are so prevalent. Irwin Schiff, as a matter of fact, is famous for saying “*More crimes occur in federal courtrooms every day than anywhere else in the country!*” and we believe he is right. The only way to eliminate these conflicts of interest completely is:

- Eliminate the requirement for jurors to be “U.S. citizens”, because this creates a bias and prejudice against those who are “U.S. nationals” ONLY because the juries are not juries of peers.
- Require jury trials for all tax matters so that judges don’t have to decide the case. Currently, jury trials are *optional* but not *mandatory* under [28 U.S.C. §2402](#).
- Eliminate attorney licensing. This is a scam that does nothing but undermine our First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and our right to contract under [Article 1, Section 10, Clause 1](#) of the U.S. Constitution.
- Eliminate the ability to sanction pro per litigants under [Rule 11](#) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.
- Repudiate the national debt and make it illegal for our Congressmen to borrow more money except with the consent of the voters and a three fourths vote by the Congress.
- Make judges directly accountable to the people they serve by making them *elected* by the people in their district rather than *appointed* by the President. This is the focus of the Judicial Accountability Initiative Law (J.A.I.L.), which you can read about at <http://www.jail4judges.org/>.

7.12.12.2 Sovereign and Official Immunity

Sovereign immunity is defined in Black’s Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, page 1396 as follows:

***Sovereign immunity.** A judicial doctrine which precludes bringing suit against the government without its consent. Founded on the ancient principle that “the King can do no wrong,” it bars holding the government or its political subdivisions liable for the torts of its officers or agents unless such immunity is expressly waived by statute or by necessary inference from legislative enactment. Maryland Port Admin. V. I.T.O. Corp. Of Baltimore, 40 Md.App. 697, 395 A.2d 145, 149. The federal government has generally waived its non-tort action immunity in the Tucker Act, 28 U.S.C.A. §1346(a)(2), 1491, and its tort immunity in the Federal Tort Claims Act, 28 U.S.C.A. §1346(b), 2674. Most states have also waived immunity in various degrees at both the state and local government levels.*

The immunity from certain suits in federal court ranted to states by the Eleventh Amendment to the United States Constitution.

This sounds reasonable on the surface, but remember that the government is NOT the king in our system of government, which is a republican democracy founded on individual rights. The PEOPLE are the sovereigns and the king, and the government exists and acts on their behalf as a fiduciary. The contract which limits and defines the powers of government officers as fiduciaries is the Constitution. We discussed the subject of fiduciary duty of individual government employees in detail earlier in

section 7.4.8. The supreme Court also agreed with the conclusion that the people are the sovereigns and the government servants are fiduciaries in the case of *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* in 1886:

"When we consider the nature and the theory of our institutions of government, the principles on which they are supposed to rest, and review the history of their development, we are constrained to conclude that they do not mean to leave room for the play and action of purely personal and arbitrary power. Sovereignty itself is, of course, not subject to law, for it is the author and source of law; but in our system, while sovereign powers are delegated to the agencies of government, sovereignty itself remains with the people, by whom and for whom all government exists and acts. And the law is the definition and limitation of power. It is, indeed, quite true that there must always be lodged somewhere, and in some person or body, the authority of final decision; and in many cases of mere administration, the responsibility is purely political, no appeal lying except to the ultimate tribunal of the public judgment, exercised either in the pressure of opinion, or by means of the suffrage. But the fundamental rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, considered as individual possessions, are secured by those maxims of constitutional law which are the monuments showing the victorious progress of the race in securing to men the blessings of civilization under the reign of just and equal laws, so that, in the famous language of the Massachusetts bill of rights, the government of the commonwealth 'may be a government of laws and not of men.' For the very idea that one man may be compelled to hold his life, or the means of living, or any material right essential to the enjoyment of life, at the mere will of another, seems to be intolerable in any country where freedom prevails, as being the essence of slavery itself." [*Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U.S. 356 (1886)]

And later in 1884, the supreme Court repeated this doctrine again:

"There is no such thing as a power of inherent sovereignty in the government of the United States...In this country sovereignty resides in the people, and Congress can exercise no power which they have not, by their Constitution entrusted to it. All else is withheld." [*Julliard v. Greenman*, 110 U.S. 421 (1884)]

Therefore, THE PEOPLE are the ones who should have sovereign immunity, and not the government but tyrannical judges try to twist this around for their personal benefit. It ought to be obvious, though, that the doctrine of sovereign immunity competes directly with the goal of the written social contract called the Constitution, which is to define and limit the delegated powers of government officers acting as fiduciaries of the people. The officers individually may be tried for their torts (injurious actions) if they are acting outside of their lawful delegated authority and so may the government they work for under the Federal Tort Claims Act, [28 U.S.C.A. §1346\(b\)](#). Here is the way one court described it:

"The doctrine of sovereign immunity, raised by defendants, is inapplicable since plaintiffs contend that the defendants' action were beyond the scope of their authority or they were acting unconstitutionally." *Berends v. Butz*, 357 F.Supp. 143 (1973)

However, in many cases, federal judges often will try assert sovereign immunity anyway or they will allow or encourage the government to substitute the United States as defendant when an injured party tries to civilly prosecute an individual government employee who was acting illegally. This, of course, violates common sense and principles of equity but happens quite often. When it does happen, the supreme Court says it amounts to communism!:

"... the maxim that the King can do no wrong has no place in our system of government; yet it is also true, in respect to the State itself, that whatever wrong is attempted in its name is imputable to its government and not to the State, for, as it can

Speak and act only by law, whatever it does say and do must be lawful. That which therefore is unlawful because made so by the supreme law, the Constitution of the United States, is not the word or deed of the State, but is the mere wrong and trespass of those individual persons who falsely spread and act in its name."

"This distinction is essential to the idea of constitutional government. To deny it or blot it out obliterates the line of demarcation that separates constitutional government from absolutism, free self-government based on the sovereignty of the people from that despotism, whether of the one or the many, which enables the agent of the state to declare and decree that he is the state; to say 'L'Etat, c'est moi.' Of what avail are written constitutions, whose bills of right, for the security of individual liberty, have been written too often with the blood of martyrs shed upon the battle-field and the scaffold, if their limitations and restraints upon power may be overpassed with impunity by the very agencies created and appointed to guard, defend, and enforce them; and that, too, with the sacred authority of law, not only compelling obedience, but entitled to respect? And how else can these principles of individual liberty and right be maintained, if, when violated, the judicial tribunals are forbidden to visit penalties upon individual offenders, who are the instruments of wrong, whenever they interpose the shield of the state? **The doctrine is not to be tolerated.** The whole frame and scheme of the political institutions of this country, state and federal, protest against it. Their continued existence is not compatible with it. **It is the doctrine of absolutism, pure, simple, and naked, and of communism which is its twin, the double progeny of the same evil birth.**"

[[Poindexter v. Greenhow, 114 U.S. 270; 5 S.Ct. 903 \(1885\)](#)]

Even so, it isn't unusual when a lower court such as a district or circuit court abuses a litigant by abusing sovereign immunity that when the case is appealed, the supreme Court in effect sanctions and encourages the abuse by refusing to hear the appeal or grant the case a writ of certiorari. The sin in such a case becomes an act of *omission* rather than *commission*, but it is still a sin and a wrong by any moral standard. All of this explains a rather wise comment one of our colleagues made when he said about man's law (rather than God's law):

"The first casualty of man's law is always truth and justice."

A related type of abuse occurs when the court asserts "official immunity", the purpose of which is to insulate from liability a government employee for acts done while in office, even if those acts are injurious and unlawful. We discuss this subject further in section 6.4.3.

7.12.12.3 Cases Tried Without Jury

Another cruel abuse that tyrannical judges impose in the courtroom is to eliminate the use of juries when it is being prosecuted civilly and is the defendant, even though the intent of the Seventh Amendment was to guarantee a jury trial for any matter over \$20. We talk about this kind of abuse later in section 6.6.2, where we say that the federal courts stole your right to a trial by jury. This is hypocrisy at its finest and the most blatant conflict of interest imaginable: putting a single judge in charge of ruling or deciding whether he should bite the hand that feeds him, which is his government employer, by ruling against it. What do you think he is going to do, especially if this very same hand that feeds him can have him removed from office for bad behavior ([28 U.S.C. §134\(a\)](#)), blacklisted, and framed by false witnesses who were secretly pressured by the DOJ and FBI? This is what the government often does to judges and even Congressmen who are honest about the fraud of the income

tax. Case in point is what happened to Congressman James Traficant from Ohio. We have the complete docket of pleadings for his case posted on our website at:

<http://famguardian.org/Subjects/Taxes/CaseStudies/JamesTraficant/JamesTraficant.htm>

Here is the way one corrupt judge unethically and immorally wiggled out of the requirement for jury trials with the government as defendant:

*Taxpayers also assert they were denied their Seventh Amendment right to trial by jury before the Tax Court. **The Seventh Amendment preserves the right to jury trial "in suits at common law."** **Since there was no right of action at common law against a sovereign, enforceable by jury trial or otherwise, there is no constitutional right to a jury trial in a suit against the United States.** See 9 C. Wright & A. Miller, *Federal Practice & Procedure* § 2314, at 68-69 (1971). Thus, there is a right to a jury trial in actions against the United States only if a statute so provides. Congress has not so provided when the taxpayer elects not to pay the assessment and sue for a redetermination in the Tax Court. For a taxpayer to obtain a trial by jury, he must pay the tax allegedly owed and sue for a refund in district court. 28 U.S.C. §§ 2402 and 1346(a)(1). The law is therefore clear that a taxpayer who elects to bring his suit in the Tax Court has no right, statutory or constitutional, to a trial by jury. *Phillips v. Commissioner*, 283 U.S. 589, 599 n. 9, 51 S. Ct. 608, 75 L. Ed. 1289 (1931); *Wickwire v. Reinecke*, 275 U.S. 101, 105-106, 48 S. Ct. 43, 72 L. Ed. 184 (1927); *Dorl v. Commissioner*, 507 F.2d 406, 407 (2d Cir. 1974) (holding it "elementary that there is no right to a jury trial in the Tax Court.").
[*Mathes v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue*, 576 F.2d 70, (1978)]*

The above ruling does nothing but encourage irresponsibility and hypocrisy in our own government, and takes government employees out of their role as servants and fiduciaries of the sovereign people and makes them into communist tyrants, to use the words of the supreme Court, who can't be called to account for their wrongs. Treason! By natural law, the judge that made the above ruling deserves to be executed under Article III of the Constitution.

7.12.12.4 **Attorney Licensing**

Another area of massive conflict of interest in the courtroom that promotes injustice is the notion of attorney licensing by the same court that hears cases by the licensed attorney. What do you think a judge is going to do if the attorney that the court licensed brings a civil suit against the government or a government officer? They are going to pull his license to practice law or at least threaten to pull it if he won't withdraw his case. This is exactly what happened to the attorney who defended Congressman James Traficant of Ohio in July of 2002. She had her license pulled because Traficant was a scapegoat who they wanted to make into a public outcast by leaving him without legal representation so that he would have to defend himself in the courtroom and would be more likely to lose!

Let's think about this for a minute folks. The First Amendment guarantees us a right of free speech. The right of free speech includes the right to either *not speak* or to appoint someone else to speak for us. When we hire an attorney to speak for us, it shouldn't matter whether he is "deemed licensed" to practice law by anyone, because we are paying the money to hire him. The government and the bar association who is in bed with them uses the "magnanimous" but fraudulent and ridiculous excuse that they have to license attorneys to protect us from predators and from our own indiscriminate taste in

lawyers so that only ethical and upstanding lawyers can “practice” law. This just interferes with the rule of supply and demand and jacks up the price. The only reason to license lawyers is because:

- It restricts the supply of lawyers so that the price is jacked up, which makes legal representation unaffordable for the vast majority of individuals.
- It creates a source of additional leverage for the government when the government or its officers are prosecuted for wrongdoing.
- Because malpractice insurance companies may charge higher premiums to insure lawyers who aren’t licensed.

But remember that a license is legally defined as “permission from the state to do that which otherwise illegal”, and the implication is that it is illegal for an unlicensed attorney to talk in front of a judge or jury. Common sense tells us that this violates the First Amendment guarantee of free speech. As reasonable men, we must therefore conclude that the American Bar Association (ABA) is nothing but a lawyer union that wants to jack up its own salaries by restricting the supply of lawyers and which is in bed with federal judges to help illegally expand their jurisdiction in return for the privilege of having those inflated salaries.

The following supreme Court cases held that a State may not pass statutes prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law or to interfere with the Right to freedom of speech, secured in the First Amendment: *United Mine Workers v. Illinois Bar Association*, 389 U.S. 217, and *NAACP v. Button*, 371 U.S. 415, and also in *Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen v. Virginia State Bar*, 377 U.S. 1 (1964).

7.12.12.5 Protective Orders

The most common thing that people want to do who know they are doing wrong is *hide the evidence*. This was true of the first sinner Eve and every human after her who sinned. The book of Genesis chapter 3, verses 6 through 19, in the Bible records that the first human to sin, Eve, after she sinned by disobeying God and eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, first hid her shameful nakedness with a leaf, and then hid with Adam when God approached. Sinners have been hiding the evidence ever since, and defense lawyers actually make a large part of their livelihood from being good at hiding evidence and avoiding direct or revealing answers in depositions. No doubt, we would need a LOT fewer lawyers and judges if people just told the truth and did the right thing to begin with. We must remember that a “lying tongue” is one of the seven things that God hates in Prov. 6:19. Why then would we want to violate God’s law by using man’s laws or our legal system to encourage or protect fraud by allowing for protective orders?

Jesus in the Bible repeats this same theme of the desire to hide evidence as being the hallmark of sinners and wrongdoers again in John 3:18-21:

*"He who believes in Him [Jesus, the Son of God] is not condemned ; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.***

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. *But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*

[\[John 3:18-21\]](#)

In a massive conflict of interest, judges in federal courts very often do the same thing that Eve did by conspiring with the government prosecutor (usually from the DOJ) to try to hide evidence of wrongdoing by either the government or by employees of the government. The easiest way for them to conspire in this cover-up is to grant a pre-trial motion by the Department of INjustice for a protective order, often without argument or explanation, and even as an Ex Parte emergency motion so that the opposing side doesn't even have a chance to prepare for the hearing. A protective order is an order by the court to cease certain types of discovery of evidence for use in trial. A protective order might be issued, for instance, to bar the plaintiff in a civil suit from deposing a government witness to ask him questions or it might prevent the subpoena of government documents related to the government wrongdoing. Because the protective order is issued BEFORE the trial, the truth is suppressed before the jury ever has a chance to hear it. This is what they did at Congressman Traficant's trial in July 2002, who was a vocal opponent of the IRS and the income tax.

Federal judges seldom have to even justify why they granted the order and even the fact that the order was granted is not allowed by the judge to be revealed to the jury even though it should because it constitutes evidence of massive conflict of interest and obstruction of justice. When they make the protective order, they will often tell the clerk of the court to make their comments off the record so they can't be prosecuted for doing so. When this happens, you ought to tape record it and prosecute them for conflict of interest (28 U.S.C. §455) and obstruction of justice! If the party who is wronged by the protective order then tries to prosecute the judge for wrongdoing and obstruction of justice, his license to practice law is pulled if he is an attorney. If he is a pro per litigant representing himself, he is fined by the court for submitting "frivolous pleadings" as an unethical and immoral way to silence him in violation of the First Amendment and strike (remove) his pleadings from the record so there is no evidence or argument to convict the judge with! Judges look out for each other and play golf together, you know. It's a good old boy network that MUST be eliminated if we are ever to have justice and equality of rights under the law and restore our society to the status of being a government of laws rather than men.

All of this discussion underscores the following words of wisdom:

"There can be no justice without truth."

If the judge won't allow the truth to be admitted into evidence during the trial or discussed, he is simply inviting more litigation and not allowing the issue to be resolved. This does a disservice to our justice system, undermines its credibility, and causes massive injustice against the rights and liberties of Americans everywhere. It is a treasonable offense also because it covers-up a violation of the oath of office for the judge in question. In most cases, juries decide only the facts and apply the law as given to them by the judge. But if the judge is corrupt and biased and the jury detects that the judge is involved in this kind of cover-up, then Thomas Jefferson said that the jury then has the duty to decide both the facts AND the law, and in many cases, to rule against the law as being unjust or at least rule that a different judge is needed to hear the case:

"It is left... to the juries, if they think the permanent judges are under any bias whatever in any cause, to take on themselves to judge the law as well as the fact. They never exercise this power but when they suspect partiality in the judges; and by the exercise of this power they have been the firmest bulwarks of English liberty." -- Thomas Jefferson to Abbe Arnoux, 1789. ME 7:423, Papers 15:283

7.12.12.6 "Frivolous" Penalties

The First Amendment guarantees every American the right to petition their government for Redress of Grievances/wrongs. Because this amendment creates a *right*, and because the exercise of rights cannot be legally penalized or taxed or restricted or regulated by the government, then at least theoretically, it is illegal for a judge to fine or sanction a litigant no matter what he says in his pleadings, and even if they are totally without merit! This isn't true of his GOVERNMENT LICENSED (conflict of interest!) attorney, but it is certainly true of the litigant who is represented *by* the attorney. However, in some instances, federal judges have been known to fine litigants up to \$25,000 for frivolous pleadings if they are litigating a very embarrassing issue against the government. An example of such an embarrassing issue would be the 861 source position described later in Chapter 5 or any other issue that would destroy government revenues from income taxes. Corrupt federal judges use frivolous penalties in order to:

- Protect the government or its employees from prosecution.
- Avoid having to tell the truth or rule on a "hot-potato" issue that could threaten their job
- Discourage future lawsuits on the same subject.

What often happens is the judge will sanction the attorney rather than the litigant because they can't fine the litigant, who has First Amendment rights, and of course the attorney passes on the cost to the litigant. Even if the case is a good one with legal merit and good arguments, many attorneys will refuse to take the case if they think the judge will be biased or could sanction them. This further discourages future suits on the same subject.

We must remember, however, what it means to be frivolous:

frivolous:

Of little weight or importance. A pleading is "frivolous" when it is clearly insufficient on its face and does not controvert the material points of the opposite pleading, and is presumably interposed for mere purposes of delay or to embarrass the opponent. A claim or defense is frivolous if a proponent can present no rational argument based upon the evidence or law in support of that claim or defense. Liebowitz v. Aimexco Inc., Col.App., 701 P.2d 140, 142. Frivolous pleadings may be amended to proper form or ordered stricken under federal and state rules of civil procedure."
[Blacks Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, 1990, p. 668]

Even though the pleading is rational, organized, and focused on substantive legal issues, judges will routinely try to sanction pro per litigants who are defending themselves without a lawyer. They will use the excuse that the litigant is inexperienced, incompetent, and every other type of verbally abusive but unsubstantiated rhetoric they can think of. They have to do this because pro per litigants are the most dangerous type of litigants since they:

- Don't have any legal fees, they can litigate endlessly against the government and must be discouraged from doing so.
- Aren't licensed like typical attorneys, the court can't threaten to pull their license if they don't like the subject of the suit or its adverse impact on the government.

Therefore, frivolous penalties are the most prevalent kind of violation of the First Amendment that federal judges like to use to gag pro per litigants, and especially if they are vexatious (outspoken, articulate, organized, and very combative). It's an obvious conflict of interest where the suit is against the government or one of its employees, and for that reason, it may be preferable to pursue your suit

against the government agent as a private person and ensure that you get a jury trial to make the ruling as unbiased as possible.

Lastly, if you are sanctioned with frivolous penalties and then try to litigate the same matter again, then tyrannical judges sometimes will increase the sanctions and justify their action by saying that the matters you litigated were already resolved. In most cases, they will not be resolved from the previous ruling because in most cases, any time you litigate matters found in this book, they will collude in the cover-up of these materials and try to use protective orders to keep you from doing complete discovery. If they had not attempted the protective order and had allowed your evidence and findings into the court record and had published that court record, then they would be correct in saying that the matters were resolved and in instituting additional sanctions, but this combination of factors seldom happens with tax honesty advocates because of the government cover-up of the truth and tyranny in maintaining their power. Remember:

“There can be no justice without truth, “

If the judge will not allow the truth or evidence of the truth to be admitted into evidence or discussed in the courtroom, then the issues you are litigating have not been resolved and no sanction should therefore be instituted unless and until the truth is fully explored, exposed, and decided upon by an impartial jury. Sometimes the judge will cite previous cases as his authority or excuse why he doesn't have to deal with your issues and say it has been decided already, but in many cases, he will cite unpublished cases, which doesn't expose the truth, or the case won't have explored the truth at all and he will be hoping you don't know how to do case research to discover their fraud and obstruction of justice.

7.12.12.7 Fifth Amendment Abuses

*“Constitutional privilege against self-incrimination applies to civil as well as criminal proceedings”
[McCarthy v. Arndstein, 266 U.S. 34; 45 S.Ct. 16 (1924)]*

Judges and government lawyers are aided in their abuse of our liberties by deliberate and flagrant violations of the Fifth Amendment. The Fifth Amendment says:

“No person shall be ... compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself,”

Fifth Amendment

What they will tell ignorant litigants opposing the government is that the Fifth Amendment only protects testimony in a criminal trial, not a civil trial such as those involving taxes. The judge will then threaten to sanction such a litigant for contempt of court if he does not testify, hoping that he will provide enough information to make the government's case. However, this approach violates the precedents of the United States supreme Court, which said on the subject:

*“The [Fifth Amendment] privilege reflects a complex of our fundamental values and aspirations, and marks an important advance in the development of our liberty. **It can be asserted in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory; and it [406 U.S. 441, 445] protects against any disclosures that the witness reasonably believes**”*

could be used in a criminal prosecution or could lead to other evidence that might be so used. *This Court has been zealous to safeguard the values that underlie the privilege.* “
[*Kastigar v. United States*, 406 U.S. 441 (1972)]

Why do you think the Fifth Amendment protects testimony even in a *civil* or tax trial? The reason is because a criminal trial could result from the testimony in a *civil* trial! This is what the supreme Court calls a “derivative use”. If the government puts you on the stand in a *civil* trial related to the imposition of penalties and the payment of a tax, and finds out that you committed criminal fraud based on your testimony, then they might later decide to indict you based on your testimony for a *criminal* offense and use your own testimony as evidence. Consequently, you can confidently assert the privilege in either a civil or a criminal trial and if the government wants to compel you, then all you have to do is demand immunity under [18 U.S.C. §6002](#). The ruling in *Kastigar* upholds the doctrine that such immunity, although granted by the federal government as the sovereign, also affords immunity from state prosecution as well.

“[A] state witness may not be compelled to give testimony which may be incriminating under federal law unless the compelled testimony and its fruits cannot be used in any manner by federal officials in connection with a criminal prosecution against him. We conclude, moreover, that in order to implement this constitutional rule and accommodate the interests of the State and Federal Governments in investigating and prosecuting crime, the Federal Government must be prohibited from making any such use of compelled testimony and its fruits.’ [43 378 U.S., at 79.](#)”
[*Kastigar v. United States*, 406 U.S. 441 (1972)]

Furthermore, if the state or federal governments attempt to introduce evidence in a criminal or civil proceeding where there was previous testimony under which immunity was granted, they have an affirmative duty as follows, citing again from *Kastigar*:

*A person accorded this immunity under [18 U.S.C. 6002](#), and subsequently prosecuted, is not dependent for the preservation of his rights upon the integrity and good faith of the prosecuting authorities. As stated in *Murphy*:*

"Once a defendant demonstrates that he has testified, under a state grant of immunity, to matters related to the federal prosecution, the federal authorities have the burden of showing that their evidence is not tainted by establishing that they had an independent, legitimate source for the disputed evidence." [378 U.S., at 79](#) n. 18.

This burden of proof, which we reaffirm as appropriate, is not limited to a negation of taint; rather, it imposes on the prosecution the affirmative duty to prove that the evidence it proposes to use is derived from a legitimate source wholly independent of the compelled testimony. [[406 U.S. 441, 461](#)]

Consequently, if a judge in a civil trial tries to compel you as a litigant and not a third party witness to testify after you have asserted your Fifth Amendment rights by saying that those rights only apply to *criminal* trials, then he is either ignorant, incompetent, or corrupt, or any combination of the foregoing.

Along the same lines, corrupt judges will also try to assert that being compelled to submit tax returns is *not* a violation of the Fifth Amendment. We know from the U.S. supreme Court ruling in *Garner v. U.S.*, [424 U.S. 648](#) (1975), however, that tax returns constitute the compelled testimony of a witness. Several cases have litigated this issue, including *William Conklin v. IRS*, No. 89N 1514 (unpublished),

U.S. v. Troescher, No. 95-55609 (unpublished), etc., and in all cases, the government has wiggled out of claiming that tax returns don't violate the Fifth Amendment because they are voluntary, which just reinforces our point throughout all of Chapter 5 that income taxes under Subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code are and always have been voluntary and that calling them a "tax" is a misnomer, because they are really just a "donation"! This provides a good transition into our next section about nonpublication of court rulings, because both of these cases were unpublished for the obvious reason that the government doesn't want the average American to know that income taxes are voluntary so they made the rulings in the above cases unpublished so that it could not be cited as an authority in later cases.

7.12.12.8 Nonpublication of Court Rulings

Nonpublication is the act of by a judge of making a ruling without putting the pleadings or ruling of the case into the official, published government court record accessible to the general public. Nonpublication is very commonly used in our courts today, and especially in the federal courts on cases involving income tax issues. The reasons for this are clear: Federal judges work hand and hand with the IRS to mistreat and abuse Americans by denying their constitutional rights to life, liberty and property and then cover up that fact in order to escape culpability and prevent successful techniques or information used against the government from being learned about or reused by other freedom fighters. This section summarizes some of the issues related to nonpublication by our courts. You can obtain further information about this subject on our website at:

<http://famguardian.org/Subjects/LegalGovRef/LegalEthics/Nonpublication/Arguments/index.htm>

7.12.12.8.1 Background

- From time immemorial, the test of fair judgment has been the willingness of a court to apply the same rules consistently.
- Our legal system is based on the principle that each of us is allowed our day in court. Secret opinions destroy this principle because our day in court is no longer open.
- Selected publication policies of the courts imply that every court of appeal opinion is presumptively *unworthy* of publication, unless such opinion meets an arbitrary standard that it (1) establishes a new rule of law or alters or modifies an existing rule, 2) involves a legal issue of continuing public interest, or (3) criticizes existing law.

7.12.12.8.2 Publication Procedures Have Been Changed Unilaterally

- The transition to a policy that comes close to uniform non-publication has been so gradual that very few lawyers, let alone members of the general public, have any idea that this destruction of the appellate system of law has taken place.
- The movement toward limited publication is usually traced back to the 1971 Annual Report by the Federal Judicial Center.
- Only a third of federal courts' opinions are now published.
- In 1997, 93 percent of the opinions handed down by California appellate justices were unpublished.
- Changes in reporting procedures have been put in place throughout the United States unilaterally, only in the last three decades, without any public or legislative input.

7.12.12.8.3 Publication is Essential to a Legal System Based on Precedent

- The notion and that rulings that are inconsistent with precedent should not be published goes against a fundamental reality: decisions that are inconsistent with the weight of precedent are, by definition, law-making.
- The weight of precedent on a point of law hardens it, making it more difficult to overturn. The sheer number of affirmations allow attorneys to rely on the stability of a doctrine with greater confidence.
- Put a different way: a court may ignore one precedent but rarely a dozen.
- Later cases help flesh out a precedent, and help to make it more understandable.
- The sheer accumulation of a number of seemingly routine decisions on a particular point of law may suggest to the courts, legal practitioners, scholars, the legislature, or the public that problems exist in this area. This may set in motion reform.
- Publication furthers an important institutional goal: maintaining the appearance that justice has been done. Publication is a signal to litigants and observers that court has nothing tied, that the quality of its work in a case is open for public inspection.

7.12.12.8.4 Citizens In A Democracy are Entitled to Consistent Treatment from the Courts

- The federal courts are not works of art to be protected from the profane and the trivial. Nor are they debating or learned societies that exist to enhance the professional satisfaction of the judges. They are a public resource.
- Explanation is fundamental to our system of justice.
- The signed the opinion assigns responsibility. The author of a bad opinion cannot behind the shield of anonymity; blame or praise worthiness is there for all to see.
- Similarly situated parties are entitled to receive like treatment in the courts. Where there is no assurance that an opinion will be published, no litigant can be certain that his case will be decided by the Court of Appeal in accordance with principles of law followed in similar cases.
- If an appeals court unilaterally changes public law by a decision and then marks that opinions "not for publication," it effectively rules that its changes do not apply to all similar circumstances, but instead, apply only to the appellant.
- An unreported decision means that judgment may be completely different from one person to another even if the facts are exactly the same. By declaring itself unbound by precedent and uncommitted to the future use of precedent, the court makes law for one person only. This is, de facto, a judicial bill of attainder.

7.12.12.8.5 Operational Realities of Non-Publication

- Nearly all circuits use staff attorneys or staff law clerks to help screen cases for full or summary appellate procedure. The screening decision inevitably coincides to a great extent with the publication decision. Thus, the reliance upon staff attorneys combined with a predisposition toward non-publication seriously diminishes the responsibility that the judge bears for his decisions.
- Because law clerk influence is likely to be the greatest in less important cases, which are not argued and will not be published, diminished quality, once again, will be most prevalent there.
- In practice, publication decisions, once made, are usually cast in concrete, and a party seeking reconsideration is perceived as adverse and meets solid resistance in the court.
- Selective publication undermines fundamental legal functions by limiting the Supreme Court's ability to correct inconsistent appellate decisions where there is no petition for hearing.

- Litigants whose situation is complicated by an unpublished opinion can count on the Supreme Court for relief *only in theory*. High courts take a few cases, and even fewer that have not been published. *For most litigants, then, a court of appeal is the court of last resort.*
- Non-publication raises the genuine possibility that a subsequent panel, unaware of a prior result, might reach a contrary result, creating a conflict in the law.
- If there is only one circuit court opinion on issue, another court might feel justified in reaching a different result. However, in several panels or circuit has spoken on different variations of the issue, it will be the rare court which will take a different path. Thus, more published opinions make the law more stable. And conversely, more unpublished opinions destabilize the law.
- Non-publication also creates the possibility that a court may decline to publish an opinion to avoid calling attention to the fact that its opinion conflicts with a prior holding.
- Judges appear to be caught in a serious dilemma: if they pay no attention to their unpublished decisions, they risk inconsistency; if they consult those opinions, they appear to be using them as precedent.
- No citation rules significantly diminish the possibility of review based upon conflict among the circuits. The very notion of a conflict is theoretically attenuated; can be said, for instance, that conflict exists between two circuit courts that have come to opposite results on a single issue when each one insists that its determination is not precedential?
- An attorney seeking a writ of certiorari is unlikely to know of the unpublished law of other circuits and therefore, will be unable to draw the Supreme Court's attention to the existence of a conflict.
- Similarly, the fact that unpublished opinions are typically not as thorough or as elaborate as reported opinions makes it more difficult for the Supreme Court to determine exactly what the lower court has done and accept the case for review.

7.12.12.8.6 Impact Of Non-Publication Inside the Courts

- Those who choose what opinions to publish may consciously decide to suppress an opinion they know to be significant enough to publish either to escape review by a higher court, to escape criticism for a controversial decision, or even to allow a court to get away with making a decision contrary to prevailing law.
- Unpublished opinions inevitably contribute to conflicts of decision. Unpublished opinions may conflict with other unpublished opinions; worse, existing conflicts between unpublished opinions, and prior, published opinions are considerably more difficult to justify.
- The refusal to publish undercuts the ability of appellate divisions to cross check on each court's acumen. This further erodes quality-control.
- Many unpublished opinions have been found to be dreadful in quality, clearly falling below minimal standards of legal scholarship and consistency.
- The poor writing quality or unnecessary brevity of most unpublished opinions makes it difficult to identify examples of inconsistency or suppressed precedent. Lack of publication thus compounds inequitable treatment under the law.
- When errors are not brought to public attention via publication, courts may continue to decide low-profile cases wrongly for years.
- Inequality of publication rates within appellate divisions in larger states further compounds the essential inequality of the basic practice of nonpublication. In some California appellate divisions, fewer than 3% of cases are published. This raises fundamental questions about whether the court is fulfilling its constitutional duty.

- The criteria for publication cannot help but be applied unevenly. Cases that qualify for publication remained unpublished.
- Similarly, procedures for requesting publication work unequally and capriciously. Even if the court is inclined to permit publication (an uncommon occurrence) only the parties and institutional litigants have practical access to unpublished opinions, and they frequently do not have an interest in seeking publication.
- Depublication rules have been used by the California Supreme Court and by the appellate courts in order to silence criticism of their own rules by lower courts.

7.12.12.8.7 Openness

- There is no difference between non-publication of judicial decisions and any other instance of unjustified secrecy in government.
- The argument that public interest must be distinguished from public curiosity is without value: it reflects a disregard for the people's right and ability to decide for themselves what aspects of their government's activities are worthy of their attention.
- There is no such thing as unnecessary public curiosity with regard to the courts: unlike matters of national security or police intelligence, the courts have nothing to hide.
- What goes on in the courts is public business and therefore, unpublished appellate opinions -- whether cut-and-dried or not -- which contain any matters that arguably provide insight into the judicial process should be freely citable, and should -- the same as any other acts of government -- been subject to open public scrutiny and discussion.
- Wide publication would reduce, if not eliminate, the wasted time, money, and human effort that is expended daily in pursuing, administering, and terminating fruitless appeals, whose points of law already have been decided in prior unpublished opinions.
- If a court is not willing to stand by a decision as a valid precedent for all, then the decision should not be made or should be regarded as unenforceable.
- The lasting authority of a decision depends largely on the quality of its reasoning, which can be evaluated *only* by reading the opinion.

7.12.12.8.8 Constitutional Considerations

- Inefficiency of judicial operations is certainly not a desirable objective; it may, however, be a price worth paying it buys or helps to buy individual liberty.
- Inequities in publication consist of concerns over fundamental First Amendment rights of petition for redress of grievances and over equal access to the courts which involve both the procedural and the substantial due process provision.
- Inequities in publication also involve the equal protection provision of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Inequities in publication present a challenge to the constitutional strictures that prescribe the duty of adjudication and demand a separation of powers between the legislative and judicial branches of government.
- The Supreme Court of United States has held repeatedly that the due process clauses of the fifth and fourteenth amendments to the United States Constitution prohibit a vague law because it is like a secret law to which no one has access.
- Many legal doctrines illustrate the importance of the law being knowable and accessible: for example, the void for vagueness doctrine, limitations on retroactive legislation, restrictions on retroactive overruling of judicial decisions, and requirements regarding prison law libraries.

- An unpublished appellate decision may create new law de facto, but is unexposed to the scrutiny of the public or the legislature. Moreover, the refusal to publish sends a message that the public in general and other potentially interested parties will never be affected by the law promulgated in this situation.
- An ever-growing body of decisional law is invaluable asset and the essence of a stable system that renders consistent judgments. New democracies throughout the world specifically bemoan a lack of such precedents. Totalitarian regimes, by definition, act unilaterally, are bound by no precedents, and are unaccountable.

7.12.12.8.9 Opinions Are Necessary, Even in “Insignificant Matters”

- It is false to condition non-publication on the assumption that most decisions only serve a dispute-settling function among two parties. Readers can compare and evaluate the majority opinion alongside any concurring or dissenting opinions to determine precisely what the court decided, and how far its decision may extend in future cases.
- Opinions facilitate the discovery of conflicts in the law.
- Opinions also permit readers to view the law's historical development and trace its impact on the society.
- Opinions that create inconsistencies must be considered law-making opinions; by definition, they depart noticeably from the established course of decisions. Such opinion should always be published.
- Unpublished opinions, especially ones that cannot be cited, will generally not receive critical commentary from the bench, the bar, scholars, and the public, for the obvious reason that they will go unnoticed. Moreover, there's little incentive to comment upon an opinion that is not "law."

7.12.12.8.10 Impact On The Legal System In Society

- Selective publication creates inequality of access to case law by making pertinent and unpublished opinions available largely to institutional and specialized lawyers
- Selective publication deprives trial judges, lawyers, litigants, and members of society of guidance.
- Selective publication decreases trial court compliance with the law, thus contributing to increased appellate litigation.
- The loss of precedent has driven many parties into alternative methods of dispute resolution. Simultaneously, it has made litigation to final judgment after appeal unavoidable because results have become random.
- Non-publication guarantees inequity in the legal establishment. It produces two classes of lawyers: the uninitiated ordinary practitioner who keeps up with the advance sheets and knows only what he reads there, and the specialist-insider who collects unpublished opinions in his field as well, and therefore possesses a special insight into the thinking of the intermediate appellate courts.
- Widespread uncertainty in the law erodes professional competence and the confidence of lawyers in the quality of their work. This, in turn, feeds misconduct, which is tolerated until it becomes the norm.
- Moreover, unequal access to unpublished decisions creates a "grapevine" among appellate judges and their research attorneys, and among attorneys who practice solely in one particular area of the law, whereby earlier unpublished opinions are relied on expressly or implicitly.
- Nonpublication subverts one of the most important forces in the development of the law: scholarly commentary. One of the most potent analytical tools in the hands of a legal commentator is an abundance of decisional law from which he can extract trends in the law, based on an assessment of how the rule of law is been judicially articulated, or how it may be operating in application.
- Most important of all, selective publication contributes to popular distrust of the courts.

7.12.12.8.11 Questions to Ponder

- How can we have the equal protection of the law if the courts have no institutional memory of the manner in which the laws are applied in similar cases?
- How can we be certain that our judges correctly and honestly state the law, if their decisions are not put out to the people for criticism?
- How can we ask our legislators to correct the law if we cannot know how the law is actually been applied by our courts?
- What effect does our right to equal protection of the law have if law can be applied to one person without immediately causing others who would otherwise be affected to complain on that person's behalf when the rule used is illegal, unconstitutional, or unjust?
- If experience shows that unpublished rulings truly add nothing to law, why do lawyers and judges continue to research unpublished opinions in preparing their briefs?

7.13 A Biblical Response to Those Who Say We Should Disarm

Genesis 4:8-12 In this passage, Scripture records the first murder wherein Cain killed Abel. That Cain must have used some sort of weapon to kill Abel is evidenced by the fact that Abel was bleeding (he was not strangled). Notice how God responded to the killing. He did not institute some sort of weapon-control, rather, He punished the one who committed the crime.

Exodus 20 and following In His holy Law, which God decreed at Sinai, nowhere do you see God outlawing weapons in regards to the various crimes which He prohibited in His legislation. He always punishes the perpetrator. He never disarms the citizenry.

Exodus 22:2 In this verse, God declares that if someone breaks into your house at night and you kill him, you are not guilty of murder. This verse makes clear that you have a God-given right to defend yourself and to defend your family.

Deuteronomy 22:23-27 This passage deals with rape. Notice that verse 27 ends with the words "but there was no one to save her." What is the implication of such a statement? The implication is that had someone been around to hear her cry out, they had a moral duty to intervene and protect her from being raped. To stand by would be immoral. We have a God-given right to defend not only ourselves, but also others.

Numbers 1 In His economy, God instituted an armed citizenry, not a standing army, in order to deal with the affairs of war regarding Israel. This is what the Founding Fathers of America envisioned for our nation. Even in Switzerland today, every home is furnished with a machine gun (one of the reasons Hitler chose not to invade Switzerland).

I Samuel 13:19-22 The Philistines disarmed the Israelites. Weapon-control was instituted. No blacksmiths were allowed lest the Israelites arm themselves. A disarmed people is the sign of a conquered people. A disarmed people is the sign of an enslaved people.

Isaiah 2:1-5 Many, including the United Nations, take the latter part of verse 4 in this passage, which states "*they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks,*" and try to say that God wants us to disarm. The context makes clear however, that "swords will be beaten into

plowshares and spears into pruning hooks" *when God Himself rules*, not when the United Nations or any other government of man rules.

Matthew 5:38-39 In this passage, Jesus is not denigrating the Law of God in regards to one's right to defend himself and others, rather He is repudiating the *lex talionis* - the law of retaliation, which said, "if someone messes you up today, you go back and mess him up five times worse tomorrow." The Pharisees were even using the Law of God to justify this mindset. Jesus is repudiating this personal vengeance which some sought to justify and participate in. He is *not* saying we cannot defend ourselves or others.

Vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19; Deuteronomy 32:35; Proverbs 20:22). We are not to avenge ourselves. If we see someone who needs our help during the commission of a crime, we have a God-given right and duty to intervene. If however, the crime has been committed (past tense), we have no God-given right or duty to go and execute judgment upon the perpetrator. God will avenge. God will judge.

God has given the sword (a symbol of judgment) to the civil magistrate (Romans 13:4). If a crime has been committed, it is to be reported to the civil authorities and they have a God-given right and duty before God to execute judgment.

Matthew 26:51-52 Some try to say that this passage proves that Jesus was a pacifist and against guns. Quite the contrary. Where does Jesus tell Peter to put his sword? "*In its place.*" John makes it clearer, Jesus said to Peter "*Put your sword into the sheath*" (John 18:11). Jesus didn't tell him to melt it down into a plowshare, rather he told him to put it "into the sheath." The sword has its proper place. It's not evil. But Peter was wanting to use it in an improper situation. Jesus came to earth to die. Peter would be abrogating the purposes of God if he intervened with the sword. As Jesus goes on to say in verse 11 of John chapter 18, "*Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?*" Jesus was trying to teach His disciples that His Kingdom is not expanded in the earth through the use of force, rather it is expanded through the preaching of the Gospel and the discipling of the nations.

If someone wants to live by the sword, they will die by the sword, as Jesus says. In other words, he who uses the sword for improper purposes will die by it. It was improper for Peter to have used it in that situation. A criminal or a tyrant who uses the sword improperly will rightly die by it. But the use of the sword in a proper fashion, to defend one's person or one's family or one's country, is not condemned by Scripture, rather Scripture upholds it.

God is not a pacifist. Jesus is not a pacifist. As Jesus said in the very next verse, verse 53, "*Or do you not think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?*" Jesus could have used force. The use of force; the use of swords were simply improper for the situation in which Christ was involved. He was suppose to die. He and the Father are not pacifists. He did not use force because He had to drink the cup of the Father.

Exodus 15:3 This verse of Scripture declares the Lord to be a "*man of war.*" That God is not a pacifist is evidenced throughout Scripture. Even Jesus Himself, who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, and who has declared all that God is (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18), drove the moneychangers out of the temple with a whip and overturned their tables (John 2:15). The book of Revelation defines Him as a King who does what? "*Judges and makes war*" (Revelation 19:11). The Scripture declares that Jesus Christ is "*the same yesterday, today, and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8). God's character does not change. God is not a pacifist.

In closing, there are some who say that "we should not have guns; we should just trust God." My response to those who say this is - "let me ask you, do you have a lock on your front door?" They always say "yes." I then ask "Do you lock it when you leave or go to bed at night?" Those who live in the city always say "yes." I then ask "Why do you have a lock on your door? Why don't you just *trust* God?"

Just because we have a lock on our door or a gun in our closet does not mean we are trusting in them to protect us with the same *trust* with which we're to trust the Lord.

Rather, we simply see the wisdom and prudence of having such things in order to be good stewards in protecting our belongings and our families.

The psalmist understood that there was no contradiction. The psalmist (David) who said in verse one of Psalm 144 "*Blessed be the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle*" said in verse two of Psalm 144 "*My lovingkindness and my fortress, My high tower and my deliverer, My shield and the one in whom I take refuge.*"

7.14 Living in a Pagan/Godless Culture

America is a pagan society. I think all of us have come to the place reluctantly where we can see that that is in fact the case. We have experienced as a nation over 150 years of strong Christian biblical influence. But that is rapidly declining. People still attend religious services. They still say they believe in God when they are polled. But there exists a kind of practical atheism and at best a situational morality. For the most part, whatever vestiges of Christian religion still pervade our culture are weak and compromising if not cultic and apostate.

Some have said in years past that we are living in a post-Christian America. Perhaps it could be better said, we are living in a sub-Christian America. We want to say we're Christians, we just don't want to commit to what Christianity is. Our Christianity has become hollow. We are clearly pagan but we wear the mask of religion. Our nation is now affirming through its leaders, through its congresses, its legislative bodies, its courts and its judges a distinctively anti-Christian agenda. Anything and everything that is distinctively Christian is being swept away under the aegis of equal rights, moral freedom. And as believers, frankly we tend to resent this.

It is not necessarily important that the church somehow impact its culture to make it superficially Christian. That is not the goal of this section. That is not our agenda. That is not our purpose. It's been a nice thing for those of us who live in America to have had Christianity influence our life as a nation...and we were a nation founded by people who wanted Christian freedom and they wrote things in the early documents of our nation to preserve Christianity, at least as much as they could, so that our culture has been influenced by the Bible, by Christian values and Christian standards. And those things have become an important component in our society.

Now we all know that's changing and it's changing very rapidly and it's changing right before our eyes. We are nearly fully secular and whatever remains to be done to make us wholly secular, we are rapidly doing it. America is abandoning its Christian influences as fast as it possibly can. And we are all being faced with some very disturbing changes. Those of us who are Christians don't like this. We have sort of assumed that a nation should be as Christian as it possibly could be, although that assumption is not certainly a biblical one. We like it that way and now it's changing and it tends to make us sad and even

angry. We watch biblical standards being replaced systematically by anarchy, by total moral freedom without any seeming moral limits and this pervasive mentality of equal rights that makes everybody into an egotist demanding his own rights, whatever they are deemed to be.

And as Christians watch this demise, they often react with anger and fear. For example, in February of 1990, Pat Robertson held a meeting after the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., and that meeting was designed to call for the formation, he said, of a Christian anti-defamation league. He said, and I quote him, "You've called us fools so we'll call you bigots. Christians are tired of being stepped on and the time has come to stand up for Christians' rights," end quote.

Now was he declaring war on a non-Christian culture? A Christian anti-defamation league? I wonder if you could get Stephen to join? Or Paul? You call us fools, we'll call you bigots...that sounds like retaliation, that sounds like vengeance, that sounds like we're declaring war in a non-Christian society. Is that what we are to do? Are they the enemy? Are they to be hated? Are they to be fought against? On the other hand, aren't they the people we're supposed to love and reach?

Frequently on Christian television programs you will hear various hosts and not the least of which is Paul Crouch on our own local TBN hurling abuse at non-Christians in the media who question the integrity of Christian broadcasting. These abusive statements against the Christian media sometime involve cursing them or consigning them to the judgment of God or even wishing that God would take their life. Is the non-Christian media our enemy? Are we supposed to be attacking the system of government? Are we supposed to be attacking the human institutions and forcing them politically or by intimidation into some biblical morality?

In the summer of 1991 there was something called "The Joshua Project." And they promoted it very widely with full-page ads in Christian publications. And The Joshua Project aimed, quote, "At taking back the culture." Now that again sounds like a declaration of war. That sounds like some kind of conflict, some kind of revolt. Somebody's got it and we've got to go get it, a sort of a crusade mentality, if you want to go back in history and look at the Crusades. The conference project that I mentioned described its purpose, I quote, "To sound the alarm, to instill the vision, to establish the leadership that will enable us to reclaim the heart of our culture," end quote.

Now that all sounds very noble. But is it? Is that our agenda? Are we to make sure that through legislation and intimidation and through the judicial process by going to court and suing and whatever else are we to do through politicizing and campaigning this particular agenda of taking back the culture? Is this what we're all about? Are we to create a superficial Christian culture?

David Rambo responding to that, he's the president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance says, and I quote, "God expects us to be salt in the world but let's do it in the context of God's redeeming love for all men and women. We must focus on the gospel, proclaiming it winsomely to secular people rather than alienating them on matters that are not central to our message," end quote.

John Seale, an author writes, "A politicized faith not only blurs our priorities but weakens our loyalties." That is a very insightful statement. It both blurs our priorities and weakens our loyalty. Our priority is to preach the gospel, our loyalty is to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom alone. He went on to say, "Our primary citizenship is not on earth but in heaven. Though few evangelicals would deny this truth in theory, the language of our spiritual citizenship frequently gets wrapped in the red, white and blue. Rather than acting as resident aliens of a heavenly kingdom, too often we sound like and act like resident apologists for a Christian America. Unless we reject the false reliance on the illusion of

Christian America, evangelicalism will continue to distort the gospel and thwart a genuine biblical identity," end quote.

If we consume our time and our money and our energy and our thoughts and our plans and our efforts in trying to make a Christian America, we will distort the gospel and thwart a genuinely biblical identity. He is exactly right. In fact, he went on to say, "American evangelicalism is now covered by layers and layers of historically shaped attitudes that obscure our original biblical core," end quote.

If you say to the average person "What is a Christian?", how many of those layers are they going to have to search through to find the reality? We must reject our confused loyalties. We must reject our compound concerns with regard to the passing world. We must reject all efforts to externally change culture and we must get on about doing what we're supposed to be doing. Billy Graham said, "So long as the gospel remains the gospel and the church the church, so long as the church of God is in need of reformation, the world of mission and one last person of salvation there will always be a future for those who seek to define themselves by the gospel itself," end quote. He is right. We cannot afford to weaken our spiritual mission, we cannot afford to obscure our priority of gospel proclamation, we cannot afford to become confused about which kingdom we belong to by getting involved in efforts to change cultural norms, cultural morals, cultural values, cultural behavior.

And certainly we can't get so engulfed in that that we become the enemies of the very people we seek to win to Christ. We can and we must reject sin as sin but we do not engage in defamation and destruction and efforts to superficially change a culture. The task of evangelizing the lost calls for focus on that very thing. If someone says to me, "What do you do?" as people often do if I'm sitting on airplane or somewhere else, "What do you do?" The common question that men get asked. I could say, "Well, I'm a minister in a church," and who knows what that would mean? Who knows what they would think? It's better if I say, "I preach the gospel." That's much more central to what I do...I preach the Word of God...that's what I do. And that is, by the way, a very fast way into a conversation on the right subject.

Certainly Paul was consumed with this very singular mandate of evangelism when he wrote this letter to Titus. And he is very concerned that the people living in the pagan culture of Crete which was utterly pagan, without any Christian influence at all, not get engaged in trying to moralize cultural behavior, that they not get involved in trying through the political avenues to create some kind of Christian culture. What he was concerned about was that they be able to demonstrate to their society that God saves people from sin. And that the primary way to do that was to demonstrate a saved life. If I'm going to tell you that Dr. So-and-so cures people from cancer, you're going to say to me, "Oh, who did he cure, let me see him." And if I'm going to say to you, "Dr. So-and-so over here makes blind people see," you're going to say, "Oh, who did he give sight to?" And if I'm going to say to you, "God is a saving God who delivers men from their sin and all that goes with it of hopelessness and helplessness and emptiness," you're going to say to me, "Show me what a saved person looks like then I'll know whether your God can do that." That is the mandate of the church. We do not attempt to change culture externally, we preach the gospel and it changes men internally. We don't even belong to this culture, we are simply aliens, our land is heaven.

The Christianity that once was part of the fabric of our nation that created some cultural props to hold us up and to give us a biblical morality and some divine standard in which to judge behavior is now gone. Cultural Christianity, whatever it was, is dead. Biblical morality is assaulted constantly. Moral freedom reigns as God. Materialism, family breakup and breakdown is epidemic. Abortions go on.

Sexual evils, drugs, crime, pagan education is flooding our nation like the Mississippi River. And we can't come close to coping or dealing with this flood of evil. We have torn down all of the standards and now we can't figure out what is right so we don't know what to teach anybody so we can't control behavior in the early years of childhood.

We now have a generation of people who have taken the agenda and are running with it. We don't have enough standards to control them. We don't have enough police to arrest them. We don't have enough courts to process them. And we don't have enough jails to keep them in.

For those of us who watched the great revival of the seventies, and I believe it was, when we saw the tremendous movement that started out as the "Jesus Movement," a sweeping movement of campuses and young people, we saw those great movements of students toward Christ, we saw mass baptisms in the oceans. We thought it was all going to lead us to days of glory and blessing. We saw Bibles being translated so that we could have them in a fresher English translation. We saw the proliferation of books and publishers and tapes and new music and there was a definite wind of the Spirit of God blowing in our country. And those were wonderful days.

But the revival of the seventies and the early eighties has turned into the debauchery of the nineties. And the change is sad. And we feel the sadness. And after a while we begin to feel resentment. We don't like what the President is doing. We don't like his agenda. We don't like his decisions. We don't like what our governor and even our mayor is saying about homosexuality. We don't...we don't like the kinds of things that our senators and our congressmen are doing. We're not happy with the decisions they are making. We are repulsed by the verdicts that are being rendered in courts that are exonerating people of criminal intent and act and letting off people who have no intended ill. I should say...who are judging people who had no intended ill and letting off people who are guilty of things we think are heinous. We aren't happy with the agenda all the way down, whether it's the judicial branch or the legislative or the executive branch. We are tired of the evolution of freedom to the point where anybody can do absolutely anything. We are angry that perversion is legalized in our country and the will of God is blatantly rejected. It's one thing to have sin, it's something else to redefine it as acceptable human behavior.

And I really believe that these are times that can...that can breed not only a sadness in the life of Christians but even hostility. And I sense that in conversations and meetings I have in various places with people that, first of all, we were sad at the trends and now we're a bit angry about it. And then we get even angrier when they decide to raise our taxes so we can fund more of this agenda. And we fear for ourselves and mostly we fear for our children and we fear for our grandchildren, don't we? And the worst we know is yet to come and it's going to come on our children's children.

And the question that I want to pose to you in this section is this...how are we to respond now that our society is so pagan? How are we to react? What is a proper Christian response in a pagan culture?

Paul answers that very question in Titus 3:1 to 8, that is precisely the issue here. Titus, as you know, is on the island of Crete. He is there to set in order the things that remain in the churches. There were at least a hundred cities on this island. We don't know how many of them had churches, but many. He has a very great responsibility to set the church in order to ordain godly leaders against a very corrupt culture. Cretans, you'll remember, according to chapter 1 verse 12, were basically designated by a prophet of their own as liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons. Unquestionably they were engulfed in idolatry and all of the extant paganism that made up the Greek and Roman world of the time. Titus

then had these churches as little pockets of righteousness in a sewer of paganism and needed to instruct them about how to react to the culture around them. Very important.

Before we proceed, it is important to emphasize that the goal of this section is not to confront our culture. Confronting the problems with our culture and trying to fix them sounds like a noble goal and I'm sure there are people who can see certain noble aspects of it and there may be some. But our goal in this section is not to impact our culture by changing their moral values. Our goal is not to impact our culture by creating traditional values, family values through legislation or judicial process. Our goal is not to make sure that the United States of America adheres to a national policy that equates to biblical morality. That is not our goal. We are not involved in altering social morality. We are not involved in upgrading cultural conduct. We are interested in people becoming saved. That is the only agenda in this section. If we're going to change our culture we're going to change it from the inside out.

You see, the church has one mission, we are a nation of priests. And a priest had one simple function, to bring people to God, to usher them into His presence. It is the only thing we are in the world to do. Frankly, if people die in a communist government or a democracy, it really doesn't matter if they end up in hell. If they die under a tyrant or a benevolent dictator, it doesn't matter if they end up in hell. If they die believing that homosexuality is wrong or believing that homosexuality is right and end up in hell, it doesn't matter. If they die as a policeman or a prostitute without Christ, they're going to end up in the same place. Whether they die moral or immoral will make no difference in their eternity. Whether they stood on the side of the street with the pro-abortion rights group and screamed for legalizing and maintaining legal abortions, or on the other side of the street against abortion and screamed to stop the killing, if they didn't know Christ they're going to end up in the same place. Right? That isn't the issue, the issue is salvation...the issue is salvation. And the sad reality is that when the church gets a moralizing, politicizing bent it usually has a negative impact on its evangelization mission because then it makes the people hostile to the current system and they become the enemies of the society rather than the compassionate friend.

If we are going to see our nation transformed, it has to be done from the inside out, that's our agenda. And so we're here to preach Christ and to know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified.

But behind that preaching must come some manner of living, some kind of life that makes our message believable. It is to that which Paul addresses himself in Titus chapter 3, let's read it. "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men for we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy statement. And concerning these things I want you to speak confidently so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."

I want to start with that last line..."these things are good and profitable for men." What are you talking about, Paul? What are you saying? What I'm saying is if you live this way it's going to benefit everybody around you. It's very important how you conduct yourself. In what sense is it good and profitable for men? Go back to chapter 2. In chapter 2 he was also talking about Christian conduct and

he says in verse 5 that we are to so live that the Word of God may not be dishonored, verse 8, that our opponent may be put to shame having nothing bad to say about us. And the end of verse 10, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

What's the point? We want to so live as to exalt the Word of God, shut the mouths of the critic and put on display God's saving power. We want the world to know that God is a saving God, that God transforms people. And how can we convince them of that? By showing them our transformed lives. Right? We are to be displaying God's saving power.

Now remember that Titus chapter 3 follows this wonderful discussion in Titus chapter 2 verses 1 to 14. And in that section of verses 1 to 14 of Titus chapter 2, Paul was also telling Titus that he needed to instruct the church about their behavior. But in that chapter it was the behavior among Christians. And how we conduct ourselves together as Christians is going to give a testimony to the world of God's saving transforming power when we live holy, gracious, loving, wise, kind lives, all of the things that he said in chapter 2. It is very evident that we are not like everybody else to the watching world, that is going to make the Word of God honored, that is going to silence the critics and that is going to adorn the doctrine of God as a saving God, one who can totally transform people. So the way we live within the church and among ourselves is crucial as a platform for our proclamation.

Then in Titus chapter 3 he's concerned not with how we live among each other in the church, but how we live in the society. How we live among non-Christians, how we live in our culture. If we're going to make God's saving power manifest, we have to make it manifest in our relations with Christians and with non-Christians. And never is the time more crucial for careful Christian behavior than when believers are engulfed in pagan culture. I mean, that's how it was, you understand don't you, in Paul's day? There was no cultural Christianity. There was no Christianity until he introduced it. In the Gentile world it was just blatant comprehensive paganism with all of the trappings that Satan could develop into it. It was totally and exclusively with the exception of a few Jews a Satanic system. All the existing religion, all the existing ideology, philosophy and thought, all the existing law and order, all the existing values, mores were derived from a non-Christian system. It was thoroughly pagan until Paul arrived. And the clash was so great that it cost him and many others their lives.

Paul knew what it was like to live in a thoroughly pagan culture, far more pagan than what we experience because in our country there is a great force of truly regenerated people. And he knew what it was to be in a world of abusive deadly inequality and slavery. He knew what it was to be in a culture of tyrants, petty dictators who were murderous. He knew what it was to be under abusive leadership. He knew what it was to see a society engulfed up to its ears in sexual perversion, the breakdown of the family. We read in some ancient documents about people who had 26 and 27 wives and or husbands, depending on the situation. The world was literally flooded with idols, petty gods. People were heavily taxed and the tax collectors were extortionists who took what wasn't justly due them. If anybody complained they would take their life as soon as look at them. And the world was full of terrorists, people who were going around executing those who had done something against them. Even in the Jewish world there were the Zealots, the Sacarei(??), the guys who carried the daggers and came up behind the authorities in Israel and stabbed them to death, terrorism was everywhere.

It was an ugly world. And Paul never ever says in any of his letters, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, we need to moralize our pagan culture. We need to impact our culture some how." No, all he ever said was, "We need to evangelize it." And he wasn't calling for any kind of protest. He wasn't calling for any kind of contention or any kind of war against the existing mentality, he was calling for the

preaching of the gospel that transforms the life. But it wasn't just the preaching, it was the living within the church and outside the church that gave a platform that made the message believable. You see, what God had done for the Christians in Crete He wanted to do for a lot of other folks, too. And the conduct of the believers there was crucial to that saving work, that saving enterprise. So he tells Titus to instruct the people with authority. Remember that in chapter 2 verse 15? With authority regarding their duty in a pagan world.

Now first, let's look at verse 1. He says just two words, "Remind them." And I want to point out to you that he's simply saying this isn't anything new. Obviously he had covered this in the past, certainly the folks knew the responsibilities they had for living in a pagan culture but they needed to be reminded. And that is a duty that belongs to everyone who stands behind the sacred desk, as it were, and proclaims the truth to God's flock. We are basically here to remind you of what you know. Present imperative means it's a regular ongoing continuing duty of reminding them. And he wants to remind them of the necessity for behaving themselves in a pagan society.

Now what he does in these eight verses is sum it up by asking them to remember four realities. It is wonderfully organized around these realities. First, remember your duty. Second, remember your former condition. Thirdly, remember your salvation. And fourthly, remember your mission. And if you will remind the people of those four things, it will keep their behavior, as Peter put it, excellent among the pagans. Remember your duty and he outlines them in verses 1 to 2. Remember your former condition and he outlines that in verses 3 to 4, actually verse 3. Then he says remember your salvation, verses 4 through 7. And finally in verse 8 he reminds them, remember your mission. And if you keep those things in mind, they become the motivation for living excellently in a pagan world.

I wish I could give them all to you in this document. But let's take point one...remember your duty. What is our duty? We may be hurt. We may be disappointed. We may be angry as we watch the vestiges of Christian influence die. We may be angry at what we see happening in the courts and in the congresses and the executive offices of our land. What is our response? We may not agree with the decisions that they are making. Here's what he says. "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men." Seven virtues are listed there. Seven virtues. Now listen to this. It doesn't matter whether your ruler is Caesar, Herod, Pilate, Felix, Fetus, Agrippa, Stalin, Hitler, Winston Churchill, Bill Clinton, it doesn't matter who it is, he says be subject, you teach them to be subject.

Rulers were tyrants. They lacked integrity. They were murderous. They were not noble. Governments made laws and maybe all the laws weren't equitable, just and fair. But he says you be subject to rulers, to authorities. He is reiterating a very commonly given biblical principle, Matthew 22, the Pharisees were always trying to trap Jesus. They want to trap Him publicly because they wanted to discredit Him publicly and turn some element of the population against Him. So they sent disciples to Him along with the Herodians and they said in verse 16, "Teacher, we know that You're truthful and You teach the way of God in truth and defer to no one for You're not partial to any." And that was a whole lot of sinful flattery. "Tell us therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll tax to Caesar or not?" Now what they're trying to do is to get Him to say it is or it isn't. If He says it is lawful, all the Jews are going to hate Him because they hate Caesar, they hate the poll tax, they hate the whole idea of being in occupied country ruled by a bunch of pagans. If on the other hand He agrees with the Jews and says no it is not right, it is not lawful before God to pay tax to Caesar, don't pay your tax, then they're going to

tell the Romans. One way or the other they're going to get some element of the power of the populous against Him.

But Jesus perceived their evil intent and He said, "Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the poll tax. They brought Him a denarius. He said to them, Whose likeness and inscription is this? They said to Him, Caesar's." And you know what? They hated to use those coins because anything with an image on it constituted...what?...an idol. And they hated that. And, of course, Caesar was a god. And this was idolatry to them. They hated not only the idea of taxation but they hated the idea of the inherent idolatry in it, a graven image made after a god. It was a violation of the first commandment. But Jesus was so wise, He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." And He upheld both. He said on the one hand pay your tax, on the other hand this had nothing to do with God, you must give to God what is God's.

The point for us today is Jesus paid His tax, even with the inherent idolatry. He said pay your tax. What were they doing with that tax? Things that surely Jesus was not pleased with. But the general overall thrust of government was positive and Christians are to submit to it.

Go to Romans 13 and here you have the most comprehensive statement about this from the Apostle Paul, the first few verses of chapter 13. Verse 1, "Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities." That's just plain and simple blanket statement. Everybody is in subjection. It doesn't matter whether it's a democracy or communist form of government, it doesn't matter whether it's a monarchy or whether it's a dictatorship, you're in subjection: good, bad, whatever form, you're in subjection to the governing authorities. Then he gives you seven reasons why.

1. Reason one: government is designed by God. "There is no authority except from God and those which exist are established by God." God has designed human government. He has designed it to exist in a number of forms and it is there because of His design for the control of human life. So submit. God designed it.

2. Reason two: Resisting is resisting God, verse 2, "He who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God."

3. Reason three: Resisters will be punished. End of verse 2, "Those who oppose will receive condemnation upon themselves." So you submit to the government...why? It's designed by God, resisting is resisting God and resisters will be punished.

4. Reason four: Government is designed to restrain evil. Verse 3, "Rulers are not a cause for fear for good behavior but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you'll have praise from the same." In other words, government is designed to restrain evil.

5. Reason five: It's designed to promote good. Verse 4, "It is a minister of God to you for good. If you do what is evil, be afraid."

6. Reason six: Government is empowered to punish. It is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. And that's why it doesn't bear the sword for nothing. God has given it the right of capital punishment. That's what bearing the sword means, God has even given government the right to take a life.

7. Reason seven (In Titus 3 verse 5): Submit to the government for conscience's sake, not just because you fear the wrath that's going to come if you disobey but for the sake of conscience because it's right.

So, submit to the government. Why? It is designed by God, resisting is resisting God. Resisters will be punished. Government is designed to restrain evil and promote good. Rulers are empowered to punish and do it for conscience's sake. Then the sum of it, verses 6 and 7, "So pay your taxes," verse 6 says, "for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing." And then verse 7, "Render to all what is due, tax to whom tax is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." The whole point is God has put government in place and you are to submit to it.

Now he gives all those reasons. The one reason he doesn't give is the evangelistic reason so that we can live and demonstrate that this world is not an issue to us. What's the difference how much tax we pay? That's not our concern. It is not our concern to be worried about legislation. It is not our concern to be worried about what the President does. It is our concern to live holy lives and call people to Christ. And our citizenship is in another world. We are only strangers and aliens here. We'll do whatever we're asked so that we do not mar our testimony because that is the greater and compelling issue.

First Peter 2 adds the very important note of evangelism. In 1 Peter 2 verse 9 says, "We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and we are to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." In other words, we are to demonstrate what salvation look like. We're to show people what a saved person is. How do we do it? Verse 12, "Keep your behavior excellent among the pagans." What do you mean by that? Verse 13, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution whether to a king as one in authority or governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers and the praise of those who do right. This is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Honor all men...verse 17...love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king." How you live in a pagan culture is crucial to proclaiming the excellencies of the one who saved you, to demonstrating your transformed life, that's the issue.

Now that takes us back to Titus again. The Apostle Paul is saying you need to be subject to rulers and authorities for evangelistic reasons. Back down to the bottom of verse 8, "This is good and profitable for the watching world."

Then he says you need to be obedient, verse 1, to be obedient, the second one. You are to obey whatever it is they say. You say, "Are we ever to disobey?" Yes. There's one occasion when we disobey, that is when they ask us what the Bible forbids us to do or when they ask us not to do what the Bible commands us to do. And the best illustration of that, as you know, is in Acts chapter 4. They told the Apostles not to preach. You remember they summoned them in Acts 4:18, commanded them not to speak or teach. Peter and John said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge." You judge whether we obey you or God. "For we cannot stop speaking," they said. Chapter 5, they flogged them, whipped them, verse 40, ordered them to speak no more. They went on their way from the presence of the council rejoicing they had been considered worthy to suffer and verse 42, every day in the temple from house to house they kept right on teaching, preaching Jesus as Christ.

There comes a point in time when the state turns against the church and tells the church not to do what God has mandated to do, then we have to obey God and suffer the consequence...be it prison or death. The only time we disobey is when we have been mandated by Scripture to do something we are forbidden to do or not to do something we are being compelled to do. We are obedient.

Then he says, at the end of verse 1, "Remind them to be ready for every good deed." This is so good. Remind them to be ready for every good deed. This is aggressive goodness. This isn't reluctant saying, "Well I'm not going to make an issue, I'm going to dutifully grit my teeth and pay my tax, I'm going to keep my anger under control." No, this is...this is an internal eagerness...the word ready means eager...eagerness to do every conceivable good deed. Approach life no matter how volatile the culture is against Christianity, no matter how pagan it is to the very core, how engulfed in idolatry and sin it is, we aggressively pursue every good thing as Galatians 6:10 says, "We are doing good to all men, especially those of the household of faith."

By the way, this is in direct contrast with the behavior of false teachers. Look back at chapter 1 verse 16. Remember the description of false teachers, they are detestable, disobedient and worthless for any good deed. One of the things, beloved, that sets believers apart from false teachers and their followers is the eager goodness in the lives of believers that demonstrates transformation, that demonstrates new birth, salvation, the life of God, the power of the Spirit, righteousness, virtue. We're to be known in society for our goodness, for our aggressive goodness.

Then in verse 2 he moves on in his list of seven virtues, "To malign no one." Not even one person is the idea. It's the verb blasphemeo from which we get the word blaspheme, it means to slander or to treat with contempt. We must confront sin. We can confront sin. We can confront the sinner because of his sin, we must call sinners to repentance but we do not stoop to blasphemy, slander, cursing and speaking contemptuously of people. I don't appreciate that when Christian people do that with regard to leaders. That's not the Christian approach. We may not like what they do but we must remember, folks, the condition they are in. Do we forget that they are blinded in their minds by the god of this world? How else do you expect unconverted people to act then like unconverted people? And how do unconverted people act? They act under the influence of Satan and his current system and they're just carrying out the only agenda they can comprehend. Maligning them is unacceptable.

Look at 1 Timothy for a moment, chapter 2. First Timothy chapter 2 verse 1, here was Timothy in Ephesus, another corrupt idolatrous city. He says to Timothy, "I want to urge you that entreaties and prayers and petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." Listen to that. We're to be tranquil, that's peaceful, quiet, godly, dignified. And what is our attitude toward the President and the Congress and the judges, the kings and everybody in authority? We pray for them. This is what God wants us to do, to pray for them constantly, making petition, prayers, entreaties for those in authority that God will work in their lives, that God will save them because God, it says in verses 3 and 4, is a saving God who has sent, verses 5 and 6, Jesus Christ to provide salvation. God wants to save and we want to pray for their salvation. Don't malign them, pray for their salvation.

Then he says to Titus another interesting thing that Christians are to be uncontentious, amachos, not fighting. We're not to fight, we're to be peaceful, friendly, don't quarrel with government, don't fight leaders. We're not to be combative. That's not the agenda for us. We're not even of this world. This isn't even our country, in a sense. We're just kind of sliding through. It's so easy to be contentious and hostile and angry about what happens in the pagan culture in which we live, and especially if it elevates our taxes or if it changes our neighborhood or our culture or whatever it is and we get angry about that. We don't like to see God denied His proper place and Satan exalted to be the leader of everything. But we are not to be contentious, we are not to fight. This is a passing world for us. All we can do is reach out as we move through and by the grace of God touch some life with the saving gospel both by what we say and what we are.

Then he says we're to be gentle. It's a beautiful word, *epieikes*, it means to be reasonable and forbearing. I think the simplest synonym is kind, considerate of human weakness, very patient with sinners. One writer says, "Sweet reasonableness." Not cantankerous, not argumentative, not angry, not hostile, sweetly reasonable, graciously kind, gentle.

And then he closes in verse 2 with the last of the seven, "Showing every consideration...showing every consider..." that's the word meekness in the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:5, *prautes*, meekness. We're meek, that's power under control, you'll remember. Never asserting one's rights, is what it means. Never fighting for one's rights. Christians don't do that. We're not in a fight for our rights. We don't have any political agenda. We don't have any legislative agenda. We're not after any rights. We don't want any particular rights with this society, we'll just live for Christ come what may. It refers to patient trust in God. We commit our lives to Him. Second Timothy 2 says if we live like this, meekly, gently, God may use us to lead people to repentance and the knowledge of the truth, 2 Timothy 2:25. You see, everything we do has an evangelistic goal. And as we live in this world, subjected to the authorities and the rulers, obedient to all the things that they lay out that don't directly violate Scripture, as we are eagerly pursuing every imaginable good deed within our society as we malign no one, fight with no one, but rather are patient with sinners, gentle, kind, we're going to demonstrate salvation because only transformed people can act like that.

And then he closes in verse 2 by saying, "For all men...for all men." You need to do this before everybody. That little phrase is very important. It appears a number of times in 1 Timothy and I want to point them out to you and we'll close. First Timothy chapter 2 verse 1, why does he say for all men? Why does he throw that in there? Because "all men" has become an important term in Paul's mind. First Timothy 2:1, "Prayers...he says at the end of verse 1...should be made on behalf of all men." Why? Verse 4, "Because God desires all men to be...what?...saved." Verse 6, "Christ Jesus who gave Himself as a ransom for all." God desires all men to be saved, and then he says to believers, live your lives this way for all men to see. That's consonant with God's saving purpose. First Timothy 4:10 says, "God is the Savior of all men." All men need to see our testimony. They need to see the transformation. Titus 2:11, "The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men." See, he repeats that phrase again and again and again.

God loves all men. God desires that all men be saved, he says. God wants you to pray for all men. The grace of God has appeared to all men. You live your life before all men so that they can see the transformation.

Only Christians can live like that. That's our duty. That's how we have to live.

Before we proceed further, we will consider the general tone in which we approach discussion of the subject in this section in Titus 3. New Testament churches were small islands in a sea of paganism. You see, they existed in an absolutely pagan culture. The Gentile world knew nothing about the Bible. It knew nothing about biblical morality. It knew nothing about Christian values. It knew nothing about a godly sense of mercy or justice. It knew nothing about a proper understanding of freedom within the framework of moral code. It was purely and totally and comprehensively and utterly pagan. These churches were born then in a culture with no Christian influence. There was no cultural Christianity. There was no Christian influence on social behavior or on the belief systems. The Gentile world was literally engulfed in idolatry, all of it designed by Satan. Their cultures were totally controlled by a Satanic agenda worked out through utterly and totally depraved human beings involved in worshipping demons.

So the churches then were in direct opposition and contrast to everything within the framework of cultural life. Given that obvious understanding, we might assume if we listen to Christians today in America that the early church should have made its primary agenda to impact culture, to try to get the various nations into which the church had been born adopt some kind of politically Christian agenda. Somehow the early church, some would seemingly want to tell us, should have put together some kind of biblical morality, some kind of biblical value system and worked very hard to get the nations to adopt that biblical moral code. However, the early church never did that. It had nothing to do with that. It did not concern itself with whatever the moral code of the nation was. It was not concerned about social behavior. It was not trying to influence culture politically or judicially or legislatively. The early church existed to do one thing and that was to reach lost people with the gospel. That was the beginning and the end of their purpose and that is still the church's purpose, that is still our only purpose, that is why we are in the world.

Frankly, it has been something of a nice thing to live in a country like America which has had such strong Christian influence. I mean, we are somewhat privileged to be living in the western world and in all of the western world to be living in that part of the western world, the English-speaking part of the western world, and particularly the United States where Christianity has had such an influence in the past 150 plus years on our culture. But that isn't how it is in most cases. Certainly through the history of the church that was not the case and it is not even the case now in all parts of the world, for several hundred years churches have existed in places like India that are utterly and totally and comprehensively pagan and other parts of Asia, many of the nations of Asia, of course, have had Christian missionaries for years and years but their culture is still completely and comprehensively pagan. There is no element of Christianity that is involved in their cultures from a legislative standpoint, from a judicial standpoint, from a religious standpoint, from an educational standpoint.

Crucial then to the effort of evangelization is this entire text of chapters 2 and 3 in Titus because here he is calling for Titus to teach the churches how to live. The issue of evangelization is not cleverness and gimmickry, it's not entertainment, it's not marketing strategy. It's not figuring out what the cultural hot buttons are and punching them all. That is not it. All of the money and time and energy and effort going to that is just so much uselessness. People are saved because a sovereign God redeems them upon the hearing of a powerful testimony of the gospel. That's how salvation works. It's not a matter of gimmickry or technique or whatever, ingenuity. Most churches think that that's the way you reach the world, Paul is saying the way you reach the world is to demonstrate what a saved person looks like. And it's so stark and it's so dramatic and it's so marvelous and it's so exciting and it's so unique and it's so different and so compelling that people come to find out whether God will save them the way He saved those whose lives they've seen. That's evangelization God's way.

And so, in this wonderful little epistle, Paul is calling on Titus to make sure the church is in the position to do that. Chapter 1 he says you've got to have the right leadership. Obviously if people are to live godly lives, you've got to have godly leaders. So he gives them all of the qualifications for godly leaders starting there in verse 5, ordaining the right kind of elders, taking all the way down through verse 9, these who are godly leaders then lead in proclaiming the truth and the people follow them. In contrast to that you have the false teachers in verses 10 to 16, their doctrine is wrong and their lives are detestable and disobedient and worthless. They are rebellious, empty talkers. Over against the false teachers who demonstrate nothing but the wrong thing and all their followers who demonstrate also the wrong thing is the true church preaching the true gospel and living transformed lives.

Now what is the character of these lives to be? Chapter 2 tells how Christians are to live in the church. Chapter 3 how they are to live in the world. Chapter 2 he says older men are to live a certain way, younger men, older women, younger women, slaves, everybody is to live in a certain way to put God's saving power on display in order to, verse 5 says, make the Word of God not be dishonored, verse 8 to silence the opponents who want to criticize your faith and in order, verse 10 says, to adorn the doctrine of God as a saving God in every respect. As the Christian lives a holy life in the church, as the life of the church is pure and holy and undefiled and all that God wants it to be, the watching world sees transformed lives. And since the end of chapter 2 says God is a saving God and brings salvation to all men, He wants to put His saving power on display and that's why He has redeemed us, verse 14, and purified us and made us zealous for good works so that people can see what a saved life is like.

Then he comes into chapter 3 and says here it's also important not only how you live in the church but how you live in the world. And you remember verses 1 and 2, we studied them last week. He says you remind them, be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

In the society and in the culture you are to live this way so that they also will see your transformed life, not only in regard to how you treat other Christians, but how you live within the society itself. And we looked at that opening verse or two last time under the heading, "Remember your duty...remember your duty." If we are to know how to live in a pagan culture, we have to remember our duty. And there were seven duties given there...seven of them. Be subject to rulers, to authorities. We bow the knee. We don't fight the system. We don't attack it. We don't revolt. We aren't revolutionaries. We aren't protesters. We are subject. Then to be obedient. Whatever the law says we comply and we obey. We are eager to do every positive good, we're not just knuckling under, we're not just bending our back and bowing our knee, we are glad, eager, anxious to pursue every good deed we can within our society. Verse 2, we never malign anybody. We don't speak evil of people. We don't blast them. We don't curse them. We don't malign their name, their character. We are not contentious, we don't fight, we don't pick fights, we don't retaliate. We are not pugilists. And we are gentle. What is that? Meek, and we show every possible kindness to everyone in our society, including our President and our leaders and all those in authority and the people that we are employed by and who are over us and are teachers and all the way down.

So if we are to know how to behave in a pagan society, first of all Paul says, we must remember our duty and it's very clear. We went over that in detail. And the reason is why? Because God desires to save. And our lives are the platform on which salvation is proclaimed believably. It's the same thing we saw in 1 Timothy 2. You are to be under the king and all those in authority over you and you are to pray for them and you are to live a quite and peaceable life and a godly life and a wise and careful and thoughtful life and to be a good citizen. Why? Because God desires all men to be saved. And what makes the gospel believable is not fighting Christians, not protesting Christians, not politicizing Christians, not Christians who want to start an anti-Christian defamation league, not Christians who want to damn and curse and consign to hell the media. What makes Christianity attractive is winsomeness, is people who are covered, as it were, in the righteousness of Christ and who manifest His love. Remember your duties, he says.

Secondly, and this is where we'll pick it up, remember your former condition. To have a proper response in a pagan culture you must remember your former condition. Look at verse 3, "For we also once ourselves were..." and then he gives a list of seven vices. Seven virtues in verses 1 and 2, seven

vices here in verse 3. "We also once ourselves were foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

Listen, before you get slanderous, before you get angry at those in authority in your country and those around you who are in sin and those who have an immoral agenda, before you get hostile and slanderous and angry and before you court those kinds of emotions that lead to venomous kinds of acts and thoughts of vengeance, before you become inconsiderate, before you fight for the cultural Christian agenda, before you attack the ungodly and attack the unsaved, Paul says remember once you were one of them. Did you forget? Did you forget? Did you forget that you used to be like that and you couldn't do anything about it? And there you have in verse 3 another one of those lists that Paul loves to give, you find them in Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, Galatians 5, Ephesians 4, one of those lists that defines the universal and comprehensive depth of human fallenness. All of us were like that. Paul himself was a blasphemer, he says in 1 Timothy 1, and a persecutor, and a violent aggressor, but he did it ignorantly in unbelief. As if to say, I did it because I didn't know any better.

You look at the gay agenda and you watch the homosexual pride parade and you listen to all the lesbian advocacy and you see all of the Playboy mentality and the filth and the pornography of our time and you watch this agenda being pushed on the social institutions and taught to your children, everything from sex education to passing out birth control devices and all of the stuff going on and something in you becomes hostile to all of that and you've got to stop and realize that the people doing that are doing it in utter ignorance. Look at verse 3, you were once foolish. What does that mean? They lacked understanding. They are completely ignorant, anoetos, without knowledge, without understanding. They don't know what they're doing. Ephesians 4:18 says basically the same thing, that the Gentiles are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their hearts. They're dark, they're ignorant. The god of this world has blinded their minds which compounds the darkness. And naturally they cannot understand the things of God, says Paul in his letter to the Corinthians.

So what do you expect? As soon as you knock the pinions out from under cultural Christianity and there aren't any restraints, their ignorance is going to take over. As soon as there's no compelling biblical criteria, they're left to their own devices and this is what you should expect. This is unbelievers acting like unbelievers. This is depravity manifesting itself. I suppose you thought that somehow the more intelligent people came, the more likely they were to approximate a biblical morality...wrong, absolutely wrong. If you want a good insight into that, pick up a book written by Paul Johnson called *The Intellectuals*. He is probably the foremost historian in our world today of western civilization and you will go through the most unbelievable morass of filth in reading about the intellectual philosophical architects of contemporary western culture and you will find out that those men who were smart enough to design the whole culture in which you live were the most debauched human beings on the face of the earth...and their lives would make a black mark on a piece of coal. Intelligence and education has nothing to contribute to morality.

Now I think...we're shocked, I think, when we look at institutions of higher education because we assume there is some...something so reasonable about biblical morality, so intelligent about biblical morality that smart people who study carefully would come to wise conclusions. But they cannot override their depravity. They're ignorant no matter how educated, no matter how many Ph.Ds they have, they're blind and ignorant and darkened. What do we expect from them? Nothing more than what their own depravity could engineer.

Then he says they're disobedient. To God? Of course and consequently to all authority instituted by God. There is in the heart of man rebellion. It is bound up in his heart. It's bound up in his fallenness. That's why you spank your children, to knock the rebelliousness under some control. But where God isn't there and the Spirit isn't there to restrain it, lawless resistance to truth and virtue will run amuck...and that is just depravity doing what depravity does. And we haven't seen it fully in American in the past because we did have some residue of Christian constraint in the system. That is all gone and now we're going to see depravity like it was seen in pagan Greek culture. We will be more the kind of church the church used to be in its early beginnings. They are disobedient. They are disobedient to God and to authority. They care not for the Bible. They laugh and mock at the Scripture overtly or covertly. They are resistant to truth and virtue.

Then he says thirdly, they are deceived. That's that verb again that gives us the word planet. They just wander around in space. They are not moored. They are not anchored. They just wander. It literally means they are led astray. They are perverted in mind and will and action. Their major thing is freedom. They just want to roam at all their impulses, nothing holds them down, nothing quantifies their life, nothing qualifies their life, they just live at whim. Whatever they feel. They are deceivers and they are deceived and they get worse and worse, 2 Timothy 3:13 says.

Now what's driving them? If they're ignorant and disobedient and deceived, they can't know the truth, they don't want to do the truth, they're led into all kinds of error, what is the driving force? Here it is, "They're enslaved to various lusts and pleasures...various lusts." A multitude of different epithumias, evil desires. It might be for money. It might be for sex. It might be for lesbian sex. It might be for homosexuality among men. It might be for power. It might be for food. It might be for alcohol. It might be for drugs. It might be for murder. It might be for rape. It might be for who knows what all. They are driven by the only impulse they have within them and that is their lust. And he adds pleasures from which we get the word hedonism, hedone, pleasures. They live for what makes them feel good. They follow their passion and their pleasure.

So when you say, "Oh, isn't it a terrible thing? You know, we know there's immorality in the streets and we know there's homosexuality in the streets, but when it happens in the Congress or when it happens in the Senate, or when immorality happens in the President's cabinet, isn't it terrible that men who have the public trust and men who are lifted up don't live moral lives?" My friend, they don't have the capacity to live a moral life. They're going to live the same kind of life that the guy in the street is going to live, they're just going to be more sophisticated at it because they're going to be slaves, bondslaves, *douloos*, they're going to be slaves to their lusts and their pleasures. That's all there is for them.

And as a result, they will spend, he says, this is all of us, we also were spending our life...now he's not saying we did it now and then or we once did it or we might do it, or there's a chance we could do it, he's saying we did it all our life in malice and envy. Malice means just plain wickedness, *kakia*, deep wickedness, but it has the idea of a malicious wickedness that wants to hurt and harm and take what it wants at the price...at any price really for another to pay.

So what do you have? First of all you have an ignorant person, an ignorant person and a disobedient person. And because they can't know the truth, don't know the truth, don't respond to the truth, they then wander all over the place and the only thing that leads them is their passion and it leads to lust and pleasure. And once they get a taste of lust and pleasure, they spend their whole life on consuming this kind of thing to the extent that they have evil intent toward everybody, that they seek everything they

can get and don't care who has to pay the price for it. Malice and envy...envy means ill will. There's a malicious evil and an ill will bound up in the fallenness of man. They never get satisfaction because lust is never satisfied, pleasure is never lasting and so they continue to consume and to consume and whatever anybody else has that gets in the way, they become angry and hostile and malicious and envious and it feeds...envy is the sin that feeds on the living and it wants to consume them. And that leads ultimately to the end of verse 3, hateful and hating one another. They then become literally consumed with hating anybody who stands in their way, they're self-centered to the degree where they hate anyone that is at all an obstacle to them or a problem to them or anybody who disagrees with them or stands in their way or takes issue with them. And then ultimately they come to the place where they hate everybody but themselves because that's where depravity ultimately goes, it goes to ego and ego says I want what I want when I want it and you get out of my way cause I'm getting it. That's why they can't maintain marriages. That's why parents can't get along with each other. That's why children hate parents, parents hate children. The ultimate agenda of fallen man is pride and pride isolates him from everybody. That's the picture.

Now what do you expect people like that to come up with? What kind of system do you expect them to come up with? Well just sit back and watch cause you're going to see it. You're seeing it right now and it's exactly what we would presume. Blind to God and therefore blind to all spiritual reality, rebellious to God's law and resistant completely to His truth. Utterly deceived about what is true and what is right, in complete bondage to mindless passion and living only for pleasure, they feed on the living by perverse treatment of others so that they are detested by the rest of the egotists and everybody winds up hating everybody.

Now what kind of world do you think they're going to develop? They're going to develop the kind of world you see. Just remember, would you, that you were there once too. And if you were saved when you were a small child, as we shall see in a moment, except for the grace of God you'd be a part of the same blindness. So before you eagerly rush to mistreat the pagans who offend you and who are destroying all vestiges of Christian influence, consider your own depravity. They are depraved. And so were you before you were saved and you were no different than them. And that's what we expect. And so you've got to look at them as Jesus looked at them and see them sadly on their way to hell and unable to do anything other than what they're doing. Yes there is a rebellion in them, yes there is an animosity toward God, there is a vitriolic attitude toward what is true, and yes it is reprehensible and yes God will condemn them and punish them in eternal hell if they don't turn from their sin and believe in Him, but at the same time God so loved the world. And we've got to be able to cope with the sin and see the iniquity for what it is and confront it for what it is without becoming malicious rebels who hate the very culture God has called us to reach. If Jesus could sit and look over at the city of Jerusalem and weep for their apostasy, can we look over our nation and weep? Remember your duty, he says, and remember your former condition.

There's a third point here. If we're going to have a proper perspective in a pagan culture we must remember our salvation. So he says to Titus, you tell them to remember your salvation. And here comes seven aspects of salvation. There were seven virtues in verses 1 and 2, seven vices in verse 3 and now there are seven aspects of salvation in verses 4 through 7. Verses 4 through 7 is one sentence, one long sentence that sweeps over the reality of salvation to remind us that the only reason we're different is because of God, not us, right? Nothing is worse than smug self-righteousness. Nothing is worse than Christians sitting around damning all of the unconverted people because of the fact that we're better than they are. Listen, my friend, the only reason you're not one of them on the way to hell is because of God's grace. You've got to remember that.

Look at verse 4, "When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration, renewing by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The only reason you're an heir and the only reason you have a hope of eternal life and the only reason you're justified and made right with God, and the only reason that you have come through Jesus Christ to receive the Holy Spirit, and the only reason you've been renewed and regenerated and washed, the only reason you've been saved is because God is merciful. That's what he's saying.

Now, you know, this particular passage of Scripture is a heaven of sorts to a theologian. There is so much here you could spend the rest of your life in those verses. It sweeps across the great glorious truths of salvation. And I'm not going to take the time to do that, next time we're going to go back into this thing and look a little more closely at those features. But for now I want you to feel the impact of the whole of what he is saying. Follow me through those verses again. Salvation was initiated by God, verse 4, "When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared." The initiative is with God. He came into the world showing His kindness and His love in the incarnation in Christ. He saved us. Again, His initiation. Not on the basis of something which we had done which was righteous and therefore earned it, but according to His mercy. He washed us, He regenerated us, He renewed us through the Holy Spirit, He poured out His Spirit on us through Christ, He justified us by His grace, He made us heirs and He gave us the hope of eternal life. It's all from Him.

So would you look at the unbeliever like that and would you say to yourself...he's not like me...listen carefully...because God has not done for him what He's done for me? You need to view him like that. When you are repulsed by the media and their anti-Christian agenda, when you are repulsed by the homosexuals and the lesbians and the fornicators and adulterers and all of that, and the educators and whoever else, the politicians, will you look at them and simply say...they're the way they are because God has not saved them? I'm the way I am because He saved me. Get the perspective.

When the kindness, verse 4 says, of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, what a great statement. Salvation is rooted in the love of God. Ephesians 2 talks about the great love wherewith He has loved us. That is why He gave us Christ. It is in God's kindness and God's love that our salvation resides. It is God our Savior, verse 10 of Titus chapter 2, it is Christ our Savior, verse 6 of chapter 3, as we've seen those same descriptive terms of God and Christ throughout the pastoral epistles, it all originates with them. His love appeared. His kindness appeared and He saved us. It is God who is the rescuer. God came down and rescued us. Verse 5, He saved us. That little three letters...three words rather, "He saved us," takes us to the cross and the resurrection. And He did it not on the basis of deeds which we have done. We didn't deserve our salvation. We didn't deserve our transformation, our deliverance from sin and death and hell was purely on God's love and God's kindness alone, nothing in us was worthy, we made no contribution to His plan, we made no contribution to His choice, we made no contribution to His work of salvation. He looked at us in pity and compassion and love and mercy and saved us. We deserve wrath, we got forgiveness. We are undeserved, we received what we do not earn. In fact, His mercy was uninfluenced and His grace was absolutely spontaneous. And yet He washed us. And the agent of washing is the Word, He regenerated us...that's speaking about the new birth, He renewed us.

All of that really looks at the same event, we were washed, that's one way to look at salvation, it's the cleansing of sin. We were regenerated, that's another way to look at salvation, it's new birth, new life,

palingenesia, that marvelous word. And then we were renewed, that's another way to look at the same event. We came out of that experience in newness of life, now living life on a completely different plane. All of that speaks of radical transformation initiated by God not according to anything we've done, we were radically transformed and then we were infused with the Holy Spirit who was poured out on us richly. We were then made right with God through all of that, verse 7 says, and became joint heirs with Christ in the hope of eternal life. Hummph...

All of that is simply to say one thing, look, the only reason you're different than the corrupt society around you is because God saved you. How can you hate those people who have never known the mercy of God? Can't you feel the same pity, the same compassion that God felt toward you?

And then in verse 8 the first little statement, "This is a trustworthy statement." Stop there. That really belongs with verses 4 to 7. That little phrase "this is a trustworthy statement" is a descriptive phrase used five times in the pastoral epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. And it is used to identify a commonly known expression that was axiomatic. When you say something is an axiom, you mean it is a self-evident truth that doesn't need proof, it's just obvious. Apparently in the early church there were a number of self-evident axioms that had found their way into the repetitive vocabulary of Christians and they would frequently recite them. This appears to have been one of those from verses 4 to 7, some think it was a part of a creed, a commonly recited creed in the early church and others think it may well have been a part of a hymn. But it was one of those trustworthy statements. Sometimes you read that same phrase in Paul's letters to Timothy, "this is a trustworthy statement and worthy of all acceptance," it's the same basic phrase. It was something that was self-evident, something that everybody knew and he's simply saying this, you all know this for sure, you all know that salvation is by grace and grace alone. So before you become angry and hostile against the culture in which you live, remember that apart from the grace of God that's you...that's you.

So, how are we to live in a pagan society? One, we remember our duty. Two, we remember our former condition, and that helps us to understand they're only acting the way they act because that's the only way they can act. And thirdly, we remember our salvation, that it's only the grace of God that sets us apart from them. And as we have been pitied, so we should pity them. They are in a pitiful condition.

Finally, fourthly, if you want to live the way God wants you to live in a pagan culture, remember your mission. Remember your duty, your former condition, your salvation and remember your mission. Now into verse 8, "And concerning these things I want you to speak confidently so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."

Now he reminds Titus to remind the church of their mission. He says to him, "Concerning these things," what things? All the things he's been writing, certainly since Titus chapter 2 verse 1. "As for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine, everything regarding sound doctrine," and then he goes and gives him a lot of things in chapter 2 and then in chapter 3. Now comes back to where he started in chapter 2 verse 1 and saying concerning these things I want you to speak confidently. Don't be hesitant, preach these things with boldness and conviction. The Greek verb is very intensive. It has added in the front of it *dia*, the intense preposition and it intensifies the verb, you are to speak confidently and intensely about these matters of Christian behavior.

That's what the church is about. When church comes together it comes together to be exhorted. As we saw in Titus chapter 2 verse 15, speak, exhort, reprove and don't let anybody disregard you, you do that with authority. You remind them, verse 1 of Titus chapter 3. Now he says you speak these things

confidently. When the church comes together, the church is to be addressed. You need to be here every week so that you can be stimulated to love and good works. The matter of evangelism is at stake and how you live your life is at stake and you need to be stimulated week in and week out to godliness. So he says, "Titus, you speak these things confidently, these matters of behavior in a pagan culture and these matters of behavior in the church that we talked about in Titus chapter 2, you speak them unhesitatingly so that those who have believed God."

That is a great phrase. Not who have believed in God, but who have believed God. What is that? Those who take God at His Word...that's a definition of Christians. Who are Christians? They're not just people who believe in God, a lot of people believe in God. They're people who take God's Word seriously. They believe God when He speaks. Eighty percent of the people in America believe in God. But I'll promise you right now, a very small percentage believe God when He speaks. And that's the issue here. He's talking about the believers who believe the Word of God. You can speak it confidently because those who take God at His Word are going to respond and be careful to engage in good deeds. They're going to take the lead in doing what is excellent. They're going to give very careful thoughtful devoted attention to the matter of spiritual living. People who take God seriously are going to do that.

Part of the problem in the church today is we've got people who say they believe in God, who say they're Christians, who are in the church and they don't take God's Word seriously, do they? But they're passed off as Christians and that's part of the confusion in the society. You speak confidently and you speak to the Christians those who take God's Word seriously and they'll be careful to engage in good deeds and these things then are good and profitable for men.

What does that mean? They lead to the salvation of lost souls because they demonstrate transformed lives, they bring light and life and peace and joy and salvation.

We have a great challenge in our beloved country. And I think the church is missing the whole approach. We have an increasingly paganized nation and some Christians are jumping on the political bandwagon trying to impact the culture quote/unquote. That's not our goal, that's not our purpose, that's not our calling. Other Christians are trying to come up with more clever strategy for evangelism and feel if they can find all the marketing tools and all of the hot buttons and push them properly, people are going to get saved because the technique is so clever. And so they turn the church into an entertainment center for unbelievers who want to come and be entertained. And hopefully if they're entertained enough to get real happy and real enthusiastic, they'll decide that they want to become Christians.

That's not how it's done, folks. You might get a crowd and you might even preach the gospel and have some people saved, but you're going to have immature carnal ignorant believers whose lives are not going to demonstrate to the culture the transforming saving power of God. When the church comes together, it comes together to be spoken to with boldness and called to holy living and out of the Word of God because those who take the Word of God seriously are going to engage in the good deeds that are going to become good and profitable for the watching world. That's the mandate. We can't just be sad. We can't certainly be hostile. We've got to pray for those in our culture and our society who are lost. We've got to pity them and love them with the love of God and show them Christ's saving power in our lives. The church does not need now to become more like the world, it needs to become utterly and distinctively the church so that there is such an obvious difference that the world can see it clearly. We're doing exactly the opposite and that's the tragedy. For us here we have a mandate, we can't fix

everything but we can be what God wants us to be here. And God will in His grace use us to bring many to righteousness.

Father, we thank You again this morning for Your Word. We are a people who can say we believe You. If You speak we listen. We take Your Word seriously and we want, Lord, to live the kind of lives that You want us to live so that we can demonstrate a transformed person is like. And then they'll know You have transforming power. Help us to live holy lives, lives of compassion and love, lives of grace and kindness and mercy that they might see in us the first born of heaven, even Jesus Christ and His love and compassion and pity and His virtue. And seeing what we are might conclude their God is a saving God and come themselves for salvation. To this end we pray for Christ's sake. Amen.

7.15 How to Teach Your Child About Politics¹⁰⁶

Because I write about politics, people are forever asking me the best way to teach children how our system of government works. I tell them that they can give their own children a basic civics course right in their own homes. In my own experience as a father, I have discovered several simple devices that can illustrate to a child's mind the principles on which the modern state deals with its citizens. You may find them helpful, too.

For example, I used to play the simple card game WAR with my son. After a while, when he thoroughly understood that the higher ranking cards beat the lower ranking ones, I created a new game I called GOVERNMENT. In this game, I was Government, and I won every trick, regardless of who had the better card. My boy soon lost interest in my new game, but I like to think it taught him a valuable lesson for later in life.

When your child is a little older, you can teach him about our tax system in a way that is easy to grasp. Offer him, say, \$10 to mow the lawn. When he has mowed it and asks to be paid, withhold \$5 and explain that this is income tax. Give \$1 to his younger brother, and tell him that this is "fair". Also, explain that you need the other \$4 yourself to cover the administrative costs of dividing the money. When he cries, tell him he is being "selfish" and "greedy". Later in life he will thank you.

Make as many rules as possible. Leave the reasons for them obscure. Enforce them arbitrarily. Accuse your child of breaking rules you have never told him about. Keep him anxious that he may be violating commands you haven't yet issued. Instill in him the feeling that rules are utterly irrational. This will prepare him for living under democratic government.

When your child has matured sufficiently to understand how the judicial system works, set a bedtime for him and then send him to bed an hour early. When he tearfully accuses you of breaking the rules, explain that you made the rules and you can interpret them in any way that seems appropriate to you, according to changing conditions. This will prepare him for the Supreme Court's concept of the U.S. Constitution as a "living document". Promise often to take him to the movies or the zoo, and then, at the appointed hour, recline in an easy chair with a newspaper and tell him you have changed your plans. When he screams, "But you promised!", explain to him that it was a campaign promise. Every now and then, without warning, slap your child. Then explain that this is defense. Tell him that you must be vigilant at all times to stop any potential enemy before he gets big enough to hurt you. This, too, your child will appreciate, not right at that moment, maybe, but later in life. At times your child will naturally express discontent with your methods. He may even give voice to a petulant wish that he lived with another

¹⁰⁶ Joseph Sobran.

family. To forestall and minimize this reaction, tell him how lucky he is to be with you the most loving and indulgent parent in the world, and recount lurid stories of the cruelties of other parents. This will make him loyal to you and, later, receptive to schoolroom claims that the America of the postmodern welfare state is still the best and freest country on Earth.

This brings me to the most important child-rearing technique of all: lying. Lie to your child constantly. Teach him that words mean nothing - or rather that the meanings of words are continually "evolving", and may be tomorrow the opposite of what they are today.

Some readers may object that this is a poor way to raise a child. A few may even call it child abuse. But that's the whole point: Child abuse is the best preparation for adult life under our form of GOVERNMENT.

That having been said, let's compare what the Supreme Court has to say about this kind of despicable behavior by the government:

"Decency, Security, and liberty alike demand that government officials shall be subjected to the same rules of conduct that are commands to the citizen. In a government of laws, existence of the government will be imperiled if it fails to observe the law scrupulously. Our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or ill, it teaches the whole people by its example. Crime is contagious. If the government becomes a lawbreaker, it breeds contempt for the law; it invites every man to become a law unto himself; it invites anarchy. To declare that in the administration of the criminal law the end justifies the means...would bring terrible retribution. Against that pernicious doctrine this Court should resolutely set its face."

[Justice Brandeis, *Olmstead v. United States*, 277 U.S. 438, 485. (1928)]

7.16 The Bill of No Rights

"We, the sensible people of the United States, in an attempt to help everyone get along, restore some semblance of Justice, avoid any more riots, keep our nation safe, promote positive behavior, and secure the blessings of debt-free liberty to ourselves and our great-great-grandchildren, hereby try one more time to ordain and establish some common sense guidelines for the terminally whiny, guilt-ridden, deluded, and other liberal Bed-wetters.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that a whole lot of people are confused by the Bill of Rights and are so dim that they require a Bill of No Rights."

ARTICLE I: You do not have the right to a new car, big screen TV or any other form of wealth. More power to you if you can legally acquire them, but no one is guaranteeing anything.

ARTICLE II: You do not have the right to never be offended. This country is based on freedom, and that means freedom for everyone - not just you! You may leave the room, change the channel, express a different opinion, etc., but the world is full of idiots, and probably always will be.

ARTICLE III: You do not have the right to be free from harm. If you stick a screwdriver in your eye, learn to be more careful. Do not expect the tool manufacturer to make you and all your relatives independently wealthy.

ARTICLE IV: You do not have the right to free food and housing. Americans are the most charitable people to be found, and will gladly help anyone in need, but we are quickly growing weary of subsidizing generation after generation of professional couch potatoes who achieve nothing more than the creation of another generation of professional couch potatoes.

ARTICLE V: You do not have the right to free health care. That would be nice, but from the looks of public housing, we're just not interested in public health care.

ARTICLE VI: You do not have the right to physically harm other people. If you kidnap, rape, intentionally maim, or kill someone, don't be surprised if the rest of us want to see you fry in the electric chair.

ARTICLE VII: You do not have the right to the possessions of others. If you rob, cheat or coerce away the goods or services of other citizens, don't be surprised if the rest of us get together and lock you away in a place where you still won't have the right to a big screen color TV or a life of leisure.

ARTICLE VIII: You don't have the right to demand that our children risk their lives in foreign wars to soothe your aching conscience. We hate oppressive governments and won't lift a finger to stop you from going to fight if you'd like. However, we do not enjoy parenting the entire world and do not want to spend so much of our time battling each and every little tyrant with a military uniform and a funny hat.

ARTICLE IX: You don't have the right to a job. All of us sure want all of you to have one, and will gladly help you along in hard times, but we expect you to take advantage of the opportunities of education and vocational training laid before you to make yourself useful.

ARTICLE X: You do not have the right to happiness. Being an American means that you have the right to *pursue* happiness -- which, by the way, is a lot easier if you are unencumbered by an overabundance of idiotic laws created by those of you who were confused by the Bill of Rights.

7.17 Am I A Bad American?-Absolutely NOT!

Someone sent us this via email and we think it is so insightful and so descriptive about our social responsibilities here in America, we wanted to share it with all of you:

AM I A BAD AMERICAN?...I'M THINKING NOT!

I believe the money I make belongs to me and my family, not some middle-aged governmental functionary with a bad comb-over who wants to give it away to crack addicts making babies so that I can help support them.

I don't care about appearing compassionate. I already support causes that I believe are worthwhile, charitable, educational, and religious. I don't need any liberal minion on the government payroll to tell me how, when, or where I need to show compassion.

I think I'm doing better than the homeless and I absolutely should not feel guilty about it.

I don't think being a minority makes you noble nor victimized.

I don't think playing with toy guns makes you a killer.

I believe it's called the Boy Scouts for a reason.

I have the right not to be tolerant of others. There are a lot of screwed up people out there; card-carrying members of the largest cult in society - dysfunction. As long as I'm responsible for me and my own legal behavior, I don't have to tolerate those assholes, no matter their race, creed, or color.

I like big houses, cars, boats, and planes.

I believe that if you are selling me Dairy Queen ice cream, a KFC box of chicken, or a hotel room - you do it in English. As a matter of fact, if you are going to live in this country, you should learn to read and speak English. That would be the civil thing to do. English happens to also be the dominant language on the Internet. Gee, I wonder why? Our ancestors did not have to die in vain so that someone could leave the country they were born in to come here and disrespect ours.

I think the cops have every right to shoot your sorry ass if you're running from them after they tell you to stop. If you can't understand the word "freeze," or "stop!" in English, see the previous line.

I don't use the excuse "it's for the children" as a shield for stupid opinions or actions.

If I received oral sex from one of my subordinate employees in my office, it wouldn't be "a private matter" or my "personal business." I would have been FIRED immediately.

I know what the definition of lying is. I know what the definition of "is" is, too...

I don't think that just because you were not born in this country, you qualify for some special loan program, government sponsored bank loan, etc., so you can open a hotel, convenience store, trinket shop, or anything else. That is bullshit.

I believe that no one ever died because of something Ozzy Osbourne, Eminem or Marilyn Manson sang, but that doesn't mean I want to listen to that crap from someone else's car when I'm stopped at a red light. But I respect your right to be really stupid.

I don't think that being a student gives you any more enlightenment than working at Blockbuster Video or Jack In The Box.

We did not go to some foreign country and risk lives in vain to defend our constitution so that decades later you can tell us it's a living document ever changing and is open to interpretation.

I don't hate the rich. If they invented it, built it, sold it, and/or serviced it - I respect them. The only rich I cannot respect are those who inherited it.

I don't pity the poor.

I've never owned a slave. Neither did my father, or his father, or his father, etc. If you go back far enough you can find shitty circumstances that impacted most of our predecessors' lives. Get over it. Equal opportunity means you do the same and you get the same - not you do less and expect more.

I believe a self-righteous liberal with a cause is more dangerous than an armed Hell's Angel with an attitude.

I own a gun, you can own a gun, and any red blooded American should be allowed to own a gun, but if you use it in a crime then you will serve the time. Not probation and not

a plea bargain - you serve time. And clean up our highways while you do the time. By the way, a rubber band and a sharp paper clip is a dangerous weapon in the hands of someone with malicious intent.

I worry about dying before I get even.

I think Bill Gates has every right to keep every penny he made and continue to make more. If it pisses you off, invent something better and put your name on the building.

We don't need more laws ! Let's enforce the ones we already have.

It doesn't take a village to raise a child, it takes a parent with the balls to stand up to the kid and spank his butt and say "NO !" Discipline means to instruct, correct and punish. Good parents do that.

I think tattoos and piercing are fine if you want them, but please don't pretend they are a political statement.

I didn't realize Dr. Seuss was a genius until I had a kid.

I will not be frowned upon or be looked down upon or be made to keep silent because I have these beliefs and opinions. This country guarantees me that right. I will not conform or compromise just to keep from hurting somebody's feelings. We, the silent responsible majority, expect reasonable, moderate behavior from our friends and our neighbors, not to mention our politicians.

Don't take my time or tax dollars for anything else.

I am sick to death of "Political Correctness."

I'm neither angry nor disenfranchised, no matter how desperately the media would like the world to believe otherwise.

I am not a bad American, I am a Great American !!

7.18 If Noah Were Alive Today

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said, "In one year, I am going to make it Rain and cover the whole earth with water until all flesh is destroyed.

But I want you to save the righteous people and two of every kind of living Thing on the earth. Therefore, I am commanding you to build an Ark." In a flash of lightening, God delivered the specifications for an Ark. In fear and trembling, Noah took the plans and agreed to build the Ark. "Remember" said the Lord, "You must complete the Ark and bring everything aboard in one year." Exactly one-year later, fierce storm clouds covered the earth and all the seas of the earth went into a tumult. The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard weeping. "CHRISTIANS:Noah", He shouted. "Where is the Ark?"

"Lord, please forgive me!" cried Noah. "I did my best, but there were big problems. First, I had to get a permit for construction and your plans did not meet the codes. I had to hire an engineering firm and redraw the plans.

Then I got into a fight with OSHA over whether or not the Ark needed a Fire sprinkler system and floatation devices. Then my neighbor objected, claiming I was violating zoning ordinances by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission. Then I had problems getting enough wood for the Ark, because there was a ban on cutting trees to protect the Spotted Owl. I finally convinced the US Forest Service that I needed the wood to save the owls. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service won't let me catch any owls. So, no owls. The carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer. Now I have 16 carpenters on the Ark, but still no owls.

When I started rounding up the other animals, I was sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me only taking two of each kind aboard. Just when I got the suit dismissed, the EPA notified me that I could not complete the Ark without filing an Environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. They didn't taken very kindly to The idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of the Creator of The universe. Then the Army Engineers demanded a map of the proposed new Flood plain. I sent them a globe. Right now, I am trying to resolve a Complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that I am practicing discrimination by not taking godless, unbelieving people aboard.

The IRS has seized my assets, claiming that I'm building the Ark in preparation to Flee the country to avoid paying taxes. I just got a notice from the state that I owe them some kind of user tax and failed to register the Ark as a "recreational water craft." Finally, the ACLU (the American Communist Lawyers Union) got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the Ark, saying that since God is flooding the earth, it is a religious event and therefore, unconstitutional. I really don't think I can finish the Ark for another five or six years." Noah wailed. The sky began to clear; the sun began to shine and the seas began to calm. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up hopefully.

"You mean You are not going to destroy the earth Lord?"

"No," said the Lord sadly. "I don't have to. The government already has."

7.19 Prayer at the Opening of the Kansas Senate

When minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual politically correct generalities, but what they heard instead was a stirring prayer, passionately calling our country to repentance and righteousness.

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest. In six short weeks, the Central Christian Church had logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of the prayer from India, Africa and Korea.

Commentator PAUL HARVEY aired the prayer on *The Rest of the Story* on the radio and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired!

THE PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask Your forgiveness and to seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, "Woe on those who call evil good,"

but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism.

We have worshiped other gods and called it multiculturalism.

We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle.

We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.

We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation.

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.

We have killed our unborn children and called it a choice.

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem.

We have abused power and called it political savvy.

We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition.

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.

We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of Your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

7.20 The Ghost of Valley Forge



I had a dream the other night I didn't understand,
A figure walking through the mist, with flintlock in his hand.

His clothes were torn and dirty, as he stood there by my bed,
He took off his three-cornered hat, and speaking low he said:

"We fought a revolution to secure our liberty,
We wrote the Constitution, as a shield from tyranny.

For future generations, this legacy we gave,
In this, the land of the free and home of the brave.

The freedom we secured for you, we hoped you'd always keep,
But tyrants labored endlessly while your parents were asleep.

Your freedom gone -- your courage lost -- you're no more than a slave,
In this, the land of the free and the home of the brave.

You buy permits to travel, and permits to own a gun,
Permits to start a business, or to build a place for one.

On land that you believe you own, you pay a yearly rent,
Although you have no voice in choosing how the money's spent.

Your children must attend a school that doesn't educate,
Your moral values can't be taught, according to the state.

You read about the current "news" in a very biased press,
You pay a tax you do not owe, to please the IRS.

Your money is no longer made of silver or of gold,
You trade your wealth for paper, so life can be controlled.

You pay for crimes that make our Nation turn from God to shame,
You've taken Satan's number, as you've traded in your name.

You've given government control to those who do you harm,
So they can padlock churches, and steal the family farm.

And keep our country deep in debt, put men of God in jail,
Harass your fellow countryman while corrupted courts prevail.

Your public servants don't uphold the solemn oath they've sworn,
Your daughters visit doctors so children won't be born.

Your leaders ship artillery and guns to foreign shores,
And send your sons to slaughter, fighting other people's wars.

Can you regain your Freedom for which we fought and died?
Or don't you have the courage, or the faith to stand with pride?

Are there no more values for which you'll fight to save?
Or do you wish your children live in fear and be a slave?

Sons of the Republic, arise and take a stand!
Defend the Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land!

Preserve our Republic, and each God-given right!
And pray to God to keep the torch of freedom burning bright!"

As I awoke he vanished, in the mist from whence he came,
His words were true, we are not free, and we have ourselves to blame.

For even now as tyrants trample each God-given right,
We only watch and tremble -- too afraid to stand and fight.

If he stood by your bedside in a dream while you're asleep,
And wonder what remains of your right he fought to keep.

What would be your answer if he called out from the grave?
Is this still the land of the free and home of the brave?

7.21 Last Will and Testament of Jesse Cornish

*"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous."
[Prov. 13:22, Bible, NKJV]*

Last Will and Testament Of Jesse Franklin Cornish

I, Jesse Cornish, being of sound mind. do of my own accord, make this last will, bequeathing all of my earthly possessions as follows:

To my son, Jesse, and my daughter, Candy, I leave all my owned real estate and equities and all my liquid assets in the form of checking, savings, and other money accounts to share and share alike.

To my son, Jesse, I leave my guns, fishing gear, boats and all other personal effects a father would normally pass on to his son.

To my daughter, Candy, I leave the things her mother left. I leave her also certain family treasures, and pieces or collected art described on the attached sheets.

To both my son, Jesse, and my daughter, Candy, I leave my total collection of African art goods. my automobiles. items of jewelry, photographs, music albums, and all household valuables to share and share alike.

To my grandchildren, I leave the faith and hope that your parents will pass on to you whatever is left of this bequest on their demise. And to this I pray that they will add their lot. The bequests I have named appear in the will that is to be probated. It is already in the hands of my lawyers who will see it through for you.

In your own safe-deposit boxes, where you found this private copy is a sealed letter addressed to each of you. You may open it now. Inside you will find specific instructions leading you to the location of special forms of assets I have secured and left for you. This wealth may well be the only thing of real value I have to pass on to you.

It is in the form of gold and silver coins and bullion. Nobody knows I bought it, there is no record of them, and nobody knows where they are except you today.

I did not buy it to speculate. I bought it to get out of paper assets and to preserve capital.

The bullion coins are worth five times what I paid for them and some of the numismatic coins have appreciated over 6000 percent in the last ten years. As the next inflationary cycle reaches double digit, their values will also double.

The numismatic, rare coins along with their certification are in the packets here that bear your names. In your names also are these storage receipts from the warehouses in Montreal and Dallas. They represent the numerous pieces of fine ivory and ebony art carvings I brought out of Africa over the years. You may claim them in person at any time. All of these items are in demand and maintain high liquidity.

I depart this life with the prayer that you will have the foresight and self discipline to leave it as it is until this nation regains fiscal sanity. When that finally comes about, there will be complete monetary reform.

Your gold, silver, and ivory will buy this new form of currency and could well be your only hope for financial survival. When I purchased the uncirculated coins to put away for you, I was afraid and didn't buy enough. Now I see they have provided the highest appreciation of all, and any further additions to this private part of my bequests to you will include more of the same. It grieves me to inform you that I have also passed on to you a "Legacy of Debt."

My generation found a way to lead the good life by borrowing from yours. We have lived out the last thirty years in a credit "dream world" of luxury and affluence and monetized the massive debt by offering the next two generations as collateral. The material wealth I leave to you will not even begin

to pay your share of the bill we ran up during your lifetime and it will haunt you and cause you to ask, "How could my dad do this?"

Please know it was not what I did, but rather, what I failed to do. I just didn't bother to get personally involved in the affairs of government at any level.

I filled my days to earn large sums of dollars and spent too many nights celebrating when I did. Like millions of others, I stood by as inept elected officials bought votes with your money and changed America from a capitalistic, free enterprise nation to a land ever-approaching mandated socialism.

The conventional investments I planned for your future failed the break-even point years ago. Savings, common stocks, and money funds were tied to the shrinking dollar and eroded away with inflation and taxes, just as they will when this economy turns around to monetize the most massive debt in history.

Over the past 15 years, most of my income was taken away in taxes to finance the enormous bureaucracy that now has a strangle hold on every aspect of our economy.

Even as I write this. I see the vultures circling -waiting to pick apart the probated portion of this will that was already riddled with taxes as I tried to keep it alive.

My final prayer is that you will use my shortcomings as a warning light to guide your way. And that you will try to find forgiveness in your hearts for the things I failed to do.

Get involved. Help get America back into the hands of the earners and the producers.

From my generation you have learned that you cannot feed and house the whole world. You also learned that the nation's banks do not deserve blind faith. 60 of them failed this past year and 750 more are in trouble with assets represented by over-extended credit.

Don't be afraid of what lies out there ahead, and don't ever feel guilty about what you earned yourself. Don't let elected officials give it away to the plunderers for the sake of re-election and self enrichment.

When the day comes for you to retire, the Social Security program will be bankrupt and gone. I paid into it for nearly forty years but never withdrew a dime.

There is an automatic \$275 burial fee you could withdraw for my funeral expenses. I have already designated funds to cover this so please turn it down and afford me the last dignity of paying my own way out.

In everlasting love,

Your dad,

Jesse Cornish

Jesse F. Cornish

State of Minnesota
County of Hennepin

Signed, sealed and delivered by Jesse F. Cornish this 17th day of November, 1980

Family Constitution, version 1.30

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<http://famguardian.org>

7.22 My Country?

Is the country described below the type of place you would be proud to call your home and your country? Is it still the “land of the free and home of the brave?” We don’t think so. Instead, our government steals our money, uses it to subsidize failure and socialism, and then asks for yet more money to correct the problems that such failed policies produce. Any civilization that subsidizes and encourages failure and irresponsibility and decadence on the scale and of the kind described below is doomed to certain self destruction. The question is not if our society will collapse, but how long, unless we mend our ways, repent for our sins, and engage ourselves politically to force change and capitalism once again.

*I come for visit, get treated regal,
So I stay, who care I illegal?
I cross border, poor and broke,
Take bus, see employment folk.*

*Nice man treat me good in there,
Say I need to see welfare.
Welfare say, "You come no more,
We send cash right to your door."*

*Welfare checks, they make you wealthy,
Medicaid it keep you healthy!
By and by, I got plenty money,
Thanks to you, American dummy.*

*Write to friends in motherland,
Tell them come as fast as you can.
They come in rags and Chebby trucks,
I buy big house with welfare bucks.*

*They come here, we live together,
More welfare checks, it gets better!
Fourteen families they moving in,
But neighbor's patience wearing thin.*

*Finally, white guy moves away,
Now I buy his house, and then I say,
"Find more aliens for house to rent."
And in the yard I put a tent.*

*Send for family (they just trash),
But they, too, draw the welfare cash!
Everything is mucho good,
And soon we own the neighborhood.*

*We have hobby--it's called breeding,
Welfare pay for baby feeding.
Kids need dentist? Wife need pills?
We get free! We got no bills!*

*American crazy! He pay all year,
To keep welfare running here.*

*We think America darn good place!
Too darn good for the white man race.*

*If they no like us, they can go,
Got lots of room in Mexico.*

SEND THIS TO EVERY AMERICAN TAXPAYER YOU KNOW.

7.23 Grateful Slave

We downloaded the poem below off the internet. Replace “Master” with “IRS” and “Federal Reserve” and you will know what the point of this book is all about. Our public servants have sold out our country chasing after the almighty dollar. We have become slaves of debt and slaves of the IRS and the Federal Reserve in the process.

GRATEFUL SLAVE

*I am a grateful slave.
My master is a good man.
He gives me food, shelter, work and other things.
All he requires in return is that I obey him.
I am told he has the power to control my life.
I look up to him, and wish that I were so powerful.
My master must understand the world better than I,
because he was chosen by many others for his respected position.
I sometimes complain, but fear I cannot live without his help.
He is a good man.
My master protects my money from theft, before and after he takes half of it.
Before taking his half, he says only he can protect my money.
After taking it, he says it is still mine.
When he spends my money, he says I own the things he has bought.
I don't understand this, but I believe him.
He is a good man.
I need my master for protection, because others would hurt me.
Or, they would take my money and use it for themselves.
My master is better than them:
When my master takes my money, I still own it.
The things he buys are mine.
I cannot sell them, or decide how they are used, but they are mine.
My master tells me so, and I believe him.
He is a good man.
My master provides free education for my children.
He teaches them to respect and obey him and all future masters they will have.
He says they are being taught well; learning things they will need to know in the future.
I believe him.
He is a good man.
My master cares about other masters, who don't have good slaves.
He makes me contribute to their support.
I don't understand why slaves must work for more than one master, but my master says it is necessary.
I believe him.
He is a good man.
Other slaves ask my master for some of my money.
Since he is good to them as he is to me, he agrees.
This means he must take more of my money; but he says this is good for me.
I ask my master why it would not be better to let each of us keep our own money.
He says it is because he knows what is best for each of us.*

We believe him.
He is a good man.
My master tells me:
Evil masters in other places are not as good as he; they threaten our comfortable lifestyle and peace.
So, he sends my children to fight the slaves of evil masters.
I mourn their deaths, but my master says it is necessary.
He gives me medals for their sacrifice, and I believe him.
He is a good man.
Good masters sometimes have to kill evil masters, and their slaves.
This is necessary to preserve our way of life; to show others that our version of slavery is the best.
I asked my master:
Why do evil masters' slaves have to be killed, along with their evil master?
He said: "Because they carry out his evil deeds."
"Besides, they could never learn our system; they have been indoctrinated to believe that only their master is good."
My master knows what is best.
He protects me and my children.
He is a good man.
My master lets me vote for a new master, every few years.
I cannot vote to have no master, but he generously lets me choose between two candidates he has selected.
I eagerly wait until election day, since voting allows me to forget that I am a slave.
Until then, my current master tells me what to do.
I accept this.
It has always been so, and I would not change tradition.
My master is a good man.
At the last election, about half the slaves were allowed to vote.
The other half had broken rules set by the master, or were not thought by him to be fit.
Those who break the rules should know better than to disobey!
Those not considered fit should gratefully accept the master chosen for them by others.
It is right, because we have always done it this way.
My master is a good man.
There were two candidates.
One received a majority of the vote - about one-fourth of the slave population.
I asked why the new master can rule over all the slaves, if he only received votes from one-fourth of them?
My master said: "Because some wise masters long ago did it that way."
"Besides, you are the slaves; and we are the master."
I did not understand his answer, but I believed him.
My master knows what is best for me.
He is a good man.
Some slaves have evil masters.
They take more than half of their slaves' money and are chosen by only one-tenth, rather than one-fourth, of their slaves.
My master says they are different from him.
I believe him.
He is a good man.
I asked if I could ever become a master, instead of a slave.
My master said, "Yes, anything is possible."
"But first you must pledge allegiance to your present master, and promise not to abandon the system that made you a slave."
I am encouraged by this possibility.
My master is a good man.
He tells me slaves are the real masters, because they can vote for their masters.
I do not understand this, but I believe him.
He is a good man; who lives for no other purpose than to make his slaves happy.
I asked if I could be neither a master nor a slave.
My master said, "No, you must be one or the other."
"There are not other choices."
I believe him.

He knows best.

He is a good man.

I asked my master how our system is different, from those evil masters.

He said: "In our system, masters work for the slaves."

No longer confused, I am beginning to accept his logic.

Now I see it!

Slaves are in control of their masters, because they can choose new masters every few years.

When the masters appear to control the slaves in between elections, it is all a grand delusion!

In reality, they are carrying out the slaves' desires.

For if this were not so, they would not have been chosen in the last election.

How clear it is to me now!

I shall never doubt the system again.

My master is a good man.

7.24 Economics 101

Suppose that every day 10 men go to a restaurant for dinner. The bill for all ten comes to \$100. If it was paid the way we pay our taxes, the first four men would pay nothing; the fifth would pay \$1; the sixth would pay \$3; the seventh \$7; the eighth \$12; the ninth \$18. The tenth man, the richest, would pay \$59.

The 10 men ate dinner in the restaurant every day and seemed quite happy with the arrangement until the owner threw them a curve. "Since you are all such good customers", he said, "I'm going to reduce the cost of your daily meal by \$20." Now, dinner for the 10 only costs \$80.

The first four are unaffected. They still eat for free. Can you figure out how to divvy up the \$20 savings among the remaining six so that everyone gets his fair share? The men realize that \$20 divided by 6 is \$3.33, but if they subtract that from everybody's share, then the fifth man and the sixth man would end up being paid to eat their meal. The restaurant owner suggested that it would be fair to reduce each man's bill by roughly the same amount, and he proceeded to work out the amounts each should pay. Now, the fifth man paid nothing, the sixth pitched in \$2, the seventh paid \$5, the eighth paid \$9, the ninth paid \$12, leaving the tenth man, the richest, with a bill of \$52 instead of \$59.

Outside the restaurant, the men began to compare their savings. "I only got a dollar out of the \$20," complained the sixth man, pointing to the tenth, "and he got \$7!" "Yeah, that's right," exclaimed the fifth man.

"I only saved a dollar, too. It's unfair that he got seven times more than me!"

"That's true," shouted the seventh man.

"Why should he get \$7 back when I got only \$2? The wealthy get all the breaks!"

"Wait a minute," yelled the first four men in unison. "We didn't get anything at all. The system exploits the poor." The nine men surrounded the tenth and beat him up. The next night he didn't show up for dinner, so the nine sat down and ate without him. But when it came time to pay the bill, they discovered something important. They were \$52 short!

And that, boys, girls, college instructors and assorted totalitarian democrats, is how America's tax system works. The people who pay the highest taxes get the most benefit from a tax reduction. Tax

them too much, attack them for being wealthy, and they just may not show up at the table any more. There are lots of good restaurants in Switzerland and the Caribbean.

8. SIN AND DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORS

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Sin and dysfunctional behaviors are defined as abnormal or self-defeating behaviors which damage our best interests and our relationships with the people around us. They also invariably hurt other people in some way. This chapter describes what happens to us and our relationships with other people when we don't follow the rest of this Family Constitution and ignore God's glorious plan for the family found in the Bible. It also addresses how to deal with people who are sinning or hurting us. The topic of sin and dysfunctional behaviors appears as a separate chapter because these behaviors adversely impact all of our relationships, including family, husband-wife, parent-child, and employer-employee, and our friendships as well. The most frequent type of damage that results to these relationships from sin and dysfunctional behaviors is isolation of us from the people around us. When we habitually undertake sin and dysfunctional behaviors, the people around us are inclined to want to avoid us because we are just too difficult to deal with or are not available to interact with them routinely. You might say that a person who acts in sinful or dysfunctional ways is "a high maintenance individual." Unfortunately, this isolation further reinforces or encourages the worsening of sinful and dysfunctional behaviors. This is because "*an idle or isolated mind is the devil's workshop*". For instance, if we are an alcoholic and are consequently irrational and verbally abusive most of the time, then our friends and loved ones will naturally want to avoid us. Their avoidance of us will give us more free time and more incentive to undertake even more dysfunctional behaviors to occupy our increased discretionary time. Isolation in this case just conditions us to be more selfish, which is harmful.

The main types of harmful consequences that sin and dysfunctional behaviors can produce include those listed below. Note that these are simply symptoms that there are sin and dysfunctional behaviors in our lives that need to be dealt with. The more serious the problem the more serious the sin or dysfunction is that is causing it. The symptoms are listed in decreasing order of seriousness:

1. Murder (which violates the ten commandments)
2. Divorce
3. Commission of crime, including robbery, theft, embezzlement, kidnapping, assault
4. Frequent or recurring anger over some issue (which destroys our friendships, because the Bible says we should not make friends with an angry man)
5. Arguments or conflicts in relationships
6. Emotional or verbal abuse (which by the way is also a sin or dysfunctional behavior)
7. Problems with communication
8. Discouragement.
9. Depression.
10. Suicidal tendencies.
11. Self mutilation, including:
 - 11.1. Tattooing.
 - 11.2. Body piercing.
 - 11.3. Drug abuse.
 - 11.4. Gluttony.
 - 11.5. Excessive partying.
 - 11.6. Sexual promiscuity leading to venereal disease.

Sin and dysfunctional behaviors are things that we would be best to try diligently to eliminate from daily life in order to live a happier life. However, establishing new habits and techniques for dealing with our problems effectively can be difficult because of the inertia built up by our upbringing as a child. Along these lines, the best book we have ever read is a book by Stephen R. Covey called *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. We highly recommend this book for people who need more

tools for dealing with their problems. The following techniques are a sampling of some of the many techniques we recommend to eliminate sin and the dysfunctional behaviors that cause us to sin and hurt the people around us. They are listed in descending order of importance:

1. Reading the Bible (see John 3:31-32).
2. Prayer to allow the Holy Spirit to influence our lives for positive change.
3. Love and encouragement, not judgment or criticism, from our spouse and other family members who are part of the “family system”.
4. Personal accountability and responsibility to someone we trust who is outside of the relationships that are affected by our behaviors and who won’t personally benefit by eliminating the dysfunctional behaviors. This will help them to view our situation more objectively and unselfishly and prevent them from being dogmatic or pushy with us, which will discourage us from improving. Such a person might be a counselor, a pastor, a close friend, or a distant family member.
5. Journaling to monitor changes in behavior patterns and help us analyze our behaviors to improve them.
6. Frequent social interaction. We need to interact regularly and positively with the people around us as a way to validate our worth and the contribution we can make. This has the affect of improving our self-esteem so we won’t want to adopt self-destructive behaviors.
7. Friendships
8. The problem solving techniques identified in section 3.1.4: Dealing with Personal Problems Effectively.

8.1 Sin Defined

Exactly what are we talking about when we say we have committed sin? Most believers understand that there are sins of commission (the comittal act) and sins of omission (the continuous course of not doing the will of God) (James 4:7). That is, we as believers can sin by doing certain acts as we can sin by not doing certain other acts. However, both types of sin can be defined alike. Sin is best understood as:

The Greek term: Hamartia--missing of the mark (occurs 173 times in the New Testament).

- Conscious/concrete wrongdoing--against God
- Lawlessness--against God
- A deed--against God
- An act--against God
- An attitude--against God
- A thought--against God
- State of being--against God
- A condition--against God
- A practice--against God

Sin can also be understood to mean: To commit an injustice, to deal unjustly, to injure, and to live in unrighteousness. Sin is that which defies morals or decency. In 1 John, sin is seen as the opposite of love (1 John 3:1-10). Sin is sometimes seen as unseemly, unspeakable or fraudulent. Sin harms the

order of the world. Sin can also mean the neglect of one's duties towards God. In one sense, to commit sin is to be "godless." When we sin, we effectively turn our backs on God.

8.2 Sin as Spiritual Addiction/Slavery

You will note that the majority of behaviors described in this chapter fall under the Christian category of "sin." For most of the sections of this chapter, the Bible classifies the behavior as sinful. Jesus reminded us in John 8:34 that "*Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.*" Slavery is a situation where we are forced or compelled to do a thing. The result is a learned or acquired obsession to do the thing we are a slave to. That is why so many of the behaviors described in this chapter have obsessions or compulsions at their root. In addition to diagnosing the problem, Jesus also prescribed treatment for the problem of sin and obsessions in John 8:31-32: "*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" If we learn His word (the Bible) and communion with our Father regularly through a personal relationship and prayer, then we will know the truth and be free from the obsession to do sin. The apostle Paul confirmed that God's prescription frees us from being slaves of sin in Romans 8:2: "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*"

We can become spiritually addicted to sin the same way we can become physically addicted to narcotics or alcohol. By habitually committing sin or habitually consuming alcohol or injecting narcotics into our bodies, we become equally "addicted." In both cases of addiction, it is the identical process. The abusive use of drugs and alcohol produce an addiction to those substances. Likewise, habitual sin produces addiction to that particular sin. The only difference is one form of addition is physical (alcohol or narcotics) and the other is spiritual (sin). However, choosing to habitually commit sin (whatever form it may take) is no less deadly than actual physical addiction. In fact, the addiction to sin is far more deadly. Sin can be the deadly narcotic we inject into our souls that leads to the worst kind of death which is spiritual death. In the 60's and 70's the expression "speed kills" was a popular slogan meant to deter the use of illegal drugs among our young people. Today the church needs a similar slogan----sin kills!

For example, I sometimes wonder how much mental illness is caused by habitual or addictive sin. How much physical sickness and disease is the result of sin? According to God's Word sin can play a big part in why we suffer both physically and mentally, not to mention spiritually. "Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin." (Psalm 38:3,17). In fact, let us look at the complete list of the effects of sin according to the psalmist (Psalm 38). You may be shocked at this list of causes and effects. The psalmist said the cause was sin. The same psalmist then listed the effects.

Psalm 38:

1. Sin results in the Lord's "rebuke."
2. Sin results in the Lord's "anger."
3. Sin results in the Lord's "discipline."
4. Sin results in "the Lord's arrows have pierced me...."
5. Sin results in "your hand has come down upon me."
6. Sin results in "no health in my body..."
7. Sin results in "my bones have no soundness."
8. Sin results in "my guilt has overwhelmed me."

9. Sin results in "too heavy a burden to bear."
10. Sin results in "my loathsome wounds fester."
11. Sin results in "I am bowed down and brought very low."
12. Sin results in "I go about mourning."
13. Sin results in "my back is filled with searing pain."
14. Sin results in "no health in my body."
15. Sin results in "I am feeble."
16. Sin results in "I am utterly crushed."
17. Sin results in "I groan in anguish."
18. Sin results in sightings, pounding heart, failing strength, dimness of eye.

Then in the New Testament the church is further earned about sin at the Lord's Supper (Communion). Paul wrote, "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 11:27-30). We understand the phrase "have fallen asleep" to mean physical death in this instance.

8.3 Types of Sin

One interesting fact about sin is that in Spanish, the word "sin" means "without". We think that the thing that people who sin are "without" is God! Sin happens when there is a deficiency or lack in our lives of Godliness and all the things that make God the loving, good, righteous, omnipotent, and glorious being that He is! Sin was the reason Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden of Eden and why there is death and disease and suffering in the world. The first or "original sin" was disobedience by Eve to God's commandment not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With that knowledge acquired through sinful disobedience comes an awareness of all the nasty things that go wrong in our lives when we ignore God's commands, as we will cover in great detail in each of the following sections.

8.3.1 Abortion

Abortion is not specifically mentioned in the bible as a sin, but there are indirect references to it in the following scriptures:

"Though shalt not murder." Exodus 20:13

"8 Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die.

9. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and the needy."
[Prov. 31:8-9]

"23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

26 *Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and disk, that the outside of them may be clean also.*"
[Matt. 23:23-26]

Based on the above, we would argue that abortion is murder, and that not only should we as Christians not do it, but based on Prov. 31:8-9, we should open our mouth and rebuke the behavior publicly in accordance with Lev. 19:17, Prov. 24:25, and Prov. 28:23. Another implication of the above is that before we are ever going to convince the world that they shouldn't condone or allow the murder that is abortion, we Christians, the salt and light of the world, need to clean out our own house first and end the practice of abortion within our congregations. Sadly, however, many Christians take the attitude that abortion is not their problem or responsibility. Even more tragic is the fact that one out of every five women who abort in the U.S. identifies herself as a born-again/evangelical Christian.

Here's an example of why abortion is not only wrong and hypocritical, but puts the foundations of our society on a very slippery downward slope indeed:

"Lets consider the case of two mothers. Both of them are eight months pregnant with healthy babies who would be viable outside of the womb and would survive birth at the time if they were born prematurely.

One mother is driving down a two lane road one night and a drunk driver swerves into her lane and hits her head on. She is hospitalized and the baby is killed while it is still inside of her. The mother presses criminal charges against the drunk driver for murder and/or manslaughter. The drunk driver is prosecuted for manslaughter and is sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Now lets consider mother number two, who also has an eight month old baby and who decides she doesn't want the baby but refuses to put it up for adoption and give it to a needy and willing couple. Instead, the mother goes to an abortion clinic to have the baby aborted with the blessing and encouragement of the state and of politicians like Al Gore. The doctor then reaches into the mother's womb and pulls out the baby by the legs until his head is the only thing left in the birth canal. The baby's legs and arms are kicking wildly as he tries to get air. Then the doctor (who by the way took the Hippocratic oath to always protect and respect life and not destroy it) inserts a pair of scissors into the bottom read of the baby's skull to open a hole. He pokes a vacuum curette through the hole and sucks the baby's brains out. Then he pulls the rest of the baby's lifeless body out through the birth canal and throws the body out with the trash. This is called a partial birth abortion, which incidentally is legal in some states.

In the first instance, the drunk driver was prosecuted for manslaughter because he was responsible for killing a baby against the mother's will. He is condemned by his family and friends for the act, and he serves a prison sentence and has plenty of time to feel the guilt for what he has done, even though he never intended to kill anyone and the death was accidental.

In the second instance, the mother premeditated the end of her baby's life, paid someone money (like a hired killer) to terminate the baby's life, and ended that life brutally and in cold blood. There isn't a more violent or inhumane way to end a life than a partial birth abortion. The doctor who killed the baby in the second instance not only wasn't prosecuted criminally for his actions, he actually made money doing it with the full sanction and blessing of the state! Not only that, but the doctor doing the killing never even gave the chance for the baby to demonstrate that it was viable or look it in the eye as it sucked its brains out. That's why he left the head in the birth canal as he sucked the brains out: So he wouldn't have to watch the crying baby as he killed it and instead

could increase the chance that it would suffocate before it came out the birth canal. That's murder too. The other reason he did this was because once the baby leaves the womb, then it is protected legally from being killed.

The only difference between these two scenarios is that of the mother's wishes. In the first instance, the mother didn't want her baby killed. In the second instance, she did. Are we then supposed to assume that murder or manslaughter is 'OK' as long as mom's do it or want to do it? Incidentally, conception takes two people. Why is not the father's wishes regarded in this matter? Shouldn't the mother at least be required to seek the consent of the father also?"

After society sanctions abortions as it does now, what is next? Are we going to put society or some politician in charge of deciding whether to end a life because it is not "cost-effective"? Are we going to decide that the state's wishes, like that of pregnant mothers, is more important than the right of liberty and self-determination for our old people? When they are hospitalized and get too expensive, are we going to let doctors decide to exterminate old or indigent patients when they are not covered by insurance and need expensive medical care? Our society is headed for **BIG** trouble if we let this happen, and the trouble starts when we condone abortion.

An interesting consequence of the abortion we have described above is that it causes the birthrate to go down, which means ultimately that we have fewer or no young people to carry the torch into our future. The consequence is a graying population that continues to get older, and who have no younger people to support them or help them. Ironically, these older people are deceived into thinking that the state will take care of them with the Social (In)Security program, which everyone knows is going bankrupt. It used to be that the young within the family unit took care of the old and vice versa. Now that we have subverted and usurped the role of the family with idolatrous social programs like social security and medicare, older adults are leaning more on the government and less on the children they aren't having. They are isolating themselves in their relative affluence and escaping accountability to what used to be their family and replacing it with self-indulgence and idleness and slavery to the government. When these same self-indulgent abortionistic adults get too old to take care of themselves and become wards of the state, and when the state determines that they can't support these older Americans because all the young people they should have had but aborted instead aren't in the workforce to pay their social security and Medicare, then its a foregone conclusion that euthenasia will be the ultimate result later on. Sin begets more sin, as they say, and death multiplies.

Keep in mind, however, that this whole nightmarish scenario all started with sexual promiscuity and a "mistake" that turned later on into a murder to cover up the mistake. We think a much more responsible approach to sexuality for people with a propensity to be both selfish, promiscuous, and murderous, is for these people to have themselves sterilized, because selfish and lustful and murderous people don't make very good parents anyway.

Another thing we would like to point out is that performing abortions earlier in the pregnancy using a drug or pill is just as evil. RU486, the abortion drug, for instance, is nothing but a "human insecticide" being peddled by satanic brokers of death and murder. Paul alludes to this in the following scripture:

"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]

Incidentally, the lying starts with the very terminology used to describe the abominable act of abortion. When abortionists describe themselves, they refer to themselves as "Pro Choice". When they describe Christians, they refer to them as "Pro Life", almost implying that if they are opposed by Christians, then those Christians must be anti-choice or coercive or dogmatic. But isn't abortion about the worst kind of coercion of one human being towards the other--murder? Instead, abortionists ought to truthfully refer to themselves as the other part of the duality they use in describing Christians: "Pro Death". But of course, being sinful, the abortionists use their very language as a way to hide from the guilt and condemnation they obviously feel about their sin.

For more information about this subject, refer the to following rather graphic and eye-opening website:

<http://www.abortionno.com>

This site has a wealth of information on both sides of the abortion issue.

8.3.2 Adultery

Adultery is condemned by God as sin in the Bible as part of the Ten Commandments.

“You shall not commit adultery.” Exodus 20:14

Adultery can be caused or at least encouraged by any one of the following behaviors or attitudes. Note that the list below is not meant to be all inclusive, but is instead meant to cover the most common causes in descending order of importance:

1. Our marital partner refusing to submit at all sexually or not submitting often enough. If we can't get our needs met sexually from within the relationship and yet we are sworn to be faithful to our spouse, then there are incentives for us to pursue clandestine affairs.
2. Dissatisfaction with the physical features of our current spouse. Perhaps our spouse has gotten fat since we met them, or they may have suffered from an accident or disease that has left them with some kind of physical deformity.
3. Communication or empathy problems with one or both spouses. Spouses who either refuse to communicate or who lack respect and politeness in communicating make us feel defensive or evasive. These types of spouses can cause us to seek companionship form others who appreciate us more.

A man who is being unfaithful to his wife and now wants to leave her for this other woman will tell her four things:

1. We never had a marriage to begin with. We should never have married. In other words, he turns his abandonment into an annulment. It never should have happened. I never loved you. We never had a marriage. What he is really doing is sources of guilt, and there are four sources of guilt that he has to deal with.
2. This may look hard for you now but it is better for you in the long run. For us to live in this kind of conflict isn't good.
3. It's hard for the kids now, but they are going to be better off too, because children should not be raised in an atmosphere where there is no love, and it's better for them.

4. I've prayed about this and God says it's OK. Oh, and what an abomination that is.

When you get to that point, what more can you say. God himself has endorsed this. So he has taken the four sources of guilt and set them aside. And he may believe it himself, but God doesn't believe it. It's a lie and he has deceived himself.

8.3.2.1 Damaging affects of Adultery

Some of the damaging affects of adultery on the family unit can include:

1. Divorce. The Bible authorizes Christians to divorce spouses who have committed adultery. The bad affects of divorce include:
 - 1.1. Children growing up in single parent households without dads around and not having proper role models for developing healthy relationships with the opposite sex.
 - 1.2. Moms having to support children as single-parents with a low income.
 - 1.3. Inadequate supervision of children in the household because of the absence of one of the parents in the household.
2. Excommunication from one's church. The Catholic faith excommunicates members for either adultery or divorce.
3. Infecting one's spouse with damaging or fatal venereal diseases acquired by having sex with other partners, often without their knowledge.
4. Mistrust and suspicion. If we lie or try to conceal affairs, this causes marital conflict and undermines communication in the marriage.

Adultery can very quickly destroy marriages if it is not dealt with firmly but fairly using "tough love". For instance, Dr. James Dobson in his book entitled *Love Must Be Tough*, stated that adultery is a type of sin that is so severe in its consequences to the stability of the family that spouses who are affected by it should use behavior modification techniques and be very dogmatic about incentivizing and motivating their spouse to eliminate this behavior. We concur with these findings.

Not only does adultery destroy marriages, it destroys churches. For instance, when the adulterer is a pastor, often that pastor must resign from the ministry and chaos in the church is the result. Also, the people going to that church become discouraged by the actions of the leader and may stumble in their faith and quit attending church because of this occasion.

The lives of children can similarly be destroyed by adultery after the divorce breaks up. Their self-esteem can be damaged permanently by adultery or divorce. When children see the adulterous parent abandon the family, they sometimes begin to believe that there was something wrong with them and that they weren't worthy of the love of that parent. This leads to despair and self-destructive behaviors that can drive a child into a miserable life of unhappiness. It also undermines their faith in marriage as an institution and makes them reluctant to pursue marriage when they become adults.

8.3.2.2 Techniques for preventing and dealing with adultery

Some of the techniques for preventing or dealing with adulterous behavior include:

1. We can schedule regular weekly days called “Husband’s night” or “Wives night” in which our partner gets whatever they desire sexually for the whole evening. See section 4.7 (Marriage Event Schedule) and section 4.8.5 (Sex and Affection) for further details on this idea.
2. Spouses can ask each other if they are satisfied sexually with their partner. They should focus on being creative and interested sexual partners with their spouse, regardless of their feelings about them.
3. We can try to make ourselves more attractive and dress or behave in ways that our spouse enjoys. However, we should also try to encourage our spouse if they do this and avoid comparing them to others, because this will create anxiety and damage their self-esteem.
4. We can make ourselves always available for and interested in communicating with our spouse. See section 4.8.4 (Communication) on some ideas for enhancing communication.
5. Show empathy, interest, and concern for our spouse at all times. Ask them how they are feeling and try to help them be happier.
6. We should live our lives as Christians as though there is no such thing as a secret. We should seek fellowship and personal relationships with godly members of our same sex who will hold us accountable and help encourage us to take the right path when we are tempted. This means becoming part of a home fellowship, for instance.
7. Each spouse should ask the other spouse weekly and get a response to the following seven questions:
 - 7.1. Have you been with a member of the opposite sex anywhere this week that might be seen as compromising?
 - 7.2. Have any of your financial dealings lacked integrity?
 - 7.3. Have you exposed yourself to any sexually explicit material?
 - 7.4. Have you spent adequate time in bible study and prayer?
 - 7.5. Have you given priority time to your family.
 - 7.6. Have you fulfilled the mandates of your responsibilities?
 - 7.7. Have you just lied to me?

8.3.3 Anger¹

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
[Prov. 16:32]

Anger is the one deadly sin we all try to justify. We like to think that there are some circumstances in which anger is permissible. We even go so far as to make anger a defensible reaction to certain situations.

A man comes home unexpectedly and surprises his wife in bed with another man. In a fit of anger, he rushes to the bureau, pulls out a gun and shoots them both. In such circumstances, we sympathize with murder and call the killing of two people an excusable “crime of passion.”

A fourteen-year-old girl is raped and traumatized for life. The assailant is tried and the judge prescribes a suspended sentence. As the rapist leaves the courthouse, he is accosted and stabbed to death by the angry mother of the violated child. We react to the news of this stabbing with a sense that justice has been done. “After all,” we say, “who wouldn’t want to do what she did?”

¹ Portions excerpted from Seven Deadly Sins, Anthony Campolo, Victor Books, 1987, ISBN 0-89693-533-7, pp. 54-73.

We all know that Jesus said, “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matt. 5:22,KJV). But how many of us know that the phrase “without a cause,” was added by the medieval scholar Erasmus? The Revised Standard Version and the New International Version of the Bible do not include the phrase. Erasmus was so desirous of justifying certain forms of anger that he was willing to change the words of Jesus in order to make his case. Jesus is harder on anger than Erasmus was, or, for that matter, than most of us might be. Jesus put anger in the same category as murder. If that seems harsh, just consider the consequences of anger in the lives of people and in the history of the world. Anger causes murder, provokes torture, leads to wars and a host of other cruel and diabolical crimes too ugly to mention. Anger stimulates spiteful actions that go far beyond retributive justice and usually result in the suffering of innocent people. It knows no limits as it leads to vengeance.

8.3.3.1 The Causes of Anger

Anger is an emotional response to being unjustly humiliated. It involves a loss of self-esteem. The angry person feels outraged at what has been done to him/her and seeks to punish the perpetrator of the injustice. Vengeance, rather than justice, is sought. The angry person is carried away by the emotion and usually behaves in ways which can only be considered excessive.

A recent news story in the Philadelphia area told of a man who killed a driver who cut in front of him on the expressway. The murderer explained that traffic had slowed as it was funneled into a single lane. He claimed that he had waited in line for more than a quarter of an hour until he could begin to enter into the flow of traffic. Just as he was about to do so, another car passed him on the shoulder of the highway and cut in front of his automobile. As though that were not enough, the driver laughed and made an obscene gesture at him. It was too much for him to handle, and when traffic later stopped because of congestion, he removed the gun from his glove compartment, got out of his car, walked up to the side of the car of the man who had taunted him and shot him to death. The injustice of what had happened was bad enough, but being laughed at and taunted was more humiliation than he could tolerate.

When I was ten years old, my sister took me to a rodeo show at the Philadelphia Convention Hall. I loved the show, and to add to my joy, my sister bought me a felt cowboy hat from a vendor who assured this would be bronco that the hats he was selling were straight from Texas.

The next day I proudly wore my hat so that all the kids in the neighborhood could admire it. Unexpectedly, an older boy who was almost twice my size grabbed my precious hat from my head and ran off with it. Hysterically I chased him, pleading with him to give me back what was mine. Suddenly, he stopped, turned on me, pushed me to the ground and held me down by sitting on my chest.

Then, for no reason except to be mean, he tore my hat in half. As I lay there helpless and in tears, I experienced an unforgettable surge of rage. The adrenalin that the anger generated gave me almost superhuman strength. I pushed my enemy off me, leaped on his back as he tried to escape, and began to scratch his face. He fell to the ground, and his head accidentally hit the curb. He was unconscious, but I did not care. With wild viciousness, I started to kick him, and if two men had not rushed to stop me, I might have kicked him to death. My anger came not simply from the injustice that had been dealt to me, but from humiliation and loss of self-esteem.

8.3.3.2 Anger in the Home

The family provides the context for most expressions of anger. This is true for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that in the home we feel less restraint from society. The family seems to be a separate world, distinct from the rest of our lives. We sense that we can express ourselves with our families without losing their affection and support. Most of us seem to think that it's okay to do things at home which we would never do outside.

Those most likely to exhibit outrageous behavior in the home are teenage children. I have been amazed to observe how young people treat their parents. They not only fail to honor them, but often humiliate them in unthinkable ways.

The problem is frequently most severe with the parent of the same sex as the teenager. Usually mothers (because they are often the most available) have incredibly painful times with their daughters. There are daughters who lash out at their mothers with derogatory names. They seem to feel that being a mother means enduring this kind of verbal abuse. Somehow they feel that their children have a right to emotional catharsis at the expense of their mothers. Seldom do they give any thought to the anguish which their mothers endure as they listen to the children's rantings. Fathers are more likely to be victims of such deplorable behavior from their sons. Young people seldom understand the anger that their parents experience when they are humiliated by those whom they love and for whom they have been willing to sacrifice so much of themselves.

Sometimes, after Christian young people have been off to a church camp or religious weekend retreat, they come home talking "the language of Zion" and, with pious platitudes give testimonies of how their lives have been changed by God. However, none of this has any significance unless it changes the way they act at home. Those who have had genuine conversion experiences will give evidence of their new life in Christ by how they relate to their parents.

As I travel across America and talk to people, I realize how much pent-up anger there is in parents who have been humiliated and dealt with unjustly by their children. Everywhere I go, I sense in parents a repressed rage at children who talk to them in denigrating ways. Such parents feel most helpless when their children are too old to be punished, and so the anger builds up more.

But children are not offenders in the home. Many children are victims of parental offenses and develop deep feelings of anger toward their parents because they feel humiliated by the unjust treatment. The child who is punished publicly often holds a grudge against the parent. Even when punishment is deserved, it should not be carried out where others can watch. To be paddled privately for some wrongdoing might be tolerable, but to be paddled in public seems an unforgivable humiliation.

It is important to remember that anger stems primarily from loss of self-esteem. The Bible gives clear instructions to parents: "do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Surely this prohibits parents from punishing their children in such a way as to cause them unjustifiable embarrassment. Public punishment can have dire consequences, in that the accompanying loss of self-esteem may generate anger that leads to unimaginable evil deeds.

In a society in which divorce is increasingly common, children are often caught in the angry conflicts of their parents. The causes and process of divorce usually generate anger because divorce often holds

a person up to public humiliation. To discover that one's spouse has "cheated" in a marriage is extremely painful; but when that adultery becomes public, the sense of disgrace is even more emotionally devastating. It is a horrible thing to have one's friends and relatives know that his/her spouse prefers another partner. The hurt is intense and the humiliation is often overwhelming. It is not surprising that in such circumstances a person can experience uncontrollable anger.

The divorce process itself is so structured that even those who seek to end a marriage amicably tend to develop deep feelings of anger toward each other. Divorce lawyers may resort to unfair tactics and try to depict the mates of their clients in the worst possible light. Frequently, to gain some advantage in a settlement, a lawyer will bring up ugly behavior from the past which will make the other party seem thoroughly perverted or evil. The humiliation endured in the courtroom can cause abiding anger to seethe in consciousness of the partner who has been so exposed. Unfortunately, the children can end up as the victims of this anger, if their parents use them to get back at each other.

I know of one case in which a parent deliberately violated the visitation rights of his former wife. He refused to have the child ready to be picked up on days when she was entitled to have the child, knowing he could upset her by making her wait half an hour when she came to his house. His anger motivated his meanness and his meanness made his wife increasingly angry. The child who loved both of her parents was torn apart emotionally by their anger toward each other.

8.3.3.3 Reactions to Anger

I know a man whose motto is: "Don't get mad, get even." Anger stimulates a seemingly uncontrollable urge to strike back at the person who has humiliated you or unscrupulously wronged you. Anger generates fantasies of ways to make the offender suffer and repent. Anger stimulates a longing to see the evildoer writhe in psychological, if not physical, agony for the crimes committed.

Edgar Allen Poe's classic tale, "The Cask of Amontillado," tells the story of an Italian nobleman named Montresor who, with infinite patience, premeditated the murder of his friend Fortunato, whose treatment of him he interpreted as injurious and insulting. Montresor anticipated the prospect of revenge with great pleasure and with such control that Fortunato was unaware of his intent until he faced death. In Poe's story, as in the true incident which inspired it, the crime went undiscovered and unpunished. Vengeance was complete, but at what cost to the avenger?

In the somewhat violent high school subculture in which I spent my teenage years, there was a big tough guy who daily extorted money from younger students. It was not enough for him that he took money from boys who could never stand up to his bullying—but, at times, he would tell his victims to beg him to take their money. He got immense pleasure from forcing boys to do this in the presence of their girlfriends and then laughing at their humiliation.

One day at lunchtime, he picked on a boy whose brother was a 225-pound, six feet five-inch center on the basketball team. Halfway through his extortion act, he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned and was greeted by a solid punch to the stomach. In the face of the threat posed by his attacker, the tyrant became a sniveling coward begging not to be hit again. The crowd in the lunchroom roared with approval as the bully was told to get on his knees and beg for mercy. Not only did he do that, but he was forced to go to every other boy in the lunchroom and kiss his shoes. After that, the bully transferred to another school. His public humiliation was more than he could bear. The rest of us were glad that he had gotten a taste of his own medicine. We felt he had it coming.

When Rudolf Eichman, the Nazi war criminal, was captured and put on public display in a cage, we sensed something ugly in the treatment; but we could easily understand the desire of the victims of Aushwitz to seek vengeance on the architect of the Jewish Holocaust.

Most examples of getting even are not so dramatic. I know of a secretary who was severely and, from her point of view, unjustly criticized for the way she did some of her work. Her coworkers all knew that the boss was displeased with her and she sensed that most of them agreed with his opinion. For several days she tried to go to work as though the criticism did not affect her, but it was to no avail. She was continually coming upon colleagues who seemed to suspend their conversation until after she was gone. Several times coworkers referred to the criticisms of the boss in their dealings with her. Eventually, she came to the point where she could no longer endure being put down, and decided to quit. Those in the office were not aware of the fact that essential papers and documents were filed according to a complex system that only she understood. When she left, the office systems were paralyzed because nobody could find anything. They tried to contact her, but she made herself unavailable. With great glee, she relished the confusion of those who had hurt her. Down deep inside she felt the satisfaction of having gotten even.

“‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Rom. 12:19), but few of us are willing to accept that arrangement. After a ten-year-old boy has been pushed into the mud by a nasty classmate, he was told that it was unnecessary to try to get even because God punished evildoers. He responded, “Okay, I’ll give God till Saturday.”

For a variety of reasons, getting even is not a healthy response to anger. First of all, it cheapens and diminishes us. I had a friend who was a doctor in a Third World country ruled by an evil dictator. The ruler wanted to build a new clinic for my friend so that the sick in the village might have a decent place for medical care. My friend was so full of anger against the dictator that he refused to accept the offer. He told me that there was no way he was going to help that evil man look good in the eyes of the townspeople, after all the rotten things he had done. He gave a speech in the village market boldly declaring that his refusal to accept the gift from the nation’s president was his way to “spitting in his face.” My friend failed in his effort to get even. Instead his refusal generated feelings of disgust and disillusionment among the villagers. Their once-respected doctor they now saw as petty and mean, willing to deny them a much-needed medical facility just to satisfy his anger and pride. The attempt at vengeance cheapened my friend and diminished him in the eyes of those he wanted to serve.

One of my reasons for opposing capital punishment is that it diminishes the humanity of those who demand it. When we murder a murderer, we become something less than God intends us to be. Furthermore, vengeance seldom provides us with a sense that justice has been done.

Recently a man who had raped, robbed, and murdered a sixteen-year-old girl was put to death in the electric chair. The dead girl’s father demanded and got the right to be present for the execution. When the ordeal was over, the father was interviewed by a reporter and simply said, “I wanted him to suffer more for what he did. Dying isn’t enough!”

Our acts of vengeance are never enough. The death of a perverted man is not sufficient recompense for the death of a lovely young girl. There is seldom equity in the simple exchange of the life of the murderer for the life of the innocent. Vengeance leaves those who seek it with a sense of having been cheated. It brings a hollow victory. To those who cry, “An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth,” one can offer the response that Gandhi once gave: “Following that philosophy will leave the world filled with blind toothless people.”

God specifically commanded Moses to instruct the people of Israel on the subject of vengeance: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him.. You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:17-18).

There is increasing evidence that the vengeful themselves end up suffering for their desire to get even. Studies exploring the linkage between psychological and physiological conditions are discovering that obsession with vengeance may be a cause of such a diverse array of ailments as arthritis, asthma, and heart disease. The emotions that vengeful people experience often create a chemical imbalance in their bodies that can have dire consequences. I do not mean to suggest that these ailments are always traceable to vengeful emotions; but there is little question among some researchers that vengeful feelings are deleterious to health. As a matter of fact, an entire book has been written about this subject entitled *Anger Kills*, by Redford Williams, M.D., and Virginia Williams, Ph.D., Harper Perennial, 1993, ISBN 0-06-097623-3.

Some people who cannot get even handle their anger by suppressing it. This is the coping mechanism often used by religious people who try to pretend that they have forgotten all about the evildoers and are not going to let themselves be bothered by such people. We religious types often pretend that we are bigger than we really are, and we try to convince others that we have risen above becoming angry when we are publicly wronged. It may be all right to convince others, but we should never deceive ourselves. Usually we are angered and we do want vengeance, but we pretend that things are otherwise. We suppress our anger and keep secret our ugly urge for revenge. In time we think we have forgotten all about what once angered us, but we should know better. We should know that nothing is ever really forgotten. Nothing is put out of our minds completely. We should know that what we suppress from our consciousness is only driven into the “underground” of our subconscious where it will haunt us without hindrance.

Psychologists tell us that the most likely consequence of suppressing anger is depression, and we know that there is a lot of depression around. When we suppress anger, we really unconsciously run it in on ourselves and inner resentments eat away at our psyche, destroying our joy. When anger is turned inward via suppression, we end up hating ourselves and wanting ourselves to experience unhappiness and pain. Ironically, we get what we want and depression grows.

I am not suggesting that all depression results from suppressed anger, but I believe much of it does. This is especially true when the depression seems unfounded. When people tell me that they can find no reason for their depression, I ask them to search for suppressed anger.

As a boy, I was haunted by the phrase in 1 Corinthians that tells us that we may get sick or die if we celebrate Holy Communion without first confessing and getting rid of the sin in our hearts. “Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why so many of you are weak and ill, and some have died” (1 Cor. 11:28-30).

Depth psychology concurs with the awesome truths of the Scriptures. How much depression is caused and how many suicides result when people come to Christ without having dealt with emotions that are too deep to put into words?

However, we must not be overawed by modern psychology, nor be too ready to accept the scientific prescriptions of its would-be healers of troubled souls. Psychiatrists and psychologists are often

wrong. Sometimes their advice is poor. This is certainly true of much of what they say about handling anger. Often the “professionals” suggest that we get rid of our anger by expressing it. They advise us to experience the catharsis that comes from “working out” our anger and frustration. The angry child is given a teddy bear and told to punch it as though it were the parent who has made the child angry. The employee is told to play golf and hit the ball as though it were the boss. The wife is told to tell her husband off and not keep her emotions bottled up inside.

Certainly it is better to punch a teddy bear than a mother, hit a golf ball than a boss, and to scream at one’s husband than to hate one’s self; but there are dangers in expressing anger.

Expressing an emotion often causes us to feel the emotion even more intensely. Those who do loving acts usually feel love all the more. Those who do kind things usually end up feeling kind. And those who express anger usually end up feeling more angry. It may be healthier to express anger than to suppress it, but expressing anger usually intensifies it.

George Herbert Mead, one of America’s foremost sociologists, discovered that what we say and do influences how we feel, as much as how we feel influences what we do. Feelings and actions reinforce each other. There is, according to Mead, interaction between them. We all should know this from experience. Who has not told someone off in a fit of anger, only to find that the expression of anger caused him or her to tremble with even greater rage when all was said and done?

What Mead pronounced in theory, and most of us have learned from experience, was profoundly stated a long time ago by the Apostle James:

For we all make MISTAKES, and if any one makes no mistakes in what he says he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. If we put bits into the mouths of horses that they may obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Look at the ships also; though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!
[James 3:2-5]

James wants us to recognize that what we say in anger can determine our destiny. There are consequences to what we say and to in the expression of anger, and we should weigh these consequences before we take the simplistic advice of those psychotherapists who tell us to do so for our health.

I can think of no more evil way to handle anger than to displace it—in other words, to take out our anger on the innocent. The newspapers these days report regularly on wife-abuse. In case after case, it becomes apparent that the victims of these beatings suffer because of displaced anger.

Men who have been humiliated at work, whose anger stems from their own limitations, and who hate themselves because they have failed to live up to expectations, express their pent-up aggression on those close to them. Usually these innocent and defenseless victims are their wives. And for every story that makes the papers, there are hosts of unreported cases. Angry men, who are unable to strike out at those they believe have wronged them, are dangerous to be around.

Wives are not the only victims of such displaced anger. Sometimes it is taken out on the elderly who are in no position to defend themselves. Often the victims of displaced anger are children, as hospital records clearly indicate. And surprisingly, there seems to be increasing incidence of husband-abuse.

Even if wives do not hit their husbands, many of them find other ways of taking their anger out on them. Wives displace their pent-up anger by lashing out at their husbands verbally.

I knew a woman who always seemed to be scolding her husband and calling him denigrating names. I was amazed as I watched her afflict him with a seemingly endless flow of verbal barbs. One day when I was with him, I asked why he put up with such painful treatment. He responded by telling me that several years before their son had died of cancer and that, as a result of that tragedy, his wife was angry with God. He went on to say, “She can’t take out her anger on God, so I guess she has to take it out on me instead.” He seemed to understand very well why his wife treated him so cruelly.

8.3.3.4 Overcoming Anger

There are constructive and healthy ways of handling anger. Perhaps the following prescriptions will provide some helpful guidance in establishing a Christian approach to overcoming this deadly emotional condition.

First of all, when anger overtakes us, we should take time to reflect. Specifically, we should reflect on the grace which God has shown to us when we have done things that would justify His anger toward us. In one of His parables, Jesus encourages us to take this route of reflection.

Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, “Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.” And out of the pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred dinari; and seizing him by the throat he said, “Pay what you owe.” So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you.” He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?”

[Matt. 18:23-33]

When we think we have a right to be angry, Jesus reminds us that God, who has every right to be angry with us, is willing to remove our wrongs from the record. It is petty of us to make others pay for their wrongdoing when the Heavenly Father has forgiven and forgotten our offenses.

God does not vent His wrath toward us even though we deserve it. Instead He handles His wrath by having it borne by His Son. The Scriptures teach us that the obedience of Jesus manifested in His willingness to obey His Father’s will even to death on the cross served to allay God’s anger toward us. Jesus represented us in His obedient submission to the Father’s will, and because of that, God’s anger toward us is no more. That is the meaning behind Paul’s words:

“Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins”

[Rom. 3:23-25]

An expiation is a gift that overcomes the wrath of someone who is offended. No other gift offered up on behalf of those of us who should have incurred the just anger of God can match what Jesus gave, as He offered Himself up for us all. In light of the love which took Jesus to the cross, there is little justification for our bearing grudges toward those who have angered us.

Someone once told the story of a mountaineer from West Virginia who fell in love with the beautiful daughter of the town preacher. The gruff and tough man one evening looked deeply into the eyes of the preacher's daughter and said, "I love you." It took more courage for him to say those simple words than he had ever had to muster for anything else he had ever done. Minutes passed in silence and then the preacher's daughter said, "I love you too."

The tough mountaineer said nothing except, "Good night." Then he went home, got ready for bed and prayed, "God, I ain't got nothin' against nobody."

When a person is loved, there seems to be little room for anger in his life. Love drives anger out of one's mind and heart, for life is too wonderful to allow anger to creep in and spoil it.

If each of us would reflect on the good news that God loves us, and would be open to His love, we could be transformed into people who "ain't got nothin' against nobody." The first step to overcoming anger is to reflect on what Jesus has done for us and how much He loves us.

Secondly, we must learn that the Bible teaches us that there is justice in God's economy. There is no need for us to seek revenge for wrongs done against us. There is a God who sets things right. Nobody gets away with sin forever.

Even if we did not have the Bible's revelation about our afterlife, we would know it existed—cosmic justice demands it. There must be a place and time, beyond space and time as we know them, where the unrepentant who have hurt people will be made to pay for what they have done. The Bible assures us that there is such a place. Mean people do not get away with their meanness. Corrupt people do not get away with their evil. Oppressors do not get away with what they do to the weak and helpless. Tyrants and petty thieves pay for what they do. In the words of Friedrich Van Logauz:

*Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.*

To those who are oppressed, the Apostle James writes, "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:7-9).

There is no need for us to seethe in anger and seek revenge; in the end, justice will come from God. However, the final Christian resolution to anger comes from deciding to imitate the style of Jesus and doing good for those who have made us angry. What we do influences how we feel, and that means that our feelings can be changed by what we decide to do. In short, there are things we can do to overcome anger. There are ways that anger can be dealt with creatively and biblically. However, when all those ways are analyzed, they can be summed up in one statement: Do good to those who hurt you, or spitefully use you, or do all manner of evil against you.

Victor Frankl, the famous psychoanalyst, was imprisoned in one of Hitler's concentration camps. He was stripped of all his dignity, abused, and tortured. He was starved and forced into slave labor. There

were many in the concentration camp who did not survive, not because they were put into gas chambers, but because they found that survival was intolerable. They were the ones who were eaten up with rage against their oppressors. The humiliation meted out on them by their Nazi dominators could not be resisted, and the overwhelming injustice was too much for them to endure. Therefore, they chose to die. Nobody overtly killed them; they gave up living.

Victor Frankl had another answer which was as old as the Sermon on the Mount. He decided to do good for those who wronged him. His decision was in line with what Jesus asked His followers to do:

And if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.

*You have heard it said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"
[Matt. 5:40-44]*

When his captors asked him to scrub latrines with a toothbrush, he would do it twice. He did it once because he had to and the second time because he willed to. He turned the situation in which he was being humiliated into one in which he willingly served others. By redefining the situation in a positive way, he learned that he could overcome his hatred and anger toward his oppressors.

It is unlikely that we will be placed in circumstances as evil as those experienced by Victor Frankl, But his way of dealing with rage is applicable in all situations. Do for those who make you angry more than they ask of you. Do good for them and serve them.

In my mid-twenties, I served as the pastor of a church. Looking back on those years, I realize that my inexperience and lack of maturity sometimes led me to do things that unnecessarily offended some of my parishioners. On the other hand, there were some people in that church who were not kind to me. One particular woman seemed determined to have me ousted from my job. She did everything she could to make my life miserable. I could count on some weekly act of meanness from her. For quite a while, I felt myself growing increasingly angry with her. What she was doing to me seemed so unfair and cruel. Her treatment of me seemed so un-Christian. Almost everyone to whom I told my story agreed that I was justified in my feelings toward her, that the ways in which she tried to humiliate me in the eyes of the congregation were evil. Only my wife did not defend my attitude.

My wife is one of those rare people who always has compassion for wrongdoers, because she is convinced that their actions are expressions of their own unhappiness. Peggy persuaded me to be nice to my tormentor and to seek ways to make her feel good. I did my best. I took her to special denominational meetings, gave her public recognition for any positive thing she did for the church, and sent her postcards when I was on trips. I'm not sure how much all of these kindnesses changed her feelings about me, but I do know that the more I did for that lady, the more I liked her. I learned what Jesus taught—the more I serve a person with whom I justifiably could be angry, the less angry I feel.

I know of a woman whose husband had been unfaithful to her. What made the matter worse was that the sexual affair had been carried on with her best friend. My friend had been betrayed by the two people in the world she trusted most. The whole sordid affair had been placed right under her nose, but she loved both her husband and her friend so much that she had failed to notice what was happening. It wasn't until her friend's husband followed the adulterous couple to a motel, and then told her the story, that she realized how she had been deceived. At first, she was filled with rage and

let her repentant husband and friend experience something of the fury she felt. Later she went for counseling and asked her Christian psychologist what she should do. He wisely advised her to overcome evil with good.

Following that advice, my friend went out of her way to be kind to those who had betrayed her. She went so far as to have several talks with her friend's husband and was able to persuade him to give his marriage a second chance. As she worked for the good of her unfaithful friend, her bitterness subsided and her love for her friend was rekindled. She found it harder to overcome her bitterness toward her husband, but eventually, by following the same formula, she was able to conquer her anger, and work with her husband toward building mutual trust and love.

The last illustration of how this method of handling anger can work in the desperate situations of life comes from the story of one of the ugliest murders in the history of the City of Philadelphia. In April of 1958, a twenty-six-year-old Korean graduate student who was studying political science at the University of Pennsylvania went out to mail a letter. Before he could get back to his apartment, he was accosted by a gang of violent teenagers looking for money to go to a dance. They robbed and killed him. This young man had been a model son and an exemplary Christian.

Those who committed the crime were the most contemptible of people. They seemed to sneer at the authorities who accused them, and they appeared arrogant as they were brought to trial. The widowed mother of their victim had every right to be filled with anger against these haughty criminals, but she was not. The members of her church in Korea took up an offering to provide funds for her to come to the United States so that she could help those who had committed the crime that had hurt her so deeply.

When the young hoods who murdered her son were tried and found guilty, she got down on her knees before the judge to plead that their lives be spared. What she did brought the first positive response from the murderers. They began to weep and express their sorrow. Tears came to the eyes of the policemen who had the young criminals in chains. And Philadelphia witnessed something of the extent to which the love of God can be lived out in a believer. I am not sure what went on in the mind and heart of that dear Christian woman, but I am almost certain that what she did for those who had killed her son made it impossible for her to be angry with them.

Anger is self-defeating, it is self-destructive, and it is contrary to the will of God. Anger motivates us to do things which are inconsistent with Christian values. "The anger of man does not work the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

8.3.4 Envy²

*"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."
[Exodus 20:17]*

The play *Amadeus* was praised by the critics. The movie made from the play won an Academy Award. Both the play and the movie brilliantly carried us into the subjective consciousness of a good man who was destroyed by envy. Antonio Salieri, court musician to the King of Austria in Vienna, encountered the teenage musical genius, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Young Mozart was obviously blessed with

² Portions excerpted from *Seven Deadly Sins*, Anthony Campolo, Victor Books, 1987, ISBN 0-89693-533-7, pp. 91-107.

talents which set him apart from his contemporaries. His virtuosity on the harpsichord was dazzling. His music was complex, moving, exciting, and reflected his total mastery of virtually all forms of composition. It was clear that God had endowed him with extraordinary gifts. Nevertheless Mozart was immature, vulgar, obscene and lascivious.

Salieri, on the other hand, had dedicated himself to serving God, promising to write music that would glorify the Heavenly Father. From his youth he had dreamed of composing music that would lift the hearts of people heavenward. Salieri was committed to serving God and asked only that God might permit him to create the kind of music that would reflect His glory. However, God had not endowed Salieri with such gifts. Salieri was able to write pleasant tunes, but not masterpieces. He could compose music which would entertain its hearers, but never immortalize its composer. Despite his immense popularity, Salieri knew that his was a mediocre talent and that his uninspired work would soon be forgotten. Because he envied Mozart's gifts, he violated the commandment against covetousness and became obsessed with envy which led him to plot Mozart's destruction. This obsession eventually drove him to insanity. In the climactic monologue of the play, Salieri curses God for denying him the kind of talent which He granted to Mozart. In this play we see a brilliant illustration of how envy can alienate a person from God.

8.3.4.1 Envy Defined

Envy is a desire to have what another person has. It is not simply a longing to have the same kind of thing the other person has; the envious person wants to strip another of something in order to possess it completely and solely.

I know of an athlete who for years was the darling of his fans. When his name was announced, the crowds in the stands would go wild with cheering. He stood apart from the other members of the team, not only for his athletic ability, but also because of his personal style. He was the epitome of graciousness. People referred to him as "classy" and the adjective aptly described him.

Then one season a rookie showed up at training camp. There was something almost charismatic about this young man which immediately attracted the attention of the press. He played with a flair and demonstrated an awesome talent which little by little gained the attention of the crowds. Soon the cries of adulation for him began to rival those given to the veteran player.

Now the older man is slowing down and only occasionally shows flashes of his former greatness. The presence of the newcomer presents a great challenge to the tired veteran. The can gracefully move out of the limelight giving way to the new idol; he can become a mentor to the younger player, teaching him the lifestyle which could earn him the respect of the community. Or, the veteran can allow himself to be eaten up with envy and lose his "class." He can become irritated by the "hot-dogging" antics of the younger man and make disparaging remarks to the press about the rookie which would reveal pettiness and bitterness. The final chapter of this sports drama is still waiting to be lived out. The veteran's admirers are hoping for the best.

8.3.4.2 Envy in the Church

Envy expresses itself in all walks of life. Its presence is evident even within church vocations. Too often preachers, missionaries and church and denominational leaders, supposedly committed to presenting Christ, allow themselves to be consumed by envy.

In a rural community in New Jersey, there are three struggling churches. One of these churches secured a new dynamic pastor whose gifts for preaching far exceeded the gifts of the other two pastors in town. The new man immediately attracted the attention and the admiration of the community. It seemed that everybody was buzzing about how good his sermons were. This new preacher drew large crowds for his Sunday services and his congregation soon included new members who used to belong to the other two churches.

As the obvious superiority of the new preacher became increasingly evident, so did the envy of the other two pastors. It was not long before that envy was translated into malicious behavior. The two rival preachers took every opportunity to compare his style of ministry with their own, making it clear that they deemed their less flamboyant ways to be truer expressions of Christianity. They claimed that the large crowds the new preacher attracted could be attributed to the fact that he preached what people wanted to hear instead of the Gospel. That was only the beginning of their evil. When they heard of some unfounded rumors about possible sexual indiscretions by their rival, they fed those rumors with innuendos and knowing glances.

Envy often leads people to lie, because the envious are capable of using almost any means possible to destroy their rivals. While in this case the two envious preachers did not lie, they did feed the rumors which were floating around town. It was not long before the reputation of the new preacher was called into question. As the stories spread, this young man became increasingly tenuous in his sermons and the fire which had characterized his delivery was gone. Because of the envy of his colleagues, he was eventually discredited and he found it impossible to continue his ministry in that community. The envy of those two men not only destroyed the ministry of an effective pastor, but eventually they made themselves appear so petty and mean in the eyes of the townspeople that their own ministries were significantly damaged.

8.3.4.3 Envy in the World

The television fare of any season offers numerous opportunities to view a variety of beauty pageants. From Miss America to Miss Universe, we can see paraded before us on our television screens a seemingly endless array of women vying with each other for coveted crowns. When the winners of such contests are announced, the other contestants generally gather around the designated beauty queens and smother them with kisses. The losers pretend to be happy for the winners as they smile for the audience and the cameras, but there are hints in their demeanor that many of these losers would just as soon see the winners drop dead. Often their body language reveals an envy which they are doing their utmost to conceal.

Recently, a shocking story of the horrible consequences which can result from envy appeared in the national press. The story covered the murder of an attractive teenager from a California high school. The all-American girl had tried out for the cheerleading team and had won a place among that elite group which to many exemplifies what it means to be an adorable teenager. The cheerleaders in her particular school were elected by the student body. To win a position on the team was tantamount to being designated as among the cutest and most popular girls on the campus.

Unfortunately, such contests inevitably leave behind a string of losers. Among the losers of this election was a girl whose envy had no limits. This rejected teenager had lost out to a rival of long standing who time and time again had won the recognition she craved. Her envy got the best of her. Eventually she murdered her competitor, and was able to take her position on the cheerleading team. When the tragic truth was finally discovered, emotional shock waves ran through the school and the community. The incident clearly demonstrated the extremes to which a young person could go in pursuit of glamour and popularity.

Jewish folklore has many stories which depict the ugliness of envy. One of the most intriguing is about a certain store owner who was visited by an angel. The angel offered the man a wish that would give him anything he desired. However, there was one condition--his rival, whom he envied intensely, would receive double what the wish granted. Without hesitation, the envious man wished to be blind in one eye.

The Bible abounds with examples of envy and its dire consequences. The slaying of Abel by Cain resulted from Cain envying the favor which Abel gained in the eyes of God. The plans of Saul to kill David resulted from Saul's envy of David's popularity. According to the biblical tradition, envy is what caused the fall of Satan. The Bible gives ample evidence of the fact that envy is the cause of some of our greatest sins.

8.3.4.4 Wanting to be Envied

Most people enjoy being envied and work hard to encourage others to envy them. This desire to encourage envy is clearly apparent among children. Most of us can recall examples from our childhood which illustrate this tendency. Few things tempted me to lie more than the desire to be envied. When other kids who lived in my neighborhood returned to school after a summer filled with great vacations and exciting trips, I felt some kind of urge to make up stories about what I did during the summer. My invented tales made their true reports seem pale by comparison and I, who envied them for their good fortune, would end up having them envy me. Every youngster knows that it is more fun to be the one envied than to be the envier.

My son has a best friend. Their relationship goes all the way back to the early days of their childhood. It was fascinating to watch the two boys interact over the years. They seemed to spend much of their time doing their best to elicit each other's envy. If my son had some special toy, he gained great satisfaction from making his friend envious by convincing him that there was no toy in his collection which was comparable. In response, my son dreamed of possessing things which would make his friend envious. At times this competitive relationship created bad feelings between them and resulted in months of alienation. I am convinced that if it had not been for their conversions to Christ, these two boys never would have maintained the relationship which blossomed into the great friendship they share today. It was the transformation of their thinking and their subsequent commitment to a biblically prescribed lifestyle that saved them from destroying their friendship.

The psychological fulfillment which comes from being envied is sought not only by children. A great deal of adult behavior is generated by the desire for this same kind of gratification. Thorstein Veblen, one of America's most brilliant economic theorists, claims that the spending habits of people are highly influenced by the psychic enjoyment which comes from getting others to long for what they possess. It is Veblen's contention that it is possible to get people to buy products that are not particularly superior in quality, by publicizing widely that the products are *very* expensive. This practice which Veblen

calls *conspicuous consumption*, motivates people to buy expensive automobiles because the buyers know that most other people in the society know that these cars are very expensive. Veblen claims that people buy costly items not necessarily because they are better in quality, but because their possession displays to others how rich the owners are. The fact that expensive possessions stimulate the envy of those who do not have them gives great satisfaction to those who do have them.

Veblen believes that this principle of envy extends even to marriage. He claims that some people, usually men, choose their mates more to be the envy of their peers than as partners who will share their love. There are some who turn away from loving relationships because their prospective partners will not elicit the envy of others. I know of one man who was engaged to a fine woman but refused to marry her because he knew that his friends would not be impressed by her appearance. She shared his interests and was a stimulating conversationalist. They had similar values and held the same Christian convictions. Nevertheless, he married another woman who had striking beauty, but few of the sterling qualities of his former fiancée. He lost out on an opportunity that would have brought him significant happiness because it was more important to him to have a wife who would make him the envy of others than one who would make him happy.

Some men, according to Veblen, encourage their wives to spend large amounts of money on clothes and home furnishings. It takes so much time to earn money that these men don't have time to acquire the things which will conspicuously display their wealth. Consequently, they use their wives to buy those items which will cause others to envy their success. Their wives may not view themselves as being used and they may even think that their husband's generosity is an expression of love. However, what lies behind such subtle exploitation is the desire to be envied.

8.3.4.5 Envy and Women

In our sexist culture, women are often manipulated into the painful position of envying each other. The values of our society make it difficult for women who are older or less attractive not to envy those who are young, slim, and beautiful. Our culture conditioning frequently makes them feel that they have lost much of their worth simply because they lack the stereotypical requisites for attractiveness.

The status of married women is still often determined by their husbands. Some marry men with prestige in order to be the envy of others. Those who fail to marry well often envy those who do. Women can cause their husbands pain by comparing them unfavorably with the husbands of their friends. Such comparisons can generate bitterness and pain in the wives as well, if they nurture their belief that they deserved better than they got.

Frequently women who enjoy being envied by their friends unwittingly alienate them by bragging about all the wonderful things they possess and by providing incredible reports of how well their children are doing. Those who have to listen to these often exaggerated talks may feel that they are being indirectly criticized. Such attempts to generate envy often produce nothing more than irritation and resentment.

The desire to be the envy of others by surpassing them in possessions often leads to overspending and consequently to marital conflict. It is not surprising that disagreement over money is the most often cited cause for divorce.

Robert and Helen Lynds conducted what many sociologists consider to be the classic study of Middle America when they analyzed the behavior of people in Muncie, Indiana. The Lynds found that the working people of Muncie purchased a host of household gadgets and appliances to gain status in the community. They were willing to work extra hours and forgo precious time of shared family life to buy these things. Often women took jobs, even though they preferred to be home with their children, because they wanted to have money to buy those things which would make them the envy of others. Thus, envy contributed to the weakening of family life in Muncie.

8.3.4.6 Envy is Destructive

There is little doubt in the minds of those who observe human interaction closely that envy is a major cause of unhappiness and self-contempt. Those who envy are never happy with what they have. They hate themselves for not being the persons they envy and despise themselves for not possessing what the envied possess.

Malcolm X, the murdered leader of the black people of Harlem during the 1960's, wrote of how his envy of white people almost destroyed him psychologically. In a social system which had made things so difficult for him and his black brothers and sisters, he envied the advantages enjoyed by whites. He so much wanted to be white and have what whites had that he went to great lengths to reject his own identity. Malcolm X explained how he purchased special skin creams which promised to lighten the color of the skin. He described his willingness to burn his scalp with a hot hair-straightening iron that would remove the kinkiness of natural black hair and make it more like the hair of the envied whites. His envy led him to hate white people for having what he wanted. His autobiography tells the story of how he was able to work through his destructive envy and overcome his hatred of himself and of white people.

Malcolm X makes it clear that the freedom of black people will not be secured simply by gaining the political and economic opportunities enjoyed by whites. Black people, he argues, must stop envying white people and stop trying to *be* white. He wanted black people to be able to say with conviction "Black is beautiful." Only when black people are free from envying white people and all that goes with whiteness, and start to glory in what they themselves are, will freedom from the tyranny of white ever be possible.

The man who covets another man's wife becomes discontented with his own. The student who envies another student's grades underestimates his own abilities. The woman who envies another woman's sexy appearance becomes a supporter of a cultural system which diminishes her own value and encourages her own unhappiness.

Envy diminishes people's enjoyment of life because they cannot be content with what they possess. In the story of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15), the older brother envies the love which his father bestows on his wayward younger brother. Because his envy makes him bitter, he loses out on the opportunity to enjoy a happy celebration, and fails to appreciate all that his father has and feels for him.

There was a married couple in one of the churches I served who had a lovely son. The boy was both gentle and kind. In so many ways he was Christlike in demeanor. However, this young man lacked both the intelligence and talents to become a professional person. His parents wanted him to be a doctor or a lawyer, but he was destined to be a manual worker. Instead of enjoying a wonderful son who was a blessing wherever he went, they envied their friends who had children in more prestigious

vocations. The young man was able to rise above the negative attitude of his parents and live a happy life, but they lost out on the opportunity to enjoy and be proud of a very special son. These parents went through life feeling cheated, instead of appreciating the wonderful gift which God had given them.

8.3.4.7 Overcoming Envy

The Bible tells us the solution to Envy in Hebrews 13:5-6:

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

*So we may boldly say:
"The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?"*

The first thing to bear in mind, in your effort to overcome envy, is that God wills the very best for you. I am not suggesting that what God wants is always realized. If such were the case, there would be no sin in the world. But if you are to rid yourself of resentment against God, it is crucial that you grasp the wonderful truth that God has meant for you to serve an infinitely important role in His kingdom, and with that He has willed for you to have the gifts and opportunities to live out that role. In short, whatever you *think* you lack is not God's fault. He willed the best for you because His love for you knows no limits. There may have been evil factors and personal sin interfering with the *initial* will of God. What you have done, or what others have done, may have thwarted His will so that the good things He willed for you have not materialized; but remember, God is a good God who wills for you all of those gifts and attributes essential for you to live your life in the fullness of joy. The abundance of His Grace and the joy of knowing him is further explained in section 2.5.3: God's Memorandum to Us.

The good news of the Gospel is that God cannot be stopped. The good that He willed for each of us from before the foundation of the earth *will* come to pass in God's eternal kingdom. The blockage of His intentions is only apparent and temporary. Eventually the good that He wills for us will be realized. Regardless of the frustrations and barriers we encounter, we have this wonderful assurance: "And we know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Part of that fulfillment is during our earthly lives, and part of it is in heaven.

Instead of being resentful and envying those for whom things seem to have turned out better, we are called to trust God and to believe that in the midst of our present circumstances, He will find a way of providing opportunities for each of us to experience joyful service and total fulfillment regardless of the difficult conditions or deprivations which we have had to endure.

In his book, *The Will of God*, Leslie Wetherhead says that we should all be searching for the possibilities which exist in our lives. He tells us that if we do, we can discover the significant and sometimes amazing opportunities for good which He has waiting for us in even the worst of situations.

I know of no better contemporary example of this than Joni Eareckson Tada. This incredible, vivacious young woman became a quadriplegic as the result of a diving accident. A life of sports, travel, and fun seemed to be over. The promise of a professional career and a happy marriage

appeared to be gone. She was confined to a wheelchair for life instead of being free to live the happy life which she had anticipated for herself.

As Joni tells her story, she explains how easy it would have been for her to envy others who were able-bodied, and how envy could have made her into a bitter person. It is a wonder that envy and resentment did not distort her personality. Instead, by the grace of God, Joni discovered some truths that changed her life.

First of all, she came to recognize that what had happened was not something that God wanted to happen. She realized that God did not want her to suffer and to be crippled for life. She came to see that Satan wanted to use her tragic accident to cause her to hate God, but she determined not to let Satan have his way. She affirmed the biblical message that God is good and wills only good for His children. Once she realized that God did not will her accident, and that He suffered with her as she had to live with its consequences, she found it easier to love God and worship Him.

Secondly, Joni discovered that in the midst of the difficult circumstances in which she found herself, God could give her meaning and joy. She discovered that *because* of the horrible thing which had happened to her, she was equipped to minister to other handicapped persons in a way that is impossible for those who are not disabled. Even though God did not will her to be crippled, He could work in the midst of her adversity to produce something of infinite importance.

Seeing how God could use her because of her condition became a source of joy; and her testimony, now heard around the world, has influenced countless persons.

Joni is still a young woman. The end of her story remains to be told. Her struggle to overcome frustration and envy will continue for a lifetime, but I have confidence in her ability to conquer those feelings, because I know that she is nurturing her relationship with God.

She lives in the hope that someday, all the good things which God willed for her from before her birth will come to pass. That is what heaven is for and Joni knows it. She is able to use as a weapon against envy the knowledge that eventually she will lack for nothing that is good. She knows that someday she will walk again, even if that someday is in heaven.

8.3.4.8 Wisdom Conquers Envy

I heard of an Oriental man who visited America. This guest in our country had come to study pieces of Chinese art which by one means or another had been taken out of his country and brought to ours. He loved art as only a true connoisseur can. Each artifact, vase, statue, and painting that he saw evoked his deep appreciation.

One day this gentleman was invited to the home of one of the richest art collectors in America to see all of the magnificent examples of Chinese art in the collection. At one point during the visit, the American collector took from his safe a crystal ball which had belonged to one of the emperors of the Ming Dynasty. When this breathtaking piece of art was shown to the oriental visitor, his response was, "Thank you for keeping this for me. I am indebted to you for all you have done to make it possible for me to enjoy this crystal ball." When the American asked what his guest meant by this statement, the man from China answered, "Is it not true that the beauty of this crystal ball is just as available for me to

enjoy as it is for you? Yet I did not have to bear the expense of purchasing it or the cost of keeping it safe."

"That is true," answered the American collector, "But you do not have the joy of owning it."

"Why should I envy you for owning it if it can offer you no more beauty than it offers me? Furthermore, you do not own it. It was in the hands of someone else before you were born and it will be in the hands of still another after you are dead. It is for you to take care of this beautiful thing while you are still alive and to share its beauty with any who asked to see it. Is it not true that if I should come again, you would show it to me and allow me to enjoy its beauty again? Then why should I envy you for having this crystal ball?"

The wisdom and logic of the visitor's argument are clear and indisputable. It is this kind of wisdom which is an effective antidote for envy.

In the Taoist literature of ancient China is a story that demonstrates how foolish envy really is. It seems that there was a wise man who had many wonderful horses. There was one horse which was so strong, fast, and beautiful that it elicited the envy of the man's neighbor. However, one day this horse escaped from the barn and ran away into the hills. The neighbor's envy changed to pity, but the wise man said "Who knows if I should be pitied or if I should be envied because of this?"

The next day the horse returned to the wise man leading a herd of fifty equally beautiful wild horses with him. The neighbor once again was filled with envy and once again the wise man said, "Who knows if I should be envied or if I should be pitied because of this?" Shortly after he said this, his only son tried to ride one of the wild horses, fell off it and broke his right leg. The neighbor's envy once again turned to pity, but the wise man responded by saying, "Who knows if I should be pitied for if I should be envied because of this?"

The next day the general of the emperor's army came to draft the man's son for an exceedingly dangerous mission, but since the son's leg was broken, he could not be recruited for this mission which promised certain death. The neighbor, whose own son was taken in the place of the injured young man, envied the wise man; and once again the wise man said, "Who knows if I should be envied or pitied because of this?"

The story goes on and on with similar twists that shift the neighbor's feelings from envy to pity and then back to envy again. But the wisdom of this man makes it clear that things are not always what they seem to be, and that what we desire is as likely to bring us pain and trouble as satisfaction and good fortune.

How many times have we seen people destroyed by the very traits we admire and perhaps covet? How often do we encounter people who are too attractive for their own good or so talented that they never learn the discipline of hard work and persistence? How often do we see people destroyed by the riches that made them the envy of others?

The great American poet Edwin Arlington Robinson brilliantly illustrates the futility of envy in the brief dramatic poem "Richard Cory."

*Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him;
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,*

Clean favored, and imperially slim.

*And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good morning," and he glittered when he walked.*

*And he was rich--yes, richer than a king--
And admirably schooled in every grace;
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.*

*So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.*

Richard Cory, handsome, wealthy and gracious, a man who was envied by all who knew him, was also a troubled and lonely man whose pain could not be relieved by his money. Those things that people envied him for were hollow and without substance.

We all need wisdom to handle what we have and to view properly what other have. God is the giver of such wisdom. "But if ye have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth" (James 3:14).

Last, but by no means least, giving thanks for what we already possess can deliver us from envy of those who have what we yearn for. Giving thanks is wonderful therapy for envy. My wife uses this remedy with great success and I attribute her optimism and contentment to her ability to see the positive aspects of her circumstances, whatever they may be. If we miss an airplane and have to wait two hours for the next one, she looks upon the two-hour wait as a gift from God so that the two of us can have this uninterrupted time to visit with each other. If I go out in the morning and find that my car battery is dead, she tells me how lucky I am that I did not have this trouble when I was out on some deserted highway. If my coat gets ripped, she welcomes the opportunity to buy a new one.

She always considers herself to be a most fortunate person and she lets it be known that she would not want to be anyone else or have any other children than her own; and strange as it seems to me, she considers it her good fortune to have me for a husband. Now I ask you, how can I not love a woman like that?

When I asked her if she ever felt that the grass was greener on the other side of the fence, she answered, "If you think the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, it is probably because you are not properly caring for the grass on your own side." If each of us would care for and appreciate the possibilities in what we have, we would cease to envy what others have.

The Apostle Paul said that love does not envy anyone. Loving those whom God has given us to love, enjoying what God has given us to enjoy, and taking advantage of the opportunities God has provided can be a reliable remedy for envy. This word to the wise should be sufficient.

8.3.5 Gossip and Slander

Gossip can be one of the most damaging behaviors to human relationships that we can do. Webster's Collegiate dictionary provides the following definition for "gossip":

"gossip: 1c: a person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts 2 a: rumor or report of an intimate nature b: a chatty talk."

There are several reasons why people tend to gossip and criticize others in public or behind their back:

1. Criticism boosts our own self-image. Pointing out someone else's failure and tearing him down makes us seem a little bit better, at least in our own eyes. It adds to our own pride, ego, and self-image.
2. Criticism is simply enjoyed. There is a tendency in human nature to take pleasure in hearing and sharing bad news and shortcomings about others.
3. Criticism makes us feel that our own lives (morality and behavior) are better than the person who failed.
4. Criticism helps us justify the decisions we have made and the things we have done throughout our lives. We rationalize our decisions and acts by pointing out the failure of others.
5. Criticism points out to our friends how strong we are. Criticism gives good feelings because our right beliefs and strong lives are proven again. Proven how? By our brother's failure.
6. Criticism is an outlet for hurt and revenge. We feel he deserves it. Subconsciously, if not consciously, we think, "He hurt me so he deserves to hurt, too." So we criticize the person who failed.

There is a strong tendency:

- For the good person to denigrate and criticize the bad person.
- For the gifted person to denigrate and criticize the less gifted.
- For the wealthy person to denigrate and criticize the poor.
- For the energetic person to denigrate and criticize the less energetic.

"Speaking evil" (katalaleite) means to criticize, judge, backbite, gossip, censor, condemn, and grumble against another person. It means to talk about and to tear down another person; to share the things about another person that cut and hurt him and that lower his image and reputation in the eyes of others. The word usually means to talk about a person behind his back, when he is not present.

Below is what God's word has to say about gossip:

*"Whoso privily [secretly] slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer."
[Psalm 101:5]*

*"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?
[Matt. 7:3]*

*"He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips."
[Prov. 20:19]*

*"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice"
[Eph. 4:31]*

*"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."
[James 4:11]*

*"And besides they [widows] learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies saying things which they ought not."
[1 Tim. 5:13]*

From this, God's word teaches us that it is sinful to gossip and we should avoid people who gossip. Along these lines, some people confuse gossip with slander, however. We would like to remind readers that gossip is about revealing secrets, whether they are true or not. Slander, on the other hand, involves communicating about someone else in a way that defames or denigrates them with false information. Slandering someone in effect consists of bearing false witness against them as prohibited by the ten commandments:

*"Do not bear false witness against thy neighbor."
[Exodus 20:16 (The Ten Commandments)]*

On the other hand, if you are speaking the *truth* in love to or about someone (like parents do with their children all the time as part of the regular discipline process, for instance) and the truth defames them, then you aren't slandering them and you have a valid legal defense in a court of law for a charge of slander. The Bible confirms that it is our duty as friends to reveal the *truth* to or about someone in order to help them and in fulfillment Jesus' command in Matt. 5:43 to "love thy neighbor" (remembering that 1 Cor. 13:6 says "love rejoices in truth"). This is exemplified below, for instance:

*"Faithful are the wounds of a friend [when our friends speak the truth about us], but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."
[Prov. 27:6]*

Nevertheless, we should avoid revealing truthful personal information about individuals that would defame them because that is gossip. The only exception to that rule is defined by the Apostle Paul in Rom. 14:13:

*"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."
[Rom. 14:13]*

He says here that we are justified in judging the behavior of others if they are putting a stumbling block in their neighbor's way. Eliminating that stumbling block is a duty and an obligation of Jesus' command in Matt. 5:43 to "love thye neighbor." Therefore, we are justified in speaking the truth in love and correcting someone who is sinning in such a situation if they meet all the following three criteria:

1. They have committed sin that we personally have witnessed or that they have admitted to us.
2. This sin has caused or is causing others around them to stumble and/or be hurt.
3. You have approached them and privately rebuked, exhorted, or admonished them and they have been unrepentant and stubborn about continuing in their sin.

At that point you have no choice but to confront others in authority to try to get the person who is sinning to abandon their sin so they don't continue harming others. This process is revealed by Jesus Himself in Matthew 18:16:

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax-collector."

You will note above that in following Jesus' command in how to deal with sin in by rebuking others, we had to tell others about sensational and personal things in a way that looks like gossip but technically isn't. Why? Because we have first-hand, eye-witness evidence that the sin occurred either directly from observing the individual or by their own admission, rather than relying on a third-parties' testimony. In short, we are acting on truthful information about a person that we have first-hand knowledge of.

Another element that ensures that a discipline or rebuke of this kind doesn't appear as gossip is to ensure that we don't benefit personally from the rebuke or intervention, but instead are trying to help or defend others from being hurt as an objective of the rebuke or reproach. That is why Paul said above (in Rom. 14:13) that we are justified in judging the behavior of others if it harms our neighbor. Gossip, on the other hand, is most often done for selfish reasons that benefit us personally more than they benefit or protect "our neighbor" or others.

Another important appropriate scripture on the subject of gossip is James 4:11:

Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

Note that the brother has sinned. He has broken the law of God, he has failed and his failure is known. It is public knowledge and he is being judged and criticized for his failure. He is being talked about. What he has done is being buzzed and gossiped about, and it is hurting and cutting him and damaging him more and more in the eyes of the world. Now, if we are forbidden to speak evil of a person [bear false witness against, share private information that does not involve sins that were repented for, or slander them] who is really guilty of sin, how much more are we forbidden to speak against a person just because we dislike or disagree with him? Note what the Scripture says: this is evil speaking. Bearing false witness about or sharing confidential personal information about a person to defame them is evil. It is just as much an evil as the failure of the other person. Therefore, the person who judges and does not satisfy the law himself is as guilty as the sinner because both have violated God's law. Hypocrites are sinners too!

The exhortation is strong: Christian believers are not to speak evil of one another. The reason is clear: we are brothers, brothers of Christ and of one another. All of us are of the family of God. However, note that we didn't say that we should treat the heathen the same as brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore:

1. We are to be loving, caring, and looking after each other, not destroying each other.
2. We are to be supporting, encouraging, and building up one another, not tearing down one another.

3. When one of us falls and gets into trouble, we are to be reaching out and helping him up, not pushing him farther down.

8.3.6 Greed³

Jesus identifies greed as a sin in Matt. 6:19-34 (NKJV):

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 "So why do you worry about clothing. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Jesus was trying to tell us in this passage that greed is a type of materialistic lust that originates from the eye, which he characterized as the "lamp of the body." For instance, wouldn't it look good to be driving around in a nice new car? Within the context of this scripture, wealth would appear to be defined as money saved to meet needs that are beyond today. This is a very difficult expectation for people to meet in today's materialistic society and a very high calling. Jesus appeared to know that much anxiety results from people worrying too much about materialistic things including the future, retirement, cars, houses, etc, and he says we shouldn't do it, because it leads us to hoard things and benefit ourselves often at the expense of people around us.

Our society has built its economy on the production of things that people are conditioned to want, but not really need. Many of the consumer goods we spend so much to buy did not even exist a generation ago. We buy these things because we have been manipulated into wanting them through advertising and peer pressure.

³ Portions excerpted from Seven Deadly Sins, Anthony Campolo, Victor Books, 1987, ISBN 0-89693-533-7, pp. 128-148.

We are willing to work two jobs in order to satisfy these artificially created wants. We are willing to take time from our families so that we can buy those things which we are assured will express our love to our loved ones more than our mere presence ever could. We are willing to reject biblical principles of living in order to buy the consumer goods which the media prescribes as essential for the “good life.” And when there are threats to the affluent lifestyle that has become synonymous with America, we stand ready to fight and, if need be, to die to protect it.

If our greedy consumption of oil is challenged by the OPEC nations, we do whatever is necessary in order to keep the oil flowing into our tanks. If totalitarian dictatorships or oppressive racist regimes promote policies which help us sustain our overly consumptive way of life, we support those dictatorships and tolerate those racist regimes. Our greedy materialistic way of life drives us to compromise principles of justice, yield on the canons of morality, and even to lose our souls.

Needs are fixed and limited, but artificially generated wants know no limits. Just when we get what we think we want, we see some new and “better” things. God has provided enough to satisfy all our needs, but not enough to satisfy all our artificially created wants. Of the getting of things, there will be no end.

Greed motivates people to buy things just for the sake of having them. It gives the possessors a deluded sense of superiority. Somehow we think that we are better than other people if we have more things than they do. In our materialistic society, children get sucked into this delusion from their earliest days. At Christmastime, they are taught that the better a person is, the more that person gets. Therefore, each child tries to point out how many more things he/she received from Santa than were delivered to the homes of playmates.

When I was a child, late on Christmas Day my sisters and I would run to the homes of our friends to play the game of “What did you get?” We would pretend that our presents were bigger and better than theirs, because we were convinced that the better children got the best things. And if we believed that we did not get better things than anyone else, we felt sad and envious, irregardless of how many gifts were under our tree.

We failed to realize that we could never have enough, because there would always be someone else out there with more. It did not occur to us that we would never be content until we had more than everyone else. Greed can never be satisfied. The more the greedy get, the more they want; and the more they want, the more discontented they are with what they have.

Some people do not outgrow the greediness they learn in childhood. Greed can linger on in disguised form, concealed by politeness, but eating away like a cancer at the joy of life. There is more truth than humor to the T-shirt message I saw, “Life is a game. Whosoever has the most things at the end wins.” There are those in our churches who attempt to teach that the accumulation of things does not bring happiness, but such efforts are generally ineffective. It requires a miraculous conversion experience for most people to escape the belief that getting things is what life is all about.

When the affluent lifestyle of Americans is attacked these days, there is usually an immediate reaction interpreting the attack as a call for people to live lives of improverishment. Yet there is little doubt in my mind that those who have felt a call to sell what they have and give to the poor have adopted a lifestyle that is very much in accord with the teachings of Scripture, if it is carried out for the right motives.

St. Francis of Assisi is still esteemed as one of the great figures in Christian history and is a worthy model for all of us, Protestant and Catholic alike. A valid Christian lifestyle of this modern age is exemplified in Mother Theresa. There is more to the simple lifestyle of this modern day saint than the good works that have come from her self-giving. She has learned what I have not yet succeeded in learning: “You will never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you’ve got.” Those who become poor as they respond to the needs of others are blessed in ways that those who live more greedy lives will never know. Those who choose poverty for the sake of others are blessed by Jesus and promised that they will be the inheritors of the kingdom of God (Luke 6:20).

The most haunting passage of Scripture for me is 1 John 3:17. There the Apostle John asks: “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (KJV) I do not like to think about that simple question, but when I do, I find myself doubting my claims that I am on my way to becoming sanctified Christian. I wonder how it is possible to hold on to the things that I want, but do not need, when other persons created by God are in desperate need. I ask myself how much I really love Jesus when I, like the rich young ruler, hold on to “great possessions,” while so many languish in their poverty.

I have no easy responses to questions like these. I try to assure myself that I am saved by *grace*, not by good works (Eph. 2:8), but then I wonder if I have cheapened grace, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer once suggested, by refusing it the opportunity to lead me into a Christlike lifestyle in regard to the poor.

8.3.6.1 Kingdom Perspectives

Among the ancient Jews there was a hope for shalom. This word was used not only as part of the greeting and parting expressions which marked the encounters of Jewish friends; it also carried the image of the kind of world in which they longed for all people to live. The word *shalom*, commonly translated “peace,” meant something far more than “peace of mind” to the people of Israel. It conveyed the image of living in a caring community in which there would be no greed and all people would care for one another even as God cares. To the Jews, *shalom* was what we Christians call the kingdom of God—a society in which everyone has enough of everything needed for joyful living.

There were symbols of shalom in the life of Israel that condemned the greediness lurking in the hearts of the ungodly. One of its clearest expressions is found in the story of the Exodus. When the Jews escaped from Egypt and wandered in the wilderness, God saw to it that they had enough to eat. Manna was sent from heaven so that each of the Children of Israel might have enough food for the day. Moses warned against greediness and told the Jews that if they took more than they needed, the surplus would decay and be filled with worms. Those who did not follow the directives of God found that things were just as Moses had predicted (Ex. 16). In shalom there is enough for everyone, but surplus for no one. That which is surplus rots.

The New Testament gives us a similar kind of warning. In the Gospel of Luke, we read:

And He spake a parable unto them, saying,

“The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself saying, ‘What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?’ And he said, ‘This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, thou has goods laid up for many years; take thing ease, eat, drink and be merry.’”

“But God said unto him, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?’”
“So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”
 [Luke 12:16-21, KJV]

Jesus establishes clearly that the greedy accumulation of things is an attempt by persons to evade dependency on God. The one who greedily hoards possessions in order to establish security for the future lacks the faith that Jesus expects of those who follow Him. Our security, according to Jesus, is in our relationship to God in whose hands lies our future. Because of the uncertainty of life, it is ridiculous to be greedy hoarders of things. The will of God is that each of us should have enough and then be willing to offer up our surplus to others in the name of God. There is no room for greed in the shalom of the ancient Jews or in the kingdom envisioned by modern Christians.

In the ideal society set forth in the Bible, all persons are to “fit in” with others and with the natural environment. There is harmony in all things. No one enjoys abundance at the expense of others. No one lives in a way that threatens the ecological balance. In everything that any person does, there is consideration for all others. In the Peaceable Kingdom which is to come at the second coming of Christ, each will live in an appropriate manner, consuming enough, but never more than is just in relationship to others.

8.3.6.2 The Eucharistic Lifestyle

John Taylor, the Bishop of Winchester, England, in his book, *Enough Is Enough*, calls Christians to “eucharistic living.” He shows the dimensions of the lifestyle prescribed by the Mosaic Law, which gives insights on how we should live. Taylor points out that once a year, at Passover, all Jewish families brought one-tenth of all that they possessed (not simply one-tenth of their annual income) to Jerusalem to be offered up to God.

These gifts were not to be used for maintaining outreach programs or to sustain the local religious establishment. This vast accumulation of wealth was not designated for what we might call “some worthy cause.” Instead, this incredible collection was used for a party. That’s right! A Party! All the people of Israel were expected to travel to Jerusalem and participate in a gigantic blowout party at which one-tenth of all the assets of the nation’s population would be spent on a banquet of celebration. There was singing and dancing. Every person from every corner of Israel was invited, and none would be turned away. The village idiot, the tax collector, those of questionable reputation, the poor, the rich, the educated, and the uncouth bums—they were all to be there. The music would play into the nights as the party went on for days.

No wonder the Children of Israel said, “I was glad when they said unto me, ‘Let us go unto the house of the Lord.’” In ancient Israel, God was worshipped in celebration. That is important for us to remember in our contemporary situation. The kingdom of God is more like a party than a soup kitchen. It is good for us to read the instructions of Moses on the way that our God requires that we enjoy Him:

Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which He shall choose to place His name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of the herds and of thy flocks; that though mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always. And if

the way be too long for thee, so that though art not able to carry it; if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set His name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul desireth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.

*And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee
[Deut. 14-22-27, KJV]*

Knowing that our God loves celebrations, I am delivered from a dour lifestyle in which I am made to feel guilty whenever I have a good time. I can enjoy a trip to the beach with friends, scream with excitement at a basketball game, and eat a good meal without going through a period of self-condemnation for having spent what could have been used to feed the poor. Our God loves a party, and those who refuse to party in His name lose out on a foretaste of glory that is to be when His kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

The important lesson to be learned from all of this is that there are limitations on partying. Moses teaches us that one-tenth of our income in any given year must be set aside for partying, and the other nine-tenths are to be used in service for others in the name of the Lord. There's nothing wrong with spending a dollar or two on a roller coaster ride (our God enjoys sharing a good time with us) as long as we keep our spending on pleasure under control.

As we respond to the needs of the poor, we must remember that admonition of Jesus:

*Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly
[Matt. 6:16-18, KJV]*

Sacrifices are to be made for the poor, but our lifestyles should give evidence that we are happy, party-going disciples of the One who invites us to a banquet. There is nothing wrong with dressing up as long as we limit what we spend.

Unfortunately, most of us have turned the Lord's formula around. We spend nine-tenths of what we possess on the party and things we want for ourselves and, if we are tithers, the remaining tenth on service for His kingdom. God wants His people to enjoy life, but He wants us to enjoy life in a manner that does not require the suffering of others. He does not want any of us to adopt a lifestyle that leads to the disproportionate consumption of the good things that God meant for all of His children to enjoy.

8.3.6.3 Greed and International Problems

In today's world, greed is not a sin which merely influences our personal relationships; it also is responsible for many of the pressing international problems which seem to defy solution. Those of us confined to spaceship earth are being thrust into an uncertain future, threatened by such ugly specters as a nuclear holocaust, a third World War, the starvation of half a billion people, and political totalitarianism. As we think about such possibilities, we must stop and consider the observations of the

Apostle James, who tells us that wars and conflicts of all sorts come from the greed of people trying to get what they do not need, but desperately want (see James 4:1-3). The resources of the earth are limited and, if certain people demand more than their just share of things, the consequences will be horrendous.

Lately a number of Christian authors have written on the question, "Is capitalism Christian?" The attempts to answer this question have been scholarly and well developed, but some of these writers fail to perceive that the question is wrong. What we should be asking is, "How can we make capitalism Christian? Every principality and power in our world, as well as every individual, is in a fallen state and is in need of restoration to the state that God intended. Capitalism can be made to glorify God if those who are part of such an economic system are willing to free it from elements of greed. Contemporary proponents of capitalism readily admit that greed is a part of this economic system in its present form. In the book *Essays in Persuasion*, Maynard Keynes, one of the foremost theorists of modern day capitalism, states:

For at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still. For only they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into daylight
[W.W. Norton Co., Inc. 1963, p. 372]

Such statements are hard to reconcile with the ethics of the Bible. It is the task of those of us who see the possibilities for human freedom and social progress inherent in capitalism to redeem it from the potential for greed which is also inherent within it. At a time in human history when capitalism offers more hope for good than the available alternatives, it becomes a matter of urgency that this economic system be brought under the judgment of God so that it can be purged and made to be as good as it can be.

We must not think that the abuses of capitalism are confined to the robber barons of bygone days. The greed that motivated those tyrants of business and industry who lived at the turn of the century lies in the hearts of all of us. There are those today who would destructively exploit the environment and bring suffering to others in order to gratify their craving for financial gain.

A case in point can be found in a recent plan for a project to be developed in the heart of Brazil. The Amazon jungle, according to some experts, is producing through photosynthesis approximately 20 percent of all the world's oxygen. A billionaire has purchased 500,000 acres of the Amazon in order to turn its trees into wood pulp. With a pulp plant manufactured in Japan and towed 15,000 miles to a tributary of the Amazon River, he expects to produce 750 metric tons of pulp every day. This would be enough pulp to produce sufficient toilet paper daily to go around the world sixteen times. We have to question whether the private enterprise of one individual can justify endangering the well-being of everyone on the planet. The significance of this project become particularly noteworthy when a study of the recent drought in Africa reveals that it may be the result of ecological imbalances which have occurred recently in the Amazon River systems. Evidently the destruction of the jungle has disturbed the processes which create rain, and the prevailing winds no longer have rain clouds to carry to the African continent.

In a case closer to home, we have witnessed the greed of some to exploit our dependency on fossil fuels. According to a study conducted by a Pulitzer Prize winning writer for the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, a few oil companies deliberately functioned as an oligopoly and manipulated the price of oil upward more than 150 percent. There are those who argue that the oil companies should get whatever the

market will allow, in spite of the fact that such price manipulations have left poor people without heating fuel and many of the inner-city elderly in real danger of freezing to death. I say that Christians must save the capitalistic system from such evil practices or else capitalism will be destroyed. Even as the Prophet Jeremiah condemned his king for building a palace at the expense of the poor (Jer. 22:13-17), so we must be ready to stand against those greedy people whose business practices exploit the poor in our time. We need scholars who will show us how to keep capitalism from destroying us. Saint Thomas Aquinas once taught, "A contract is fair when both parties gain equally." The time has come for the church to spell out for those in business the nature of fair contractual relationships according to biblical principles.

8.3.6.4 Greed in Unions

Greed expresses itself not only among the entrepreneurs who create the businesses and industries which generate jobs, but also among the workers who are employed in these jobs. There was a time when workers were controlled and manipulated unfairly by their bosses. They worked incredibly long hours, under subhuman conditions for unbelievably low wages. Their children and wives were forced to work to supplement the family income which, in most cases, was close to the subsistence level. Conditions for the labor force became so unbearable that workers were willing to take risks and make sacrifices to change the social arrangements which had reduced them to exploited victims. Out of these desperate conditions the labor movement was born. Inspired by a vision of more than just economic order, the workers in industries and businesses across the nation organized into unions that were able to achieve great benefits for their workers through collective bargaining. Largely as a result of the union movement, the American workers have become the highest paid in the world.

Today the future of those in the labor force is threatened not by the exploitive employers but by their own greed. Certainly, there are a variety of reasons for the collapse of many American industries, not the least of which is poor management. At times, they seem almost to will their own destruction as they strike for wages that are so unreasonable that employers are forced to take their operations out of the country to a place where labor is cheaper. It is time for us to recognize that our capitalistic system is in danger, not only because of the greed of industrialists, but because of the greed of workers who demand more and more pay for less and less work.

Christians need a new philosophy of money. In *The London Times*, one of the leading churchmen of England wrote:

The demand for "fairness" in prices and incomes suggests some convictions that there are, or should be, some moral considerations in the distribution of the rewards of industry and the market price should not be the sole criterion. We should ask, what is "fair?" What does a man deserve?

The greediness of workers is evident in the fact that unions no longer advocate shorter work days because they know that if their members had more time off, they would probably take second jobs and thereby reduce the number of jobs available for the unemployed. Furthermore, these union members who have gained so much for themselves through collective bargaining show all too little sympathy and provide all too little support for the Latino farm workers who have become an oppressed underclass in our affluent society. The Old Testament prophets would have as much to say to the union members of America as they would have to say to the tycoons who exploit the poor.

8.3.6.5 Greed and Prophecy

The Book of Revelation tells us that the kingdom of evil stands in opposition to the kingdom of God. John labeled this diabolical social order “Babylon.” In Revelation 13-18, we read of the sins of Babylon that bring about its ultimate destruction. Babylon, says the Scripture, is the great whore that seduces people (Rev. 17:1-5). It is a beastly creature which demands worship (13:4). And it is a city which greedily consumes the resources of the world (18:7-13).

When I was a teenager, I loved to go to church and hear prophecy sermons that decoded the secret symbols of the vision of John. The Gospels were okay, but I felt that the deep stuff of the Book of Revelation lay waiting to be discovered by “brilliant” minds. The Bible teachers who led these prophecy conferences always seemed able to explain world events from this most mysterious book of the Bible. Babylon, they said, was the Soviet Union. They seemed able to correlate the behavior of the leading nation of the Marxist movement with the descriptions of the Great Whore outlined in Revelation 4-18. It was interesting to learn from my father that, during the 1930s, similar preachers considered Germany to be Babylon. Furthermore, I have since learned that certain evangelical preachers in Latin America consider the United States to be that evil nation.

In the last few years, I have come to believe that Babylon may refer to any society. For me, Babylon represents any socio-economic system that is not under the lordship of Christ. If Christians are living in Russia, then Russia is their Babylon. For Christians living in Britain, Britain is their Babylon. For Mexicans, Mexico is Babylon and for those of us who are Americans, the United States is Babylon. The kingdom of God is represented by the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) which God sends from heaven to take the place of the old dying order.

Once I began to apply the Scripture to my own situation, it seemed to be alive with meaning. I saw my own affluent society as the seductive whore drawing Christians away from God by offering them an array of worldly delights (Rev. 17-18). Who of us can deny that we sense the seduction of our culture which in a host of subtle, and not so subtle, ways lures us into striving greedily after its pleasures.

Our society, furthermore, like the Babylon of prophecy, requires that we worship her. Nationalism, here as elsewhere in the world, is easily transformed into a religion, and patriotism is at times unconsciously enthroned into worship of the state. Satan enjoys perverting that which is good and using it for his purposes, so it is no surprise that emotions like patriotism, which can bring out the best in us, can be twisted in such a way that we become jingoistic, ethnocentric national chauvinists.

Lastly and most importantly, I recognize that our society like the Babylon of the Bible, encourages wasteful overconsumption which will eventually seal its doom.

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, “Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come.”

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk and scarlet, and all thine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from

thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all
 [Rev. 18:9-14, KJV]

I believe that unless Americans are able to find in Christ deliverance from our greedy and wasteful lifestyle, our nation is doomed to suffer the fate of Babylon. Our greed which has resulted in untold suffering among the poor peoples of the world, is known to God, and He will respond to our evil ways on the day when He judges the nations (Matt. 25:32).

Consider the fact that one of the reasons there is hunger in the world is that we have been seduced by our society to develop tastes and appetites that require the exploitation of farmland. If all the land in Latin America presently used to grow sugar, coffee, and tobacco (all of which poison our bodies and destroy our health) were used to grow food for indigenous populations, empty stomachs would be filled and dying children would be saved. Most of the food grown in Third World countries is exported to richer countries. It is heartbreaking to learn that most of the cattle butchered in Latin America end up as hamburgers in the fast-food restaurants of the United States, while many of the people who watched those cattle get fattened for the slaughter suffer from malnutrition. The anchovy fisheries of Peru, with one-sixth of the world's fish production, export most of their catch to feed the pets of North Americans. In the United States, we spend \$5 billion a year to feed 48 million dogs and 28 million cats. Please understand that I love animals and have a well-fed cat in my home, but I wonder what our Lord's judgment will be on a society in which 80 percent of its dogs are deemed overweight while the poor of the world starve to death.

The excesses of our society make for frightening statistics. We buy what we do not need and throw away what we no longer want. We junk 7 million cars each year, 70,000 of which are abandoned on the streets of New York City. We throw away 52 billion aluminum cans and 24 billion bottles. One of the most serious problems of modern America is the disposal of the waste materials that result from our greedy lifestyles. All of this greed and waste become intolerable in the face of the following facts:

- One billion people go to sleep hungry each night.
- 40,000 people die of starvation each day.
- Out of every 100 babies born in the world, 40 will risk permanent physical and/or mental damage because of malnutrition, and only 3 out of the 100 will get the education and skills they need to perform creative work.
- More than 100,000 children go blind every year due to lack of vitamin A in their diets.

The greed of the American population is one major factor contributing to these tragedies. The time has come to repent and to abandon the ways of Babylon. The time has come to heed the Book of Revelation, which says:

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities"
 [Rev. 18:4-5, KJV]

8.3.6.6 Overcoming Greed

There is one primary way to overcome greed, and that is to discover the joy that comes from self-giving. The nature of sin is that it blinds us to the truth that we have been designed in the image of a

giving God (John 3:16), and that we therefore fulfill the purpose of our Creator by giving away what we are and have to others. When we are called upon to sacrifice, it is not only that others might benefit from our self-giving, but that we ourselves might know the joy that God wills for us to have. If we do not experience a sense of wondrous fulfillment in our giving, then the Lord would rather that we reconsider what we do and why we do it (2 Cor. 9:7).

God is quite able to meet the needs of the poor without us if He so chooses, but instead He has created a world that allows all of us to realize the greatest happiness that life can afford. This happiness comes from giving what He has placed in our hands to meet the needs of those who are in desperate straits.

I know of a family that made a commitment to support several poor children in Haiti. A little more than \$100 dollars a month was sufficient to feed, clothe, and educate five orphan children who otherwise would have had no hope. In order for the family to carry out its commitment, there were sacrifices to be made. The children had to forego some of the things that many of their friends took for granted. They rode secondhand bicycles and sometimes their Christmas presents did not compare favorably with what their friends got. The family nevertheless, stayed with their commitment for almost a decade.

One day the father of this family came home with some exciting news. His company was sending him to Haiti for a week to take care of some business matters. Because his way would be paid by his company, he would be able to take his family along, provided they traveled in the most economical way possible. The family was thrilled with the possibility of meeting the five children whom they had supported for such a long time.

The second day they were in Haiti, the family hired a jeep and drove out to the village where their young friends lived. The children, who were now teenagers, had been told of the visit and looked forward eagerly to the day when they would meet those who had done so much for them. The American family traveled for hours, but their tiredness did not detract from the joy they experienced when they arrived at their destination.

The five young people whom they had supported stood waiting in front of their school. They had been there since the early morning to meet their American friends. As soon as the jeep stopped in front of the school, the five Haitian teenagers ran to it with happy excitement. The two American children bounced out of the jeep and into their arms and there followed a quarter-hour of glorious hugging. Despite the language barrier, these young people communicated their affection for each other. At the end of that special day there was an unplanned ceremony in which the Haitian children gave to their American friends Christmas tree ornaments they themselves had made out of twigs and sisal. After a long and affectionate good-bye, the Americans got back into their jeep to return to Port-au-Prince.

On the way to the capital city, the two children sat in pensive silence. Their silence seemed so strange and puzzling that their father asked what was wrong. "Oh, nothing's wrong," answered his daughter. "I was just thinking that there is nothing we could have done with our money over the last ten years that would have made us happier than we are right now."

There are many good Christians organizations that can help to establish relationships with children in poor countries who are in need of support. One of the best is Compassion International, a highly evangelical relief organization. For \$21 a month, Compassion International can arrange for the support of a child whose life otherwise would be lived out in desperation. Twenty-one dollars a month is

approximately seventy cents a day--the cost of a cup of coffee. The address of Compassion International is 3955 Cragwood Drive, P.O. Box 7000, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80933.

In 1979, a rich man was asked to deliver a commencement address to his old elementary school in Harlem, New York City. In the course of his remarks, he spontaneously made a fantastic offer to the boys and girls of the graduating class. He offered to pay the tuition of any of the children who wanted to go to college. The children responded to the offer with enthusiasm and this rich man delivered on his promise, and then some. He not only provided the necessary funds, but he also made a commitment of his time to these children. As the years went by, he counseled and tutored them. His visits and encouragement were crucial in getting these children through high school. His loving support and financial assistance have carried most of them into college.

The story of this generous millionaire would be incomplete without stating the fact that this man had more genuine joy from what he gave to these young people than he ever could have derived from either greedily hoarding his wealth or spending it on his own pleasures. Greediness promises much, but delivers little in the way of joy. On the other hand, those who are lovingly self-giving discover the real joy that money and things can give if they are graciously shared with others. This may seem a bit simplistic, but it is nevertheless, the truth. Greed is defeated in the face of the hilarious joy that comes from Christlike giving.

8.3.6.7 A Warning to Yuppies

Yuppies is the name ascribed to the generation of young people who are taking their places in the modern business world, the Young, Urban Professionals. A study made by *Fortune* magazine revealed some disturbing things about this group of Americans. These young people are intensely committed to living what they consider to be the "good life." When questioned about what they considered that to be, they responded that the "good life" is a lifestyle in which a person can enjoy good things. Their goals included making enough money to buy gourmet foods, own expensive cars (preferably BMWs), live in pleasant surroundings, and vacation in exotic places. In order to reach these goals, they are willing to make necessary trade-offs in their personal lives. They will forego marriage until they can be sure it will not interfere with their money-making careers. None of those interviewed intend to have children because they see children as an inconvenience and an interference with their career goals. These Yuppies feel no loyalties or obligations except to themselves. They view their employers as means to an end, their jobs as stepping stones to better positions, and the families into which they were born as persons who "act like something is owed to them." In young adults, greediness has become a way of life. Unfortunately, our churches are preparing teenagers to take their places in this self-serving system, teaching that this is what decent American Christian young people ought to do.

It is a good thing that Yuppies aren't too high on marriage. There is little doubt that greedy persons make poor marital partners. They seem to be interested only in what they get out of the marriage and have little concern for what they can contribute in love. There is more and more talk of "symbiotic" relationships in which the self-centered interests of one member offer an unintentional benefit which serves the self-centered interests of the other. More and more couples anticipating marriage draw up marriage contracts so that each may protect and keep what they own, and gain the maximum advantage from the marital arrangement.

Contrast the Yuppies with a young woman who is far from typical of our young adult population. After completing college, she sought out organizations which might offer her an opportunity to give her life

in meaningful service to others. Following several interviews and study tours, she decided to work with an organization called Habitat for Humanity.

She was particularly drawn to this organization because of its founder, Millar Fuller. She learned that he himself had once been seduced by Babylon into a lifestyle of affluence. He had learned how to make money better than most people ever do and before he had turned thirty, he had become a millionaire. His success nurtured his greed and he seldom stopped to enjoy what he had earned. He hurled himself with increasing zeal into new ventures which promised more money and greater opportunities for investments. Then one day, unexpectedly his wife told him that she was leaving him. The news shook him to the depths of his being and forced him to reevaluate his life and the things for which he had lived. Consequently, he took a step that would launch him into a form of missionary service which would change his life, give a new beginning to his marriage, and bring hope to thousands of poor people. He decided to help the poor build decent housing for themselves. Fuller sold all his possessions and, along with his wife, became committed to working on the mission. First in Africa, later in Latin America and eventually in the United States, he organized poor people to work along with members of his organization in order to build housing that would allow them to live with dignity.

Habitat for Humanity makes the funds needed for building materials available through no interest loans. Fuller believes that the Bible teaches that loans to the poor should not entail interest. Habitat workers receive no salary, and get little public recognition for their long hours of service. But they radiate a joy that can only be regarded as the joy of Christ.

Today the young woman of our story is working joyfully with people who are blessed by the vision of a decent life. She is enthusiastic and excited about her vocation. She has learned the rewards of a sacrificial lifestyle that is marked by more than what have become the tribal practices of evangelicals. We must teach that it is not enough to give up obscene rock music, "R" rated movies, and beer parties. We must communicate to a lost generation that being a Christian is rejecting Babylon and becoming a citizen of the New Jerusalem. It is turning one's back on greediness and allowing Jesus to create a heart of self-giving in its place.

8.3.7 Homosexuality

The bible clearly forbids homosexuality in Lev. 18:22: "*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.*" Beyond this scriptural prohibition, there are additional moral reasons why homosexuality is a hazard to society.

1. It spreads communicable diseases, including aids. Aids activists have attempted to make it into a heterosexual problem by donating the blood of aids inflected homosexuals to bloodbanks, which ultimately has infected many thousands of heterosexuals, including many hemophiliacs.
2. It used to be illegal in our society, until politically active gays and a liberal media changed its status through a massive media campaign to glamorize and destigmatize and legalize it. However, keep in mind what Thomas Jefferson, one of our founding fathers, said about this approach:

*"It is error alone which needs the support of government [or the media, for that matter].
Truth can stand by itself."*

8.3.8 Idolatry

3 You shall have no other gods before me.

4 You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

[Exodus 20:3-6]

Idolatry is the greatest sin mentioned in the bible. That is why the first commandment from the ten commandments mentioned in the book of Exodus is about idolatry. Most other sins described in this chapter on sin occur because there is idolatry in our lives. The surest indicator that there is idolatry in our lives is that we lust after something or covet it, and that we value it more than we value God. For instance:

1. When we put sex ahead of God as an idol and/or an obsession, then fornication, homosexuality, and lust are the sins we experience. (see Col. 3:5)
2. When we put money ahead of God as an idol and/or an obsession, then lying and covetousness are the sins we are infected with. (see 1 Tim. 6:10)
3. When we put things or possessions ahead of God as an idol (materialism), then covetousness is the sin we are infected with.
4. When we put the praise of men ahead of God as an idol and/or an obsession, pride and envy are the result.
5. If we put our families and loved ones ahead of God as an idol and/or an obsession, then we cannot claim to be Jesus' disciple: "*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*" (Luke 14:26).
6. When we depend more on the government than we depend on God or our own efforts, then socialism and all that evils that accompany it, are the result.

In this context, an idolater is therefore someone who is so preoccupied with himself, his passions, and with his sin that he has no time or desire to serve God or develop a relationship with Him. How do we do this? Through regular prayer and bible study, fellowship with others, and donating our time and our money to charities and the needy. The notable absence of these things, either individually or collectively, is one basis for saying that we have an idolatry problem.

Idolatry is about priorities. If we are going to put God first, then everything else has to come after Him. The way we spend our money and our time is the most reliable indicator of what our priorities are. Our priorities will always be reflected in the way we spend our money and their time. The bible says in Matt. 7:15-17 that we can judge people by their fruits:

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Our fruits are manifested in our behavior as we spend our money and our their time, because these two things are the two most valuable and limited things we can have during our lives. You can see this in the way people worshipped God throughout the old testament. If you do a search on the word "firstfruits", it is mentioned frequently in the context of honoring the Lord and putting him first. Here is an example: *"Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. 29 Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me."* (Exodus 22:28-29) People of old knew that the best way they could demonstrate that God was first in their lives was to give to Him their firstfruits as an offering.

Recall that we said at the beginning of this chapter that when we sin, we are slaves of sin. That slavery to sin keeps us separated from God and incurs his wrath. Idolatry is therefore where most other sins begin. That is why some people say "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." Whenever God isn't first, we are vulnerable to becoming slaves to many other kinds of harmful sins that will steal our allegiance and our time. The apostle Paul says we should avoid the fruits of idolatry:

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.
[Col. 3:5]

Why? Because all of these sins mentioned above (fornication, uncleanness, passion, covetousness) that we become enslaved to detract is from having a relationship with God. That is why some people say that sin separates us or alienates us from God and hinders our prayers. That is also why Prov. 18:1 says: *"A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment."*

Lust (e.g. for money, sex, power) is the origin of most forms of idolatry. Idolatry can be described as a misplaced allegiance or misplaced priorities. See the section on lust for further details on how to address idolatry.

How can we overcome idolatry? By putting God first! Start tithing, and budget some of your most valuable time each week as a donation to helping the needy. When you see how little some other people have, you will see how much you have to be thankful to the Lord for. Another important way to show that we put God first is to pay him respect. This means not saying his name in vain or swearing by his name, which violates Exodus 20:7: *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."* Instead, we should speak highly of the Lord in front of our friends and be thankful for our salvation.

8.3.9 Laziness

Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest, how long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep--so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man.
[Prov. 6:6-11]

It may surprise us that the sin of sloth, which in modern vernacular is laziness, is the most serious of the seven deadly sins. We tend to think of laziness as a weakness or a common human fault. Those of us raised according to the Protestant work ethic see laziness as an undesirable trait. Sloth is something we make jokes about. However, few of us would list it as a major sin.

We look on laziness as a cultural trait that enables us to jest wistfully about those people who appear to have a more “relaxed” attitude toward work than Type A personalities who are on their way to becoming workaholics. Listing sloth as the first of seven deadly sins may seem a little extreme. Those with politically leftist leanings might even consider the destination of sloth on this list of crucial sins to be an attempt by capitalists to use religion as an instrument for condemning any who are not enthusiastic members of the work force. Nevertheless, this designation of the church fathers may have genuine validity.

M. Scott Peck, a social scientist who has written some of the most popular books in the field of psychotherapy, would concur with their assessment of sloth. Peck says that laziness is a major cause of evil, a primary cause of psychological illness, and the main reason that Americans are increasingly failing at human relations.

8.3.9.1 Laziness in Loving

First of all, Peck points out that laziness is what prevents us from being loving, and we all know that failure to be loving has horrendous consequences in our world. Love requires commitment and work, and those who are lazy are seldom willing to expend that kind of energy. For the lazy of the world, love is something that is just supposed to happen. As the song suggests, “Some enchanted evening, you will see a stranger...and somehow you’ll know...” Most popular songs make love seem like an accident. Our culture promotes a view of love that makes this most important characteristic of being human and of being Christian seem to be a spontaneous emotion which can be neither controlled nor created.

When youngsters ask their parents how they will know when they are “in love,” they receive the standard answer: “When you’re in love, you’ll know!” This failure to recognize that love is an art requiring discipline and hard work is largely responsible for the absence of love in so many of our interpersonal relationships. Nowhere is the lovelessness caused by laziness more evident than in the array of broken marriages in our society. Love becomes nonexistent and marriages collapse primarily because most people do not work hard enough to create love and build marital relationships.

I agree with Peck’s analysis. In my limited experience as a counselor, I too have found laziness to be the major cause for the failure of marriages. Time and time again, I have observed that the parties involved in marital disputes have known exactly what was needed to restore the relationship, but were unwilling to put forth the effort. Time and time again, I have been told by marital partners on the verge of separation that they just did not want to do what was necessary to create something positive out of what had become the “empty shell” of a relationship. Some claimed that they had tried too many times already and decided to give up rather than try again. Others have copped out with fatalistic statements such as, “This marriage was just not meant to be.” Still others have assumed that they were incompatible with their mates. In almost every case, those whose marriages failed simply were too lazy to do what was necessary to make their marital relationships work.

In one particular case, the husband had become preoccupied with sports. When he was in high school, he played on the basketball and football teams. In the early years of marriage, his wife tried to share his interest. She went to games with him and cheered for the hometown professional teams. She regularly read the sports pages of the newspapers in order to be informed enough to carry on conversations with her husband about how the players and teams were doing; but his interest in sports grew until it became a total preoccupation. Nothing else in life seemed to interest him. His sexual

interest in his wife diminished. His involvement in church declined and there was room for nothing else in his life but sports.

One day his wife left him for another man. He came to me to see if there was something he could do to get her back. I told him that there was something he could do. He could change. I told him that he could cut back on the time and energy he spent on being a sports fanatic and make a commitment to his wife to give time and attention to things that would interest her. I told him that he would have to rearrange the priorities in his life and begin to give the Lord and his family the time and attention they deserved. He listened to me for a while and then said, "I thought of all that; but to tell the truth, I don't feel it's worth the effort. I want her back, but not that much."

The case may seem a little extreme, but I assure you it is not. All across this country, sports are moving from pastime to preoccupation. More and more people (usually men) are allowing the games of their favorite teams to become the most important events in their lives. Too lazy to get out of the stuffed chairs that seem riveted in front of their television sets, vicariously involved in the exploits of their favorite stars, they become passive observers of the play of others, and feel they have done something significant when their teams win.

It is time that church leaders recognize that spectator sports are nurturing a latent tendency to laziness in the lives of their members. It is time that we all become aware that precious time is being absorbed by a sports mania that threatens devotion to God and to family. How many hours that are desperately needed for building relationships between parents and children are being consumed in the TV football games? How many Monday nights are lost to the pro game of the week? How many New Year's Days are turned into a meaningless progression of bowl games?

When these lazy observers of other people's activities are told about this encroaching evil in their lives, they joke about it. They know that what they are doing is a wrongful waste of precious time. They recognize that their mates and children are being denied one of the most precious gifts that can be given. Nevertheless, they refuse to change. Sloth prevents them from escaping from their lazy preoccupations and from paying attention to that which has eternal significance. They know better, but they are too lazy to do anything about it. Sloth makes what is ultimately important seem not worth the effort. The case of this derelict husband can be duplicated by hundreds of thousands across the country.

8.3.9.2 Laziness, Love, and Will

I knew a woman who was going through a psychological hell. She was suffering from depression that seems to be getting progressively worse. Her husband brought her to believing that unless she received some help, she might hurt herself in some way or even commit suicide.

The first two sessions that I had with her revealed nothing that might be the cause of her neurotic condition. During the third visit, I took a shot in the dark and asked her, "Are you having a sexual affair?" She hesitated for a long time, then said, "Yes," and broke down in tears.

This woman had come from a Christian background and was still actively involved in the life of the church. She held to a conservative theological and ethical system of thought and was well aware of God's judgment on what she was doing. Furthermore, she was aware of the connection between her illicit affair and her depression. She did not need me to point out the nexus between what she was

doing and how she was feeling. She understood all too well that there would be no deliverance from her depression until she repented of her sin and got right with God. I asked her why she did not do what she knew she had to do to find an escape from her dire straights. She answered, “You don’t understand—I am in love. Losing him would be too painful for me to bear. What you are asking is too hard. I just can’t do it.”

Life is not easy. It is hard to do the will of God. Setting one’s life right through repentance is not a happy experience. But if one is too lazy to do what one knows has to be done, there will result a deadness to the heart and soul that psychotherapy cannot cure. Sloth is the demonic tendency to remain where we are when we ought to be moving on to do those things which we know will provide deliverance from the pain of our existence.

When I counsel someone who is about to walk out on a marriage partner, I ask, “Do you *want* to be in love with our spouse? Do you want to be turned on by your mate?” Usually I am told that questions like these are ridiculous, that people cannot make themselves love those for whom they feel nothing. They claim that when love is dead, nothing can be done about it.

After listening to their protestations, I point out that when the Bible describes love, it almost always speaks of something that is willed. Husbands are *commanded* to love their wives. Wives are *commanded* to love their husbands. All people are *commanded* to love their neighbors. There is no doubt about the fact that Jesus spoke of love as something that people should *do*; and if love is something we should do, then lazy people, who are unwilling to put forth the effort to love, are justifiably condemned by our Lord.

I challenge those who come to me for marriage counseling this way: “If you do what I tell you to do for an entire month, I can promise you that by the end of the month, you will be in love with your mate. Are you willing to give it a try?” It is amazing to me how many clients who try to plead that they are not primarily responsible for the breakup of their marriage refuse to accept this challenge. They act as though they are victims of broken marriages when, in reality, they too are causing the demise of the relationship because they are too lazy to do what I ask them to do. They see divorce as an easier alternative than working hard at bringing a dead relationship to life again.

When couples accept my challenge, the results are invariably successful. I offer neither a sophisticated scientific discovery nor a magical formula. My prescription for creating love is so simple that those whom I give it often scoff at what I recommend. “Do ten things each day that you would do if you were in love,” I tell them. “First think in the morning, make a list of ten specific things you could do that day to express your love if you were in love.” I know that if people do loving things, it will not be long before they experience the feelings that are often identified as being in love. Love is not those feelings. Love is what one wills to do to make the other person happy and fulfilled. Doing those things generates the feelings which are associated with “being in love.” In our society, we believe that what a person feels influences what he does. Often, we don’t realize that what a person does influences what he feels.

I tell clients who are trying to recreate positive marital relationships to take the time to write love notes and to say sweet things to their partners. If they make the effort to express love, it will not be long before they feel love.

The story is told of a couple who came to a marriage counselor. At the end of the session, the wife said sadly, “I can’t remember the last time my husband said, ‘I love you.’”

“Is that true?” the counselor inquired.

With some anger in his voice, the husband said, “The day I married her I said, ‘I love you,’ and I told her that if I ever changed my mind, I’d let her know.”

Within the story, his answer is meant to be funny, but its real-life implications are tragic. By not saying our love, we let it die. Love must be expressed in words and deeds in order to be revitalized and grow.

8.3.9.3 Too Lazy to Nurture

Most of the problems related to rearing children in our modern world are caused by sloth. Children become undisciplined because parents are too lazy to do the hard work associated with nurturing them properly in the ways of responsible living. Many parents have given up on trying to get their children to straighten their rooms and make their beds because their children do not readily follow orders. Parents tell me that it is easier to take care of their children’s rooms than to get them to do it themselves. They explain that after trying repeatedly with little success, they give up. I point out to such parents that they are lazy, and that by their own admission, they are unwilling to keep at their responsibility until things are done right. Everybody knows that the most important thing is not the straightening of rooms, but the disciplining of children to do what they are supposed to do, even when they don’t feel like it. The parents who do not keep at the task of requiring their children to do what is expected of them, and who find it too much trouble to be checking constantly on them, are too lazy themselves to do for their children what God requires of them.

Knowing that they can get lazy parents to do the work that they should do, some children deliberately try to drive their parents to the point of such exasperation that they’ll say, “Never mind, I’ll do it myself.” They test their parents to see how hard they are willing to try to get them to work. Usually, they find that their parents have so little perseverance that they choose the easiest course, which is to relieve their children of responsibility.

I can remember as a boy being told that it was my job to do the dishes after dinner. My first response was to pretend that I did not know how to wash them and that I could not learn. My mother proceeded to show me how, and I pretended to be too stupid to learn. I thought she would give up after a couple of weeks, but she knew that I needed to do those dishes more than those dishes needed to be done. When my mother would not give up on me, I realized that there was no escape from the dishes, and that if I said for the next ten years that I did not know how to wash them, then for the next ten years my mother would daily teach me how to do them.

I hear many parents complaining about the kind of music their children like. I am told that many of the new rock records have sexually explicit lyrics and tend to glorify what is evil and ugly. Yet, in most cases, teenagers get into an indiscriminating style of listening to rock music because their parents are too lazy to do anything about it. Sloth is responsible for parents allowing their children to go off to their rooms, shut their doors and listen to the latest recordings of Prince or Black Sabbath. It is laziness on the part of the parents which is responsible for their laissez-faire attitude toward the development of their children’s taste in music.

To ask what records are being purchased, to ask about the messages of the songs and to discuss the value of the music with their children requires more time and effort than most parents are willing to

expend. Thus, a generation is left to the corrupting influence of a rock subculture because so many parents are unwilling to address the hard task of training their teenagers. It is true that parental control can become too restrictive. However, in most cases, the problems of youth are not related to parents demanding too much of them, but rather, demanding too little, because they are slothful.

I do not mean to suggest that if parents work as hard as they should at disciplining their children, all will be ideal. It should be noted that God had two perfect children, Adam and Eve, whom He reared in the perfect environment of Eden; yet both of them rebelled against His will. Where there is freedom there will be rebellion; still, parents should imitate the Heavenly Father, and never give up on their children. God works hard at being our Father and we should work hard at being parents to our children.

8.3.9.4 Too Lazy to Enjoy

Joy in Christ requires a commitment to working at the Christian lifestyle. Salvation comes as a gift, but the joy of salvation demands disciplined action. Most Christians I know have just enough of the Gospel to make them miserable, but not enough to make them joyful. They know enough about the biblical message to keep them from doing those things which the world tempts them to do; but they do not have enough of a commitment to God to do those things through which they might experience the fullness of His joy.

I know of a young woman who lacked any semblance of joy in her life, even though she had accepted Christ as her Savior. She lived a life of relative piety and went to church on Sundays with fair regularity. Nevertheless, life was depressing for her and she seemed bored with it. She went to a Christian psychotherapist for help, but after several sessions with him, felt that the effort was futile. Then one day she came into her therapist's office with her face radiant with excitement "I've had the most wonderful day," she said. "This morning I could not get my car started, so I called the pastor and asked him if he could drive me to my appointment with you. He said he would, but on the way he had to stop by the hospital and make a few calls. I went with him and while I was in the hospital, I visited some elderly people in one of the wards. I read from the Bible and prayed with them. By the time the morning was over, I was higher than a kite. I haven't felt this good in years."

The psychotherapist quickly responded, "Now we know how to make you happy! Our problem is solved! Now we know how to keep you out of the doldrums!"

Much to his surprise, the young woman answered, "You don't expect me to do this sort of thing every day, do you?"

Here is a very specific case in which the person knew what she had to do to experience joy, but was too lazy to do it. Sloth takes away the possibility of joy. Those who are not happy should make a list of those things they know God wants changed in their lives. Then, asking the Lord to help them, they should set out to bring about those changes. Those who allow God to have His way with them will find their lives infused with the joy and peace they ask.

Unfortunately, the tendency to be controlled by sloth kills the desire to change for the better. Sloth is a condition of the heart which works against doing what is necessary to find joy in life or to experience salvation. Most people know they need to be saved sometime and thing that they may get around to

putting things right with God some day, but they lack motivation to get moving on it now. Sloth takes a terrible toll.

8.3.9.5 Too Lazy to Become

Some people are afraid of becoming Christians because they know that there are changes they will have to make, and are unwilling to do so. They want cheap grace that requires little response to what Jesus has done for them. They do not accept the fact that the good works God desires of them are means through which their joy might become full. They are afraid to become what God believes that they can be, because they are too lazy to face the challenges of living out the will of God in their daily activities.

It is possible in any church to find people who want to be a part of the group, not because they find that the orthodox positions of Christianity are true, but because they do not want to think and work out the meaning of the Bible through honest labor. They find it easier to believe things to be true because some authoritarian person declares them to be true. They accept what they are taught without evaluation or question. It is work to search the Scriptures in order to determine whether or not what is being taught is biblical.

It is hard to struggle with working out the relationship of salvation to the affairs of everyday life. It is easier to let some “authority” tell us how to live and to explain what the Bible requires of us. The lazy like to be delivered from the arduous tasks associated with thinking about the meaning of Scripture for their lives and the painful process of changing their lifestyles.

When I was in the eight grade, my math teacher gave our class a textbook which had the answers to the problems in the back of the book. She told us not to use those answers, but to work the problems out for ourselves. Most of us in the class could not resist the temptation to peep at those answers as we did our homework. We found it so much easier to “work out” the assigned problems if we had the answers in advance. However, those of us who took this easy route with our homework usually flunked the tests. I am convinced that the same is true in the Christian life. Those who try to get by on the answers of others probably will be unprepared for the real tests of life. Each of us should struggle with what we have been taught through Scripture and work out the meaning of these teachings for our everyday lives so that we can be certain of the faith that lies within us.

The church too often provides a haven for the slothful, especially if leaders want unquestioning acceptance of what they preach. Christians need to be encouraged to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). They need to avoid tendencies to sloth in their lives. Growing up in Christ is hard work, and other people cannot do it for us. We are called to do those things that will foster spiritual maturity.

8.3.9.6 A Style of Procrastination

Parents know that one of the most effective techniques children use to get out of assigned work is to promise to do it later. Procrastination is an effective tool for the slothful. They can make themselves appear responsible even though they do nothing. The slothful hope that if they put off their work long enough, they can somehow escape from it.

Lazy college students usually put off reading the assigned textbook material until the night before the final examination, and usually fail to do research papers until the night before they are due. Procrastination is the most common cause of academic failure in higher education.

On several occasions, I have run out of gas because I did not feel like going to get the tank filled up. Somehow I felt that a later time would be better and, in each case, I suffered unnecessarily for not doing what I should have done.

Procrastination is one of the most effective weapons in Satan's arsenal. It is impossible to estimate the number of people who intended to become Christians at some later time, but who were not willing to make the decision when they were confronted with the Gospel. King Agrippa responded to the convicting message of the Apostle Paul by saying: "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" (Acts 26:28, KJV). Sloth causes us to put off until tomorrow what is not absolutely required today. Agrippa put off making a decision for Christ and probably never did get around to doing what he was almost persuaded to do after hearing Paul's defense.

I remember attending revival meetings as a boy in which "Almost Persuaded" was used as a closing hymn:

*"Almost persuaded, now to believe;
Almost persuaded, Christ to receive;"
Seems now some soul to say,
"Go, Spirit, go Thy way,
Some more convenient day
On thee I'll call."*

The Bible always calls us to act in the present. The Old Testament leader cried out:

*"Choose this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
[Josh. 24:15, KJV]*

In the New Testament we are told: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Those who are lazy can always find some reasons for delaying action, hoping that if they delay long enough, they will not have to act at all. Usually, they procrastinate until it is too late to act.

There are many parents who know that they should take time to share the Gospel with their children. They know that they ought to instruct their children in biblical teachings and that they ought to lead their children in family worship. They know what they ought to do, but they suffer from inertia. When their children assume a course of action that is destructive and sinful, they cry out, "If only I had done what I was supposed to do as a parent, this would not have happened." Procrastinating parents may hope subconsciously that even if they do not share the teachings of the Bible with their children, others will. They often realize too late that their children have failed to receive what they should have in Christian instruction. In the words of the nineteenth-century American poet, John Greenleaf Whittier:

*For all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have been!"*

I am convinced that on Judgment Day, the sins of omission will loom larger than the sins of commission. Consequently, more sins will have resulted from sloth than from all the other sins put together. In his letter to the church of Ephesus, Paul writes: “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). His admonition carries significant implications for all Christians. It is important to think of what can be done for Christ at home or at work, to consider ways to contribute to the well-being of others, to strive to become all that we can become as we do those things which God has called us to do. It is tragic to let opportunities of the moment slip away because of sloth, to allow life to be consumed in laziness. It is vital to respond to the challenges that each day presents.

One day a middle-aged man came to my office to talk with me. He explained how he had let the opportunity to serve God in a heroic and magnificent manner slip away from him. He told me, “Doc, once I was going to be a missionary and do something important for the kingdom of God, but I didn’t do it. I kept putting off taking the necessary steps that would enable me to fulfill the will of God for my life. Now it’s too late. My time has passed. There’s no way I can ever do what will please God. I’m married and have two kids in college. I’m in debt up to my ears. There’s no way I can stop everything in order to take up the call to Christian service. I came to urge you to talk to your students and keep them from making the same mistake I made. Keep them from putting off serving Jesus until it’s too late.”

I almost lost my temper with him. “Look,” I said, “I don’t want to hear about what you might have done for Jesus twenty years ago. I want to talk about what you are going to do for Him today. I think you’re using the failures of the past to evade the challenges of the present. You’re still excusing yourself from the tasks which God has set before you. Only now you’re trying to make you present responsibilities seem unimportant compared to what you think you should have done twenty years ago.”

The man was shaken by what I laid on him, and that allowed me the opportunity to go on. “You may think that the little things you can do for the Lord now are relatively unimportant, but the Bible says that if we are faithful in a very little thing, we shall have authority over great things. Why not get on with doing the work of God that is waiting to be done right now?”

8.3.9.7 Getting Rid of Sloth

The way to rid of sloth is to become subject to the Holy Spirit. The same Jesus, who died 2,000 years ago on the cross to atone for our sins, is resurrected and present with us now through His Holy Spirit. All of us who believe in what Jesus did for us then are able to invite the Holy Spirit to effect changes in our lives here and now.

In the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul explains some of the changes that the Holy Spirit will bring about in our lives if we want Him to: “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through the Spirit which dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

1. The life generated by the Holy Spirit displaces the deadness that seems to typify those who are subject to the demonic influence of sloth. Laziness saps the vitality out of human existence. All of us who have wasted time know of that debilitation.

Days spent watching soap operas on television do not invigorate us. Rather, they leave us with a psychological fatigue. Sloth does not create a sense of well-being, but leaves us dissipated and groggy. However, when we open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit, He “quickens” us. Just as new life was imparted to the corpse of Jesus, giving Him the ability to rise from the dead, even so the Holy Spirit will give life to those who are deadened by sloth. Our repentance from sin and inward surrender to the will of God makes us fertile soil for the fruit of the Spirit to take root and grow, driving the deadness of our souls away.

2. Also, surrender to the Holy Spirit gives us a sense of direction as to what we should do. The Spirit thus enables us to overcome one of the major contributors to inaction and sloth—indecision. Without a sense of direction, we often find ourselves paralyzed by inability to decide what we ought to do. The Spirit of God delivers us from such a state of ambiguity by helping us to discern what we ought to be doing with our lives.

A young woman who was a student at Eastern College seemed unable to generate any enthusiasm for studying. Her grades were poor and her attitude toward her work was extremely negative. She was a classic example of sloth. She was continually late for class, and often cut. She could be counted on to drift off to sleep during the lecture on those rare days when she showed up to class.

Halfway through her first semester at college, she became friends with a vivacious Christian who was a dynamic leader in the Youth For Christ movement. Her new friend took an intense interest in her and, over the course of a few weeks, led her into a conversion experience that transformed her into a vital Christian. Overnight her academic performance changed. She was alert in class. Her assignments were done with care and insight. Her interest in the subject matter would have delighted any teacher. When asked her about the dramatic change in her attitude, she explained that since she had accepted Christ, she had gained direction and purpose for her life. She claimed that she sensed that God was leading her into Christian service and that this gave her academic programs new meaning. She didn’t mind working, because she knew what she was working for.

God provides a purpose for life. He convinces those who surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives that they are called to be on a mission in His name. When such a sense of divine calling is imparted to people, they inevitably respond with enthusiasm and are freed from the burden of sloth.

3. Fear of failure is a major contributor to laziness. The Apostle Paul tells us: “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship” (Rom. 8:15). This is good news to those of us who have found our lives frozen in sloth because we were afraid to act. If we are afraid that our efforts will come to nothing, and that we will appear ludicrous for attempting what we cannot do, we will probably attempt very little.

It is hard to say what percentage of children do poorly in school because they do not try, but I believe that many do not try because they are afraid of failure. These children often do not attempt to do their assignments because they know that if they do not try, they can still maintain the image of being intelligent. However, if they try and fail, they will be exposed as the inferior persons they believe themselves to be. Sloth is nurtured by fear. As long as children can convince the significant others in their lives that they are failing because they are not trying, they do not run the risk of failing because they are inadequate.

All of this changes when persons surrender their lives to the will of God and allow God to impart His Spirit to them. In Romans 8:16-17, we read: “It is the Spirit Himself bearing witness to our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”

Feelings of inferiority will be eliminated in those who are inwardly convinced by the Holy Spirit that they are children and heirs of God, and that they will be glorified with Christ forever. The new status imparted to Spirit-filled Christians will create a confidence and self-assurance that will encourage them to attempt things they hitherto considered impossible. Their relationship with God through the infilling of the Spirit transforms them into fearless doers of those things they believe God wants them to do. Their new self-confidence overcomes the fears generated by former feelings of inferiority. This self-confidence is the result of their new concept of themselves as sons and daughters of God. The immobility of sloth is abolished and they are willing to give each task their best efforts, not worrying about the consequences. They know that if they faithfully do the will of God, the results need not be of concern to them. God has called them to be faithful rather than to be successful. They are assured that “in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

4. Lastly, the Holy Spirit motivates us out of a slothful state of consciousness because a needy world is waiting for us to become what we should be and do what we should do. “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:19).

When the Holy Spirit fills us, we begin to feel what Jesus feels for His fallen creation. There are injustices, corrupt social practices, arms races, and wars. Economic oppression, hunger, and racial discrimination seem universal. Truly all of creation is in desperate need of the transforming efforts of a people led and empowered by God. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is not intended only to perfect us so that we will be fit for heaven when we die, but to equip us to be God’s agents for change in this present age. The Spirit imparts to us the passion of Christ’s mission which He Himself set forth:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”
[Luke 4:18-19, KJV]

To be filled with the Spirit is to have our hearts broken by the things that break the heart of Jesus. To be alive in the Spirit is to view people through the eyes of Christ. Consequently, whenever we see anyone suffering, we will feel what Christ feels for that person and seek to alleviate that suffering. Whenever we see anyone hungry, we will view that person as Jesus does and seek to feed that person. Whenever we see someone imprisoned, we will long to see that captive set free because we desire what Christ wills for that person. Being filled with the Spirit creates within us a hunger for justice and a craving for the salvation of the lost. With such an orientation to the world, it is impossible to maintain a slothful attitude.

Sloth deadens, but the Spirit gives life. Sloth thrives on feelings of inferiority, but the Spirit gives us the assurance that we are the children of God. Sloth is self-centered, but the Spirit creates a burning desire to change the world. Sloth leaves us bored and empty, but in the Spirit we find the fullness of God’s joy.

8.3.10 Lust⁴

Sigmund Freud shocked the Victorian world by declaring that sex was a preoccupation of all human beings. His comprehensive study of human nature and his analysis of human behavior led him to conclude that all of life is permeated with a craving for sexual gratification. According to Freud, even religious experience was filled with sexual overtones and meanings. When, as a young graduate student, I first read Freud, I dismissed his theories as totally devoid of truth. I refused to accept his premises and certainly disagreed with his conclusions. However, I have come to believe that this founder of modern psychotherapy cannot be dismissed so easily. This cynical explorer of human motivations makes more sense of what people think and do than most of us are willing to admit on reading his work for the first time.

The Apostle Paul probably would have found much in Freud's opinions with which he could have agreed. Paul, like Freud, understood lust to be a repressed, illicit sexual desire, which is a normal part of every human psyche. Paul made clear in his epistles that before the transforming power of Christ comes into our lives, we are people who are controlled by the lusts of the flesh. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17, KJV). As a consequence of being fallen creatures, we have a natural tendency toward sexual perversion:

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

*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 recompense of their error which was meet
[Rom. 1:24-27]*

According to Paul, lust is a perversion of love. Lust is the result of a demonic twisting of love. When we are converted by the Holy Spirit, we will be restored to what we were meant to be, and only then will we be motivated by love.

It is clear in Paul's writings that the primary thing that differentiates the behavior of the new person in Christ from the unconverted person is that the new person lives life to express love while the old person lived life to fulfill lust. This simple dichotomy separating the love-motivated Christian from the lust-motivated person could lead many of us to doubt our salvation. Paul's differentiation between these two types of people seems so crisply clear that when we experience lust, we may take the experience as evidence that we are not Christians. It is easy to conclude from Pauline writings that lust is the litmus test that designates us as unregenerate types who are alienated from God and devoid of the Holy Spirit. Not only does Paul offer us a clear-cut division of humanity into one group made up of love-motivated Christians and another group made up of lust-motivated sinners, but John and James support his judgment. Added to the spiritual self-doubt that is generated by these apostolic writings are the words of Jesus, who tells us: "You have heard it said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'" But I

⁴ Portions excerpted from Seven Deadly Sins, Anthony Campolo, Victor Books, 1987, ISBN 0-89693-533-7, pp. 32-53.

say to you that every one who looked at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

When new Christians read passages such as these, they sometimes are driven to despair. It would be easy for a newly converted person to reason, “Christians are delivered from lust and do not even think lustful thoughts. But I still have lustful cravings and I still harbor lustful thoughts. Therefore, I must not be a Christian.” The problem is made worse by the fact that there are always some church members around who claim to have reached a state of sinless perfection in which they no longer have any lustful dimensions to their personalities.

The Apostle Paul recognized this tendency to despair among sincere Christians who, in spite of accepting Christ as Lord, still experience lust in their lives. His response to those who taught that the saved are spiritually perfected is brilliantly set forth in his Epistle to the Philippians. There were pious pretenders in the Philippian church who put down those who, in humble honesty, admitted to having sin in their hearts. Paul endeavored to set the record straight on this issue.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended in Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12-14, KJV).

In this passage Paul makes it clear that as a Christian, he was a person who was “in process.” He declared that the Spirit did not instantaneously transform him into a perfected person; because there was much within him that warred against the work of the Spirit. In the Epistle to the Romans, he wrote:

*For I delight in the Law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
[Rom. 7:22-24]*

When we become Christians, we give to the Holy Spirit the freedom to transform us into new creatures who are freed from sin and motivated by love. However, this transformation takes time. The lusts of the flesh must be driven out of our consciousness, and that process takes a lifetime to complete. If we are spiritually disciplined through regular prayer, Bible study and the strengthening fellowship of other Christians, we can experience increasing conquest over the flesh by the Spirit. There will be struggles and temporary setbacks, but in the midst of all this Paul gives us this assurance.

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies
[2 Cor. 4:8-10]*

When we say that it will take more than a lifetime to be freed from all the effects of the lusts of the flesh, we do so in the confidence that beyond the grave we will become people who are fully motivated by love as God intends us to be. Jude 24 tells us that when the Spirit finishes His work in us, He will be able joyfully to present us “faultless” before the throne of grace. And the Apostle John gives us the good news that when we see Christ, either on His return or in the resurrection, we shall be as pure as Jesus Himself (1 John 3:2).

While You're Waiting for the Second Coming

Having faced the realistic declaration of Scripture that freedom from lust is not something which is instantaneously experienced with conversion, but is the result of a long and arduous spiritual struggle, we must press on toward becoming what Christ expects us to become. In order to do this we must carefully examine those things which increase lust, so that we may avoid them, and discover those things which enhance love, so that we can develop them in our lives.

I have already stated that lust is a perversion of love. In the famous narrative poem *Don Juan* by Lord Byron, we read of a man who seeks psychological gratification through sexual escapades. Don Juan looks for a woman who will meet *his* needs and satisfy *his* appetites. If the libertine of our day regards Don Juan as an ideal type to be imitated, as he seduces woman after woman, he misses the whole point of the story. Don Juan is a tragic figure who hungers for something that he never seems to experience. He longs for an erotic turn-on which will leave him not only physically satiated but psychically fulfilled. Don Juan seeks that woman who will make him fully alive and emotionally ecstatic. Like the worshipers of Dionysius in the ancient Greek world, Don Juan hopes for a sexual experience which will fill the spiritual vacuum of his soul. His tragedy is inevitable because lust does not deliver what it seems to promise. The gratification sought through sexual conquests is never delivered. Don Juan, like the rest of us, is deluded into thinking that the living out of sexual fantasies can give unspeakable joy.

Most of us have fantasized sexual experiences. The only difference between us and Don Juan is that he lived out his fantasies, while we usually do not, often more because we lack opportunity or audacity rather than because we are spiritual.

There was a time when I would have pretended that such was not the case. I was sure that the other Christians I knew would be shocked and break fellowship with me if they knew what went on in my mind. Those in the church seemed beyond the lustful fantasies which plagued my consciousness. However, I have since learned that I am not the only one in the church who, from time to time, fantasizes about the possible joys of sexual liaisons. In the words of one preacher: "It's depressing to realize that most of us are like the rest of us." The problem we have with lust is common to all who live this side of Eden.

What we all must learn is that lust does not deliver what it promises. If we were to live out our fantasies, we would not experience psychic ecstasy; instead we would experience the filthy side of personhood in a heightened sense. Soren Kierkegaard, having lived out one of his sexual fantasies by visiting a house of prostitution, wrote in his diary: "Tonight I paid a woman in order to experience my own despicableness." It may be true that at the moment of sexual satisfaction the person motivated by lust feels transported into a state of bliss; but that brief moment is quickly followed by a sense of emptiness and shame.

Erich Fromm, a disciple of Freud, understood this truth and broke ranks with his academic mentor primarily because he recognized that Freud failed to grasp the real hunger of human personality. According to Fromm, all of us have been created to gain our ultimate fulfillment in life from loving, rather than through the gratification of our sexual appetites. This world-famous neo-Freudian humanist is correct when he declares that lust creates a desire to gain through sex with the partners of our fantasies what can only be gained through loving self-giving.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Roman Christians about the delusions of thinking that sex will provide our richest satisfactions. He described in graphic detail how the failure to gain the expected gratification will drive us to more and more extreme perversity as we hope that in some stranger and more esoteric sexual experiences. Lust leads us to extreme degradation as we seek to gain a sense of fulfillment by living out the fantasies which it generates. Paul further explained that lust drives people into such things as witchcraft. A study of Satan worship will reveal that in most cases, people get into it as a make-believe ritual that is part of perverted sexual games. Only later do they begin to view their satanic worship as a religious experience.

Some years ago, a foreign film captured the attention of students of cinema. The film, *La Dolce Vita*, picked up the theme of the gradual denigration of a modern man living in the sophisticated circles of Roman society, as he continually sought new ways to satisfy his sexual appetite. The film traced his decline into the occult, step by step, as he moved from one kind of sexual practice to another. In his moral collapse, he sought ever new forms of stimulation as the practices already tried lost their ability to excite him. Throughout his descent into the depths of demonic corruption, there were constant appeals from those who represented purity and love, but his lust controlled him and eventually led him into a pit of filth and degradation.

8.3.10.1 Lust as illusion

Perhaps the most deceptive aspect of lust is that the more a person tries to satisfy it, the more intense it becomes. To feed lust is to generate an even greater hunger for its gratification. The person who yields to lust finds that the more the lust of the flesh is fed, the more ravishing it becomes. In short, when it comes to sexual lust, the more one gets, the less one is satisfied. It is this desperate longing created by yielding to lust that drives the individual into the hands of the demonic.

The longing to satisfy sexual lusts becomes so strong that one is willing to call upon the powers of darkness in hope that the hungers of the flesh might be satiated. The ultimate tragedy is that the Evil One is the great deceiver and gives what people *think* they crave, only to leave them emotionally empty and spiritually unfulfilled. Satan mocks those who worship him by delivering what they want while denying what they really need. Lust is his ultimate weapon in the battle for souls.

Lust is an illusion, but love never fails. As Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 13:8, "Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away." It is ironic that setting aside the desire for one's own gratification, and seeking to bring joy and fulfillment into the lives of others, provides the psychic gratification that eludes those who seek it through lust.

It is easy to see from Mother Teresa her a deep joy and serenity. She does not seek joy for herself, nor does she make self-actualization a quest of her life; nevertheless, she has found both. She realizes that the joy for which the heart longs cannot be gained by seeking for it, but comes unexpectedly to those who lovingly sacrifice themselves and all that they possess for the sake of the joy of others. It is this lesson that we learn from Christ's words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:24-25).

In order to illustrate this biblical truth we will contrast two marriages. In the first marriage, the husband complains constantly that his wife does not gratify a vast array of his psychic/sexual needs.

He is planning to leave her and take up with another woman who “really turns me on.” “Hey,” he says, “it’s not my fault that she fails to gratify me. We can’t change the way we are.”

This husband portrays the selfishness of so many who enter into marriage with the expectation that their partners are obligated to meet their needs. Blinded by the pop psychology outlined in some of today’s bestsellers, they think that marriage is an arrangement destined to deliver physical and emotional delights and actualize all their potentialities for happiness. These children of the cult of romanticism have bought into the lyrics of the songs that lead our hit parade and tell us such things as: “Lay Your Hands on Me,” “I Miss You, Can’t Stand to Live Without You,” “Talk to Me, Me, Me,” “Fairy Tale Lovers,” and “Lost Without Your Love.”

The self-centeredness of much of our romanticism is often ignored, but anyone who carefully examines the expectations that people usually bring to marriages will discover that most of them seek their own gratification without realizing that such an orientation has nothing to do with love. In the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:5, love is “not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.”

In the second marriage, the husband is committed to his wife’s happiness. Every day he tries to think of something he can do that will give her joy. I got to know this man because he brought his wife to me for vocational counseling. She had some writing ability and he wanted to know if it was possible for her to enroll in a journalism program at our college. Though her husband had not had the opportunity for a college education, he was excited about the prospect for his wife. He promised that if the college would take her as a student, she would have plenty of time for study because he would do the housework. When I asked him if it bothered him that his wife would be better educated than he was, I realized that he had never thought about it. All that he wanted for his wife was to have the opportunity to fulfill her dream to be a write and to that end he was willing to make any sacrifice. I have seldom met anyone was thrilled about life as that man was, or, in the terminology of Abraham Maslow, more self-actualized. Love meets our needs; lust delivers a void.

Those who complain that this biblical prescription for life ignores the sexual needs of people, belong to what James H.S. Bossard, one of the graduate school professors at the University of Pennsylvania, mockingly called, “The pure orgasm school of thought.” Bossard claimed that those who think that the “right” partners and the “right” techniques will produce marital bliss are greatly mistaken. According to his observations, those who paid little attention to things like sexual adjustment, but concentrated on making each other happy, proved to be the most sexually fulfilled persons he knew. I concur with Bossard and claim that lust betrays; as we live out the fantasies which lust generates, we gain little satisfaction in bed or, for that matter, in life. On the other hand, if we love our marital partners and sacrifice for *their* happiness and fulfillment, our marriages will deliver more joy than we ever could have imagined and more sexual pleasure than those who live by lust ever could dream possible.

8.3.10.2 Lust as Immaturity

In 1 Corinthians 13, often called the Love Chapter of the Bible, the Apostle Paul points out that love is mature. He declares that there comes a time when our childish emotions must be outgrown because we are required to live like adults. Paul wrote in verse 11: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (KJV).

Lust is a childish thing. This is particularly evident as it expresses itself in the lives of married people. A young woman I knew enjoyed having an array of men want her as a partner. She dated many and was considered a femme fatale who could have any man she wanted. She eventually married, but in her marital state could not find contentment with one man; she wanted them all.

The inability to make choices is a primary mark of immaturity. I can remember when I was a boy going to the store with a quarter in hand, and having the delightful opportunity to buy some candy. I remember standing in front of the candy counter for what must have seemed forever to the clerk, trying to decide which kind of candy I should choose. There were so many different kinds that I would find myself immobilized.

When the impatience of the clerk finally would force me to decide, I would be filled with anxiety, and as soon as I had made my selection, I would wish for another kind of candy, which suddenly seemed much more appealing than what I had in my hand.

Being unable to choose one of a variety of possible delights is cute behavior for a ten-year-old, but is unbecoming a person of thirty-five. By that age people should have the courage to make decisions and then to believe that what they have decided is the most glorious of all the choices that could have been made. To make a choice and then vacillate and yearn for something else is childish.

At an office party, a junior executive began to “make moves” on one of the secretaries. After several of his clumsy come-ons, I overheard the young woman say with a tone of irritation in her voice, “Bill, why don’t you grow up and go home to your wife?”

“What a fitting response,” I thought. That was exactly what was wrong with that man—he needed to grow up. He had chosen a woman for his wife, and still wanted her; but he wanted other women too. In his immaturity, he refused to accept the limitations which his decision had imposed on him. He did not recognize that maturity involves a willingness to accept the limitations that go with choices and an ability to find joy in the situation one has chosen.

Lust thrives on immaturity. It encourages the imagination to fantasize about what it would be like to have this partner or that partner in bed. It gets people to play foolish games in which they try to hold on to the sexual partner they have chosen while at the same time trying to seduce for their own pleasure others whom they are forbidden to possess. But Scripture teaches that one should “put away childish things,” or, to put it more bluntly, to grow up!

Maturity is not passive resignation to the inevitable, but rather the state of mind that enables persons to create magnificent possibilities for happiness in the situations in which they find themselves. Abraham Lincoln once said, “Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.” That makes sense. In most cases, persons who are sexually fulfilled in their marriages are that way because, having made a decision to be married, they simultaneously made a decision to find sexual fulfillment with their mates. On the other hand, much sexual dissatisfaction in marriage stems from the fact that people refuse to take full advantage of the possibilities for sexual gratification that are inherent in their marriages. Refusing to live within the limitations imposed by their marriages, they lust after other possibilities. If such childish persons do get out of their marriages and into the relationships about which they have fantasized, they undoubtedly will be disappointed. Their lustful cravings will not be gratified with their new partners, no matter what they dream, because their own failure to be satisfied with what they have is the real cause of their joylessness. Like little children, they do not want what

they possess, regardless of how wonderful it is; but instead long for what they are not allowed to have. The immature, who do not glory in what is theirs to enjoy, are easy victims of lust.

8.3.10.3 Lust as a Denial of Death

One of Freud's most brilliant contemporary interpreters, Ernest Becker, in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Denial of Death*, contends that throughout our lives a growing consciousness of our own mortality is an increasingly dominant factor in our behavior. Becker helps us to see that most of what we do, and especially our sexual behavior, is the result of our vain attempt to suppress the intolerable awareness that we are moving inexorably toward death. Our bodies constantly provide reminders that we are getting older. Who among us middle-aged citizens has not stood pensively in front of a mirror and viewed with dismay what is, while remembering what has been lost?

Our thighs have become flabby and our hair (if there is any) loses its lustre. Cosmetics can do only so much for biological clocks that are winding down. In the midst of the malaise brought on by encroaching death, we look for deliverance. Usually we do not care from whence the deliverance comes, as long as it provides an escape from the pain of knowing what is happening to us. We will accept all forms of lies and distractions if they can make us forget the sinking feeling in the depths of our souls. Such is the fertile soil in which lust can be planted and thrive.

The lusts of the flesh seem to offer a diversion, causing us to forget that we are dying. They promise relief from the emptiness that comes with our knowledge of the inevitability of death. The imagined joy of being transported from the mundane by forbidden sexual pleasures seems like a way of salvation to our lost souls.

Who among us does not know of some person who had position, wealth, and family and then threw them all aside to fulfill a craving of the flesh? Which one of us has not thought of risking all that we hold dear in order to enjoy a moment of illicit pleasure? How often have we marveled at the scope of the disasters caused by yielding to sexual passions? David destroyed the glory of his kingdom in his lust for Bathsheba. Samson forfeited his charisma and strength for Delilah. Solomon allowed his wisdom to turn to cynicism because of his insatiable cravings for women. Who has not shuddered at what lust will drive people to do? Behind it all, contends Becker, is the desire to escape the consciousness of mortality.

The woman who is approaching menopause experiences a sense that her life is ending sooner than she thought it would. She becomes painfully aware that she is entering the waning years of her existence. The efforts of her husband to comfort her are of no avail; she realizes that she is losing more than her ability to bear children. She longs to express groanings which cannot be uttered. She wants to be young and attractive again. Then, unexpectedly, a man several years younger than she shows an interest in her. She wonders if, in spite of all that has happened to her over the years, she still possesses seductive powers. She asks herself if she appears to him younger than she really is. "Perhaps the aging process is not as obvious as I thought," she says to herself. "If I could just captivate him, then I would know." Then insidiously, lust begins to manifest itself. She imagines what it would be like to experience sexual ecstasy in his arms. And it is only a matter of time before she does. Her escape from reality happens without regard to the consequences.

There are few people I pity more than those middle-aged men trying to be "cool." With their slick casual shirts unbuttoned at the neck to display an array of gold chains, they attempt to look smooth and

sophisticated. They try so hard to be men who know what life is all about as they hungrily eye the women. They fail to notice if their stomachs have swelled from drinking too much beer and their bellies hang over their belts. They try to conceal what is obvious to any objective observer; they are scared little men, pathetic parodies of the selves they would like to be. They look for some validation of the façade they project, and they think that it will come if they can just hustle some women. Any woman will do. They think to themselves, "I know I'm just as good in bed as I've ever been, maybe better." Lust is nurtured by their fears. They want sex for reasons that they themselves do not understand. The truth of why they lust is too painful for them to bear.

We cannot delude ourselves that all of this goes on only outside the church. Many pastors have sought escape from their fears of death by way of excursions into sexual immorality. Their own sermons have made them more aware than most people of the transitory nature of life. The funerals and tragedies of others are part of a pastor's daily work and make the awareness of his/her own frailty all too real. It is difficult for any member of the clergy to be unaware of the presence of death in the midst of life. The laity is prone to assume that those in the pulpit live in the assurance of eternal life and therefore do not fear death. Many members would be shocked to learn of any self-doubt or lack of faith in eternal life in their clergy. Pastors are aware of this and respond by pretending that their steadfast convictions keep them from ever being troubled by such things. They learn to conceal their troubled souls within their clerical robes. But the fear of death is there, and the false affirmation of life through lust is a real danger.

I tremble at the thoughts of pastors counseling women in one-to-one situations. Very often such counseling sessions are difficult to handle because they encourage a level of honesty and reciprocity in which the counselor is often confessing to the counselee. Then there are two desperate souls reaching out to each other for affirmation. At first it is just an affectionate embrace...simply an expression of Christian love. Later there comes more...and still later... Hurting people are vulnerable. Spiritual counseling intensifies the consciousness of hurt and makes people seek comfort and escape without thinking rationally about the consequences. Lust lurks in the shadows of our minds waiting to express itself whenever fears about death and about the meaninglessness of life are exposed.

At a recent meeting of psychotherapists, a survey of participants revealed that a majority of them at one time or another had experienced sexual relations with their clients. While I am sure that the percentage of pastors who have such experiences would be significantly lower, I am also sure that the realities would be shocking. Because of the vulnerability to sexual exploitation that exists in counseling situations, extreme care must be exercised. Ideally, counseling should occur between members of the same sex. The next best arrangement is for a pastor to have his wife present when he counsels members of the opposite sex. Finally, if counseling must take place cross-sexually without others being present, it should be in a setting that is open and visible. To counsel behind closed doors is asking for trouble. Some of my more sophisticated colleagues in the counseling business will disagree with this advice. They will say that I fear that lust is lurking in every consciousness and that people will be tempted to give vent to their lusts whenever opportunity presents itself. In response I must say that it is much better to be safe than sorry. Too many ministries have been left in ruins and too many people have been hurt because insufficient care was exercised as to where and with whom counseling was undertaken.

8.3.10.4 The Insights of Feminists

It is amazing to witness so much wholesale condemnation of the insights of feminist leaders on the part of some who speak for evangelical Christianity. The truth is that much of what the feminists are saying needs to be heard by Christians, especially in male-dominated churches. Often the most meaningful insights into the nature of lust, and the most intense condemnations of lust come from the feminist movement. This is easy to understand, since women are more likely to be victimized by lust than are men. Over the years, women have lost their reputations as men have laughingly “sown their wild oats.” Women have been the victims of sexual exploitation and rape. They are the ones who suffer most from the sins of the flesh.

There are those who argue that it takes two to have sex and that the man and woman are equally to blame. At first that argument seems viable, but careful sociological studies will poke holes in it. In-depth interviews have revealed that men and women relate to sex and love quite differently. Men find it easy and almost natural to separate love and sex. Consequently, it is very easy for them to have sexual affairs without much emotional involvement. Most women, on the other hand, have a strong tendency to link sex with love. When they have sexual affairs, they are usually more emotionally committed to their partners. This significant difference means that usually the sexual act is very meaningful to the woman, while the male partner has more interest in the physical gratification. While studies show that this differentiation between men and women is breaking down, demonstrating that it has cultural rather than biological roots, the differentiation still holds for most of the population.

In light of that differentiation, it is easy to see why women are more likely than men to be exploited because of lust. In another study it was revealed that while women most feared being used and then discarded, the greatest fear of men was failure.

A second reason for the condemnation of lust by feminists is their anger at being viewed as sex objects. They are angry with a society that expects women to have bodies shaped to stimulate the sexual desires of men. They rail against the cheerleaders at pro football games who serve no other purpose than to expose themselves to the lascivious ogling of the male spectators between plays of the game. They are tired of being evaluated for jobs on the basis of how they look instead of being judged by what they can do. They are irate over a tendency within our culture to make their primary *raison d'être* to be sexually pleasing.

Is it any wonder that women with dignity reject such a function? Is it any surprise that they stand against a culture which would make them sexual things whose primary function is to serve as lust objects to a leering male population? Why does not the church join their crusade? Why is it that all that seems to concern us is the kind of pornography that reveals nudity, while we fail to recognize the kind of obscenity that reduces women to sexual “things”?

Many women suffer from the psychological oppression that comes with living in a sexist society. They are treated like sex objects and all too often are conditioned to enjoy this denigrating from of existence. There are many women who have learned to appreciate the sideward glances of men who mentally undress them. Such women thrive on the attention they get with their suggestive walks and poses, and, because they are winner at the game of “Who is the sexiest?” they are eager to play that game regardless of the costs. And the game *is* costly. The day always comes when those attributes enabled them to win the game fade away. When that happens, such women are no longer of any value to the lustful watchers and, therefore, have little worth in their own eyes. Is it any wonder that the suicide rate for women over the age of thirty-five is disproportionately higher than for men over the same age?

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ affirms the dignity of every person, male or female, in ways that transcend the standards of this lust-infected world. He lets us know that each of us is of worth to Him whose love has no limits and will never change. Jesus looks at us with love, never with lust. In His eyes we have everlasting value.

In Christ there is no sexism. As we grow into His likeness, we view others as He views them and hence we grow out of lust and look on others in love. As we are transformed by the Holy Spirit, we view ourselves differently. We are delivered from any false consciousness that leads us to see our worth in terms of how sexy we are, and we come to recognize that our worth is established by the fact that Christ loves each of us so much that He would have died for any one of us. In truth—He did.

8.3.10.5 How to Conquer Lust

The conquering of lust, as I stated earlier, is a lifelong process. However, it begins with a decision in the present. Having surrendered to the lordship of Christ, the Christian is expected to wish for the purification of the mind and heart. However, too many of us are like Saint Augustine, who once prayed, “O Lord, deliver me from lust—but not yet.”

The Bible hits our problem sharply as it describes us as people who love our sin (John 3:19-20). Lust gives us pleasure that we sometimes love more than we love Jesus. Consequently, the first step toward victory over lust is to wish to be free from its hold on us and to recognize that Jesus is willing and waiting to help us in this venture. Unfortunately, many of us have to wait until some dire consequence comes of our lust before we recognize our inability to overcome it by ourselves and call on Christ to undertake the struggle with us.

There was once a town reprobate who was wonderfully saved at a revival meeting. He pledged to start a new life and abandon his licentious ways, but he found that it was not easy to overcome the lusts of the flesh. Several months later he ran into the preacher who had led him to Christ and the preacher asked him directly, “Well, how’s it been goin’?”

“It’s been goin’ awful,” the convert responded. “It’s like two teams of horse pullin’ away at my soul. One team pullin’ in one direction tryin’ to get me to do what God wants and another team pullin’ in the opposite direction tryin’ to get me to do the things of the flesh.”

“Let me ask you something,” inquired the preacher. “Which team of horses wins?”

The new Christian answered with a twinkle in his eye, “Whichever team I says giddyup to.”

In the end that’s the position of each of us. God is able to help and He is willing to help—providing we want to change. The first step away from being controlled by lust is to wish to change by the grace of God.

The second step is to remember to think before you act. Remember what is at stake when you are tempted to give in to the lusts of the flesh. There is an old hymn of the church with says:

*I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.*

Some people suppose they can fulfill the lusts of the flesh without hurting anybody, because they think that nobody will ever find out about it or because they think their spouses won't care. I am sure that there are those who do get away with it in this life, but I am equally convinced that there are more who are found out. In Arthur Miller's famous play, *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman, the main character, is in a hotel carrying on a dirty little affair with a woman he picked up in a bar. Much to his surprise, his son Biff comes to the hotel and happens on his father with this woman. In one moment, Biff's whole image of his father collapses, and from then on he sees his father as a cheap, pathetic person. Willy Loman never dreamed he would get caught, but he did, and then it was too late to make things right again. Willy could not help but ask, "Was it worth it?" The answer for Willy is the same as for all of us—"NO!" The risks are too great and the stakes are too high. Only a fool plays this game.

Even if we think we can fool all of the people all of the time, any kind of thoughtful reflection would lead to the conclusion that we can fool Jesus none of the time. He is always with us no matter where we are or what we do (Matt. 28:20). This truth which is our hope in times of trouble is also one we must remember when contemplating lust. The Apostle Paul reminds us that when we enter into illicit sexual acts, Jesus becomes a silent witness and a forced participant in what we do (1 Cor. 6:15). In the Book of Hebrews, we learn that being present in our degradation pains Him as much as the nails that pierced His hands and feet on the day of His crucifixion (Heb. 6:6).

8.3.10.6 Alternatives to Lust

Sex should be fun. If Christian couples do not find fun and laughter in sex, they have perverted it. In the sexual act there should be superb enjoyment, and to make it less than that is to destroy its spirituality. The mistake of the Victorians was that they did not think that sex was good unless it was entered into with somber disposition. The prevailing value system of the Victorians made women believe that sex was a painful ordeal that must be endured if they were to fulfill their wifely duty. The women of that age were afraid to let themselves go while engaging in sexual activity. They should have known that such sexual rigidity only encouraged their husbands to lust after other women who might make sex more fun. In one case study, Freud learned of a Victorian woman who, on her wedding night, drugged herself into unconsciousness, leaving a note for her husband which read, "Do to me what you must." God never intended sex to be viewed as a necessary evil, but rather as a glorious foretaste of heaven.

I am not suggesting that sex be devoid of reverence, thoughtfulness, kindness, and spiritual significance. On the contrary, I am suggesting that in sex we experience a whole gamut of godly emotions. Let's not forget that as laughter and joy belong to spirituality, so they belong in our sexual relationship as part of holiness. If sex in loving marital relationships is what God wills it to be, lust will lose its lure when contrasted with the ecstasy of love. The death of lust will come when the deadness of its consequences are compared with the vitality of the ordained culmination of love.

Those of you who are single are faced with an on-going struggle with sexual desires. I cannot pretend that living without sex is easy, and yet it is necessary if you are going to live according to a biblical morality. If you think I am saying "You've got a painful and unresolved struggle on your hands for which we Christian preachers have no solution," you read me right. God does not diminish the sexual hungers of the single person, even though decent ways to gratify those hungers are not available. In short, it's a tough thing to be single and Christian at the same time. I can offer no effective consolation, except to quote from the Apostle Paul:

*Now concerning the unmarried, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy...I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband
[1 Cor. 7:25, 32-34]*

Lust is often an escape from boredom. Jesus came that our joy might be full. He imparts His Holy Spirit to us, to fill us to that we can live on a higher plane of fulfillment. Those of us who work out our Christian commitment by serving soup to street people must remember that the kingdom of God is also a joyful banquet where there is singing and dancing before the Lord. We must let the world know that the kingdom of God is celebration by demonstrating in our own lives something of the joy we will know when His kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven. Even our sacrifices should be expressions of joy, because joy is the fruit of the Spirit. Show me a person who is singing songs, sharing laughter, bubbling with the excitement of life, and I will show you a person who is being delivered from the destructiveness of lust.

One problem with our age is that people have forgotten how to experience passionate joy. They think that they must go to Disneyland or have 600 channels on their television to be entertained. They think that by getting *things* they will find fulfillment. All the while, a voice echoes down the corridors of time asking, "Why do you spend your money for that which does not satisfy?" The Christian life is a vitality in which the deadness of lust has no place. In the words of Moses: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19, KJV).

8.3.11 Lying

The Bible, and especially the book of Proverbs, identifies lying as one of the most deadly sins a person can commit and something God hates:

*"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
[Exodus 20:16 (The Ten Commandments)]*

*"A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish."
[Prov 19:9; Prov. 21:6]*

*"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are his delight."
[Prov. 12:22]*

*"A righteous man hates lying, but a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame."
[Prov. 13:5]*

*"16. These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17. A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18. a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, 19. a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren."
[Prov 6:16-19]*

Whenever we lie, we destroy trust, security and stability in all of our interpersonal relationships. Therefore, truthfulness is the foundation of the security in all of our personal relationships.

We describe the sin of lying as an Intermediate sin in section 3.5.3 deserving of private reproof and reporting to the police if a violation of law (fraud, for instance). Lying often results from pride and selfishness and happens most often after a person has committed a sin and wants to cover up that sin to protect their credibility.

It is important to remember that true security in all our relationships comes only when we are honest and truthful. Whenever we lie, we destroy trust, security, and stability in all types of interpersonal relationships. God wants us to feel safe, secure, and at peace, and that is why he hates lying.

Lying has many ill affects on everyone it affects:

1. Turns everyday communication into emotional abuse.
2. Discredits the person who did the lie.
3. Creates mistrust and suspicion in the family.
4. Is a product of selfishness and reveals selfishness.

Make no mistake about it: God hates lying. It is one of the deadliest sins a person can commit and undermines our relationships with other people and all of civilization. The only cure for lying is to repent and apologize to the people who have been hurt by your lies and promise never to do it again.

8.3.12 Murder

God forbids murder in Exodus 20:13:

"You shall no murder."

Jesus recognized that murder begins with anger and so he forbid us to be angry at all:

*"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."
[Matt. 5:21-22]*

We recognize that the above passage says "without a cause" but as we pointed out in section 8.3.3, Jesus didn't actually say this phrase, but made *all* anger a sin.

Statistically, 60% of women who kill use poison. They will most often poison the food of the intended victim. This approach is a variation on the old female motto: "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." In this case, they way to his pocketbook *and* his heart is through his stomach, since women will often kill men to inherit their assets. The majority of men, on the other hand, kill using guns instead of poison.

8.3.13 Pride⁵

Pride can be very destructive of relationships. The Bible talks a lot about pride. The book of Proverbs, for instance, addresses this subject probably more than any other single subject. Here are a few of the scriptures on the subject:

“By pride comes nothing but strife. But with the well-advised is wisdom.”
[Prov. 13:110]

“18. Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. 19. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”

[Prov. 16:18-19]

“A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.”

[Prov. 29:23]

“For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.”

[1 John 2:16]

“16. These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17. A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18. a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, 19. a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.”

[Prov 6:16-19]

We describe pride as an intermediate sin deserving of private reproof in section 3.5.3 of this constitution. Pride:

1. Is the original sin Satan had that made him fall from God’s grace.
2. Destroys relationships.
3. Causes endless strife.
4. Is self-serving and selfish.
5. Is the opposite of love.

In today's vain and misguided culture, psychologists often use the term "self-esteem". If you look up the word pride in the dictionary, you will find that self-esteem and pride are synonyms. Pride is just an exaggerated or excessive form of self-esteem. What makes pride different from self-esteem is that it has a contemptuous, conceited, and disdainful aspect to it. Self-esteem is a good thing, but we should be careful not to allow it to grow or transform into pride, conceit, or disdain for others, because this will cause us to be alienated and isolated from the people we love around us.

Savonarola, the great Florentine preacher of the fifteenth century, one day saw an elderly woman worshipping at the statue of the Virgin Mary which stood in his city's great cathedral. On the following day, he noticed the same woman again on her knees before the Blessed Mother. With great interest, Savonarola observed that day after day, she came and did homage before the statue.

⁵ Portions excerpted from Seven Deadly Sins, Anthony Campolo, Victor Books, 1987, ISBN 0-89693-533-7, pp. 74-90.

"Look how she reverences the Virgin Mother," Savonarola whispered to one of his fellow priests.

"Don't be deceived by what you see," the priest responded. "Many years ago an artist was commissioned to create a statue for the cathedral. As he sought a young woman to pose as the model for his sculpture, he found one who seemed to be the perfect subject. She was young, serenely lovely, and had a mystical quality in her face. The image of that young woman inspired his statue of Mary. The woman who now worships the statue is the same one who served as its model years ago. Shortly after the statue was put in place, she began to visit it and has continued to worship there religiously ever since."

Pride is arrogant self-worship. It is the sin of exalting oneself and placing one's own interests above the interests of others. Pride craves admiration and even adoration, and will not share the limelight. Pride deludes its victims into believing that they have no peers and drives them to try to destroy anyone who takes recognition away from them. The proud are in love with themselves and seek to call attention to their admirable qualities.

Pride is a primary barrier to salvation. God has provided our deliverance from sin through the death of His Son. We are saved by putting our faith in Christ and believing that His death atoned for our sin. Salvation is not something that we earn, but comes as a gift from a gracious God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

Pride makes it difficult for many of us to accept this gift. We have a tendency to want to be saved because we are somehow worthy of God's blessings. Our pride drives us to want to earn our salvation by doing enough good deeds so that the Heavenly Father will owe us eternal life. But this is not the plan God has devised. Rather, He requires us to humble ourselves, acknowledge our inability to live righteous lives, repent of our sins, and depend only on His grace.

We prideful people have trouble with this plan because it renders our own good deeds and personal achievements worthless. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5, KJV). As spiritually impoverished sinners, our only hope for salvation lies in God's gift, yet pride leads us to try to prove our worth to God. God despises our pride and calls us to trust only in Jesus who was willing to humble Himself and become the ultimate servant of humanity.

Even among evangelical Christians who say that they are saved by grace, I find blatant expressions of pride. I am amazed to discover how many of those who claim to be in Christ still believe that their own righteousness will earn them credit with God. They do not claim that their good works will gain them access *to* heaven, just status *in* heaven. They are convinced that by serving Jesus here on earth, they can improve the position they will occupy when they get to heaven. But whenever Christian service is rendered with hope of reward, it is not really Christian at all. That any of us should seek superiority over the rest of us is anti-Christian and a contradiction of the Gospel. That anyone should even think about being better off than others in heaven is an expression of a prideful disposition that is unworthy of a follower of Jesus. Nevertheless, I have heard Christians complain about the injustice of deathbed converts receiving the same rewards in heaven as longtime Christians.

It was against this kind of prideful thinking that Jesus was speaking in the Parable of the Vineyard. At harvest, a man bargained with laborers to work in his vineyard for a fixed daily wage. As the day passed, he hired others to work for fewer hours at the same daily wage. When those who had begun to work in the morning complained about this arrangement, the man responded: "Is it not lawful for me to

do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first shall be last: for many be called, but few are chosen (Matt. 20-15-16).

The cure for pride is pretty clear:

1. Recognize the brevity of our life on earth and our own mortality. For instance: "No one on their death bed looking back at how they spent their precious time on earth ever wished they had spent more time at work."
2. Adversity builds character more quickly than any other thing. Get yourself in a few difficult situations or make friends with people who have been through a lot of adversity. Volunteer to help people who have a lot of adversity in their lives: Prison, poverty, teenage pregnancy, cancer, old age. Talk to people who have declared bankruptcy, had multiple divorces, and deaths in the family. Ask them what is important in life to them. You will learn some surprising lessons about what is *really* important!
3. Learn to be good at and feel good about complementing and helping others.
4. Have an "attitude of gratitude" and thankfulness for the many gifts and blessings God has bestowed on us.
5. Learn to depend less on self and more on God and others.
6. Don't worry so much about what other people think of you. Don't worry about impressing them.
7. Be willing to freely admit and repent for our mistakes.
8. Do something funny or stupid that makes people laugh at you once in a while!
9. Learn to laugh at yourself. Lighten up!
10. Be less competitive and independent and focus more on team efforts, leadership, and delegation. This takes more focus off self and puts more onto others.

8.3.13.1 Pride Infects the Spirit

Pride infects Christians in a variety of ways that can spoil their commitment to Christ. I have known some missionaries to be caught up in their own nobility as they minister in the name of Christ. Like the Pharisees in the days of our Lord, some of them want people to acknowledge their sacrificial lifestyle and tell them how wonderful they are.

I find that the easiest way to escape from the pitfall of pride while serving others in the name of Christ is to remember His words:

Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; Naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me."

Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?"

And the King shall answer and say unto them, "Verily say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me"

[Matt. 25:34-40]

If I can serve others as if I were serving Jesus, I am delivered from any feelings of nobility in what I do. It is one thing to lift some drunk out of the gutter, take him home, shower him and put him into my

bed. In such a case I might view myself as a wonderful person who did something worthy of praise. On the other hand, if when I look into the eyes of that drunk, I think of ministering to Jesus Himself, I am only left inquiring of myself, "Am I worthy?"

To recognize the image of our God in even the most socially despised of creatures is to become a humble servant of these people.

Pride mars so many ministries. As a young pastor, I caught myself time and time again going into the pulpit more concerned about what kind of image I was projecting to my congregation than about how much glory I would bring to God. Even in the midst of Christian service, I found myself seduced into seeking personal recognition rather than the spiritual well-being of those who had come to hear the Gospel. I constantly needed to repent of the sin of pride.

One of the most disturbing practices among American pastors is the promotion of unnecessary church building programs. Because we can glorify God through art forms, there is a place for magnificent architecture. However, from one end of this country to the other, there are tens of thousands of church buildings with low aesthetic value, many of which do little more than provide gratification for the egos of the pastors and committees who plan them. Someone has sarcastically suggested that many American clergy suffer from an "edifice complex." A number of the church buildings being constructed are unnecessary, because their congregations will underuse them. Some of these groups could rent a local school or theater at a fraction of the cost of a new building, or facilities could be shared by two or three congregations.

There are ways for churches to have places for worship and Christian education without entailing the exorbitant cost of new buildings. Nevertheless, the construction will go on because the pride of pastors and church leaders demands it. No matter that the money going into bricks and mortar is desperately needed to feed a half billion hungry people. No matter that the financial resources given for buildings that glorify pastors could be used to save some of the 40,000 children in our world who starve to death each day. No matter that they funds spent on structures that will be fully used for only a few hours a week are essential to finance the propagation of the Gospel to the billion people who have not heard the story of God's salvation. Pride, not need, often determines how money give to churches will be spent. Paul tells us: "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit but in humility count others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3). Unfortunately, those members of the clergy who are obsessed with buildings have failed to get this message.

We can prevent this kind of prideful waste of the Lords money by holding Pastors and each other more financially accountable. These kinds of wasteful projects could be prevented at churches if the congregation insisted on being more involved in the affairs of the church and being informed about what is going on. Some churches have a budget committee, for instance, consisting of senior members of the congregation as well as the pastors and they vote in order to decide on financial issues. When the vote comes up, as a member of the committee, you can vote no.

When one preacher was in seminary, he had to take a course in homiletics under Professor Albert G. Williams. This dear saint of God required each of the students to preach a sermon that he and the members of the class would evaluate. The preacher vividly remember delivering his homily. It was well-constructed with three points which he deemed to be profound and biblically sound. The body of the sermon was laced with illustrations and witticisms. He delivered the sermon with practiced gestures and made sure to employ the techniques of proper eye contact with his listeners. In short, he knew he was good.

Following the class, he was handed a bundle of papers containing the evaluations of his fellow students. They offered praise for my sermon and assured him that he would really go places after graduation. The last evaluation in the pile was from Professor Williams. He did not comment on the pastor's message or on its delivery. His one sentence was concise and cutting: "You can't convince people that you're wonderful and that Jesus is wonderful in the same sermon." That pastor never forgot that simple line. Remembering it just before he preaches acts as a safeguard against using his sermon as a prideful play of recognition.

8.3.13.2 Pride Ruins Relationships

Pride keeps us not only from God, but from each other. In order to elicit the admiration of others we deceive one another. Our pride hinders us from being open and honest. We would rather have people admire the selves we pretend to be than to love the selves we really are. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, the tragic Willy Loman is so anxious to convey the impression that he is a successful businessman who knows how to handle people, that he conceals his frightened, lonely self from his closest friends and even from his wife. He becomes a solitary man who lives out his days in desperate isolation. His pride keeps him from the kind of self-revelation essential for meaningful relationships.

Sociologist Erving Goffman contends that society is nothing more than a complex system of con jobs in which we try to convince each other that we are something we are not. He says that doctors try to inspire awe in their patients by pretending to be able to diagnose what they really do not understand; that lawyers pretend to know exactly what the law allows when in reality they are very limited; and that teachers present themselves to their students as possessing more knowledge than they really possess. Goffman claims that pride makes con artists of us all.

It seems to me that one of the most important dimensions of salvation through Christ is deliverance from the dishonesty that stems from pride. When you come to that awareness of how important you are to Jesus, you see your boasting as hollow and meaningless. If you view yourself as so special to God that He would have sent His Son to die just for you, you find that playing games to establish a sense of importance becomes unnecessary.

When you recognize that the righteousness of Christ has been ascribed to you, you know that any attempt to add to your image through righteousness of your own is ridiculous. When you are in Christ, you do not need the praise of others to maintain your identity.

Once we become aware of who we are with God, we can afford to be open and honest with others because we no longer fear their rejection. And once we can dare to be open and honest about ourselves with others, we are able to enter into deep relationships with them. False pride leads us to deceive one another. Knowing ourselves in Jesus delivers us from foolish pride and gives us the grace to make ourselves transparent to each other.

Many people who consider themselves Christians remain at odds with each other because their pride will not allow them to make the confessions necessary for reconciliation. There is the father who in an angry tirade orders his son out of the house, and then anguishes over what he has done. But pride prevents him from going to his son to say that he is sorry. There is the deacon who verbally attacks his pastor at a church business meeting, and stomps out of the church in a huff. He misses the fellowship of his former church friends, but will not confess his sin because he is afraid of losing face. Pride so often acts as a barrier to reconciliation, but there is a remedy for this kind of alienation in the example

of Christ. He did not wait for us to come to Him confessing our sin and begging forgiveness. The Bible tells us that while we were still in our sinful state, Jesus took our sin upon Himself. What He did for us, we should be willing to do for others.

What this means in practical terms is that when someone wrongs you, you should not make that person's repentance the basis upon which reconciliation can begin. Rather, you should recognize that his pride will probably keep him from taking that important step. Therefore, you should go to him, assume the guilt for what has happened, and take the sin upon yourself. Pray yourself to the point where you can take the blame for what has happened. Remember that is exactly what Jesus did for you on the cross.

There is a strong likelihood that once you have taken this difficult step and the offending party no longer finds self-justification necessary, there *will* be repentance. People are far more willing to repent when they realize that they will not be condemned if they do. At that point they are free to look at themselves with honesty and recognize that *they* did that was sinful. It is probable that when you go to the person who has hurt you, and acknowledge that you are to blame for what has happened, the offending party will say, "I'm responsible too," and will confess his failures. We can help people to overcome their prideful self-righteousness by rendering such an attitude unnecessary.

8.3.13.3 Pride Destroys Those We Love

The pride of parents can lead to the destruction of children and sometimes the relationship we have with them. People who are out to prove that they are better than others often use their children to achieve this end. We will never know how many children have had their lives made miserable by being pushed to achievements which make their parents look good. Children who are driven to psychological exhaustion for academic achievement often know that their labor is primarily to enhance the status of their parents. Behind the claims that the parents expect the children to do well, because success in school will increase their options, is the ugly reality that the achievements of the children visibly demonstrate the superiority of the parents.

Sports are ruined for many teenagers. There is not much fun on most varsity teams because there is a deadly seriousness about the games being played. From Little League through interscholastic sports, the omnipresent parents are pushing their children in order to gratify their own ego needs.

Another expression of the prideful exploitation of children can be witnessed in the beauty contests for teenage girls and even for children. Recently, I saw a television special about little girls competing for such dubious titles as Miss Junior Miss. With stark amazement, I watched interviews with parents who admitted that they pushed their daughters through arduous routines so that they might become winners. It took very little analysis to discover that the parents were nurturing a desire to achieve success through their children.

As I watched those girls mastering the techniques of women who have become the sex objects of our society, I wondered how long it would be before many of them would be destroyed by the parents' desires for recognition.

Even young marriages can be manipulated to serve the interests of parents. We all know of parents who reject the prospective mates their children have chosen because they think these potential sons or daughters-in-law are beneath them. Since the status of women is significantly influenced by the men

they marry, some parents try to prevent marriages which will diminish a daughter's position in society. Such parents are sometimes more concerned what others will think of the mate their daughter selects than about whether she will be happy. Happiness is often a casualty of pride.

Other forms of exploitation of children are evident in Christian circles. How many people have been pushed into church vocations because of the pride of parents? When I taught in seminary, I was well aware of the fact that many of my students were studying for the ministry, not because God had called them, but because being ministers of the Gospel would serve the ego needs of their parents.

As a preacher, I would like to be able to say that my son or my daughter is in the ministry. But why? Is it because I believe that they will find spiritual fulfillment in such positions and actualize their God-given potential? Is it because I believe God has ordained them to such service? Or is it because my pride drives me to want to brag about the fact that my children want to follow in my footsteps?

In some cases it is pride rather than love that makes parents want their children to have a salvation experience. They want to be able to say pompously, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). Pride can pervert the motivation of even the noblest objectives.

Perhaps the most ugly expression of pride that destroys children is seen in incest. Recent studies reveal that in most situations where fathers have been exploiting their daughters sexually, the mothers are well aware of what is happening. However, these mothers usually allow the sexual molestations to continue and say little or nothing, because they are afraid of the shame of prosecution. These mothers are willing to sacrifice the psychological and physical well-being of their daughters rather than to endure the humiliation of exposing their husbands for what they really are. They may urge their daughters to say nothing about what is going on, or even worse, may pretend that they do not believe the stories their daughters tell them. The preservation of pride can lead to unspeakably cruel treatment of children whom parents profess to love.

8.3.13.4 Pride Can Destroy A Nation

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). That warning not only applies to personal relationships but is particularly applicable to what goes on at the societal level. I am convinced that the United States has its greatest enemy in itself. The pride of America, more than any other single factor, threatens our existence as a nation.

A good example of how national pride can destroy a nation could be found during the Vietnam War. I will always remember the shocking words of President Nixon: "I will not be the first President of the United States to lose a war." There was no talk of the rightness of the war or the concerns of justice. There was no discussion of what this war was costing America. All that seemed to matter was that the pride of the president be kept intact. President Nixon may have had noble motives for pursuing a military struggle that cost the lives of over 40,000 American soldiers and left half a million of the scarred for life. I want to believe that there was more than national pride and the face-saving of an American president at stake in that painful conflict. However, there is not doubt that because our leaders found the humiliation of defeat too much to endure, the Vietnam War continued long after it became evident that it could not be won. There is a gigantic price to be paid for pride.

As we find ourselves caught up in an incredible arms race worldwide, I am beginning to wonder whether it is national defense or national pride that drives us to build bigger and more devastating bombs. I wonder whether it is our fear of being destroyed by the Russians and the Chinese or our compulsion to be the number-one nation in the world that is responsible for our willingness to spend ourselves into national bankruptcy in order to feed our military machine. The Prophet Isaiah once offered this warning to the Children of Israel: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!" (Isa. 31:1).

It would be well for us to heed that warning today. Our pride will lead us to trust in our own strength for our salvation. We would be wise to humble ourselves as a nation, repent and trust in the Lord.

8.3.13.5 Develop Healthy Humility

A common mistake among evangelical Christians is to confuse humility with humiliation and to think that pride can be overcome through self-contempt. Humility enhances our humanity and makes us more like Christ, whereas humiliation diminishes our humanity and tempts us to forget that we are made in the image of God.

John Perkins, the founder of Voice of Calvary, gives us one of the most moving illustrations of the destructiveness of humiliation in a touching story from his youth:

I was about eleven years old when I got a powerful lesson in economics. It was a lesson which helped me see why poor families like mine stayed poor while the rich got richer.

I stood on a farmer's back porch, waiting for him to come back with the money. I was bone tired, that good kind of tired that comes after a hard day's work. The kind of tired a boy earns from doing a man's work. The kind of tired a boy earns from doing a man's work of hauling on a hot, humid summer day in Mississippi.

But if my body was remembering the day's work, my mind was flying ahead to what I could do with the dollar or dollar and a half that would soon be in my pocket. Would I buy a shiny new pocket knife? That would really wow the guys back home. Or what about a wallet?

Not that I really needed these things, you see. But I was a few miles away from home. For kids in our town that was big stuff. Vacations were always an occasion for bragging--so much that the kids who did not go on vacations had to invent them.

So that's how this thing got started, this custom of buying something while you're gone to prove where you've been. What I bought wasn't all that important. What was important was what it would prove.

The farmer came through the kitchen onto the back porch. I held out my hand expectantly. Into it fell--I could hardly believe it--just two coins! A dime and a buffalo nickel! I stared into my hand. If that farmer would have knocked the wind out of me, I couldn't have been any more surprised. Or hurt. Or humiliated.

I had been used. And I couldn't do a single thing about it. Everything in me wanted to throw that blessed money on the floor and stomp out of there.

I couldn't. I knew what white people said about "smart niggers." I knew better than to be one of those. I shuffled off that back porch, head down--ashamed, degraded, violated. I didn't want anyone to know I had been exploited. I hated myself.

God does not want any of us to endure such loss of dignity and self-respect. He sent His Son into the world not to condemn us, but to give us new identity as His sons and daughters. God wills for us to accept His adoption whereby we become "heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

There are discoveries to be made about ourselves, when we are in a right relationship with God, which will make us spiritually healthy. Not the least of these discoveries is the good news that we are accepted even though we are unacceptable. When the Prophet Isaiah went up into the temple to pray, in the year that King Ussiah died, he discovered that his sin made him acceptable. Overwhelmed by a vision of the glorious presence of God, he responded: "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Is. 6:5, KJV).

While Isaiah realized his own inadequacies and unacceptableness, he also discovered the grace of God which made him acceptable. God provided cleansing from his sinfulness when an angel was sent to purge him: "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, 'Lo, this has touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged'" (Is. 6:6-7, KJV).

Lastly, Isaiah learned that God had a mission for him that gave his life ultimate significance: "also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'

Then said I, 'Here am I; send me;'" (Is. 6:8).

Therein lies the basis on which each of us can gain a wholesome sense of selfhood. Like Isaiah, we must be humbled with the discovery that our sinfulness has rendered us unacceptable to a holy God; but through the grace of God, we learn the amazing news that He makes us acceptable and gives to each of us significant mission in life. When we grasp what we are apart from Christ, we are stripped of our pride; and we realize that because He still loves us, He purges our sin and gives to each of us special gifts in order to carry out His calling for us, our dignity is established.

A pastor told this story from his boyhood. He came home from school one day in tears, threw himself into his mother's lap, and cried, "Manna, am I a nigger?" His mother asked firmly, as only a black mother can, "Who told you you're a nigger?"

"The kids down at school, they told me I'm a nigger."

Listen," said his mother, "You're a nigger when I tell you you're a nigger--and I never will."

Whenever the people around us attempt to degrade us, we must remember what God says we are. He calls us to a high calling and gives us a title that clothes us with dignity.

Once a friend of mine encountered a little girl carrying a huge mass of cotton candy on a paper cone. He asked, "How can a little girl like you eat all of that cotton candy?"

"Well you see, Mister," the little girl answered, "I'm really much bigger on the inside than I am on the outside."

Pride leads us to pretend to be bigger on the outside than we are on the inside. Healthy humility is the recognition that God has imparted to each of us, by His grace, a gift which makes us greater on the inside than most people will ever know.

8.3.14 Selfishness

Selfishness hurts our loved ones. In many ways, it is the opposite of love and is most frequently demonstrated as pride or ego. Selfish people don't spend a lot of time thinking about how their behavior affects others or demonstrating empathy, so they generally have great difficulty relating to other people. This causes them to be isolated and scare people away from intimate relationships with them. This isolation can lead to chemical dependency, which in turn leads to many of the other sins and dysfunctional behaviors we have talked about in chapter 7. The cure for selfishness is the same as it is for pride, so please read the previous section.

8.3.15 Sexual promiscuity/fornication

The cause of sexual promiscuity is lust, which we covered in detail in section 8.3.9. Lust is the thought that leads to the behavior of sexual promiscuity. Sexual promiscuity and adultery can in turn lead to several other types of sins, including lying (to cover it up), sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) that can affect our eventual or current spouse and children, and eventually divorce. Along these same lines, we wanted to provide an interesting observation about Sexually Transmitted Diseases:

*The leading cause of death is birth.
Life itself is a sexually transmitted terminal disease that we are all infected with.*

Sexual promiscuity is a type of sin that can also lead to unwanted pregnancies, which can then lead to abortions that God regards as murder. Marriage is the only way God identifies in the Bible to responsibly and ethically satisfy our sexual desires. Anything else is regarded as either fornication if the perpetrator is unmarried or adultery if the perpetrator is married.

*Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.
[1 Cor. 6:18]*

Infidelity or fornication also undermine the trust found in relationships and makes us look selfish and undisciplined to our eventual marriage partners. Healthy relationships require mutual trust, honesty, responsibility, discipline, and mutual respect, all of which require us to be very careful and selective about our sexual partners.

8.3.16 Unwillingness to submit sexually to our marriage partner

Lack of sexual submission in marriage leads to self-destructive behaviors in marriage, most especially for men, who have stronger sexual desires than women. The consequence of this sin, however, include both adultery, and the divorce that the Bible authorizes in Matt. 5:31-32 following the adultery. A woman who doesn't submit sexually to her husband or make efforts to increase the enjoyment of sex in marriage is every bit as much to blame for her husband's adultery as her husband in this regard. The Bible is very clear on this issue in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. Section 4.8.5 (Sex and Affection) goes into great detail on this subject so we won't belabor this issue further. The humorous quote below sums this up:

"When you put men in the doghouse, then they play in the cathouse."

8.4 Dysfunctional Behaviors

Dysfunctional behaviors are those behaviors that are harmful to our relationships but which are not classified directly as sins by the Bible.

8.4.1 Authoritarianism

Being authoritarian means being pushy, manipulative, legalistic, inflexible, judgmental, and dictatorial in one's approach towards personal relationships. Being authoritarian in many ways is the opposite of showing unconditional love. Authoritarianism can have a very damaging affect on one's personal relationships because it can scare people away from us and result in us being isolated and alone and unhappy. Even if the reason we are doing these things is the noble expressed wish of pursuing the best interests and good of people around us, our friends and loved ones won't perceive it that way. They don't want to be controlled and if the control is extreme, then they will view it as emotional abuse and their rebellion will be equally extreme also.

Instead of being authoritarian, we need to learn to be flexible and give them the room and freedom and respect to manage their own affairs. This is what we call the "*let go principle*." We alluded to this in section 4.3, where we talked about the purposes of marriage, by saying that Christ revealed the paradoxical truth that we can't really live until we first die. The Bible talks about the "let go principle" in the following passages as well: Matt. 10:39; Mark 8:35; Luke 17:33. In a Biblical context, what the "let go principle" means is that we have to be willing to give up self, the glorification of self, and our own desires to really enjoy what is around us and see our situation clearly. If we don't give up most of what people think of as "self" just as Jesus did, then we commit sin and become slaves of sin and self. Other examples of the "let go principle" in action we can all relate with are exemplified below:

- If you need a loan from a bank, you dress like you are wealthy and act like you don't need the money. Banks always want to loan money to people who can prove they don't need it, because they know you will pay it back. However, if you desperately need the money, have bad credit, or can't pay your bills, then they won't give it to you!
- In the realm of romance, the best time to find a mate is when we aren't focused on looking. If you were to survey all the people who are married and asked them how they met, it was often a coincidence in which they weren't actively looking for someone, but simply "stumbled" onto their mate through happenstance in the process of doing things and activities they enjoy and which make them both feel happy and fulfilled. They will often share an interest in this common activity. That hobby or activity they have a shared and passionate interest in oftentimes ends up becoming the glue that holds the marriage together after they decide to get married. Many people will tell you that the worst thing one can do in a relationship is appear desperate or codependent. This scares away prospective mates quicker than anything. Codependent people are the type who, when they meet someone who might be a romantic prospect and who expresses even the slightest interest, they will be pounced on and mercilessly pursued and hounded for attention, dates, etc. In the realm of people, a good analogy to the approach of codependents is that when you ask them for a drink, they turn the fire hose on you!

In the context of parenting, an authoritarian approach may work when children are younger, but it will wear thin as the years pass and they declare their independence. Their rebellion will be a certainty—and probably will be spectacular. A more flexible and loving approach towards discipline is warranted. We have to balance love and limits. Unconditional love is the key to doing this. We need to remind our children of the following at every opportunity as they are growing up:

You are loved, you are important, and you always will be, no matter what happens. I care enough about you to provide for you, stand with you, coach you, correct you, and even die for you if necessary. My commitment to you is not based on what you do or don't do, how you look, whether your body is perfect or handicapped, or how you perform in school or sports. It is based on the fact that I am your parent and you are my child, a priceless gift that God has loaned to me for a season. Eventually I will release you to live your own life, but while you are growing up, I consider caring for you an assignment of utmost importance.⁶

Children need, and actually fervently seek, boundaries and ground rules. Expressing love and enforcing limits are not contradictory but intimately related. Allowing a child to have her way without any restraint is not an expression of love. At the other extreme, harsh, rigid, or authoritarian treatment of children, even if it produces apparent model citizens, isn't an appropriate exercise of limit setting.

The Bible is clear that being overly legalistic and authoritarian produces "death". In 1 Cor. 15:56, Paul states: "*The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.*" Lord, let us not make too much room in our lives for sin by being too legalistic with the people we love and care about. We'll just isolate them and undermine our credibility and influence in accomplishing positive results in their lives.

8.4.2 Chemical addictions

Alcohol and drug abuse can be devastating to a marriage, most often because they interfere with effective communication by making us irrational and unpredictable. For instance, 67% of emotional abusers frequently use alcohol. Also, 90% of all child abuse involves abuse of alcohol. Communication is the absolute key to meeting our responsibilities and to building strong and meaningful personal relationships. Because we need other people's help, we need to communicate to them the needs that we have and the ways we think they can help us satisfy those needs. When we can't communicate properly and lovingly because of drugs or alcohol, then we alienate people around us and our problems multiply.

Drugs and alcohol can also impair our ability to deal effectively with our problems. They undermine good judgment and cause us to adopt self-destructive behaviors. Because drug and alcohol abuse impairs our judgment, it has the affect of creating, intensifying other dysfunctional behaviors listed in this section. For instance, when we drink or take drugs, we have the tendency to avoid fulfilling our responsibilities and obligations. This multiplies our problems and gives us even more reason to use alcohol to escape the consequences of not fulfilling those responsibilities. We then lose credibility when we can't manage our own lives, and this makes us more evasive of other people and fearful to have relationships. We have the tendency under those circumstance to avoid relationships because of guilt about being judged for our irresponsible or dishonorable behaviors. This creates further isolation that makes us turn even more to chemicals as a way to escape the unpleasantness of reality.

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A) or Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.) are support groups dedicated to dealing with chemical addictions. When you or your loved ones have chemical addiction problems, we suggest getting everyone in the family involved in these groups. Below is a summary of the 12 step program promoted by A.A. for dealing with alcohol addictions:⁷

⁶ Baby and Child Care, Paul C. Reisser, M.D., 1997; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; pp. 292-301.

⁷ <http://www.aa.org/em24doc6.html>.

1. *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
4. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
5. *Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
11. *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

A.A. newcomers are not asked to accept or follow these Twelve Steps in their entirety if they feel unwilling or unable to do so. They will usually be asked to keep an open mind, to attend meetings at which recovered alcoholics describe their personal experiences in achieving sobriety, and to read A.A. literature describing and interpreting the A.A. program.

A.A. members will usually emphasize to newcomers that only problem drinkers themselves, individually, can determine whether or not they are in fact alcoholics.

At the same time, it will be pointed out that all available medical testimony indicates that alcoholism is a progressive illness, that it cannot be cured in the ordinary sense of the term, but that it can be arrested through total abstinence from alcohol in any form.

8.4.3 Cyberaddiction

This problem is a relatively recent phenomenon that didn't become widespread until about the mid 1990's.

8.4.3.1 Symptoms

The symptoms of computer addiction are quite specific:

1. Psychological Symptoms
 - 1.1. Having a sense of well-being or euphoria while at the computer
 - 1.2. Inability to stop the activity
 - 1.3. Craving more and more time at the computer
 - 1.4. Neglect of family and friends
 - 1.5. Feeling empty, depressed, irritable when not at the computer
 - 1.6. Lying to employers and family about activities
 - 1.7. Problems with school or job
 - 1.8. Loneliness
 - 1.9. Shyness
 - 1.10. Depression
 - 1.11. Low self-esteem

2. Physical Symptoms
 - 2.1. Carpal tunnel syndrome
 - 2.2. Dry eyes
 - 2.3. Migraine headaches
 - 2.4. Back aches
 - 2.5. Eating irregularities, such as skipping meals
 - 2.6. Failure to attend to personal hygiene
 - 2.7. Sleep disturbances, change in sleep pattern
3. Behavioral symptoms
 - 3.1. Divorce
 - 3.2. Incurable children

Computer addiction has been identified by many professionals and the media. Family therapists hear about it frequently. Clinical Psychiatric News reports increasing complaints related to computer use. At many colleges and universities, counselors and Deans of Students report increases in inappropriate and excessive computer use associated with rule infractions, student failures and academic drop-outs. Lawyers find that compulsive computer use can be a major factor in divorce.

8.4.3.2 Treatment

Like any addiction, this one can be treated. Some doctors believe that one of the most effective methods to deal with all these types of problems is Cognitive Behavior Therapy, which teaches the patient to identify the problem, to solve the problem and to learn coping skills to prevent relapse. Often the treatment is helped by medication. In addition some doctors recommend support groups for the other affected persons.

Maressa Hecht Orzack, a Harvard University psychologist and founder and director of Computer Addiction Services at McLean Hospital, a Harvard-affiliated teaching hospital in Belmont, Mass. She says that computer addiction is a real and growing problem. She receives messages every day from people who ask for help or want information about the signs of computer addiction. She also maintains a website at <http://www.computeraddiction.com>.

Treatment for cyberaddiction is tricky, according to Orzack. "Like an eating disorder, you can't expect people to give it up completely," she says. "Tempting 'food' is all around < at work, at school, and in their homes. You have to limit the time spent in front of a machine the way you limit the time spent at the table. Moderation is important, especially for the new generation of kids who begin to use computers in the first grade, or even before then."

One of the hardest things is to get people to come in and talk face- to-face with a therapist. They want to do it all on the Internet.

Orzack describes one man who spent all night on the Internet. He couldn't get up to go to work or keep appointments. She kept contacting him by Internet to remind him of his obligations until he finally came to see her.

Orzack and other therapists use the same treatment methods as they do with gambling, alcohol, or eating addictions. In one technique, known as cognitive-behavioral therapy, people are taught to monitor their thoughts and identify those that trigger addictive feelings and actions. At the same time, they learn new skills to cope with the addiction and ways to prevent, or handle, relapses.

In another technique, motivational interviewing, patient and therapist work together to set goals such as learning to recognize the difference between healthy and addictive computer use. "The efforts of patients are constantly reaffirmed, and they are not scolded for slips or failures," Orzack explains.

She uses a combination of both techniques, making "contracts" with people to specify how much time they will spend in front of a computer screen. As an example, she encourages them to set an alarm, or two alarms if needed, to signal when to turn to other activities. Orzack tries to get them to devote more time to other pursuits, such as exercising, talking with family and friends, and developing new recreational or social interests

The average treatment takes three months of regular sessions and telephone (not e-mail) checkups. But, Orzack acknowledges, some people require a year or more to deal with their bad habits.

"Nobody's ever cured," she says. "You just learn to deal with the problem."

8.4.4 Gambling addiction

Gambling addiction is perhaps the most destructive of all the compulsive behaviors, because it can financially devastate a family, enslave the family to gambling debts, and thereby cause divorce. The most frequent cause of conflicts in marriage are related to financial problems and perhaps no behavior produces more financial problems than gambling addictions.

8.4.4.1 Symptoms

Gamblers Anonymous offers the following questions to anyone who may have a gambling problem. These questions are provided to help the individual decide if he or she is a compulsive gambler and wants to stop gambling.

1. Did you ever lose time from work or school due to gambling?
2. Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy?
3. Did gambling affect your reputation?
4. Have you ever felt remorse after gambling?
5. Did you ever gamble to get money with which to pay debts or otherwise solve financial difficulties?
6. Did gambling cause a decrease in your ambition or efficiency?
7. After losing did you feel you must return as soon as possible and win back your losses?
8. After a win did you have a strong urge to return and win more?
9. Did you often gamble until your last dollar was gone?
10. Did you ever borrow to finance your gambling?
11. Have you ever sold anything to finance gambling?
12. Were you reluctant to use "gambling money" for normal expenditures?
13. Did gambling make you careless of the welfare of yourself or your family?
14. Did you ever gamble longer than you had planned?
15. Have you ever gambled to escape worry or trouble?
16. Have you ever committed, or considered committing, an illegal act to finance gambling?
17. Did gambling cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
18. Do arguments, disappointments or frustrations create within you an urge to gamble?
19. Did you ever have an urge to celebrate any good fortune by a few hours of gambling?

20. Have you ever considered self destruction or suicide as a result of your gambling?

Most compulsive gamblers will answer yes to at least seven of these questions.

8.4.4.2 Treatment

Treatment of gambling addictions uses the same 12-step program as Alcoholics Anonymous as follows:

1. We admitted we were powerless over gambling - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this Power of our own understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.
7. Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having made an effort to practice these principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers.

The 12 Step Program is fundamentally based on ancient spiritual principles and rooted in sound medical therapy. The best recommendation for the program is the fact that "it works."

If you need help, we suggest that you see a mental health professional or at least get involved in a treatment program. A good 12-step recovery program for compulsive gamblers is offered by Gamblers Anonymous at <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/>.

8.4.5 Obsessive/compulsive (OCD) disorders⁸

Obsessive compulsive disorders are behavioral disorders characterized by recurring obsessions and compulsions, especially as symptoms of a neurotic state. Ironically, some forms of obsessive compulsive disorder can earn admiration, particularly in a society as highly driven as America is today. Personal hygiene, domestic cleanliness, and perfectionism, for instance, are widely regarded as virtues: Perfect grooming turns heads, a spotless house wins praise, and corporate culture rewards organizational skills.

To the casual observer, an OCD sufferer might appear to be a highly efficient, fully functioning person. But to close observers, such as family members and friends, the OCD sufferer looks more like someone mysteriously enslaved by incomprehensible forces that are beyond his or her control.

⁸ OCD Resource Center; <http://www.ocdresource.com>.

8.4.5.1 Symptoms

Answering these questions will help you to reflect on your condition and organize your thoughts to facilitate your diagnosis.

If you lose more than an hour a day to any of the below, and if the need for such repetitive behavior causes marked distress or significantly interferes with your normal routines, relationships or occupational or social functioning, discuss it in detail with your doctor.

1. Does performing a certain ritual feel like an urgent necessity of life?
2. Do recurrent intrusive thoughts cause discomfort or anxiety?
3. Does an extreme need for order and cleanliness force you to tidy things/bathe/shower/wash your hands excessively?
4. Do you do things (e.g. checking locks) over and over?
5. Do you repeatedly perform certain routines to prevent "bad things" from happening?
6. Do you have great difficulty discarding things even when they have no practical value?
7. Are you persistently late or absent from work, school or other appointments?
8. Do you constantly question things and express needs for reassurance?
9. Do you have difficulty completing simple tasks in a reasonable amount of time?
10. Do you suffer from undue concern over little things and details?
11. Do you experience extreme emotional reactions to insignificant events?
12. Do you suffer from inability to sleep properly?
13. Do you find yourself frequently staying up late to get things done?
14. Do you avoid certain things or situations?
15. Is your performance of daily routine tasks a struggle?

Common obsessive, intrusive thoughts include:

1. Fear of contamination. Fearing dirt, germs, cancer, AIDS, bodily waste, asbestos, chemicals, radiation, sticky substances.
2. Fear of causing harm to others. Putting poison in food, spreading illness, smothering a child, pushing a stranger in front of a car, running over a pedestrian.
3. Fear of making a mistake. Setting fire to the house, flooding the house, losing something valuable, bankrupting the company.
4. Fear of behaving in a socially unacceptable manner. Swearing, making sexual advances, saying the wrong thing.

Common compulsive, ritualistic behaviors include:

1. Cleaning/washing. Hand washing, showering or cleaning oneself repeatedly.
2. Checking/questioning. Checking to see if light switches, appliances and faucets are off; if doors are locked; numbers are correct.
3. Collecting/hoarding. Collecting old objects, mail, or trash to the point of filling up one's house.
4. Counting/repeating. Counting to a certain number or counting objects over and over; repeatedly performing a movement or set of movements before being able to move on.
5. Arranging/organizing. Arranging items in perfect symmetry or in a particular order (for example, cans or books on shelves).

8.4.5.2 Treatment

Treatment should be sought out when the symptoms escalate to a point where they interfere with life. Common OCD symptoms—such as extreme concern about order, germs or contamination, or the need to perform certain rituals to prevent imagined catastrophes—may not, in and of themselves, interfere with daily life. But OCD is a disorder defined by degree. When its symptoms escalate to the point of chronic preoccupation, when they consistently consume more than an hour of each day, it's time for help.

Medications:

The drugs that have been shown to be effective in the treatment of OCD are potent serotonin inhibitors: one product is a tricyclic antidepressant and the others are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). These medications may help normalize the brain's balance of serotonin—the chemical linked to OCD.

Beneficial effects of SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) are documented by research. While the relationship of serotonin to OCD is not entirely understood, the condition seems to be linked to low levels of this substance in the brain. SSRI therapy is helping a growing number of OCD sufferers. LUVOX® (fluvoxamine maleate) Tablets is an SSRI that, since its approval by the Food and Drug Administration, has become one of the top prescribed medications for OCD.

People respond to medication differently, and your doctor will be able to prescribe the one best suited for you. It is important to work closely with your doctor to monitor your response to the medication. With all medications, you should talk with your doctor about side effects and possible interactions with other drugs you are taking. Even so, the maximum improvement of symptoms may not occur for several weeks or months. Ideally, medication should be used in conjunction with behavioral therapy.

Behavior therapy:

Medication and behavior therapy often complement each other. While medication appears to alter the body's level of serotonin, behavior therapy helps the patient learn to resist compulsions and obsessions.

The focus of behavior therapy is a process called habituation through which the patient learns to confront their fears and reduce anxiety without performing the rituals. Gradually, the person exposes himself or herself to situations that cause anxiety, but refrains from performing the rituals that relieve the anxiety. For example, an individual might be exposed to an unclean object like the floor or a waste basket. This will cause anxiety for the person, but he or she will not reduce these feelings by washing, cleaning or performing rituals. Eventually, the patient realizes that the feared consequences will not occur and the anxiety decreases.

8.4.6 Phobias

The foundation of all human relationships is trust. When we are afraid of someone or something, we have anxiety. We can be afraid of something real or something imagined that exists only in our mind. This anxiety creates mistrust and suspicion of the people and things around us that interferes with healthy human interaction and normal human functioning. Examples of types of phobias include:

1. Fear of heights.
2. Fear of being closed in (claustrophobia).
3. Fear of relating to other people.

With fear of people, we undermine our relationships unnecessarily. People want to be valued and feel important and respected. This is where they get their self-esteem from. By mistrusting people around us, we make a basic statement about them that says: “You are dishonest, irresponsible, and/or selfish so I can’t rely on you to do the right thing in my behalf or other’s behalf. There is no telling what kind of damage you are going to do to my relationship to you or the people I care about, so I have to watch you.” No one wants to hear that kind of message, and so they will naturally avoid us.

Phobias and fear in general are best treated with lots of the following two ingredients:

1. Love. This includes acceptance, loyalty, and commitment.
2. Knowledge. It is difficult to fear something that you completely understand.

Using love to fight phobias involves being positive, encouraging, honest, and frank when dealing with either ourselves or other people who have phobias. We need to be careful to be tactful and nonjudgmental in describing our fears and dealing with people who have phobias so we don’t offend others in the process or spread our irrational fears. Try to focus on developing relationships and activities that increase our self-esteem. This will naturally increase the esteem that we have for people and things around us. Remember: with people phobias, we can’t value and esteem others until we first can value and love ourselves. Loving people who have phobias is the best approach to eliminate the phobias and help them feel secure and valued. Focusing on the thing they are afraid of and showing that it isn’t going to hurt them will help calm them down. The Bible is clear on this in 1 John 4:18:

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

Using knowledge to fight our fears deals with focusing on the origin of our mistrust or anxiety and trying to understand it as thoroughly as we can. We need to question whether it is rational, normal, and will promote a healthy interaction with the people around us. We need to solicit feedback or assistance from mental health professionals in helping to eliminate the anxiety. If we understand where the fear is coming from, then we can eliminate the cause of the fear and solve the phobia problem.

8.4.7 Poor communication skills

Communication is the foundation of all human relationships, and especially of marriage. Unhealthy or bad communication can create a great deal of mistrust, suspicion, and anxiety in other people, which can only isolate us and destroy our relationships with people we care about. The Bible says we should avoid negative communication:

“7. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 12. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? 12. Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”
[James 2:7-12.]

Communication is an art form that we can easily spend our whole life learning and improving and never be good at. The hardest aspect of avoiding bad communication is not allowing expedience or our emotions to get the worst of us so that we say words in haste that we can never take back which might irreparably damage our relationship perhaps forever. Developing quality communication takes a lot of time, love, discipline, patience, and unselfishness to perfect, because we need other people's help to practice! You can't talk unless you have an audience! A person once said in this regard: "You are entitled to an opinion, but not to an audience!" Section 4.8.4: Communication covers this subject in greater detail and is highly recommended reading.

8.4.8 Pornography addiction⁹

Pornography addiction in the Internet age is a very common form of dysfunctional behavior. It has been described as "an affair of the mind" and is based on lust. Because it is based on lust and because lust is a sin as we described in section 8.3.9, indirectly it is a sin. However, the Bible doesn't directly address this topic as a sin. Pornography addiction increases conflict and undermines the sexual bond between husband and wife that sustains the relationship. It is a problem that women often have trouble understanding because they lack the strong libido that most men have. Below is a list of common reasons why pornography addiction is regarded as a dysfunctional behavior that is bad:

1. Porn destroys families from the inside out. It usually starts with the man, who God intended as the spiritual leader of the family. Porn will help block God's blessing and favor from a family. Once a man is hooked on porn, he will do almost anything to keep his addiction secret. Results can include: sexual dissatisfaction with his spouse, habitual lying, incest with other family members, rape, serial murder, divorce, abandonment, bankruptcy, violent behavior and a loss of rational thinking.
2. Your thoughts toward other people are increasingly sexual in nature above all other thoughts - you have a warped or perverted perspective that will never be satisfied as long as you feed it. You'll find yourself repeatedly returning to porn.
3. Your thought life is inseparably permeated with the images you view - they are stamped into your brain with the aid of hormones released during sexual arousal.
4. Pornography is habit forming and in many cases progressive. It can lead to more and more hard core material, including perversions of homosexuality, bestiality, necrophilia (sexual interest in corpses) and sadism (a sexual perversion in which gratification is obtained by the infliction of physical or mental pain on others).
5. Pornography intensifies an individual's drive to serve oneself, rather than serve others.
6. The financial impact of a pornographic addiction can be very large. The convenience of credit card transactions on the internet encourages spending without limit.
7. By viewing and purchasing porn, you are supporting the porn industry and facilitating its growth.
8. Your children could get hooked on porn if they find your material.
9. If married, you are expending your sexual energy in area other than with your spouse - your sex life could suffer, your spouse may get unhappy, causing problems in your marriage.
10. If you get caught, you can suffer consequences professionally, socially and emotionally.
11. You are allowing your sexual appetite to feast on images of other people having sex. God intended a different plan for you.....one where you and your spouse can enjoy each other in a marriage relationship. The porn you fill your mind with now, will detract and destroy your satisfaction,

⁹ Porn-free; <http://www.porn-free.org/>.

intimacy and fulfillment from sex in your marriage, whether you are currently married or married in the future.

12. Porn has power over you. Do you doubt this? Just try to walk away from it and never view it again - its almost impossible! This kind of power is destructive and will attempt to dominate and ruin your life.
13. Porn will increase your chances of committing a sexual crime, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, sodomy, etc..
14. Porn will increase your propensity to lie
15. Reality and fantasy rarely match up. Sex in porn is a portrayal, purely made for the viewer's enjoyment. Sex in real life is, or should be, an expression of love between a man and a woman in a marriage relationship.
16. Jesus says in the Bible in Matt. 5:27-28: *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

The presence of several of the following signs may indicate a pornography addiction:

1. He looks at pornographic materials such as magazines, books, videos, the Internet, and clothing catalogs.
2. He secretly gets up at night to watch television.
3. He will not account for the increasing number of 800 and 900 number phone calls.
4. He often isolates himself and doesn't let his wife know where he is.
5. He is controlling during sexual activity or has frequent mood swings before or after sex. He demands sex when and where he wants it.
6. He has tried to switch to other forms of porn to show he isn't dependent on one form and makes rules to cut down on usage, but never seems to fully adhere to those rules.
7. He seems preoccupied in public with everything around him.
8. He lacks intimacy before, during, and after sex. He offers little or no genuine intimacy in the relationship.
9. He gets angry when anyone shows concern about his problem with pornography.
10. He is increasingly dishonest.
11. He offers no appropriate communication during sex.
12. He has no close male friendships.
13. He frequently uses sexual humor.
14. He always has a good reason for looking at pornography.
15. He does not want to socialize with others, especially those who might intimidate him or hold him accountable.
16. He has feelings of depression.
17. He hides pornography at work or home.

Two very good resources for Christians in dealing with pornography addiction can be found on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.porn-free.org>.

<http://www.estheronline.org/>

They have a very good in-depth structured process for diagnosing and treating pornography addiction.

8.5 Common Sinful Excuses to Evade Responsibility for Sin

8.5.1 It's an Obsession

The world defines the word obsession as: A compulsive preoccupation. No, the Bible calls this kind of behavior sin. In fact, the Bible calls this kind of sinful behavior idolatry. An obsession (idolatry) in any form is a sin. Idolatry is understood to be any area of blind devotion in a person's life. Like an idol, an obsession takes God's place in our lives. His place must be number one. To be obsessed is to be out of focus with God's plan and purpose for our lives. For example, we can be obsessed with an unhealthy romantic relationship. However, we can also be obsessed with seemingly good things like a career, a particular biblical doctrine, or even a genuine ministry from God. Anything can become obsessive and consequently become a sin. What then is the solution to ungodly obsessions? Obsessions are removed from the believer's life as they walk in openness, yieldedness, honesty, transparency and most of all obedience to God and His Word. Obedience to God always brings clarity of His will for the believer's life. Obsessions cloud the Christian's understanding of God's will and distract the believer away from God. Therefore, since obsessions hinder us from doing God's will, they are sin.

8.5.2 Its an Addiction

The world defines an addiction as: An eventual uncontrollable physical or mental dependence. No, the Bible calls this kind of addictive behavior sin. Usually an individual becomes addicted only after long-term or habitual sinful behavior. Repeating sinful behavior time and time again until you become addicted does not change the fact that each time you indulge yourself in this behavior you are sinning. (It must be noted that there are accidental addictions to various medications, etc., but these are rare.) Rather, we are addressing willful and conscious cooperation with practices that lead to a dependence, usually on certain substances. However, we can also become addicted to many things other than substances. For example, we can become addicted to certain behaviors or attitudes. (Lust, envy, pride, anger, greed, gluttony, gambling, sex, pornography.) Whether in attitude or action, this type of addictive behavior is sin.

8.5.3 It's an Impulse

The world defines an impulse as: A sudden, uncontrollable thought, an activity of the mind. No, the Bible calls this type of impulse a sin of the mind. Impulses in this context are best understood as arguments of the mind that resist God, mental barriers against God's will, mental theories that discredit and dishonor God, conceits of the mind (mental pride), mental deceptions, mental fantasies, sophistry, imaginations and mental speculations. Second Corinthians 10:5 says we should "Demolish (cast down) arguments (of the mind) and every pretension (of the mind) that sets itself up against the knowledge of God..." Therefore an impulse is a choice you make in your mind and heart that can sometimes go against God's knowledge and will. This type of impulse is a sin. Believers have a choice to demolish these kinds of impulsive thoughts. The unbeliever does not.

This same verse continues by instructing us to "...Take captive every (human) thought to make it obedient to Christ." This means we are to take every impulsive thought "captive" (submissive towards and obedient to the Word of God) and not yield to sinful impulses in our minds and hearts. We do this only through the power of the Holy Spirit in us as believers. Nonbelievers are unable to control their thoughts (impulses) since they are slaves to sinful thoughts and actions. It is the new birth by the Spirit

of Christ in each believer that allows us to live above impulses. As the believer exercises his authority to control sinful impulses, the result is a "...demolition of (mental) fortresses, a demolishing of reasonings and every haughty mental elevation...and a taking captive of every thought into obedience to the Christ..."

8.5.4 It's Hormonal

The world defines the word hormonal as: A strong (often sexual) physical urge. No, the Bible calls this type of behavior lust. Lust in any form is a sin. For the believer, hormones do not act independently of their will for they are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live above sin. If our hormones "act up" it is because our hearts are not right with God. Believers control their "sanctified" hormones. Their hormones do not control them. Hormones will do exactly what our hearts tell them to do.

8.5.5 It's a Sickness/disease

Let us look at alcoholism. The Bible calls such a behavior sin. Robin Boisevert states, "The Scriptures very clearly teach that alcoholism (or the life-style of a drunkard) is sin and a matter of morality, not pathology. In the Bible the decision to get drunk is presented as a moral one for which every person is accountable to a Holy God...recognizing the reality of guilt, rehabilitation centers...seek to absolve a person's sense of justifiable guilt by seeking to convince him or her that alcoholism is a genetic malady or biological disease for which he has no moral responsibility and should experience no guilt.

"I believe the above approach is a tremendous to the individual and to society. The only authentic way to deal with alcoholism (or drug abuse, homosexuality, gambling, gluttony, etc) is to accept responsibility for your actions by acknowledging they are wrong and then asking God to forgive you through the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

"Finally, I grant that alcoholism can become physically addicting. Initially, however, drunkenness is something someone voluntarily chooses. In time the choice becomes less voluntary, but this too must be seen as a consequence of irresponsible behavior. A person doesn't start off addicted." ¹⁰

8.5.6 It's a Compulsion

The world defines a compulsion as an irresistible impulse to act; forced behavior over which one has no control. No, this type of behavior is sin. In other words, we can resist behavior that seems to overtake us. For example, anger is frequently a purposeful sin and not a mere involuntary compulsion. Our own selfishness, for example, can trigger an angry response; we haven't chosen to resist; thus, we have sinned; then, with self-preservation in mind, we try to excuse our behavior. Paul wrote that we can grieve the Holy Spirit as a result of anger (Ephesians 4:29-32). Grieving the Holy Spirit only occurs as a result of sin. This "grieving" could result from all forms of anger such as:

1. Bitterness
2. Malice
3. Clamor

¹⁰ People of Destiny magazine, "The Couch or the Cross?", November-December 1991, p. 4.

4. Envy
5. Resentment
6. Intolerance
7. Criticism
8. Revenge
9. Wrath
10. Hatred
11. Seditious
12. Jealousy
13. Attack
14. Gossip
15. Sarcasm
16. Unforgiveness

(List taken from *Spirit-Controlled Temperament*, by Tim LaHaye, copyright 1996 by Post, Inc.)

8.5.7 It's a Weakness

The world defines a weakness as: A moral defect or failing for which you are not liable. No, it too can be sin. This does not include Paul's "weakness" which he described as a "messenger of Satan" which "buffeted his flesh" (2 Corinthians 12). We do not fully understand this, but it was clearly not a moral failure or defect of his character. Paul hinted that this weakness involve dill treatment, hardships, persecution and difficulties, but there is not mention of moral failure or physical infirmities, as some may believe. Frequently, a weakness is our sinful nature manifesting a "work of the flesh." The works of the flesh are sin. For example, fear is frequently viewed as a legitimate weakness. The Bible calls fear a sin. Fear is the result of a form of selfishness (self-dependence, lack of faith, trust). When we do not trust God, we fear. This would include all forms of fear, such as:

1. Anxiety
2. Doubts
3. Timidity
4. Indecision
5. Superstition
6. Withdrawal
7. Loneliness
8. Over-aggression
9. Worry
10. Inferiority
11. Cowardice
12. Suspicion
13. Hesitancy
14. Depression
15. Haughtiness
16. Social shyness

(List taken from *Spirit-Controlled Temperaments*, by Tim LaHaye).

We also dismiss depression as a weakness. However, like many forms of fear, depression too is usually the result of selfishness. We become filled with self-pity (which is sin_) and the consequence of this self-pity is termed depression. The church could be freed from spending millions of dollars on sedatives and antidepressants, counselors and therapists, if she would only repent of the sins of anger, fear, and depression.

As previously stated, the apostle Paul wrote about his weaknesses but these must not be confused with sinful weaknesses like those mentioned above. Specifically Paul's "weaknesses" were described as those situations listed in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 that kept him humble and relying on God's grace to carry him through the demands of a difficult calling of God. Paul was not justifying sinful behavior. He was describing the "cross" which he was called of God to bare and which ultimately led to his martyrdom, according to church history. That is why after three requests by Paul to have his "thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan" (2 Corinthians 12:7) removed from his life, God answered Paul by saying, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Again these weaknesses were God-ordained circumstances designed to maintain Paul's usefulness to God by keeping him totally dependent on God. In contrast to this understanding of Paul's weaknesses, sinful weaknesses (moral failures) are deliberate acts of disobedience to God and His Word.

8.5.8 It's Genetic

No, it's the result of choosing to sin. We can't continue to blame our gene pool for our tendencies toward sin. The 1990's became the decade for genetic rationalization and excuse. contrary to what medical science and research may tell us, everything is not dependent upon or a result of the genetic! Don't blame your genes, blame yourself!

Jesus was the greatest geneticist who ever lived. In fact, Jesus created the gene. HE knows its function; its fixed location on a chromosome; its specific influence on phenotype; and its ability to mutate to various allelic forms. Jesus never said sin was the result of an individual's genetic heredity) history. Jesus should know, He created us as genetic beings. Jesus said sin came from the heart (spirit) of man and was an act of the human will.

As a man, Jesus Himself came "...In the likeness of sinful man..." (Romans 8:3). Yet He never sinned. He lived above sin, He knew the temptation of sin without every having committed it. He was as much a genetic being as any human being. But, genes were not the issue then and they are not the issue now. The heart of man is the origin of sin, not his gene pool. There is no such thing as sinful genes, but there is such a thing as a sinful heart! Genes are neither sinful or sinless. They are neutral. They are no more a vehicle for sin than the harmless atom, molecule, cell, or chromosome.

8.5.9 It's Environmental

Personal choice can always override poor environment. "Where there is a will, there is a way." NO one has to sin simply because of his or her surroundings. Many individuals may not have had much choice in selecting their particular environments, but God has promised that all believers can live victoriously over sin, no matter what their environment may be (Romans 8:28-39). If this was not true, Jesus never would have remained sinless on earth. He went out of His way to mix with sinners, yet never once sinned.

If sinning or not sinning would be the automatic effect of environment, then Lucifer should have never sinned in the beginning. There was no sin that existed or occurred in heaven up to that time. Yet Lucifer sinned against God. Sin was and is a matter of personal decision. We decide to sin. We do not merely reflect our environment or act in subjection to it when we sin. An incredibly sin-filled environment could not force Jesus to sin while on earth. And Lucifer, in an incredibly sin-free environment (heaven) committed terrible sin by attempting to overthrow God. So environment cannot be called responsible for an individual's sinning. However, if you are unable to live above sin in the environment you are in, then take some good advice: get out of that environment or infiltrate that environment with God's Word, God's people, and prayer!

8.5.10 "It's my Upbringing--The Way I Was Raised."

No, if your behavior is contrary to the standards of the Bible, then your actions are sinful. Blaming your parents or your childhood experiences does not change the fact that you are totally responsible for your present behavior. As believers, we all have a new Father. God, our Father, is rearing us to be like Him. Therefore we are expected to act like our heavenly Father in all Godliness.

8.5.11 "It's My Personality"

More than that it is a sin. Never blame God for your sinful behavior by claiming that's the way He made you. Many times our very personalities are altered because of our own sinful lifestyles. We must never turn that around on God and make Him responsible for our wrong choices. We are told by God that our sinful personalities were "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). We are then told to walk in this reality. Truly we are now to "...Live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

8.5.12 "It's My Disposition"

If you were not "born again," you might have an argument with this point. Since "...old things pass away and all things become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV), for the born-again believer, you haven't "a leg to stand on" when eliminating or ignoring sin based on the excuses of personality and disposition.

8.5.13 "It's Chemical"

Here is a whole new attempt by the medical and scientific community to understand, label, and explain that which the religious community recognizes as sinful behavior. If you are struggling with fits of rage, that is a sin, not necessarily a chemical response (Galatians 5:20). If you are a convicted sex offender, the cause for your behavior is not chemical, it is spiritual. For example, lust is a sin, not a chemical reaction. Science is even attempting to prove that such sinful behavior may be congenital, that is, present in the individual at birth. Thus, they falsely conclude that this reasoning effectively eliminates any personal responsibility for sin. They argue "You can't help how you were born!" Nowhere does the Word of God allow for such a lie. Uncontrollable rage, sexual lust, and a host of other transgressions are clearly identified in the Bible as sin. Sin (transgression) is a choice, not an inherited trait or congenital defect. What does this mean for the Christian? The believer, although born in sin, does not have to sin! The believer has effectively been born again as an overcomer of sin!

Generally speaking, what some identify as chemical the Bible identifies as sinful. What we diagnose as a severe physical and psychological disorder, the Bible calls sin. What the medical community has been medicating and to which it has been applying therapy, probably needs repentance!

Many forms of depression are not chemical but are the result of lack of trust in God. Many forms of mental illness are the result of yielding to fear. Many forms of unbelief (the inability to have faith in God). are the result of willful refusal to live by faith--a lack of desire to fight the good fight. Yes, in many cases, we are responsible for these types of behavior, not our chemical organic composition.

8.5.14 "It's a Bad Habit"

The world defines a bad habit as: A (negative) pattern of behavior acquired by frequent repetition. More than that, it is sin. Here is sin in one of its most subtle forms, for we all have habits of one kind or another. This is not to say all habits are sinful. But denying sin because a bad habit has developed which is repeated time and time again, is still just an excuse. It is an excuse that is unacceptable, because Jesus came to break the "habits" of sin in our lives.

Sociologists tell us that within different cultures, many subcultures exist. These subcultures frequently develop their own vocabulary of terms and phrases. This creates for the members of that subculture a greater sense of belonging and importance to that particular group.

In the church today we have such a subculture. We have a growing segment of the church population that is increasing in their acceptance and approval of sin. One proof of this accusation is found in the vocabulary or language of this subculture.

8.5.15 "The Devil Made Me Do It"

No, that is a lie. The devil cannot make you do anything you do not want to do! (1 John 5:18). It is your sin that causes the spiritual breakdown of your relationship with God. Don't blame someone else...grow up!

8.5.16 "It's My _____'s Fault"

(Fill in the blank---husband-wife--pastor-boss-police-parent-government-teacher, etc.) Some believers even go so far as to blame almighty God! Imagine blaming God! "It's not my fault. It's God's fault!"

King Saul repeatedly used this classic excuse throughout his reign as king over Israel. In 1 Samuel 15:3, God told Samuel to go to war against the Amalekites, "...And totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them: put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys." Contrary to God's command, Saul allowed Agag, the king of the Amalekites, to live (vs. 8). He also spared the "best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs--everything that was good" (vs. 9).

When confronted by God (through the prophet Samuel) Saul made two mistakes. First, he lied and tried to excuse his actions as if he had truly obeyed God'. Deceivingly Saul said, "...I have carried out the Lord's instructions" (vs. 13). Second, Saul blamed others when he was caught "red handed" by the prophet. Again Saul said, "...The soldiers brought sheep and cattle..." Then to make matters worse,

Saul conveniently got religious and claimed that the animals were spared in order to "...sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest" (vs. 15). He tried to place the blame and find fault with the soldiers. He made excuse for his disobedience by trying to impress the prophet that the animals were for sacrifice. Finally, he made the classic excuse for disobedience. Saul was hoping that Samuel, as God's representative, would accept his partial obedience as compensation for obvious and blatant disobedience. Saul said deceptively, "But I did obey the Lord" (vs. 20). However, Saul's scheme failed. Samuel, the prophet, was not fooled by Saul. He pronounced judgment on Saul and announced that Saul would not forfeit the position of king which God had given him. God called Saul's actions of finding fault with other rebellious and arrogant (vs. 23). Eve-like throughout his life, Saul blamed everyone else: the people, Samuel himself, the Philistines, his soldiers, or whoever was available. Blame shifting and faultfinding are sin.

8.5.17 "That's Just the Way I Am"

No, that is a lie and a very poor excuse. That is why you were born again, to become a new person!

8.5.18 "I Can't Help It"

No, that is a lie also. The Bible says, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

8.5.19 "I Was Born That Way"

No, that is a lie. You yielded to sin so many times you have become what you are today. You have reaped what you have sown. In a recent study of the brain structure of deceased homosexual men, a distinct physical difference was noticed. Compared to normal brains from heterosexual men (also deceased), there was actually a clear and distinct physical contrast. There appeared in the majority of homosexual brains, a different physical feature not found in any of the heterosexual brains. The scientific team drew two possible conclusions concerning this evidence. The first possible conclusion was this physical difference determined the behavior of these homosexual men. This, they suggested, justified the argument (with proof, they thought) that homosexual behavior is the result of a physical (genetic and/or chemical) cause. After all, these experts had the obviously different physical brains of these homosexual men right in front of them. The homosexual and lesbian community cried out, "At last our life-style has been recognized or justified. We are all normal, or as normal as our brains will allow!" They thought surely there could be no question now that homosexual men and women did not choose, but were born into their sexual preference.

The second conclusion put an abrupt end to their rejoicing. The second and equally accepted possibility was the opposite of the first conclusion. They concluded that over time the behavior of the homosexual men affected and even caused this mutation in the structure of their brains. Think of it, behavior changing the physical features and structure within a human being's body!

8.5.20 "I'm Diagnosed as Having _____."

We live in an age of over diagnosis, especially in the mental/ emotional sciences. It seems everyone has been diagnosed as having some kind of disorder. It has become almost fashionable. This tendency

is clearly visible both in the world and the church. I understand how the world arrives at such conclusions, but I am deeply concerned that the church has arrived at the same conclusion about herself. I have some difficulty with the idea that such a growing portion of the body of Christ is seemingly becoming dysfunctional! Yet many believers attempt to place such a false diagnosis on individuals in the church of Jesus Christ. I strongly disagree. It is as if spiritual hypochondria has crept into the church. Whole segments of the body of Christ have a neurotic conviction that if they are not ill, they should be. Falsely, we assume that God primarily exists for our happiness. After all, is not God's main function to meet my need? Absolutely not! God primarily exists and His main "function" is to receive worship and unquestioned obedience from His children. After all, He is God! Secondarily to this is our wholeness and well-being as His followers. He comes first; we come second.

Obviously, accurate diagnoses have their place in the church, only as long as they are not used to justify sin. I agree with Dr. Larry Crabb when he said, "One problem contributing to this simplistic thinking is a well-intentioned overreaction to the tendency of many professional counselors to excuse sinful living on the grounds of psychological complexity. It is regrettable that many Christian psychologists talk more about such things as unconscious motivation and emotional damage than they do about sin and responsibility. The net effect is to weaken the influence of the Bible's insistence that we choose to live righteously. A number of Christians, and I am among them, react strongly to any view that explains sinful behavior as the understandable consequence of psychological forces."¹¹ Dr. Crabb continues, "I am unalterably opposed to any line of thinking that undermines the concept of personal responsibility, and I find myself in general agreement with those who insist people are accountable for choosing Godly responses to life's situations."

8.5.21 "It's Not Hurting Anyone."

No, that is a lie and a sin. The Bible says the sins of the parents can hurt the children (Exodus 10:5), the sins of the people can hurt their nation (Proverbs 14:34), and an individual can be hurt, even in his physical body, as a result of yielding his body to (sexual) sin. ("...He who sins sexually sins against his own body" 1 Corinthians 6:18) Most of all, your sin hurts God who loves you and died for you. Either directly or indirectly, sin hurts everyone.

8.5.22 "Who Are You to Judge?"

Some years ago there was a cute little saying that swept through the church. It was so popular that some thought it may have been in the Bible. The saying went something like this: "God has called the church to be fruit inspectors." Believing this was scriptural, we flocked to stand alongside this new truth. In actuality, this saying is clearly unscriptural and has done some real damage to the cause of truth and righteousness. Let us look at what Jesus said. "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matt. 7:16). That sounds like fruit inspecting to me!

Another misconception in the church is the idea that we are not to judge. The Bible does not say that at all. The reason we think the Bible says that is because we have quoted only half the verse for so long we forgot there was more on the subject. Jesus said, "Do not judge or you will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matt. 7:1-2). First Corinthians 2:15 says the spiritual man makes judgments. Judging is not

¹¹ The Marriage Builder, Dr. Larry Crabb, Zondervan Publishing House, 1982, 1992, p. 8.

wrong. The focus of Jesus' statement is who you judge, what you judge, and how you go about the judging. He was addressing hypocrisy and not righteous judgment. To stand up against sin is a righteous judgment. To call a sin a sin is what Jesus did for three and a half years while on earth. A careful survey of the gospels show us He spent more time judging the scribes and the Pharisees than He did preaching the Gospel to them. The church will one day even judge angels! (1 Corinthians 6:3).

8.5.23 "Where is Your Love?"

When sinful behavior is called into question in the church, almost immediately there are charges of, "Where is your love?" Let us look at a few Scriptures dealing with truth and love. "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted.." (Proverbs 27:5-6), "...Speaking the truth in love..." (Ephesians 4:15). "...In faithfulness you have afflicted me" (Psalm 119:75). According to these verses love means telling the truth, rebuking, and if necessary even "wounding." "Wounding" means speaking the truth in love in order to expose sin and restore a believer. When sin is challenged you will be accused of not operating in love. The opposite is true. Love speaks the truth about sin.

8.5.24 "Jesus Accepts Me, Why Can't You?"

Let us look at what Jesus expected of His followers and on what Jesus based His acceptance of a person.

First, if you made excuses for sin and tried to manipulate Him, Jesus was brutally honest and straightforward. He called the Pharisees "white sepulchers full of dead men's bones," "A brood of vipers," "hypocrites," etc. (see the gospels). Jesus never tolerated excuses for sinful living. You were told to "go and sin no more." Sin was never negotiable with Jesus. It has been said that Jesus loved the sinner and hated the sin. I agree! The church must accept the sinner but stand firm against the sin. Like Jesus, the church cannot afford to compromise in this area.

Second, as Dudley Hall said, "Jesus let people know right up front the cost of serving Him. At times it almost seemed as if Jesus was trying to drive people away. He did not tolerate their weaknesses, He forced them to grow strong and overcome their weaknesses. That is why the Lord only had high-impact, low-maintenance converts."¹²

8.5.25 "Nobody's Perfect"

Nobody is perfect (when referring to oneself) but this is still no excuse to sin. Jesus Christ is perfect and He is our role model and example. We are to walk as He walked, talk as He talked."...For we realize that our life in this world is actually His life lived in us" (1 John 4:17, J.B. Phillips). If we do not continually look to Jesus as our example then we begin to settle for second best. "We know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3). This verse tells us we should not excuse ourselves but should purify ourselves. Here the word purifies means to cleanse from defilement, including the body, soul, and spirit. If our eyes are on the One who is perfect, we will not want to make lame excuses for our imperfections. The church should be in a constant process of ongoing

¹² Morningstar Journal, Vol. 3, Number 1, "Deliverance From the Welfare Church," pgs. 60-64.

purification through relationship with Jesus Christ. We are to "...Continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at this coming" (1 John 2:28). The statement "Nobody's perfect" is just an easy excuse for permitting sin to continue and spread in our lives.

8.5.26 "Don't Play God With Me."

What is an individual really saying when he says angrily, "Don't play God with me"?

1. "I know you're right, but I don't want to face my sin."
2. "I've successfully rebelled against God in this sin for years and you're certainly not going to change me."
3. I've never taken God very seriously."
4. "I probably never will take sin very seriously."

It is true, we are not to play God in anyone's life. However, the Bible does tell us to "sharpen" each other. "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). Sin dulls the spirit of man. Even believers become dull as sin wears down our spiritual edge.

8.5.27 "We're Mutually Consenting Adults"

More than that, regardless of agreement, it is a sin. Mutually consenting to sexual promiscuity does not change the fact that it is a sin. If two people mutually consented to steal money or tell a lie, does it make it less a sin or an unlawful act? In the same way, committing fornication is a sin and against the law of God. It matters not whether you are an adult, nor how many people consent to do it.

8.5.28 "Everybody Does It"

This worldly sentiment is expressed in God's Word in the following references: "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly" (Proverbs 26:11). Or, "A dog returns to its vomit, and, a sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud" (2 Peter 2:22).

If we are going to excuse sin based on the number of people committing that particular sin, we are doomed. The Word of God compares this type of individual to a dog and a sow. Both dogs and pigs symbolize religious hypocrites. "Returning to their vomit" is symbolic of their gross stupidity and their rejection of God's righteous laws. Jesus addressed this argument in His day as well. He said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). The choice is ours. Choose the wide gate and broad road (the "everybody does it" path) and you guarantee destruction in your life. Choose the small gate and the narrow road (the spiritual minority path) that only a few find, and you guarantee yourself life.

Frequently in the Bible the majority was wrong (10 of the 12 spies were wrong; the people of Noah's time; even the disciples were wrong!). Being in the minority usually meant you had faith in God (Joshua and Caleb; Noah, Paul). According to the Bible, numbers seldom prove anything in terms of right and wrong.

8.5.29 "It's Adult Entertainment"

More than that, it is a sin. Jesus said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23). It would be difficult to get much clearer than that. Jesus had a way of "making a point."

8.5.30 "It's My Body"

No, it's not your body solely, not if you are a believer. Your body belongs to God. "You are not your own: you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Even civil law agrees with the Scriptures on this point. The law states that certain practices are not allowable when it concerns your body. It is illegal to kill the body (suicide). It is illegal to inject harmful chemicals into the body (drug abuse). It is illegal to mutilate or otherwise harm the body (self-mutilation). It is illegal to sell the body for sexual purposes (prostitution), to name a few. It is even illegal to improperly dispose of a dead body or use it in an improper way.

The Bible requires a much higher standard for the believer when God speaks concerning our physical bodies. "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life: and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13).

8.5.31 "It's Not a Sin to Me"

Here is one of the most diabolical lies of all! It does not matter what we as humans consider to be sin. Our opinions must be in line with the Word of God. The only thing that matters is if sin is a sin to God. Try this argument ("It's not wrong to me") with the traffic officer who just pulled you over for speeding. Try convincing him that your personal speed limit is significantly higher than the state's speed limit. It may be an excuse he's never heard before, but it won't get you off (see Romans 13 for some insights on secular authority). With God there are clear absolutes and one of these absolutes is the eternal truth about sin. Sin is sin whether you think or believe it or not.

8.6 The Solution for Sin

8.6.1 Jesus' Advice on How to Deal With Sin

There is no question about it, Jesus was a radical when it came to addressing the subject of sin! Radical yet at the same time His radical solution was the right solution. He understood sin. He had a fix on it. He did not underestimate it. He spoke forcefully about sin. So forcefully, in fact, that even today we need help in understanding His words.

Jesus said if your hand, foot, or eye causes you to sin, cut it off, or pluck it out. He said it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God without these body parts than to have these body parts and be thrown into hell (paraphrased from Mark 9:43-47). Exactly what did Jesus mean?

Jesus was not teaching His followers on-the-spot surgery for the removal of certain troublesome physical organs and limbs. As always, Jesus used the parable to illustrate a spiritual truth. Jesus was saying that His followers (the church) must strike at the root of sinful thoughts and actions. We must

deal with the sinful behavior of the organ and not the literal organ itself. For example, Jesus said sin originated in the "heart." This was not a reference to the physical organ responsible for the pumping of blood in our body's circulatory system. Jesus meant the spirit of man, his inner being, thus the "heart of man." *Jesus taught that we must cut off even the occasion to sin no matter what the cost!* This may seem like sharp language from the lips of love incarnate, but Jesus did say what He meant and meant what He said! Sin must be "cut off" from our lives daily.

As a believer, I deeply resent and grieve the fact that the world is dictating to the church, in which I am a living stone, concerning sin. We in the church have allowed this to happen so the church must assume responsibility for returning to God's Word as the source of truth and judgment. She must repent and begin to once again call sin by its true name. Sin is sin. It always has been and it always will be. Why has God made sin such a seemingly dogmatic issue by human standards? Why is sin such a black and white matter? Cannot sin be a gray matter, resolved through reasoning and logic? Herein lies some of the answer. It is our human, worldly standards that clash with the eternal righteous standards of God. It was God who authored the book concerning sin before the worlds were made. He and He alone determines what is good and what is evil. There is not "middle of the road" policy with God concerning sin. He will allow no compromise. He will tolerate no excuses, for it is His holiness, righteousness, and truth that are on trial every time we trespass.

Sin is a direct challenge to God. Sin challenges God's holiness, righteousness, and truth. Sin literally "sickens" a perfect loving heavenly Father. God has given no authority to man to override Him concerning sin. God Himself is the measure by which the church must determine what is right and what is wrong.

8.6.2 Personal Relationship with God

Paul wrote, "My determined purpose is that I may know him, that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of his person more strongly and more clearly" (Philippians 3:10, AMP). God is looking for people who will practice intimately with Him. As one minister so aptly put it, "The church needs to learn how to practice the presence of God." Amen! We practice the presence of God by pursuing intimacy, fellowship, and relationship with Him. The solution for sin in the church is simply this: The church must "fall in love" with Jesus again! Each believer in the church must grow stronger in his/her love for Him! The church must fellowship with Him longer, more reverently, and with deeper conviction, setting aside all hindrances. The church must gain a new focus by beholding Him for who and what He is. The church needs to return to a Christ-centered gospel. The church needs to return to a Christ-centered understanding of Christianity over all.

The church's purpose (why it ultimately exists) is to serve Jesus Christ. The church draws her life from Jesus Christ. If the church loses her relationship with Christ she will lose the life of Christ she so desperately needs in this hour. First John 3:6 says, "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning." This is the answer to the problem of sin. The believer must practice abiding in Him. Each believer must "live" in Him. It is this love relationship that will produce the "side effect" of a life progressively free of sin. What a wonderful side effect it is!

8.6.3 God's Grace

Let us define grace in a way that simplifies the concept. Grace is best defined by the letters that make up the word:

G-God's
R-iches
A-At
C-Christ's
E-Expense

What a beautiful understanding of Grace. Grace is God's riches at Christ's expense to the church!

Grace is incredibly important in our efforts to find God's solution to sin. Paul wrote, "I do not set aside the grace of God.." (Galatians 2:21). If we "set aside" the truth of God's grace in our lives then we forfeit much of God's power in our lives to conquer sin.

What does God's grace do for us?:

When we fail, God's grace succeeds for us!

When we quit, God's grace perseveres for us!

When we are faithless, God's Grace is faithful for us!

When we feel condemned, God's grace forgives us!

When we feel worthless, God's grace reminds us we are worthy!

Grace reminds us our son-and-daughter relationship with God!

Grace reminds us of our inheritance in God!

Grace reminds us that sin has been defeated!

Grace reminds us that Christ died for our victory!

Grace reminds us that Christ died for our victory!

Grace reminds us that we are not fighting for a place of victory, but that we are fighting from a place of victory.

Grace reminds us we are unconditionally loved, accepted, received, adopted and embraced by a God who is love. Grace is the immeasurable love of Christ to us.

Forty-four books of the Bible record something on the subject of sin. However, before we become discouraged about this reality, there is another side of the issue of sin. Twenty-eight books of the Bible record some powerful and exciting information about the subject of God's grace. A favorite verses concerning grace is found in Romans 5:20: "...Where sin increased, grace increased all the more..." This is a precious promise from God. No matter how deep sin is, God's grace is deeper. If sin increases, God's grace will always increase proportionately, and then some! God said His grace will increase "all the more" in our lives.

(NOTE: Romans 6 teaches that we are not to sin in order that grace may somehow be activated or "increased" in our lives. In fact, Paul writes, "Should we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin: How can we live in it any longer?" (vss. 1-2). So that the reader may fully grasp the role of grace in his life, I recommend that he read Romans 5 and 6.)

Some have said that we live in the age of "sloppy agape" and "cheap grace" as far as sin is concerned. No amount of love or grace can substitute for the cleansing blood of the lamb, which washes sin away. **It is possible to experience God's love and grace and still need forgiveness of our sins.** The church

has confused these truths to the degree that we have effectively diminished the power of the blood of Christ. Love does not wash away sin and grace does not wash away sin. We do ourselves no favors when we allow preaching in the church to offer a cheap imitation of truth to compensate for the unadulterated truth of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. Only Christ's blood can redeem! Only Christ's blood can wipe away sin through forgiveness! Here is God's order on the subject of sin and forgiveness:

First, the blood of Christ.

Second, the love of Christ.

Third, God's grace in Christ.

Only when these truths are put into practice can the church experience full salvation from sin. The church needs all three, but love and grace can only be appreciated after we first understand the cleansing blood of Christ. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse us--forgive us from sin.

8.6.4 Sanctification: To be set apart

One of the greatest truths given to the church so that she may be able to live above sin is the doctrine of sanctification. First Thessalonians 4:3 says, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified." Paul wrote to "Those sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:2). We will define sanctification as: The process of, or result of, being made holy by God, to be sanctified means to be set apart for use by God and to be consecrated. The King James translation of the Bible uses the term "sanctification." Many newer translations use the term holiness as a synonym for the term sanctification. Thus, when one is sanctified he is also understood to be holy in God by the working of the Holy Spirit.

The error of much of the teaching on this truth of sanctification is that the emphasis is always placed on the individual who needs sanctification rather than on the finished work of sanctification. The church needs a new vision of the "One" who does the sanctifying! Jesus Christ is the great "sanctifier." In fact, sanctification is more a person than it is a mere doctrine. First Corinthians 1:30, KJV, says, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The greater truth of sanctification is that Jesus has already sanctified us. By faith in Christ, it is already done! It is our reality today! The New Testament clearly places believers as already sanctified in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). As this truth that sanctification is a finished work is restored to the church, sin will lose much of its "punch." Until this happens, many will needlessly continue in the slavery of sin (Romans 6:16).

Here is the basic truth of the doctrine of sanctification: First, keep in mind that sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit in us. Second, believers are holy in Christ (set apart for God by His sacrificial atoning blood), and are to be holy in practice by the power of the Holy Spirit. Third, we are to be sanctified, in attitude and action, because we are already sanctified in Christ! It is this truth called "sanctification" that provides the believer with the ability to live above sin.

"The consequence of a sanctified life will be the elimination of sin as a power and the establishing of righteousness in your life. A basic understanding of the doctrine of sanctification will include:

1. "A growing understanding of our union with Jesus Christ as the basis of all positive change (Romans 6).
2. "A spirit-empowered 'putting off' of sinful habits and putting on of righteous patterns of living (Romans 8:3-14).
3. "A continual renewing of the mind according to New Testament truth (Romans 12:1-2).
4. "A daily denying of ourselves to follow Jesus Christ in a life of discipleship" (Luke 9:23).

8.6.5 The Holy Spirit

The solution over sin is found in the power of the Holy Spirit in each believer. The Holy Spirit puts within the grasp of each believer a new potential daily, to live above sin, on one hand, the Spirit of God is a pledge and foretaste of the future, but He is also our present source of strength and overcoming power today. The church must avail herself of this power now, for without this power sin will prevail.

The Spirit-filled life (Galatians 5:16-25) is the only answer for living above the sins of the flesh. Fortunately God has provided the church with all the power necessary to live this Spirit-filled life. However, the church needs to understand that there is no viable substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit in order to live this life in victory over sin. The power of the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit that comprises the Spirit-filled experience which the church so desperately wants and needs. If unconfessed sin remains in the life of the individual, he risks forfeiting this power in his life. The power of sin has been broken and each believer needs to maintain this victory. How do we do this? By dependence on His power and might. Through Him "we can do all things" and "we are more than conquerors" and "if God is for us, who can be against us?" Amen!

8.6.5.1 Satan Condemns, the Holy Spirit Convicts

Satan condemns Christians into states of hopelessness and defeat, while the Holy Spirit convicts believers of the need to seek repentance which leads to righteousness. Condemnation is not the answer to the problem of sin, conviction is. For example, if this book gave no solution to the issue of sin, it too would be guilty of promoting condemnation. This is not the case, since much of this content is devoted to the solution of sin.

The Holy Spirit works like this too. He points out areas of specific sin but always tells us how to successfully deal with these same sins. There may be shame and repentance required to deal with these sins but this too is from God. Believers are supposed to feel the guilt and shame of their sins. This is called conviction. The Word of God describes conviction as a Godly sorrow. Godly sorrow leads us to repent of our sins. "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.." (2 Corinthians 7:10). This is why the conviction of sin from the Holy Spirit is a gift. The conviction of sin is the great mercy of God in demonstration in the life of a believer.

Satan, on the other hand, never lets us know exactly what our sin is and never lets us know what to do about it. Satan condemns us and offers no hope of forgiveness. In fact, he would rather we did nothing about our sin except feel condemned about it and defeated by it. Condemnation paralyzes the believer's effectiveness in God. Condemnation is vague, abstract, nebulous, and confusing. Condemnation offers no solutions, and traps its victims in a sea of doubt and ambiguous agony. Condemnation never "lets up." It constantly reminds us of our alleged hopelessness to live

victoriously above sin. This is the life of satanic condemnation. Jesus Christ came to destroy this cloud of condemnation over all believers.

In contrast to this, the conviction of the Holy Spirit is extremely accurate, clear, thorough, and in every way liberating to the believer. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin it is always for the purpose of the believer receiving forgiveness and having his relationship with the Father restored. Satan uses condemnation to destroy, but the Holy Spirit uses conviction to restore. For the believer, a restored heart is a confident heart. "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God..." (1 John 3:21).

8.6.5.2 Truth Versus Condemnation

Jesus said that His truth always sets us free. "*Then you will know that truth and the truth will set you free*" (John 8:32). Notice that Jesus said it was knowing the truth that sets us free. Truth only frees us if it's the truth of God's Word; that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world; and only if we know it! To state it more precisely, since truth is the person of Jesus Christ, then we must know Him in order to be truly free!

Jesus was Himself truth incarnate, consequently, there was literally no condemnation in His person. He was totally, completely, eternally and perfectly free. In one sense, it was impossible for Jesus to condemn! This reality led Jesus to never once condemn anyone. "Then neither do I condemn you, Jesus declared, go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11).

8.6.5.3 Jesus' Conviction of Sin

Jesus was quick to convict people of their sins and show them the way out. Truth shows us our sin and the way out of that sin. Truth identifies the hard target of sin in us and then gives us the strategy to deal effectively with it. The conviction of the Holy Spirit always specifically identifies our sin and places the emphasis on the solution for that particular sin. Satan uses condemnation to emphasize the problem of sin but the Holy Spirit is always solution oriented when it concerns our sins. Victory over sin is God's plan for us. Defeated in sin, at the hands of the accuser, is Satan's plan for us. The believer must choose to whom he will respond and believe. Again the choice is the believers.

In opposition to the truth, condemnation is usually the result of two incorrect types of thinking which have little or no truth in them. First, it is the result of rationalizing in our minds that continuing in unrepented, chronic sin is somehow acceptable. This opens up the believer to experience condemnation from Satan who takes full advantage of our failures. Truly he is the accuser of God's people (Revelation 12:10). Our sins only add to the strength and validity of his accusations. Consequently, by receiving this condemnation we begin to entertain negative thoughts about our life and situation. which attempt to destroy our identify in Christ. Second, it is the result of failing to understand true forgiveness and appropriate this forgiveness by faith. This type of thinking usually results in spiritual bondage in the heart or spirit of the believer which limits the spiritual effectiveness of the individual. Condemnation "locks up" the believer, putting him in a kind of spiritual prison. Both effects of condemnation (negative thoughts and spiritual bondage) are major hindrances to true freedom and release from sin. Condemnation imprisons both our minds and our hearts.

What then is the solution? First, repent of all sin. Second, identify condemnation in your life as originating from the devil and refuse to allow it to ever enter your life again. Third, recognize that you are in Christ and that in Christ there is no demonic condemnation. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). The key to living above condemnation is seeing that it is trying to rob you of your true identity and purpose in Christ! To be liberated, victorious, and effective disciple in Christ, you must not allow this to happen!

8.6.6 Controlling the Mind

"As a man thinketh, so is he."

There is little controversy that all sin originates in the mind. The mind (one's thought life), is the real battlefield for the believer. Sin always begins with a thought. Sin is never spontaneous. Sin is premeditated. For example, murder is frequently the end result of harboring hatred, anger, and bitterness in the mind. These sins are resident in a person long before they are manifested in the act of violently taking another's life. Before adultery is committed, that person already lusted in his heart and mind.

The book of James clearly outlines the destructive progression of sin in our minds. First, each of us is tempted or "dragged away" by sinful thoughts in our minds (1:14). Obviously this dragging away occurs in our thought life. It is not a physical battle. It begins as a mental battle. Actually being tempted as a result of our own sinful thoughts then becomes a "self-imposed" spiritual battle of our own making! These sinful thoughts, "evil desires," entice us to spend our time and energy dabbling deeper and more frequently into considering impurity and ungodly temptations. Finally our sinful desires, the result of sinful thoughts, conceive. In other words, these thought patterns have come to life in our minds, and as a result sin is generated in the everyday actions of our lives. Thus tragically, the conception of evil in the mind is then "birthed" in us as sin in the flesh. Finally sin, "when it is full-grown, gives birth to (spiritual) death."

According to James, "temptations" (not to be confused with testings that come from God to strengthen us), "Evil desires" and "enticements," all occur as a result of allowing sinful thoughts to "take root" in our minds since our minds are like gardens. They can "grow" good thoughts or bad thoughts. It is as simple as that.

Similarly, our minds can either be the "wombs" for sinful thoughts or Godly thoughts. If we allow sin to become "full-grown" in our minds, like a womb, our mind will eventually give birth in direct relation to that which conceived it--to sinful actions. However, the believer can control this entire process of sin that takes place in our minds. In the sense that sin is birthed in us, all of us have "fathered" some horrible sins because we did not understand God's power in us. No matter how reluctantly, we have all participated in the birthing of sin. Therefore, we are fully responsible to do something about sin in our minds.

The Bible gives us some clear instruction on what to do with our thinking. This is one key to living above the slavery of sin in our minds. The Christian does not have to allow any sinful thought to find a "home" in his heart or mind. The thought may enter our minds but we have full authority to reject that same sinful thought. This is what the "helmet of salvation" mentioned in Ephesians 6:17 is all about. Divine protection and authority over our thought life is ours as a result of Christ's blood being shed. We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) as part of the armor of God. The helmet of His

salvation guarantees each believer personal power from the Holy Spirit to control his or her thought life.

Billy Graham once gave his analogy about our thought life as believers. Graham said, "You can't stop the birds from flying overhead, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair." Thoughts will come from God, the devil, or even your own mind. Through the Holy Spirit in us, we do not have to allow the birds to build any nests in our hair! We can sort through our thoughts and learn to identify those that are sinful and reject them. We need not allow them to give birth. We can choose to restrict the use of our "mind-wombs" for the birthing of only Godly thoughts. We can pull the weeds of sinful thoughts out of our "mind-gardens" as we rely on God's power in us.

God's Word gives us the guidelines for exactly what purpose we should be using our minds. It tells us what to think on, that is, what to accept and what to reject as far as our thoughts are concerned. I call this list a filter for our minds. If we filter out thought life through this list (Philippians 4:8), we will keep our minds free from sin.

1. True thoughts--as compared to false thoughts.
2. Noble thoughts--as compared to ignoble thoughts.
3. Right thoughts--as compared to wrong thoughts.
4. Pure thoughts--as compared to impure thoughts.
5. Lovely thoughts--as compared to ugly thoughts.
6. Admirable thoughts--as compared to dishonorable thoughts.
7. Excellent thoughts--as compared to compromising thoughts.
8. Praiseworthy thoughts--as compared to discrediting thoughts.

God's Word says, "Finally, brothers (all believers)...think about such things!" (Philippians 4:8). Let this list be your mind's filter.

8.7 Diagnosing Sin in Interpersonal Relationships

Every sin is caused by certain behavior and has certain symptoms in the relationships that it affects. This is related to the idea that we will reap what we sow and that for every action, there will be a response. Below is a table that concisely identifies likely types of sin within a relationship based on the symptoms or behavior that the sin can produce in people. This list can be useful when exercising the Problem Solving techniques identified in section 3.1.4 in order to correct one's personal problems effectively:

Table 8-1: Behaviors and the Sin that Causes Them Within Relationships

<i>Behavioral Symptom</i>	<i>Probable sin(s) that may be causing the symptom</i>
Adultery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spouse not submitting sexually. 2. Temptation of one spouse. 3. No joy or contentment with present situation. 4. Lust. 5. Poor communication or passivity on the part of one spouse (conditional love and immaturity on the part of that spouse are the cause). 6. Lack of empathy or unconditional love.
Anger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selfishness. 2. Love is conditional rather than unconditional

Behavioral Symptom	Probable sin(s) that may be causing the symptom
	(selfishness). 3. Inability or unwillingness to love as God commands us to. 4. Expectations about marriage unrealistic. 5. Discontentment. 6. Unthankfulness.
Crying	1. Selfishness. 2. Lack of contentment.
Deceit	1. Selfishness. 2. Pride. 3. Lust.
Denial	1. Selfishness. 2. Pride. 3. Irresponsibility.
Depression	1. Anger (repressed). 2. Lack of contentment. 3. Lack of thankfulness. 4. Envy. 5. Selfishness. 6. Greed. 7. Unrepentant. 8. Irresponsibility or unwillingness to repent 9. Lack of wisdom or ignorance (about ways to deal with problems).
Drug or alcohol abuse	1. Improper response to suffering. 2. Irresponsibility (escaping from problems). 3. Addiction (slave of sin).
Fear or anxiety	1. Presence of sin in one's life (Adam and Eve became afraid after they ate the fruit). 2. Irresponsibility (unwillingness to deal with or fix own problems). 3. Deceit of oneself (won't admit one's sin or repent for it)
Guilt trips	1. Selfishness.
Health problems	1. Anger. 2. Resentment. 3. Premature birth.
Hiding or locking up things in the house to prevent them from being viewed by other family members	1. Sin and the wish to hide it. 2. Irresponsibility. Unwilling to take responsibility in front of the other spouse for one's own actions.
Hypochondria	1. Selfishness. 2. Lack of contentment. 3. Lack of thankfulness. 4. Pride (needs too much affirmation or attention from others).
Hypocrisy	1. Selfishness, unrighteousness.
Impatience	2. Selfishness.
Irresponsibility	1. Laziness. 2. Fear (of accepting consequences). 3. Lack of faith in God (unwilling to leave results up to Him.)
Jealousy	1. Envy.
Lying	1. Selfishness
Negativity	1. Bitterness and resentment.

<i>Behavioral Symptom</i>	<i>Probable sin(s) that may be causing the symptom</i>
	2. Fear. 3. Irresponsibility (wants to avoid examination by others by keeping focus off self and onto the faults of everyone but self.
Passivity, running away from spouse or family	1. Irresponsibility (running away from marriage commitment). 2. Sin and the desire to. 3. Unwillingness to hear the truth
Suppression of free speech Anti- "hate crime" laws	1. Sin, and a desire to hide it. 2. Selfishness. 3. Irresponsibility. 4. Idolatry.
Resentment	1. Unforgiveness. 2. Selfishness.
Theft	1. Greed. 2. Drug or alcohol addiction. 3. Sloth (too lazy to work to support oneself).
Unforgiveness	1. Selfishness. 2. Lack of faith. 3. Pride.
Withholding information from a spouse	1. Selfishness.

8.8 Statistics On Sin in the Bible

Here are some "facts and figures" on the subject of sin as gleaned from the NIV translation of the Bible. I thought these might be of some interest to the reader. I hope they help the reader gain a better general knowledge of the Bible's content on the subject of sin.

1. Total of references using the word **sin**--420 times, **sins**--275 times, **sinned**--88 times, **sinning** -- 20 times, **sinful**--49 times, the total of combined words is 852. Obviously the Scriptures have a great deal to say about **sin**.
2. First use of the word **sin** -- the word "die" (Eve quoting God) "...And you must not touch it (fruit from the tree) or you will die" (Genesis 3:3).
3. First casualty of sin -- (eve) "...She took some and ate it" (fruit) (Genesis 3:6-7).
4. First human reaction to **sin** -- (Adam and Eve) "...They hid from the Lord God..." (Genesis 3:8-10).
5. First example of fear as a result of **sin** --(Adam) "I was afraid because I was naked..." (Genesis 3:10).
6. First excuse by a man ever spoken due to **sin** -- (Adam) "The woman you put here with me --she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it" (Genesis 3:12).
7. First excuse by a woman ever spoken due to **sin** --(Eve) "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:13).
8. First shedding of blood for **sin**. "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).
9. First example of **sin** separating man from God -- (Adam and Eve) "So the Lord banished him from the garden...he drove the man out..." (Genesis 3:22-24).
10. First example of **sin** on a "citywide" scale -- "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me" (Genesis 18:20-21).

11. First evidence that **sin's** consequence can be passed down through generations -- "...Punishing the children for the **sin** of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me."

9. LEGAL ISSUES AND AGREEMENTS

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9.1 Introduction

We all acknowledge that marriage is first and foremost a sacred covenant made to and before God. In addition, marriage is *also* a legal and binding contract recognized and enforced by the secular state. Families are built and maintained around the legal framework created by this contract. Many people in effect “sign” this marriage contract without really fully understanding what they are signing and without having any knowledge whatsoever about its legal implications. In some cases, if they knew more about what they were agreeing to, they would think *much* harder about the person they married. The result would probably be a lower divorce rate if people were more careful about getting married.

People often will get divorced because their expectations about marriage have been violated. Interestingly, however, many people are often unwilling to reveal what those expectations are to their prospective spouse for fear of being rejected. Pre-nuptial agreements are helpful and indispensable in further defining the relationship so that the spouses more completely understand the expectations that each has of the relationship. This has the effect of strengthening the relationship.

Many people believe that pre-nuptial agreements make divorce easier to get. As a matter of fact, we would argue that they should make it *harder* to get divorced for Christians, because divorce violates God’s word except where there is sexual immorality (see section 4.14 earlier). The secular state, however, doesn’t care whether sexual immorality has occurred in most cases. Most states now have no-fault divorce laws, which we believe just encourages divorce, as the statistics in section 4.14.3 so clearly point out. This effect has clearly torn our society apart at its seams because it quite plainly violates God’s word and His will. Some states have enacted the concept of two different types of marriage: 1. Regular marriage; 2. Covenant Marriage. Covenant Marriage is MUCH more difficult to end or divorce out of than regular marriage and is reserved and used mainly by Christian couples. The covenant marriage concept has come out of the Christian conservative community, in fact. One purpose that a pre-nuptial agreement should fill would be to extend the marriage agreements to make a regular marriage into a covenant marriage, for instance. That is precisely the intent of this section and this entire document, as we pointed out in section 1.1: Purpose of this Document.

Another interesting fact is that being a Christian doesn’t necessarily lead to a lower divorce rate. As a matter of fact, scientific research by George Barna of Barna Research (<http://www.barna.org>) reveals that the divorce rate among born-again Christians is HIGHER, not lower, than non-religious people! Below are the findings:

“(Ventura, CA) Divorce may not be popular, but it remains common in America. A new study by the Barna Research Group (Ventura, CA) shows that one out of every four Americans adults have experienced at least one divorce.

One of the surprising outcomes to emerge from the study is that born again Christians are more likely to go through a marital split than are non-Christians.

Using statistics drawn from nationwide survey interviews with nearly 4000 adults, the data show that although just 11% of the adult population is currently divorced, 25% of all adults have experienced at least one divorce during their lifetime. Among born again Christians, 27% are currently or have previously been divorced, compared to 24% among adults who are not born again. (Because of the large sample size involved, that difference is statistically significant.)

Who Gets Divorced?

What may be just as surprising are some of the statistics related to various population groups. For instance, while Baby Boomers have been widely criticized for their selfishness and their inattention to family needs in favor of career pursuits, the generation for which divorce is most prevalent is not the Boomers but the generation that preceded them – the Builders. Thirty seven percent of the adults from that generation, who are presently from 53 to 72 years of age, have endured a divorce, compared to 34% among Boomers. In fact, one might argue that it was Builders who initially popularized divorce. Evidence of that is found in a comparison of the incidence of divorce among the Builders (37%) and among those of the generation that preceded them (the Seniors – 18%). To date, only 7% of Busters have been divorced, but that is largely because most of them have yet to be married for the first time.

Other surprises included regional, ethnic and denominational differences. Divorce is much less likely in the Northeast than elsewhere. Only 19% of the residents of the Northeast have been divorced, compared to 26% in the West and 27% in both the South and the Midwest. A higher proportion of whites gets divorced (27%) than is true among African-Americans (22%) or Hispanics (20%). The eye-opener is that only 8% of Asians get divorced – just one-third the incidence found among whites.

Among the characteristics that do not seem to be related to divorce are educational achievement, household income, and political ideology.

Faith and Divorce

Surprisingly, the Christian denomination whose adherents have the highest likelihood of getting divorced are Baptists. Nationally, 29% of all Baptist adults have been divorced. The only Christian group to surpass that level are those associated with non-denominational Protestant churches: 34% of those adults have undergone a divorce. Of the nation's major Christian groups, Catholics and Lutherans have the lowest percentage of divorced individuals (21%). People who attend mainline Protestant churches, overall, experience divorce on par with the national average (25%).

Among non-Christian groups the levels vary. Jews, for instance, are among those most likely to divorce (30% have), while atheists and agnostics are below the norm (21%). Mormons, renowned for their emphasis upon strong families, are no different than the national average (24%).

A related survey recently completed by Barna Research among a nationwide sample of Protestant senior pastors showed that just 15% of pastors have ever been divorced.¹³

In spite of the many requirements God has revealed about the marriage relationship in the Bible to we who are believers as revealed in section 4, we still refuse to obey what he has commanded and end our marriages in divorce even more often than non-believers! Hence, the need for pre-nuptial agreements for those people who are contemplating marriage seriously, and especially among Christians, who have a higher, not lower, divorce rate than the general population.

9.2 Religious Freedom in the Public Schools

¹³ <http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=39>; Dec. 21, 1999; Barna Research; 5528 Everglades St.; Ventura, CA 93003 Voice: (805) 658-8885; Fax: (805) 658-7298.

This section discusses religious freedom in the public, government-funded and run schools. It does not address religious freedom in private schools because there are no constraints on religion in private schools.

9.2.1 The First Amendment

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law . . . prohibiting the free exercise of religion."¹⁴ This provision is commonly known as the Free Exercise Clause. The Supreme Court has held that this measure safeguards all religious beliefs but not all the ways that individuals might act on those beliefs.¹⁵ For example, the Supreme Court held that the Constitution protects the Mormon's right to believe in polygamy but not the right to engage in that practice.¹⁶

The historical controversy surrounding the Free Exercise Clause centers on whether the state must exempt individuals from laws or policies that conflict with their religious beliefs, or simply treat religious people on an equal footing with nonreligious people.¹⁷ Until recently, the Supreme Court held that the Free Exercise Clause requires the government to accommodate religious persons when state law or policy burdened religious beliefs or actions.¹⁸ The government could refuse to accommodate such persons only if protecting a compelling government interest by the least restrictive means.¹⁹

In 1990, the Supreme Court adopted a different position on the parameters of the Free Exercise Clause.²⁰ In Employment Division V. Smith, the Court held that, as long as a government policy or law is neutral and generally applicable, the government need not accommodate religious people whose beliefs conflict with such policy or law.²¹ In other words, as long as the state does not intend to discriminate against religious people when it adopts a law or policy, the state does not offend the Free Exercise Clause.

The Smith approach differs drastically from the accommodation view of the Free Exercise Clause, under which courts found constitutional violations even where government action or policy created only unintentional or incidental burdens on religious beliefs.²² Under the Smith approach, however, burdens must be direct and intentional to amount to constitutional problems.²³

9.2.2 The Establishment Clause

¹⁴ U.S. Constitution, Amendment 1.

¹⁵ Reynolds v. Unites States, 98 U.S. 145, 164 (1878).

¹⁶ See id.

¹⁷ See generally Michael McConnell, Origins of the Fre Exercise Clause, 103 Harv. L Rev. 1409 (1990).

¹⁸ See generally Sherbert V. Verner, 374 U.S. 398 (1963).

¹⁹ Id., at 406-07.

²⁰ Employment Divisoin v. Smith, 494 U.S. 872, reh'g denied, 496 U.S. 913 (1990)

²¹ See generally id.

²² See McConnell, Origins of the Free Exercise Clause, 103 Harv. L. Rev. at 1418.

²³ See id.

Invariably, school administrators cite the Establishment Clause to justify any interference with religious speech or activity in the public schools. This constitutional measure provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."²⁴

Since the early 1960's, when the United States Supreme Court decided the public school prayer cases, widespread misconceptions have existed concerning the role of religion and religious activity in public education. Often religious persons face discrimination or outright hostility in the public education system. School officials have told individuals that they may not pray or talk about religion while in school, even by themselves and on their own time. Supreme Court precedent, however, dictates otherwise.

Every United States Supreme Court decision condemning religious activity in public schools has involved state-directed and state-sponsored religious activity. While the Supreme Court has held that the state may not prescribe religious activities, it has never ruled that individual religious expression in public schools is unconstitutional. Courts have expressly acknowledged the difference between individual religious speech and government-endorsed religious expression: "[T]here is a crucial difference between government speech endorsing religion, which the Establishment Clause forbids, and private speech endorsing religion, which the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clause protect."²⁵

Government involvement in religion, however, raises concerns under the Establishment Clause. Courts use the often criticized but never overruled test articulated in Lemon v. Kurtzman to determine whether school interaction with religion is permissible.²⁶ Under this framework, a school policy is constitutional if it: (1) has a secular purpose; (2) has a primary effect which neither advances nor inhibits religion, and (3) does not create an excessive entanglement with religion.²⁷

The Supreme Court has identified only seven specific practices as unconstitutional establishment of religion in public schools:

1. State-directed and required on-premises religious training.²⁸
2. State-directed and required prayer.²⁹
3. State-directed and required Bible reading.³⁰
4. State-directed and required posting of the Ten Commandments.³¹
5. State-directed and authorized "periods of silence" for meditation and voluntary prayer, where the legislative intent is to promote or advance religion.³²
6. State-directed and required teaching of scientific creationism.³³
7. State-directed prayer led by clergy at public high school graduation and promotion ceremonies.³⁴

9.2.3 Freedom of Association

²⁴ U.S. Constitution, Amend. 1

²⁵ Board of Educ. v. Mergens, 496 U.S. 226, 252 (1990) (Plurality opinion).

²⁶ Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).

²⁷ Id at 612-13.

²⁸ McCullum v. Bd. of Educ., 333 U.S. 203 (1948).

²⁹ Engel V. Vitale, 370 U.S. 431 (1962).

³⁰ Abington Sch. Dist. v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

³¹ Stone V. Graham, 449 U.S. 39, reh'g denied, 449 U.S. 1104 (1981).

³² Wallace v. Jaffree, 472 U.S. 38 (1985).

³³ Edwards v. Aguillard, 482 U.S. 38 (1985).

³⁴ Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992). The debate over the constitutionality of student-initiated prayer continues.

The Supreme Court has recognized an inherent general freedom of association within the First Amendment.³⁵ The Supreme Court has acknowledged two types of association: private and expressive.³⁶

The freedom of private association safeguards "an individual's choice to enter into and maintain certain intimate or private relationships." form unwarranted government intrusion.³⁷ Such associations include marriage, child-rearing, and relationships that "presuppose 'deep attachments and commitments to the necessary few other individuals with whom one shares not only a special community of thoughts, experiences, and beliefs but also distinctively personal aspects of one's life.'"³⁸

The freedom of expressive association allows "individuals to associate for the purpose of engaging in protected speech or religious activities."³⁹ The Court has held that "[t]he Constitution guarantees freedom of association of this kind as an indispensable means of preserving other individual liberties."⁴⁰ Students meeting for a religious club would fall under this category.

9.2.4 Right to Know

A plurality of the Supreme Court has held that the right to know is an "inherent corollary of the right of free speech."⁴¹ The plurality held that students have the right "to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding."⁴²

Courts, however, treat this right differently depending on the context. For example, courts typically disfavor school attempts to restrict student access to materials.⁴³ These cases generally arise when schools seek to remove controversial books from their libraries. In Board of Education v. Pico,⁴⁴ a plurality of the United States Supreme Court held that school administrators cannot remove books from the library "simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books and seek by their removal to 'prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.'"⁴⁵

Although plurality opinions of the Supreme Court do not serve as binding precedent, most courts examining similar fact patterns use the Pico plurality as their chief guideline. Under Pico, a school's underlying motivation for removing books should be the focus of any judicial inquiry.⁴⁶ If schools remove books because of the "pervasively vulgar content" or unsuitable educational nature, courts will find their motivation constitutional.⁴⁷ School officials who fail to follow established policy for removing books provide evidence of an improper motive.⁴⁸ and courts will look unfavorably on such decisions in order to safeguard the students' right to know.

³⁵ Roberts v. United States Jaycees, 468 U.S. 609, 622-23 (1984).

³⁶ Board of Directors of Rotary Int'l v. Rotary Club of Duarte, 481 U.S. 537, 544-45 (1987).

³⁷ Id. at 544.

³⁸ Id. at 545 (quoting Roberts v. Jaycees, 468 U.S. at 619-20).

³⁹ Id.

⁴⁰ Roberts v. Jaycees, 468 U.S. at 618.

⁴¹ See Board of Educ. v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853, 867 (1982) (plurality)

⁴² Id. at 868-69 (plurality opinion).

⁴³ See e.g., Pico, 457 U.S. at 868-69 (plurality opinion); Campbell v. St. Tammany Parish Sch. Bd., 64 F.3d 184 (5th Cir. 1995); Case v. United Sch. Dist. No. 233, 908 F. Supp. 864 (D. Kan. 1995).

⁴⁴ 457 U.S. 853.

⁴⁵ Id. at 872 (plurality opinion).

⁴⁶ Id. see also Campbell, 64 F.3d at 188-89.

⁴⁷ Pico, 457 U.S. at 870-72 (plurality); see also Campbell, 64 F.3d at 188.

⁴⁸ Id. at 876.

Courts use a different standard of review for schools' curricula decisions.⁴⁹ The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals has held that students questioning the legality of curricula decisions must "cross a relatively high threshold before entering upon the field of constitutional claim suitable for federal court litigation."⁵⁰ Courts typically defer to school judgment in these matters.⁵¹ For example, a federal district court upheld a schools' decision not to add the film *Schindler's List* to its curriculum because of its R rating.⁵² The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals found constitutional a school's decision to stop using a textbook because of its vulgar nature.⁵³

However, this deferential position does not invariably produce victories for schools. In Pratt v. Independent School District No. 831, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals invalidated a school's decision to remove a film from its curriculum.⁵⁴ The court noted that although schools enjoy substantial discretion in curriculum matters, they do not have an absolute right to remove materials from their curricula.⁵⁵ The court struck down the school's removal of the film because the school's administrators based their decision on their own personal values, not on the violent content of the film.⁵⁶

9.3 Five Reasons Why Christians Should *Not* Obtain a State Marriage License⁵⁷

Every year thousands of Christians amble down to their local county courthouse and obtain a marriage license from the State in order to marry their future spouse. They do this unquestioningly. They do it because their pastor has told them to go get one, and besides, "everybody else gets one." This section attempts to answer the question - *why should we not get one?*

9.3.1 REASON #1. The definition of a "license" demands that we NOT obtain one to marry.

Black's Law Dictionary defines "license" as, "*The permission by competent authority to do an act which without such permission, would be illegal.*" We need to ask ourselves- why should it be illegal to marry without the State's permission? More importantly, why should we *need* the State's permission to participate in something which God instituted (Gen. 2:18-24)? We should not need the State's permission to marry nor should we grovel before state officials to seek it. What if you apply and the State says "no"? You must understand that the authority to license implies the power to prohibit. A license by definition "confers a right" to do something. The State cannot grant the right to marry. It is a God-given right. Likewise, there isn't a state in the union that can or does prohibit marriage either.

One might say that there is *one* thing that the marriage license *does* allow which would otherwise be illegal, and that one thing is the right of one greedy and selfish spouse to hide community property under the care of someone else, drag the other spouse into court, and then make false allegations (lies) of

⁴⁹ See e.g., Virgil v. School Bd., 862 F.2d 1517 (11th Cir. 1989); Zykan v. Warsaw Community Sch. Corp., 631 F.2d 1300, 1306 (7th Cir. 1980); Borger v. Bisciglia, 888 F. Supp. 97, 99-100 (E.D. Wis. 1995).

⁵⁰ Zykan, 631 F.2d at 1306.

⁵¹ See Borger, 888 F. Supp. at 99-100.

⁵² Borger, 888 F. Supp. 97.

⁵³ Virgil, 862 F.2d at 1525 (noting that students still had access to materials in library).

⁵⁴ 670 F.2d 771 (8th Cir. 1982).

⁵⁵ Id. at 776.

⁵⁶ Id. at 778

⁵⁷ Pastor Matt Trewhella, <http://www.mercyseat.net/BROCHURES/marriagelicense.htm>.

domestic abuse to engender court sympathy. Is this the only kind of thing you want to license by giving the state control over your marriage? These vindictive spouses then have their spouse kicked out of his or her own house based on the unwarranted presumption of domestic violence and then use the legal system to vindictively destroy them financially by enslaving that spouse financially to their lawyer (family law attorneys cost about \$225/hour). Then they use the court to legally steal all the remaining unhidden assets by dividing separate property and the appreciation on that separate property in half. This process sets a very bad example for the children, creates fear and anxiety in both spouses, and enriches family law attorneys and the spouses for lying about each other to gain an advantage, but accomplishes no good whatsoever.

Another interesting outcome of divorce is that the anxiety and fear it creates in spouses who have gone through it has the effect of preventing people from ever being willing to marry again in order to avoid a very painful repetition of this kind of insane experience. These divorced spouses who don't remarry then are encouraged to seek means other than marriage to get their sexual and emotional needs met. The only option available to them is then to fornicate and live in sin without a commitment or a marriage license. The media and our worldly culture promotes this stereotypical lifestyle, so they get trapped in it and end up unhappy, feeling guilty, and defensive and combative over their choice of lifestyle. Fornication as a cure for not getting married is worse than the disease (of divorce) from a biblical perspective, especially for any illegitimate children and abortions (murder) that might result from such a choice of sinful lifestyle, because the bible says fornication is a sin.

If these discouraged divorcees do take the chance and get remarried, the divorce rate is actually higher for second marriages than it is for first marriages! First marriages end in divorce approximately 55% of the time in California. Second marriages end in divorce 60% of the time! To make things worse, who wants to raise someone else's children and not have any of their own? That is why we say that people don't learn anything from divorce after they have their first one. They don't use that experience as a way to grow spiritually and become less selfish and prideful. Instead, they just get more selfish, arrogant, and argumentative because they are more adept at playing the litigation game and using marriage to gain financial advantage. How can we say that people more often than not use marriage to gain financial advantage and that their inordinate focus on money is at the root of the divorce problem? Because statistics point to the fact that the number one cause of arguments and divorce is related to arguments over money in the marriage! The number two cause of arguments and divorce is related to sex, and they probably argue about that, I'm guessing, because men like sex more than women, so men feel unfulfilled in marriage when they marry a spouse who won't submit in the biblical sense, as we talked about in section 4.8.5.2: The Four Laws of Sexual Satisfaction In Marriage.

We don't want to paint such a gloomy picture here, but we're trying to use the truth to emphasize that your character and that of the person you marry is the most important predictor of whether the two of you will stay married, and that character has to be based on a shared faith and strong and equal commitment to godly principles if your relationship is to survive the test of time! We pointed this out in section 4.8.1: Common Spiritual Beliefs and Faith and won't belabor it further here.

9.3.2 REASON #2. When you marry with a marriage license, you grant the State jurisdiction over your marriage.

When you marry with a marriage license, your marriage is a creature of the State. It is a corporation of the State! As a matter of fact, most states treat married spouses as the equivalent of business partners with a fiduciary duty towards each other insofar as property and custody issues are concerned.

Therefore, they have jurisdiction over your marriage including the *fruit* of your marriage. What is the fruit of your marriage? Your children and every piece of property you own. There is plenty of case law in American jurisprudence which declares this to be true.

In 1993, parents were upset here in Wisconsin because a test was being administered to their children in the government schools which was very invasive of the family's privacy. When parents complained, they were shocked by the school bureaucrats who informed them that their children were required to take the test by law and that they would *have* to take the test because they (the government school) had jurisdiction over their children. When parents asked the bureaucrats what gave them jurisdiction, the bureaucrats answered, "your marriage license and their birth certificates." Judicially, and in increasing fashion, practically, your state marriage license has far-reaching implications.

9.3.3 REASON #3. When you marry with a marriage license, you place yourself under a body of law which is immoral.

By obtaining a marriage license, you place yourself under the jurisdiction of Family Court which is governed by unbiblical and immoral laws. **Under these laws, you can divorce for any reason.** Often, the courts side with the spouse who is in rebellion to God, and castigate the spouse who remains faithful by ordering him or her not to speak about the Bible or other matters of faith when present with the children, even if those matters of faith promote continuance and strengthening of the marriage.

Ministers cannot in good conscience perform a marriage which would place people under this immoral body of laws. They also cannot marry someone with a marriage license because to do so they have to act as an agent of the State, and this violates the law regarding separation of church and state! The minister would have to sign the marriage license, and then have to mail it into the State. Given the State's demand to usurp the place of God and family regarding marriage, and given its unbiblical, immoral laws to govern marriage, it would be an act of treason for ministers to do so.

9.3.4 REASON #4. The marriage license invades and removes God-given parental authority.

When you read the Bible, you see that God intended for children to have their father's blessing regarding whom they married. Daughters were to be *given* in marriage *by their fathers* (Deut. 22:16; Ex. 22:17; I Cor. 7:38). We have a vestige of this in our culture today in that the father takes his daughter to the front of the altar and the minister asks, "Who *gives* this woman to be married to this man?"

Historically, there was no requirement to obtain a marriage license in colonial America. When you read the laws of the colonies and then the states, you see only two requirements for marriage. First, you had to obtain your parents permission to marry, and second, you had to post public notice of the marriage 5-15 days before the ceremony.

Notice you had to obtain your *parents permission*. Back then you saw godly government displayed in that the State recognized the parents authority by demanding that the parents permission be obtained. Today, the all-encompassing ungodly State demands that *their* permission be obtained to marry.

By issuing marriage licenses, the State is saying, "You don't need your parents permission, you need *our* permission." If parents are opposed to their child's marrying a certain person and refuse to give their permission, the child can do an end run around the parents authority by obtaining the State's permission, and marry anyway. This is an invasion and removal of God-given parental authority by the State.

9.3.5 **REASON #5. When you marry with a marriage license, you are like a polygamist.**

From the State's point of view, when you marry with a marriage license, you are not just marrying your spouse, but you are also marrying the State.

The most blatant declaration of this fact that I have ever found is a brochure entitled "With This Ring I Thee Wed." It is found in county courthouses across Ohio where people go to obtain their marriage licenses. It is published by the Ohio State Bar Association. The opening paragraph under the subtitle "Marriage Vows" states, "*Actually, when you repeat your marriage vows you enter into a legal contract. There are three parties to that contract. 1.You; 2. Your husband or wife, as the case may be; and 3. the State of Ohio.*"

You see, the State and the lawyers know that when you marry with a marriage license, you are not just marrying your spouse, you are marrying the State! You are like a polygamist! You are not just making a vow to your spouse, but you are making a vow to the State **and** your spouse. You are also giving undue jurisdiction to the State.

9.3.6 **When Does the State Have Jurisdiction Over a Marriage?**

God intended the State to have jurisdiction over a marriage for two reasons - 1). in the case of divorce, and 2). when crimes are committed i.e., adultery, bigamy. etc. Unfortunately, the State now allows divorce for any reason, and it does not prosecute for adultery.

In either case, divorce or crime, a marriage license is *not* necessary for the courts to determine whether a marriage existed or not. What is needed are witnesses. This is why you have a best man and a maid of honor. They should sign the marriage certificate in your family Bible, and the wedding day guest book should be kept.

Marriage was instituted by God, therefore it is a God-given right. According to Scripture, it is to be governed by the family, and the State only has jurisdiction in the cases of divorce or crime.

9.3.7 **History of Marriage Licenses in America**

George Washington was married *without* a marriage license. Abraham Lincoln was married *without* a marriage license. So, how did we come to this place in America where marriage licenses are issued?

Historically, all the states in America had laws outlawing the marriage of blacks and whites. In the mid-1800's, certain states began allowing interracial marriages or miscegenation as long as those marrying received a license from the state. In other words they had to receive *permission to do an act which without such permission would have been illegal.*

Blacks Law Dictionary points to this historical fact when it defines "marriage license" as, "A license or permission granted by public authority to persons who intend to intermarry." "Intermarry" is defined in Black's Law Dictionary as, "Miscegenation; mixed or interracial marriages."

Give the State an inch and they will take a 100 miles (or as one elderly woman once said to me "10,000 miles.") Not long after these licenses were issued, some states began requiring *all* people who marry to obtain a marriage license. In 1923, the Federal Government established the Uniform Marriage and Marriage License Act (they later established the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act). By 1929, every state in the Union had adopted marriage license laws.

9.3.8 What Should We Do?

Christian couples should not be marrying with State marriage licenses, nor should ministers be marrying people with State marriage licenses. Some have said, "If someone is married without a marriage license, then they aren't really married." Given the fact that states may soon legalize same-sex marriages, we need to ask ourselves, "If a man and a man marry *with* a State marriage license, and a man and woman marry *without* a State marriage license - *who's really married?* Is it the two men *with* a marriage license, or the man and woman *without* a marriage license? In reality, this contention that people are not really married unless they obtain a marriage license simply reveals how Statist we are in our thinking. We need to think biblically.

You should not have to obtain a license from the State to marry someone anymore than you should have to obtain a license from the State to be a parent, which some in academic and legislative circles are currently pushing to be made law.

When I marry a couple, I always buy them a Family Bible which contains birth and death records, and a marriage certificate. We record the marriage in the Family Bible. What's recorded in a Family Bible will stand up as legal evidence in any court of law in America. Both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were married without a marriage license. They simply recorded their marriages in their Family Bibles. So should we.

(Pastor Trewhella has been marrying couples without marriage licenses for ten years. Many other pastors also refuse to marry couples with State marriage licenses.

This section is not comprehensive in scope. Rather, the purpose of this section is to make you think and give you a starting point to do further study of your own. **If you would like an audio sermon regarding this matter, just send a gift of at least five dollars in cash to: Mercy Seat Christian Church 10240 W. National Ave. PMB #129 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53227.**

9.4 Fiduciary Duty

The California Family Code, section 721, says the following about the financial responsibilities that married spouses have toward each other:

721. (a) Subject to subdivision (b), either husband or wife may enter into any transaction with the other, or with any other person, respecting property, which either might if unmarried. (b) Except as provided in Sections 143, 144, 146, and 16040 of the Probate Code, in transactions between themselves, a husband and wife are subject

to the general rules governing fiduciary relationships which control the actions of persons occupying confidential relations with each other. This confidential relationship imposes a duty of the highest good faith and fair dealing on each spouse, and neither shall take any unfair advantage of the other. This confidential relationship is a fiduciary relationship subject to the same rights and duties of non-marital business partners, as provided in Sections 15019, 15020, 15021, and 15022 of the Corporations Code, including the following:

- (1) Providing each spouse access at all times to any books kept regarding a transaction for the purposes of inspection and copying.
- (2) Rendering upon request, true and full information of all things affecting any transaction which concerns the community property. Nothing in this section is intended to impose a duty for either spouse to keep detailed books and records of community property transactions.
- (3) Accounting to the spouse, and holding as a trustee, any benefit or profit derived from any transaction by one spouse without the consent of the other spouse which concerns the community property.

The California Family Code section 1101 also says about this fiduciary duty the following:

(a) A spouse has a claim against the other spouse for a breach of the fiduciary duty imposed by Section 1100 or 1102 that results in impairment to the claimant spouse's present undivided one-half interest in the community estate, including, but not limited to, a single transaction or a pattern or series of transactions, which transaction or transactions have caused or will cause a detrimental impact to the claimant spouse's undivided one-half interest in the community estate.

(b) A court may order an accounting of the property and obligations of the parties to a marriage and may determine the rights of ownership in, the beneficial enjoyment of, or access to, community property, and the classification of all property of the parties to a marriage.

(c) A court may order that the name of a spouse shall be added to community property held in the name of the other spouse alone or that the title of community property held in some other title form shall be reformed to reflect its community character, except with respect to any of the following:

- (1) A partnership interest held by the other spouse as a general partner.
- (2) An interest in a professional corporation or professional association.
- (3) An asset of an unincorporated business if the other spouse is the only spouse involved in operating and managing the business.
- (4) Any other property, if the revision would adversely affect the rights of a third person.

(d)

- (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), any action under subdivision (a) shall be commenced within three years of the date a petitioning spouse

had actual knowledge that the transaction or event for which the remedy is being sought occurred.

- (2) An action may be commenced under this section upon the death of a spouse or in conjunction with an action for legal separation, dissolution of marriage, or nullity without regard to the time limitations set forth in paragraph (1).
- (3) The defense of laches may be raised in any action brought under this section.
- (4) Except as to actions authorized by paragraph (2), remedies under subdivision (a) apply only to transactions or events occurring on or after July 1, 1987.

(e) In any transaction affecting community property in which the consent of both spouses is required, the court may, upon the motion of a spouse, dispense with the requirement of the other spouse's consent if both of the following requirements are met:

- (1) The proposed transaction is in the best interest of the community.
- (2) Consent has been arbitrarily refused or cannot be obtained due to the physical incapacity, mental incapacity, or prolonged absence of the non-consenting spouse.

(f) Any action may be brought under this section without filing an action for dissolution of marriage, legal separation, or nullity, or may be brought in conjunction with the action or upon the death of a spouse.

(g) Remedies for breach of the fiduciary duty by one spouse as set out in Section 721 shall include, but not be limited to, an award to the other spouse of 50 percent, or an amount equal to 50 percent, of any asset undisclosed or transferred in breach of the fiduciary duty plus attorney's fees and court costs. However, in no event shall interest be assessed on the managing spouse.

(h) Remedies for the breach of the fiduciary duty by one spouse when the breach falls within the ambit of Section 3294 of the Civil Code shall include, but not be limited to, an award to the other spouse of 100 percent, or an amount equal to 100 percent, of any asset undisclosed or transferred in breach of the fiduciary duty.

9.5 Record Keeping

Every member of the family is responsible for keeping and safeguarding any and all records of family finances for a period of at least 7 years. They are entitled to keep those records under lock and key. However, if they are the only one with the key, they are expected and required to provide copies of the locked up documents or electronic versions to the other spouse so that he/she may also be informed of the condition of family finances.

9.6 Asset and Liability Inventory at the Time of Marriage

The California Family Code sections 130 and 752 define separate property as follows:

130: “‘Separate property’ is property that is separate property under Part 2 (commencing with Section 760) of Division 4.”

752: “Except as otherwise provided by statute, neither husband nor wife has any interest in the separate property of the other.

Below is a list of the financial and property assets and liabilities to be treated as separate property at the time of marriage. The parties to this constitution swear to God and affirm that this account is true, correct, and complete to the best of their ability:

Table 9-1: Assets and Liabilities Going Into Marriage

#	Description	Type: Asset/Liability	Manufacturer/Model/ Account #	Date of Purchase	Fair Market Value (FMV)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
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9.7 The State of California’s Default Pre-Nuptial agreement

Marriage is unlike any other area of law. In any other area of law, the only enforceable agreement between two parties is what appears in a written contract that is signed by the two parties. In family law, if you get a marriage license from the state when you get married, the state in effect writes the marriage contract and changes it frequently based on new legislation as well as rulings by the state supreme court. Worst yet, the state doesn't include with the marriage license that people sign a copy of what the spouses are agreeing to based on state law at the time they get married. This leads to a lot of confusion among people about family law, and a big windfall for lawyers who practice family law. The result is that when two people get married, *they don't find out until they get divorced*, if they get divorced, what was in their marriage contract! Do you want your sacred marriage and your future regulated by a godless secular state that promotes homosexual marriages, enslavement through high taxation, no-fault divorce at the slightest whim because of "irreconcilable differences," and whose laws are written by lawyers who look after their own by maximizing litigation? I certainly wouldn't!

Nevertheless, most people getting married in California who get state marriage licenses sign the marriage contract without ever even knowing or questioning what they are agreeing to. This leads to the interesting and entirely Christian idea, as we mentioned in section 9.3 (Five Reasons Why Christians Should Not Obtain a State Marriage License), that it probably isn't a good idea to get a marriage license from the state, but instead do it only at your church. Interestingly, there are over 1311 sections in the California Family Code at present that form the basis for the marriage contract and very few people know what is in this code, much less where to get a copy of it. However, Proverbs 18:15 advises us: "*The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, the ears of the wise seek it out.*" Why don't more Christians want to know more about what they are getting into when they marry and get a state marriage license? I would argue that much of it has to do with hormones and impatience dominating their thought patterns, and as we all know, letting the flesh rather than the mind and the spirit operate our lives is a recipe for *disaster*. It is therefore no wonder the divorce rate is 55% in California and growing every year.

The other irony is that more people don't take their future into their own hands by writing their own marriage contract to make sure that their moral and religious beliefs aren't compromised by the state's default marriage contract. People on the one hand will buy life insurance and car insurance to protect themselves, even though the risks (or probabilities) of harm are actually lower in these cases than the risk of divorce, but when it comes to their marriages, which will end in divorce in the vast majority of cases, they just leave it at the mercy of the state legislature and the family lawyers, none of whom agree with their religious, spiritual, or moral values and whose only motive is profit at great expense. One family lawyer we talked to said that justice simply doesn't happen in the family law courtroom.

Therefore, let's take a look at California's default pre-nuptial contract for the benefit of all. I won't bore you with all the legalese or points and authorities, but here is what you would be agreeing to if you got married in the State of California at the time this document was written, which is _____, 2000:

1. *Timeframe*: It takes 6 months minimum to get a divorce. This is what is called the cool-off period. 80% of divorces in San Diego County happen within 8 months after filing.
2. *Basis for divorce*:
 - 2.1. Only one party has to want a divorce in order to get one, and that party can get one against the will of the other. This has the affect of encouraging divorce in most cases.

- 2.2. Since California is a “no-fault” divorce state, the only basis for divorce needed is “irreconcilable differences.” This occurs when the spouses have reached an impasse or argument that at least one of them identifies as not being remediable through counseling.
- 2.3. Note that NONE of the following criteria need be proved for a divorce being granted:
 - 2.3.1. Adultery.
 - 2.3.2. Pedophilia
 - 2.3.3. Physical or verbal abuse.
 - 2.3.4. Criminal behavior.
 - 2.3.5. Failure to abide by God’s laws for marriage and divorce.
- 2.4. If you want your marriage to last and you want unfaithfulness punished, then you are wise to have a prenuptial agreement that has a clause that a spouse who commits adultery loses all property interests in the community.

3. Legal assistance:

- 3.1. 55% of all marriages end in divorce in California.
- 3.2. There are 15,000 divorces per year in San Diego County.
- 3.3. Over 90% of the divorce cases heard in San Diego County involve at least one party on either side who is representing himself/herself in a court of law. Such people are called Pro Pers.
- 3.4. The person who does not have legal representation is at a distinct disadvantage in the divorce proceeding and often gets legally and emotionally abused with underhanded tactics and chicanery by the party who has legal counsel.
- 3.5. Trial lawyers in California have done everything in their power to prevent pro per litigants from getting tools or information that would allow them to conduct their case effectively without the need for a lawyer. For instance:
 - 3.5.1. Most family law attorneys are extremely reluctant to be hired to work as a “coach” and not provide a full-service arrangement whereby they do everything. This is in spite of the skill and experience level of the person who needs legal assistance. You will probably never hear such attorneys admit it, but the reason is because they want to make LOTS of money and they can’t if they don’t maximize their involvement in the case and provide services for which they aren’t needed.
 - 3.5.2. The procedures for bringing on an attorney to work as a “coach” to aid and assist proper litigants rather than represent them fully are cumbersome and not well-documented anywhere in the most prevalent family law practice guides published by such companies as the Rutter Group. I would speculate that this situation exists because once again, family law attorneys do not want to undermine their business base or reduce their profits by providing less than full-service representation.
 - 3.5.3. The Family Law Facilitator’s Office in the Family Court of San Diego County has several volunteer lawyers on their staff to help pro per litigants, but they won’t help for most matters and are there primarily to market themselves to do fee-for-service legal representation at \$225/hr on average.
 - 3.5.4. The main source of information for practicing family law in California that is used by most family law lawyers is the Rutter Group Family Law California Practice Guide. This monstrosity has three volumes and about 5,000 pages of information about California Family Law and costs almost \$300. It’s very useful if you know anything about law, but it isn’t written for pro per litigants and takes way too much energy for the typical pro per to use and understand.
 - 3.5.5. Family law is extremely complex in California, which is a community property state. The probability that a pro per litigant will make a mistake or violate procedures and be sanctioned by the judge because of that is high.

3.5.6. The state (probably with the sponsorship of the trial lawyers association) recently passed a law that makes life much more difficult for people who write or publish computer software that automates the legal process, making it harder for pro pers to find such software and harder to manage your case.. People who publish such software now have to post a \$25,000 bond, which few people can afford. This same thing is happening in other states, including Texas, where Intuit had to take its Quicken Family Lawyer off the shelves because of a lawsuit by the trial lawyers association.

3.6. **BOTTOM LINE**: You're smart if you avoid the need to litigate by having your own air tight marital agreement so you won't have to go into court and will get a fairer deal.

4. Spousal support:

4.1. If one of the spouses is unemployed at the time of the divorce, then the other spouse has to pay that spouse spousal support for half the length of the marriage or until that spouse finds a job, whichever occurs first.

4.2. If the parties were married ten years or longer, then the unemployed spouse is entitled to permanently collect spousal support for as long as they are unemployed.

4.3. Even though courts regularly admonish unemployed spouses to find work, irresponsible spouses frequently don't get jobs anyway and continue to collect spousal support with impunity.

4.4. Spousal support is based on state guidelines and a percentage of the employed spouse's income.

5. Personal Property and assets:

5.1. California is a community property state. All income made and all property purchased during the marriage with community assets is considered community (that is shared) property.

5.2. Everything the parties came into the marriage with they are entitled walk out with as their separate property, minus any interest or appreciation.

5.3. Appreciation on separate property that is in the name of only one person and was purchased before marriage goes entirely to the original owner. Personal property that has a community title but started out as separate property at the time of marriage is also treated this way.

5.4. Property that was separate property going into the marriage is considered to be separate even if its character changed and it became community on the title, unless there was an explicit transmutation agreement between the parties that changed its character.

5.5. Appreciation on community property in the name of both parties that was purchased during the marriage with community assets is split 50-50.

5.6. Separate property can only be treated as such by the court if it can be rebutted with physical evidence or testimony that it was separate property going into the marriage. The evidence usually takes the form of account statements, title documents, income tax returns, cancelled checks, etc. Such evidence supports what is called a *traceable right of reimbursement* for the contribution of separate property for use by the community. Therefore, you are strongly admonished to:

5.6.1. Keep careful records of all separate property going into the marriage, or else the court will treat the property as community property by default.

5.6.2. Keep all separate property records and legal agreements in a separate safe deposit accessible only to you. You also might want to provide a copy of these records to your spouse.

5.6.3. Keep in mind that most businesses in California are required to keep financial records for no longer than 7 years. Beyond that, you generally can't subpoena copies of the records, so make sure you especially keep copies of older records.

6. Real estate:

- 6.1.1. Any separate property used to contribute to the purchase of a community home or business or vacation property is returned to the party that it came from minus interest or appreciation.
- 6.1.2. Any increase in equity of the home is split 50-50, unless separate property was used to make the payments. This is known as a 2640 division. This makes it extremely unfair and prejudicial for the spouse who contributes separate property to the downpayment on a community residence, because they get no appreciation or interest on their separate property contributions to the acquisition of community property. *We therefore do not recommend using separate property as a downpayment on a community residence under any circumstances.*
- 6.1.3. Appreciation on the home is split 50-50 unless there is a written agreement to the contrary, or unless the property was in the name of only one spouse at the time of marriage.
- 6.1.4. If the home was in the name of only one spouse either at the time of marriage or at the time it was purchased, then the spouse whose name it was in gets a pro-rata share of the appreciation on the property but not the principle that was paid off. This is known as the Moore-Marsden rule.

7. Retirement:

- 7.1. Long-term marriages: If the parties are married ten years or more, each spouse gets a permanent entitlement to a portion of the other spouse's retirement. They are entitled to half of the benefits accrued indefinitely.
- 7.2. Short term marriages: Divorcing spouses are entitled to half of the benefits accrued during the period of the marriage for short marriages of less than ten years.
- 7.3. The portion of the other party's retirement that a divorcing spouse gets is based on the Brown formula, where the percentage of the total time that that payments were made to the retirement account during which the spouses were married determines the award.

8. Child custody, support, and visitation.

- 8.1. Child custody will be determined based on the best interests of the child.
- 8.2. Most awards go to Mom as the primary custodian, with Dad only having visitation for usually between 5 and 33% of the time, even if he wants a 50-50 arrangement.
- 8.3. The only time you usually see a 50-50 award of custody is when both parties agree to it during litigation or as part of a prenuptial agreement they signed before they married. If they fight over custody, then 50-50 awards almost never happen because judges think that warring parents can't be good parents.
- 8.4. Child support is computed based on state guidelines. These guidelines are based on a percentage of total income of both parties and the percent time that the non-custodial parent has the child.
 - 8.4.1. If both parties have exactly the same income and a 50-50 timeshare, then the support will be zero.
 - 8.4.2. Even if the timeshare is 50-50, child support is still usually paid by the father to the mother because the father usually has a higher income than the mother.
- 8.5. Because child support is based mainly on income and timeshare, then there is a strong incentive for mom to make false allegations about dad's parenting skills in order to increase her timeshare and therefore her support amount. This happens very often as a way for mom to turn junior into a cash register and dad into a financial slave who has been robbed of his kids. For such cases, polygraph tests are not admissible as evidence in the State of California by default, and so there is a big uphill legal battle for the father to get his credibility back and spend time with his children. Most of the time, it costs between \$20,000 and \$30,000 for dad

to get his kids back in such cases if he is not at fault. The only way for dad to counteract this possibility is to stipulate BEFORE the parties marry that they agree to admit polygraph tests into evidence insofar as child abuse or neglect allegations are involved.

- 8.6. Late child support payments compound at 10% simple interest.
- 8.7. There is nothing keeping a parent from moving out of state, and a parent who will lose time with their child because of a move-away.
- 8.8. If there is strong evidence for parental alienation, then courts have been known to frequently switch custody over to the parent who is the target of the alienation as a way to sanction the parent effecting the alienation.

9. Legal fees and sanctions:

- 9.1. Even when the attorney for a spouse is being “obstreperous” and unnecessarily difficult, he is not personally or financially liable for such unscrupulous actions. Instead, any award of sanctions or attorney fees for such tactics is awarded against the spouse they are representing and not them.
- 9.2. Judges will routinely sanction pro per litigants with legal fees for the side that has legal counsel if they make more work for the opposing side, but not vice versa.
- 9.3. Cost is \$225/hr on average.
- 9.4. Judges will routinely have the party who makes less money pay the legal fees of the party who makes more money, and this is especially true if a party has no income.
- 9.5. Pro per litigants most of the time can’t bill or sanction the opposing side for their time and costs of litigating, even in cases where there is clear fault on the part of the party who has legal representation. This creates a highly discriminatory environment for pro per litigants that favors the party who has an attorney.

10. Fiduciary duty

- 10.1. Married spouses are treated essentially as business partners who have an obligation to deal honestly, fairly, and respectfully with each other, even if they are separated. This duty is known as fiduciary duty.
- 10.2. Fiduciary duty carries with it the following requirements:
 - 10.2.1. Spouses may not gift community assets to third parties without the explicit written consent of one’s spouse.
 - 10.2.2. Spouses may not sell community assets to third parties for less than their fair market value without the explicit written consent of one’s spouse.
 - 10.2.3. Spouses are obligated to give a fair and reasonable accounting and answer questions on how they managed the community’s assets. This does not include the legal requirement to keep records.
- 10.3. Dishonest spouses (called predators or gold diggers) will typically do the following activities in violation of their fiduciary duties in order to keep their assets or income from being split if they are anticipating a divorce. All of these tactics can be proven with a polygraph test for the vast majority of cases. It is also prudent and very important to have a prenuptial agreement at the time of marriage as shown in section 9.9 of this document that prevents most of these tactics. This will reduce the risk that these tactics will be used by someone you might be marrying:
 - 10.3.1. Gift separate property assets to their relatives at the time of marriage or during the marriage.
 - 10.3.2. Sign a quitclaim deed at the time of marriage for jointly owned property they share with other brothers, sisters, or parents.

- 10.3.3. Gift assets to relatives at the time of separation to keep the court from considering it, which is sanctionable by a 100% penalty if this act can be proven without a reasonable doubt.
- 10.3.4. Sell community assets at less than fair market value to third parties, who will hold the assets until after the divorce.
- 10.3.5. Not document any of their transactions or conduct them in cash, so they are not traceable.
- 10.3.6. Get their paychecks by check instead of direct deposit so they can gift the assets in cash to their relatives for safekeeping.
- 10.3.7. File separate income tax returns.
- 10.3.8. Do not allow their spouse to get copies of business records, including pay statements, income tax returns, and account statements.
- 10.3.9. Refuse requests by a spouse to get copies of the business records to facilitate a fairer property division.
- 10.3.10. Lie about their assets on their Income and Expense declaration submitted to the court.
- 10.3.11. Say they lost their statements, even though they have copies. This is perjury and is also punishable if proven.
- 10.3.12. Destroy the evidence and financial records of their spouse so that spouse cannot prove the separate property interest that he has during the divorce proceeding.

11. False allegations and perjury

- 11.1. It is very common on California for divorcing spouses to make false allegations about their partner about domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, or spousal abuse. There are many reasons for this, including:
 - 11.1.1. False allegations of spousal abuse allow a divorcing spouse to get a restraining order so they can legally evict their husband or wife from the home, eliminating the need for them to compromise or communicate in trying to reconcile the marriage.
 - 11.1.2. False allegations of child abuse or neglect often have the affect of alienating the other parent from their child and giving a spouse an advantage in the child custody dispute. This gives a spouse a higher timeshare, which then guarantees them higher child support every month.
- 11.2. Another common tactic is for spouses to hide assets during the separation so that these assets don't need to be divided and they can be hoarded. They will then falsify what is called their Declaration of Disclosure (DOD) so as to conceal the existence of these assets. It is very difficult to prove that fraud was involved without a polygraph test, but if it can be proven, the penalties can be substantial. As a matter of fact, the state allows that ALL of the assets that were hidden are given to the spouse that was lied to!
- 11.3. It is very difficult to determine if a person is lying or propagating false or discrediting allegations of domestic violence, child abuse, or child neglect. The main reason for this is that in California, the California Evidence Code §351:
 - 11.3.1. Does not allow polygraph tests to be admitted into evidence without consent of both parties. Rarely will both parties consent to this, especially if one of them is making false allegations to gain a strategic advantage in the divorce case.
 - 11.3.2. Does not require divorcing parties to submit to a polygraph test.
- 11.4. Because polygraph tests are not admissible as evidence in California, then what usually happens when there are disputes over false allegations in a custody dispute is that judges will order the following:
 - 11.4.1. They will first order the accused parent to undergo supervised visitation so that his or her parenting style can be monitored by an objective third party. Reports are completed

on this person that become evidence for the judge. The supervised visits go on for the length of the psychological evaluation, which can last as long as 11 months! What a waste.

11.4.2. Next, they will order a very long, expensive psychological evaluations. For a custody evaluation, this can cost \$5,000-\$6,000. Polygraph tests only cost \$300! Therefore, the psychologists now get rich because one of the spouses are lying. He will also take his time completing the custody evaluation in order to run up costs. Most custody evaluations take from 6 to 11 months.

11.4.3. Finally, they will appoint or order a new lawyer, called the Minor Counsel, who will represent the minor child because neither of the parents can be trusted to have the child's best interests in mind. This third person is very expensive (\$250/hr) and now shows up at every court hearing. His cost is split 50-50 between the father and mother. This means that when the respondent's counsel, the petitioner's counsel, and the minor counsel show up to court, it costs a total of \$750/hour! This very quickly depletes the community of any assets and destroys any possibility of a decent standard of living for either parent or the child after the divorce is finalized. Instead, the parents finish their divorce with a mountain of legal debts, high child support bills, and a dramatically lower standard of living.

11.5. The affect on the child of having to go to supervised visits just to see a parent is that the child has less trust for that parent, even if the mistrust isn't warranted, which further gives the falsely accusing parent a strategic advantage.

11.6. The only realistic way to prevent all this expensive and oppressive nonsense is to stipulate to the following on a pre-nuptial agreement signed by both parties:

11.6.1. The parties agree to take a polygraph test whenever certain types of allegations are involved.

11.6.2. The parties agree or stipulate to admit this evidence voluntarily into the court without further foundation. This means that you don't need testimony to get the evidence admitted.

Does this default prenuptial agreement for California scare you? It should! I hope it causes people to think *much* more carefully about getting married, and about the person they choose as their spouse! We're not trying to discourage marriage, because we really believe in it. Perhaps doing this would lower the divorce rate and create a more stable environment for the next generation of children to grow up in, which would further lower the divorce rate later for the next generation.

9.8 Questions And Answers for Prospective Spouses Who Can't Accept Having to Sign a Pre-Nuptial Agreement

Below are a few common remarks and questions we hear from people when asked about their feelings on divorce and pre-nuptial agreements. It turns out that women are the ones most likely to object to prenuptial agreements, perhaps at least in part to the many statements made in section 4.15 (Humorous Side of Marriage), and in particular 4.15.10. We follow each question with a canned answer to such remarks to help you understand a well researched perspective on these issues:

9.8.1 Doesn't post-divorce spousal support make marriage into the equivalent of prostitution?

Question 1: If people get divorced without a pre-nuptial agreement and leave settlement up to the court in California, then spousal support is very commonly awarded for a period not to exceed half the length of the marriage. Doesn't payment of spousal support under those circumstances in essence make marriage into a legalized form of prostitution, where the sex comes during marriage and the payment comes after marriage?

Answer 1: Good question! We can't argue with that logic at all! This question simply helps to reinforce the idea that we should get married out of choice and not out of need or desperation. People will always be happiest in marriages where they can be interdependent rather than dependent. We talk a lot about this in section 3.1.3 of this document, when we addressed the three stages of personal growth, and in sections 3.8.2.1 (Inequality versus Equality), 3.8.2.2 (Manipulation versus mutuality), 3.8.2.4 (Control versus intimacy), and 3.8.3, page 3-51 (Emotional Dependence). In that context, marriage is a team and a partnership that requires the highest level of maturity and interdependent thinking in order to be a happy and satisfying experience for the spouses. Anything other than interdependent "team" thinking makes marriage into a parasitic relationship where one person (usually the man) becomes an involuntary supporter (or host, in biological terms) for the other spouse with the blessing and sanction of the state legal apparatus, no matter whether they are married or not! We believe this produces a condition of slavery rather than partnership, and encourages a type of dependence by the woman that will incentivize women to make all kinds of false claims and allegations about the spouse they are divorcing in order to extort money out of them. Read section 9.7 to find out about all the legal chicanery that goes on in the name of not taking personal responsibility for oneself as part of a divorce. We think pre-nuptial agreements prevent this problem and force prospective spouses to take personal and complete responsibility for supporting themselves, regardless of their matrimonial state. How can this be a bad thing? It will also give them much more dignity and autonomy because it keeps the state and the courts out of their relationships.

9.8.2 Don't the legal aspects of marriage amount to legislating morality?

Question 2: Doesn't the legal aspect of the marriage contract promote fear and force people to stay married for fear of what would happen legally if they got divorced? Shouldn't marriages be based on love and the spiritual covenant we make before God instead of fear of reprisal by the state? Why should our marriage have to rely on law to in effect "legislate the morality of staying married"?

Answer 2: Another very good question. We believe that the state has no business legislating morality, because it just doesn't work. Marriage as an institution is primarily a spiritual union, as we pointed out in section 9.1. That is how God intended it. The main reason it needs to have a legal aspect is for the benefit and protection of the children, who are the future of our civilization and our future leaders and businessmen and women. We believe ensuring a prosperous and healthy future for our civilization and our children is a worthy goal of the state.

However, relationships without a strong spiritual foundation and common faith and which rely exclusively on fear of the legal and financial consequences of divorce will never be

adequate to make marriage a happy institution. The fruit of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, unselfishness, and common spiritual and religious faith, are the only things that will ever be an adequate foundation for a happy marriage and family. If these elements aren't mutually shared because one spouse is a Christian and the other isn't (unequally yoked) or the spouses have a common faith but not a common degree of commitment to that faith, then the marriage will most certainly be unhappy. Holding that kind of marriage together won't help anyone, and it will likely do more harm than good to the children if the spouses are always angry and arguing, constantly bitter and unhappy, chemically addicted because they want to escape, or committing adultery because their spouse doesn't meet their sexual needs. We believe that the state should not be punishing *either* one of the spouses financially who leave this type of relationship by getting divorced. The pre-nuptial agreement in section 9.9 protects both spouses from being harmed financially for getting divorced, and therefore doesn't force people to stay in a relationship that will be bad for their children and for their own emotional health. We agree that if they are both Christians, they have an obligation to work things out, and they can and should allow the Holy Spirit to operate in their lives to make the marriage and family work, but no amount of legislation or in effect legal threats on the part of the state can or should force them to do this.

9.8.3 Do pre-nups make divorce easier to get?

Question 3: Do pre-nuptial agreements make divorce easier to get?

Answer 3: We would argue that they don't, and that actually, the state marriage license (pre-nuptial agreement) makes divorce easier to get than this pre-nuptial agreement. Here are some very good reasons why:

1. The state's legal apparatus rewards women financially who want to get divorced with monthly child support and spousal support. If women know they can escape their commitments and responsibilities and not have to work, in effect becoming a financial parasite to their X-husband's income with spousal support for half the length of the marriage, then they are encouraged to get divorced. However, with the prenuptial agreement in section 9.9 of this constitution, there is no financial incentive for women to get divorced because:
 - 1.1. Not allowed to award spousal support and child support assumes a 50% timeshare, which is far more equitable.
 - 1.2. Retirements are separate property.
2. Most states now have "no-fault" divorce laws. This means that in most cases, there is no incentive to talk about or accept responsibility for the behaviors and attitudes that caused the divorce or to seek counseling to reconcile it. The only justification you need in most states is "irreconcilable differences", which just makes it easy to get divorced. All this has the effect of encouraging divorce.
3. One of the biggest causes of divorce is violated expectations. People divorce because their new spouse doesn't behave the way they expect and they are selfish enough to get divorced and risk destroying the relationship because their spouse won't change to meet their expectations. Most people go into marriage without taking the time to understand

or explain to their prospective spouse these expectations or requirements for how they want their new spouse to behave. For instance, very few people seek pre-marital counseling BEFORE they marry in order to understand each other better. An excellent book that accomplishes this that we highly recommend is *Before You Say I Do*, by H. Norman Wright and Wes Roberts, Harves House Publishers, 1997, ISBN 1-56507-637-0. Instead, most people let hormones control their choices and often rush into marriage and end up unhappy because they didn't take the time to get to know the person they were marrying. This document and the pre-nuptial agreement in section 9.9, on the other hand, defines quite exhaustively what the shared expectations of both prospective spouses are. It establishes a detailed spiritual foundation for the family that is based on trust, shared goals, mutual agreement, respect, and personal responsibility. This, we believe, will have the effect of ensuring MUCH more meaningful commitment between the spouses when they finally do get married. We believe that if all couples took the time to document their shared expectations like we have here, then the divorce rate would be MUCH lower than the 55% it is now.

9.8.4 Are pre-nups based on mistrust?

Question 4: Aren't pre-nuptial agreements founded on the concept of mistrust? Should they be avoided because of this?

Answer 4: Pre-nuptial agreements are no more founded on the idea of mistrust than the state's default prenuptial agreement. If people could be trusted to fully honor their commitments and behave honorably all the time, we wouldn't need all 1,311 sections of the California Family Code and a vast judicial and legal apparatus of the secular state to enforce these laws. Why is it OK for a godless secular state to write the marriage contract but not the parties who are marrying? Below are a few possible (guess?) reasons why couples would not want to jointly define the legal aspects of the marriage contract for themselves and instead would want to leave their future entirely up to the state:

1. Prospective spouses don't want to scare away their partners.
2. Prospective spouses don't want to create anxiety in their partner by getting lawyers involved before they get married. They don't want to reveal their hidden agenda and thereby undermine trust.
3. The woman benefits too much financially from the state's default pre-nuptial agreement and doesn't want the male to realize what he is agreeing to until after he in effect "signs" the contract by getting married.
4. They aren't happy with their spouse but think they can change them later with the hammer that the state's legal apparatus gives them to coerce their spouse (very bad reasoning). We think that you should never marry anyone expecting that you can change anything about them after you get married. Loving them demands that we be completely honest and open about our feelings and expectations with them *before* we marry them.
5. The women has great anxiety over her husband leaving her for another woman when she is older and less attractive. She is in effect deathly afraid of being abandoned and

left to raise the kids later in life by an unscrupulous husband. The state's default prenuptial agreement is her vehicle to punish him for doing this if it ever happens by taking between 50% and 90% of his assets and income both during and after the marriage. This will FORCE him to stay faithful and committed. We would question why a woman would want to marry a man she felt this way about in the first place.

9.8.5 Why get married at all if you are going to have a pre-nuptial agreement?

Question 5: Why get married at all if you are going to have a pre-nuptial agreement? Don't prenuptial agreements make marriage no different than dating from a legal perspective?

Answer 5: The fact of the matter is, as we pointed out in section 9.7, that if you get a marriage license from the state, you will have a prenuptial agreement whether you want one or not. The real question to ask is not whether you want one, but who you would rather have write it: 1. The morally bankrupt legislators of the secular state who can change it at any time, including after you get married or ;2. The both of you through mutual agreement, where it isn't subject to change. Once we accept this premise that we will have one whether we want one or not, then its just a question of what needs to be in it. Even if we let the state write the agreement, there is a lot of variation among states in what goes into the contract. For instance, in Texas, there is no spousal support but in California, there is. Similarly, some states are community property states while others aren't. Why not have a pre-nuptial agreement the two of you define that doesn't change based on the state you live in?

Another worthy question to ask is: Why shouldn't dating be more like marriage? People put on their best face during the courtship process because they regard it as a marketing exercise. If they knew they can't use the state's legal apparatus to intimidate and coerce their mate into compliance after they get married, then they will have to continue to behave every bit as respectfully and courteously during the marriage as they did during the courtship. What's wrong with that? This will encourage them to show their true colors during the courtship process, because as Abraham Lincoln says: "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

9.8.6 So how do I keep my husband faithful if I don't have a big legal stick to beat him ruthlessly with when he misbehaves?

Question 6: So how do I keep my husband faithful if I don't have a big legal stick to beat him ruthlessly with when he misbehaves?

Answer 6: This question is related to item 5 of the answer to question 4. This question is similar to Theodore Roosevelt's saying: "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." It is based on mistrust and anxiety by the woman of the man in the marriage. This question arises out of what

women say they worry most about in relationships: That the man they marry will leave them for another woman. We would argue that women do the same thing to their men, and that men need equal protection. This pervasive anxiety of women is often so severe that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy by virtue of the fear and insecurity it creates in the man. It also is based on the fact that the man should be expected to assume all financial risks of getting married. This attitude assumes the woman needs the upper hand at all times to manipulate and control the man to keep him compliant to her wishes. It undermines the value of trust, respect, dignity, communication, cooperation, and partnership within the relationship and replaces them all with a big stick. The woman who asks this question is assuming that her man is selfish and dishonorable and will do anything he can to get sex from women and be married to an attractive woman at all times, including hurt people (abandon them), lie (break his marriage vow), and be irresponsible (not pay child support) to meet his sexual needs. The default state pre-nuptial agreement is written with this assumption in mind and hands the woman a big financial and legal hammer to keep the guy in line to prevent this problem (see section 4.15.6 for the humorous side of this very situation). However, this is like legislating morality and is based on mistrust. If the woman really does mistrust her man this much, we would argue that the couple has no business getting married in the first place! Once again, we would argue, as we did in question 1 above that marriage will be unhappy unless it is an EQUAL partnership in every respect. This means that one party doesn't have an advantage over the other, either in courtroom or in the bedroom. Without equality under the law for both sexes who marry, then marriage just becomes a vehicle for women to economically equalize the score with men, where they have a financial incentive to marry a man long enough to empty out his bank accounts and saddle him with spousal support and child support, and then leave him. We call such women black widows. What are your thoughts on this subject?

9.8.7 Do pre-nuptial agreements put too much of the focus of the relationship on selfishness and materialism?

Question 7: Do pre-nuptial agreements put too much of the focus of the relationship on selfishness and/or materialism?

Answer 7: Jesus makes it pretty clear that we should not concern ourselves with or worry about tomorrow or what we own or will eat in Luke 12:22-34. He instead says in Luke 12:29-31: *“And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. ... But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”* This simply emphasizes the importance of faith and common spiritual goals over the materialistic aspects of the marriage commitment. Furthermore, prenuptial agreements or the law can never hope to enforce these priorities in our hearts because they are spiritual and not legal conditions. Instead, we would argue that the only thing the state's default pre-nuptial agreement identified in section 9.9 does is to create anxiety in both parties over how they will be able to support each other and hold the relationship together, which Jesus said above that we shouldn't have. We believe, instead, that a pre-nuptial agreement between the parties entirely removes the possibility that marriage is being undertaken for financial or materialistic reasons, and ensures a full and frank disclosure of intents and motives for

getting married, which we believe ensures:

1. Purity of intent and motives for both parties entering into marriage.
2. Proper spiritual focus going into the relationship.
3. Honesty and truthfulness about our needs and expectations.
4. The absence of anxiety or duress for both parties.
5. The absence of any hidden agendas.
6. The absence of materialism or covetousness by either party.
7. The presence of love. Why else would two people get married if they got absolutely nothing else out of the marriage but the love of their partner?
8. That we have to rely on our own abilities and effort and our own faith in God rather than our future spouses' income as the source for our security and emotional well-being, which is precisely what Jesus said we should be doing in Luke 12:22-34.

We would argue that when we use pre-nuptial agreements to remove all the materialistic and wealth-transfer (theft?) aspects associated with the legal definition of marriage, then we are left exclusively and only with marriage as what the Bible says it really is: a spiritual union before God our Father which is acknowledged and recorded legally by the state. Why shouldn't this definition of marriage be enough to satisfy especially us Christians? Any attempt to legally reintroduce the materialistic aspects of the marriage commitment by forcing someone to accept the state's default prenuptial agreement simply transforms marriage into a form of prostitution, where we are legally coerced by the state and our future spouse into giving money in order to get sex, which is against the law in most states (see section 9.8.1). We may not often call it prostitution, but that is what it has become in many cases because of how marriage has been used as a device for economic equalization by unscrupulous men and women.

Why has our society allowed the legal aspects of marriage to evolve into a wealth-transfer exercise where women rape men financially upon divorce? Here are a few possible reasons we would like to suggest:

1. The traditional family model within America had mom at home raising the kids and dad out working to support the family. In that scenario, it makes sense that mom should share the wealth with dad and receive child support, but only when both parents agree on that scenario and mom didn't force dad to let her not work. However, that model no longer applies because the vast majority of women now work (70% or more). Nevertheless, women still have the unreasonable traditional view of the family so they in effect get the best of both worlds at the expense of men: 1. The economic freedom of working and supporting themselves (which 70% or more of them do), but 2. The advantages of a matriarchal attitude by the courts that requires the man to support them. Things are changing in this area, but they aren't changing fast enough in the courts or in the minds of women. We would argue that you can't have your cake and eat it too and that women need to be more realistic about what they expect from men in this department.
2. Couples who are marrying off their daughters don't want them to come back home to stay or ever be economically dependent on them again.
3. Women like the idea of using marriage as a means to equalize the sexes economically without the need for much additional effort. After all, it is true that the average woman

makes less than the average man.

Even considering these factors, however, are we (and especially women) really being honest with our future spouse and ourselves if we avoid talking about and reaching agreement on these critical issues *before* we get married? Aren't marriages supposed to be based on trust, which can only exist with complete honesty, truthfulness, and full disclosure, and what better disclosure of the issues could there be than something like this family constitution?

Doesn't it make more sense to eliminate the possibility that the courts or expensive lawyers will ever be involved with or control our lives? Why shouldn't all the extreme anxiety of legal involvement and the threat of wage garnishment be eliminated as a reason for staying married? Is fear of punishment from the legal system the reason for getting and staying married, or is it love? In our mind, fear has no place as a basis for an enduring relationship. What is your opinion on this subject?

9.8.8 Do pre-nuptial agreements have risk reduction advantages for both spouses over the state's default pre-nuptial agreement?

Question 8: Do pre-nuptial agreements have financial advantages for both spouses over the state's default pre-nuptial agreement.

Answer 8: The prenuptial agreement below actually has *significant* financial and risk-avoidance advantages for *both* spouses over the state's default agreement for spouses who really and genuinely love and trust each other. Let's list a few of them:

1. If either spouse is in trouble with the IRS, he or she can transfer all of his or her separate property assets to the other spouse temporarily and thereby render themselves judgment-proof if they get dragged into court for back taxes or tax evasion. A trust, on the other hand, would not protect spouses in this way.
2. If a spouse has to declare bankruptcy, he or she can transfer all of his or her separate property assets to the other spouse temporarily and thereby render themselves judgment proof against creditors or collection agencies. A trust, on the other hand, would not protect spouses in this way.
3. When parties seeking to collect monies from a spouse are searching for assets that have been transferred to the other spouse, then the other spouse's assets won't show up because that spouse has a different social security number.

9.8.9 Doesn't the State's Default Prenuptial Agreement Encourage Domestic Violence or Spousal Abuse?

Question 9: Doesn't the state's prenuptial agreement encourage domestic violence or spousal abuse? Can't we reduce the possibility of domestic violence with our own prenuptial agreement?

Answer 9: Very good question. We would argue that the state's default pre-nuptial agreement appearing in section 9.7 above actually does more to encourage domestic violence and spousal abuse than the one proposed and defined below between the spouses. This is because:

1. The structure of family law in the state often rewards and encourages spouses to make false allegations of abuse against the other spouse in order to advantage themselves in the custody battle and property award by using lies to denigrate the character of the other spouse. Courts often feel sympathy for spouses who have been battered and will try to compensate them unfairly. However, this kind of sympathy, if it is based on false allegations, simply prejudices the rights of the other spouse and creates more anger and resentment, which increases litigation and the chance of domestic violence. The prenuptial agreement below prevents false allegations of domestic violence with polygraph tests and eliminates kick-out orders. This eliminates the possibility of anger and resentment on the part of a falsely accused spouse that can lead to domestic violence.
2. When spouses divorce or are in conflict, the property and custody issues need to be litigated and often can't be settled through mutual agreement. The focus on the possibility of litigation caused by conflict increases fear and the uncertainty of the situation, which can cause spouses to reach a fear and hysteria state that makes them more likely to commit acts of violence and emotional abuse against the other spouse. The prenuptial agreement below minimizes the possibility of litigation by specifying all rules and conditions up front and actually punishes litigation by forcing the spouse who initiates litigation to contradict the prenuptial agreement to pay all the legal fees. This lowers the fear and anxiety level of both spouses because they feel less anxiety about having to litigate if they get married.
3. The stakes are higher with the state's default prenuptial agreement. For instance, the default prenuptial agreement awards spousal support, exorbitant child support, and (unjustly) divides the appreciation on separate property owned prior to marriage in half. This usually does more to unfairly prejudice the financial rights of the man in the marriage than the woman. Is it any surprise then that men are more likely to be violent when they learn that divorce is a possibility? They have more to risk financially, usually and would be hurt more financially by a divorce. The prenuptial agreement below solves this problem by eliminating such financial inequities. It eliminates spousal support, forces a 50-50 child sharing, and keeps appreciation on separate property during the marriage as separate property, thereby discouraging use of marriage as an economic equalizer by either spouse.

Therefore, we believe that the prenuptial agreement below actually does more to *prevent* domestic violence and spousal abuse than the state's default prenuptial agreement because it minimizes the possibility of false allegations, unnecessary litigation, and unjust court prejudices based on those false allegations that can lead to the kind of anger and resentment that can ultimately cause domestic violence and spousal abuse.

9.8.10 What should I tell my fiancé about why I feel the need for a pre-nuptial agreement?

Question 10: What should I tell my fiance about why I feel the need for a pre-nuptial agreement?

Answer 10: Tell her (it's usually the woman who objects to pre-nuptial agreements because the courts give her the biggest financial advantage in most divorce proceedings):

1. You don't ever want the courts or lawyers involved in your relationship under any circumstances. Ask her how she can guarantee this without a pre-nuptial agreement?
2. Ask her how she intends to remove all the risks associated with the default pre-nuptial agreement appearing in section 9.7 earlier.
3. Ask her about other divorces she has witnessed and ask her whether she thought the result was good for the man or was equal and fair.
4. Ask her why she doesn't want to discuss or agree to the terms of the marriage and document all the expectations involved so that you can make sure you know what they are and are prepared to do your best to meet them.
5. Tell her you want to avoid all the anxiety, great expense, and uncertainty of legal involvement. Divorce is already traumatic enough without getting lawyers and judges involved. If she doesn't want to sign the pre-nuptial agreement, then have her sign a statement that she will pay all legal fees on both sides that result from a divorce if she initiates it or abandons the home or refuses to submit sexually to force her spouse to initiate it.
6. Say that you don't want the reason why we stay married to involve the fear of punishment or financial loss by the courts. Emphasize that unconditional love and religious faith are the only legitimate reasons to get or stay married.
7. Tell her that she is not a source of mistrust or anxiety and that she is the best thing that ever happened to you, but that the source of anxiety you have has more to do with family law and how it is practiced in the state than it does with her.
8. Read chapter 7 of this document in its entirety with her. Ask her for her comments and response.
9. Tell her that your previous experiences with the legal system (if you were divorced once already) were very unpleasant and left you feeling victimized and that you want to avoid any future possibility of repeating this experience again.
10. Point out that a very common tactic by unscrupulous women is the bait and switch approach. In this approach, a man thinks he has reached an agreement because the woman says she agrees or will comply, but she does so as a concession because she doesn't want to look disagreeable or reveal her true character. At the time she agrees or concedes to the man, she deliberately hopes he will forget the agreement and she can then change her mind at a much later time. This kind of deceit mirrors that described in the book of Genesis in the Bible, where Eve was the first person to deceive Adam and deceit was the original sin of man. Many women operate this way as a devious way to get their financial or emotional needs met and they are loathe to write down anything they agree to because it undermines their ability to manipulate the situation later by "conveniently changing their mind" and dishonoring their commitment in the process. The man's response to this approach should be: *"If you can't get it in writing, you probably won't get it!"*

9.8.11 Wouldn't I be the laughing stock of all my family or friends or coworkers if I signed a prenuptial agreement?

Question 11: Wouldn't I be the laughing stock of all my family or friends or coworkers if I signed a prenuptial agreement? Wouldn't it make me look bad for people to know that I did something like this?

Answer 11: First, we would argue that you will never get into the position of having to be a laughing stock because this agreement prevents anyone other than a judge, a witness, the attorneys for the parties and the two parties from ever viewing it or knowing what is in it.

Second, we would argue that with such a high divorce rate and a litigious society in which we live, prenuptial agreements have become very common. Therefore, there is little need for concern about having one.

Thirdly, we would question the motives of the person who made this statement because the Bible says in Prov. 16:18: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." The Apostle Paul also said in Phil. 2:3: "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit but in humility count others better than yourselves." We would argue that a person who would say this is prideful and is infected by the cares of the world and overly concerned about the opinions of others and the praise of men as we described in section 7.3.9: Pride. This kind of selfishness and pride (which was Satan's sin and the cause of his rebellion) would not be healthful within a relationship. If this agreement would dissuade a person with such an attitude from getting married, then it is doing its job, because people like this have no business being married to begin with.

Fourthly, instead of expecting (worldly) people to like us or accept us for the Godly choices we make, we ought to expect that they will hate us and reject us because of our spiritual beliefs and our faith and the obedience to the Lord that we demonstrate through that faith, as Jesus pointed out: "*Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven. For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*" (Luke 6:22-23). We also find the same kind of admonition in James 4:3-4 "*You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be friend of the world makes himself an enemy with God.*"

9.8.12 Is it true that most family law attorneys don't like pre-nuptial agreements and advise against them simply because they eliminate the need to litigate and thereby decrease profits?

Question 12: Is it true that most family law attorneys don't like pre-nuptial agreements and advise against them no matter how advantageous they might be to their client? Would they do this simply because such agreements eliminate most of the need to litigate. Isn't litigation the most important and regular source of revenue for divorce attorneys and don't they make most of their money by keeping couples arguing rather than settling? (Incidentally, a decrease of litigation is viewed by family law courts as beneficial to the children because

they decrease financial and emotional stress on the parents and the children.)

Answer 12: Asking a family law attorney whether he/she thinks you should have a prenuptial agreement is like asking a barber if you *don't* need a haircut! Of course he/she will say no because he wants your continuing business and wants as many reasons as possible to go back to the courtroom! Lawyers make money by litigating, not settling, and the more a couple decides and agrees on before marriage *in writing*, the less need there will ever be to litigate later on when the couples have disagreements or communication problems. That's the foundation of why we have so many laws on the books governing marriages in California: to minimize the need for litigation.

Family law attorneys make between \$150-\$250/hour in California and they aren't about to admit that they want to give you as many reasons as possible to need them, nor would they be likely to admit that they would advise against an equitable prenuptial agreement simply because it would eliminate the need for their services! However, if you ever ask them for their advice on the prenuptial agreement proposed below in section 9.9, then you should ensure that you completely understand their reasoning and all the technical and legal aspects of it. Caveat emptor! Be forewarned that they may use their technical knowledge of the law to nix an agreement as a smokescreen of obfuscating legalese in order to hide their *real* reasons for disapproval, which are that it would decrease their business and their lucrative profits!

9.8.13 Aren't prenuptial agreements supposed to give me MORE freedom and autonomy and not less? It doesn't seem like this one does.

Question 13: Aren't prenuptial agreements supposed to give me more freedom and autonomy and not less? It doesn't seem like this one does. I instead feel like I'm being put in a straight jacket and that much more, not less, is being expected of me as a consequence of the relationship and the marriage than if we did nothing and just relied on the state's default prenuptial agreement.

Answer 13: The purpose of any prenuptial agreement should be to give both parties *more* freedom and *more* autonomy and to make them feel *more* empowered than they would otherwise be if they relied entirely and only on the provisions of the state's default prenuptial agreement. It should make them feel more responsible for themselves and less reliant on the help of others, not more. That is the only way to maintain the dignity within the relationship to make it an enduring one. They should feel no more restricted or controlled within marriage than they did when they were dating, at least as far as the state is concerned. This will prevent the unwanted intrusion of the state into their otherwise very personal and God-given marriage and will maintain "separation of church and state". The prenuptial agreement proposed should ensure a separation of legal matters from spiritual matters and should not allow the atheistic beliefs of the state to interfere with the responsibilities the spouses feel toward God with respect to the marriage. Refer to section 9.3 for details on why separation of church and state in a marriage is important and why Christians should not obtain a state marriage license but should instead sign a prenuptial agreement based on Godly principles, even if not all the provisions of the agreement are enforceable in a court of law.

Some people might ask: "Why does the proposed prenuptial agreement need to have so many provisions?" The answer is that if we are going to undo most of the provisions of the STATE's default pre-nuptial agreement, which has evolved steadily over the past two hundred years of legal wrangling and legislation, then we have a lot of territory to cover and a lot of things to specify in order to nullify the effect of each of the unjust terms in the state's default agreement. If the law resulting from all 1300 sections of the complex California Family Code and the body of case law behind it weren't so explicit and oppressive and detailed in its effect, then there would be far fewer things to specify in a prenuptial agreement if one wished to nullify its effect.

Below is a tabular, side-by-side and detailed legal analysis that compares between the state's default prenuptial agreement mentioned in section 9.7 and the one proposed in section 9.9. This table is very useful in understanding the impact of state marriage laws. It hopefully shows clearly the itemized terms of each of the two approaches and the differences so that readers may judge for themselves whether they have more or less freedom and autonomy than they would if they relied on the state's default alone. Based on the table below, we would suggest that the proposed agreement does in fact provide more freedom, empowerment, and autonomy for the married spouses than the state's default agreement mentioned above in section 9.7:

1	ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS	<i>Rutter California Family Practice Guide Applicable Section(s)</i>	<i>Applicable statutes and case law</i>	<i>State's default prenuptial agreement in section 9.7</i>	<i>Proposed prenuptial agreement in section 9.9</i>
1.1	Based on lack of ability to pay or need	Family 1:36-37; Family 5:183	Fam. C. §270 Fam. C. §2030, 2032	Court can determine based on need who should pay attorney fees of either side.	Parties pay their own attorney fees and avoid entirely the need to litigate
1.2	Based on violation of ethical rules	Family 1:75.4	Cal. Pak Delivery, Inc. v. United Parcel Service, Inc. (1997)		
1.3	For pro-per representation	Family 14:128.1	Fam.C. §2030/2032	Pro per litigants can request attorney fees against the other side but seldom get them.	Litigation is avoided so attorney fees are irrelevant.
1.4	Attorney fees awarded because of the nondisclosure of significant assets , thereby violating her fiduciary duty to responsibly manage community assets.	Family 8:617-8:617.1	Fam. C. §1101(g)	When a party tries to hide assets in violation of their fiduciary duties, then the court can award attorney fees against them to recover costs to discover and litigate the recovery of these assets.	
1.5	Contempt motions	Family 18:226.5	CCP §1218(a)	Parties found in contempt for violating a court order “may” be ordered to pay the charging party’s attorney fees and costs incurred in connection with the contempt proceeding.	There would be far fewer things that would require court orders because everything would be in the agreement. This would virtually eliminate litigation and legal costs. Parties found violating the agreement would have to pay the attorney fees for the other side to obtain redress.
2	SANCTIONS				
2.1	<u>Breach of fiduciary duty</u>	Family 8:612 (Statutory claim for breach of fiduciary duty)	Fam. C §1101(a) (breach of fiduciary duty) CC §3294	Parties are obligated to pay to their spouse punitive award for fraud and breach of fiduciary	There would be far less community property and almost no real community property. The two biggest

1	ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS	<i>Rutter California Family Practice Guide Applicable Section(s)</i>	<i>Applicable statutes and case law</i>	<i>State's default prenuptial agreement in section 9.7</i>	<i>Proposed prenuptial agreement in section 9.9</i>
		Family 8:619 (100% value penalty for breaches with "oppression, fraud, or malice"	(Punitive damages for fraud, oppression, malice)	duty resulting from misappropriation and nondisclosure of community assets.	sources of community property, retirement and real property, would be eliminated so that fiduciary duty issues would be virtually irrelevant.
2.2	<p>Post-1994 proceedings: Violation of "certificate of merit" Cannot be awarded to moving party, only to court CCP §128.7(d).</p>	Family 15:85-86	CCP §128.7	Requires the legal proceeding meet the following requirements in order to not be sanctioned by the court as an unmeritorious motion: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Claims and legal contentions therein are warranted by existing law or by nonfrivolous argument 2. Allegations and other factual contentions therein have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, are likely to have evidentiary support after reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery. 3. The denials of factual contentions are warranted on the evidence or, if specifically so identified, are reasonably based on a 	Same under proposed agreement.

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				lack of information or belief. [CCP §128.7(b)(1)-(4).	
2.3	<u>Frustrating settlement</u>	Family 14:82; 14:230-267	Fam. C. §271	Allows the court to sanction parties who disrupt or interfere with a prompt and fair settlement.	Same under proposed agreement.
2.3.1	Cannot be assessed against a party's attorney, only against party		Marriage of Daniels (1993) 19CA4th 1102, 1110, 23CR2d 865, 869		Same under proposed agreement.
2.3.2	Cannot impose unreasonable financial burden. It must be scaled to the payor's ability to pay.	Family 14:246	Fam.C. §271(a); Marriage of Quay (1993) 18 CA4th 961, 969		Same under proposed agreement.
2.3.3	Parties relative circumstances irrelevant to the determination of whether to make an award.	Family 14:248	Fam.C. §271(a)		Same under proposed agreement.
2.3.4	Requires evidence of conduct that frustrated settlement	Family 14:250.1	Marriage of Schulze (1997) 60CA4th 519, 531		Same under proposed agreement.
2.4	False allegations of child abuse or neglect	Family 7:318	Fam. C. §3027	Allows court to sanction parties who make false allegations of child abuse or neglect against the other party. Does not allow or provide for polygraph tests.	Admits polygraph tests into evidence and requires photographs and recordings to authenticate. This prevents abuses. Also removes the incentive to want to make false allegations by ensuring a 50-50 timeshare no matter what.
2.4.1	Failure to unsuccessfully make or oppose a motion for a protective order	Civil Procedure 8:717.1	CCP 2025(n), 2025(I)	Allows courts to impose sanctions against a party for failure to make or oppose a motion for	Prevents protective orders so that reproach and correction may occur. Therefore prevents this

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				protective order.	type of sanction against either party.
2.4.2	Failure to respond to an inspection demand after a motion to compel	Civil Procedure 8:864.1; 8:1205	CCP 2031(k); 2023(b)(2)-(4)	Allows courts to sanction parties who fail to respond to an inspection demand after a motion to compel has been granted.	Requires parties to provide copies of all records to each other in fulfillment of their fiduciary duty. Sanctions would be same under proposed agreement.
2.4.3	Property disclosure declaration non-compliance: Failure to provide or failure to provide all necessary information	Family 1:491	Fam.C. §2107(b) & (c)	Allows courts to sanction parties who don't meet disclosure requirements by revealing all their assets.	Same under proposed agreement.
2.5	Violating a court order (failure to appear)	Family 5:430-431; 14:106	Fam.C. §271; CCP 177.5	Allows court to sanction parties to fail to appear at a noticed court hearing.	Prevents the need to litigate and therefore makes this type of sanction far less likely.
2.6	Sanctions for refusing to exercise custody and visitation orders or failure to assume caretaker responsibility	Family 6:41;7:597-599;14:60	Fam.C. §3028(a)	Allows courts to sanction parties who refuse to honor their part of custody and visitation orders or agreements in place. The compensation shall be limited to (1) the reasonable expenses incurred for or on behalf of a child, resulting from the other parent's failure to assume caretaker responsibility or (2) the reasonable expenses incurred by a parent for or on behalf of a child, resulting from the other parent's thwarting of the parent's efforts to exercise	Same under proposed agreement.

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				custody or visitation rights. The expenses may include the value of caretaker services but are not limited to the cost of services provided by a third party during the relevant period.	
3	PROPERTY DIVISION:	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>		
3.1	REAL PROPERTY	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>		
3.1.1	Purchased during marriage	Family 8:287 (Home acquired DURING MARRIAGE with separate property down payment and community credit)	Marriage of Lucas (1980) 27 C3d 808, 166 CR 853	Separate property down-payments are reimbursable to contributor as separate property. Appreciation on separate property contributions to equity is not split pro rata, but instead is split in half.	Separate property down-payments are reimbursable to contributor as separate property. Appreciation on separate property contributions to equity is split unevenly as a pro rata share rather than in half. This approach is more complex, but more equitable.
3.1.2	Purchased prior to marriage with separate property of one spouse			Separate property contributed to residence at time of marriage is reimbursable to the contributor. A pro-rata share of the appreciation on that separate property is also separate property of the contributor and is not split evenly. Community contributions to equity are split in half.	Same as state law. Separate property contributions to equity are the only kind authorized. Cannot pay for a separate real property with community investment or checking assets in most cases unless by mutual written agreement.
3.2	PERSONAL PROPERTY	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
3.2.1	Accumulated during marriage	Family 8:287 (Home acquired DURING	Fam. C §900 et seq;	Personal property bought during marriage is treated	Character of personal property purchased during

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		MARRIAGE with separate property down payment and community credit) Family 8:840-8:880 (Epstein and Watts Guidelines)	Fam. C §2103-2105 (Preliminary and Final DOD required) Fam. C §2640-2640 (Division of assets)	as community property regardless of the account that paid for it (community or separate).	marriage is determined by the account that paid for it. Vast majority of purchases will come from separate property account and therefore will be separate property and not community property.
3.2.2	Community property gifted to relatives during marriage	Family 8:617 (50% value penalty, plus attorney fees)	Fam. C §1101 (breach of fiduciary duty)	Requires written authorization of the other spouse to be valid. Otherwise must be restored to community upon division.	No such thing as community personal property. All property acquired during marriage is separate property since it is paid for out of separate property accounts. Personal property cannot be paid for out of a community account.
3.2.3	Joint investment account			Authorized. Can pay for anything from this account. Usually only require one signature for withdrawals.	Authorized. Require TWO signatures to withdraw funds. This prevents abuses by either spouse.
3.2.4	Joint checking account			Authorized. Can pay for anything from this account. This leads to confusion as to the disposition of property purchased during marriage.	Only one per couple and one per family-owned business. Tight constraints on what spouses can pay for from this account. Used mainly for community expenses but not real or personal property purchases. Regular monthly deposits by either spouse are required in order to meet community expenses.

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					Refusal to make deposits by either spouse when employed results in a liability and a reimbursement to the other spouse. Excess monies deposited to this account are split evenly and deposited electronically to the separate property accounts of either spouse.
3.2.5	Separate property checking and investment accounts			Not described. Assumed not to exist during marriage. Instead, everything is treated as community property, which disadvantages spouses who are employed and advantages spouses who are not employed as far as property issues..	Income deposited to such accounts and property purchased using this account is considered separate property for asset division. Requires only one signature to withdraw and spouses are not required to seek permission of other spouse to make withdrawals, because account is entirely theirs.
3.2.6	Personal property that does not have sales receipts or tracing as separate property			Treated as community property	Treated as community property
3.3	RETIREMENTS	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
3.3.1	Retirement benefits accumulated before marriage	Family 8:60 (federal retirement)	NA	Separate property of party who accumulated it.	Separate property of party who accumulated it.
3.3.2	Retirement benefits accumulated during marriage	Family 8:20	Fam.C. 770(a)	Community property subject to division in half.	Separate property of party who accumulated it.
3.4	REIMBURSEMENTS	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
3.4.1	Unreimbursed community expenses during marriage			Not reimbursable because everything is community.	Reimbursable to the spouse who paid more than half the expenses. This might occur, for instance, because the

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					other spouse isn't working.
3.4.2	Unpaid arrearages of any kind resulting from delinquent property awards or child support payments	Family 6:507 (arrearages)	CCP §685.010(a) and (b), §685.020(b)	Shall accrue interest at the rate of 10%, compounding monthly, following the final divorce	Same as state law.
3.4.3	Penalties for nondisclosure of community assets as part of divorce	Family 8:617 (50% value penalty, plus attorney fees for undisclosed assets) Family 8:631.1 (unequal division caused by concealment of assets)	Fam. C §1101 (breach of fiduciary duty)	Punitive 100% value penalty for cases of fraud, oppression, or malice	Same as state law.
3.5	Spousal support			Usually awarded for half the length of the marriage at a rate set by the court.	Not authorized
4	CUSTODY AND VISITATION				
4.1	GENERAL PROVISIONS:	NA	NA	NA	NA
4.1.1	IRS tax deduction for child using IRS form 8332	NA	NA	Custodial parent usually gets deduction, even if that parent provides less than 50% of the cost of raising the child.	Parties take turns getting the tax deduction. Wife on odd years and husband on even years.
4.1.2	Both parties are strongly encouraged to attend church regularly with the child	Family 7:403-403.4 (Religion); Family 7:495.1 (religious activities by parents cannot be restricted)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child) Marriage of Weiss (1996) 42CA4th 106, 111-113, 49 CR2d 339, 342-344; Marriage of Mentry (1983) 142 CA3d 260, 264-	State law does not prescribe this.	Family constitution recommends significant religious involvement of both parents and child.

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			266, 190 CR 843, 846-847		
4.1.3	Video and audio taping of exchanges	NA	Penal C. §632	Video and audio taping not authorized unless by mutual consent or when in a public place.	Both parties consent to video and audio taping of telephonic visitations and exchanges.
4.1.4	Slander	NA	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Not prescribed.	Both parents agree never to slander or tell untruths about the other parent, especially in the presence of the child
4.1.5	Photos of child	NA	NA	Not prescribed	Each parent who takes photos of the child during holidays and special occasions shall provide a secondary copy of every photo to the other parent within one week after pictures are received back from developing.
4.1.6	Custody in the event of death of a spouse	NA	NA	In the event of the death of either the father or the mother, the surviving parent shall take full/100% legal custody of the child.	Same as state law
4.2	<i>In-Person Visitations:</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA
4.2.1	Physical and legal custody by both parents.	Family 7:340 (joint custody)	Fam. C §1830 (family conciliation court jurisdiction); Fam. C §3002 – 3003 (custody definitions) Fam. C §3011;3031 (domestic violence implications)	Joint by default.	Joint physical and legal custody

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			Fam. C §3040 (joint custody preferred)		
4.2.2	Custody time share	Family 7:480-486 (visitation rights) Family 7:596 (change of custody warranted when one parent interferes with visitation of other)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child) Moffat v. Moffat, supra; Burchard v. Garay (1986) 42 C3d 531, 540, 229 CR 800, 806, fn. 11; Catherine D. V. Dennis B. (1990) 220 CA3d 922, 932, 269 CR 547, 553-554	Custody time share is decided by the courts	50% timeshare for both parents with parents sharing decision making responsibility and authority
4.2.3	Child support amount	Family 6:165-6:250 (guideline formula)	Fam. C §4050-4076 (child support)	Child support set by state guidelines	No child support because of 50% time share. If court order child support over the objections raised in this agreement, then spouse receiving said support agrees to refund amount to other spouse in full every month.
4.2.4	Missed visitations	NA	NA	Determined by court.	Missed visitations will be made up by extending the time of drop off during the next visitation with the parent who has been deprived of visitation time prior to that and shall be negotiated electronically during the pickup time for that visitation.
4.2.5	Advance notification of missed visit	NA	NA	Determined by court	Each parent must notify the other parent via email and a letter at least 24

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					hours in advance that they can't make visitation
4.2.6	Work conflicts with visitations	NA	NA	Determined by court	Work conflict is the only authorized reason for missed visitations
4.2.7	Documentation required for work conflicts	NA	NA	Determined by court	Work conflicts must be documented with a signed excuse statement from the parent's employer in order to be legitimate.
4.2.8	Unauthorized or unexcused missed visitations	NA	NA	Determined by court	Each occurrence of unauthorized or unexcused missing of visitation exchange shall be subject to \$500 fine to the party who missed the visitation
4.3	<i>Telephonic/electronic Visitations:</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA
4.3.1	Restrictions on child-initiated contact with either parent	Family 7:310.6 (contact with child should approximate family situation as closely as possible)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Determined by court	No restrictions whatsoever on CHILD (not parent) INITIATED calls or video teleconferences. This will always be in the best interests of the child
4.3.2	Promoting and encouraging telephonic contact with parent who is not present with the child	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Determined by court	Both parties agree to promote and encourage telephonic/electronic visitation as often as possible
4.3.3	Quickdial button for use by children to call noncustodial parent	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Determined by court	Both parties shall ensure that a quickdial button is provided on their phone with the other parent's telephone number assigned to it and which the child is frequently

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					made aware of
4.3.4	Time limits on telephone contact	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Not specified	Time limits on telephonic or electronic visitations initiated by either parent shall be no less than two hours per day. This is in disagreement with the custody evaluator, who recommended only one father-initiated call per week for no more than 15 minutes.
4.3.5	Time window for parent-initiated telephone calls	NA	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Not specified	Time window for parent-initiated calls shall be no less than one hour commencing at 6:30pm daily or at least three times weekly
4.3.6	Video contact and computer contact between child and divorced parent	Family 7:310.6 (contact with child should approximate family situation as closely as possible)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Not specified	Both parents shall buy a computer for use by the child and install a digital camera (\$69) and provide an Internet cable modem connection (\$46/month) at their residence that can and will be used for video teleconferencing using Microsoft Netmeeting with the parent who does not have custody at that time. Father volunteers to set this up and fix any problems at no charge. The computer of either parent will be equipped with NetNanny or an equivalent product that will prevent the child

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					from using the computer for unauthorized purposes. This computer will be exclusively and only for the use of the child, doing his schoolwork, entertainment, and implementing electronic visitations.
4.3.7	Use of cordless phone during telephonic visits				Both parties will get a cordless phone and use it when the parent who isn't present calls and wants to talk to the child. They will ensure when the parent calls that they speak into the phone when they ask the child if he wants to talk to the other parent and then put the phone up to the child's mouth when he or she responds. This will prevent the parent who has the child from lying about whether the child does or doesn't want to talk.
4.3.8	Recording of telephonic contact between child and parent	Family 1:62-1:62.1 (eavesdropping illegal)	18 USC §2510 Williams v. Williams (1998) 229 Mich. App. 318, 581 NW2d 777, 780-781	Recording of telephonic contact is prohibited without consent of both parties.	Recording of telephonic visitations is authorized for either parent, but the parties agree NOT to discuss these recordings with third parties, play them, or use or reference them in court pleadings information gleaned from

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					the child about these conversations, subject to a \$1,000 for each occurrence.
4.4	Daycare Provisions:	NA	NA	NA	NA
4.4.1	First right of refusal to provide daycare for child by other parent	Family 7:310.6 (contact with child should approximate family situation as closely as possible)	Fam. C §3011, 3020, 3162 (frequent and continuing contact of child with both parents)	Determined by court.	Parent who does not have custody at any given time should have first right of refusal to provide daycare when custodial parent needs it.
4.4.2	Distance to daycare provider	NA	NA	Determined by court	Commercial daycare provider should reside within five miles of either parent's residence.
4.4.3	Deciding on daycare providers	NA	NA	Determined by court	Daycare provider mutually stipulated in writing. If agreement cannot be reached, the lowest cost provider presented by either party that is within five miles of either parent's home shall be chosen.
4.4.4	Language of daycare environment	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Determined by court	Daycare provider and other children watched by that provider shall speak only English. School is the proper environment to learn a secondary language. This is necessary for the proper socialization of the child and is in the best interests of the child.
4.4.5	Timeshare credits for daycare	Family 6:168.5-6:168.6 (timeshare credit for daycare)	Marriage of Whealon (1997) 53 CA4th 132, 145, 61 CR2d 559, 567	Determined by court	Parent who has overnight custody of the child on a given day also gets timeshare credit for any daycare or school the child attends during that

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					day.
4.5	CHILD SUPPORT:	NA	NA		
4.5.1	Reimbursement of child care expenses during separation	Family 6:510.1-6:510.3 6:512.10	Fam.C. §4009 Fam.C. §3028	Custodial parent usually reimbursed for half of documented expenses	Custodial parent shall receive a reimbursement only for actual expenses incurred.
4.5.2	Sharing of costs of long-distance visitations	Family 7:566-7:584.1 (Burgess applied)	Marriage of Burgess, supra, 13 C4th at 32-33, 51 CR2d at 449	Visitation costs usually awarded to parent most able to pay.	When either party moves more than 50 miles away from other party, we agree to split the cost of making visitation possible, where the party who moved away with or from the child first pays 60% of the cost. This will discourage either spouse from moving away from the other parent.
4.5.3	Move-away penalties in the event of divorce	Family 7:566-7:584.1 (Burgess applied)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Not usually awarded.	There is a 33% penalty of the child support amount against the custodial parent if that parent decides to move more than 100 miles away from the non-custodial parent. This will encourage involvement by both parents in the child's life.
4.5.4	Child medical expenses	Family 6:294 (50-50 add-on child support expenses)	Fam. C §4062;4063 (child care)	Usually split 50-50	Child –related medical expenses for Casey that are not covered by health insurance will be split 50-50 by both parents
4.5.5	Destination of support checks	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §4062;4063 (child care)	Determined by court	Child support or 4062 checks shall not be sent to PO boxes. They must be sent to the actual address

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					where the child and custodial parent reside. This will ensure that the noncustodial parent is kept continually informed of the whereabouts of the child and the custodial parent.
4.5.6	Required evidence of reimbursible expenses	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §4062;4063 (child care)	Determined by court.	Evidence of expenses sent to the parent paying child support must include photocopies of BOTH SIDES of cancelled checks clearly showing the signature of the payee. For the purposes of daycare costs, the following records shall be provided to the other parent: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daycare provider's name. 2. Date and time of day that care was provided. Whether and how the father was offered first right of refusal to provide the care.
4.5.7	Wage assignment for daycare or medical expenses	Family 6:299.11-6:299.14 (add-on child support expenses are billable)	Fam. C §4062;4063 (child care)	Wage assignment shall NOT apply to daycare or medical expenses. These will be paid by personal check upon receipt of a bill. Daycare expenses shall not exceed the fair market rate if provided by a relative	Same as state law

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4.5.8	<u>Child support past 18:</u>	Family 6:59.5	Family §3901	The duty of support continues as to an unmarried child who has attained the age of 18 years, is a full-time high school student, and who is not self-supporting, until the time the child completes the 12th grade or attains the age of 19 years, whichever occurs first. There will be no child support after the child reaches age 18	Same as state law
4.5.9	<u>Trust funds:</u>	Family 6:59.5, 6:177.2	Family §3901 ----- Marriage of Chandler (1997) 60 CA4th 124, 130, 70 CR2d 109, 113	Although it is an abuse of discretion for the court to order that a portion of the child support be paid into a trust fund, there is no reason why a parent can't assume this and notify the child of this without litigating it.	Same as state law.
4.5.10	<u>SANCTIONS:</u> Sanctions for refusing to exercise custody and visitation orders or failure to assume caretaker responsibility	Family 6:41;7:597-599;14:60	Fam.C. §3028(a)	The compensation shall be limited to (1) the reasonable expenses incurred for or on behalf of a child, resulting from the other parent's failure to assume caretaker responsibility or (2) the reasonable expenses incurred by a parent for or on behalf of a child, resulting from the other parent's thwarting of the parent's efforts to exercise custody or visitation	Same as state law.

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				rights. The expenses may include the value of caretaker services but are not limited to the cost of services provided by a third party during the relevant period.	
4.5.11	<u>CONCEALMENT OF CHILD ISSUES:</u>	Family 7:605	<i>Marriage of Comer, supra 14 C4th at 526, 59 CR2d at 167; Creed v. Schultz (1983) 148 CA3d 733, 738-739, 196 CR 252</i>	Court may require child support to be paid to designated trustee for transmission to custodial parent when child is produced for visitation.	Same as state law.
4.6	SCHOOLING	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
4.6.1	Private school prohibited	NA	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Child will not attend private school unless the custodial parent decides to put the child in private school.	Same as state law.
4.6.2	Parent requesting private school pays for it		NA	Court doesn't usually award costs for private school. Recommends attending public schools instead.	If the court orders private school then the parent requesting it will pay the whole amount
4.6.3	Timeshare credits	Family 6:168-168.1 (adjustment tied to "physical responsibility" rather than custody)	Marriage of Drake (1997) 53 CA4th 1139, 1160, 62 CR2d 466, 480 (citing text) Fam. C. §4050	Determined by court. This provision not usually supported by court.	Parent who has overnight custody of the child on a given day also gets timeshare credit for any school the child attends during that day.
4.7	NOTIFICATION PROVISIONS	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
4.7.1	Travel outside of county	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Both parents must notify each other by postal letter and email at least 144	Same as state law

<i>I</i>	<i>ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS</i>	<i>Rutter California Family Practice Guide Applicable Section(s)</i>	<i>Applicable statutes and case law</i>	<i>State's default prenuptial agreement in section 9.7</i>	<i>Proposed prenuptial agreement in section 9.9</i>
				hours in advance of overnight travel of the children outside of San Diego County. The notification shall describe in detail their itinerary, stops, phone numbers, addresses, etc. Nontraveling parents agree not to divulge this information to third parties.	
4.7.2	Contact information	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Both parties shall keep the other informed at all times of their address, phone number (pager, home, work phones), and email address (work and home).	Same as state law
4.7.3	Activities requiring both parents involvement:	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Parents shall keep each other informed at all times of:	Same as state law
4.7.3.1	Child's teacher and doctor information	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	The location of the child's teacher(s), doctor(s), and therapist(s) address and phone number provided within one week of the time it is first known.	Same as state law
4.7.3.2	Health traumas	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	The results of health traumas, medical emergencies, regular checkups by providing a copy of the medical records for each visit not attended by the other parent and mailing/faxing them within one week of the incident	Same as state law

1	ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS	<i>Rutter California Family Practice Guide Applicable Section(s)</i>	<i>Applicable statutes and case law</i>	<i>State's default prenuptial agreement in section 9.7</i>	<i>Proposed prenuptial agreement in section 9.9</i>
4.8	PARENT COMMUNICATION PROVISIONS:	NA	NA	NA	NA
4.8.1	Communication provisions between parents	Family 7:310-7:310.6 (best interests of the child)	Fam. C §3020 (best interests of child)	Both parents shall be responsible for maintaining open communication with their partner in pursuit of the child's best interest. This will be provided by:	Same as state law
4.8.2	Restraining order impact	Family 5:65-5:67 (protective orders)	Fam. C. §6320	During any period of time after divorce/separation that a parent lives in a residence which has a restraining order issued against the other parent, an exception shall be made allowing calls to that parent's home for the purposes of arranging custody and visitation or for telephonic visitation with the child	Same as state law
5	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE				
5.1	Proof of domestic violence			False allegations are sufficient, and most of the time are never verified with testimony in court	Requires a polygraph test and a recording to prove
5.2	Kickout orders			Courts can kick out offending spouse from his OWN house!	Not authorized. Only recourse for an aggrieved spouse is to vacate residence.
5.3	Rape charges			Authorized between spouses. What a messed up world!	Not authorized, since marriage is about sexual submission
5.4	Use of polygraph tests to prove			Not authorized	Authorized and clearly defined
5.5	Discovery protective orders to hide			Authorized and	Not authorized, so that

1	ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS	<i>Rutter California Family Practice Guide Applicable Section(s)</i>	<i>Applicable statutes and case law</i>	<i>State's default prenuptial agreement in section 9.7</i>	<i>Proposed prenuptial agreement in section 9.9</i>
				encouraged	public reproach may be used to restore credibility of a falsely accused spouse.
6	CUSTODY EVALUATIONS				
6.1	Requirements and qualifications for custody evaluator			Not defined	Very clearly defined to prevent abuses.
6.2	Process for conducting custody evaluation			Not defined	Very clearly specified to prevent abuses.
7	DISCOVERY AND EVIDENCE				
7.1	Pro Per litigants entitled to "work product" protection.	Family 11:140.1	CCP §2018 ----- Dowden v. Super.Ct. (Dowden) (1999) 73 CA4th 126, 135, 86CR2d 180.187	Allows pro per litigant to have work product protections allowing them not to have to provide their work products as part of normal discovery.	Same as proposed agreement.
7.2	Admissible evidence:		CCP §2030 CCP §2033(n) CCP §2031 CCP §2032 CCP §2028	Admissible evidence includes: Interrogatories Requests for Admissions Business Record subpoenas Physical or Mental examinations Written depositions Testimony of Expert Witnesses	Adds polygraph tests
7.3	Inadmissible evidence:		Evid.C §1324 CCP §§1103-1105 Evid.C. §1151 Evid.C. §1152 Evid.C. §1152.5 Evid.C. §1153	Inadmissible evidence includes: Improper Character evidence Improper Habit Evidence Subsequent Remedial	Same as proposed agreement.

<i>1</i>	<i>ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS</i>	<i>Rutter California Family Practice Guide Applicable Section(s)</i>	<i>Applicable statutes and case law</i>	<i>State's default prenuptial agreement in section 9.7</i>	<i>Proposed prenuptial agreement in section 9.9</i>
			Evid.C. §1155 Evid.C. §§1150-1154	Measures Offers of Compromise Communications During Mediation Proceedings Offer to Plead Guilty or Withdraw Plea of Guilty by Criminal Defendant Evidence of Liability Insurance Content of settlement offers	

9.9 Pre-Nuptial/Marital Agreement

Instead of the default pre-nuptial agreement of the State of California listed above, the spouses or prospective spouses instead agree to use the following pre-nuptial agreement, which is much better than the state's, much fairer to both parties, and far less likely to encourage litigation. The agreement is intended to remove the negative aspects of marriage and make it more like the dating relationship: Based on mutual respect, choice, and interdependence, rather than fear and legal intimidation. It prevents the following types of problems that the default California pre-nuptial agreement encourages:

1. Encourages the parties to think very carefully about the expectations they have for marriage and share them with their partner and write them down. This prevents problems where the parties have unrevealed or unrealistic expectations that cause conflict.
2. Discourages domestic violence and physical abuse (see section 7 and 8.3.1.2).
3. Discourages adultery or infidelity by punishing it if revealed through a polygraph test (section 9.1.1).
4. Discourages gold-digging (marrying someone for their money):
 - 4.1. Minimizes financial dependence of one party on the other and encourages spouses to have a more balanced life that includes a career and interests and friends outside of the marriage. If spouses know ahead of time that they are exclusively responsible for their own retirement and won't get spousal support, they are much more likely to work and be economically self-sufficient, whether married or not. Marriage should never be a crutch for either spouse to not be responsible for themselves.
 - 4.2. Keeps retirements separate property
 - 4.3. Disallows spousal support.
 - 4.4. Prevents gifting community assets to third parties without the written consent of both parties (see section 3.2.5 and 8.4.1.5).
 - 4.5. Prevents destroying of financial records and punishes spouses who won't provide financial information to the other spouse (see sections 8.4.1.9 and 9.3.13).
5. Discourages emotional abuse, because it:
 - 5.1. Prevents filing of restraining or kick-out orders against a spouse based on false allegations (verifies them with polygraph test).
 - 5.2. Prevents spouses from using their control over money or assets in the marriage to control or coerce their partners.
 - 5.3. The polygraph test portion of it discourages lying to gain financial advantage in the divorce or custody settlement. It also sanctions false allegations of child or spousal abuse (section 9.4.1.2).
 - 5.4. Minimizes the need for litigation and legal threats against either party to enforce legal rights.
 - 5.5. Minimizes emotional dependence of one party on the other and encourages spouses to have a more balanced life that includes interests and friends outside of the marriage. This encourages interdependence rather than dependence, which we said in section 9.7.1, question 1, was an important ingredient to happy marriage.
 - 5.6. Provides a structured vehicle for resolving all major family disputes and issues so anger doesn't build and turn into physical abuse or emotional abuse.

We believe this agreement encourages parties to treat marriage as icing on the cake instead of the cake, but it also assumes there is an irrevocable aspect to the commitment. It is meant to remove the stigma of marriage viewed from the man's perspective that is described in section 4.15: The Humorous Side

of Marriage. Note that any issue appearing in the default agreement above that is *not* addressed in the agreement below will be assumed to be handled as indicated in the default agreement. Readers who disagree with the notion of a prenuptial agreement are encouraged to read section 9.7 before they read this section.

As we indicated in the introduction to this chapter, some states support the concept of covenant marriage. Unfortunately, California does not. However, pre-nuptial agreements can be used to extend the marriage obligation in order to make the marriage the equivalent of a covenant marriage. Christian marriages would be the most logical type of marriage to do this in, because Christians are not allowed to get divorced by God unless there has been sexual immorality. The pre-nuptial agreement below has the goal of making the marriage into the equivalent of a covenant marriage.

The Bible advocates in Prov. 25:8-10 trying to keep things out of court, and pre-nuptial agreements have the tendency to reduce the possibility that marriages or divorces ever get litigated and that the spouses get what they expect out of the relationship while still preserving their privacy and dignity:

“Do not go hastily to court, for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor has put you to shame? Debate your case with your neighbor, and do not disclose the secret to another; lest he who hears it expose your shame, and your reputation be ruined.”

Another interesting scripture from the bible gives the following advice to men in Prov. 31:3:

Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings.

We would like to add to this that men should also not give their strength or control over their lives or the fruit of their marriage to the state either, and the state's default prenuptial agreement does exactly that, which is why a replacement agreement that nullifies the power grab by the state is needed.

We therefore think it makes a lot of sense to have a pre-nuptial agreement for the reasons we stated above, where the parties who are married are Christian and they want an enduring relationship that doesn't get litigated and which satisfies the expectations of all parties concerned. The above scripture also advocates keeping the pre-nuptial agreement secret and not telling anyone else about it. What is your view?

Below is the pre-nuptial agreement we agree to honor and be legally bound by during the course of our marriage. It addresses and corrects all of the shortcomings of California's default pre-nuptial agreement. It contains a superset of the clauses that can be used by all couples. Couples should feel free to modify and tailor it for their specific circumstances by deleting clauses that they feel are unnecessary.

PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENT

1. WHEREAS, the parties known as _____ and _____, intend to reside together in the future as Husband and Wife, without obtaining a government issued Marriage License;

2. and WHEREAS, they desire to marry under the Laws of God protected by the Common Law, without state intervention, and with full authority to act under God's Law. See Article 1, Section 10 of the U.S. Constitution, which specifically prohibits any state government from interfering with this contract:

No State shall...pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.

3. and WHEREAS this relationship is undertaken in good faith and in pursuit of the blessings of life, liberty, happiness, and prosperity for the parties and their future children and families.

4. and WHEREAS, they desire to affix their respective rights and liabilities that may result from this union of marriage and joint residency as Husband and Wife;

5. and WHEREAS, they have fully and completely disclosed to one another their current financial status, including assets and liabilities;

6. and, WHEREAS, they have each had an opportunity to consult with separate legal counsel of their own choice as each independently wishes to consult and paid for out of their own separate funds;

7. and, WHEREAS, they mutually stipulate that their respective legal counsel are considered competent and have fully and completely informed them of their legal rights and responsibilities under this agreement;

They now therefore agree:

8. That they shall be known as husband and wife from the date of solemnization as described within the enclosed Notice of Intention to Marry. That the title of Sui Juris shall remain with _____ as husband and Alieni Juris shall remain with _____ as wife.

9. That the New King James Version of the Bible, their common faith in a Christian God, and the Family Constitution they have both been given a copy of, shall be the ultimate authority, reference, and arbiter for modeling normal and proper relationships and conduct between the parties and their prospective family and these will be the reference point at all times in the event of any dispute.

10. That love, commitment, personal responsibility, and respect shall be the foundation of the relationship between the two parties and their family and they are to be exercised at all times with empathy and due consideration of the feelings and needs of others by putting those needs above one's own. Respect and love shall include:

10.1 Behaving and communicating in a truthful, positive, polite, calm, and constructive way at *all* times.

10.2 Judging righteously by judging the *behavior* and not the *person*. Seeking only God's glory, peace, and justice for others rather than our own selfish desires in the process of judging (see Lev. 19:15; Is. 1:17; Prov. 10:21; Prov. 31:8-9; 1 Cor. 11:31; John 7:24; James 1:22; Rom. 2:13; Rom. 14:13).

10.3 Never condemning or slandering or belittling others, especially in public or in front of other family members or friends. Speaking facts and truths about a person for which we have personal knowledge shall *not* be regarded as condemnation or slander.

10.4 Focusing on solving problems and objectively analyzing their behavioral causes rather than blaming the person and avoiding responsibility or participation in a mutually agreeable solution to change behavior and improve the situation.

10.5 Being without hypocrisy or anger, but instead purging iniquity from the family with mercy and truth (Prov. 16:6).

10.6 Mutual submission to the sexual, affection, and communication needs of one's spouse at all times and without question or resistance. This means *not* using deprivation of communication or sex or affection as a weapon against one's spouse to get what a party wants, which is NOT an expression of unconditional love, but is instead a type devious and selfish manipulation masquerading as love that will eventually destroy the relationship and the marriage. See 1 Cor. 7:1-5 for further details.

10.7 Yielding time out of every day to do what the other party desires and to communicate and commune together in prayer and supplication with God our Father.

11. That they should they bear or adopt children in their union, that all should be reared in God's Law jointly with the responsibility, custody, and care of the children *equally divided* and sustenance maintained by both parties. In the event of death of either spouse prior to the children reaching 18, the surviving spouse agrees to care for the children. The parties

agree not to pursue litigation to affect or undermine this custody and care arrangement of the children and agree not to make any adverse allegations about the character or parenting abilities of the other spouse. They agree *never* to request that a court order their spouse to pursue counseling, seek parenting classes, or undergo any kind of psychiatric evaluation of any kind. This is in keeping with the idea that it is regarded as a fundamental right to raise and care for one's child in a way that each parent desires *without* intervention or coercion or character assassination from lawyers, the government, expert witnesses, or the other spouse.

12. That all assets or income purchased or acquired or beneficially received in the name of one party rather than in joint name during the marriage shall be regarded as separate (solely owned) rather than jointly owned or community property within the meaning of state and federal law. This shall include appreciation, dividends, or interest on separate property assets acquired prior to marriage of the parties. There shall be a rebuttable presumption on the part of both spouses that absent evidence of joint ownership or purchase from joint funds, all property in the custody of the parties shall be presumed to be separate property. The recipient or owner of said separate property shall have the *exclusive right* to manage and dispose of such property in any way he or she sees fit without consulting his or her partner, but is encouraged to manage such assets for the benefit of both parties and the family. The parties agree not to get angry, argue, object, or punish in any way either party for the exercise of such property rights.

13. That for the purchase of assets in joint names, the same shall be considered held in *tenancy in common*. Each party shall contribute from their own income and resources such funds as necessary for the maintenance of the union as well as the payment of all upkeep, taxes, and other fees or charges on such property. That pro rata proportion of income and effort which they personally contribute to the sustenance of jointly held assets during the marriage shall be considered to be their separate property (and not community property) for the purposes of state and federal law.

14. That in the filing of any tax returns or other government or legal documents by either spouse, that both spouses agree to always file in the status of *single* and not list or identify their spouse. This will prevent implicating or endangering assets of an innocent spouse in the event that tax collection, court judgment, or litigation activity occurs against the other spouse.

15. That they promise never to litigate in order to demand or request spousal support or child support, in a court of law or through binding arbitration, from their spouse for any reason. They instead agree to take full and complete personal responsibility for their own support and half the support of their children, and their own legal expenses in their entirety at all times in the future. They mutually agree, however, that they reserve the right to *voluntarily*, help and assist their spouse and their children as they see fit and as their conscience and their God and the bible dictate, but are not to apply government or legal or emotional or sexual compulsion to do so under any circumstances. This ensures that trust and good faith shall be the motivation behind *all* conduct in the relationship at all times. Such requirement derives from the following scriptures found in the bible:

15.1 *“But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.”* (Titus 3:9)

15.2 *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”* (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

16. That any litigation relating to or intended to undermine, change, or invalidate this marriage contract or any portion thereof be paid for in its entirety by the spouse contesting it, and this includes legal fees on both sides of any dispute. Furthermore, any fees or awards of property resulting from such litigation shall be returned to the original owner of said property by the receiving spouse, thus rendering such litigation useless and without effect. Parties agree to divulge to each other at any time the content of any and all client files, evidence, notes, or litigation materials maintained by their attorney relating to any litigation against their spouse or a family member of their spouse. Parties agree NOT to use any papers, evidence, or litigation materials in court that they haven't disclosed to their spouse at least two weeks prior to filing them with any court.

17. That should allegations of illegal, unethical, domestic abuse, child abuse, or violent acts be alleged by a party against the other party or their offspring or adopted children, then *both* parties mutually consent *in advance* to undergo polygraph testing to confirm the disposition of such allegations, and to truthfully and completely answer any number of questions under oath during said testing as authored by the other party or his/her counsel. They also stipulate in advance to admit such evidence into a court of law for use by the judge in reaching a finding. Whatever the outcome of any such allegations or instances of abuse, the parties agree that this contract and any civil or criminal litigation resulting from their relationship

shall NOT be permitted by either party in any way or at any time to affect or restrict the Second Amendment right to bear arms of either party.

18. That the marriage between the parties is to be regarded as a confidential fiduciary relationship, and as such, the parties to the marriage agree not to divulge any medical, sexual, personal, or financial details about their spouse or their relationship to parties outside the relationship without express written consent of their spouse while that spouse is alive. This includes a prohibition against the furnishing of evidence or testimony to law enforcement, legal professionals, or the courts in the administration of justice. Likewise, the parties agree *not* to call anyone, including their friends and family members, as witnesses against a party to this agreement or the blood relatives of a party to this agreement, in a court of law.

19. Other than debts validly contracted for services or materials or otherwise related to joint property of the Husband and Wife, if any, the Husband, Sui-Juris, shall have the right to obligate, act for, contract for and to the benefit of the other party known as Wife, Alieni-Juris under the Common Law. This includes the management of jointly-held property but not separate property.

20. **SEVERABILITY CLAUSE:** If, for any reason, any provision of this agreement is held invalid, it is mutually stipulated that all other remaining provisions of this agreement shall continue to be legally binding against the parties. If this entire agreement is held invalid or cannot be enforced, then:

20.1 To the full extent permitted by law any prior agreement between the parties (or any successor thereof) shall be deemed reinstated as if this agreement had not been executed.

20.2 The parties will treat their relationship as if it never existed and agree to deny in any court of law that they were ever married or met any legal requirements necessary for them to be treated by the state or federal government as if they were married.

21. This is the full agreement of the parties and there are no agreements other than those stated herein. This agreement shall only be modified by a writing executed by both parties hereto and witnessed by at least one notary.

*****READ CAREFULLY AS THIS IS A LEGAL BINDING AGREEMENT*****

AGREED AND ACCEPTED:

NAME/HUSBAND: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/STATE: _____
COUNTY: _____

NAME/WIFE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/STATE: _____
COUNTY: _____

Prospective Husband signature:

Date:

Prospective Husband's attorney signature:

Date:

State Bar #: _____

Prospective Wife signature: _____

Date: _____

Prospective Wife's attorney
signature: _____

Date: _____

State Bar #: _____

STATE OF _____)
COUNTY OF _____)

On _____ before me _____ personally appeared
_____ personally known to me (proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence) to be the
person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same in his
authorized capacity, and that by his signature on the instrument the person or the entity upon behalf of which the person
acted, executed the instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal.

Signature of Notary: _____

10. DEFINITIONS

alimony: Money paid, other than child support or subsistence payments, by one of the parties of this agreement to the other party to this agreement as a result of divorce transpiring between them.

assets: Assets as defined here shall include:

Bank instruments, to include:

Passbook accounts.
Certificates of deposit
Money market accounts
Checking accounts under a single name
Lawful currency of any country
Individual retirement account trusteeships

Bonds

Gold, silver, or gems of any form

Items of personal property

Mutual fund accounts

Promissory notes

Stocks

Trusts

Real estate

child: A person who is either younger than 18 years of age or who is economically dependent on his or her parents for more than half the economic cost of his/her lifestyle.

child support: An amount of money paid on a recurring basis to a divorce parent who has custody of a domestic offspring while that offspring is a child.

domestic offspring: Offspring conceived during copulation occurring exclusively between BOTH parties to this agreement.

earned income: Remuneration in whatever form provided for services rendered in the course of employment.

encouragement: The skill to help children in self-esteem. It is a way to show children that they belong and are:

- Accepted
- Capable
- Loved

Look at the words *encourage* and *discourage*. They both include the word *courage*. Courage is an important part of self-esteem. It means a willingness to make an effort. An encouraged child has strong self-esteem. This child has the courage to cooperate, to try new things, and to be responsible. A discouraged child has little self-esteem and won't make an effort. This child doesn't have the courage to choose positive ways to belong.

Encouragement is based on the idea of respect. Like respect, it is something children need all the time. You can learn to get in the “encouragement habit.” Learn and practice some skills to show that you:

- Love and accept your child
- Notice when the child tries or improves
- Appreciate your child
- Have faith in your child

family: A group of people who live under the same roof and who often originate from a common genetic pool. These people are usually under one head or authority, who is usually the husband/father. The members of a family cooperate in the care and rearing of their own or adopted children, subject to the authority of the head of the household.

father: The male who is biologically responsible for the birth of a child. A man who has begotten a child.

fiduciary duty: A responsibility that married spouses have towards each other in some states, including California. This responsibility requires the spouses to act in good faith with regard to all financial matters affecting the marriage. It requires that they manage community assets and income in a way that benefits BOTH parties, rather than just one. This means, for instance, that they are not allowed to gift assets to third parties or sell them at less than their fair market value without the express written consent of their spouse.

husband: A married man. The Bible says in Eph. 5:23 that the husband is the head of the household.

I-message: A good way to talk about problems is with an I-message. I-messages tell how you feel when a child ignores your rights. They focus on you, rather than the child. I-messages don't label or blame. When you use an I-message, you simply tell how you feel.

I-Messages Have Three parts

To use an I-message, do three things:

1. **Tell what is *happening*.**
2. **Tell what you *feel*.**
3. ***Explain* why you feel that way.**

Here is an I-message:

- “When you don't call, I feel worried because I don't know where you are.”

Table 10-2: I-Message Example

#	It uses these words	Example
1	When	“ <i>When</i> you don't call,
2	I feel	<i>I feel</i> worried
3	because	<i>because</i> I don't know where you are.”

Once you understand the parts of an I-message, use words that feel natural to you:

- “I feel scared when I find the iron left on. We could have a fire.”

Decide if you want to tell about your feeling, or just the problem:

- “I can’t set the table when it’s covered with toys.”

These are the most important things to remember about I-messages:

- They focus on you, not your child.
- They do not place blame on anyone.

liabilities: Accounts payable or loans payable by a party or the results of any adverse court judgments or liens against a party to this agreement.

love: (1 Cor. 13:4-8) Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

maturity: Maturity is the balance between courage and consideration. If a person can express his feelings and convictions with courage balanced with consideration for the feelings and convictions of another person, he is mature, particularly if the issue is very important to both parties. If you examine many of the psychological tests used for hiring, promoting, and training purposes, you will find that they are designed to evaluate this kind of maturity.⁵⁸

misbehavior: Behavior of children that is destructive or harmful to them or the family or other individuals in the family. Misbehavior is characterized by any or all of the following characteristics

- Anger
- Selfishness
- Irresponsibility
- Hate
- Negative attitudes
- Destructiveness of property or possessions
- Revenge

mother: One of two people responsible for producing and raising a human being.

personal property: Tangible items or articles of property other than real property. Such items are generally thought of as transportable.

real property: Real estate, land, buildings, dwellings, structures and the fixtures or items permanently attached to them.

reflective listening: The process of repeating what you think your child feels and says. Think of yourself as a mirror that *reflects* your child’s feelings. You also reflect the *reason* behind the

⁵⁸ *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey, 1989, Fireside, p. 217.

feeling. To listen reflectively, start by using the words “You feel” before the feeling, and “because” to tell the reason for the feeling:

- “*You feel* jealous *because* Mike got picked and you didn’t.”
- “*You feel* disappointed *because* Petra didn’t call.”
- “*You feel* impatient *because* you want to use the phone.”

After a while, reflective listening will feel more natural. Then you can use your own words:

- “Are you hurt that Carlo didn’t ask you to the party?”
- “You’re lonesome in our new apartment.”
- “Looks like you’re eager to get to practice.”

respect: Having a high or special regard for something: ESTEEM. In the context of human relationships, placing value on a person, and showing consideration for their likes and dislikes. Treating them ethically and in a way that makes them feel confident, secure, encouraged, and loved.

self-esteem: A belief that we belong and are: 1. Accepted; 2. Strong and capable; 3. Loved. Self-esteem helps our children know that they belong, can contribute, and are loved. It helps them create successes. It helps them get through problems. It helps them say “I can” and “I will.”

transmutation: An act, process, or instance of transmuting or being transmuted. Transmutation is a change or alteration in form, appearance, or nature of some thing.

In the context of family law, transmutation has been defined as a general term to describe arrangements between spouses to convert community property to separate property or vice versa.

unearned income: Unearned income comprises all forms of income other than earned income and shall include the following:

Gifts

Government entitlements to include:

Good stamps

Medicare and Medicaid

Social security

Welfare

Inheritances

Insurance proceeds

Pension, IRA, Roth IRA, and Keogh plans (both military and civilian)

Veterans educational benefits

verbal abuse: Words that attack, slander, or injure, that cause one to believe the false, and that speak falsely of one. Verbal abuse constitutes psychological violence. Without the element of falseness, the behavior can cause psychological harm but isn’t called verbal abuse.

YOU-message: A method of addressing problems that is accusatory and blaming. It uses the word “you” in the sentence. Examples:

- “You should know better.”
- “You stop that.”
- “You cut it out!”

wife: A married woman.