

TWENTY SECOND ANNUAL  
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"  
LECTURESHIP, 2014

# **FACING CRISIS**

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**NORTHWEST FLORIDA SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES**  
**Training Laborers for ...**

## **THE HARVEST**

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

(Luke 10:2)



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offers a great opportunity for those who desire  
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**TWENTY SECOND ANNUAL  
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"  
LECTURESHIP**

**February 16-20, 2014**

**THEME:**

**FACING CRISIS**

**Editor:  
Sidney White**

**Presented by the Church of Christ at Milestone**

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## FORWARD

The twenty-second annual (2014) Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies lectureship has as its theme "*Facing Crisis*". Crisis is nothing new, and some of the lessons will deal with crises in both Old and New Testament times. In our day, there are crises in the world, in the home and in the church. The twenty eight lessons contained in this book will deal with each of these areas.

As one studies the Bible, regardless of the time period, it can be noted that little has changed. Whether one talks of wicked rulers/leaders, immorality, problems with marriage, parenting, children or in religious matters, there has never been a time when each of these areas did not face some kind of crisis. As we study these matters, we must realize that God has always provided the answer, and continues today, through His word, to provide answers for us. These twenty eight lessons will consider these areas from a Biblical perspective, giving insight from the word of God to help the reader of this book deal with crises in his/her life.

Each year we invite twenty eight speakers, men we believe to be sound, faithful and godly men to participate in the lectureship, assigning them a specific subject to help develop our theme for the year. We believe that the NWFSBS lectureship is among the best, though we might be a bit prejudiced. As a result of the quality of the material, we would encourage congregations to consider using this material in Bible classes. Books are available from the printer at a minimal cost, especially compared to the cost of other materials. The information needed to order books is found on page two and at [www.oldpathspublishing.com](http://www.oldpathspublishing.com).

We wish to thank the elders of the church of Christ at Milestone for providing the school and the opportunity for us to spend a week each year in such a study of the word of God.

*Sidney White, Director*  
Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies  
February 2014

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## CRISIS: NOTHING NEW

*Jimmy W. Bates*

1. Solomon said, "...*there is no new thing under the sun.*" (Eccl. 1:9)
  - a. So it is with **crises**, they're a common occurrence.
  - b. We all face crises to various degrees on a regular basis. At times it may seem that no sooner do we get through one crisis, that we find ourselves consumed by another!
  - c. A sizable portion of the world's population is facing a crisis at any given hour.
2. A crisis can be brief, or can last for days, months, or even years.
3. There are different kinds of crises: economic, natural disasters, international, medical, personal, family, etc.
  - a. Thus, the timely nature of our Lectureship theme.
  - b. Examples of crises in both Old and New Testaments; and authority, leadership, and moral crises in the world, the home, and the church.
4. In our present lesson, we will attempt to lay a foundation for our study by discussing:
  - a. What constitutes a **crisis**!
  - b. The tools we need and how we can prepare ourselves to successfully deal with crises when they come.

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. WHAT IS A CRISIS?

- A. The English word ***Crisis*** is not found in the Bible, but the Greek words *krisis* (noun) and *krino* (verb) are used numerous times associated with various forms of the words: judgment, condemn, condemnation, etc.
  1. Definition of Gr. *krisis*
    - a. "distinction; discrimination; judgment; decision, award..."— The Analytical Greek Lexicon. (p.241)
    - b. "1. A separating, sundering; separation; a trial, contest. 2. Selection 3. Judgment — i.e. opinion or decision given concerning anything, esp. concerning justice and injustice, right and wrong, the judgment..." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon (p.362)
    - c. "denotes the process of investigation, the act of distinguishing and separating; a judging, a passing of judgment."— Strong (p.222-223) "primarily denotes a separating, then, a decision, judgment...." — Strong (p.281)
  2. Gr. *krino* — "to separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose..." — Thayer (p.360)

B. Definition of English word **CRISIS**:

1. Word Origin & History – “c. 1425, from Gr. *krisis* “turning point in a disease” (used as such by Hippocrates and Galen), lit. “judgment,” from *krinein* “to separate, decide, judge,” –(Online Etymology Dictionary, 2010 Douglas Harper).
2. “1. a) The turning point in the course of a disease when it becomes clear whether the patient will recover or die b) an intensely painful attack of a disease; paroxysm. 2. A turning point in the course of anything; decisive or crucial time, stage, or event 3. a time of great danger or trouble, whose outcome decides whether possible bad consequences will follow...” (New World Dictionary).
3. “1. A stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events, especially for better or for worse, is determined; turning point. 2. a condition of instability or danger, as in social, economic, political, or international affairs, leading to a decisive change. 3. A dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person’s life.” (Random House Dictionary)

C. Other words often associated with a **CRISIS**:

1. Emergency: “a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action... any sudden or unforeseen situation that requires immediate action...” (New World Dictionary)
2. Trials: “state of being tried by suffering, temptations, etc. ... a hardship, suffering, etc. that tries one’s endurance, faith, patience.” (New World Dictionary)
3. Tribulation: “great misery or distress, as from oppression; deep sorrow ... something that causes suffering or distress; affliction; trial...” (New World Dictionary)
  - a. Affliction: implies pain, suffering, or distress imposed by illness, loss, misfortune, etc.
  - b. Trial: suggests suffering that tries ones endurance, patience, etc.
  - c. Tribulation: describes severe affliction continuing over a long and trying period.
  - d. Misfortune: applied to a circumstance or event involving adverse fortune and to the suffering or distress occasioned by it.

- D. Based on the above definitions, a **CRISIS** is a painfully distressful situation; a time of instability and danger in which there is a decisive and crucial measure of time; a turning point in which, based upon investigation and distinguishing passing of judgment, decisions, choices, and changes are made; the trend of which will either be for the better or for the worse!



1. It is imperative that when we find ourselves in the middle of a crisis that we understand the importance of using wise judgment and making the proper decisions, choices, and changes that will result in a positive outcome — things getting better rather than worse!
2. We need to prepare ourselves ahead of time so we will possess the tools needed to successfully deal with the crises that will face us in life!

## II. TOOLS NEEDED TO SUCCESSFULLY DEAL WITH CRISES:

### A. Strong Faith and Trust in God!

1. Learn to develop, maintain, and live each day in faith:
  - a. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4).
  - b. Can't please God without strong faith (Heb. 11:6).
  - c. Consider Job's faith and how it got him through difficult days.
2. Don't neglect those things that are essential to strong faith:
  - a. Bible study (Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-10; 3:18).
  - b. Prayer (2 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18). To be able to pray to God when a crisis comes, the Christian must stay on praying terms with God.
  - c. Regular worship (Matt. 4:10; Heb. 10:24-25).
  - d. Involvement in the work of the church (1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:7,14; 3:1).
3. Learn to truly trust and lean on the Lord (Prov. 3:5,6).
  - a. When faced with a crisis, it is important to refocus our attention on the Lord by meditating on His word and promises, and reflecting upon His love, mercy, and power.
  - b. Consider Psalm 46:1-11; 1 Peter 5:6,7; Phil. 1:12; 4:4-13; 2 Cor. 1:4-12.
  - c. Learn to live one day at a time (one step at a time) Matt. 6:24-34.
  - d. Don't drown in self-pity; Learn to encourage yourself (1 Sam. 30:6; 2 Tim. 4:17; Psalm 27:13).
  - e. Look beyond the pain and troubles of today to a better day! (Rom. 8:26-28). For the child of God who has put his faith and trust in God, there is the assurance that things will get better, but not until we enter the portals of heaven will all pain, all troubles and trials cease and plague us no more!

### B. Patience and Endurance: (James 1:2-4).

1. A crisis will try (test) our faith...

- a. If our faith is genuine, the test will work patience, steadfastness, steady endurance.
  - b. If faith fails, one will “give up” in the face of crises.
  - c. The word patience literally means “abiding under” or “to bear up under” the burdens, trials, afflictions of the crises we may face in life.
- 2. Patient endurance unto the end is necessary to our salvation (Matt. 24:13; compare: 1 Cor. 15:57, 58; Rom. 2:7; 5:1-5).
- 3. Be patient in dealing with crises; don’t ever give up!
- C. Hope and Courage: (Heb. 6:18,19).
  - 1. Hope, as an anchor, holds us sure and steadfast in the storms (crises) of life.
  - 2. One of the greatest blessings enjoyed by the Christian “in Christ” is Hope! (1 Peter 3:15)
  - 3. In a world of pain, suffering, difficulty, uncertainty, and tragedy; how wonderful it is to have the “Christian Hope”!
  - 4. Hope gives us confidence and courage (Psalm 31:24; Rom. 5:5; 12:12; 15:4).
- D. Wisdom from Above: (James 1:5; 3:17).
  - 1. The decisions made in the time of crises which determine the ultimate outcome, require wisdom from God.
  - 2. Hasty, unwise, and un-thought-out decisions in the midst of a crisis more often results in making a difficult situation even worse!
  - 3. We should follow the inspired instruction of Solomon (Prov. 3:1-24).

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1. We all must deal with crises of one kind or another as long as we live on this earth!
  - a. World and international crises: wars, conflicts, terror, weapons of mass destruction, all kinds of tragedies on the world stage.
  - b. Crises within our Nation and society: economic, moral (abortion, crime, homosexuality), the rejection of God and the Bible.
  - c. Crises in the Home: divorce, living together without marriage, same sex marriages, lack of discipline, godless homes with no moral or spiritual training, etc.
  - d. Crisis in the Church: liberalism, no respect for Bible authority, worldliness, immorality, lack of knowledge, lack of leadership, etc.
  - e. Personal and family crises: These are closer to home and have a tremendous impact upon our personal lives and the lives of our family members.

2. May we all develop the tools needed and prepare ourselves to deal with crises in a positive way! Strong faith and trust in God; patience and endurance (faithfulness); hope and courage; wisdom from above; growing in Bible knowledge and applying God's instructions in the Bible to our daily lives.
3. May we serve God in the spirit of the words of **Isaiah 26:3**, "*The lord will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth thee.*"
  - a. We face life's burdens and difficulties knowing that God's will shall prevail.
  - b. The last book of Divine Revelation sends the message of victory to those who are faithful "in the Lord." Being faithful means we can and will overcome.

## **CRISIS: THE FLOOD**

*Jeff Bates*

1. From the moment Eve partook of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:6), every living individual has faced crises, and we will continue to face them until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.
2. This lesson will seek Biblical answers to the following questions.
  - a. How does one recognize the existence of a crisis?
  - b. What should be the attitude of a godly person toward crisis?
  - c. How does a godly person endure and overcome the crisis?
3. Our lesson text is Genesis 6:1–9:17.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- I. **WHAT INDICATES THERE WAS A CRISIS DURING THE DAYS OF NOAH?**
  - A. The Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man. Gen. 6:3
    1. It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. Gen. 6:6
    2. The Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. Gen. 6:7, 13
    3. God determined to bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven. Gen. 6:17
    4. There was therefore a major crisis among men.
  - B. The great majority of the people went about their daily lives, ignoring the crisis that would destroy them.
    1. "*...In the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until*

*the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away..." Matt. 24:38-39*

2. Why were they unaware of the crisis?
  - a. Noah preached righteousness to those people 120 years while building the ark in preparation for the flood. Gen. 6:3; 2 Peter 2:5
  - b. They chose to ignore the crisis, because they were a part of it, and they had no intentions of changing their lives according to God's will.

## II. WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF THE CRISIS THAT EXISTED IN NOAH'S GENERATION?

- A. The wickedness of man was great in the earth. Gen. 6:5
  1. Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. Gen. 6:5
  2. Man had corrupted his way upon the earth. Gen. 6:12
  3. The earth was filled with the violence of men. Gen. 6:13
- B. The people likely did not consider themselves to be wicked or evil, but they had rejected God's will for their own.
  1. Righteousness is simply obeying the commandments of God. Psalm 119:172
  2. Therefore, disobeying God's commandments is unrighteousness, wickedness, evil, sin.
  3. Ignoring just one of God's commandments makes one evil. James 2:8-11
  4. This evil, wickedness, sin, brought about the crisis.
- C. How had mankind reached such a state of wickedness?
  1. It began with godly men marrying the women of the world, merely because they had a beautiful outward appearance. Gen. 6:1-2
  2. The children born to the union of godly men with worldly women, followed the example of worldliness. Popular among men, known for their worldliness. Gen. 6:4
  3. God has always warned his people against close relationships with those who are not his people. 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18
  4. Yet even today, there are many Christians who marry denominational church members, or others who are hardly religious.
- D. Do we wonder why:
  1. There are so many divorces, even among Christians?
  2. There are so many who leave the Lord's church after being married?
  3. We lose so many young people to denominationalism?

### III. WHAT WAS NOAH'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS?

- A. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Gen. 6:8
  - 1. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Gen. 6:9
  - 2. Noah walked with God. Gen. 6:9
  - 3. Noah did according to all that God commanded him. Gen. 6:22
  - 4. Righteous before God in his generation. Gen. 7:1
  - 5. Noah refused to be influenced by the sin of the majority.
- B. Only eight souls were saved from the flood. Gen. 6:18; 7:1,13
  - 1. How were these eight souls different from those who perished in the flood?
    - a. Did God bless them with some "miraculous righteousness" that no one else was given?
    - b. Satan accused God of "making" Job righteous (Job 1:9-11). But Satan's accusation was false.
    - c. Noah and his family were normal people who chose to serve God faithfully, when every other soul around them chose to reject God's will.
  - 2. Were there people who died in the flood who considered themselves to be godly people? — Worshipers of the God of heaven, yet who rejected some aspect of His will?
  - 3. The great majority refuse to serve God faithfully. This is a truth among all generations of men. Matt. 7:13-14
- C. Noah's faithfulness influenced his wife, his sons, and his daughters-in-law.

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1. Who are you, among men today? Are you a follower of men, or a follower of God?
- 2. Are you in crisis because of sin?
- 3. Prepare yourself for the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, lest you be caught unaware, as so many were when the flood came.
- 4. Where are you leading your loved ones?

## CRISIS: REHOBOAM/JEROBOAM

*Ed White*

- 1. Since the dawn of creation, there have been various crises in the lives of human beings.
  - a. There was even a crisis in the garden of Eden concerning the forbidden fruit.
  - b. There was a crisis in the lives of Abraham and Lot concerning which area of land to choose for their cattle, Gen. 13.

- c. Crisis have never ceased to exist and because of wrong decisions men have suffered much hardships.
- 2. When we look at the time of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, we see that there was a crisis which effected the Jewish nation for years to come.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. BACKGROUND:**

- A. After the children of Israel entered the promised land, conflicts with the heathen nations arose which created a crisis.
  - 1. Judges were appointed to help solve the crisis at hand.
  - 2. Samuel was the last of the judges, cf. 1 Sam. 8:1-5.
- B. As Samuel grew old the people cried out “..make us a king to judge us like all the nations ... 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” (1 Sam. 8:5,20). (This opened the door for a crisis).
  - 1. The first three kings, Saul, David, Solomon, each reigned 40 years over a united kingdom.
  - 2. As Solomon grew old, Jeroboam was made ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph, 1 Kings 11:28.
  - 3. The prophet Ahijah spoke to Jeroboam about rending the kingdom from Solomon, 1 Kings 11:29ff.
  - 4. Solomon, hearing of this, sought to kill Jeroboam and he fled to Egypt, 1 Kings 11:40 and remained there until the death of Solomon.

### **II. CRISIS CREATED BY REHOBAM:**

- A. Rehobam, Solomon's son, reigned in his father's stead, 1 Kings 11:43.
- B. The Jews made a proposal to Rehobam, 1 Kings 12:4.
  - 1. Rehobam rejected the counsel of the old men, 1 Kings 12:6-7, and took the advise of the young men, 1 Kings 12:8-11. (What some would call “advice shopping”).
    - a. “My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.” 1 Kings 12:10
    - b. He further stated: “my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke.” 1 Kings 12:11
    - c. This was not the speech one would make who felt himself to be a good shepherd of God's flock.
    - d. Perhaps, how different things would have been had Rehobam gone to God for an answer rather than to human beings!
    - e. This opened the door for an even greater crisis among God's people.

- f. Jesus said: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matt. 23:12)
- g. Of all that is said concerning the situation at hand, there is no mention of his ever inquiring of the Lord as to what should be done!
- 2. This led to a crisis in Israel that would last for years to come, a division of the kingdom — 2 tribes remaining with Rehoboam and 10 tribes going with Jeroboam, 1 Kings 12:16ff.
- 3. This crisis began because of the foolish leadership and a few rash and boastful words from the lips of one who sought to be the leader of Israel.
- 4. Think of the division in the Lord's church today due to foolish leadership, leadership asking for advice from the wrong people!
- 5. Thus, the counsel of wisdom was rejected and the counsel of folly accepted, 1 Kings 12:8-11.
- C. This division in the kingdom led to even greater crises among the Jews for years to come.

### III. CRISIS WITH JEROBOAM AND THE TEN TRIBES:

- A. Jeroboam, in order to keep the 10 tribes away from Jerusalem, set up altars at Dan and Bethel, 1 Kings 12:26-33.
- B. Note the promise of God to Jeroboam through Ahijah in 1 Kings 11:38.
  - 1. However, he made no effort to seek the guidance of God.
  - 2. God's word did not profit him because it was not united by faith on his part, cf. Heb. 4:1-2.
- C. Jeroboam, like many today, was a man of self-will — doing what HE WANTED!
  - 1. God's presence was completely overshadowed so far as Jeroboam was concerned.
  - 2. "There are too many people, even in the church, who feel that their own views regarding what they should do are better than the way of faith which is always contrary to human reasoning." (Gospel Advocate Annual Lesson Commentary, October 14, 1962, p.241). Read Isa. 55:8-9
  - 3. He made them feel that religion should be easy and convenient, cf. Matt. 16:24; 10:34-39; 1 Kings 13:34; cf. also 2 Kings 17:18-23
- D. What were some of the sins of Jeroboam?
  - 1. He chose his own places for worship (Dan & Bethel) instead of what God had chosen, Deut. 12:11-13; cf. 1 Kings 12:26-30.
  - 2. He changed the object of worship — calves instead of God, 1 Kings 12:28.

3. He changed the time of worship — 8th month for the 7th month, 1 Kings 12:32-33; cf. Lev. 23:34,39 (God had ordained the 7th month).
4. He changed the priesthood — “made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.” 1 Kings 12:31
- E. Jeroboam died after 22 years as king, however his evil leadership became a measuring stick for the kings that followed as every king of Israel repeated the same foolish pattern established by him, and Israel eventually was delivered into the hands of the Assyrians, 2 Kings 17:20-23, a crisis indeed.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The influence of our lives is not contained to just the time we have on this earth.
  - a. We influence people every day we live by our words and action and it may be good or bad, cf. Matt. 5:13-16.
  - b. Even after death, our influence will follow us, cf. Rev. 14:13.
2. It is a serious thing to sin, which may cause others to sin.
3. Let each of us search our heart and strive not to make the same mistakes that Rehoboam and Jeroboam made.
4. Let us always seek the guidance and counsel of God in heaven.

## CRISIS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT MATT. 27:22

*Charles Blair*

1. There is no greater crisis in life than a life lived without Jesus the Christ. The very meaning of life centers on where am I going when this life is finished. The atheist nor the skeptic has any answers for what lies beyond the grave. Jesus Christ is the only answer, which based on the evidence from scripture, is the meaning and the solution for life itself. When we come to His death on the cross, we find the answer and the solution of life's mysteries and problems.
2. In this study we shall raise the question, what will each of us do with the One they call Jesus?

#### DISCUSSION:

- I. GOD'S PLAN FOR SAVING MAN WAS ETERNAL; i.e., BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN. THAT SALVATION



**WOULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS THE CHRIST:**

- A. It was a plan which included both Jews and Gentiles. Eph. 3:11; Titus 1:2; I John 2:2
- B. When we therefore read material from the Old or New Testaments, this plan of God is the foundation of all that we read. Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 2:15
- C. God provided evidence in the Old Testament, which when men read with honest hearts, should be able to reach the conclusion that Jesus was/is the Christ, the Son of God.

**II. THE EVENTS OF MATTHEW 27 TAKE PLACE IN THE MONTH OF APRIL. WE KNOW THIS BECAUSE AT "THIS" FEAST PILATE WOULD RELEASE A PRISONER. WE THEREFORE TAKE A BRIEF LOOK AT THIS FEAST CALLED THE PASSOVER:**

- A. Matthew 27:15 tells us at "that" feast the governor would release a prisoner of their choosing.
  - 1. The wisdom would be to gain good will of the people.
  - 2. Moral people concerned for their families or their community surely would not desire to release some person who would be a threat to them.
  - 3. In this way, the Roman government could build good will with no danger of losing an important/violent criminal.
- B. Pilate understood the reason they had delivered Jesus to him was out of their envy of Jesus (v.18).
  - 1. What he did not understand was their hatred for Jesus.
  - 2. He would not have given them the choice had he understood the level of hatred they felt toward Jesus (Acts 3:17).
- C. It is still the same choice today as men try to decide, what will we do with Jesus.
  - 1. In our world of trying so hard to soften the idea of responsibility, the word "hate" is too strong.
  - 2. It assaults our sensibilities.
  - 3. Life however, must be defined and seen as God sees it.

**III. HERE IS WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE PASSOVER:**

- A. On the tenth day of April, they were to select a lamb and set it apart (Exodus 12:3).
  - 1. It was to be a male lamb of the first year from either the sheep or the goats (v.5).
  - 2. This lamb was to have no blemish.
- B. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, it was to be killed in the evening (v.6).
  - 1. Years later, the commands of God called for a lamb to be sacrificed, every morning and every evening of each day.
  - 2. However, this day was special.

3. Years later as they settled in Canaan, this feast was to be observed every April.
  4. The intent was for them to tell their children what had happened when they were in Egypt (Exodus 13:8).
  5. They were to wear copies of the event on their wrist and on their foreheads to always remind them of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt (v.9).
- C. They were to take blood from the animal killed (either lamb or goat) and strike all three sides of the door where they were (v.7).
1. When God would pass through Egypt that night, when He saw the blood on the door, He would 'passover' that house and not kill the firstborn in that house.
  2. It served as a warning to all future generations, that it requires effort to bring about one's relationship with God.
  3. Did they deserve to have their firstborn child or animal saved because of their goodness? The answer we would shout out is, No, not their goodness.
  4. It was a free gift from God. The animal killed, the blood applied were efforts on the part of man to please God.
  5. Let no one convince us that love does not have conditions.

**IV. WE NOW MOVE BACK TO A DAY IN APRIL IN WHICH THE WEATHER WAS COLD; JESUS STOOD BEFORE PILATE WITH HIS ENEMIES ASSEMBLED; HE HAD ALREADY BEEN BEATEN, SPIT ON AND MOCKED BEFORE HE WAS EVER BROUGHT TO PILATE:**

- A. The other apostles had all fled from the events in Gethsemane.
1. Peter followed at a distance and on this cold morning sat down with others to warm himself by the fire (Mark 14:54).
    - a. We wonder at times how many individuals follow at a distance like Peter did — finding some comfort by a fire and not knowing the danger one is in by not following the Lord all the way.
    - b. How many are so very close until they understand what the Lord requires and they go away sorrowful (Matt. 19:22)?
- B. Before the Jews, they spit on Him and slap Him with the palms of their hands (Matt. 26:67).
1. Any person looking on to such behavior would cry out, this is not justice, this is mob rule.
  2. Without knowing Scripture, one might conclude that Jesus is all alone at this point.

3. The abiding promise of God is that He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5).
4. Human eyes could not see the spiritual battle about to be engaged in for the salvation of men's souls.
- C. Pilate gives Jesus an opportunity to defend Himself against charges which are being brought against Him.
  1. The essence of those charges rest in the question Pilate raises to Jesus.
  2. "Art thou the king of the Jews" is what Pilate wanted to know (Matt. 27:11).
  3. The effect of Jesus' answer was to say, "yes".
  4. Pilate is amazed that Jesus does not make any effort to answer and thereby deliver Himself from this mob of angry and hate-filled men.
  5. Pilate did not know these events had to take place in order for prophecy to be fulfilled. Some 700 years earlier, Isaiah would say that the Messiah would not open His mouth (Isa. 53:7).
  6. The meaning is not that Jesus would not speak, but rather that He would not speak to defend Himself in this mock trial.

**V. LET US MOVE FORWARD AND THEN RETURN TO OUR TEXT TO MAKE APPLICATIONS FOR EACH OF US:**

- A. Never in all human history was there ever such a time when all heaven and hell focused on one such event.
  1. One thing which God always required of the worshipper was to kill the animal in sacrifice from a position of willingness.
  2. A sacrifice given from something other than a willing heart would not be accepted by God (Isa. 1:19; Mal. 1:13).
  3. In the "golden text of the Bible" (John 3:16) is a statement about the Godhead. The Father gave and the Son willingly submitted to His will. John 6:38; Heb. 5:8
- D. The battle which raged that day beyond human sight was the conflict between evil trying to win and the force of God not giving in so that man could be saved.
  1. When Jesus, after six hours died, He by that death was victorious over all the efforts of Satan to rob man of peace and hope of heaven (Col. 2:15).
  2. This battle was set up and carried out by God to save man (Acts 2:23).
  3. At a given point in the battle, God had to do something which had never occurred before.
    - a. He had to forsake One that was obedient in order for sin to be paid for (Psa. 22:1; Isa. 53:11; Matt. 27:46).

## VI. WE COME TO OUR TEXT WITH QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ASKED AND ANSWERED:

- A. Are we like Peter following at a distance when the question is asked, what will you do with Jesus?
- B. Are we like Judas, who repented and yet could not face the choice he had made?
  - 1. We have all known of those who toward the end of their lives have regretted not giving themselves to God.
  - 2. True repentance is changing our mind which leads to a change in action.
- C. Are we like the enemies of Jesus on this day?
  - 1. What did they say to Judas?
  - 2. They said, "what is that to us" (Matt. 27:4).
  - 3. We implore people to obey Jesus before it is too late.
  - 4. This attitude of the enemies is seen and shouted out in the lives of so many, "What Is That To Us?"
- D. Are we like Pilate who can wash our hands as if to say I do not have to be involved with this man Jesus beyond some moral constraint?
- E. What do you want to do with Jesus?
  - 1. It's a question no one can answer for us except ourselves.
  - 2. We must decide, where and with Whom we will be in eternity.

## VII. ONE MORE EFFORT TO "SEAL THE DEAL."

- A. Matt. 23 speaks of the desolation of the house of the Jews.
- B. Matthew 24 speaks of the fall of Jerusalem dealing with that desolation.
- C. Matthew 25 is the scene at judgment.
- D. Briefly stated, the Shepherd divides the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:33).
  - 1. The *sheep* stand for all the *righteous* at judgment.
  - 2. The *goats* stand for all the *unrighteous* at judgment.
- E. Jesus was like the sheep symbolizing all the righteousness of men in as much as He lived a perfect life without sin (Heb. 4:15).
- F. But what about the goats?
  - a. God made Jesus to be sin for us (II Cor. 5:21).
  - b. He was the sacrificial goat for the day of atonement.
  - c. He was also the scape goat on the same day.

## VIII. WHAT IS OUR MOTIVATION TODAY?

- A. We love Him because He first loved us (I John 4:19).
  - B. My friend, what will you do with Jesus?
-

## **CRISIS: RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY**

*Barry O'Dell*

1. Respect is defined, "esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person."
2. On March 6th, 2013 in Los Angeles, a mother and her two daughters attacked a school teacher outside her classroom because of an issue that one of the daughters had with her. Because of the nature of the beating, the mother was charged with felony battery and one of the daughters was charged with assault with a deadly weapon.
3. In October of 2012, a 50 year old male teacher in Pittsburg was knocked out cold in an alley by six students who then laughed and celebrated the incident.
4. In April of 2013, an elementary school Physical Education teacher was attacked by two teens with an aluminum baseball bat because, "they didn't like the way he was talking."
5. The examples could go on and on, but we clearly observe everyday that there is an astounding lack of respect for authority in this world.
6. Our object in this lesson will be to consider what the Bible teaches concerning respect for authority and the Christian's response to such teaching.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THE PATRIARCHAL AGE AND THE CRISIS OF A LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY.**

- A. From the beginning of time on earth, God has been the Supreme Authority.
  1. Man was created and initially given ONE negative command (Gen. 2:15-17).
  2. In rebellion to this very simple command, Adam and Eve decided to do exactly what God said they were not to do (Gen. 3:1-6).
  3. The consequences of their choice were both tragic and far-reaching (Gen. 3:16-24; Rom. 5:12).
- B. Cain did not respect the authority of God when he offered "of the fruit of the ground" in worship to God (Gen. 4:3-7).
  1. The word *well* in Hebrew implies that which is right or acceptable.
  2. Hebrews 11:4 reveals God was not acting arbitrarily, but that He had revealed a plan of sacrifice to be obeyed.
- C. Noah's generation was wicked and, "...every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

1. The text reveals that man was striving (contentious against law) with God (Gen. 6:3).
2. Man was rebelling against the Creator of the universe and he had become "filled with violence" (Gen. 6:13).
- D. Historically, then, man has had a problem with authority.
  1. Many other examples could be cited from this portion of Biblical history.
  2. The sad reality though, is that man is no different today!
  3. The stories mentioned by way of introduction are, unfortunately, not uncommon because mankind has a lack of respect for authority.
  4. The period referred to as the Mosaic Dispensation further illustrates man's lack of respect for both civil and spiritual authority.

## II. THE MOSAIC AGE AND THE CRISIS OF A LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY.

- A. If one were to begin reading from Exodus 20 and continue to Malachi 4, it would quickly become evident that there was in place an objective standard of authority.
  1. God did not deliver the 10 Suggestions to Israel at Sinai!
  2. He revealed an objective and understandable Law to Moses and the people which He expected them to obey.
  3. The initial response of the people was, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Exod. 24:3).
  4. Again, after Moses read the book of the covenant to the people they said, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exod. 24:7).
- B. However, there are many examples of the nation of Israel and individuals failing to respect the authority of God.
  1. For example, Israel was commanded, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. ... Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or 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. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them..." (Exod. 20:3-5).
  2. It did not take Israel long to forget this command (Exod. 32:1-6).
- C. Another example of the lack of respect for God's authority is found in Leviticus 10:1-2.
- D. During the wilderness wandering the Israelites found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath Day (Num. 15:32-36).
  1. This was another display of a complete lack of respect for the authority of God!
  2. The sentence was death because God had said, "Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for

whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" (Exod. 31:14-15).

3. God demands strict obedience to His laws!
- E. The Mosaic Dispensation gives us several examples to man's lack of respect for civil law as well.
  1. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 records God's requirements for a man who would become king after Israel inherited the Promised Land.
    - a. He was to be an Israelite (v.15).
    - b. He was not to multiply horses for himself (v.16).
    - c. He was not to multiply wives for himself (v.17).
    - d. He was to keep his own copy of the law, read it, and keep it (vs.18-20).
  2. Saul, the first king of the United Kingdom of Israel was disobedient to the laws of God (1 Sam. 13, 15).
  3. David, the second king, was guilty of polygamy (2 Sam. 3:2-5).
  4. King Solomon "loved many strange (NKJV — foreign) women" (1 Kings 11:1) which was in direct conflict with God's revealed will for Israel (Deut. 7:3-4).
  5. 1 Kings 11:3 reveals, not only were they foreign, but, "*He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.*"
  6. Consider the following examples of a lack of respect for God's authority in the Old Testament:
    - a. Jeroboam, 1 Kings 12:25-33.
    - b. Ahab, 1 Kings 16:29-34.
    - c. 2 Kings 17 is a summation of Israel, her leaders, and her continued stubbornness toward God.

### III. THE CHRISTIAN AGE AND THE CRISIS OF A LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY.

- A. All we have to do is read the papers or watch the news to see that man is continuing the pattern seen in the Bible.
  1. Law and authority exists for man's protection and society's function.
  2. Paul wrote, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom. 13:1-2).
    - a. In August of 2013, two young men beat an 88 year old World War II veteran to death in Spokane, WA.

- b. Ariel Castro held three women in captivity for 10 years in his basement in Cleveland, OH.
  - c. O. J. Simpson was acquitted for murdering his wife, but later went to prison for kidnapping and robbery.
  - d. Mike Tyson has a rape conviction, DUI, and would bite the ears of some of his boxing opponents.
  - e. Michael Phelps was convicted for drunk driving and pictures were posted of him smoking marijuana.
  - f. Timothy Geithner, who served as head of the United States Treasury Department, cheated on his taxes. Is this the best our country can do for leadership?
  - g. These are just a few examples of "prominent" people in our society who seemingly have no regard for law/authority.
- B. A sad reality is that this attitude has historically found its way into the church.
- 1. Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of lying (Acts 5:1-11).
  - 2. Divisive false teachers in Rome (Rom. 16:17-18).
  - 3. Corinth had a couple committing fornication and everyone knew it (1 Cor. 5)!
  - 4. Peter, Barnabas, and some other Jews were acting like hypocrites (Gal. 2:11-14).
- C. Roman Catholicism evolved over many years and today it continues to disrespect God and His word.
- D. Protestant denominationalism developed as a result, yet that movement divided the religious world even further.
- E. Today, in the Lord's church, there are many examples of a lack of respect for God's authority.

### CONCLUSION:

- 1. What is the faithful Christian to do?
  - a. Civilly, we are to "be subject unto the higher powers" (Rom. 13:1).
  - b. Spiritually, we are to love God and keep His commandments (John 14:15).
- 2. The Bible says that we are to be, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).

## CRISIS: PORNOGRAPHY

*Wayne Rodgers*

- 1. The world lieth in wickedness (1 John 5:19).



- a. Pornography is a sin that is not only invading our society; it is invading our congregations.
- b. It is invading Christian's lives.
- c. It is destroying families and relationship with God.
- 2. Pornography is everywhere!
  - a. Gone are the days when pornography was just associated with dirty theaters in bad neighborhoods and in wrapped-up magazines under the counter at the convenience stores.
  - b. Gone are the days when persons had to make a deliberate, premeditated choice to get involved with pornography.
  - c. By contrast, today, we each must make a deliberate, premeditated choice not to get involved with pornography.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### I. CRISIS ACKNOWLEDGED (PORNOGRAPHY DEFINED).

- A. Pornography comes from two Greek words:
  - 1. *porne* which means "harlot or prostitute" and *graphos* which means to write or depict graphically, literally, "graph or graphic."
  - 2. In other words, it means to graphically depict the use and abuse and perversion of sex in any form or fashion. That is what we mean when we are using the word, *pornography*.
- B. Another word that should be defined is "lust."
  - 1. It is a strong craving or desire.
  - 2. Prov. 6:25, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids."
- C. Pornography is designed for one purpose — to stimulate sexual excitement!

##### II. CRISIS ASSESSED (PORNOGRAPHY DEFILES).

- A. Pornography defiles *socially*.
  - 1. There are more than 250 monthly magazines that cater to pedophiles — people who get their kicks by looking at the nude bodies of children eight years old and younger.
    - a. These magazines and websites are full of stories telling their readers that all women and children secretly desire sex, and that to seduce or rape them is to do them "a favor."
    - b. When is taking the innocence of a young child who has no idea of what sex is and abusing him in such a way "a favor?"
  - 2. Pornography is a cancer that is producing sexual perverts that is destroying the traditional family unit and is eating away at the very roots of our society.
    - a. Psychologically, the abuse of these women and children (girls and boys) has caused difficulty with

intimacy and love within their future homes because of a misunderstanding due to this type of abuse.

- b. The family structure is being destroyed.
- c. This is just one example of where pornography leads.
- 3. There are several chemicals released in the body when one sees or is watching pornography that make it very addictive as a drug.
  - a. These are chemicals in the body that produce feelings of pleasure.
  - b. Each time stimulating in a way that was only intended to be enjoyed by married couples by God's own design.
- B. Pornography defiles *spiritually*.
  - 1. Pornography denies the purity of sex.
    - a. It takes a beautiful creation of God and drags it through the filthiest perverted dirt Satan can dig up.
    - b. Wise Solomon asks, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Prov. 6:27)
    - c. Neither can any man, no matter how pure, clean, wholesome, and strong he is, get around the stench of pornography and not get the smell on him.
    - d. He cannot jump into the lake of sexual immorality without getting wet.
  - 2. Pornography will destroy one spiritually.
    - a. It is sinful (Prov. 5-7; Matt. 5:27-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21).
    - b. It will lead one to Hell!
    - c. Pornography is a spiritual killer!
  - 3. But, there is hope!
    - a. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).
    - b. There is refreshing in the presence of the Lord!

### III. CRISIS AVERTED (PORNOGRAPHY DEMANDS AN OVERCOMING).

- A. Conditions are given for overcoming any sin's consequence (Rom. 6:23).
  - 1. We must repent as mentioned previously (Acts 3:19).
  - 2. We must avoid it at all costs! (1 Cor. 6:18)
- B. To Overcome and Defeat pornography:
  - 1. Consider the following verses and applications:
    - a. Psalm 101:3-4, "*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.*"

- 1) We must determine in our hearts to stay away from pornography!
- 2) We must determine early and build our faith that we might have the strength to abstain (Rom. 10:17; 1 Thess. 5:21a-22; Eph. 6:10-18).
- b. Prov. 5:15-20, *"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. <sup>16</sup>Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. <sup>17</sup>Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee. <sup>18</sup>Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. <sup>19</sup>Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. <sup>20</sup>And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger."*
  - 1) We must determine in our hearts that we will not be involved in sexual sins!
  - 2) Solomon is teaching his son to not go after a strange woman, but rather cleave unto your own wife, as God intended (cf. Matt. 9:5).
    - a) The sexual relationship is intended for the husband and wife!
  - 3) We must determine if already caught up in pornography to make a change (Prov. 5:21-23).
  - 4) We must determine to change what we see (Job 31:1). Make a covenant with our eyes!
- C. Some practical observations and ways to deal with the issue and problem of pornography:
  1. Change the relationship status that we have with God. Chances are, we have drifted away from God at the very least.
  2. Admit there is a problem and it affects me personally. By admitting, you are accepting responsibility for actions that follow.
  3. Use an accountability partner.
  4. Be ever diligent to work on proper relationships. This benefits you, your spouse, your children, and generations to come.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. An autobiography of the 5 short chapters in the life of a porn addict (source unknown):
  - a. Chapter 1 — I walk down the street and there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. I am lost. I am helpless. It isn't my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

- b. Chapter 2 — I walk down the same street and there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I cannot believe I am in the same place, but it still isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.
  - c. Chapter 3 — I walk down the same street and there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see that it is there. I still fall in. Now it is a habit. My eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.
  - d. Chapter 4 — I walk down the same street and there is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.
  - e. Chapter 5 — This is the final chapter of healing. I walk down a different street.
2. Make a change in your life and the lives around you by steering clear of pornography.

## **CRISIS: GAMBLING**

*Chad Dollahite*

1. Gambling is a controversial subject among many, but it is not hard to determine that, biblically, gambling is something Christians need to stay away from altogether.
2. Some people will go to seemingly any lengths to justify what they want to do.
3. The cause of truth is not advanced, however, with weak arguments, regardless of the subject; such is true with gambling as well, as is seen in the following examples:
  - a. The Bible teaches we must work for money. But, what about a gift/inheritance? There is nothing wrong with receiving such, yet they are not "worked for."
  - b. Gambling is wrong because of the risk factor. This is not true; many things in life are risks, but neither sinful nor gambling.
4. What is gambling, then? The definition involves the following three aspects:
  - a. There must be an uncertain, arbitrary event.
  - b. There must be a wager (something of value) that is deliberately 'chanced' on a particular outcome.
  - c. There must be a clear winner and a loser; the winner wins at the direct loss of the other gambler(s).
5. It is my position that gambling is 100% sinful, as will be shown from the Bible in this material.
6. We will approach this study from two perspectives:
  - a. Biblical reasons why gambling is wrong.
  - b. Arguments used attempting to justify gambling.

**DISCUSSION:****I. BIBLICAL REASONS WHY GAMBLING IS WRONG:**

- A. Gambling is done out of covetousness.
  - 1. What motivates people to gamble? They want to win something!
  - 2. One of the 10 Commandments was, "Thou shalt not covet" (Exod. 20:17), but the verse goes on to state several particulars, then ends with the general statement, "nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."
  - 3. To *covet* means to lust after, long for, or desire something that belongs to someone else.
  - 4. Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).
  - 5. Christians have their affections on things above (Col. 3:1-2); we have no need to be so obsessed with 'stuff', that we gamble to get more.
- B. Gambling preys on the weaknesses of others.
  - 1. Christian principles are the exact opposite. (Gal. 6:10, helping, not taking their money!)
  - 2. The busiest days in casinos are the first few days after welfare checks come out.
    - a. In other words, there are untold numbers of those who cannot afford it hoping to strike it big at the expense of untold others who cannot afford it either.
    - b. One study showed that the poor bet up to three times what the middle and upper classes bet.
  - 3. State lotteries in Connecticut & Massachusetts were equivalent to a state sales tax of over 60% on lower-income groups.
  - 4. Why would a Christian have anything to do with something that is preying on others' weaknesses?
- C. Gambling miserably fails "the fruit test."
  - 1. Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:16-18).
  - 2. Jesus' statement begs the question, "What kind of fruit does gambling produce?"
  - 3. When legalized gambling arrives in a community, does it raise moral standards? Does it help improve living standards?
  - 4. Eight months after casinos opened in Gulfport, Mississippi, police noted that murder rates went up 75%, rape

200%, robbery 311%, assaults 64%, burglary 100%, car theft 160%.

5. Three years after casinos arrived in Atlantic City, they went from 50th to 1st in per capita crime.
  6. Nevada (home of the infamous city, Las Vegas) is always nationally near the top or 1st in suicide, divorce, high school dropouts, homicide against women, gambling addiction, bankruptcy, abortion, rape, out-of-wedlock births, alcohol-related deaths, prisoners locked up, and crime in general.
  7. Indeed, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." By its fruit, gambling is shown to be a bane of society.
- D. Proverbs 13:11 condemns gambling, in principle, at the very least: "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase."
1. *The English Standard Version* (ESV) renders this verse, "Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it" [hastily] footnote — "by fraud"].
  2. Another translation has, "Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows over time" (New Living Translation).
  3. "Wealth from gambling quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows" (The Living Bible).
  4. There is a principle in Proverbs 13:11 of the value of money gained via hard work, as opposed to a get-rich-quick scheme or methods akin to gambling. (Again, this is not to say that receiving a gift/inheritance is wrong, but there is a principle throughout the Bible of the value of hard work.)
- E. Gambling is addictive.
1. Paul said, "All things are lawful unto me, but *all things are not expedient*: all things are lawful for me, but *I will not be brought under the power of any*" (1 Cor. 16:12, emphasis added).
  2. When people win, they want more and more until it consumes them.
  3. When people lose, they will gamble more to try to win back what they lost.
  4. Either way, gambling consumes them until they are, in some cases, terribly addicted.
  5. One secular publication reported that gambling is "recession-proof" (The Nevada Observer).
    - a. How is gambling recession-proof? Because, once started, it is addictive and rather difficult to stop; in short, it is highly addictive!

- b. Why would anyone gamble when he cannot afford it?  
Because he is addicted!
- 6. "Gamblers Anonymous" exists simply because of the addictive nature of gambling.
- 7. Most lottery tickets have a number on the back to the Gamblers Helpline. Why? Because the number one gambling problem almost always is the lottery.
- 8. One study showed that 43% of people who gamble have a tendency towards "compulsion" that results in them spending more money than they could afford.
- 9. Pawn shop owners talk of those who come in to pawn artificial limbs and glass eyes, or people who will pull out gold teeth, all just to get money for their gambling addiction.
- 10. The Christian is under the power of One — his Lord Jesus Christ. That rules out gambling, if nothing else but for the fact that the Christian is going to avoid any addictive activity.
- F. Gambling is poor stewardship (cf. Matt. 25:14-30).
  - 1. The odds of winning the lottery vary from 18,000,000:1 to 120,000,000:1.
  - 2. The odds of getting struck by lightning are 2,650,000:1
  - 3. A person is forty times more likely to get struck by lightning than to win the lottery.
  - 4. A person is one hundred twenty times more likely to die from flesh-eating bacteria than to win the lottery.
  - 5. The chances of two of three people making a hole-in-one on the same hole are higher than the chances of winning the lottery.
  - 6. A person is twelve hundred times more likely to die from a snake bite or bee sting than to win the lottery.
  - 7. If a person drives ten miles to purchase a lottery ticket, he is twenty times more likely to be killed in a car accident than to win the lottery jackpot.
  - 8. Powerball odds are about 1 in 146,107,962; MegaMillions odds are about 1 in 175,711,536.
    - a. What if your financial planner wanted to sink your retirement savings into an investment that has a 1 in 175,000,000 chance of turning a profit?
    - b. Would you give him the go-ahead? Only few would fail to recognize such poor stewardship.
  - 9. Some have said, "The lottery is a tax on people who can't do math."
  - 10. Aside from all other reasons to avoid gambling, it is obvious the only ones who gamble are those who cannot understand the odds! As the saying goes, "The house always wins!"

11. Christians, God is going to hold us accountable for our stewardship or lack thereof (see 1 Cor. 4:2)!
- G. Gambling will inevitably hurt the Christian's influence.
  1. Christians especially need to realize the influence principle when it comes to gambling; even people in the world treat gambling as a vice.
  2. Most, if not all, states require a person to be eighteen years of age to purchase lottery tickets.
  3. Why is Las Vegas called "sin city?" Why do the commercials make such statements as, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas?" Because even the world gets that gambling is a "vice."
  4. Can you just imagine trying to talk to someone about the Lord while you are engaged in a game of Blackjack or poker with them (or right after you bought a lottery ticket)?
  5. Paul said, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13).
    - a. This verse is in the context of something not sinful of itself.
    - b. Note that Paul would not even do something lawful if it caused a problem, much less something that violates Christian principles (cf. James 1:27)!
  6. An old proverb states, "In a bet, there's a fool and a thief;" neither does my reputation any good!
  7. Christians seeking to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-14) will have nothing to do with gambling.

## II. OBJECTIONS MADE IN DEFENSE OF GAMBLING:

- A. "There's no verse in the Bible that says not to gamble."
  1. There is no verse that says "thou shalt not" do many things, but we readily recognize their sinfulness.
    - a. There is no verse that says not to use heroin, cocaine, or other recreational drugs.
    - b. There is no verse that says, "thou shalt not have an abortion."
    - c. Yet, these things are soundly and obviously condemned by basic Bible principles.
  2. Furthermore, there is a verse that deals with gambling, in principle, at least, Proverbs 13:11.
- B. "All of life is a risk."
  1. Gambling is not wrong because of the risk; this is not what makes gambling sinful.
  2. Something may be a sure-fire bet, but is still sinful if it involves gambling, for the reasons previously noted.



- C. "Gambling is no different than investing in the stock market."
1. This is simply not true; the stock market is not an artificial risk.
    - a. With the stock market, a person profits or loses based on the economic performance of a company.
    - b. The stock market does not involve seeking to gain at the direct loss of others.
  2. In economic gain, all profit is by the exchange of goods or services.
    - a. In the stock market, there's a legitimate exchange of goods and services.
    - b. With stocks, a person's money goes to work for him; he is profiting from letting someone else use his money, which is an honest economic principle (see Matt. 25:26-27).
- D. "Good comes from gambling."
1. This is a lie, and the devil loves this lie!
    - a. What about abortion? Based on the "good comes from it" mentality, we can use aborted babies for stem cell research, so abortion is a good thing.
    - b. What about alcohol? Based on the "good comes from it" mentality, it really helps me unwind after a stressful day, so drinking beverage alcohol is a good thing.
    - c. What about the lottery? Based on the "good comes from it" mentality, we can use lottery proceeds for schools, so the lottery is a good thing.
  2. Michael Fitzgerald, columnist for The Stockton Record (Stockton, California), wrote an article in 2005 titled "Casinos a Gamble for Society" (June 17, 2005, accessed via [www.recordnet.com](http://www.recordnet.com)).
    - a. In this article, he noted that the social problems created by gambling (addictive gambling, domestic abuse, suicide, crime, etc.) far outweigh any benefits to the community.
    - b. He further wrote, "The social problems created by gambling cost taxpayers \$3 for every \$1 of state tax revenue collected."
    - c. Mr. Fitzgerald wrote, "A Creighton University study found that counties with casinos soon have double the bankruptcy rates of counties without casinos."
  3. The Nevada Resort Association claims one-third of gaming dollars goes to education, but the Nevada Department of Education website reported only 15% of educational funding from "gaming taxes."
  4. The benefit argument is just another carefully-crafted lie of the devil.

5. Even if this argument were true, since when do two wrongs make a right?
- E. "I only spend a dollar a week; it's a cheap way to have fun and to have something to hope for."
  1. This is an especially sad statement to hear coming from a child of God.
  2. If one needs something to hope for, how about Matthew 6:20? "*Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*"
  3. Even one dollar a week is fifty-two dollars per year, and think how much a foreign missionary could do with that for God's work, not something that goes against so many Christian principles.
  4. What if we applied the "little bit" argument to other areas that go against Bible teaching?
    - a. What if someone says, "I only look at a little pornography, so what's the big deal?"
    - b. What if someone says, "I only take God's name in vain a little, so it's not a problem?"
    - c. What if one takes the attitude, I only cheat on my taxes a little, so it's no big deal?"
    - d. We understand each of these is, in fact, a big deal, whether done in moderation or to extremes, and so it is with gambling, too!

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The devil will come up with all kinds of lies, like, "It's good for education," "It's for the kids," and so on.
2. But, the bottom line is, anything that takes from the poor, wreaks havoc on the community, promotes covetousness and addiction, and hurts my influence as a Christian, is something I should want no part of as a child of God!
3. As Don Blackwell stated, "Any way you roll the dice, gambling is sinful!"

NOTE: The vast majority of this material comes from Don Blackwell's excellent study, "The Truth About Gambling," and is used with Don's permission. I highly recommend brother Blackwell's study, available from World Video Bible School or the Gospel Broadcasting Network, and I thank him for allowing me to use this material for this lecture.

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# CRISIS IN THE WORLD

*Jan Adams*

## DISCUSSION:

- I. In today's corrupt society, "the harvest truly is plentiful" (Matt. 9:37).
  - A. Co-habitation is widely accepted and justified by many.
  - B. Child molestation is increasing as well.
  - C. Divorce rate is 1 out of every 2 marriages.
  - D. Homosexual lifestyles are accepted and on the rise daily.
    1. 78% of homosexuals have STDs.
    2. The average life-span of homosexuals is 42 years.
    3. 9% live over age 65.
  - E. Abortion is prevalent and animals seem to come before unborn babies.
  - F. The attitude today among our young people is, "I believe people have the right to believe what they choose to believe about marriage."

## II. WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT THESE RELATIONSHIPS?

- A. Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; Eph. 5:5; Heb. 13:4; Jer. 1:5
- B. Jeremiah's writings could be taken from newspapers today.
  1. Jeremiah loved the stiff-necked people of Judah so much that he pleaded with them for more than 40 years. Jeremiah was not treated well by the people, but this did not stop his very compassionate plea to them.
  2. The people had forsaken and forgotten God. Jer. 2:13,32; 7:28; 16:12,17; 18:15
  3. They did not fear God. Jer. 5:1, 23-25
  4. The people spoke of godly things, but they did not mean it with their hearts. Jer. 17:5, 5:31
  5. They followed their own ways instead of God's ways. Jer. 6:10; 16:12
  6. They even tried to hide their sin, as if God would not see it. Jer. 16:17
  7. They had forgotten how to blush, and there was no shame. Jer. 6:14-16

## III. AS CHRISTIANS, ARE WE DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD?

- A. Money and possessions.
  1. We must admit that there often is little difference in the attitude of some Christians and the attitude of unbelievers toward possessions. It is not money which is "the root of all evil" but "the love of money" which comes between man and God. (I Tim. 6:10)

2. It is one's attitude toward "things" that makes the difference. Let us keep in mind that "one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).
- B. Christians are to be the Temple of God.
  1. Are we holy or are we defiling the temple of God? I Cor. 3:16-17
  2. Are we conforming to the world or are we being transformed by the renewing of our minds? Rom. 12:1-2
  3. Our Dress: Do we, as women, carefully observe "modest apparel?" I Tim. 2:9-10
  4. Are our men and women engaging in sexual activities outside of the marriage relationship? (Heb. 13:4)
  5. Are our young people engaging in pre-marital sex? Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:3
  6. Is divorce a problem in the church today?
- C. Our lifestyles.
  1. What kind of movies do we watch, music we listen to, and magazines we read? A growing problem in America is the addiction to pornography. It should be remembered that we are what we think about (Prov. 23:7).
  2. Alcohol and drugs? Whatever harms our bodies is sinful (I Cor. 6:19-20). Drunkenness is condemned in Scripture (Gal. 5:21), but so also are "drinking parties" (I Pet. 4:3).
  3. Our speech.
    - a. Let us remember that God told ancient Israel to refrain from taking "the name of the Lord your God in vain" (Exod. 20:7).
    - b. In the New Testament, Jesus warned his disciples against using an "idle word" (Matt. 12:36).
    - c. Paul said that the Christian should put "away lying" and should "let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth" (Eph. 4:25, 29).
    - d. Paul went on to say that "wrath" (explosion of rage), "clamor" (shouting in anger), "evil speaking" (speaking words of abuse), and "malice" (words designed to harm others), be put away (Eph. 4:31-32).
    - e. Let our speech be "seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:16) and use our words to encourage. Prov. 21:23; 15:23; 16:24
- D. Why is it important for Christians to guard against looking like the world? How does this hinder our ability to spread the Gospel?
  1. Matt. 23:13-30, "Woes" to the Scribes and Pharisees.
  2. John 17:14-15, Jesus prayed for his disciples that they would be "one" and show love one to another. They were to be "in" the world, but not to be "of" this world.

3. Let us determine that worldliness must not be tolerated in our lives or in the life of the church.

#### IV. OUR INFLUENCE ON THE WORLD.

- A. Jeremiah is a wonderful example of how one prophet influenced an entire nation. We too must strive to have a godly influence on those we come in contact with.
- B. We must remind ourselves that saving souls is our #1 priority. We cannot give up. Use technology to glorify God.
- C. Matt. 5:13-16, "Ye are the salt of the earth...light of the world. ... Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."
- D. Phil. 2:14-15, "Do all things without murmuring and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

#### V. EXAMPLES FROM GOD'S WORD.

- A. EUNICE: Taught and trained her children according to God's Word. 2 Tim. 1:5
- B. PRISCILLA: Woman in the Mission Field. Acts 18:1-4, 18-21
- C. SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE WELL: John 4, Shared her good news with others
- D. DORCAS: Acts 9:36-42, a woman "full of good works and charitable deeds"
- E. LYDIA: Woman of Hospitality. Acts 16:11-40
- F. MARY MAGDALENE: Anointed Jesus' Feet. A costly act of service. Luke 7:36-50

#### VI. HOW CHRISTIAN WOMEN CAN BE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE TODAY.

- A. Let us never forget that our purpose in life is to glorify God whether in the home, church or world. In the world we can be an example of Christian service by diligence, faithfulness, joy and unselfish love.
  - B. Christianity can never make an impact on the world until the world sees each of us acting like a Christian. Christian women, especially have a great potential for leading others to Christ through their lives and examples.
  - C. Let our lights shine to God's glory before people who might otherwise not come in contact with Christian people, but we must guard ourselves to practice what we profess. Col. 4:5-6
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# CRISIS IN THE WORLD: CRIME

*Joel Wheeler*

1. One may hear the old saying "Crime doesn't pay" yet it is one of the biggest businesses in the world today.
2. In our society, "crime" takes only a moment but it seems that "justice" takes an eternity.
3. We cannot escape the news of crimes being committed. It is reported on the entertainment networks, newspapers, radio, and internet.
4. In the days of Noah, there was also the onslaught of crime.
  - a. Gen. 6:5, "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
  - b. God did not create a world of crime; it was brought in by sin. (Gen. 1:31; 3:ff)
5. Crime is a crisis in our society today because it is global.
  - a. Crime is found in every corner of the world from so called "civilized" societies to third world countries.
  - b. Because of sin, crime is universal.
  - c. Crime has been categorized by law enforcement. There are Violent Crimes, Organized Crime, Crimes Against Children, Hate Crimes.
6. How does crime affect individuals, families, communities, nations?
  - a. Crime is not based on poverty. Five billion dollars have been spent since 1967 on the 'War on Poverty' and yet crime rates have escalated in the US.
  - b. A person's peer group strongly influences a decision to commit crime.
  - c. Youth gangs were prevalent in the days of Solomon.
  - d. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path" (Prov. 1:10-15).

## DISCUSSION:

### I. HOW IS CRIME DEFINED?

#### A. The Various Definitions of Crime.

1. An action or an instance of negligence that is deemed injurious to the public welfare or morals or to the interests of the state and that is legally prohibited.

[www.dictionary.reference.com](http://www.dictionary.reference.com)

2. According to Ronald Blackburn who studies the psychology of criminal behavior defines crime as: Offences against the community and behavior that is disapproved of by the society which defines it.
  3. The problem is that some crimes are not disapproved by society. (i.e. traffic violations, speeding, etc.)
  4. If there is no law on record for an act that was done, then no crime has been committed according to Blackburn.
  5. Although a certain act, such as beating a slave (1700s), it still violates God's laws of morality.
- B. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Programs, Violent Crime is composed of four offenses.
1. *Murder and non-negligent manslaughter* — the willful act of taking another person's life.
  2. *Forcible rape* — the violent act of sexual assault. (See FBI.org for exact definition)
  3. *Robbery* — taking or the attempt of taking the value from another person by force. (See FBI.org for exact definition)
  4. *Aggravated assault* — unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury.
- C. There are many "non-violent" crimes.
1. According to Legalmatch.com: Non-violent crimes are those crimes that do not involve the use of any force or injury to another person. The seriousness of a non-violent crime is usually measured in terms of economic damage or loss to the victim.
  2. Examples of non-violent crimes are: Bribery, Counterfeiting, Mail and Wire Fraud, Embezzlement, Money Laundering, Prostitution, Drugs and Obstruction of Justice, just to name a few.
- D. Crime as the Bible defines it: a transgression against the public right; serious offence against the law, a base weakness or iniquity, all of which are regarded by the Bible against God, man or both. (Bible History, ISBE).
- E. The Hebrew words for crimes are:
1. *Judgments (mish-pawt)*: "...for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence" (Ezek. 7:23).
  2. *Heinous crime (zam-maw)*: "For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges" (Job 31:11).
  3. *A fault (aw-shawm)*: "What is this thou hast done unto us? ...and thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us" (Gen. 26:10).

F. The Greek words for crimes are:

1. *Cause (aitia)*: "For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him" (Acts 25:27, ASV).
2. *Indictment (egklema)*: "...which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him" (Acts 25:16).
3. *Fault or case (aitia)*: "...Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him" (John 19:4).

## II. HOW ARE WE TO DEAL WITH CRIME?

- A. God has ordained government to keep order in society.
  1. Romans 13:1-5, Paul instructs Christians with their relationship to government.
  2. Verse 1: Christians are to be submissive to government. God has given government the power to execute punishment of the law.
  3. Verse 2: If one resists government, then he resists God because He has ordained or appointed government to carry out justice.
  4. Verse 3: Rulers punish evil doers, not law abiding citizens. There is no need to fear government if we abide by the law.
  5. Verse 4: Rulers and government serve God to keep order and peace, and punish those that commit crimes. Punishment is a deterrent to do evil.
- B. The Law of Moses demanded the punishment fit the crime.
  1. "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exod. 21:24-25).
  2. The punishment was not greater than the crime and everyone received the same punishment for like crimes.
  3. Under the Law of Moses, no individual received a lighter punishment because of his wealth or social status.
  4. There was no "plea bargaining" under the Law of Moses.
  5. The fear of punishment kept criminal behavior in check.
  6. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:1-3).
- C. Crimes punishable by death under the Law of Moses.
  1. Murder or smite with deadly intent. Lev. 21:12,15
  2. Adultery. Lev. 20:10, both man and woman put to death.



3. Bestiality. Lev. 22:19, both person and beast put to death.
4. Stealing another person and selling them. Lev. 21:16
5. Witchcraft and Sorcery. Lev. 20:27
6. False prophet. Deut. 13:5
7. Human sacrifice. Deu. 18:10ff

### III. HOW WILL GOD DEAL WITH CRIMES?

- A. Jerusalem paid severely for their part in crucifying the Son of God.
  1. Matt. 24:27, Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem as prophesied by Daniel. (Dan. 9:27)
  2. God rendered judgment upon Jewish leaders and Judaism.
- B. God punished several in the New Testament for their crimes against Him.
  1. Acts 5:1-10, Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for their crime against God. They lied.
  2. Acts 12:20-23, Herod killed James the apostle and had set himself up as a god. God smote him with maggots.
- C. The Day of Judgment will be final punishment on crime.
  1. Solomon wrote, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14).
  2. No crime will escape God's wrath.
  3. Paul wrote, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).
  4. The Lord will execute judgment. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
  5. There is a clear picture of the fate of those who commit crimes. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).
  6. The end of time will come and the earth will have served its purpose. (2 Peter 3:10-12)

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We live in a world of sickness, sorrow and sin. Crime happens every day around us.
2. We must continue to be faithful and wait upon God.
3. He will not forget those who were faithful unto death (Rev.2:10).

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## CRISIS: TRIALS OF LIFE

*Tom House*

James 1:2-4

1. The circumstances men face are as many as the number of men.
2. While the type of trials vary, the degree of severity will likewise vary.
  - a. Some will face "light afflictions" (2 Cor. 4:17), others will face "heavy" temptations. (1 Peter 1:6)
  - b. Some trials will come in response to our own misdeeds, which, in fact, may be warranted.
  - c. Other trials may come as a result of our effort to live and promote righteousness.
  - d. Some trials will occur simply because of life's uncertainties in addition to the frailties of human existence, (sickness, accident, etc.).
3. Indeed, the true character of an individual will clearly be seen in the approach one takes in facing the trials.
4. The theme of this study concerns "Facing Crisis," and since it is the case that all face crisis or will face some type of trial, this lesson is designed to provide insights to help in overcoming trials, and to be strengthened when enduring the trials.

**DISCUSSION:****I. DEFINING THE TERMS.****A. Trial(s)**

1. *purosos* — ignition (calamity as a test), burning. (1 Peter 4:12)

2. *dokimion*: – a testing, the trying; to determine trustworthiness. (1 Peter 1:7)
3. *peira* – (the idea of piercing); to assail. (Heb. 11:36)
4. *dokitme* – the testing of trustiness by experience. (Rom. 5:4)
- B. Afflictions – *thilipsis* – anguish, burdened, persecution, trouble. (Rom. 5:3; 2 Cor. 8:2)
- C. Temptations – *peirasmos* – a putting to proof (by experiment (of good), experience (of evil), solicitation, discipline or provocation); by implication – adversity. (1 Peter 1:6; James 1:2; Acts 20:19)
- D. Patience – *hupomone* – cheerful or hopeful endurance, constancy.

## II. THE SIMPLE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRIALS.

- A. Without doubt, trials will play havoc with one's emotional state.
- B. Depending on the type of trial, it can be expected to cause:
  1. Anger —
    - a. Be mindful, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with anger.
    - b. We are urged to be "angry and sin not." (Eph. 4:26)
    - c. Also, Jesus warned that if one "is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment" (Matt. 5:22); signifying that disciplined anger "with cause" is not condemned.
  2. Depression —
    - a. Cain's trial was disappointment; so note his reaction. (Gen. 4:5-6)
    - b. Some of the trials David faced became the impetus for bouts of depression.
      - 1) The sickness of the infant of Bathsheba. (2 Sam. 12:15-17)
      - 2) The death of his son Absalom. (2 Sam. 19:1-8)
    - c. The guilt of betraying the Lord, led Judas to commit suicide. (Matt. 27)
- C. These and other emotions can be debilitating to the physical body as well as the spiritual.
  1. The inflammation of depression or anxiety can cause loss of appetite and loss of sleep; all of which exert a tremendous stress on the body, causing significant problems with the heart and other primary functions (heart attack and stroke).
  2. The mental stress can lead to loss of self-discipline which leads to other sins.

D. Hence, when there are those in such conditions, exhortation is one tool to be employed to perhaps help the afflicted to cope with the trial.

1. The Lord exhorted Cain. (Gen. 4:6-7)
2. Joab exhorted David. (2 Sam. 19:5-7)
3. James exhorted Christians when they were facing trials. (James 1:2-3; 5:7-11)

### III. EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO FACED SIGNIFICANT TRIALS.

#### A. Job (Job 1-2)

1. He lost his wealth.
2. He lost his children.
3. He lost his health.
4. His wife did not provide positive exhortation. (Job 2:9)
5. His friends offered no comfort. (Job 2:11-13; 4-5; note 4:7-8, and 16:4-5)
6. But through it all, Job did not sin. (Job 1:22; 2:10)
7. God would bless Job twice-over what he had lost. (Job 42:10,12)

#### B. Joseph. (Gen. 37-41)

1. He was treated with treachery by his brothers.
2. He is sold in slavery.
3. He is falsely accused and imprisoned.
4. He remains true to God and is blessed.

#### C. Jesus. (Matt. 26-27)

1. Who suffered greater affliction than did the Lord?
2. He was betrayed, falsely accused, and arrested. (Matt. 26:47ff)
  - a. Note Peter's reaction at the time of the Lord's arrest. (Matt. 26:51)
  - b. Note the Lord's response. (Matt. 26:52-53, esp. v.53)
3. He was falsely convicted and condemned to death.
4. Then, when on the cross, He would pray for His antagonists. (Luke 23:34)
5. After His death, burial, and resurrection, there were those who were distressed over the events; whom Jesus would exhort. (Luke 24:13-35)

### IV. RULES OF EXHORTATION IN DEALING WITH TRIALS.

- A. First, one must recognize that there are certain burdens we must bear ourselves. (Gal. 6:5)
- B. Secondly, we must understand that others have burdens with which we may assist. (Gal. 6:2)
- C. Thirdly, there are cares that neither ourselves nor anyone else can bear; hence, they are taken to God. (1 Peter 5:7; Psa. 55:22; Phil 4:6)

- D. The passage in Philippians 4 is the key to understanding the matter; note the context and the point of the passage.
1. v.4 Not only should we rejoice when everything is going well, but also when we face the adversities.
  2. Note the examples:
    - a. Peter and John were beaten; yet they rejoiced. (Acts 5:41)
    - b. Previously, Peter had not been so strong. (Matt. 14)
      - 1) He became distracted by the sea, and began to sink. (v.30)
      - 2) The Lord would chastise Peter for being of "little faith." (v.31)
    - c. Note Paul's trust in God when a situation he faced seemed hopeless. (Acts 27:9-44, note esp. vs.20-25)
    - d. In writing to the Corinthian brethren (2 Cor. 1), he refers to the occasion when in Ephesus, the mob of Diana worshipers created such a tense situation, that he thought he would be killed. (2 Cor. 1:8-9; the account found in Acts 19)
  3. Phil. 4:5, the text reveals why there is eternal optimism in the Christian's disposition; "the Lord is at hand," i.e. He is always near. (Psa. 145:18)
  4. Verse 6 contains a two-fold rule for overcoming the anxieties we face:
    - a. Go to God in prayer and supplication; i.e. worshipful petitions.
    - b. Express first, thanksgiving for the blessings we have.
    - c. By following this pattern, one will begin to realize that the apprehensions we have about matters will usually begin to dissolve. (Psa. 68:19)
  5. Then realize that there are things over which we have no control. (Matt. 6:25-34)
    - a. Jesus taught that one is not to attach himself to the things of the earth.
    - b. He explains in Matt. 6, that the Father's greatest gift to us physically is life; and consequently, He will provide what is necessary to sustain that life.
    - c. To illustrate the folly of anxiety, Jesus refers to certain examples in the natural realm:
      - 1) The birds do not express worry about food and shelter, yet they are provided.
      - 2) Likewise, the flowers do not fret about how they look, yet consider their array.
    - d. The point Jesus makes is, since we are of more value than these things, it is unreasonable that we should be anxious when they are not! In fact, it illustrates a lack of faith.

- e. No less than three times in this context, Jesus plainly condemns anxiety. (Matt. 6:25,31,34, the KJV word "thought" is translated as "anxious" in the ASV.).
  - 1) In this section, He makes it clear regarding those things over which we have no control; all the worry in the world will not change the circumstance. (v.27)
  - 2) It will not be until one comes to this resolution that one will find inner peace. (Phil 4:7)
  - 3) The "peace of God" will "keep" one's heart; meaning that God's peace will form a fortress around the heart, not allowing it to be penetrated by the distractions of evil; either real or presumed.
  - 4) Such defines the concept of trust.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Don't misunderstand; to trust in God is not to suggest that we play no role in overcoming the burdens we face.
2. If the matter can be repaired; and we can repair it, then by all means, do it!
3. Sitting around and worrying about the lack of provisions will not provide them; we must do what is necessary to obtain them. (1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Cor. 9:8)
4. Pining away over the loss of someone or something will not reclaim the loss.
5. We prove our trust in God by meeting the responsibilities He has placed on us. (Matt. 7:7; Prov. 3:5-6)

## CRISIS IN THE WORLD: INDIFFERENCE

*Victor M. Eskew*

1. Bible events:
  - a. In the days of David, Goliath challenged the armies of Israel daily on the field of battle, putting them to shame (I Sam. 17:4-10).
  - b. In the days of Nehemiah, the walls of the city of Jericho laid in waste (Neh. 1:1-3).
  - c. In the days of Haggai and Zechariah, the remnant who had returned to Jerusalem had yet to complete the building of the temple (Hag. 1:1-4).
  - d. The church at Corinth had failed to withdraw from the fornicator that was in their midst (I Cor. 5:1-2).
2. What was the cause of the inactivity in days gone by? One clear answer is indifference.

3. Indifference is defined as: Little or no concern, Lack of feeling or interest, Mediocre quality.
4. Indifference has always plagued society and God's people. It is a blight upon our nation and the Lord's church, even in our present time.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. THE DISEASE OF INDIFFERENCE.

#### A. Indifference to the truth.

1. Prov. 23:23, *"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."*
2. Evidence of indifference to the truth.
  - a. In some places, the truth is not preached at all. In other places, only part of the truth is set forth.
  - b. Preachers do not try to fill their sermons with truth.
  - c. Congregations are pleased with stories, positive thinking, pop-psychology, current events, skits, and dramatic performances instead of Bible-based sermons.

#### B. Indifference to worship.

1. Psalm 29:2, *"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."*
2. Evidences of indifference to worship.
  - a. Many brethren desire shorter worship services.
  - b. In most churches, attendance at the Sunday evening service is fewer than for the morning services.
  - c. Worship has been changed in some congregations into a concert or circus in order to please man.
  - d. Some congregations have cutout Sunday evening services altogether.

#### C. Indifference to immorality.

1. I Thess. 4:7, *"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."*
2. Evidences of indifference to immorality.
  - a. Almost all of us tolerate immorality on TV, in the movies, and in music.
  - b. Drinking, gambling, smoking, and sex outside of marriage is found in most congregations.
  - c. Adultery is tolerated in many churches.
  - d. Our speech and dress often mimic that of the world.

#### D. Indifference to the local congregation.

1. God ordained the local church and desires for elders to be over every flock (Acts 20:28; See Acts 14:23 and I Peter 5:1-3). *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

2. Evidences of indifference to the local congregation.
  - a. It is difficult to fill positions of work in the local church (i.e., teachers).
  - b. Works of the church are not always supported by members (i.e., Gospel meetings).
  - c. Many churches are suffering financially because members do not give liberally.
- E. Areas of indifference: service, to giving, church discipline, to the lost, to the erring, to benevolence, to the brotherhood.

## II. THE CAUSES OF INDIFFERENCE.

- A. When we think we cannot make a difference.
  1. This is one of the reasons that we do not excel in soul-winning. We do not think we can make a difference. Thus, we have become indifferent. Even lessons on the subject do not spur us to greater action.
  2. Perhaps we don't understand what difference we make.
    - a. The increase is not in our hands.
    - b. We are only to plant and water.  
Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."  
I Cor. 3:6, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."
- B. When those around us are indifferent.
  1. When others seem not to care that spirit of indifference seems to infect us. We reason: "If they aren't concerned, why should I be?"
  2. NOTE: Indifference keeps us from doing the will of God. Therefore, indifference is sin. The Bible warns us about the permeating effects of sin (I Cor. 5:6). "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"
- C. When changing things, it will take a lot of focused effort.
  1. Most of us like quick, easy, simple fixes to problems. If something involves a lot of work, we quit and become indifferent.
  2. To be a teacher takes a lot of time and energy.
    - a. Two points:
      - 1) The church needs good teachers.
      - 2) The time should come in every Christian's life that he/she becomes a teacher (Heb. 5:12).
    - b. Many churches cannot find enough teachers. Members seem to be very indifferent about it.
  3. The Bible tells us to put forth effort. Heb. 4:11, "*Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*"



- D. When we grow tired.
  - 1. Many Christians do exert themselves. Over time, however, they grow weary.
  - 2. This tired feeling causes them to reason in unsound ways, especially if others are not laboring. "Why bother?"
  - 3. II Thess. 3:13; Gal. 6:9, "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing."
- E. When we, or those close to us, are in sin.
  - 1. Sin stifles. Sin halts progress. It makes us indifferent to spiritual things.
  - 2. Thus, the Bible exhorts us to flee from sin in its early stages. When sin blossoms, it has too many terrible consequences. James 1:15, "Then lust when it hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
- F. When there is no success.
  - 1. We long for fruit, for success, and for positive results. When they do not come, we can become indifferent.
  - 2. There have been many who did not have positive results: Noah, The prophets, Jesus Christ.
  - 3. By faith, we persist in our efforts. Heb. 10:38, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

### III. THE CURE FOR INDIFFERENCE.

- A. Every part of the cure for indifference involves a choice of man's will.
  - 1. We must make the first move.
  - 2. God can and will assist us when we access the powers that He has left us.
- B. Elements of the cure:
  - 1. Develop a strong belief that your Christianity matters. David believed that fighting Goliath mattered. I Sam. 17:29, "And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"
  - 2. We must commit ourselves to the cause. David did. I Sam. 17:32, "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."
  - 3. We must develop a love for God.
    - a. Love can constrain us (II Cor. 5:14).
    - b. For our love to increase, we must understand the love of God. I John 4:19, "We love him, because he first loved us."
  - 4. We must increase our knowledge of God's Word. The Word of God can put life into an individual. Psa. 119:107,

"I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word."

5. We must develop a respect for God. Prov. 14:26-27, "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."
6. We must develop vision, that is, seeing the end of this life. Heb. 11:16, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
7. Pray: Pray that God will remove all the obstacles that will keep you from serving Him with fervor. Matt. 21:22, "And all things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Indifference can destroy both individuals and churches.
2. When it begins to affect us, we must recognize it as quickly as possible.
3. We must seek the cures. Remember, it will take an act of will on your part to overcome this disease (Prov. 23:7).
4. David asked: "Is there not a cause?" If the answer to this question is, "Yes," how can we be indifferent?

## CRISIS IN THE HOME: CHILDREN

*Tom W Snyder*

1. The parable of the good Samaritan is of interest to us. Why did both the priest and the Levite look, but not act, upon the hurt man? Did they not see the crisis? Did they not see the fatal outcome of doing nothing?
2. We don't know what prompted their non-activity. Maybe they didn't care, maybe they were too busy, maybe a lot of things.
3. While this deals with the question, "Who is my neighbor?", could the principles be applied to our topic at hand and suggest, "Who is my child?" Many a child today is in crisis both physically and especially spiritually, and parents are being more like the priest and the Levite.
4. We need to be as the Good Samaritan by learning how to bring up children and having the determination to follow through.
5. The crisis of the hurt man on the road could be clearly seen. If our children were bleeding or not breathing, we would admit crisis and most would respond.

6. What of that which is unseeable — the spiritual? This is seen by faith, hence our lesson: children in crisis.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. WHAT IS A CRISIS.**

- A. Component parts of a crisis: Time, Place, Event, Impending danger, Outcome, Causation.
- B. Crisis implies urgency. Jude 3; Titus 1:11; Gal. 2:4-5,11-14
- C. Crises do not come in a one-size-fits-all. James 1:9-10

#### **II. POTENTIAL CRISES PERTAINING TO CHILDREN AND THE HOME.**

##### **A. Abortion:**

- 1. Total abortions in the U.S. 1973-2011 — 54½ million+.
  - a. 234 abortions per 1,000 live births (according to the Centers for Disease Control).
  - b. Abortions per year: 1.2 million.
  - c. Abortions per day: 3,288.
  - d. Abortions per hour: 137.
  - e. 9 abortions every 4 minutes.
  - f. 1 abortion every 26 seconds.

(Taken from American Life League, Inc.)

- 2. These figures represent a serious life-threatening crisis for children:

- a. It is one that children have nothing to do with: it is not a marble about to be swallowed; it's not even a potentially fatal disease.
- b. It is totally caused by mother (or parents) and her choice — not as in the days of Moses or Jesus where the state killed the children, nor modern China.
- c. Thankfully, the danger is not from all mothers:
  - 1) Some mothers respect life and they don't use the worthless argument that a child is non-life or non-human.
  - 2) Some mothers respect God and His law of not being a murderer.
  - 3) Some mothers are lovers of children that they cannot see. Someone said that if expecting mothers only had a window into the womb there would be fewer abortions.
  - 4) Christians above all people have removed this crisis from the life of a child.

##### **B. Fornication:**

- 1. Parents involved in fornication bring a manner of crisis into the life of a child as part of the innocence and joy of childhood is removed.
- 2. Some potential crises include:

- a. Multiple parents: yours, mine, and ours.
  - b. Divorce with all its heartaches.
  - c. Children being reared by grandparents.
  - d. Single parents.
  - e. Kids having kids.
  - f. All this increases the potential for:
    - 1) Abortions
    - 2) Physical abuse
    - 3) Emotional abuse
    - 4) Sexual abuse
    - 5) Confusion of the sexes. Children who do not know their left hands from their right claiming to be homosexual. This doesn't come from children, it comes from adults perverting children.
    - 6) Lack of spiritual upbringing.
- C. Parents who do not love one another:
- 1. Children do not learn the lessons of love.
  - 2. They are imprinted with what the home was like and take it with them to adulthood, sometimes rejecting marriage or despising fathers (or mothers, depending on their perception of fault).
  - 3. They can be scarred for life when parents demonstrate hate.
  - 4. Parents, on the other hand, can bless their children by father and mother loving one another.
  - 5. Again, parents produce or eliminate crises in the lives of their children.
- D. Parents who do not love God. Without this there will be no:
- 1. Training up in the Lord, Prov. 22:6.
  - 2. Nurture and admonishment of God, but wrath, Eph 6:1.
  - 3. Lives of the saints to emulate since they are forsaking the Lord, Heb. 10:24-25.
  - 4. Bible school, no worship, no VBS, no meetings.
  - 5. It's pathetic that so many will express the notion, "God works in mysterious ways," but ignore the revealed ways we know God works. God has given us ways to protect our children, but these are often neglected.
- E. Parents obsessed with the worldly things:
- 1. Work is noble, but when children observe their parents placing work over the spiritual (i.e. Bible school, Gospel meetings, work days, etc.), what have they taught the children?
  - 2. Sports obsessed. Most schools will not allow the child to play sports if they do not keep their grades up. Parents need to observe this same principle as it pertains to Bible classes and other spiritual things. If teens need to sleep during "church", either check their blood sugar or

their bedtimes. It is up to parents to not allow Saturday to take away from the spiritual activities of Sunday.

F. Parents that spoil the child:

1. Children, in order to avoid crises in their lives, need to understand the word "no".
2. They need to understand there are unpleasant things in life and how to deal with them.
3. They need supervision:
  - a. Where they may go, where they may not go.
  - b. What they may do, what they may not do.
  - c. Who their friends are.

4. THE CHILD'S LIFE IS THE PARENTS' BUSINESS.

5. Some needed supervision includes: TV, web, movies, social media (Face Book).
  6. The web and social media offer interaction with the world, and, sadly, the potential of danger is an ever-present reality. They also can form habits that can last a lifetime, such as gossip and rumor spreading.
- G. Public schools create crises in the lives of children:
1. Peers they learn to speak and live like.
  2. Some teachers.
  3. Evolution.
  4. Humanism.
  5. These come into conflict with godly teaching and with truth. When they have peers and teachers they like and respect who teach a different doctrine than that of parents and the church, this indeed is a crisis in their lives. Whom shall they believe?

### III. PARENTS ARE IN CRISIS PREVENTION.

- A. Children's lives start with one female and one male. These are intended to be mother and father.
- B. Children come into this world helpless: physically and emotionally.
- C. The crises they face are not of their own doing until later in life:
  1. Parents protect the child from things in the house and outside the house.
  2. Parents protect the child from the real "monsters" and from things that "go bump in the night" and seem to live under the bed and in the closet.
  3. While this lesson might seem to be judgmental of parents, it is with good reason. If we are going to bring children into the world, God holds us as parents accountable for their upbringing and protection from the many crises that would harm them.

4. As Reuben, who tried to protect his brother Joseph, said to his brothers who sought to do him harm: Do not sin against the child.
5. He then indited them, saying: ye would not hear?
6. He also gave the results: therefore, behold, also his blood is required.
7. If this is said of brothers, what of parents who sin against the child?

#### CONCLUSION:

1. In Romans 1:32-37, Paul is showing the depraved world of the Gentiles. Part of that sin is the unnatural life of homosexuality. He then branches out to other wickedness, among which are those who have "unnatural affection."
2. There are things that can interrupt the natural progression of parenthood (sickness, accident, war) but, barring such, there is a God-given order for parents to love and care for their children.
3. This is sometimes interrupted by things such as materialism, feminism, and humanism which foster unnatural affections.
4. It is not the community that rears the child, not even the grandparents; it is mommy and daddy's job.
5. Childhood is short, eternity is long. Let us, as parents, do what we can do to make sure our children go to heaven.

## CRISIS IN THE HOME: FATHER/HUSBAND

*Robert R. Taylor, Jr.*

1. Families en masse today face one crisis after another and they come with rapidity.
2. Husbands and fathers will either be a part of each danger or problem faced or an answer to each crisis and danger.
3. Saul, in the Old Testament, was an answer to the witchcraft problem when he cut them off, but became a part of the problem when he sought out the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28).
4. Either a "part of the problem" or a "part of the answer" will be the approach of this lesson.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### I. HUSBAND IS A PART OF THE PROBLEM:

- A. When he refuses to show himself a man (Gen. 1-2).
- B. When he refuses to be the head of the wife and of the home (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:22ff; Col. 3:18).
- C. When he fails to love his wife (Eph. 5:25-29).

- D. When he fails to provide for her and later their children (1 Tim. 5:8).
- E. When he fails to render due benevolence to her (1 Cor. 7:3-5).
- F. When he fails to be kind to her (Eph. 4:32).
- G. When he fails to give honor to her as the weaker vessel (1 Peter 3:7).
- H. When he violates marital vows (cf. Eccl. 5:4-5).
- I. When he decides to put an end to their marriage (Matt. 19:6).

## II. HUSBAND IS A PART OF THE ANSWER:

- A. When he shows himself to be a man of sobriety, righteousness and godliness (Titus 2:11-12).
- B. When he heads the home in a godly framework (Eph. 5:23).
- C. When he loves his wife as Christ loves His Bride (the church) and as he loves his own body (Eph. 5:25-29).
- D. When he provides what wife and family need (1 Tim. 5:8).
- E. When he renders due benevolence to her in sexual matters (1 Cor. 7:3-5).
- F. When he is kind, considerate and practices much in the way of TLC (Eph. 4:32; 1 Peter 3:7-8).
- G. When he truly honors his wife (1 Peter 3:7).
- H. When he is fully faithful to his marital vows.
- I. When he does his part to make marriage happy and permanent (Matt. 19:3ff; Heb. 13:4).

## III. LET US NOTE SOME HUSBANDS IN PROFILE.

- A. The kind of husbands we DO NOT need:
  - 1. Like the churlish Nabal in 1 Samuel 25.
  - 2. Like Ahasuerus toward the modest Vashti in Esther 1.
  - 3. Like those in Malachi 2 who were putting away unwanted wives.
  - 4. Like those in Matthew 19 who favored putting away wives for every cause.
  - 5. Like Herod Antipas who stole his brother's wife — Herodias (Matt. 14; Mark 6).
  - 6. Like Felix who stole Drusilla from her husband (Acts 24).
- B. The kind of husbands we DO need:
  - 1. As Adam was toward Eve (Gen. 2:22-24).
  - 2. As Abraham was to Sarah but not when he asked that she lie for him or took Hagar for a secondary wife (Gen. 12, 20, 16).
  - 3. As Jacob was toward Rachel (Gen. 29:18-20).
  - 4. As Boaz was to Ruth (Ruth 3-4).
  - 5. As Elkanah was to Hannah who said he was better to her than ten sons could be (1 Sam. 1:8).
  - 6. As Zacharias was to Elisabeth (Luke 1).

7. As Aquila was to Priscilla (Acts 18; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16; 2 Tim. 4:19).

#### IV. FATHERS ARE A PART OF THE PROBLEM:

- A. When they fail to love God supremely (Matt. 22:37).
- B. When they are faithless as husbands.
  1. Fathers die in the hearts of children when it is discovered that they practice divided love — have outside interests.
  2. The hero status is lost in a hurry in such ungodly conduct.
- C. When they fail to love wife and children and provide for them (1 Tim. 5:8).
- D. When they fail to be strong in example and faithful in what they teach their children (Gen. 18:19).
- E. When they fail to be strong spiritual leaders in the family framework.
- F. When they fail to be in the lead. At the funeral of Jim Powell of Mount Juliet, Tennessee, which I helped with in the 1950s, one of his sons said, "Dad would always say, 'Come on boys.' Whether we were going to the field or to church services. He was always in the lead."
- G. When they give little or no time to the family.
- H. When they show little or no interest in heaven as the goal for the family (Heb. 11:10ff).
- I. When they are abusive to wife and children.

#### V. FATHERS ARE A PART OF THE ANSWER:

- A. When they love wife and children.
- B. When they provide well for them.
- C. When they live truth and teach truth in that order (Ezra 7:10; Acts 1:1).
- D. When they take quality time for their families.
- E. When they are strong spiritual leaders in the home.
- F. When they are in front. A little boy walking in the snow behind his Dad said, "Daddy, don't take such long steps." "Why?" said the Dad. The lad said, "Because I'm walking in your steps."
- G. When discipline and tough love are practiced with consistency.

#### VI. LET US NOTE SOME FATHERS IN PROFILE.

- A. The kind of fathers we DO NOT need:
  1. Like Lot who pitched his tent toward Sodom and soon was a citizen in that sinful city (Gen. 13:19).
  2. Like Achan was — a man of theft (Josh. 6)



3. Like Eli was to his immoral and irreverent sons (1 Sam 1).
  4. Like Jeroboam was to Nadab (1 Kings 12).
  5. Like Ahab was to Athaliah.
  6. Like Herod the Great was to his family.
  - B. The kind of fathers we DO need:
    1. Like Enoch who walked with God before his children (Gen. 5:21-24; Heb. 11:5).
    2. Like Noah who helped save his family of wife, sons and daughters-in law (Gen. 6-7).
    3. Like Abraham (Gen. 18:19).
    4. Like Joshua (Josh. 24:15).
    5. Like Jonadab and his non-drinking descendants (Jer.35).
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## **CRISIS IN THE HOME: WIFE/MOTHER**

*Elliott Glasgow*

1. There are many movements in the world today which contend that the twenty-first century woman has lost her status as an individual.
  - a. They assert that her role as a wife and mother does not let her develop and enrich her own life.
  - b. These movements urge women to reject the role set out by God in the beginning.
  - c. "The women who have joined these movements think of themselves as oppressed people."
  - d. They want women to get out into the world and compete with men rather than staying home and seeing after the needs of their families.
    - 1) This is not to say that a woman should never work in the business world.
    - 2) Many times it is necessary for the woman to help in the financial matters.
  - e. But, when it is at all possible, the woman's place is in the home. "Almost 60% of the female labor force consists of married women whose husbands are present in the home.
  - f. And, of these women, over half have children under 18 years of age."
  - g. Many of the so-called "Liberation groups" feel that women have lived long enough under man's domination.
  - h. Women, they say, should have no dependency on men. One leader of this movement says, "Woman has been subjected and enslaved by man — confined to child bearing, keeping

- house, sleeping with her husband . . . enhancing his life to the complete exclusion of her rights and privileges as a person.”
- i. Betty Friedan, one of the originators of this movement says, “Women are the only and husbands’ shirts white as snow.” Lolita sex objects or morons whose greatest quest in life is to have their kitchen sinks.
  2. These women are failing to reach what really brings true happiness and fulfillment to a woman.
    - a. They are seeking to bring happiness only to themselves rather than working together with their husbands and children for happiness.
    - b. “When our society tries to merge the two sexes into one and fails to recognize their basic differences and roles, serious consequences have occurred.”
  3. What we see happening in homes today, and ever changing roles of wives and mothers are not new. Let’s take a brief look into some homes in Old Testament times and see how women went against God’s order and the end result.

### DISCUSSION:

- I. **FROM POTIPHAR’S WIFE (Gen. 39:6-7) WE LEARN OF “DESIRE RUNNING WILD.”**
  - A. Wrong desire can result from a lack of fulfillment.
    1. Prosperity doesn’t lead to internal fulfillment.
    2. Lack of fulfillment can make us vulnerable to temptation.
    3. That is why marital fulfillment is so important. (1Cor. 7:5)
  - B. Wrong desires left unchecked are progressive. (Gen. 39:10)
    1. Entertaining our wrong desires makes them more intense.
    2. Entertaining our wrong desires will make us feel like slaves. (Rom. 6:16-17)
  - C. Wrong desires left to progress, damage others.
    1. Wrong desires never care about the other person.
    2. Wrong desires result in wounding others.
- II. **FROM DELILAH (Judges 16) WE LEARN OF BETRAYING LOVE FOR MONEY.**
  - A. Chasing the promise of wealth can lure us down the path of betrayal. (Judges 16:4-5)
    1. Wealth can cause us to betray our values.
    2. Wealth can cause us to betray our relationships
  - B. Guilt is a destructive tool for manipulating relationships.
    1. Attempting to control a person with guilt will destroy a relationship.

2. Attempting to unconditionally love someone transforms the relationship. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)
- C. Our lives can be used to bring the downfall or success of others.
  1. Our lives can hinder the success of others.
  2. Our lives can propel others towards success.

### **III. FROM PENINNAH (1 Sam. 1) WE LEARN HOW WE CAN BE INFLUENCED BY OUR INSECURITIES.**

- A. Antagonists are motivated by their insecurities. (1 Sam. 1:4-5)
  1. Peninnah was an insecure wounded woman.
  2. Remembering that antagonists are wounded people helps us have grace.
- B. Antagonists can be relentless in their attacks.
  1. As long as the wound remains, antagonists have an endless supply of attacks.
  2. Dealing with our wounding protects us from being antagonistic.
- C. Antagonists are unconcerned over the pain they cause others.
  1. Antagonism can progress to the point of having no remorse.
  2. Maintaining a clear conscience keeps our concern for others.

### **IV. FROM JEZEBEL (1 Kings 16) WE LEARN THE POWER OF WRONG INFLUENCE.**

- A. Be selective with your partnerships. They can turn you away from God's path. (1 Kings 16:29-33)
  1. Who we partner with has tremendous influence upon our lives. (1 Cor. 15:33; Prov. 4:14-15)
  2. Who we partner with should have similar values. (2 Cor. 6:14).
- B. Don't be surprised that Satan will always have opposition ready. (1 Kings 19:1-3)
  1. There will always be people Satan will use to discourage you.
  2. Often our greatest attacks come after our greatest victories.
- C. No one can escape God's absolute principles of planting and reaping. (2 Kings 19:31-33)
  1. We will always harvest what we plant. (Gal. 6:7-8)
  2. God has given us great freedom in determining our future harvest. (Prov. 13:19)

**V. FROM ATHALIAH (2 Kings 11; 2 Chron. 22) WE LEARN THE POWER OF GODLESS AMBITION.**

- A. Be intentional with your influence on your children's lives.
  - 1. Athaliah's influence destroyed the life of her son.
  - 2. Our influence should equip our children to succeed. (Deut. 11:19)
- B. Ambition unchecked can damage those around us.
  - 1. Godless ambition is self-serving and destructive. (2 Chron. 22:10)
  - 2. God prompt ambition is others serving and Kingdom productive. (1 Cor. 9:23-25)
- C. No matter how dark the situation, God is working.
  - 1. Sometimes it appears as if the darkness has won. (2 Chron. 22:11-12)
  - 2. It is impossible for the purposes of God to be thwarted. (2 Chron. 23:11; Isa. 8:10; 14:27)

**VI. FROM HERODIAS (Mark 6) WE LEARN THE POWER OF RESENTMENT.**

- A. Sometimes God calls us to expose wrong behavior. (Mark 6:17-19)
  - 1. Confronting wrong will sometimes create resentment rather than remorse.
  - 2. Confrontation is necessary in loving relationships. (Gal. 6:1)
- B. Fear can cause people to do destructive things. (Mark 6:20)
  - 1. Herodias' plan was motivated out of resentment and fear.
  - 2. Living in fear can result in harm to ourselves and others. (Prov. 29:25; Josh. 1:9; Isa. 43:1)
- C. There are times God allows evil plans to succeed. (Mark 6:26-28)
  - 1. Just because Herodias's plan worked doesn't mean God's plan failed.
  - 2. Often, the evil plans of the world are used by God to refine His people. (1 Peter 4:12; James 1:2-4)

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. As a Christian wife, one should always strive to live life to its fullest, using every opportunity to make one's husband and family happy. One should have as his ultimate goals, not the gaining of fame or worldly possessions but, that of spending eternity together in heaven (Mark 10:29-30).
  - 2. The single most important figure in the home should be God. Together, the husband and wife should seek to follow the teaching of Jesus. If this is done, the marriage will be happy.
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# CRISES IN THE CHURCH FOR WOMEN

*Irene C. Taylor*

1. Any time humans are involved, whether it be in the home, community, business world or government, problems are going to arise.
2. Our study will deal primarily with problems involving women in the work of the church.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY.

- A. Deity is the Supreme Ruler of all, whether in heaven or on earth (Gen. 1).
  1. While here on earth, Jesus declared He was here to do His Father's business (Luke 2:49).
  2. Jesus declared, "All power (authority) is given to me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).
  3. We are to submit to God's authority (James 4:7).
- B. He has established the chain of authority in the church.
  1. Elders are to oversee and shepherd.
  2. He is to be the husband of one wife (I Tim. 3:2).
    - a. Women cannot scripturally serve in this capacity.
    - b. Listening to the world has caused much unrest among women, even in the church.
    - c. Changing the male term (in some modern translations??) does not change God's order!
- C. Failure to respect authority in the home.
  1. Because the home is the source of prospects for church membership, it contributes to the stability or weakening of the church.
  2. Failure to instill proper respect for authority in the home contributes to disrespect for authority in the church.

### II. DANGERS FROM PERVERSIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

- A. Perversions are "translations" which are not true to the original revelation of God's Word, whether written or oral.
- B. They are dangerous because they contain many additions and/or subtractions to God's truth.
  1. They have no divine authority.
  2. They promote false, unscriptural concepts.
    - a. Many, including women, become enamored with their claim to have additional insight.
- C. They condone compromise.
  1. They fail to condemn sinful lifestyles.
  2. They promote acceptance of worldly standards.

3. They promote postmodernism.
  - a. This leads to crafting one's own religion, doing what is right in one's own eyes.
  - b. Many women are pleased with the "freedom" to accept change.

### III. AVERSION TO DISCIPLINE.

- A. A child poorly disciplined in the home will likely resent discipline in the church.
  1. The Bible teaches discipline is needful.
  2. It is needed when our conduct disrupts the peace of the Lord's Body.
    - a. Discuss Euodias and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2).
    - b. Insisting that I have my own way about how things are done.

### IV. THE "US" VERSUS "THEM" ATTITUDE.

- A. Let "them" do it...I'm too busy.
  1. The danger of filling our time with too much social, secular activities.
  2. Our example before our children molds their attitude.

### V. HAVING THE DESIRE NOT TO BE DIFFERENT.

- A. 1 Peter 2:9
- B. Accepting the "I'm Okay, You're Okay" philosophy.

### CONCLUSION:

1. The basic cause of any kind of crisis in the church stems from a lack of respect for authority beginning with that from God. A proper respect for Him allows for respect in all other areas.
  2. Our love for God is weak at best when we fail to follow His pattern. Women have too long been influenced, perhaps without even realizing it, by the liberal thinking of the world. This is especially true as it pertains to the role of women in every sphere. That it has invaded the church creates critical problems.
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## **CRISIS IN THE HOME CO-HABITATION VERSUS MARRIAGE**

*Jimmy Ferguson*

1. One does not have to be a trained sociologist to know that there is a growing problem in America involving couples simply living together out of wedlock.
2. Years ago this was called "shacking up" and those who practiced such were looked upon as "lower class." However, society has redefined co-habitation and has come to approve of it.
3. It is evident that Satan has attacked the home in the following areas:
  - a. Same-sex marriage
  - b. Adultery
  - c. Fornication (Co-habitation)
4. This study will show that co-habitation without the benefit of marriage is a violation of the will of God and is therefore sinful.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. CO-HABITATION DEFINED.**

- A. Co-habitation is a male and female living together in a sexual relationship without the benefit of marriage.
  1. The reason often given for "living together" is to try out a potential mate to see if they can make it as a married couple.
- B. God made provision for the fact that man is a social being.
  1. After creating man, God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18)
  2. This provision involved marriage. When God brought the woman to the man, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:23-24)

#### **II. CO-HABITATION IS CONDEMNED UNDER THE HEADING OF FORNICATION.**

- A. Even if it could be argued by the couple that they would not be engaging in sexual relations, there are still problems with co-habitation arrangements.
  1. Such an arrangement places the couple in a situation where they will be tempted. The apostle Paul writes, "Wherefore, to him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall." (I Cor. 10:12)

2. Such an arrangement is detrimental to one's influence. Paul also writes, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (I Thess. 5:22)
- B. Fornication is defined as "any illicit sexual intercourse." (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)
  1. Within the context of marriage, sexual relations are sanctioned by God.
    - a. The Hebrew writer stated, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers [fornicators] and adulterers God will judge." (Heb. 13:4)
  2. God's Word condemns fornication in the strongest of terms.
    - a. In I Cor. 6:9, Paul states that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, and then lists "fornicators" as being among those who are classed as "unrighteous."
    - b. In Romans 1:29-32, fornication is again listed as "unrighteousness."
    - c. In Galatians 5:19-22, fornication is listed as a "work of the flesh" and Paul notes that those who do such things "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
    - d. In Colossians 3:5, Paul states, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; *fornication*, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

### III. MARRIAGE, NOT CO-HABITATION, IS GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN AND WOMAN.

- A. When God created man, He created him with certain fleshly appetites such as the sexual urges. For the satisfaction of sexual urges, God instituted marriage.
- B. An examination of the topic of marriage reveals that there are four basic purposes for which God designed marriage.
  1. God designed marriage for the purpose of *companionship*. God decreed that it was "not good that the man should be alone." (Gen. 2:18)
  2. God designed marriage for *bodily satisfaction*. The sex drive is as natural and honorable as a hunger for food and drink if it is kept in its proper place — marriage. Paul wrote, "to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (I Cor. 7:2).
  3. God designed marriage for *reproduction*. God blessed the first union and said, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:27-28).



4. God designed marriage for the *training of children*. Since one of the purposes for marriage is reproduction, it is only natural that marriage be used for the training of those who are procreated. A home with a husband and wife (mother and father) is the best place to raise children. Paul exhorts parents to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

#### IV. EARTHLY CONSEQUENCES OF CO-HABITATION.

- A. Some of the many consequences of co-habitation and fornication are misplaced trust, unplanned pregnancy, and STDs.
- B. Sex outside of marriage always does some kind of damage. It leaves some people grieving because they can no longer claim virginity. The individuals are no longer "pure" from a spiritual standpoint.
- C. Another consequence is the greater likelihood of divorce if the couple later decides to marry. The National Survey of Families and Households found that couples who co-habit before marriage are 50 percent more likely to divorce. The same survey also found that unmarried couples living together are twice as likely to be unhappy in their relationship, as are those who are duly married.
- D. The family therapist, Laura Schlessinger, says that those who desire to live together for a period of time to test the sincerity and durability of their love overlook a common characteristic of human nature. It is the sense of being bound that helps love to become stabilized. The couple that is firmly committed to the principle of lifelong togetherness, has a much greater chance of experiencing a genuine lasting relationship, than the couple who regards their domestic habitation as being subject to termination.

#### V. WHAT CAN WE DO?

- A. Worldliness is not something that is characteristic of those who are not members of the Lord's church. Worldliness has also infiltrated the church. James asked his readers, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4)?
- B. Co-habitation is also practiced by many who profess to be "Christians." What can preachers, elders, and Christians in general do to help alleviate this problem?
  1. More preaching needs to be done from the pulpit on God's design for the family.
  2. Classes need to be taught in our congregations on morality in general and purity of heart specifically and

how that relates to our conduct. Our teenagers especially need such classes.

3. Parents need to set the example in the home in order to show their children what a "Christian home" is all about. Parents also need to teach their children about biblical morality.
4. Elders, as shepherds of the local flock, need to know their members. Furthermore, they must teach and encourage God's standard of morality to their membership.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Marriage, not co-habitation, is God's plan.
  - a. Marriage provides intimate companionship for life (Gen. 2:18).
  - b. It provides a context for the procreation and nurture of children (Eph. 6:1-2).
  - c. It provides a godly outlet for sexual desire (I Cor. 7:2).

## CRISIS: ABORTION

*Kenneth Burleson*

1. We have been told that only Catholics oppose abortion. NOT SO.
2. I have spoken on many occasions against abortion.
3. Many oppose abortion that are not religious at all.
4. The claim of the pro-abortionists is that many women die at the hands of illegal abortionists, therefore, it needed to be made safe and legal. People need to understand that a crime is a crime.
5. Abortion was legalized in 1973 — in 12 years 15 million babies were aborted.
6. In this lesson we discuss: 1) the source of life, 2) what the Bible says about babies, 3) the life of an unborn child, 4) arguments made for abortion, 5) types of abortion and 6) abortion is a sin.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### I. THE SOURCE OF LIFE.

- A. Life is from God. Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 2:7
  1. Man does not have the power to create life.
  2. It is a crime for man to take innocent life. Gen. 9:6
- B. Life begins at the moment of conception.
  1. Sperm fertilizes the egg.
  2. 23 chromosomes are united with 23 other chromosomes.
  3. Growth immediately begins. This is called life.

## II. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT BABIES.

- A. An unborn child is alive and known by God. Psalms 139:14; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1
- B. Called a babe *outside* the womb and *inside* the womb.
  - 1. Luke 2:16, "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the *babe* lying in a manger."
  - 2. The same word "babe" is used referring to John the Baptist, yet in the womb. Luke 1:41
  - 3. Genesis 25:21,22; Exodus 20:13; Proverbs 16-17; Genesis 9:6

## III. THE LIFE OF THE UNBORN CHILD.

- A. At ten days from conception:
  - 1. The tiny human sends a message to the mother's body.
  - 2. Several changes take place in the mother's body.
- B. At eighteen days the heart begins to beat, at twenty-one it is pumping.
- C. At forty days an electroencephalogram (EEG) records brain waves.
- D. Six to seven weeks the baby begins to move.
- E. At eight weeks all body systems are present. The baby begins to suck his/her thumb.
- F. Eleven to twelve weeks the baby is breathing steadily (breathing amniotic fluid).
  - 1. Blood is circulated through vessels to all body parts.
  - 2. Can feel pain.
- G. Fifteen to sixteen weeks — 5½ inches long and 6 ounces in weight. The baby can grasp with hands.
- H. At twenty weeks, some have survived outside the womb.
- I. At six months the baby is covered with a real fine hair.
- J. At thirty weeks the umbilical cord has been the baby's lifeline to the mother.
- K. At thirty two weeks the child sleeps 90-95% of the time.
- L. At forty weeks the baby is now ready for life outside the mother's womb.

## IV. ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON.

- A. There are two sides in the abortion debate.
- B. Both agree that fetuses are biologically human (that is of the human species).
- C. Pro-life supporters argue that abortion is morally wrong on the basis that a fetus is an innocent human person.
- D. Abortionists draw a distinction between human being and human person. While the fetus is innocent and biologically human; it is not a person with a right to life.
- E. Abortionists define personhood by Mary Ann Warren:
  - 1. Consciousness (at least able to feel pain).
  - 2. Reasoning self motivation.

3. Ability to communicate and self-awareness.
4. Other philosophers suggest some other things:
  - a. Lack of brain waves.
  - b. Self-consciousness, rationality, and autonomy.
- F. Answer: This criteria for personhood would disqualify two classes.
  1. The reversibly comatose patients.
  2. Human infants. These would not have a right to life.
- G. They claim that the baby is a part of the mother's body.
  1. Answer: NOT SO, different DNA.
  2. Life is originated when there is a new DNA.

#### V. TYPES OF ABORTION.

- A. *Salt poisoning* after 16th week. A large needle is inserted into the abdomen of the mother and a strong saline solution is dispensed into the amniotic sack.
- B. *Suction Aspiration*. A hollow plastic tube which has a knife-like edge on the tip is inserted into the uterus, the suction tears the baby apart and is placed in a bottle.
- C. *D & C*. A loop-shaped knife is inserted into the uterus. The doctor cuts the placenta and baby into pieces and scrapes them into a basin.
- D. *Prostaglandin Abortion chemical*. This produces a violent labor and delivery. Most of the time the baby is killed by the contractions. Some times the baby is born alive.
- E. *Caesarian Section*. The abdomen of the mother is surgically opened and the baby is lifted out. Once the baby breathes the air and displaces the amniotic fluid, they either place the babies head back in the fluid and the baby drowns or the baby is thrown into a bucket of water.
- F. *The morning after pill*. At one time girls under 18 could not get the pill. It was moved to 15 and recently they changed to no limit on the age.

#### VI. ABORTION IS A SIN. Exodus 20:13; Prov. 6:16,17

##### CONCLUSION:

1. According to "Center for Disease Control" in 2009, 784,507 legally induced abortions were reported.
  2. The abortion rate for 2009 was 15.1 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years and the abortion ration was 227 abortions per 1,000 live births.
  3. One should abstain from sexual relationships prior to marriage.
  4. We must teach children, teach them plainly, do not beat around the bush. They must be warned of the consequences.
  5. Abortions are performed on eleven and twelve year old girls.
-

# THE CRISIS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Ronnie Whittemore

1. Introduction and Definitions:
  - a. What is a crisis? The dictionary defines "crisis" as: *An unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; especially: one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome.*
  - b. A situation that has reached a critical phase. We would add to this definition the high level of influence and urgency from society toward our Biblical topic of discussion.
  - c. The wide acceptance, tolerance and approval of society have achieved an urgent status on this subject.
2. What is homosexuality?
  - a. The dictionary defines "homosexuality" as:
    - 1) The quality or state of being *homosexual*.
    - 2) Erotic activity with another of the same sex.
  - b. The Bible defines "homosexuality" as sinful conduct.
    - 1) Homosexuality is described as "changing the natural use into that which is against nature" and the definition applies to both men and women (Rom. 1:26-27).
    - 2) It falls into the category of fornication (1 Cor. 6:18).
    - 3) It is sexual misconduct and will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

## DISCUSSION:

### I. A CONTRAST OF VIEWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY.

- A. God's view on homosexuality is well explained in the Scriptures.
  1. It is an abomination in the sight of God (Lev. 18:22).
  2. The penalty for this sin was death in the Old Testament (Lev. 20:13).
  3. Homosexuality is ungodly, lascivious and wicked (2 Peter 2:6-8).
  4. The lessons of Sodom and Gomorrah serve as a reminder of God's view on homosexuality (Jude 6-8).
- B. Liberal America's view on homosexuality is well documented.
  1. The liberal news media or mainstream media (MSM) beats endlessly on the drum of homosexuality.
    - a. In an article by Tim Graham from NewsBuster.org, he reported on the results of a study released by the Pew Research Center in June 2013. [See <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/tim-graham/2013/06/18/new-liberal-study-lends-credence-conservative-charges-bias-dramatic-medi>.]

- b. "Pew's study of more than 1,000 stories from March 18 to May 12 found what anyone could find. Washington Post media blogger Erik Wemple noted the numbers back up the lament from Brian Brown of the National Organization for Marriage that even Fox News doesn't want to hear their side of the argument: Here's how coverage on Fox News broke out, according to the PEJ: 63 percent mixed, 29 percent supportive and 8 percent opposing. ... The numbers establish that organizations across all kinds of media categories were running stories highly favorable of gay marriage: Network news, cable news, NPR and so on."
  - c. This is the overarching theme for the news media studied: Across the main sample of news media, statements in support of same-sex marriage greatly outnumbered those in opposition. Of the 488 stories examined in this study, 47% included twice as many statements in support of same-sex marriage than in opposition. Less than a fifth of that number (9%) included more statements in opposition while 44% carried a roughly even mix of viewpoints or none at all. This pattern is true for reported stories and for editorials and commentary.
2. Hedonistic Hollywood has pushed the homosexual agenda for decades.
- a. Homosexual themes have crept, walked, run and warped their way into our living rooms through soap operas, television sitcoms, movies, etc.
  - b. In March 2012, actor Kirk Cameron made an appearance on "CNN's Piers Morgan Tonight." When asked about homosexual marriage, this actor voiced his support of Biblical teaching on the subject.
  - c. In an article, entitled, "Kirk Cameron irks liberal Hollywood with Homosexuality Comments," Daniel Distant of The Christian Post, wrote, "Cameron pulled no punches with British interviewer Piers Morgan, and told the TV host that homosexuality is 'unnatural,' 'detrimental,' and 'ultimately destructive to so many of the foundations of civilisation' during the interview." [<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/kirk.cameron.irks.liberal.hollywood.with.homosexuality.comments/29444.htm>]
  - d. As a result, Kirk Cameron received many supportive comments from the public, but many of his fellow actors, including Rosanne Barr, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Craig Ferguson, Debra Messing, Kristin Chenoweth,

- weth and even Alan Thicke (played Kirk's father in Growing Pains) railed against Kirk and his stance.
3. Many government officials and politicians support and endorse homosexuality. Let us look at some headlines:
    - a. September 6, 2013 (CNN) — President Barack Obama met with leaders of several Russian social activist groups Friday, an event that likely touched on the sensitive subject of gay rights in the nation amid tensions over Syria.
    - b. September 6, 2013 MOSCOW (AP) — Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights activists said Tuesday they have been invited to meet with President Barack Obama on the sidelines of this week's Group of 20 summit in Russia.
    - c. June 27, 2013 DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — President Barack Obama on Thursday praised the Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage as a "victory for American democracy" but clashed with his African host over gay rights in a sign of how far the movement has to go internationally.
  4. The public schools have been used for years to promote homosexual propaganda.
    - a. The philosophical argument put forth is:
      - 1) If homosexual acts are moral, as many promote, then they should be normative.
      - 2) If they are normative, they should be taught in our schools as a standard.
      - 3) If they are a standard, they should be enforced.
      - 4) Therefore, the public educational system is the vehicle used to drive the adoption of homosexuality as normal behavior. [Heather Has Two Mommies].
    - b. The American military has been used as training ground in the same way to promote conformity of homosexuality in our society. [Don't ask don't tell].

## II. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CONFORMATION TO THE WORLD AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE MIND.

- A. The Bible warns against conforming to the world.
  1. Some years ago, brother Wendell Winkler wrote about some causes of immorality. He listed the following:
    - a. People are more actively stimulated and less actively restrained.
      - 1) Keep in mind that with every invention for good, the devil can turn it into something wicked.

- 2) Every communication device can aid in heralding the Gospel. That same device can be used in some evil way.
- 3) The Bible reminds us, though we may be stimulated through what we see, read and hear, that we must keep ourselves pure.
- 4) Prov. 23:7; 4:23; Phil. 4:8; James 1:27; Matt. 5:48
- b. There is a mania for conformity.
  - 1) The apostle Paul challenged us to be “transformed” rather than “conformed” (Rom. 12:1-2).
  - 2) The Israelites demanded a king “to be like the nations round about them” (1 Sam. 8:5).
  - 3) Our mission is to follow Jesus, not the world (Matt. 16:24; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21).
  - 4) Christians are different and the Lord’s church is exclusive (1 Peter 2:9).
    - a) Have you fought with your teenage children over fashion because Paris’ new trends are higher hems and plunging necklines?
    - b) Have you faced challenges from co-workers who constantly invite you to bars for a drink?
    - c) Have you been subjected to the constant offers to “gamble” for our children’s sake in lotteries and raffles from our schools and government officials?
- c. We have changed our attitudes and standards.
  - 1) The nation has changed.
  - 2) It is not that these sins have not existed in prior generations; it is that attitudes have evolved over the decades from shame, to tolerance, to acceptance, to approval.
  - 3) But God, Christ and the Bible do not change! (Malachi 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Gal. 1:6-9).
  - 4) We need to change our lives to fit the Gospel!
- d. The nation has experienced a change in roles in the home.
  - 1) The women’s liberation movement has undermined the divine arrangement of God.
  - 2) It is so tiring to see society trying to make men out of women and women out of men.
  - 3) God made man and woman to complement one another. Man was not complete without woman.
  - 4) We should embrace the beautiful roles that God has given to mankind.
  - 5) Both roles, men and women, are important. See Eph. 5:23-25; Gen. 2:18-25; Titus 2:1-8).



- e. Humanism as become the moral ethic of the day. Simply stated, Humanism is putting man first.
  - 1) Our society is rank with humanism.
  - 2) Modern-day environmentalism is a humanistic movement.
  - 3) Government and politics have become the god and religion of many citizens.
  - 4) Our public school system has been used to promote humanism.
  - 5) But we are admonished to put God and His church first (Matt. 6:33; James 1:8).
- B. The Bible encourages the transforming of our minds (Rom. 12:2).
  - 1. The apostle Paul wrote rather extensively about this subject.
    - a. Paul also wrote that the "inward man is renewed day by day" (1 Cor. 4:16).
    - b. Paul wrote that he could be a castaway unless he kept himself under subjection (1 Cor. 9:27).
  - 2. Consider the lives of the faithful, they faced tremendous trials, they needed daily spiritual exercises.
    - a. David wrote about "meditating day and night" (Psa. 1).
    - b. Lot's righteous soul was "vexed day by day." Would he not need renewing "day by day?" (2 Peter 2:7-8)
    - c. Noah preached 120 years to the saving of his house, but unless he transformed his mind daily, he could have lost his own soul (2 Peter 2:5; Gen. 6:8).

### III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CHOICES: HEAVEN OR HELL?

- A. Hell is often described as a prepared place with certain characteristics.
  - 1. It is everlasting (Matt. 25:41).
  - 2. It is a place of torment and pain (Luke 16:23-28; Rev. 20:10).
  - 3. It is a place filled with people who deny and disobey God (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
  - 4. It's inhabitants will include the most depraved our society (Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8).
  - 5. It is the place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).
- B. Heaven is described as a wonderful place reserved for the faithful of God.
  - 1. The Godhead will be there (Acts 7:55-56; Heb. 1:1-3).
  - 2. The angelic hosts will be there (Rev. 8:13).
  - 3. The faithful of ages past will be there (Heb. 11).

4. Heaven will be a place of peace, joy, and happiness because it will be void of sorry, pain and tears (Rev. 21:4).

### CONCLUSION:

1. Homosexuality is a sinful lifestyle.
  - a. This behavior is despised by God.
  - b. This sin should be detested by God's people.
  - c. We have the challenge of perceiving things as God does, not as the world does.
2. But the decision to tolerate, accept, approve and even participate in this sin is ours.
  - a. Paul wrote that certain brethren in Corinth had been involved in that sin at one time, but they gave it up (repentance) in order to serve God and be right with Him.
  - b. There is a way to God, but it is through obedience to Jesus. (Matt. 16:24; Heb. 11:1,6; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:41, 47; Rev. 2:10)

## CRISIS IN THE CHURCH: TOLERATION

*Rusty Stark*

1. The assigned title for this lesson starts with the assumption that there is a crisis (something bad) because we tolerate things we should not. Already, this sets us apart from our world and from many in the church.
2. Toleration is held up as an ideal in the world. Tolerance is the watchword of our society.
3. Anything that smacks of condemnation is condemned out of hand, because it is not tolerant:
  - a. Those who condemn *homosexuality* are considered intolerant and homophobic.
  - b. Those who condemn *other religions* are narrowminded and cult-like.
  - c. Those who condemn *living together* without the benefit of marriage are considered hopelessly out of step with the times.
4. Sadly, many in the church echo these cries for more toleration and less condemnation.
5. There is little doubt that Christians, in many cases, could and should be more tolerant of some things. In items of *preference*, matters of *expediency*, and areas of *option*, it is wrong and sinful to insist on our own way. In some things, it is a crisis if we fail to be tolerant. Philippians 2:3, "Let nothing be done through

*strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."*

6. But the big crisis we face in regards to toleration is that of tolerating too much. The spirit of the age has caught us. The world has condemned us for condemning, and like scolded pups, many have tucked tail and run, failing to condemn sin and failing to resist the evils that abound in our society.
  - a. Many have bought into the ideas that our old hermeneutic is *too narrow*, our view of truth is *too simplistic*, our doctrine is *too harsh*, and our circle of fellowship is *too small*.
  - b. And just as bad, many have accepted the idea that even if we are right in our view of truth, we should be tolerant of those who disagree. The modern concept is that reproof and rebuke will discourage, that sermons should never be negative, and that correcting others will "drive them off."
7. And so, many congregations work hard to include (tolerate) people and things that God has excluded from his fellowship.
8. Rather than trying to deal with problems 'out there' among the liberals or among denominations, this lesson will seek to set forth the crisis of toleration found even in our own congregations at times. After all, if we are intolerant of those out there, but tolerant of sin in our ourselves, our families, or our own congregations, we are hypocritical. Remember the scathing illustration of the beam and the mote (Matt. 7:3-5)?

## DISCUSSION:

### I. THE CRISIS OF TOLERATION — TOLERATION AT WORK.

- A. ELDERS, do you guard the flock and watch for the souls of the members (Heb. 13:17)?
  1. Do you try to restore the sinner (Gal. 6:1)? Do you try to convert the sinner from the error of his way and thereby save his soul from death (James 5:19-20)?
  2. Do you lead the congregation in the effort to 'purge out, therefore, the old leaven,' and thereby keep the church pure from sin (1 Cor. 5:6-7)?
  3. Do you guard against false teachers, take note of them and avoid them, and refuse to endorse them or give them a platform to spread their error (Acts 20:28-31; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11)? False teachers are grievous wolves who want to destroy the flock. Elders who care about the safety of the flock will not be tolerant of false teachers.
  4. Do you make sure the flock is fed with both the *milk* and the *meat* of the word (Heb. 5:12-14)? Or, are you tolerant of preachers who don't make a stand against evil, spend their pulpit time telling one joke after another, and

never preach the painful, negative sermons that the truth demands (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2)? Too many elders have been guilty of tolerating weak preachers. These weak preachers do not necessarily spread false doctrine, but they do not oppose it either. They do not directly advocate worldliness, but neither do they speak out against it.

5. These questions are asked with the greatest respect for godly elders, but those men who refuse to confront error in their midst are not godly, and they are not truly acting as elders.
  6. An eldership once told me that they knew they had members in their congregation who were living in adultery, but they had decided not to do anything about it 'for the sake of peace.' James 3:17 teaches us that purity must be given a greater priority than peace.
  7. When elders ignore sin, it is toleration at work.
- B. PREACHERS, do you labor to preach all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27)?
1. What happens when summertime comes and members begin to appear in less than modest clothing? Do you publicly stand against such attire and preach verses like Matthew 5:28 and 1 Timothy 2:9-10?
  2. Do you (in love) personally and privately confront members when they are not glorifying God because their clothing is reflective of the world, not reflective of godliness?
  3. Some preachers are bold in the pulpit, but afraid to confront members when they see them sin. Preachers should be equally bold, both in and out of the pulpit (Acts 20:20, publicly, and from house to house).
- C. CHRISTIANS, what do you do when you see others begin to fall away, to grow sporadic in their attendance, and to be less involved in the work of the church?
1. Do you rebuke, do you reprove, do you say something, identify the problem, and encourage those weak brethren to be stronger? Or, do you find yourself wishing that someone would speak to them, that the elders would take care of the problem, that the preacher would go visit them?
  2. Remember that we are all responsible for encouraging and reproofing one another. Hebrews 10:24, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." 1 Thessalonians 5:11,14, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. ... Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that

are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."

## II. WHY TOLERATION IS A CRISIS:

- A. *Because it represents disobedience.* It is always a crisis when people disobey God. Obedience is more important to God than worship is (1 Sam. 15:22). Since salvation is offered to the obedient (Heb. 5:8-9), the disobedient will be lost in an eternal devil's hell (Rom. 2:8-9).
  1. Elders: Elders are told to guard and feed the flock. It is disobedience to turn a blind eye to sin and to permit false teachers to spread their error. Even without considering the effects of such toleration, this disobedience is itself a crisis.
  2. Preachers: 2 Tim. 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Reprove, rebuke, and exhort is not the same as 'stroke egos, tread lightly, and avoid making anyone mad.' Preachers who tolerate sin and avoid confrontation are sinfully disobedient to the charge they are given. This disobedience is a crisis.
  3. Christians: Heb. 12:15-16, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; <sup>16</sup>Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." Here is a clear command addressed to all Christians. Be on the lookout to help keep others from falling. We should beware so that no one will "fail of the grace of God." We must all be dedicated to the task of keeping the church pure, and helping one another go to heaven. To tolerate sin is sin. And, it represents a crisis of disobedience.
- B. *Because of the harm it does.* One only has to look at Israel of old to see how harmful toleration is. They were given a plan to keep themselves free from idolatry (Deut. 13), but they repeatedly fell into sinful toleration of sin rather than following the plan of God. As a result, the whole nation suffered, again and again.
  1. Elders: The job of elders is not to pacify, it is to protect. When they fail in their duty, the church Jesus died for and purchased with his blood is lacking that portion of protection that God designed should be afforded by elders. What happens when elders fail? Crisis is the result. False teachers decimate the church (Acts 20:29). Souls are lost. Can there be a greater crisis?

2. Preachers: If we believe the church is strengthened and sanctified by the word (Jude 20; John 17:17), then we must also believe that the church is weakened by weak preaching, and sullied or made unholy by cowardly preachers. Again, the bottom line result is that souls are lost.
  3. Christians: Do we care about helping our brothers and sisters go to heaven? When we see a brother sin, we should be concerned about his soul. When we say nothing, we are being tolerant, but we are not saving the soul (James 5:19-20). Consider Jesus' command regarding what to do when a brother sins against us personally. Luke 17:3, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." He does not say to ignore it, and he certainly does not say to tolerate it (see also Matt. 18:15-17).
- C. *Because it ignores God's perfect plan for keeping the church pure.*
1. The neglected commandment — discipline.
  2. Take a moment to read the following verses:
    - a. Matt. 18:15-17, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. <sup>17</sup>And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."
    - b. 1 Cor. 5:7,11, <sup>5</sup>Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. ... <sup>11</sup>But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one not to eat."
    - c. Rom. 16:17-18, <sup>17</sup>Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. <sup>18</sup>For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
    - d. 2 Thess. 3:6,14-15, <sup>6</sup>Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye with-

- draw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. ... <sup>14</sup>And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. <sup>15</sup>Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."
- e. Titus 3:10-11, "<sup>10</sup>A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; <sup>11</sup>Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."
  - f. 2 John 9-11, "<sup>9</sup>Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup>If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: <sup>11</sup>For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
3. These lines are clear and stark. There is no lack of clarity in this matter. Impenitent sinners do not belong in the fellowship of God's people.
    - a. Matthew 18 condemns tolerance of personal sin between brethren.
    - b. 1 Corinthians 5 teaches us not to tolerate immorality in our midst.
    - c. Romans 16, Titus 3, and 2 John teach us not to tolerate false teachers.
    - d. 2 Thessalonians 3 commands withdrawal from all who are out of step with God's law.
  4. But, there is a problem with these verses. The plan is perfect; the law is clear; but *we have neglected to do God's will in this matter*.
    - a. This is not a new phenomenon. Even in the days before our present digression, church discipline was often ignored and neglected. Teaching about it was minimal, and the consistent practice of it was rare.
    - b. And today, even congregations who consider themselves conservative and claim to follow the New Testament pattern shy away from this perfect plan of God.
  5. Consider the inconsistency of emphasizing the Bible *plan of salvation*, the Bible *pattern for organization, name, mission, and worship of the church*, while at the same time neglecting God's commands to *keep the church pure*.

### III. WHAT WILL WE DO ABOUT TOLERATION?

- A. There are three things we need to do in order to deal with this crisis:
1. We must *realize there are enemies of our cause* (Phil. 3:18).
    - a. Satan wants the world in the church.
    - b. Sin does not come into our midst by accident, denial will not make it less destructive, and it will not go away if we ignore it.
  2. We need to *adopt God's view of sin*.
    - a. Heb. 5:12-14, Discerning the lines God has drawn.
      - 1) In order to overcome the crisis of toleration we need to drink deep from God's word.
      - 2) We need to become those who can handle the meat of the word, and not simply the milk.
      - 3) When we are skillful in the word of righteousness, we will be able to discern good from evil. We will be able to discern and respect the lines God has drawn.
    - b. Amos 5:15, Loving and hating the right things.
      - 1) God's desire is that we love good and hate evil.
      - 2) 1 Peter 3:10 teaches to eschew or recoil from evil.
      - 3) 1 Thess. 5:21-22 demands we hold fast to good things, but that we abstain from all appearance of evil.
      - 4) When we understand what grief sin has wrought in this world, what harm it is presently doing to individuals, families, congregations, and our country, and that it condemns men to an eternal torment in hell, we will not be tolerant, we will be adamant.
  3. We need an unshakable faith in God's plan.
    - a. The Bible is right. God is smarter than we are. His plan for church discipline is a perfect plan.
    - b. We need to stop listening to those who say, "It won't work."
    - c. No one loves the church more than Jesus, He died for it (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).
    - d. No one understands the workings of the church more than Jesus, He built it (Matt. 16:18).
    - e. How arrogant it is for men to think that their lofty ideals and modern ideas about toleration can possibly offer a better solution for sin than God's pattern.
- B. But the question is not so much what we "need to do." The question is what "will we do?"
1. Is this just a topic for lectureships, or will we share it with our congregations?



2. Dare we challenge elders with the truth that if they tolerate sin in the Lord's church they fail in their duty as elders (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17)?
3. Will we as preachers do more than rebuke sin theoretically in the pulpit and then offer a tolerant silence when we see members fall into it?

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Sir R. Murray Hyslop of Kent, England: "Burke once said: 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing.' Leave the Drink Trade alone and it will throttle all that is good in a nation's life. Let it alone, that is all that is required. Cowardice will suffice for its triumph. Courage will suffice for its overthrow." (<http://quoteinvestigator.com/2010/12/04/good-men-do>)
  - a. Hyslop attributed this quote to Edmond Burke, just as Kennedy and others have.
  - b. Research has left much doubt that Burke ever said these exact words.
  - c. Does it matter? No! The truth of these words is found in the fact that they echo ideas found in God's word.
2. What if we changed the quote slightly?
  - a. "Leave Immorality or False Doctrine or Sin alone and it will throttle all that is good in a congregation's life. Let it alone, that is all that is required. Cowardice will suffice for its triumph. Courage will suffice for its overthrow."
3. We know beyond doubt the ultimate source of the most important quote on this matter "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven..." (1 Cor. 5:8).

## CRISIS IN THE CHURCH: MATERIALISM

*Brandon Baggett*

1. There is no question that we live in a rich society.
  - a. Wealth, luxury, and riches could characterize much of America.
  - b. Most have sufficient food, clothing, and shelter.
  - c. Many even live lives of luxury.
2. Material prosperity has led to a major crisis in our society — materialism.
  - a. Defined: "preoccupation with or emphasis upon material objects, comforts, and considerations, with a disinterest in or

- rejection of spiritual, intellectual, or cultural values.” (Dictionary.com)
- b. Sadly, many people in our society are more concerned about material things rather than spiritual things.
  - c. The Bible strongly warns against this mind-set. (Matt. 6:19-21; I Tim. 6:9-10)
3. What is far more tragic is to see materialism in the Lord’s church.
    - a. Some Christians are more concerned about name brands, vacations, and toys than they are about Bible study, faithful attendance, or giving.
    - b. Materialism is a crisis within the church that we must all face.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. CASES OF MATERIALISM.

#### A. Israel:

1. The prophet Amos prophesied during a very prosperous time in Israel’s history.
  - a. Two Kings are mentioned in Amos 1:1: Uzziah and Jeroboam II.
  - b. Called: “The Golden Age of Northern Israel.”
2. Their prosperity caused them to become satisfied spiritually and to forget God.
  - a. Amos 6:1, 4-6
    - 1) They were living in luxury and ease, but morally, politically, and religiously, they were everything God did not want.
    - 2) Moses warned them! (Deut. 8:7-14)
  - b. Materialism will cause us to forget God.

#### B. The rich young ruler:

1. The Bible says this man was “very rich.” (Luke 18:23)
  - a. He is called a ruler, but his riches ruled him. (Luke 18:18)
  - b. He was near salvation, but so far away. (Luke 18:22)
2. His riches hindered him.
  - a. This led to Jesus teaching on the perils of riches. (Matt. 19:23-24)
    - 1) Note: merely having riches does not make reaching heaven impossible.
      - a) Abraham was rich (Gen. 13:2).
      - b) Joseph of Arimathea was rich (Matt. 27:57).
    - 2) Trusting in riches hinders. (Mark 10:24)
  - b. If we choose to trust in material things, then we too will be hindered.

#### C. Judas:

1. The Biblical record shows that Judas was consumed with materialism.

- a. He manifested a covetous attitude when Mary anointed the Saviors feet. (John 12:3-6)
  - 1) He had no compassion for the poor. His true motive was greed.
  - 2) As the treasurer, he had been embezzling money.
- b. He betrayed the Lord for the common price of a slave. (Matt. 26:14-16)
- 2. Materialism led to the ruin of Judas.
- D. Laodicea:
  - 1. Laodicea was a materialistic congregation. (Rev. 3:17)
    - a. Their materialism caused them to become lukewarm. (vs.15-16)
    - b. Their materialism caused them to become wretched, poor, blind, and naked spiritually. (vs.17-18)
    - c. Their materialism caused them to dethrone Jesus from the throne of their heart. (v.20)
  - 2. The words of Jesus prove that one can overcome materialism.

## II. CONSEQUENCES OF MATERIALISM.

- A. Devotion:
  - 1. People who are consumed with materialism are "in love" with their possessions and money. (I Tim. 6:10)
    - a. They talk often about what they have, what they do not have, and what they want.
    - b. Their main goal in life is to get more and more. (Prov. 23:4; 28:20)
  - 2. Since they are devoted to material things, they are not devoted to God. (Matt. 6:24; Eph. 5:5)
- B. Deception:
  - 1. Jesus warned about the deceivableness of riches. (Matt. 13:22)
  - 2. Material things deceive us in many ways:
    - a. They offer a false sense of security. (Prov. 11:28; I Tim. 6:17)
      - 1) Material things can be taken away from us.
      - 2) Material things can be lost.
    - b. They do not satisfy. (Eccl. 5:10)
- C. Distraction:
  - 1. The child of God should be focused on spiritual things. (Col. 3:1-3)
  - 2. People who are consumed with materialism are distracted and lose focus by:
    - a. Hoarding up earthly goods (Luke 12:18-19, v.15)
    - b. Indulging themselves (Amos 6:4-6)
- D. Decline:
  - 1. Materialism leads to a decline in financial giving.

- a. Evident by many church contribution records.
- b. We still have the command to follow I Cor. 16:1-2.
- 2. Materialistic individuals do not give for several reasons:
  - a. Some have placed themselves in great debt in pursuit of "things."
  - b. Others choose to spend their money elsewhere: vacations, eating out, name brand clothing, toys, etc.
- E. Destruction:
  - 1. The end result of living a materialistic life is eternal damnation. (Col. 3:5-6; I Cor. 6:9-10)
  - 2. We must lay up treasure in heaven instead of on earth. (Matt. 6:19-21)

### III. CURE FOR MATERIALISM.

- A. Remember that riches are deficient.
  - 1. They cannot save me. They cannot satisfy me. They are not secure.
  - 2. In the end they will all be burned up! (II Peter 3:10)
- B. Recognize that God owns everything.
  - 1. Psa. 24:1-2; Deut. 10:14; Job 41:11
  - 2. Our job is to be good stewards of what God bestows upon us.
- C. Reach towards being content.
  - 1. The child of God should be content. (I Tim. 6:6-8; Heb. 13:5)
  - 2. No matter our state in life we should be content. (Phil. 4:11-12)
- D. Respond to material things by 'giving' instead of 'getting.'
  - 1. As already established, material things do not satisfy.
  - 2. However, giving is a source of great joy. (Acts 20:35; II Cor. 8:1-5)
- E. Replace material things with God as your main priority.

### CONCLUSION:

- 1. Is materialism a crisis within the church? No question!
  - 2. There are many things that we could list that can destroy a child of God. Materialism would be on that list.
  - 3. Let us all strive to master money and possessions instead of allowing money and possessions to become our master.
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## CRISIS IN THE CHURCH: MODESTY

*Steven Holt*

1. It has been said many times that it is easiest to discuss modesty in Wintertime in Alaska.
  - a. We say this because when we think of modesty, we think of only one aspect of it.
  - b. Our society has told us that modesty in every area of our lives is ridiculous and we are free to do everything as we please.
  - c. What has this done to the Lord's church and its members?
2. It's All in The "Kosmos."
  - a. What does the "kosmos" have to do with a lesson concerning modesty? The word is translated "world" 186 times in KJV.
  - b. In one verse, 1 Peter 3:3, it is translated "adorning."
  - c. Since "kosmos" is a word primarily used in reference to the world around us, what if we applied that meaning here?
  - d. What if our discussion of modesty focused as much on the world around us as it does the individual?
3. Modesty is defined as being correct and proper in dress, speech, and conduct.
  - a. Do we allow the world to decide how our dress, speech and conduct will be?
  - b. Do we decide for ourselves what our dress, speech and conduct will be?
  - c. If we make the decision to decide for ourselves what it will be, we can then have an impact on the world around us.

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. DRESS.

- A. What does a person's dress say about them?
  1. How often can we tell what someone's career or lifestyle is based on how they are dressed?
  2. Is it possible for our dress to make someone think we are a part of something that we are not?
  3. The way someone is dressed can tell a lot about them.
- B. How did Adam and Eve attempt to cover themselves in the garden?
  1. Genesis 3:6-7
    - a. "Made themselves aprons"
      - 1) Hebrew word translated "apron" means girdle, belt, loin cloth or armor.
      - 2) How much would any one of these things cover?
        - a) These things by themselves would never be considered modest.
      - 3) They thought their coverings would suffice.
      - 4) What does God do? God supplied them with appropriate coverings.

2. Genesis 3:21

- a. What would be the difference in fig leaves sewn together and a coat of skin?
- b. Notice the difference from Genesis 2:25–3:21. At what point did shame come into the picture?

**II. SPEECH.**

- A. Not only should we be focused on our dress when considering modesty, we also must consider our speech.
- B. “Sticks and stones” is one of the biggest lies man has created.
- C. What is correct and proper speech?
  1. Colossians 4:6
    - a. “Seasoned”
      - 1) A culinary word. Literally ‘sprinkling on of seasons.’
      - 2) Why do we use seasonings?
    - b. “With salt”
      - 1) Salt flavors and preserves.
      - 2) How should our speech be flavored and preserved?
    - c. One translator: “Let your language be always seasoned with the salt of grace.”
  2. Ephesians 4:29-32
    - a. Corrupt communication (v.29).
      - 1) The Greek word translated “corrupt” is defined as: rotten, no longer fit for use, worthless.
      - 2) Many translations interpret this phrase differently, but all carry the same idea.
    - b. Evil speaking (v.31)
      - 1) The Greek here is the word from where we get “Blasphemy.”
      - 2) We often think of blasphemy as only against God.
      - 3) In this passage, it can mean any speech that hurts another’s good name.

**III. CONDUCT.**

- A. A lot can be said about a person based on the way they conduct themselves.
- B. This also includes the previous two points of discussion.
- C. What does it mean to conduct one’s self in modesty?
  1. 1 Cor. 15:33
    - a. The word translated “communications” is from a Greek word defined as “A multitude of men gathered together.”
    - b. Many translations have used “company” or “companionships” here instead of communications.

- c. In most cases, we act like the people we surround ourselves with.
- d. We must make a conscious decision as to whom we will be around.
- 2. Philippians 1:27
  - a. "Let your conversation be."
    - 1) The word translated "conversation" carries the idea of the way you conduct yourself in your daily affairs.
    - 2) If our "conversation" is worthy of the Gospel of Christ, we surely will be living a life that is pleasing to our Father.
    - 3) If we abide by this, we would also keep our speech and dress in a similar manner.

### CONCLUSION:

- 1. It is clear through the Scriptures that there is a certain lifestyle that a Christian should live.
- 2. We learn in Romans 12:2 that we are to be "in the world but not of the world."
- 3. To live a modest life will help us to keep that distinction in our daily life.
- 4. If we allow immodesty into our lives and homes, it is only a matter of time until it has overtaken the Lord's church as well.

## CRISIS IN THE HOME

*Laura Boyd*

- 1. What constitutes a Family?
  - a. Webster's definition: "the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children."
  - b. God's definition:
    - Gen. 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Matt. 19:4, Mark 10:6)
    - 1 Cor. 7:2, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."
    - Mark 10:7, "For this cause shall a *man* leave his father and mother, and *cleave to his wife.*" (emphasis mine)
  - c. Society's definition:
    - 1) A fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children.

- 2) Two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another, and reside usually in the same dwelling place.
2. "Statistically, it is no longer a mother, a father and their biological children living together under one roof." (Excerpt from NY Times article, Feb 24, 2011 "How do you define family")

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. CAUSES OF CRISIS IN THE HOME INCLUDE:**

- A. The failure to respect God's authority and design for the home.
  1. Man's wisdom is inferior to God's. Isa. 55:8-9, 1 Cor. 1:25
  2. Society's definition of the family and marriage conflict with the Bible.
  3. Homosexual relationships are condemned by God. 1 Cor. 6:9-10
  4. Adultery is the only scriptural reason for a divorce. Matt 19:9
- B. Immaturity and Selfishness.
  1. Marriage is for those mature enough to leave their parents. Matt. 19:5
  2. A marriage where both people are in love with the same person will not work.
  3. The priority in the home should be God, and then spouse, before self. Luke 14:26, Eph. 5:21
- C. Absentee, permissive, or apathetic parenting.
  1. A lack of discipline leads to a lack of respect from the child. On the average, about five parents are killed by their biological children in the United States every week. (48 Hours reporting, July 26, 2012)
  2. The January 2013 census data shows the number of United States children who live in single parent homes has nearly doubled in the last 50 years.
  3. Children should be taught that life is not always fair and not everyone gets a prize just for participating.
  4. Spoiled, self-centered children grow up to be spoiled, self-centered adults.
  5. Children need parents, not peers.
- D. Lack of leadership by the husband and/or lack of submission by the wife.
  1. The husband is to lead in all areas, including spiritual matters. Eph. 5:23; 6:4
  2. Some wives must take over the leading due to default of the husband.
  3. A submissive wife does not equate to being a less important person.
- E. Addictions



1. Alcohol consumption as a beverage during teen years leads to higher incidences of alcoholism. Prov. 23:29-35
  2. Drug misuse, prescription and illegal, has become a widespread problem. I Cor. 6:12
  3. Pornography is becoming more of a problem due to availability and opportunity to view such in the home via the internet. Psal. 101:3
- II. **SOME CRISES ARE OUT OF OUR CONTROL. THESE MAY INCLUDE:**
- A. The death of a loved one. Heb 9:27
  - B. The loss of income.
  - C. Severe or prolonged illness or injury. Psal. 119:71
- III. **SOME WAYS TO REDUCE THE EFFECT, AND/OR ELIMINATE, A CRISIS IN OUR HOMES WOULD BE TO:**
- A. Set the right priorities. Matt 6:33
  - B. Build your home on the right foundation, Jesus Christ. I Cor. 3:11
  - C. Have consistent, mutually agreed upon, parenting and discipline measures that are in-line with Biblical teaching. Prov. 13:24; 23:13-14; Eph. 6:4
  - D. Monitor and limit access to TV, phones, and video games for ALL children in the home. Use parental lock-outs to prevent usage without supervision.
  - E. Seek out professional guidance and counseling for addictions and avoid people, places or things that may weaken your resolve. 1 Cor. 15:33
  - F. Make religion natural in the home. Deut 6:7-9
  - G. Cast your cares on God, and let God handle the problems we cannot control. 1 Peter 5:7; Matt. 19:26; I Cor. 10:13
  - H. Be thankful for the good in your life on a daily basis. Phil. 4:6; James 1:17
  - I. Practice the "Golden Rule" at home. Matt. 7:12
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## **CRISES: WORSHIP CHANGES**

*Jared Knoll*

1. Worship has been a facet of man's existence since the beginning.
2. At the beginning of God's word (Gen. 4) and at the end (Rev. 22), you read about men worshipping. The word appears in its many forms some 200 times in Scripture.
3. Worship is:

- a. "Worth-ship" — honor worthily extended, worthy of praise or exaltation.
  - b. Hebrew (*hishtachawah*) means to prostrate or bow. (Exod. 23:24; II Kings 17:35)
  - c. The Greek (*proskuneo*) means to kiss toward one, a token of reverence. (Matt. 2:2; John 4:24; Heb. 1:6)
  - d. It involves a "lesser" paying homage to one considered "greater" (Heb. 7:4,7).
4. We are also cognizant of the fact that many changes have occurred in the means and manners with which men worship.
- a. We have by the title deemed this to be a crisis, "a time of danger or great difficulty, a decisive moment or turning point."
  - b. The burden of this lesson is to demonstrate the danger of the type of changes we are considering — why this is a decisive moment or time in the church.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### I. CHANGES EXEMPLIFIED: WHAT KIND OF CHANGES ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

- A. There have been many things introduced in the modern world, though change is not new.
  - 1. Our desire is not to rehash all things of the past, but we are aware of things like: children's church, "swapping pulpits" with denominational preachers, instrumental music and many others.
  - 2. We will take note of some more recent occurrences as well as some examples from the Bible to learn/remember God's disposition toward such change.
- B. Modern changes:
  - 1. Instrumental Music: *Heritage Church of Christ* in Fort Worth.
    - a. Information can be observed at [www.heritagechurchofchrist.org](http://www.heritagechurchofchrist.org)
    - b. As of September 8th, they have introduced mechanical instruments into their Sunday evening worship.
    - c. Excerpt: "The shepherds are in unanimous agreement that scripture does not prohibit the use of instruments in our worship, but we also recognize that many of our members would still prefer acappella singing."
  - 2. Women's Roles — Gal328.org
    - a. Fifty-one Churches of Christ are enumerated on the website.
    - b. The purpose is "Gender Justice" as defined on the website: "In general, gender justice means recognizing that men and women are created by God,

redeemed by Christ, and gifted by the Spirit truly without distinction or partiality. In Christian community, gender justice means encouraging both men and women to exercise their Spirit-given gifts in the church's work, worship, and leadership, and celebrating the truth that the Spirit grants such gifts without respect to gender. Concretely, gender justice in the Church of Christ includes opening traditionally masculine leadership roles and activities (deacon, elder, minister, worship leader, preacher, teacher, etc.) to women, and encouraging men to discover and cultivate their gifts for activities traditionally performed by women."

3. Bar Church: *Southern Hills Church of Christ* in Abilene, Texas.
  - a. Information can be observed at: [www.sohillschurch.org/get-connected/events/bar-church/bar-church-faqs/](http://www.sohillschurch.org/get-connected/events/bar-church/bar-church-faqs/)
  - b. The idea is the assembly of the church in the *Memories Country and Western Bar*.
  - c. It is called a satellite location of the *Southern Hills Church* and under the oversight of the eldership.
  - d. There will be mechanical instruments of music used and alcohol will be served.
  - e. The goal was to reach people who were "fed up with church, had dim views of the church and especially church people and perceived themselves to be unworthy or far from God."
4. Many other such examples can unfortunately be cited but these suffice. It also becomes necessary to consider the possible departures man will make in the future.
  - a. Something that may already be happening, but unknown as yet to this preacher, is "*Internet Church*."
  - b. With technologies like 'facetime' and 'skype' it may shortly be that there will be many who stop "coming together." (I Cor. 11:17-18,20,33-34; 14:23,26)
- C. Old Testament Changes:
  1. Cain (Gen. 4; Heb. 11:4).
    - a. Faith comes by hearing God's word.
    - b. This means that God had spoken. Cain knew, but didn't hearken.
    - c. Whatever he did wrong, we can at least say he did not hearken to God's word, affecting change in the mode or manner of worship.
    - d. With him, God was not pleased nor did He accept the worship.
  2. Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. 10)

3. Saul — proposal concerning worship (I Sam. 15).
4. Jeroboam — His Golden Calves (I Kings 12:26-33).
5. Uzziah — wrong one to officiate (II Chron. 26:16-21).
- D. New Testament changes:
  1. Consider the circumstances at Corinth (I Cor. 11-14).
  2. Vain worship of the Pharisees (Matt. 15:9).
  3. Worshipping of angels (Col. 2:18)

## II. WHY HAVE/ARE CHANGES TAKING PLACE?

- A. Answer this Question, "Why do you worship?"
  1. The answers are telling...
  2. Any answer that starts out, "because I..." and goes on to focus on the provision for you, is the wrong answer.
  3. Certainly there are residual benefits, but these are not primary.
  4. This is often the root cause of why change takes place. This is important because change is the result of the shift from 'God' to 'ourselves' as the object.
- B. People have lost focus of the real reason we worship — God, who is the object, is worthy. He is the focus.
  1. He is omnipotent — Creator and Sustainer.
  2. He is omniscient.
  3. He is Omni benevolent — loving, merciful, gracious.
  4. He is omnipresent.

## III. EXAMINE THE SCRIPTURE TEACHING ON WORSHIP — GETTING BACK TO GOD'S DESIGN.

- A. John 4:19-24
  1. Source of teaching — "Jesus saith unto her..." (Matt. 17:5; 28:18; John 14:6; II Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:30-31).
  2. Sequence of the passage — worship was not the first thing discussed, rather salvation and morality was. Worship is not the atoning activity; it is the activity of the atoned.
  3. Significance of worship — a 'lesser' serving a 'greater.'
    - a. Coming before our Creator — a priority (as Noah coming off ark, Gen. 8; Psa. 122:1).
    - b. Should have proper attitude (Gen. 19:10-13).
  4. Spirit of worship — Humility (Luke 18:3); Reverence (Heb. 12:28); Thanksgiving; Sacrificial (II Sam. 24:24).
  5. Standard of worship — truth, only the way God has said.
- B. There are five specific acts of worship outlined in Scripture, including 'when' and 'how' they are to be accomplished (Acts 2:42; Matt. 6:5-15; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:7; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16):
- C. Worship must be:
  1. From a willing mind (II Cor. 8:12).

2. Done decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40).
  3. Humbly and reverently (Heb. 12:28; I Peter 5:5,6).
  4. With sincerity and purely (Phil. 1:10; John 4:23,24).
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## **CRISIS IN THE CHURCH: RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY**

*Barry Kennedy*

1. Crisis is defined as "a situation or period in which things are very uncertain, difficult, or painful, especially a time when action must be taken to avoid complete disaster or breakdown" (*Encarta Dictionary*).
2. Christians are not immune to the difficulties and uncertainties of life because we live in this world.
3. God has made a way of escape to His people, helping us to endure (1 Cor. 10:13).
4. The foundational element to finding a cure for the crises we face is to develop a healthy respect for authority.
5. Developing this respect for authority in the church will help to cure a crisis of ignorance, inactivity, and instability.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY HELPS TO CURE THE CRISIS OF IGNORANCE.**

- A. It has been said that two of the largest problems among the Lord's people are *ignorance* and *apathy* (i.e. *I don't know* and *I don't care*).
  1. God (The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is the supreme authority in all things, because God is the source of all things (Gen. 1:1).
  2. The inspired Word of God is the means by which man is directed in this life (Psa. 119:105; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
  3. Jesus told the Sadducees, "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" (Mark 12:24)
    - a. Too often people try to make the claim that "ignorance is bliss."
    - b. To make such a claim is often nothing more than a feeble avoidance of a responsibility or commitment.
    - c. When we cure the problem of *ignorance*, as it pertains to the Word of God, we will be much more likely to cover the problem of *apathy* as well.

4. Only a heart of stone can study the Word of God and not come away with a deep love for the Lord and a desire to follow Him (Rom. 10:17; John 15:13; 14:15; 1 John 4:19).
- B. Notice some biblical examples of ignorance that God did not consider bliss.
  1. *Josiah* began to rule over Judah in a crisis of gross spiritual ignorance (2 Kings 22).
    - a. God's people had "lost" (literally rejected, 2 Kings 21:1-9) the Word of the Law.
    - b. Josiah had respect for the authority of God and those who shared this respect as well (2 Kings 22:2).
    - c. Josiah's respect for God's authority was demonstrated when he heard the lost Word of the law (2 Kings 22:11).
    - d. When Josiah's ignorance was resolved, he turned to the Lord and made restitution (2 Kings 22:18-20).
  2. *David* also suffered a crisis of ignorance.
    - a. He failed to consider how God wanted the ark of the covenant transported (2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 13-15).
    - b. He was perplexed when Uzzah was struck down (2 Sam. 6:8; 1 Chron. 13:12).
    - c. Many very religious people today are just like David.
      - 1) They assume they know what God's will is, yet they fail to consult the guide book (2 Thess. 3:16-17).
      - 2) Jeremiah noted the folly of such self-centered direction (Jer. 10:23).
      - 3) Adherence to the authority of God, as revealed in His word, was the cure to David's problem (1 Chron. 15:2,15).
- C. Many are going through life suffering a spiritual crisis; yet, their blatant ignorance of God's word causes them to fail to see their lack of submission to the authority of God.  
(Ignorance shows that there is a crisis in the world and in the church when it comes to having respect for authority)

## II. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY HELPS TO CURE THE CRISIS OF INACTIVITY.

- A. How many leaders in the Lord's church have found themselves struggling with inactivity in the membership?
  1. The old adage is still being said that "ninety percent of the work is carried out by ten percent of the membership."
  2. No matter if the above statement is true or not, how much better would "church work" be if we could get all hands on deck?

3. Jesus said of Himself, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).
  4. Therefore, if we see Jesus as the authority, and He is (Matt. 28:18), and we understand that He left us an "example" that we should follow in His steps, and He did (1 Peter 2:21), should we not take on that same disposition?
- B. Developing an appreciation for the authority of the Scriptures will help every individual member to see his or her potential.
1. Jesus told a parable about three individuals receiving "talents" from their master (Matt. 25:14-29).
    - a. The master (i.e. the Lord) knew the ability each man possessed better than they themselves knew (Matt. 25:15b).
    - b. The inactivity of the "one talent man was not overlooked or dismissed as being acceptable (Matt. 25:24-29).
  2. God has delivered unto us everything that we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him (2 Peter 1:3).
    - a. Any amount of knowledge we have of God comes from His word.
    - b. That word tells us there is a way to live, and not to live (Gal. 5:19-26).
- C. Consider how a respect for the authority of God was exemplified in the Scriptures.
1. Peter, James, and John were permitted to accompany the Lord on the mount for His transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8).
    - a. When Peter saw Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah, he became overwhelmed and recommended three tabernacles to be erected: one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for the Lord (see Luke 9:33).
    - b. The voice of the Father came forth with a resounding, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"* (Matt. 17:5).
    - c. Peter and the other apostles fell on their faces in fear, but Jesus relieved them with the words "Arise and be not afraid" (Matt. 17:7).
    - d. They arose and followed Him.
  2. About three thousand Jews who came for the Pentecost submitted to the authority of God (Acts 2).
    - a. Fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus, Peter and the eleven boldly proclaimed that the Jews were guilty of crucifying the Son of God (Acts 2:23, 36).

- b. Hearing these words cut them to the heart so deeply that they cried out, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)
- c. Peter's response had the full weight of the authority of Christ. "Then Peter said unto them, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38; emphasis mine BK).
- d. Those who "gladly received his word" obeyed and that day the Lord added about three thousand souls to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).
- e. Those obedient converts got involved in the work as they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).
- D. Do we respect the authority of God's Word enough to be steadfast in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58)?  
(Inactivity shows that there is a crisis in the world and in the church when it comes to having respect for authority)

### III. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY HELPS TO CURE THE CRISIS OF INSTABILITY.

- A. James said, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).
  - 1. The double minded man is one who tries to serve two masters (Matt. 6:24).
    - a. The Greek word is *dipsuchos* – two spirited, that is, vacillating (in opinion or purpose): – double minded. (Strong's).
    - b. Many are trying to have one spirit focused upon this world and the other focused upon the Lord.
    - c. When we put anything before God (making it our god) it is idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14; Col. 3:5).
  - 2. When we yield ourselves we become slaves (Rom. 6:16).
    - a. Servants (KJV) was translated from the word *doulos* meaning "a slave (literally or figuratively, involuntarily or voluntarily; frequently therefore in a qualified sense of subjection or subserviency): – bond (-man), servant" (Strong's).
    - b. Paul informed the Roman congregation that they were once the servants of sin, but they "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17).
    - c. The Roman brethren obeyed out of a respect for authority.
- B. Living for this world can never bring anything but instability.



1. God's word teaches us how to have the peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7).
  - a. We can be free from the instability of anxiety looking to God in prayer and supplication and thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6).
  - b. All these blessings are reserved for those who submit to the authority of God (Eph. 1:3).
2. The apostle Paul let the Corinthian brethren know that hope in this world brings only misery (1 Cor. 15:19).
- C. Will we allow the world to be our authority (i.e. culture, family, government, etc.), or will we choose to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29)?

#### CONCLUSION:

1. We must understand and teach that a rejection of God's commands in His Word is a rejection of God Himself (John 12:48).
2. Too many Christians, for far too long, are suffering crises in their lives.
3. Many crises, including (but not limited to) ignorance, inactivity, and instability could be resolved if we would learn to respect the proper authority.

## CRISIS: SOCIAL PREACHING

*Garland M. Robinson*

1. The way of man is not right with God. Prov. 14:12; 12:15
  - a. The world refuses to accept the fact that man is *inferior* and God is *supreme*.
  - b. Man seeks to minimize the Bible — calling it myth, fable, fiction, superstition.
  - c. Psalm 14:1, "*The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, [there is] none that doeth good.*"
2. Man follows his own course — thinking he has a better way.
  - a. He refuses to recognize evil and wickedness.  
Isa. 5:20-21, "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto [them that are] wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*"
  - b. Jer. 10:23

**DISCUSSION:****I. MEN IDENTIFY WHAT THEY CALL THE “SOCIAL PROBLEMS” OF THE WORLD.**

- A. Poverty, Racism, Disease, Inequality (Injustice), Hunger, Education, Drugs, Divorce, Abortion, Health care, Homelessness, Homosexuality/Lesbianism, Gangs, etc.
- B. They seek to cure “social ills” by wealth redistribution — “spreading the wealth around” (take money from those who have it and give it to those who don’t).
  - 1. Some are very open in proclaiming that it is their mission in life to “right the wrongs of society.”
    - a. They trash the U.S. constitution.
    - b. They trash the Holy Bible as the very word of God.
  - 2. The agenda of social progressivism/liberalism is to deny there is an absolute standard of right and wrong.
    - a. To them, right and wrong is what an individual believes it to be — as long as you don’t condemn.
    - b. To them, the only thing wrong is to say there is an absolute standard of right and wrong — that there is only ONE right way.
- C. As a result, their goal is to do what is right in their own eyes. cf. Judges 21:25
  - 1. They detest and abhor the idea that the Bible is the “operations manual” for all humanity — for our planet.
  - 2. Sadly, this concept is reflected in the preaching of the day: in denominationalism as a whole and even in some churches of Christ.

**II. PULPITS AROUND THE WORLD ARE FILLED WITH “SOCIAL PREACHING.”**

- A. “I’m okay, you’re okay” philosophy is the norm of the day.
- B. Socialism says, the worse thing in the world is to make people feel guilty.
- C. The feeling of many in the pew is that it’s the preacher’s job to make them feel good.
  - 1. Sadly, many are willing to accommodate them!
  - 2. Too many preacher’s feel that if they can keep the members happy, their job is secure.
  - 3. I was once told by a preacher, “anything goes, as long as people are coming and are happy, we’ve done our job!”
    - a. “Lord help us” when people have that mentality.
    - b. The God of heaven and earth commands something far different!
  - 4. 2 Tim. 4:2, *“PREACH THE WORD; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”*

### III. THE ABSOLUTE CURE FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD IS THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

- A. Go into all the world and preach the Gospel. (Mark 16:15)
  1. Paul was sent to preach it. (1 Cor. 1:17)
 

1 Cor. 9:16, *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel"*  
 Acts 20:26-27, *"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. <sup>27</sup>For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the counsel of God**"*
  2. People are made to "feel good" when they hear and obey the GOSPEL.
    - a. Acts 8:39, The Ethiopian Eunuch went on his way rejoicing when he was baptized.
    - b. Matt. 13:44-46, The Gospel and the kingdom/church is a treasure beyond compare, a pearl of great price, worth more than a man has or will ever have.
- B. The Lord calls all men unto Him by "The Gospel of Christ," not a Social Gospel of men. 2 Thess. 2:14; John 6:44-45; 1 Cor. 4:15
  1. Matt. 13:23, When the *Gospel Seed* is sown into honest and good hearts, it brings forth abundantly.
  2. Acts 2:37-41, The *Gospel preached* on Pentecost resulted in about 3,000 being baptized.
  3. Acts 13:14,44, The *Word of God* (not socialism) was preached in Antioch of Pisidia.
    - a. v.46, It was necessary that the word of God be preached to them.
    - b. v.47, The Gospel was/is a light that brings salvation.
      - 1) v.46, But sadly, many of the Jews judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life by rejecting the light of the Gospel.
      - 2) v.48, However, many of the Gentiles "glorified the word of the Lord" and obeyed it.
    - c. v.48, "And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."
  4. 2 Tim. 1:10, Christ *"...hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."*
- C. Salvation from sins does not come about by the preaching of the Social Gospel! — The watered down, no conviction, no substance, no salvation, social, non-gospel.
- D. Rom. 1:16, The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.
- E. Pleasing God comes by faith (Heb. 11:6). Faith comes by hearing the Gospel (Rom. 10:17).

#### IV. THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST WILL JUDGE US, NOT A SOCIAL GOSPEL.

- A. Rom. 2:16, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ *according to my gospel*."
- B. John 12:48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: *the word* that I have spoken, *the same* shall judge him in the last day."
- C. Rev. 20:12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and *the books were opened*: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and *the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books*, according to their works."
- D. 2 Cor. 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad."

#### V. HUMAN SUFFERING WILL ALWAYS EXIST.

- A. It was brought into the world by SIN.  
Rom. 5:12, "...*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*:"
- B. Jesus said the poor will always be in this world. Matt. 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8
  - 1. He helped their physical infirmities. Luke 7:22, blind see, lame walk, lepers cleansed, deaf hear, dead raised
  - 2. More importantly, Luke 4:18, He came to preach the GOSPEL to them. Luke 7:22
  - 3. We can help relieve some suffering of some men, but it's been all for naught unless we preach the saving Gospel to them. Jesus died to save men from their sins, not human suffering.
- C. Rom. 8:18, "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*"

#### VI. MANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AND A SOCIAL GOSPEL.

- A. The Gospel brings PEACE. A social gospel doesn't. Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15; Phil. 4:7
- B. The Gospel is DEFENDED. A social gospel can't be defended. Phil. 1:7,17
- C. The Gospel must be CONTINUED and LIVED in. A social gospel must not be walked in. Gal. 2:5,14
- D. We LABOR in the Gospel, not a social gospel. Phil. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:2

- E. We are ENTRUSTED with the Gospel, but not a social gospel. 1 Thess. 2:4
- F. We are to RECEIVE the Gospel, but not a social gospel. Acts 17:11; 19:20; 8:14
- G. We are to SPREAD the Gospel, but not a social gospel. Acts 6:7; 8:4,25; 10:36-37; 12:24; 13:5; 14:7,21; 16:10; Rom. 1:15; 15:19-20
- H. The Gospel of Christ will BUILD us up. A social gospel won't. Acts 20:32
- I. The Gospel of Christ is HINDERED by a social gospel. 2 Cor. 9:12; Gal. 5:7
- J. The Gospel is PERVERTED by a social gospel. Gal. 1:6-9; Col. 1:23

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Rom. 8:35, "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*" A social gospel will separate us.
2. 1 Peter 1:4, Jesus died on the cross to give us "*...an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*" A social gospel destroys our inheritance.
3. Rom. 16:25, The Lord has the power to establish us according to the Gospel. A social gospel can't.
4. 2 Peter 1:3, By God's divine power he has given us "all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the *knowledge* of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
  - a. Social outreach, helping the social ills and needs of men help the physical body, but DO NOT HELP THE SOUL.
  - b. Jesus died to save the SOUL, not the PHYSICAL BODY.

## CRISIS SOLUTION: RETURN TO GOD

*Ben F. Vick, Jr.*

1. The English word crisis (plural 'crises') means an "unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty." In the field of medicine, it carries the idea of "the turning point in the course of a disease, which indicates recovery or death."
2. The previous lessons have clearly set forth the crisis in the world and in the church.
3. The lesson assigned to me is the first of several on the solution to the crises mentioned. A solution is a *statement that solves a problem or explains how to solve a problem.*

4. Since "the past is prologue," the solution given by God through Hosea in the long ago is the solution for man today. (Hosea 14:1).

#### DISCUSSION:

##### I. "O ISRAEL, RETURN UNTO THE LORD THY GOD."

- A. "Return" is the occurrence of a change in direction back in the opposite direction; it is the act of going back to a prior location.
- B. One begins life in a state of innocence (Rom. 7:9; Matt. 19:14), but the transgression of God's law severs the relationship with God (Gen. 2:16-17; Eph. 2:1; I John 3:4).
- C. As Israel and Judah of old were called upon to return to God, so man today must return to God (Jer. 3:12,14, 22; 15:19).
- D. Reconciliation (to make friends again) is based upon man's return to God.
  1. The means of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21).
  2. The chain of authority in reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21; cf. John 16:13-15).
  3. Note: "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). Man did the departing by his own sin; *ergo*, man's having been the guilty party, must make the return upon the conditions laid down by the God, the innocent party.
  4. The realm of reconciliation is within the body of Christ (Eph. 2:12-17).

##### II. RETURN UNTO GOD — THE CONDITIONS.

- A. Prayerful words of penitence from the child of God are required (Hosea 14:2). It is not lip-service that the Lord demands; but genuine confession of sin (I John 1:9; Isa. 66:1-2; Psa. 51:17).
- B. Real repentance means turning to the Lord (Hosea 14:2).
- C. Genuine repentance meant not putting one's trust in Asshur (Assyria), nor in horses, nor in idols (Hosea 14:3).
- D. Today men must turn away from what the world offers. Those things are of no value (I John 2:15-17; James 4:4; Rom. 12:2).

##### III. RETURN UNTO THE LORD THY GOD — BLESSINGS.

- A. Those who return unto God by repentance and prayer shall find mercy (Hosea 14:3).
- B. They will find healing and love (Hosea 14:4).
- C. To those who return:
  1. God's anger will be turned away (Hosea 14:4).
  2. God's blessings will be as the dew of Israel (Hosea 14:5).  
In a dry and arid land, the dew from heaven is refresh-

ing and stimulating to the thirsty plants. God's blessings upon those who return are refreshing and stimulating unto the soul.

3. One who returns unto the Lord "shall grow as the lily." "The lily, which carpets the fields of Palestine (Matt. 6:29), has slender roots, which might easily be up torn, but under God's protection even these are to strike downward like the roots of the cedars." (Ellicott's Bible Com. p. 632). See Hosea 14:5.
4. Not only will they be rooted and grounded in the truth (Col. 1:27); but their branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as [the cedars] of Lebanon (Hosea 14:6).
5. They who return unto the Lord will not only be blessed, but shall be a blessing to others (Hosea 14:7).

#### IV. RETURN UNTO THE LORD THY GOD — ILLUSTRATED.

- A. The younger son, of his own free will, demanded his inheritance and departed from his father's house. (cf. Luke 15)
  1. He went into the far country and wasted his substance with riotous living.
  2. When the boy had spent all that he had, he began to be in want. Then, he joined himself to a citizen of that country and was given the task of feeding the swine.
  3. When he became so hungry that he "feigned would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat," he "came to himself." He remembered home.
  4. He resolved to return to his father. He started the long journey back home.
  5. As he was a long way off, his father saw him, and ran to meet him. He confessed his sin. His father restored him to his place in his home.
  6. There was rejoicing.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Hosea 14:9, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."
  2. Jer. 3:12, "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever."
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## SOLUTION: RETURN TO GOD'S WORD

*Jeff Grimes*

1. Whenever there is an airplane crash with great loss of life, the authorities immediately launch an investigation to discover the cause of the crash.
2. If there is a sudden drop-off in the stock market, analysts go to work to study the reasons for this reduction in economic activity.
3. If someone becomes sick and suddenly dies without an obvious cause, one is concerned as to why. In such cases an autopsy is performed to determine the cause.
4. These are only a few areas that we seek to know the causes for the effects. We have long been convinced that nothing happens without some prior cause. It is a fact that every cause has its effect and every effect has its cause.
5. Whenever a crisis is produced, we are interested in the cause and the solution.
6. Whenever individuals or nations turn their backs on God, chaos ensues, and a crisis develops.
7. Satan is smart enough to know that in order to get people away from God, one first has to get them away from the Word of God (Luke 8:11).
8. What is the solution? The only solution to offset any crisis we face is a return to God's word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The time is now!

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. A RETURN TO GOD'S WORD IS THE CRISIS SOLUTION FOR OUR HOMES.

- A. With every manufacturer's product, an operator's manual is provided. The manufacturer who designed the product knows what is involved to assure problem-free operation. When the product malfunctions, or to put it another way, a crisis is experienced, we retrieve the manual and promptly turn to the "trouble-shooting" section to diagnose the problem and find a solution. More often than not, if we follow the manufacture's suggestions the crisis can be solved rather easily. Unfortunately, we are prone to use our own wisdom in trying to "fix" the problem.
- B. God made us (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7; Job 4:17; 33:4; Psa. 139:14; Acts 17:28). He knows us inside and out.
  1. "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" (Isa. 64:8, KJV)
  2. "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14).



3. "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25).
- C. Since it is the case that God is man's Creator, He has furnished mankind with an instruction manual for smooth operation.
  1. Whatever instruction God imparts to us through His Word, we need to remember that it is "for our good always," and whatever advice God gives on any subject will be right.
  2. "And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day" (Deut. 6:24; Psa. 119:128).
  3. It is truly sad that Adam and Eve were not more aware of this. They learned the hard way the timeless truth that "the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15, Gen. 2:15-17; 3:16-19).
  4. When we fail to love the law of God we deprive ourselves of "great peace", and forfeit great wealth (Psa. 119:72, 165).
- D. I know of nothing that should be any dearer to our hearts than our families. We all know the old clichè.
  1. "As the home goes, so goes the nation."
  2. "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."
  3. "Home is where the heart is."
  4. "There's no place like home."
- E. As we observe our surroundings, the philosophical slogan "These are the times that try men's souls" is becoming more and more of a reality.
- F. We are truly living in perilous times.
  1. Paul wrote, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1).
  2. The word "perilous" has to do with those things hard to bear, or that which would be troublesome.
- G. The homes of America have not escaped these troublesome times.
  1. Rapid changes have been taking place over the past 40-50 years in our society that have put a tremendous strain on traditional values.
  2. The homosexual agenda, empowered by influential voices in government along with the Hollywood crowd have contributed greatly to the destruction of home and family. They make no bones about it. They want our "children — God's heritage" (Psa. 127:3).
- H. In the infinite wisdom of God, the home was created. Its design was and is for the well being and happiness of man.

1. Marriage and home are divine in origin.
  - a. Marriages are failing because we have forgotten it originated with God. The world in which we live has forgotten this as well.
  - b. The majority feels self-sufficient; they think the instructions God gave in His Word are outdated and not needed.
  - c. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psa. 127:1).
    - 1) That is another way of saying without the help of God our plans ultimately are destined to fail. A crisis will develop.
    - 2) "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).
  - d. The inspired instructions given by Paul recorded in Eph. 5:21–6:4 would transform the homes of America if applied.
  - e. Every crisis solution for home and family is found in God's Word. Husbands, wives, and children would do well to give heed.
  - f. The questions of leadership, submission, sexual activities, domestic duties, the rearing of children, and the permanency of marriage have already been determined (Eph. 5:22–6:4; 1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Cor. 7:1-7, 39; Heb. 13:4; Matt. 19:6, 9; Rom. 7:1-4). "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89).
  - g. The theme songs of every home should be "Give Me the Bible" and "I Need Thee Every Hour."
2. Marriage is intimate in relationship and monogamous in character.
  - a. Notice 1 Cor. 7:1-5.
  - b. Paul wrote in verse two that in order "to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."
  - c. "His own" — "Her own" — the idea presented is that husbands and wives are peculiar to each other, in contrast to public property. Husbands and wives are not public property. A woman does not have her own husband if she must share him with other women, and vice versa.
  - d. The truth presented is that of a monogamous relationship — one man for one woman for one lifetime.
  - e. The AIDS epidemic, a crisis of monumental proportion could be stamped out in one generation if society

will return to God's solution in Scripture — the implementation of one man, for one woman, for one lifetime (Gen. 2:18-25; Eph. 5:31).

3. Marriage is permanent in duration.
  - a. We need young men and women who are not presently caught up in the heat of fleshly lusts, but rather are taught to understand that marriage is a commitment for life.
  - b. This commitment should be based on love; not lust (2 Sam. 13:1-20).
  - c. "Till death do us part" (Matt. 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12).
  - d. Far too many couples make their marriage vows before God very lightly. They need to remember there are three involved in this vow; God is the third party.
  - e. "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.  
<sup>15</sup>And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.  
<sup>16</sup>For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away..." (Malachi 2:14-16).
  - f. "...A threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12). Only when God is the third partner in marriage will it be successful.
  - g. The divorce courts could be driven out of business if only husbands and wives would return to Biblical principles, and apply them to their marriages.

## II. A RETURN TO GOD'S WORD IS THE SOLUTION FOR THE CRISIS OF OUR NATION.

- A. Civil government, like home and marriage, has been established by the God of heaven and earth.
  1. "For there is no power but of God: For the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1ff; John 19:11; Jer. 27:5; Dan. 2:21; 4:25).
  2. Christians are to obey civil law, provided those laws do not violate the law of God; in which case "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29; 1 Peter 2:13-17).
- B. When a nation of people and their leaders depart from Biblical age-old values, anarchy ensues.
  1. The fear of God is replaced with the fear of man (Rom. 3:18; Prov. 29:25).
  2. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

- a. Righteousness is accomplished by living righteous lives (1 John 2:29; 3:7).
  - b. Righteous lives are produced by obeying God's Word (Psa. 119:172; 1 John 2:3-6).
- C. MORALITY, not MONEY is the crying need for the citizens of America!
  - 1. It's NOT the economy "stupid" — it's the moral climate!
  - 2. The trillions of dollars pumped into the economy are not going to solve the real "bankruptcy" this nation faces.
  - 3. Unless we as a nation "consider our ways" and return to biblical principles; whatever "stimulus package" implemented is only going "into a bag with holes" (Haggai 1:6-11).
- D. Homosexuality in America is no longer considered a vile and abominable sin, but an "alternate lifestyle." Our nation has "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:25). Yes, "There is a way which seemth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).
  - 1. Homosexuality (sexual relations between men) and lesbianism (sexual relations between women), at any time in the past or present, has never been an acceptable "life style" in God's sight. Culture has absolutely nothing to do with it! God speaks plainly in both Old and New Testaments, condemning this deplorable "lifestyle" as "very grievous" sin.
  - 2. Carefully consider these Scriptures: Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:1ff; Lev. 18:22-23; 20:13; Deut. 23:17; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:11-12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7. Isaiah 3:8-9, "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves."
  - 3. New Testament: Matt. 5:32, 19:9; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; 2 Peter 2:6-8; Jude 7.
- E. Abortion (murder of unborn children), like homosexuality, is an accepted practice in America.
  - 1. The duty of government is to protect the innocent and punish the evil (Rom. 13:4). There is nothing more innocent than an unborn child.
  - 2. The Scriptures do not make a distinction between pre-natal and post-natal life. The same Greek word (*brephos*) is used eight times by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament to describe both. Five times its translated "babe/babes," then "infants," "young children," and "child" once

each (Luke 1:41,44; 2:12,16; 18:15; Acts 7:19; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Peter 2:2).

3. God can not and will not bless a nation that condones what His word condemns. America the beautiful must return to God's Word!
4. *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my 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).

### III. A RETURN TO GOD'S WORD IS THE CRISIS SOLUTION FOR THE LORD'S CHURCH.

- A. Unless you are a modern day "Rip Van Winkle" and have been asleep for the past twenty years, then you are aware of the menacing cloud of liberalism hanging over the Lord's church.
- B. The liberal philosophies involved in destroying our nation are the same underlying principles doing great harm to the church. The only difference is that one is in the political kingdom of men; the other is in the spiritual kingdom of Christ — the church.
- C. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how to thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).
  1. If the Lord's church fails to stand and preach the Truth, then who will?
  2. The Lord's church in the 21st century must not "give place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5).
    - a. The truth on how to become a Christian must be preached. One must: **Hear** the Truth (Rom. 10:17); **Believe** the Truth (Heb. 11:6); **Repent** of sin (Luke 13:3,5); **Confess** Jesus as the Son of the living God (Matt. 10:32-33,16:16); **Be Baptized** "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21).
    - b. The truth about worship must be preached (John 4:24).
    - c. The truth about Christian living must be preached (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-2).
    - d. The truth about marriage and divorce must be preached (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).
    - e. The truth about discipline must be preached (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6,14).

- f. Christians should not “shun to declare all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:20, 26-27).
- D. I did not have the privilege of attending the services of the Lord’s church when I was young. I came out of the Baptist denomination. However, in the great providence of God I was fortunate enough to marry a young woman (forty-seven years ago this coming June) that knew the truth. But what is frustrating to me is this, if some of my brethren had their way; they would carry me back to the “weak and beggarly” elements of denominationalism.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Again the question is asked, What is the solution for the crises we face in our Home, Nation, and the Lord’s church?
  - a. It is the same solution applied by Josiah in 2 Kings 22 & 23; 2 Chron. 34 & 35.
  - b. It is the same solution applied by the apostles and elders to those Judaizing teachers trying to bind circumcision on the Gentiles (Acts 15).
  - c. It is the same solution that if applied would have corrected the crises in the churches of Asia, Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea.
  - d. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6).
2. “And now, brethren, I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up; and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

## SOLUTION: RETURN TO GODLY LIVING

*Chris Clevenger*

1. The churches of Christ on the Mediterranean island of Crete were facing crisis while Paul was preaching in Asia Minor sometime around AD 67 (Titus 3:12).
  - a. The various congregations of the church on the island lacked the leadership of faithful elders (Titus 1:5).
  - b. The church was suffering from the propagation of the tainted Gospel preached by the Judaisers (Titus 1:10-11).
  - c. The Cretans were generally lewd and base people and posed a great challenge to Titus’s evangelistic work (Titus 1:12).
  - d. Foolish questions and contentions were causing strife in the church. This was leading to various schisms caused by heretical men and their doctrine (Titus 3:9-11).

2. Paul's divine directions to Titus provided a two-fold solution to the crises that plagued the young church on Crete.
  - a. First, he instructed Titus to remind the brethren of the unsearchable grace of God (Titus 1:4; 2:11; 3:15).
  - b. Second, Paul emphasized that a thorough understanding of such grace would lead to godly lives evidenced by good works (Titus 1:1,16; 2:7, 11-14; 3:1,8,14).
3. The book of Titus can easily be broken down into three sections coinciding with its three chapters with all three sections highlighting God's grace and good works (godliness).
  - a. Chapter 1 is intended to encourage the elders of the church to maintain good works.
  - b. Chapter 2 was written to call for all demographics in the church to maintain good works.
  - c. Chapter 3 was divinely designed to point members in general to godly living in all aspects of life.
4. Paul provided a "faithful saying" that required a constant affirmation by Titus: "They which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3:8).
  - a. In one verse, the apostle Paul reveals that living a godly life requires faith, focus, and forwardness.
  - b. As God's people in every age return to godly lives the same three attributes are required of each of them.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

##### **I. RETURNING TO GODLY LIVING REQUIRES FAITH (Titus 3:8).**

- A. Those who "have believed in God" will lead godly lives.
  1. All men act in accordance with their beliefs. If they do not live in such a way, then they do not really believe it.
  2. Those who have truly believed in God will live lives of godliness realizing that God sees all the doings of man (Heb. 4:13).
- B. Biblical faith includes obedience to the commands of God.
  1. This type of faith comes as a result of hearing the word of God (Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 10:17).
  2. Faith and faithful acts of obedience are inseparable (James 2:18, 20, 26).
- C. Various groups in the church are called to manifest this type of faith throughout the book of Titus.
  1. Aged men are called to live godly, sober, grave, and temperate lives (Titus 2:2).
  2. Aged women are to behave like godly women (Titus 2:3).
  3. The younger women, having been taught by the older, are to return to lives of godliness (Titus 2:4-5).

4. The younger men are to be sober minded thereby exemplifying godliness (Titus 2:6).
5. Even elders (Titus 1:5-9), preachers like Titus (Titus 2:7-8), and servants (Titus 2:9-10) are to possess godliness.

## II. RETURNING TO GODLY LIVING REQUIRES FOCUS (Titus 3:8).

- A. It is impossible to continually live a life of godliness without resolve and dedication.
  1. Consider the frequent calls to faithfulness found throughout the New Testament.
  2. A life of faith and godliness does not happen by chance; faithfulness is a matter of dedicated and determined choice.
- B. The word translated “be careful” is similar to the expression “seek those things which are above” (Col. 3:1) and call Christians to focus on eternal verities.
  1. The Cretans struggled to overcome a worldly, temporal mindset (Titus 1:12).
  2. This call to godliness would require them to focus their eyes upon a higher, more ethereal plain — heaven.
- C. To live a godly life, a life ever cognizant of the existence of God, demands careful thought and consideration.
  1. A thorough investigation of God’s word is necessary.
  2. A thoughtful application of God’s word is required.
  3. A tenacious dedication to God’s word is mandatory.

## III. RETURNING TO GODLY LIVING REQUIRES FORWARDNESS (Titus 3:8).

- A. The phraseology included in “to maintain good works” indicates a certain inclination and perpetuation of these acts.
  1. The churches of Crete, as well as the church throughout the world, needed to be known and recognized for their good deeds and godly living.
  2. These “good works” would be an immediate and automatic outgrowth of their love for God and love for the lost.
- B. Just as the apostle Paul was forward to remember the poor (Gal. 2:10), he calls for the Christians on Crete to be habitually involved in good efforts and works.
  1. Godliness is more than “random acts of kindness.”
  2. True godliness is a lifestyle of faithfulness towards God, sincerity towards God’s word, love for God’s people, and benevolence for those outside of Christ.



- C. God's people should be known for their godliness just as much as they are known for their commitment to truth and doctrinal purity.
1. The world may think the church strange for her moral stance (1 Peter 4:4).
  2. Nevertheless, an honest and godly conduct may provide a great opportunity to teach those same detractors the Gospel of Christ (1 Peter 2:12).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The book of Titus emphasizes the return to godly living by reminding the Cretan Christians of God's great grace.
2. Throughout the book there are five revelations about a godly life filled with good works.
  - a. First, a godly life provides a pattern for others (Titus 2:7).
  - b. Second, a godly life is pursued with passion by Christians (Titus 2:14).
  - c. Third, to live a godly life requires preparation (Titus 3:1).
  - d. Fourth, a godly life is the proper profession for all of God's people (Titus 3:8).
  - e. Fifth, a godly life is profitable to all (Titus 3:8, 14).
3. If God's people are going to escape the current crises that plagues the world, the church, and the home and avoid similar situations in the future, it is imperative that all of God's people live godly lives.

## SOLUTION: RETURN TO DISCIPLINE

*John Cotham*

1. Discipline has become the forgotten God-given tool for keeping the church pure of sin.
  - a. Just as has happened in the home (family); so, has happened in the church (family of God).
2. God has always shown mankind that discipline is needful for correction.
  - a. Example: Home, family, children. Look at God's instructions:
    - 1) Prov. 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
    - 2) Prov. 13:24, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
    - 3) Prov. 22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."
    - 4) Prov. 23:13-14, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die."

- 14Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.”
- b. Some today will say, “But, that’s the Old Testament. We’ve outgrown that!” “The belt is too cruel.” “There are better means to discipline.”
    - 1) That’s the attitude that is behind the breakdown of today’s families in America.
  - c. Discipline is the tool the American family has forgotten.
  - 3. The same attitude has permeated the Lord’s church.
  - 4. Excuses Given:
    - a. “We’ve grown past that.”
    - b. “Discipline is cruel; discipline causes family embarrassment.”
    - c. “Discipline just doesn’t work today...they only leave to attend somewhere else.”
    - d. “If we disciplined all that needed it, we wouldn’t have half our number.”
    - e. We’ve heard all the excuses!
  - 5. Just like in the home, discipline and its application is a much needed subject for today’s family of God.

#### DISCUSSION:

- I. **THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A NEED FOR DISCIPLINE AMONG GOD’S PEOPLE.** Commentator Matthew Henry wrote: “The greatest obstructors of the success of the word are those whose lives contradict their good doctrine...”
  - A. Consider the Israelites:
    - 1. Judges 21:25, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”
    - 2. 1 Kings 14:16, “And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.”
  - B. So God sent the prophets:
    - 1. 2 Chron. 24:19, “Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.”
    - 2. Does that sound like some today?
  - C. Like families in this life, there has always been a need for discipline in the family of God.
- II. **WE MUST ASK, “IS THERE EVIDENCE GOD HIMSELF HAS TAKEN DISCIPLINARY ACTION UPON MANKIND?”**
  - A. In Noah’s day. (Gen. 6:5-7, 13).  
Purged the earth...all mankind except for eight souls.
  - B. God’s promise to the Hebrews in their new land. (Lev. 26:12-17) Keep My word or suffer the consequences.

- C. A similar promise is repeated. (Deut. 8:11-14, 19-20)  
Keep your loyalty to Me or perish.
- D. Even when it has to do with our natural care. (Deut. 11:13-19) Obey, or I will remove My blessings.
- E. All of these examples plus many more prove that our God is serious when it comes to obedience to His commands.
  - 1. Is God still that serious today? (Deut. 18:17-19) (Christ, His Prophet)
- F. There must be no doubt that God is just as serious about discipline today as He has been in the past?

### III. HAS GOD GIVEN DIRECTIONS INDICATING HIS SAME SERIOUS NATURE FOR TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FAMILY?

- A. The answer is a clear "YES."
  - 1. However, God no longer performs the disciplinary action Himself. He has given that responsibility to each individual congregation.
  - 2. The leaders of every congregation are given this responsibility.
    - a. Certainly it is the responsibility of the elders if the congregation has elders.
    - b. Still, the responsibility falls on the leadership of every congregation, even the brethren in the men's business meeting.
    - c. Because a congregation does not have elders does not remove the responsibility for proper discipline.
- B. Are there instructions regarding discipline to brethren in the twenty-first century?
  - 1. Shepherds (leaders) should remember what God told the shepherds of His people under the Law of Moses. (Ezek. 34:4-10)
    - a. Those that have leadership in the church today are under a grave charge to keep the brethren and the church pure, no matter the century.
- C. Why such a serious need? Brother David Pharr wrote: "Many no longer expect that church people will behave much differently than the unchurched. It seems both have the same ambitions, are pursuing the same temporal goals, go to the same places, laugh at the same things, and make the same excuses." (*The Spiritual Sword*, Jan., 2003, p.22)
  - 1. Apparently, God's people have always had that same problem. 1 Cor. 10:21, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."
  - 2. How sad that it doesn't seem to alarm most members today that some brethren try to live with one foot in the church and one foot in the world.

**IV. HAS GOD GIVEN SPECIFIC BOUNDARIES, SPECIFIC LIMITS, SPECIFIC ACTS THAT WILL TELL US WHEN ONE NEEDS DISCIPLINARY ACTION?**

- A. YES. Had it not been the case, we could not carry out His commands. What are some of these limits? Who are these that need disciplinary action? How do we identify them?
1. 1 Cor. 5:9-13, "Fornicators, covetous, idolaters, railers, drunkards, extortioners"
  2. 2 Thess. 3:6-15, those who: "Walk disorderly, will not work, that obey not word of the epistle" (divine word).
  3. Rom. 16:17-18, "Those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine."
  4. Those, along with all who will openly live a life of disregard for the word of God.

**V. WHY IS SUCH ACTION NECESSARY? WHAT BECOMES BROKEN? WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE?**

- A. FELLOWSHIP! The family relationship is based on the oneness of fellowship; fellowship with God and fellowship with each other as members of His family.
- B. Allen E. Highers wrote: "Fellowship must exist vertically before it can exist horizontally; that is, it must extend upward to God before it can extend outward to man. The true basis of fellowship one with another is fellowship with God. How can we be in fellowship with those who are not in fellowship with God?" (*The Spiritual Sword*, October, 1969, pp. 29-30)
- C. The pure Christian cannot continue in any fellowship with the world, nor with the worldly member.
- D. We must understand that if one willfully lives in violation of God's commands and doctrine, he/she is in a lost condition.
- E. If that brother/sister refuses to change, they deprecate godly fellowship.

**VI. HOW SHOULD SUCH DISCIPLINE BE CARRIED OUT?**

- A. Obviously with much love and respect for the brother or sister, never with hatred or animosity in our hearts for the person involved in sin.
- B. Matt. 18:15-17, Notice there are steps, particularly if between two Christians.
1. Go to the offender. If no repentance, then,
  2. Carry witnesses. If still no repentance, then,
  3. Carry it before the church (assembly). If no repentance, then mark and disfellowship.
- C. There is obviously a sequence whereby final conclusion of fellowship can be continued.

- D. Some have misunderstood and have misapplied these verses. Many times the sin is not against a member, but simply sins against God and in living as such is against His body.
- E. When discipline is needed, the elders (leaders) must first go to the offender to see if repentance can be accomplished. If after efforts are exhausted, it must be brought before the church, and the offender must be marked and disfellowshipped.
- F. The entire purpose is to achieve repentance by the offender.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Brethren must recognize that in failing to carry out proper and needed discipline, we also sin against God. We must return to correct discipline in the Lord's body or be accountable.
2. Elders (leaders) who fail to discipline properly enjoin themselves in support of the sins and the sinful living of those who need the discipline.
3. Whole congregations overlook the sins of many; even of those used in the worship service.
4. The scripture is clear. God will judge those who have failed to keep His family pure.
5. Discipline has to do with FELLOWSHIP. Our fellowship can only be with those who maintain a pure relationship with God.
6. Brethren, we have a crisis! Return to the taking of proper discipline throughout the church is imperative!
7. Failure to do so has severely weakened the body of Christ in many places.
8. Disciplinary action must be taken wherever unrepented sin arises. Failure to do so will destroy the effect of any congregation.
9. "The greatest obstructers of the success of the Word are those whose lives contradict their good doctrine..." (Commentator Matthew Henry).

## SOLUTION: RETURN TO EVANGELISM

*Stephen Wiggins*

1. I will fulfill my responsibility on this theme under two points: the crisis and the solution.
  - a. The *Crisis*. A "crisis" may be defined as a crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; it is a situation that has reached a critical stage. As this pertains to evangelism, the Lord's church today needs to seriously con-

sider our efforts to preach the Gospel to the whole world. The crisis is that a minimal amount of humanity is members of the Lord's church. Billions of people remain lost without the Gospel (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).

- b. *The Solution.* A "solution" is an action or process taken to solve a problem. What is the solution to the problem as it pertains to the efforts of the churches of Christ to evangelize the world? I am careful to offer a biblical solution to the crisis under discussion. God offers the best solution to any spiritual crises that the church faces. Let us be content to do things God's way.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. THE CRISIS:

- A. There has never been a time within the history of the church in which we had access to as many avenues to preach the Gospel to the world.
  1. We have better *transportation* (planes, trains, and automobiles), better *communication* (television, telephones, mail, and computers), and better *trained preachers* (at least more schools, access to written, audio, and video material, and advantages of education), and yet the church is growing less today than when we did not possess these advantages.
  2. The population of the world in the year 2013 is estimated at 7½ billion people. There are just over five million members of the churches of Christ in approximately 40,000 congregations worldwide. We should be concerned over the fact that there are many false religions in the world today that have more members than among the Lord's redeemed.

### II. THE SOLUTION: At least in part, there must be the following responses on the part of the twenty-first century churches of Christ. These responses on the part of God's people will ensure that a remedy will be forthcoming for today's crisis in evangelism.

- A. There must be a *genuine love within us for humanity* in general.
  1. God loves humanity (John 3:16). We must cultivate that same intense love for the souls of people (cf. Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9). Like the Savior, we must have compassion for the lost (Matt. 9:36-38).
  2. Without the motivational aspect of love, the Lord's church will never make the necessary effort to preach the Gospel in order to convert the lost (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

One soul is worth more than the whole world (Matt. 16:26).

- B. There must be a *conviction within us that people are actually lost in sin.*
  1. The very purpose Jesus came was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). What our Lord commenced in his physical body (seeking the lost) must be continued by his spiritual body, the church.
  2. We must cultivate the conviction that people without the Gospel of Christ will be lost throughout eternity in hell (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- C. There must be *confidence on our part that the Gospel is truly God's power to save.*
  1. The power of God to save people from the consequences of sin resides in the message of the Gospel and nowhere else (Rom. 1:16).
  2. The power does not reside in anything but the Gospel of Christ.
- D. There must be *faith on our part in the promise that God will give the increase.*
  1. God is the one who gives the increase among those saved (1 Cor. 3:6). This is not, never has been, and never will be a human achievement. Such increase is possible only from God's vantage point.
  2. There is a tendency for some to resort to gimmickry in order to produce growth within the church (illustration: preacher promised to kiss a pig if attendance drive resulted in achieving the set goal). No one "grows the church" any more than they can grow a tomato plant. We plant and water but God gives the increase.
- E. There must be *obedience on our part to the command of the Great Commission.*
  1. There are grammatical reasons for understanding that the Lord uttered a command to be obeyed when he gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19; cf. Matt. 9:13); [see Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 642; Cleon Rogers, "The Great Commission," *Bibliotheca* (July 1973), 258-267].
  2. The *teaching* (KJV) or *making disciples* (ASV) is exactly what was done by the apostles (Acts 2:42; 14:21). The early church was obedient to the divine command of the Great Commission. The church of today must be obedient as well.
- F. There must be a *sense of urgency on the part of God's people today is fulfilling the Great Commission* (2 Tim. 4:2; John 4:35; 2 Cor. 6:2).

1. We must be “instant” (KJV) or “urgent” (ASV) in the proclamation of the word. This term relates a “readiness to discharge a task, to fix one’s mind on, to be attentive to” (BDAG, 418).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. May God help the churches of Christ today to be more evangelistic. May our spirits be “stirred” (KJV) or “provoked” (ASV) within us (Acts 17:16). Let us strive to do the following:
  - a. Recognize the crisis in evangelism.
  - b. Repent of any shortcomings on our part.
  - c. Return to and revitalize our efforts pertaining to that God-given responsibility.
  - d. Resolve to deal with this crisis God’s way, and not man’s.
  - e. Rejoice as souls are saved and God is glorified.

## **RETURN TO A FOCUS ON HEAVEN**

*Sidney White*

1. According to a poll several years ago, “most expect to go to heaven.”
2. Even many of those who do not believe in hell believe in heaven.
3. Perhaps we speak too little about the place for which we should be striving.
4. In order to help us re-focus on heaven, consider the following questions, with answers.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- I. **WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN THE REALITY OF HEAVEN?**
  - A. The patriarchs believed in heaven. Heb.11:10, 13-16.
  - B. David believed in heaven. 2 Sam. 12:23; Psa. 23:6
  - C. Daniel believed in heaven. Dan.12:2
  - D. John the baptizer believed in heaven. Matt.3:11, 12
  - E. Jesus knew whereof He spoke. Matt.13:41-43; 25:23,34; John 14:1-6; 17:24
  - F. Paul believed in heaven. 2 Cor. 5:1; 12:2-4
  - G. John knew of heaven. Rev.21:1,2
- II. **IS THERE A WAY TO GET TO HEAVEN? YES!**
  - A. The way to heaven is through Christ. John 14:6
  - B. The way to heaven involves desire. Heb.11:16
  - C. The way to heaven involves obedience. Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8-9



- D. The way to heaven demands endurance. Matt. 10:22; James 1:12
- E. The way to heaven demands faithfulness. Rev. 2:10

### **III. ARE THERE HINDRANCES ALONG THE WAY TO HEAVEN? YES!**

- A. The devil will do all he can to hinder us. I Peter 5:8
- B. There are three avenues of temptation. I John 2:15-17; I Cor. 10:13

### **IV. ARE THERE SUFFICIENT SIGNS TO KEEP US ON THE RIGHT PATH TO HEAVEN? YES!**

- A. We must pray without ceasing. I Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:6
- B. We must be constantly studying God's word for directions. 2 Tim. 2:15; I Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; Matt. 5:6
- C. We must abstain from all appearance of evil. I Thess. 5:22
- D. "Set your affections on things above." Col. 3:1-2

### **V. WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?**

- A. It is described as a rest. Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 4:9; cf. Luke 16; 2 Thess. 1:6-9
- B. It is described as a "better place." Heb. 10:34; 11:10,16, 24-27.
- C. It is a place of eternal fellowship. Matt. 25:46
- D. It is an eternal place. Matt. 25:46
- E. It will be a place of victory. I Cor. 15:57
  - 1. We win some battles here and lose some, but the ultimate victory is in heaven. 2 Tim. 4:6-8
  - 2. The Christian life is likened to a war, a race and a walk, and we can be victorious in each.
  - 3. It will be a victory over death, the devil, darkness, despair, discouragement, disappointment and danger.
- F. It will be the end of a lot of things.
  - 1. It will be the end of indifference. Rev. 3:15ff
  - 2. It will be the end of immorality. Gal. 5:19-21
  - 3. It will be the end of immaturity. Heb. 5:12-14.
  - 4. It will be the end of irreverence, ignorance, ill-will and ingratitude.
  - 5. What a wonderful, beautiful place it will be without these things.
- G. Heaven will be a beautiful place because of its nature.
  - 1. It is the promised place of the people of God.
  - 2. It is the Christian's inheritance. I Peter 1:4
  - 3. It is a place prepared by Jesus for a prepared people. John 14:1-3

**CONCLUSION:**

1. While there are a lot of questions about heaven to which we do not have answers at this point, what we do know about it ought to create a strong desire to set aside the things of this world, and a strong desire to go there when this life is over.
2. Are you prepared to go there?
3. One must be obedient to the first principles of the Gospel.
4. One must continue faithfully until life is over.

This lesson on DRUGS appeared in the 2007 lectureship book: *Issues Destroying Homes and How to Build Firewalls of Protection.*

## **CRISIS: DRUGS**

*Tom House*

1. Drug and alcohol abuse continues to be America's most pressing societal problem.
2. The ill effects of this woe have permeated nearly every facet of the culture.
3. The effects, which are manifest in the *civil, social, economic, domestic, and spiritual* domains, are usually tabulated annually to provide the populous a perspective on how it is destroying itself.
  - a. *The civil domain:*
    - 1) Of every 200 to 2,000 drunk drivers on the road at any one time, only one will be arrested; and only few of them are severely punished.
    - 2) Over 80% of Americans who drink have admitted to driving after drinking.
    - 3) It is estimated that 7% of the driving population account for over 66% of all alcohol related crashes.
    - 4) To put it in perspective; depending on what area of the country one lives, between 7 p.m. and 3 a.m. on weekends, one of ten drivers met on the road will be legally impaired.
  - b. *The social domain:*
    - 1) Thousands of families are affected every year in that more than 100,000 people die every year due to alcohol use.
    - 2) Alcohol is involved in:
      - a) 66% of all fatal accidents;
      - b) 70% of all murders;
      - c) 53% of all fire deaths;
      - d) 60% of all sex crimes against children;
      - e) 45% of all drownings;
      - f) 50% of rapes;
      - g) 56% of domestic disputes.

- c. *The economic domain:*
  - 1) Just the insurance companies have estimated that drunk drivers cost American tax-payers about 25 billion dollars a year in claims.
  - 2) The other problems added to this account for more than \$100 billion dollars a year in economic loss due to alcohol and drug use.
  - 3) \$10 to \$20 billion is lost every year to work-time loss due to alcohol use.
  - 4) Over \$10 billion is lost in cost for welfare families affected by alcoholism and drug use.
- d. *The domestic domain:*
  - 1) 60% of child abuse cases are attributed to alcoholism.
  - 2) 56% of all domestic disputes involve alcohol.
  - 3) One of the greatest contributing factors to the high rate of divorce is alcoholism and drug use.
- e. *The spiritual domain:*
  - 1) The alcoholic and drug addict are not spiritually minded; they are self-absorbed and usually oblivious to the affect that they have on others.
  - 2) The percentage of alcoholics and drug addicts who attend religious services is generally quite small. (Isa. 5:11-12)
  - 3) The lack of spiritualism in their lives is translated in how they treat themselves and others.
  - 4) Most times they are unaware of how they behave, or that their behavior is seen as unacceptable.
  - 5) Solomon warned that those who succumbed to the brew would behave in such ways, which, had they not become inebriated, they would not as likely have acted in such a manner. (Prov. 23:29-35; 20:1)
- 4. The Bible's clear condemnation of the use of intoxicant alcohol is just as clear regarding the use of illicit chemical substances.
  - a. In Galatians 5, the works of the flesh are designated; including the term "witchcraft." v.20
  - b. "Witchcraft" is translated from the Greek word *pharmakia*, from whence comes the word "pharmacy," or "pharmaceutical."
  - c. The "sorcerers" of the day were known in two camps:
    - 1) Some were "soothsayers," or those whom we would know as "magicians."
    - 2) Others were known for their potions; many of which were quite potent; highly addictive opiates, and hallucinogens.
- 5. The Greek word for "drunkenness," (v.21), is from *methe* a noun, literally interpreted as "strong drink."
  - a. The term correlates with the verb forms, *methusko*, meaning the process by which one becomes drunken; namely, drinking; or,

- b. *Methuo*, in the passive voice, interpreted as “have well drunk.” (John 2:10)
  - 1) The passage in Galatians 5 states that “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (v.21)
- 6. The question most particular to this study is: What might we do to protect our homes against such vile infections.
- 7. This lesson is designed to approach the problem by applying four “T”s.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. INFORM

- A. Information is the key to approaching any problem. (Prov. 1:5; 4:13)
- B. One needs first to inform self.
  - 1. Learn of the dangers of chemical abuse.
  - 2. Go to the law officials and listen to the sad stories they will tell of those who went the path of chemical abuse.
  - 3. Do not take for granted the experiences you have; whether by personal use or those you know who have been affected by its use.
  - 4. Never, ever presume that your children will not involve themselves in the chemical culture!
- C. Inform your children of the dangers of chemical abuse.
  - 1. If there are programs provided by schools or other civic organizations, research the validity of the programs; and if sound and dependable, see to it that the children are present.
  - 2. Never, ever presume that your children will understand and appreciate the dangers of chemical substances; presume that they will be curious.
  - 3. Never, ever presume that your children fully understand what it means to live righteously; just because they live in the house with Christians does not mean that they will act like one!
  - 4. Teach them principles of righteousness. (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 23:19:21)
- D. Inform your law enforcement officers.
  - 1. You may have to do it with anonymity, but provide the officers with information you may have of drug dealers, or sites where users or dealers work.
  - 2. Law officials cannot do much in the area of drug enforcement without information.

### II. INQUIRE

- A. Inquire of those in the medical community for information about the physical signs of chemical abuse.

- B. Doctors will also likely be able to give you information about symptomatic behavioral patterns of those who are chemically dependant.
- C. Inquire of law officials about the particular forms of paraphernalia which might be employed by users.
- D. When or if you are able to identify certain paraphernalia, or if you discover chemicals for which your child has no prescription, inquire as to what they are and how they came to be in their possession. Do not relent!
- E. When the children are not in your presence, inquire of their whereabouts; and conspicuously, if necessary, check the information they give you.
- F. While, in some cases, this might seem untrusting; it may save your child's life!
- G. Never, ever presume that your children will "always" tell you the truth.

### III. INVOLVE

- A. A sure path to disaster is to ignore one's children.
- B. Never, ever assume that they automatically develop a sense of maturity; it must be developed by example and teaching.
- C. For certain, a parent's responsibility is primarily to be in areas of spiritual training. (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4)
  - 1. Never assume that a child knows "the way."
  - 2. When a child comes of an age to think for himself, he will think his "way" is "the way." (Prov. 12:15; 14:12)
  - 3. Timothy was trained from a youth in the way of the Scriptures. (II Tim. 3:15)
  - 4. Families need to focus on spiritual activities as well as wholesome secular activities.
- D. Parents should involve themselves in community efforts where children's needs are being emphasized; such will demonstrate their interests in their own children's well-being.

### IV. INSPIRE

- A. Children seek role-models; be one!
- B. Paul urged his young protégé, Timothy, to present himself as an example to the believers. (I Tim. 4:12)
- C. Young people learn to be examples from following examples of those they deem worthy of their emulation.
- D. Hence, our behavior should be patterned after the Lord's.
  - 1. Paul urged the Corinthian brethren to be a "follower" of him, inasmuch as he was a "follower" of Christ. (I Cor. 11:1)
  - 2. The word used in 1 Cor. 11:1, is *mimetes* in the Greek, and means to imitate.

3. The same word is used in Eph. 5:1-2.
4. Paul also urged the Philippians to be “fellow imitators.” (Phil. 3:17)
- E. A pertinent question to be asked is: “What does it mean to be like Christ?”
  1. It means to do things as Christ would do them.
  2. It means doing those things for the reason Christ did them.
  3. It means to avoid things Christ avoided.
  4. It means avoiding those things for the reason Christ avoided them.
  5. It is to know that Christ was tempted like we are, and did not sin. (Heb. 4:15)
  6. It is to know that He has made ways of escaping temptation for us. (I Cor. 10:13)
- F. Our children need to learn that there is nothing wrong with being righteously different. (Rom. 12:1-2)
  1. Our children desire, in the worst way, to conform to the world.
  2. They must be trained to think otherwise; their minds need to be “renewed.”
- G. Would Jesus have been exposed to the types of behavior about which has been discussed here? Absolutely!
  1. He would avoid them because He knew the influence of evil they would have, and He would not be responsible for tempting man to evil. (James 1:13-17)
  2. He would have spoken vehemently against such behavior, even as Paul would. (Eph. 5:1-5,11)
  3. Jesus would be mindful, as He would inspire Paul to write, that we are to “glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (I Cor. 6:19-20)

#### CONCLUSION:

1. We should all have an addiction problem, but one which engages that which is good. (I Cor. 16:15)
  2. To be like Christ is to be selfless. (Matt. 20:28)
  3. One who is chemically dependant thinks of no one but himself; he is self-consumed and self-destructive.
  4. Emphasizing things spiritual will greatly enhance our ability to guard against the “wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:11-17; Phil. 4:6-7 “keep” *phroureo* mounted guard or sentinel, to protect).
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