VOLUME 3

IN SEARCH OF HOLINESS

By Loretta A. Bernard
and David K. Bernard

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Dedicated to the memory of our nephew and cousin, Thomas K. Mitchell, whose untimely death at the age of twenty-four prevented him from continuing to proclaim these truths—and to all young ministers who hold fast to Christian integrity and holiness until Christ comes.

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AUTHORS' PREFACE

IN SEARCH OF HOLINESS: A Practical Guide for Today grew out of a one semester course in Practical Holiness taught at the United Pentecostal Bible College in Seoul, Korea and out of experiences in North America and Asia. We feel a need for a straightforward, practical book on holiness designed for all Bible believing people. We hope that this book meets that need. We do not offer it in a spirit of legalism, or with the purpose of setting denominational and church rules. Neither do we intend it to be condemnatory or directed against any individual. We have tried to set forth the basic biblical teachings on holiness and explain how they apply to the day in which we live. The book is a statement of what we as Jesus name, Spirit-filled Christians believe, and why we believe it.

There are probably some topics about which there are differences of opinion. We present our convictions and beliefs with the hope that they will provoke prayerful consideration and Bible study. For this reason we have tried to back up everything with Bible references. We do not want you to accept everything as dogma, but prove it for yourself. We hope the layman will discover reasons for church standards and will develop some real personal convictions. We hope that ministers will become aware of certain areas of holiness in which they must be particularly careful. We also hope to provide the ministry with material they can use to teach their people, and guidelines by which they can establish local church standards.

The subject is covered so that the book will be relevant to foreign lands as well as to North America. The chapters are so divided that they are as independent of each other as possible. This allows the reader to consult only the subjects that interest him at a particular time. Cross references to other chapters are given when necessary. Of course, the different aspects of holiness are so interrelated that the most benefit will be gained by reading the book as a whole.

We want to thank Elton D. Bernard, husband and father, for suggesting, organizing, motivating, editing, promoting, and, in short, making this book a reality.

This book has made us think about our lives and examine ourselves closely in many areas that we have sometimes neglected. Our prayer is that it will affect you also, and have some part in forming you into "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

I
HOLINESS: AN INTRODUCTION

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

Holiness defined. Holiness is one of God's basic characteristics. In reference to Him, the word denotes absolute perfection and purity. Only God is holy in Himself. When the word is applied to persons or objects it refers to that which has been separated or set apart unto God. For the Old Testament Hebrews, holiness included both the negative concept of "separation" and the positive concept of "dedication." For born again Christians it specifically means separation from sin and the world and dedication to God. Since we have received the Holy Spirit of God we are given power over sin, disease, and the devil (Mark 16:15-18). This power over sin enables us to become witnesses of the fact that we have indeed been born again (Acts 1:8). We are able to say, "God has saved me from sin. He has brought me out of sin."

Holiness is essential to salvation. Hebrews 12:14 is just as strong, as true, and as relevant to salvation as the words, "You must be born again or you cannot see the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:3, 5). After the new birth experience, a conflict arises between the flesh and the born again spirit. This battle is a battle for holiness, and we must win it in order to be saved.

The need for separation. God is holy and demands a holy people that will be like Him (I Peter 1:15-16). Beginning with the sin of Adam and Eve, man's sin has separated him from a holy God. The only way to restore the original communion between man and God is for man to be separated from sin. The choice is either separation from God or separation from sin. There are only two families—the family of God and the family of Satan, who is the god of this world system (I John 3:10; II Corinthians 4:4). There is no neutral ground. These two families are distinct and separate. One is a holy family—a holy priesthood (I Peter 2:9). The other is an unholy family. The call for separation from this unholy world is clear and explicit. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (II Corinthians 6:17).

A living sacrifice. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:1-2). This scripture gives more meaning to the ideas of holiness and separation. Holiness includes a sacrifice of our desires and wills. We must present ourselves in a manner that is acceptable to

God. It is only our reasonable duty to do so. This means we should be willing to do anything to make ourselves acceptable to God, regardless of the sacrifice. We must be holy and separated in order to be acceptable.

Holiness is imparted by the Holy Ghost. Man can only become holy through divine assistance. Sanctification (separation) begins with the hearing of the gospel and continues through faith, repentance, and water baptism in Jesus' name; but it is accomplished primarily by the infilling and indwelling of the Holy Ghost (I Peter 1:2). In this age, the laws of God are not written on tables of stone. This does not mean, however, that God has no laws; for He had laws even in the Garden of Eden. What it does mean is that today God chooses to write His laws on our hearts through faith by the Holy Ghost (Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 10:15-17). Therefore, all Holy Ghost filled people who allow themselves to be led by that Spirit have the laws of God written upon their hearts. This means we can be led by a conscience, and by the impressions and convictions of the Holy Ghost. We have a fundamental basis of holiness resident in us.

Holiness is taught directly by the Holy Ghost in us. This is evident from what has just been said, and it is supported by Jesus Himself. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Holiness is taught by Holy Ghost filled teachers and pastors. What does I John 2:27 mean which

says, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you"? This scripture is simply speaking of the basic holiness that abides in all who have received the Spirit. It does not mean that it is unnecessary to be taught by a God-called, Spirit-filled teacher. A teacher is a gift from God, given for the perfecting of the saints according to Ephesians 4:11-12. The struggle for perfection is what holiness is all about, and the ministry is given to help the saints win that struggle.

Holiness is taught by the Bible. The Bible does not try to give specific answers to the countless situations that may face an individual. That is the purpose of the Holy Ghost and of the ministry. The Bible does give basic guidelines that apply to men and women of all cultures, times, and situations. The Bible tells us what God likes and what He dislikes. It tells us those practices and attitudes that God will not accept and those which He expects of His people.

Holiness is an individual problem. Philippians 2:12 says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." This does not allow each person to make his own rules for being saved, but it means that each must carry out or accomplish his own salvation with fear and respect. In other words, salvation is ultimately the individual's own responsibility. After receiving the new birth experience, each person has to make sure that he endures to the end of the race. He must maintain what God has given to him (Hebrews 3:14).

Personal convictions. Since each person is individually responsible to God, each must have his own

convictions. From the time we receive the Holy Ghost we need to be taught by Spirit-filled teachers that God has placed in the church and by the Spirit directly. We also need to have personal convictions. We cannot rely on the convictions or lack of convictions of others, but we must seek an answer for ourselves on specific issues. Of course, any definite teaching of Scripture is enough conviction in itself, and a person cannot avoid it by saying he does not feel convicted.

Sometimes God may give a person certain convictions that are not shared by some other believers. Perhaps this is necessary because of that person's background or because of his weakness in a certain area; or perhaps God is leading him into a closer relationship with Him. In this situation, the person should be true to his own convictions insofar as they are consistent with Scripture. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind . . . for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:5, 23). At the same time, he should not try to force them on others. Likewise, others should respect his convictions and not belittle them (Romans 14:2-6). God will always honor and bless those who make personal consecrations. There is a special blessing and relationship with God that comes through these special consecrations.

Holiness cannot be legislated. Holiness must be motivated by the Holy Ghost that dwells within you. Ministers have the spiritual authority and, indeed, the responsibility to ask for standards of conduct and dress among the saints. They will have to give a report to God concerning you (Hebrews 13:17). However,

ministers can plead, "Dress modestly," but if holiness is not in the heart, a person will not obey. Holiness cannot be legislated—it is either in the heart or it is not. After being born again, it should be a simple matter to take the basic holiness instinct imparted by the Holy Ghost and combine it with the Word of God as taught by a Holy Ghost filled pastor in order to live a holy life. Instead, so many people are rebellious, and so many try to compare denominations and churches. Denominations have never saved anyone; for only the Word of God can bring salvation.

Holiness is maintained by love for God. For this reason the Scriptures teach, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (I John 2:15). We can only live holy by loving God, and not the world, which is under Satan's control. Law or fear may cause us to avoid sin to a degree, but only love will create a desire in us to avoid everything that is not like God and everything that is not conducive to His presence in our lives. When one person really loves someone else, he tries to please that person regardless of his personal preference and convenience. Likewise, when we love God, our Father and Saviour, we want to obey His Word. When we read His letters to us we want to live according to them because we love Him. His Spirit in us helps us to be obedient. He helps us to be joyful in our obedience, even though the flesh does not want to be obedient. As Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23). (See also John 14:15; I John 2:3.) On the other hand, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

Some basic principles of holiness. The Bible teaches us the essential elements of true holiness. "Be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). Be "temperate in all things" (I Corinthians 9:25). These three scriptures describe the essence of practical holiness. The underlying purpose of any specific standard of holiness is to help us abide by these basic principles. First, we must not act or look like the world of sin. We must avoid even those things which have a suggestion of or a resemblance to evil. The question should not be, "How closely can we resemble the world and still get by?" or "What is the least that we can do and still please God?" Rather, we should ask "What can we do to be as close to God as possible? How can we live so that there will be no doubt to the world that we are identified with Jesus Christ?" Furthermore, we must be temperate in all things, which means we should always exercise self control and restraint. Our flesh must always be in subjection to the Spirit. Temperance also means that everything should be done in moderation and not to extremes or excess. We must not go to the one extreme of laxity, compromise, and worldliness, nor to the other extreme of self-righteousness, hypocrisy, and ostentation. The principles of nonconformity to the world and temperance in all things are the keys to understanding every area of holiness discussed in this book.

A Christian's attitude towards sin. A Christian is not a sinner. We have been born again, and we have power over sin (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:4). We have been born into the family of God and have taken on

the personality of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). We are Christ's disciples, and we live according to His teachings. If we are truly Christians, that is, Christ like, then we cannot be sinners at the same time. In fact, we must hate sin. "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil" (Psalm 97:10). "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil" (Proverbs 8:13). Therefore, if we truly love God we will automatically hate evil. Now, as human beings, we all have different personalities. Some people are naturally more aggressive, outspoken, or outgoing, while others are more reserved or easygoing. This will make no difference in our attitudes towards sin if we allow the Holy Ghost to reign as King in our lives. Regardless of our original personalities, each of us will hate evil. This enables a minister to speak out against sin forcefully. Regardless of his basic personality, he is able to identify sin and preach against it.

A minister's attitude towards sin. A minister has the responsibility to preach against sin (Ezekiel 3:17-19). He also helps people to know what is sin by naming it. He has the duty to establish the necessary standards to maintain holiness. These standards are not for visitors but for members, particularly those used as leaders and examples. No matter what a minister's personal inclinations are, the Holy Ghost in him cannot tolerate sin and causes him to cry out against sin. The Holy Ghost gives him the boldness to rebuke and exhort the people when necessary. The Holy Ghost must reign as King in his life so that the unction and inspiration of the Spirit will give him the spiritual force that is needed. The man who is quick to rebuke, who is quick to show anger, or who is intolerant will also

be changed by the Holy Ghost. He will become kind and gentle in his admonitions, and he will preach with compassion when he sees the sins of the people. The minister must be filled to overflowing with the Holy Ghost. Then the Spirit of God will preach through him (Joel 2:28). Since God hates sin, the minister will also hate sin and will receive the ability to preach against it. At the same time he will have in his heart the genuine love of God for the sinner.

Some ministers are so easygoing and reluctant to hurt feelings that they cannot bring themselves to preach against sin in a specific way. Some say, "My personality does not allow me to preach against sin. I can only preach love." However, if you really love someone who is in sin, you cannot help but preach against sin, because it is sin that causes people to be eternally lost. True love means more than gentleness. If I really love someone, then I love him enough to tell him the truth, even if he hates me for it. The minister must preach the truth whether the hearers continue to like him or not; for this is the only chance they have of being saved. The listener may not realize that it is love that is speaking, but it **is** love. A minister who does any less than this is unfit as a messenger for Christ.

A true minister does not preach just what the people like to hear. He is not an ear tickler or a joker. Certainly, humor and imagination are permitted in the pulpit, but the minister's basic calling is to tell the people what God wants them to hear. If a minister lets a person continue in sin simply because he has a weak personality and is afraid of hurting his feel-

ings, then he needs to be refilled with the Spirit. That man is a weak Christian and not a leader at all.

Ministers are messengers, not the author. A minister is not God and he cannot assume the job of the Great Shepherd. He cannot change the Word of God to please people. He is merely a messenger. It is illegal for a postman to change the contents of a letter. The recipient of a letter has no right to rebuke the postman for the contents of the letter, nor can he ask him to change it. The postman is not the author, and it is beyond his capacity to alter the message. Similarly, a minister merely delivers the message of God to the people. He dares not change the Word of God.

Scriptures a victorious Christian must understand. There are several key scriptures that are essential to understand in order to know the Christian's position with regard to sin and to holiness. Chapters 6 and 8 of Romans have a good explanation of the entire subject of Christian living.

The law of sin (Romans 7:20). Paul teaches us that there is a law of sin in this world that is greater than the law of Moses and greater than the law of the mind. That is, neither the Old Testament law nor the process of mental assent and reasoning has the power to overcome the basic sinful nature that is in man. This law of sin is also called the nature of sin, the old man, the old nature, the first Adam, and the flesh.

The law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2). The law of the Holy Ghost is the only law that is greater than the law of sin. It is the only law that can set men free from the power of sin, because by the infilling of

the Spirit a new nature is born in man. This new nature does not desire to sin, but has the laws and desires of God implanted in it. It is important to realize that good works cannot replace or supersede the law of the Spirit.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (I John 3:9). This scripture simply means that the child of God does not practice sin. He does not want to sin because he has received a new nature. "For his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This means that, just like God, his Father, the Christian hates sin and cannot tolerate it in his life. It certainly does not mean that he lacks the capacity or ability to sin; for that would contradict the teachings of I John 1:8 and 2:1. Here are some examples that illustrate what the Scripture does mean. If a certain food makes you sick, you would say "I am sorry, but I cannot eat this food." If a certain action is not in your best interests or goes against your principles, you would say, "I cannot do this." In both cases, the word "cannot" does not mean that you are physically incapable of performing the action, but that you are restrained by your nature or your knowledge. Similarly, Christians are restrained by their new nature from sinning. As long as that nature is in control, the Christian will not sin. The Holy Ghost gives power and victory over sin. "The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (I John 2:14).

Dead to sin (Romans 6:2). "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The next few verses continue to say that our old man has been crucified with Christ (through repentance), so that we

should not serve sin any longer. "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:7). The Christian must understand that he is dead to sin, and that he has been delivered from sin. What does it mean to be dead to sin? By way of illustration, what emotions does a dead person have? What reaction would a dead man have if you slapped his face, or waved a million dollars in front of him? There is no reaction, of course, because the man is dead. Therefore if we are dead to sin, any temptations to sin should bring no reaction from us. If we are really dead, and have settled the problem of sin in our life, then living a holy, Christian life is easy. When we are half dead and half alive, however, it is difficult and eventually impossible to live for God.

Separation from God (Romans 8:38-39). Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God. Demons, angels, men, trials, tribulations, time, or circumstances do not have the power to separate us from God. No one can take us out of the Father's hand, not even Satan himself (John 10:29; I John 5:18). However, the Christian himself can break his close relationship with God by his unbelief and disobedience, and can backslide. (See Romans 11:20-22; II Peter 2:20-22.)

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (I John 1:8). This Scripture has been abused many times to teach false doctrines. It is not speaking of an act of sin but of the nature of sin that is resident in every human being. Even though a person has been born again, the old nature remains subdued in him. He has not yet been translated but is still

waiting for the redemption of his body (Romans 8:23). So, John is teaching that the ability to sin is still in us. Any person who holds the theory that his sinful nature has been eradicated at a certain point in his Christian experience is only deceiving himself. While there is a definite separation between the believer and his sinful nature, that nature or ability to sin is always there. This is, in fact, why it is so important to keep a "dead to sin" attitude.

The point is that God has so constituted the born again believer that there is no need for him to sin. There is no such thing as a sinner-saint. God has given the saint a divine nature and a hatred of sin. The Holy Ghost takes up permanent residence to aid the Christian in his battle against sin. To illustrate, we can say that the Christian has the same power over the evil nature or old man as he does over a radio. If a program comes over the radio that is unfit for a Christian to hear, he simply turns off the radio. He has the power to prevent that radio set from bringing evil into his thoughts. Similarly, the Christian has power over sin. If the Holy Ghost rules in his life, he will be able to "turn off" sin when it tries to enter. So, if a Christian sins, it is only because he has not given the Holy Ghost full control in that area. He is yielding himself to another master and he becomes that master's servant (Romans 6:16). There is no such thing as a ninety percent Christian or a sinning Christian. "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (I John 3:8).

Is a Christian a sinner? In the light of the above scripture, the answer to this question must be "No." As Christians, we are not sinners. We were sinners in

the past, but we have been delivered and are now the children of God. What is the position of a Christian who commits a sin? As we have seen, this person has allowed himself to fall under the influence of Satan and the sinful nature. He should immediately go to our Advocate and Counsellor, Jesus Christ (I John 2:1). Since Jesus now occupies the position of our High Priest, we can confess our sin directly to Him, and He will forgive us (Hebrews 4:14; I John 1:9).

Personal prayer. Since confession to Jesus is the way in which a Christian obtains forgiveness of a sin that he has committed, personal prayer is very important. A Christian should never wait until he comes to church to confess his sins, but needs to confess a sin immediately and ask for forgiveness. Personal, private prayer is our communication with God, whether the Spirit in us makes intercession or whether we do so verbally. All of us need to examine our hearts and ask God to cleanse us from secret sins and faults (I Corinthians 11:31). We need to ask for the teaching and leading of the Spirit. These prayers do not have to be voiced in the congregation, for this is a matter between the individual and God. Prayer is also our means of tapping the power to overcome that God has made available to us.

Filthiness of the flesh and spirit (II Corinthians 7:1). Paul exhorts us, saying, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In this scripture "flesh" refers to the physical element while "spirit" refers to the spiritual element in man. The first thing to notice is that we cannot separate the spirit from

the flesh in this world. For instance, Matthew 5:28 classifies lust for a woman as adultery committed in the heart. This is a sin of the spirit, in that the flesh did not actually commit the act of adultery. But in the sight of God it is still sin. To God, hatred in the heart is the same as the actual act of murder. So, Paul is telling us to cleanse the thoughts of our minds as well as the actions of our flesh. We must cleanse both flesh and spirit to be holy in the sight of God.

The flesh is only the house in which the spirit dwells. When one is born again, he immediately enters into a conflict—war between the flesh and spirit. It is necessary to understand this war that is going on in the Christian life. The Holy Ghost will win this war for us, if we abide by the guidelines that He has given (II Timothy 2:5).

Satan's message. The devil tries to convince us that since we are in the flesh, and the flesh is weak, we cannot live holy. He wants us to believe that we cannot help but sin every day. The truth is that God has commanded us to be holy. It is true the flesh is weak, but it is also true that in the flesh Jesus condemned sin (Romans 8:3). Christ put on flesh so that through death He could destroy the one who had power over death, namely Satan (Hebrews 2:14). Jesus overcame sin in the flesh, and He is our example. We, too, can overcome sin in the flesh because we have the Spirit of Christ within us.

Perfection. The Bible teaches us that we grow into perfection. Hebrews 6:1 says, "Let us go on unto perfection," and Philippians 3:15 speaks of "as many

as be perfect." Ephesians 4:12 teaches that God gave the five-fold ministry "for the perfecting of the saints." It is possible to distinguish between absolute perfection and relative perfection. We are all striving for absolute perfection as exemplified in Jesus Christ. Even while undergoing this growth process in order to achieve perfection, we may still be considered perfect in a relative sense if we are growing properly. For example, a month old child may be a perfect child even though it does not have teeth, cannot reason fully, cannot walk, and cannot talk. It is perfect in a relative sense, because it is developing at the proper rate in relation to its age. In ten years, if this child still cannot walk or talk then it cannot be called a perfect human being. An apple bud in spring is not an apple, but that does not mean it is imperfect. Later the blossom will develop into a tiny green ball, and finally it will ripen. At each stage it is perfect. This teaches us that we can obey the exhortation to be perfect. To do this we must constantly learn, grow, and correct our faults. We cannot stay in the same position that we were in when we first received our new birth experience.

Tolerance because of different levels of perfection. Some people are able to develop more rapidly than others. When people of a Christian background are born again they begin with a good foundation and so are able to grow rapidly. Others who come from a pagan or atheistic background have to change completely all their ideas and concepts. Thus, two people may have a different level of perfection even though both received the Holy Ghost at the same time. We are

not to judge them (Matthew 7:1). In particular, saints should be careful not to rebuke others if they fail to measure up to certain standards of holiness. It is primarily the job of the ministry and the Holy Ghost to patiently superintend the perfecting of a new saint.

Not only will saints have different degrees of perfection, but so will churches. This depends on the background and foundation of the saints. It also depends on the minister. Some ministers do not teach against anything. As a result, their flock cannot grow into perfection. Others build a church on the Word of God, not their own personalities, and their members can grow into perfection.

Let us go on to perfection. The aim of this chapter is to prove that holiness is a commandment to be obeyed daily in the life of each Christian. "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). Since God has commanded us to be holy, we know that He will give us the ability to do so; for He will not require of us something we are unable to do. Holiness and righteousness are given to us through the Holy Ghost. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11). We must continue to live a holy life in order to remain without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27). If we do get a wrinkle or a blot, it must be immediately cleansed by the blood of Jesus through our repentance (I John 2:1).

The Holy Ghost gives us the ability to live a separated life. It is, therefore, our responsibility to allow the Holy Ghost to reign in our lives, and to keep the old nature dead to sin and the world.

We are justified (made right in the sight of God)! We can live a holy life! Let us go on to perfection. Let us not merely receive the born again experience and rest on that basic foundation, but let us grow and build. Let us be completely filled with the Spirit and be cleansed of every spot. Let us go on to perfection!

II
THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE

"The just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Basic concepts of Christian living. When Christians talk about holiness, it is easy to emphasize rules, regulations, do's and don'ts. In a book of this kind it is difficult to be specific, plain, and honest without running the risk of seeming legalistic. This chapter attempts to put things in the proper perspective by describing the basic nature of the Christian walk. The Christian life is a life of faith and liberty, not one of legalism or drudgery. Instead of merely trying not to do wrong, we are trying to bear fruit pleasing to God. Simply put, we want to imitate Christ. This chapter will define the essence of the Christian experience. Subsequent chapters will analyze what we believe to be important problem areas in today's world,

but keep in mind that we are predicating the whole book on the concepts presented here; namely, that we live by faith not works, that the Christian experience is one of personal freedom from sin and the law, that it is a life of personal consecration to God, and that we display holiness by imitating the life of Christ and by bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

The purpose for holiness in our lives. The first reason for holiness is to please God, for His own sake. He purchased us with His own blood and we belong not to ourselves but to Him (I Corinthians 6:19-20; I Peter 1:18-19). Therefore, we cannot live to ourselves, but we must live unto Christ (II Corinthians 5:15). The second goal of holiness is to communicate Christ to others. We attract and win others to Him by our lives. Finally, we realize that the Christian life of holiness is the best plan for our lives. It will benefit us both now and in the life to come.

Faith and works. In order to live for God we must first understand that we are saved by faith and not by works (Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). Faith leads us to repentance. True faith will cause us to obey the Word of God. It will lead us to water baptism and to the Holy Spirit baptism (Mark 16:16-17; John 7:38-39). Our motive for holiness must be faith and not works. We obey God's Word because we believe that it is true and that it is good for us. We do not follow holiness in order to earn our salvation or to earn favor with God; for we cannot make ourselves holy or save ourselves. Our salvation depends totally on our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Although we are not saved by our works, faith

will lead us to do certain things. It will cause an outward manifestation; for "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). We demonstrate faith in God and His Word by our actions and by our daily lives. James said, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). Paul wrote a letter to Titus in order "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). The conclusion is this: We cannot be holy by our own efforts. However, we can be holy if we put our faith in Jesus and let His Spirit work in us.

Jesus came to deliver us from the law and its orientation towards works. He also delivered us from bondage to sin. We are no longer servants of sin nor of the law, but we are free to make a choice. We are free to do God's will and live above sin. We have Christian liberty, but we must not use that liberty to indulge in fleshly activities, or in a way that would hinder someone else. "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). We do not need the law, because if we walk after the Spirit we will automatically fulfill all the righteousness that the law tried to give but could not. Before Christ, men tried to fulfill the law by their own works and efforts, but they failed because they were weak in the flesh and subject to sin. After Christ, we are freed from the dominion of sin and the weakness of the flesh. We are able to follow the Spirit, thereby fulfilling the righteousness of the law (Romans 8:1-4).

The work of the Spirit. The Spirit baptizes us

into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13) and adopts us into the family of God (Romans 8:15-16). In other words, the Spirit gives us a new nature. This new nature is none other than the Spirit of Christ—Christ in us (Romans 8:9; Colossians 1:27). We put on the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5). Christ is formed in us (Galatians 4:19). The Spirit of God conforms us to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). We are able to live holy lives by letting the mind, personality, and will of Jesus Christ replace our own. Jesus lived on the earth for thirty-three years to give us an example to follow (I Peter 2:21-24). He died and rose again to defeat sin and death and to give us the power to follow His example (Romans 8:3-4).

This is what holiness is really all about: letting the Spirit and personality of Christ shine through us. We want to display His Spirit. We want to please Him and be like Him. We want to live as He lived and do what He would do. We want to manifest the characteristics and traits of Jesus Christ. In this way we become living examples of Christianity. We become open letters from Christ to the world, written by the Spirit (II Corinthians 3:2-3). The good works that He produces in us will lead men to God and they will glorify Him (Matthew 5:16).

Christian characteristics. What are the characteristics that Christians (Christ-like people) display? Galatians 5:22-23 gives us an excellent list, called the fruit of the Spirit (notice the capital letter). If we have the Spirit in us, we will bear this fruit. While speaking in other tongues is the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit baptism, the abiding evidence that

the Holy Spirit dwells in a life is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. Paul lists nine elements of Spiritual fruit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Peter lists eight qualities that will make us fruitful in Christ: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (II Peter 1:5-10). Faith and temperance are repeated in both lists. Virtue and godliness are aspects of goodness, brotherly kindness and charity are aspects of love, and patience is similar to longsuffering. Also, I Peter 2:21-24 records some characteristics of Christ for us to imitate. In this passage, Peter tells us that Christ had no sin or guile (deceit), and describes His love, patience, temperance, and faith while suffering for our sins.

We will be dealing with all these attitudes and characteristics throughout the book. In order to lay a foundation we want to discuss briefly the ninefold fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians. As you read, remember that this is the fruit God wants us to bear, and this is the fruit that will attract sinners to the gospel message.

Love. Love is the most basic element of our Christian life. It is the only acceptable motivation for serving God. We are commanded to love our fellow Christians, to love our neighbors, and even to love our enemies. If we do not love our fellow man then we do not love God. If we love the world then we do not love God. Love is the test of true Christianity. If we understand what love really means we can fulfill the Bible's teaching on holiness. For example, love one for another will eliminate jealousy, strife, gossip,

murmuring, and bitterness. Love for God will eliminate worldliness and rebellion. On the other hand, if we do not love both God and man then **nothing** will make us right in the sight of God. Correct doctrines and good works cannot take the place of love. The closer to God we become, the more love we will have. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 5:5). Because of its importance, we will study love again in Chapter III and will give extensive scriptural references.

Joy. As, with the other aspects of Spiritual fruit, we receive joy from the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). Our experience with God is "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8). We can have God's joy no matter what happens to us. This kind of joy is not the joy that the world gives; for it is not dependent on circumstances. Regardless of external conditions, we can always rejoice in our salvation and in the God of our salvation (Luke 10:20; Habakkuk 3:17-18). Joy is a weapon we can use and a source of strength in times of trial. "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). When discouragement comes we can draw upon the joy of the Spirit and gain strength. The way to overcome is to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). We can praise our way to victory.

How do we obtain joy in time of need? As we have just seen, we can always get joy from our salvation. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD" (Isaiah 12:3-4). Psalms tells us about two other sources of joy. "They that sow in tears shall

reap in joy" (Psalm 126:5). If we plant good seed with tears and prayers we will reap good results with joy. Also, the Psalmist says "in thy presence is fulness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). If we will draw close to God and enter into His presence we will have perfect joy. We can enter into His presence with singing, thanksgiving, and praise (Psalm 100).

Peace. We can also have peace in the Holy Ghost—peace that passes all understanding and peace about which the world knows nothing (Romans 14:17; Philippians 4:7). No matter what happens we can have inner peace. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Not only can we have peace of mind, but also peace with others. In fact, God expects this of us. "Follow peace with all men" (Hebrews 12:14). (See also Romans 12:18.) Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers"—those who make peace where there is no peace, those who bring peace to a troubled person or a troubled situation (Matthew 5:9).

How can we acquire and maintain peace in our lives? We will have perfect peace if we focus our minds on God and if we trust Him. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). Also, we must learn to rejoice in the Lord, to be moderate, to be anxious for nothing, and to make our requests known to God through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. If we do this then we will have the peace of God (Philippians 4:4-7).

Longsuffering and patience. Patience is very important in our Christian experience. Jesus said, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). We bear fruit with patience (Luke 8:15), we run our race with patience (Hebrews 12:1), and we obtain promises by faith and patience (Hebrews 6:12). "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36).

Longsuffering connotes patience or forbearance in relationships with people. Paul beseeches us to walk worthy of our calling, "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3). Longsuffering comes with meekness, love, a desire for unity, and a desire for peace. Patience comes by the trying of faith and by tribulation (Romans 5:3; James 1:3). If we let patience have its perfect work, we will have experience, hope, and everything else that we need (Romans 5:4; James 1:4).

Gentleness. Gentleness is not the same as weakness. To be gentle is to be courteous, mannerly, kind, patient, serene, and not harsh, violent, or rough. Jesus was gentle in dealing with people, yet he was firm and decisive when necessary. The Lord wants us to be gentle unto all men (II Timothy 2:24). His gentleness will make us great (Psalm 18:35).

Goodness. This word includes righteousness, morality, virtue, and excellence. We must remember that "there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). Any good thing we have comes from Him

(James 1:17). Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight (Isaiah 64:6), and only the righteousness of Christ saves us. When we have faith in Him, God imputes the righteousness of Jesus to us (Romans 4:5-6). We will be saved only if we continue in God's goodness (Romans 11:22).

Faith. We have already discussed faith as it relates to salvation. (See also Chapter XIII for a definition of "believer.") Not only do we need faith to be saved, but we need faith to continue our Christian walk. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Faith makes us realize that all things work together for good for those who love God (Romans 8:28). Faith assures us that God will never allow us to be tempted more than we can bear and that He will always provide a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13). Faith will bring answered prayers, supplied needs, and fulfilled promises. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). (See also Mark 11:22-24.) Faithfulness also means being loyal, true, constant, and consistent.

How do we receive faith? First, we need to realize that God has given a measure of faith to every one of us (Romans 12:3). We all have some faith. Surely we have as much faith as a grain of mustard seed, and if we will exercise this much faith nothing will be impossible (Matthew 17:20). The Bible says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). We build faith primarily by hearing the word of God preached and by reading the promises in the Word of God. We can also increase

our faith by hearing the testimonies of others and by drawing upon our own past experiences with God. Faith can also come in a critical moment as a supernatural gift of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:9).

Meekness. To be meek means to be patient, mild, and not inclined to anger or resentment. Again, this does not mean weakness or spinelessness. Meekness includes humility—a realization that we are nothing without God and that we must have His help. Meekness is an important quality for leaders to have. Moses was the meekest man in his day (Numbers 12:3), and Jesus described Himself as meek and lowly (Matthew 11:29). Jesus said that the meek would inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5). The Lord wants us to show meekness to all men (Titus 3:2). Here are some things the Bible says should be done with meekness: Preaching the Word (II Corinthians 10:1), receiving the Word (James 1:21), helping and restoring an erring brother (Galatians 6:1), displaying wisdom (James 3:13), and adorning our lives (I Peter 3:4). Meekness is an attitude that we must consciously strive to develop in ourselves. It takes effort on our part. "Submit yourselves therefore to God . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord" (James 4:7, 10).

Temperance. This encompasses self-restraint, self-control, and moderation. Any pleasure can become painful if carried to excess, and any good thing can be ruined by taking it to extremes. In I Corinthians 9:24-27 Paul illustrates the concept of temperance by using a runner in a race. To win his race, a runner must be "temperate in all things." He must have discipline and self-control. He must have a well balanced

training program and must be moderate in his activities. Likewise, Paul had discipline and control. He said he knew what his goal was and he kept his body under subjection. Temperance is an attribute that we need to display at all times. "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5). For more on temperance see Chapter VIII.

Wisdom in pastoral guidance. Before ending this chapter, we want to discuss the role of the ministry in teaching on Christian living. As ministers we need wisdom in this area when we teach and preach. We err if we equate Christianity with rules. As Christians we do things because we want to please God and not because someone forces us to do them. Holiness is positive. It means having Christ-like qualities, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, exercising the power of the Spirit, and being free from the bondage of sin.

We personally have strong holiness convictions as you will see as you read this book, and we do not advocate compromise of them. Much harm has been done by those who do not teach holiness and by those who are too willing to change their beliefs under pressure from the world. However, much harm has also been done under the guise of holiness teaching by those who emphasize the negative and by those who lack wisdom in dealing with visitors and new converts.

As a general rule, we believe that preachers should keep to basic themes of holiness in their messages and should emphasize the positive nature of the gospel. Holiness should not be preached with vehement condemnation, but should be taught with love, patience, and understanding. We can use the same approach to

holiness as does the New Testament. For example, we can exhort the people to follow modesty and temperance, and to avoid sins such as lying and fornication. Specific problem areas can be left to pastoral counselling and exhortation.

As far as visitors are concerned, we need to welcome them and love them as they are. We are not to judge or condemn. Let God do the convicting. After all, it takes the Holy Spirit to draw men to repentance and to give men power to change their ways of living. A saint should avoid telling visitors what to do. If they ask questions, give Bible answers. Use wisdom and refer them to the pastor in delicate situations. If they are in the process of repenting, the pastor may need to advise them about sins in their lives. However, remember that they can receive the Holy Ghost instantly, if you will stress repentance, faith, a willingness to change, and a desire to do God's will whatever it may mean. If they manifest these attitudes they can be filled even though they do not have an understanding of certain issues and doctrines. After receiving the Holy Ghost, it will be much easier for them to sort out problems, learn about God, and clean up their lives.

In working with new converts, it is important to have patience and tolerance. They need a lot of positive teaching, encouragement, and understanding. They need to be taught how to be sensitive to the Spirit and how to use the Spirit to overcome trials and temptations. We have seen many people who received a genuine experience from God but who were driven away from the church by harshness, intolerance, overzealous admonition, and lack of wisdom (on the part

of a minister or another saint). They choked on meat that was forced on them when they really need milk and time to grow. Give God time to work through His Spirit, the preaching of the Word, and the example of the congregation. Pastors, if you feel that it is absolutely necessary to deal with a specific situation use individual suggestions instead of commands. If possible, explain why something will be beneficial, but do not use a threat or force them to do something. Never underestimate the power of God to change lives. A good way to teach new converts is to have special classes for them in which you explain why we do certain things and courteously answer all questions, using the Bible and not tradition as your guide. When they want to become voting members, teachers, ushers, or choir members, that is a good time to request them to meet certain qualifications.

Established saints usually can be dealt with on the basis of individual talks. A good time to set certain church standards is at a choir meeting, a Sunday school staff meeting, or a closed meeting for church members. If corrective action must be taken, do so quietly and individually. In this way, you can maintain high standards for your church and at the same time you will not drive away visitors or crush new converts.

Holiness as a way of life. In the final analysis, we as authors cannot tell you as a reader what to do; we can only give suggestions and share the results of our prayer, study, and experience. The Christian life is a close, personal relationship with God. It is a constant search for holiness and a constant attempt to

draw closer to God and to become more like Him. **If we will let His Spirit lead us and if we will cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, then holiness will come naturally and easily. It will be a joy and not a burden. It will be a normal way of life.**

III
CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Attitudes are the most important elements of holiness. If a person has the proper attitude towards God and his fellow man, his holiness will be manifested in all areas of life. If he does not have the right attitude, no amount of outward holiness will compensate for the lack of inward holiness in the sight of God. Wrong attitudes are the first signs of backsliding and are inevitable components of hypocrisy.

Love is the basic attitude that distinguishes true Christians from the world. All the law and prophets can be summed up in two commandments: Love God and love your fellow man (Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:27). Love is the force that will cause us to keep all of God's commandments (John

14:15, 23). In fact, our love for God is proved by how carefully we obey His Word (I John 2:3-5). Jesus commanded that we love one another even as He has loved us (John 15:12, 17). Love one to another is the ultimate test of true Christianity (John 13:34-35). If we do not love our brother then we do not love God (I John 4:20-21). Love is the fulfilling of the law (Leviticus 19:18; Romans 13:10; James 2:8). A Christian must extend love to every human being, even enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). Once again, this type of love is the ultimate proof of Christianity, for even sinners love those that love them in return (Matthew 5:46). We cannot over emphasize the necessity of love as a basis for all actions and all relationships. Love never fails (I Corinthians 13:8). We will not fail God or each other if we let love have its perfect work. No activity or attribute is worth anything if love is not the underlying force and motivating factor (I Corinthians 13:1-3; Revelation 2:1-5). These two scriptures list the following things that are valueless without love: speaking in tongues, eloquence, prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, sacrifice, philanthropy, works, labor, patience, right doctrine, right leadership, right fellowship, perseverance, and zeal for Jesus name.

Let us apply these teachings about love to the subject of holiness. First of all, we should love God enough to want to do His perfect will. If we love Him as we should we will want to be like Him as much as possible. We will try to avoid anything that is not like Him. We will want to obey Him and please Him even in areas that seem from a human viewpoint to be unnecessary and trivial. If we begin to question

holiness teachings we should stop and check to see how deep our love for God really is. Second, when any type of resentment or dislike arises in us towards another human being, we should be very careful. We must retain a loving and forgiving attitude towards that person if we want to maintain our holiness and our Christianity. Love for our fellow man means we are patient, kind, not envious, not egotistical, not boastful, mannerly, not self seeking, not easily provoked, slow to think evil of someone, and pleased only with what is good. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things (I Corinthians 13:4-7). Our actions must be motivated by this kind of love for God and our fellow man. Following holiness standards for any other reason or without this love is worthless and will lead to hypocrisy.

Having established the importance of right attitudes, let us examine some specific scriptures concerning them. Ephesians 4:31, the scripture quoted at the beginning of this chapter, lists some very dangerous attitudes that Christians must put away. If we allow these attitudes to remain in our lives we are feeding the flesh and starving the spiritual man.

Bitterness is something sharp, disagreeable, distasteful, harsh, severe, resentful, or vehement. This is the type of attitude that produces piercing remarks and unpleasant language. It is never appropriate. Some people think they can put aside the spiritual man and give vent to their bitterness, but they cannot do this if they want to be holy. Even when a minister rebukes, he cannot do it with personal bitterness or with sharp,

disagreeable, harsh, or severe words. There is a time for rebuking and exhorting, but never with bitterness.

Wrath is violent anger, rage, or indignation, and the word strongly suggests a desire to avenge or punish. The flesh always wants to get revenge, and it often will do so by a display of feelings or a cutting remark. Perhaps we may disagree on certain issues, but we must not become resentful or vengeful. You may be perfectly correct in principles, but if you allow yourself to become violently angry or wrathful, then you are wrong. The same is true about the other wrong attitudes we are discussing. We cannot allow ourselves to go ungoverned in this manner, but we must learn to control our feelings. Wrath cannot be controlled through our own strength, but through prayer and seeking God. It is especially disgraceful for a minister to become violently angry and resentful. There is no way to explain this lack of control to the saints. Remember, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

Anger is a feeling of extreme displeasure that usually results from injury or opposition. The word itself does not suggest a definite degree of intensity nor does it necessarily require an outward manifestation. If anger is allowed to go uncontrolled, it usually manifests itself as a desire to lash out at someone or something. If controlled and used properly this feeling may be constructive and even beneficial. For example, Jesus displayed anger against sin when He cleansed the temple of thieves. What kind of anger is permissible and what is not? Paul tells us, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon

your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). Anger that causes you to hurt someone or to sin in any other way is wrong. Anger that you carry in your heart and nurse into a grudge is also wrong. Anger without a cause is wrong (Matthew 5:22). If there is a just cause for anger you must not take the situation personally and must not direct that anger against any individual. Instead, use the emotional force as a motivation to correct the wrong if possible. Then, forgive the other individual involved, and forget about it. Pray until you can forget it. Regardless of the circumstances, temperance or self control is a fruit of the Spirit and must be displayed (Galatians 5:23). Ministers, what should be your attitude when you teach something that some saints continue to disobey? Your reaction must not be personal anger. They are not rebellious towards you, but they are rebellious towards God. You must be careful and maintain self control.

Clamour is a noisy shouting, outcry, uproar, or insistent demand. Do you always have complaints? Do you clamour to get your way? Some adults throw temper tantrums and act just as stubborn as small children who fall on the floor, scream, and kick. People who keep the church in an uproar, constantly demanding attention, always presenting demands, or blocking the progress of the church are guilty of clamouring. This attitude and behavior is condemned by Scripture.

Evil speaking comes from an evil heart. Much of it stems from jealousy. How much do you speak evil of people? How much trouble do you cause by evil speaking? (See Chapter IV for more on the sub-

jects of talebearing, gossip, and reviling.)

Malice is an active ill will, a desire to hurt others. Malice takes pleasure in causing someone to suffer or in seeing that person suffer. It is usually the result of hate, which is as bad as murder in the eyes of God (I John 3:15). We should hate sin, but not the sinner. We can rejoice when sin is defeated in certain areas, but never in the misfortunes and sufferings of other people even if they are sinners. Love rejoices not in iniquity, but in the truth (I Corinthians 13:6).

Envy and jealousy. These emotions are closely associated with bitterness, wrath, malice and strife. Envy and strife are capable of producing any and every kind of evil (James 3:16). Envy and jealousy consist of a grudging of possessions or accomplishments. They often include spite, covetousness, and suspicion. Envy is a work of the flesh and will keep us out of heaven (Galatians 5:21; James 4:5). This spirit surfaces unexpectedly in places where it should not be. People in the church often get upset when someone else is used more in the church, when someone else is recognized more than they, when someone else gets certain favors, or even when others get spiritual blessings. Beware! This is the spirit of envy.

Forgiveness. In place of all these evil attitudes, we are exhorted to be kind to one another, tenderhearted and forgiving. Forgiveness is based on love and involves bearing the cost of someone else's mistake. It means giving up your rights in certain situations, and ignoring certain things even when you know

you are correct. It means swallowing your pride and asking someone else to forgive you even when you feel they should be asking your pardon instead. It means turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39), literally and symbolically. Most importantly, forgiveness includes forgetting. Some people say, "I'll forgive but I won't forget." They need to pray until they **can** forget; that is, until they no longer hold anything against anybody. Other people pretend to forget, but bring up an old grudge at a future confrontation. Or, they may bring up an old mistake in order to gain some advantage over someone. This is not forgiveness. Jesus very plainly taught that God will forgive us only as much as we forgive others (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 18:23-35). If we want to be forgiven of our sins we need to learn how to forgive our brother when he makes a mistake.

A root of bitterness. Many times there are people that no one can satisfy. They murmur, complain, are uncooperative, and are self willed. They cannot accept correction without becoming angry. They are busybodies, they sow discord among the brethren, they are talebearers, and they cause problems everywhere they go. What is wrong? It could be that they have a root of bitterness as described in Hebrews 12:15. "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." Notice that this passage follows right after the admonition to follow peace and holiness without which no man can see God (v. 14). Taken together, these verses prove two things. First, holiness is essential to salvation. A person can fall from grace if he is not holy. Second,

having a proper attitude is one of the most important aspects of holiness. A person can be defiled by bitterness.

A root of bitterness is a source of bitterness in someone's life. It is something in the heart which causes all of the outward manifestations we have identified. From this root many types of fruit come forth, none of which is the fruit of the Spirit. The actual root could be a grudge against someone because of an incident, jealousy because of a certain situation, or just something in the heart that never has been surrendered to God. When bad attitudes begin to manifest themselves, check to see if there is a source in your own heart. Cut it out, get rid of it, and you will bear much more enjoyable fruit.

As Christians we cannot judge one another, but we can observe fruit. You do not have to judge if something is an apple tree or an orange tree when you see the fruit on it. The fruit speaks for itself. Likewise, when the fruit of the root of bitterness appears in others it is easy to see. There is no judgment involved in this case. Just avoid participation in the gossip, envy, hatred, and strife that come out of that source. Simply refuse to partake of such fruit lest you be one of the many defiled by that person's root of bitterness.

Nothing shall offend. The true Christian's attitude stands in stark contrast to the root of bitterness and all of its resulting attitudes. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165). Great peace is always the result of loving God and His Word (Philippians 4:7). Peace is one of the results of being justified or counted right

in the sight of God (Romans 5:1). True obedience to God will keep us from being offended. His Word teaches that we must not be offended and we must not offend others (Matthew 5:29-30; 13:41; James 3:2). The meaning of the scripture in Psalms is that nothing will be a stumbling block to those who love the Word of God.

How many times have you heard something like the following: "They invited others, but they did not invite me," "They asked others to do something at church, but not me," "They never ask me to do a certain thing," "I was entitled to a certain thing because of my position or age, but they did not give it to me," or "They did not speak to me"? How many times have your feelings been hurt because you were rebuked, you were misunderstood, or you did not get the recognition you thought was due? In all these cases we must remember the scripture, "Nothing shall offend." Perhaps there were good reasons that you do not know about, perhaps you did not get the true story, or perhaps someone made a mistake. Regardless of the circumstances, we cannot allow our feelings to be hurt. We must forgive people even before they ask and even if they never ask. If you have ever prayed the Lord's prayer you have asked God to forgive you only as much as you forgive others. Regardless of whether custom or etiquette has been violated, and regardless of whether you are in the right or not, you cannot become offended and refuse to forgive if you want to be saved yourself. If we love God, then we will let nothing be a stumbling block to us. No matter what comes, we still will not stumble. This is

humanly impossible, but God gives us the power to overcome. Let us not say, "I am offended" or "Someone hurt my feelings," but rather let us pray until we get victory over the situation.

Attitude when rebuked. We must maintain this determination in times of rebuke or reproof. The Psalmist said, "Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths" (Psaln 25:4). Some people have the opposite attitude. They feel as though they never need anyone to rebuke, reprove, or exhort them in any way. However this is contrary to the Word of God. God has placed government in the church. (See Chapter XII.) Everyone from the highest in position to the lowest is under this system of government. Even Peter and Paul accepted rebuke from others (Galatians 2:11-14; Acts 23:3-5). People who do not like government are on their way to apostasy (II Peter 2:10). Never be so great that you cannot accept admonition, rebuke, or exhortation. Even if you are a seasoned saint or an elder minister, you just might need help to make it to heaven. The proper attitude is, "Thank you for trying to help me," not "Well, I'm a saint of God just as well as you, and I know a lot of things you do wrong too, so why are you telling me this?"

Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." This scripture applies to ministers and saints alike, and it contains some important teachings. First, God has ordained rulers in the church. He has organized a system of church

government. Second, we must be humble and obedient. "To obey is better than sacrifice . . . For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (I Samuel 15:22-23). Third, the true leader has a duty to watch over your soul. If he sees something that is sinful or dangerous, he is obligated to tell you about it. If you are going down the wrong path, he must warn you. You should accept this without becoming angry; for he is only fulfilling his duty. Fourth, the leader is responsible to God. He must warn you, but he is not responsible to you. Whether he will warn you or not is between him and God. Whether you will listen and submit is a problem between you and God. Finally, God will be your judge. If in His judgment you have rebelled against the authority He has placed over you, then it will be unprofitable for you.

"A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool" (Proverbs 17:10). If you are wise, you will accept reproof. Just a few words will be sufficient if you have the proper attitude. If you think you are beyond reproof then you have placed yourself in the position of a scorner or a wicked man. On the other hand, if you are wise you will love your rebuker (Proverbs 9:7-8). Both the rebuker and the rebuked must have the proper attitude in order for there to be good results.

Can a minister be rebuked? There is nothing in any of the Scriptures we have used to suggest that a minister is exempt from these guidelines. Of course, he must be rebuked by a minister of equal or greater authority. In fact, Paul teaches Timothy that a minister who lives in sin should be rebuked before others

that they all may learn (I Timothy 5:20). However, it is often the case that when someone is rebuked, he gets so much sympathy and comfort from his "friends" that he does not repent but instead becomes rebellious. When this happens, no one learns what God intended for them to learn from the rebuke.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness . . . Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 3:16; 4:2). From this we learn that the Bible is given for reproof and correction. The ministry is authorized, and indeed commanded, to use the Word to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. Keeping this in mind, let us always have the proper attitude when we receive admonition. We should pray, "Show me your ways, Lord. Lead me into perfection. When I go astray, send someone to correct me. Let me realize my errors before it is too late. Give me a good attitude when I listen to sermons or to a personal rebuke. Don't let me make excuses or try to justify myself. Don't let me rebel, but teach me to obey. Give me leaders who love me enough to teach me and reprove me. Teach me your paths."

Murmuring and complaining. To complete our discussion of attitudes towards our spiritual leadership, we need to discuss this subject. Murmurers and complainers are ungodly according to Jude 15-16. The Christian way is to pray for one another, encourage one another, and exhort one another. Paul says, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings"

(Philippians 2:14). If there is a problem, the scriptural method is to go to the brother you do not agree with and settle the difference (Matthew 18:15). It is wrong to complain and murmur to others either by talking or writing. That is sowing discord. (See Chapter IV.)

It does not take much to cause the average person or congregation to murmur. The slightest inconvenience, the temporary lack of water, food, clothing, or money will test everyone. Without God in control we are prisoners of our desires, appetites, and passions. Look at the example of the Israelites. They began to show their dispositions during the second month of their wilderness journey. They began to murmur and complain about everything (Exodus 16:1-3). In Exodus alone there are twelve major complaints of Israel against the plan of God and against their leader. No wonder they ended up traveling more than forty years on a journey that should have taken only a few months. Their murmuring stemmed from unbelief and a lack of respect for God's appointed leadership.

Jude 11 teaches us to avoid the gainsaying of Korah. This man criticized Moses and challenged his spiritual authority. What happened? God caused the earth to open up and swallow him and his followers. When Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses, the Bible says the Lord heard it (Numbers 12:2). Now Miriam and Aaron were older than Moses and part of his own family, but God rebuked them just the same. "Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant?" God asked. Miriam was stricken with leprosy for seven days as punishment.

This should teach us to avoid murmuring and

complaining, especially against the man of God. Paul learned "whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). If you feel that you are being mistreated, murmuring and complaining is not the solution to the problem. The answer lies in praying and in talking directly to the person who is creating the situation. Vengeance belongs to God. Let Him do any repaying that needs to be done (Romans 12:19).

An excellent example of the proper attitude is found in David's relationship to Saul. Saul certainly wronged David, even trying to take his life. Saul had sinned to the point where God rejected him, and Samuel had already anointed David to be the next king. Yet, on two occasions, David refused to kill Saul when he had the chance to do so. As long as Saul was king, David did not want to harm him. David waited for God to remove Saul.

Do you catch yourself murmuring or complaining? Learn to be content. Learn to pray. Learn to talk things over with the right attitude, if the situation requires talking. Do not talk things over with someone if it will not do any good, if it will inflame the situation, or if you cannot talk with a humble, quiet, forgiving spirit. Complaining is contagious. It is also contrary to the Word of the Lord.

Busybodies. Now that we have discussed attitudes towards our spiritual leaders, let us discuss attitudes towards our fellow man, particularly fellow Christians. A busybody is someone who is inquisitive about other people's personal affairs, a meddler in the business of others, a person who is busy with matters that should not concern them. I Peter 4:15 tells

us not to suffer "as a busybody in other men's matters." Paul also warns against busybodies (II Thessalonians 3:11; I Timothy 5:13). According to Proverbs 20:3, a meddler is a fool.

Some people seem to know a little about everyone else's business. They are involved in all kinds of problems. Many times they try to interfere with the disciplining of an individual and try to solve the pastor's problems for him. Most of the time they do not help, but just add more wood to the fire. Such people are a curse to a neighborhood and a plague to a church. These people try to find out everything that is going on. They feel that they are important and that they know everything. Actually they cannot be trusted with any important job that requires keeping things in confidence. As a result, a busybody never qualifies for the ministry.

We need to examine ourselves to see if we have the attitude of a busybody. If you are inquisitive by nature, you need to let the Holy Ghost deliver you from that curiosity where other people's lives are concerned.

Pride and a proud look. God hates a proud look (Proverbs 6:17). He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Pride was the sin that caused Satan to fall, and it will cause the downfall and destruction of all who harbor it (Isaiah 14:12-15; Proverbs 16:18). The pride of life is one of the three basic categories of worldliness that tempt Christians (I John 2:16). John the Baptist and Jesus preached their harshest sermons against the hypocrisy and pride of the scribes and Pharisees. How remarkable it is that

these vehement statements were not directed at the acknowledged sinners but at the religious leaders of their day. By this we know that it is often the religious people who are most susceptible to the sin of pride.

Christians, therefore, must be very careful not to develop this attitude. When talking about holiness it is so easy to become self righteous and critical of others. This is pride and hypocrisy. We can be the most holy looking people in the world, but if we are full of pride we will not be justified in the eyes of God. For an example of this happening, read the prayer of the Pharisee and compare it to that of the publican (Luke 18:9-14). God rejected the pious prayer of the former, but heard the sincere heart's cry of the latter.

There are two warnings that must be given. First, do not let pride enter your heart as a result of your holiness standards and your knowledge of the truth. Second, do not have a proud look. Ministers are especially susceptible in these two areas. Since God hates even a proud look, be careful how you conduct yourself. Ministers, does pride show in the way you speak to the saints, in the way you sit on the platform, or even in the way you walk around with your Bible in your hands?

Pride is one thing we must always guard against, no matter how spiritual we are. The more successful we are spiritually, the more the devil would like to make us proud. We must have humility, and not false humility either. We have seen some people display their humility so ostentatiously and try to prove how humble they were to others that they were actually taking pride in their so-called humility. As a test, if

you think you are really humble, then most likely you are not. When you finally think you have attained humility, then you have just lost it.

The way to eradicate pride and a proud look is to pray. Fall down on your face before God. Lay prostrate before Him. Pray until you weep. Confess your sins and think of how unworthy you are to have enjoyed God's mercy. This kind of prayer is not counted in minutes but in hours. After you have completely broken your spirit, get up and don't let anyone else know about that prayer and experience. This experience must be renewed periodically in order to keep pride away.

There are two more subjects that need special treatment in our day. Since they can be dealt with in terms of attitudes, we include them in this chapter.

Attitudes towards women's liberation. There are some things about this movement that are consistent with the Word of God, but there are many things that are not. On the positive side, the Bible does teach that the woman is just as important as the man. She is just as intelligent and just as valuable to the plan of God. There is no unequal treatment of male and female in Christ (Galatians 3:28). Throughout the Bible, God has used women as prophetesses, judges, teachers, deaconnesses, and laborers in the gospel (Judges 4:4; Isaiah 8:3; Acts 18:26; 21:9; Romans 16:1; Philippians 4:3). Applying this to daily life, we believe that if a woman has a secular job she should be paid as much as a man who is doing the same job, assuming both are performing equally well.

Having said that, we still must recognize that according to the Bible, a woman must be subject to her own husband (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; I Peter 3:1). There can only be one final authority of any unit, and God has chosen the husband to be the final authority in the home. Along with that authority, the husband also has the ultimate responsibility to provide for his family. He must love his wife as Christ loved the church and must honor his wife (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19). Otherwise his prayers will be hindered (I Peter 3:7). The woman came from the side of the man, not from his head or his feet. She is not to lead him or to be under his feet, but to help him (Genesis 2:18). If she is married, a woman's first responsibility is to help her husband and to care for her children. The Bible strongly advocates marriage and the home, while condemning extramarital sexual relationships, homosexuality and lesbianism. (See Chapter IX.) Because of this, much of the so-called women's liberation movement is opposed to the Bible.

The question remains, are women subject to all men? Can any man assert authority over any woman? The answer is "No." A woman is subject only to her own husband. Another man has authority over a woman only if he would have authority regardless of gender. According to Paul, a woman in leadership should have men in authority over her. Paul did not allow women to interrupt a public assembly and ask questions—a privilege that men often had in those days (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11). He did recognize the right of women to prophesy (any inspired

speaking) in public if done under the authority of men and not by usurpation (I Corinthians 11:5; I Timothy 2:12).

In spiritual matters, a woman should follow the leadership of her husband if he is Spirit-filled. Even if he is not, she should acknowledge him as the leader of the family in order to win him to God (I Peter 3:1-2). On matters of personal conviction, doctrine, and spiritual experience, a woman must be true to her own individual beliefs since God ultimately will judge everyone on a individual basis.

Attitudes in church meetings. The subject of church organization, government, and authority is more fully discussed in Chapter XII. In this section we want to analyze the first general conference of the church in Acts 15, and see how it operated. At this conference, an important, controversial issue had to be decided, namely what practices of the Jewish law were mandatory for Gentile Christians. Delegates came to Jerusalem where they met with the leaders and pastors there—the apostles and elders (vs. 2-4). Both sides debated and disputed at great length, with the major views being fully represented (v. 7). Finally, they reached a decision which the church as a body agreed to support. Letters were sent to the various congregations informing them of the decision that had been reached (15:23; 16:4). Notice that they worked together as a group after the decision despite the sharp differences of opinion that had originally existed. The church also worked together as a group to send letters of recommendation and to collect special offerings (Acts 18:27; II Corinthians 8:19). They loved

each other, helped each other, and even rebuked each other when they saw the need. Paul rebuked Peter and others "when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (Galatians 2:14).

What took place in Acts 15 was a democratic discussion in which a majority of the brethren formulated a decision under the influence of the Holy Ghost (v. 28). After this decision, the church united in their observance of it. Democracy is often misunderstood when we have meetings today. It means giving in quite a bit on nondoctrinal issues. It does not mean that we can do what we want and never listen to someone else. When a majority of the brethren want to do something and you do not, you should accept the decision with a good attitude. This means no murmuring or complaining, or else you will be guilty of sowing discord. The correct attitude is to comply with the majority decision on nondoctrinal matters. If you have confidence in your brethren, then it is easy for you to believe that God can influence a majority of them in the direction He would want them to go. If you love your brethren, you will accede to the wishes of the majority. At the same time, the leaders cannot have an attitude of pride which says, "I am the leader so you do as I say." Peter himself tells the ministry not to be lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock (I Peter 5:3). Ministers as well as saints should show brotherly love, "in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10).

What should a convention be like? The participants should not become angry, upset, resentful, or provocative. How can they be this way and then get up and preach to the people? How can they have a

call to help others when they cannot even get along with each other? A conference should be a meeting where there is some business to take care of, but also where there is fellowship, healing, revival, and an outpouring of the Holy Ghost. It should be a time for strengthening convictions and listening to others preach the doctrine that we love. It is so refreshing to hear someone else explain the truth in such a way that we can say, "This is the way I believe it, too." In this way, a conference is a time for mutual encouragement, not a time for gossip, murmurings, complaints, or disputes.

We need to guard against a stubborn attitude. Watch out if you catch yourself saying, "Well, I'll just do it anyway" or "If they don't do it my way I won't participate" or "I don't need anyone to tell me what to do."

The most important aspect of holiness. In concluding this chapter, let us remember that a proper attitude is the single most important aspect of holiness. A person with a humble, teachable attitude and a genuine desire to live for God can always be led to greater truth. Inward holiness will lead to outward holiness, but the reverse is not true. We often forget this, because it is so easy to observe and compare outward holiness but more difficult to discern inward holiness. Outward holiness is often the easiest part to obey, while attitudes and spirits are more difficult to control. As you read the rest of this book remember that a bad attitude will keep you out of heaven just as surely as any violation of outward holiness or any sinful act that you physically commit. Let us check

our hearts for pride, murmuring, sowing discord, bitterness, wrath and other evil attitudes that will destroy our holiness. It would be so sad for a Christian, and especially a minister, who has been born again and who presents a good outward example, to lose out with God because of some attitude which he has allowed to creep into his heart.

IV
THE TONGUE: UNRULY MEMBER

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).

"Let the words of my mouth . . . be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD" (Psalm 19:14).

Unruly member. The tongue is the most difficult member of the body to control, and it has the potential for causing the most harm. The way you use your tongue is a good indication of your relationship with God. The tongue speaks whatever is in the heart. If you speak evil, then evil must be in your heart, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man" (Matthew 15:18). James has some strong teaching concerning the tongue. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26). "If any man offend not in word,

the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). He compares the tongue to a bit in a horse's mouth which controls the movements of the horse, to a small helm which controls a large ship, and to a small fire that can cause great trouble. The tongue can defile the whole body. Only the power of God can tame it (James 3:1-13).

This is one reason why God has chosen speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). We receive the Holy Ghost when we repent, believe, and surrender completely to God. Our tongue is the hardest member to tame so it is the last part of us to yield to God. When we speak in tongues for the first time under the inspiration of the Spirit, it signifies that God has at last come in and taken complete control.

James makes it clear that it is easy for us to sin with the tongue, that the tongue is very dangerous, and that sinning with the tongue can completely destroy our holiness. What are the ways in which we can sin with the tongue?

Talebearing and gossip. This is one of the most vicious sins. It is Satan's primary tool for destroying the church from within. It can destroy confidence in people, harm the innocent, and hinder the repentant. It splits churches, discourages saints, and disillusions new converts. The Bible teaches us to speak evil of no man, especially our brothers and sisters in the Lord (Titus 3:2; James 4:11). "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off" (Psalm 101:5). Most people will readily acknowledge the evils of gossip, but the problem comes in identifying it in their

own lives. This is an area of great practical difficulty in the lives of many Christians. Let us explicitly describe what we mean by talebearing or gossip in hopes of awakening some to the realization of what they are actually doing. Basically, it means telling things of a personal, intimate, or sensational nature. It includes spreading rumors that could damage someone, and it includes backbiting, which means telling scandalous things about someone. Notice that gossip not only includes lying about someone or spreading unverified rumors about someone, but it even includes telling facts of a personal nature that the gossiper has no business revealing. Telling a fact can be talebearing when it is told as gossip to one who does not need to know about it.

God has ordained organization and authority in the church (I Corinthians 12:28). (See Chapter XII.) When problems arise in the church, those in authority should be informed. However, needless talebearing to other members of the congregation is not right. Laymembers in the church are not to judge one another (Romans 14:10, 13; Matthew 7:1; James 4:12). In the church, the leadership can and must judge in order to protect the flock (Matthew 18:18; I Corinthians 6:5).

This means the leadership does have the responsibility for dealing with sin in the church. It also means the laity does not have that responsibility. Sometimes, certain things must be told for clarification, for instruction, or for accuracy. In general, however, telling stories that could be harmful to others is not right in the sight of God. Talebearing and gossip are against

the Word of God. "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Proverbs 26:20, 22). How many churches would have peace if their members really believed this scripture!

To take a practical example, what should you do if you find out that a certain man who is in the church and who calls himself a brother has committed adultery? You cannot conceal the sin, for you do not have that authority. You must report it to the person in authority—the pastor, presbyter, or superintendent, depending on the person involved. At that point, the matter becomes the leader's responsibility. If you then tell everyone else in the church you become a talebearer. There is a reason for telling the pastor since he must protect the rest of the church and must try to help the sinning brother. There is no reason, however, to tell anyone else. If the brother has repented, why tell anyone about the sin? How will it help him to tell everyone else of his fall? As another example, suppose a laymember falls into sin, repents, and moves to another church. The former pastor should inform the new pastor so that the latter may help him, but it should be kept secret from the other church members. These examples explain two scriptures about talebearing. "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Proverbs 11:13). "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (Proverbs 17:9).

Notice that you never have the authority to cover unrepented sin regardless of whether it is your friend who is involved or not. Also, you cannot cover sin that will disqualify a man from his position according to the Bible. In both cases, the one in authority needs to know. At the same time, you do not need to retell your friend's sin to others. That is between him, those in authority over him, and God. Basically, a private sin becomes a church problem when the person does not repent but lives as a hypocrite, or when he brings disgrace and reproach upon the church. This is especially relevant when someone in a position of leadership has sinned. For example, what if a deacon in the church commits adultery, but repents? The pastor should still be informed because this is a matter that could disgrace the whole church and because the deacon has lost his qualifications, namely his good report. The one with whom he has sinned as well as anyone who finds out about the sin will lose confidence in the church if nothing is done. This does not mean that the pastor should make a public announcement of the repented sin. He should silence the man if he has repented, and not tell anyone why. In many cases, the pastor may put someone on probation or silence them for a certain period of time. Of course, the people should not speculate and gossip about what has happened.

If you hear that another saint has said something against you, done something against you, or has been indiscreet in some areas, what should you do? First, love thinks no evil, so you should disbelieve the rumor. Forget about it. If after praying you cannot forget it,

then go to the person involved, get the story straight from them, and clear it up (Matthew 18:15). What happens if you hear a serious rumor about someone? If you cannot ignore it then ask the pastor about it. The pastor should then speak to the individual concerned. If he is persuaded that the rumor is false then he should so advise those who heard it. If he feels that it is true he has a duty to clear up the problem. He cannot ignore it. Regardless of the outcome, you should not pass the rumor on any farther.

If the pastor hears a serious rumor about you, he should call you in and explain what he has heard. If you explain the situation and it is the result of a misunderstanding, you must not get a bad spirit. Do not try to find out who started the rumor or who is doing the talking, but be thankful that the pastor is trying to help you. Let him clear it up. If you try to find out who told the pastor, you are manifesting a spirit of vengeance and malice. Let the pastor rebuke the one who started the rumor. If you are really innocent, the person who reported the rumor to the pastor has done you a favor, especially if they did not spread it any further.

Sowing discord. The subject of talebearing is so important because it is a principal means of sowing discord among the brethren. Sowing discord is one of seven things that are listed as abominations (Proverbs 6:19). An abomination is something God hates, and it will keep you out of heaven (Revelation 21:8). Sowing discord involves going from person to person causing dislike, distrust, and division by telling confidential things or by constant criticism. The kind of person

that sows discord by words is one who thinks he can tell all kinds of things anywhere, anytime, to anyone. These people repeat things they heard in confidence and obtained through friendship. They are not afraid to criticize anyone. Test yourself in this area. Do you enjoy gossiping about people? Do you enjoy hearing something bad about someone? Do you enjoy telling everything you know? Do you enjoy criticizing or laying blame on others? Do you stir up trouble, dissension, and strife? If so, you need to be careful. It does not matter if you are the best preacher as far as oratory is concerned, if you sow discord you are in trouble with God.

Swearing. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath . . . lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12). Jesus said, "Swear not at all" (Matthew 5:34). What does this mean and what is the reason for this command? To swear means to assert as true, or to promise, while under oath. An oath is a formal calling of God as a witness. The teaching is that we should not swear to anything or bind ourselves by an oath to do a certain thing or to join a certain group. Jesus told us that the law allowed one to swear by the Lord, but that we should not swear by heaven, earth, or even by our own heads. The reason is that we do not have the power to change any of these things or to enforce our oaths (Matthew 5:35-37). God can swear by Himself because He has the power to make whatever He says come true. If it was not so before, it becomes true the minute He speaks it.

When we are called upon by law to swear to

something, we can simply say, "I affirm." To affirm means to state positively, to confirm, or to assert as valid. As human beings we do not have the power to swear by oath, but we can affirm that what we are saying is true. As Christians our word should always be true, and our promise should be just as good as any oath. We do not need to use the words "I swear" to prove that at least we are telling the truth this one time. We do not swear because we cannot control the things we would swear upon, but we can make sure that we always tell the truth and that we perform our promises to the best of our ability.

The Name of the Lord. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain" (Exodus 20:7). The commandments applicable today can be grouped into two categories: love God and love your neighbor (Mark 12:28-31). This commandment pertains to loving God. It is designed to teach us the proper use of His name. It refers to all profane, vain (useless), trivial, and irreverent use of God's name. It also includes any abuse of His name in false religions and witchcraft. The right use of God's name is in praise, prophecy, preaching, teaching, worship, meditation, and prayer. There is a blessing for those who think upon His name (Malachi 3:16).

Unfortunately, many Christians overlook this commandment. How many times have you heard the words God, Lord, Jesus, JC, or Hallelujah (which means "praise the Lord" in Hebrew) used in a useless or lighthearted way? To many people the use of one of these words is a matter of habit. If they are happy, angry, sad, disappointed, or startled they use it as a

mere byword. Why use a word that refers to God in such a situation unless we are sincerely communicating with Him? This applies to using worship songs and phrases in an irreverent way.

We can learn a lesson from the Jews. They were so careful about taking the name of the Lord in vain, that they would not pronounce the name **Jehovah**. When quoting or copying the Old Testament Scriptures they substituted the Greek word *Kurios* which means Lord. For example compare Isaiah 40:3 where "LORD" means Jehovah, with Matthew 3:3 where the word is translated as **Kurios** or "Lord."

If you have the habit of using "Jesus" or "Lord" or "God" without any real thought of praise, worship or prayer, then why not break that habit? Without realizing it, we might be taking the Lord's name in vain.

Slang. All of us, but especially the ministry, should also be cautious when using slang expressions. Many slang words have bad connotations, and we can pick them up without realizing what they really mean. What about watered down versions of curse words? If we do not want to use certain words, why use their derivatives and substitutes?

Filthy communication. "Put off . . . filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8). "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth" (Ephesians 4:29). We are temples of the Holy Ghost. Dirty jokes, dirty words, and dirty actions cannot be allowed to come from us. Words that are suggestive of something indecent should not come from the lips of a Christian. Can praises and vile words come out

of the same mouth? "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh" (James 3:11-12). Paul tells us to have "neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting" (Ephesians 5:4). "Foolish talking" means idle, stupid talk. "Jesting" comes from the Greek word *eutrapelia*, which Strong's *Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* defines as "witticism, i.e. (in a vulgar sense) ribaldry." It refers to coarse, obscene jesting. In other words, Christians should not take part in smutty, insinuating, sex oriented stories, jokes, and actions. There are some things done in secret which it is a shame even to talk about (Ephesians 5:12). It is alarming to see this teaching being ignored by Christians today. So many off color stories are told in mixed company and in public.

Cursing. "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (Romans 12:14). "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (James 3:10). These scriptures are concerned with the practice of pronouncing a curse upon someone. The Christian attitude is not to return evil for evil but to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). The Old Testament gave an eye for an eye, but in the New Testament Jesus commands "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Some ministers have misunderstood the authority

they think they have received from God. They try to use their authority to curse saints who do wrong. In one case, a woman and her family did something the pastor did not like. In retaliation, he verbally pronounced a curse upon her, saying, "You will not prosper" and so on. This type of thing is not authorized by the Word of God. It is contrary to the scriptures we have just seen. This type of behavior stems from a wrong attitude, not from the Spirit of God.

There are three examples in the Bible that are sometimes used to give validity to such cursing. We will explain how they really do not. The three cases are found in II Kings 2:23-24, Acts 5:3-10, and Acts 13:10-11.

In the first, a group of young men from the city of Bethel mocked Elisha. They called him a bald head, an epithet of contempt and derision in the Old Testament which meant "worthless fellow." They taunted him, saying, "Go up," that is, "Be translated like you say Elijah was." Elisha rebuked them in the name of the Lord. Later two bears came out and tore forty-two of them. The first thing to note here is that this occurred under the law, before the teaching of Jesus, and before the Holy Ghost baptism was given. Also we must realize that Elisha really did not condemn these men. They were from Bethel, one of the two cities in the Northern Kingdom of Israel that had golden calves (I Kings 12:29), and they were mocking the prophet of God and the power of God. Under the law, these men were already condemned to die because of their idolatry (Deuteronomy 13:12-15). God had already cursed them, and the question was

simply when the judgment would be carried out. Because God does not always execute judgment speedily, men are prone to think that God has overlooked their sin (Ecclesiastes 8:11). In this case, God had simply delayed his judgment until they began mocking His prophet. Whether Elisha cursed them or not did not make any difference as far as God's judgment was concerned.

The second case concerns Ananias and Sapphira. This couple tried to deceive the church and the Holy Ghost by lying. God gave Peter a word of knowledge and revealed the truth to him. Peter did not personally curse Ananias and Sapphira. He merely told Ananias that he was lying. A short time later God gave him a word of knowledge, and he prophesied that Sapphira would die just like her husband had. In any case, God used this as an example to the church. All hypocrites in the church today are not immediately struck dead by God. This was a special example at the beginning of the New Testament church, just as God killed Aaron's son for disobedience after the law was first given (Leviticus 10:1-2). In both cases, judgment was executed immediately as an example, and in neither case did a man curse the offenders.

The last case concerns Paul and the sorcerer Barjesus, who opposed the preaching of the gospel in Cyprus. This is simply a case where God gave Paul a word of knowledge and Paul prophesied to Barjesus. God impressed Paul as to what He was going to do, and Paul revealed it to the man. Paul said, "The hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind"

(Acts 13:11). There was no personal hatred involved. A true minister of the gospel never hates and never seeks revenge.

These examples do not prove the authority to curse, but rather prove the judgment of God. To curse someone would be in direct opposition to the Word of God. Do you think Paul could have written, "Bless and curse not" in Romans 12:14, and then done the opposite?

When someone does something wrong, the attitude for the Christian to take is, "God help him to understand his mistake. God have mercy on him. Help him to obey Your Word and not become an apostate." When someone does something against us personally we must ask God to help them and we must pray for love.

Reviling. "Nor revilers . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:10). "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be . . . a railer, . . . with such an one no not to eat" (I Corinthians 5:11). To revile or to rail means to abuse using words. It can mean to scold or to use harsh, insolent, or abusive language.

Once again, we are temples of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, we must be careful not to follow our fleshly emotions. There are absolutely no circumstances in which you are justified in reviling someone, even if you have been treated wrong or unjustly judged. We cannot use the excuse, "Well, we all have personal emotions," because the Holy Ghost is given to us to overcome our fleshly emotions. In I Corinthians 4:12-13 we find the proper reaction when others revile us.

The apostles were reviled, persecuted, defamed, and made as the filth of the world. Their response was to bless.

Paul was rebuked for reviling the high priest while under questioning by the Sanhedrin council (Acts 23:1-5). Ananias, the priest, had commanded someone to slap Paul, which was contrary to the law. At the same time he was trying to judge Paul by the law. Paul quickly told Ananias that he was a "whited wall," or hypocrite, for doing this. When Paul said that, those standing by rebuked him for reviling God's high priest. When Paul realized Ananias was the high priest, he apologized. He quoted Exodus 22:28 which prohibits the reviling of a ruler and explained that he did not know he was speaking to the high priest when he said what he did. Either Paul did not know to whom he was speaking or he did not acknowledge the man's usurpation of office. In fact, according to history, Ananias usurped this office from which he had previously been expelled by the Romans for crimes. Paul recognized that even though he was being unjustly condemned, he could not revile the high priest, because of his office.

Even Michael the archangel did not bring a railing accusation against the devil when contending with him, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Michael did not abuse even Satan with words, remembering no doubt that Satan originally had been created as an anointed cherub. Jude contrasts Michael's good attitude with that of apostates who despise dominion, speak evil of dignities, and speak evil of those things which they know not (vs. 8, 10).

Similarly, Peter describes those who are apostates, or those backslidden to the point where they do not fear the Word of God. "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord" (II Peter 2:10-11). Notice that these people do not like for anyone to tell them what to do. They will not accept correction. They are not afraid to speak evil about those in authority over them. We know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). These people have no fear or reverence for the Lord, His Word, His church, or His appointed leaders, so they are not afraid to revile just like people in the world.

According to Peter and Jude, these people need to learn from the angels. The angels who are given the responsibility to report to God about these same apostates do not rashly accuse or bitterly condemn them. They merely report the facts as they are without reviling or railing. They are courteous in their reports, even though they have more power than human beings.

So we find that the apostles, including Paul, and the angels, including Michael, knew better than to revile. Yet so many ministers and saints do not hesitate to speak whatever they wish about dignitaries and people in authority. Saints talk about their pastors, and ministers talk about other ministers. How can this be? Even if someone has sinned, there is a process

by which the matter can be brought before the pastor, the presbyter, or the general board. To report facts to the proper authority is not wrong, but to be malicious and to revile when reporting is wrong. Discourteous reports are wrong. Even the angels are careful about this when reporting to God.

Holiness demands that we do not speak evil, that we do not revile anyone. Even if a person has sunk to the lowest sin, we cannot revile him. We should be especially careful not to revile leaders. Those who revile are doing something that the apostles, Paul, Michael, and all the angels are afraid to do. Let us ask God to create a good attitude in us towards everyone.

Lying and bearing false witness. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:16; Mark 10:19). "All liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8). In these and many other scriptures, God shows how much He hates lies. Nothing which makes a lie, whether by speech or action, shall enter into the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:27). Two of the seven things listed as abominations, or things God hates, in Proverbs 6:16-19 are a lying tongue and a false witness that speaks lies. God wants us to keep our promises even if they hurt us (Psalm 15:4). All these scriptures make it clear that "he that speaketh lies shall not escape" (Proverbs 19:5).

To lie means to make a statement knowing that it is false, especially with the intent to deceive. It can include deliberately giving a false impression or confusing the issue in order to evade the truth. We can

even lie in certain situations by withholding information which is vital for the hearer to correctly understand the situation. In other words, hiding part of the truth that needs to be told can be lying. We can lie by our actions as well as our words if we deliberately deceive, mislead, or create a false impression. It does not matter how small a lie is, it does not matter to whom the lie is told, and it does not matter for what purpose the lie is told. A lie is a lie.

Let us give a few examples to illustrate. What if two people have an argument and refuse to speak to each other? A third person decides to be a mediator and falsely tells each person that the other has apologized. Even if the two become reconciled, the third person has told a lie. The end, a good result, did not justify the means. What if a young person has parents who will not let him go to church? Can he say he is going somewhere else and instead go to church? No, that is a lie. You cannot sin in order to go to church and expect to be all right. Suppose a woman pays her husband's tithes, but he is an unbeliever. When he finds out about it he makes her promise not to pay them as a condition for her continued church attendance. Can she pay his tithes anyway? No. She has given her word, and she would be lying if she broke it. She would be defrauding her husband and destroying her husband's confidence in her. Even if you are helping the church, if your method is wrong, you are sinning in the sight of God.

Some feel that the story of Rahab proves that the end does justify the means. She lied to the people of Jericho in order to conceal the Israelite spies. We

must realize, however, that she was a Gentile who did not know the law of God. She had simply heard about the great things Jehovah had done for Israel, and she had faith in Him. As a result, she hid the spies. She was not saved by her lie, but by her faith backed up by her works. God's plan was to show His power through Israel so that all the nations would see it, believe on Him, and be saved. Rahab was one person who did just that. If Rahab had known about the law of God, God could have made a way to deliver her and the spies without her lying.

To give another Old Testament example, Abraham lied on two occasions by saying that his wife, Sarah, was only his sister (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-16). He did this so that foreign kings would not kill him in order to marry Sarah, who was very beautiful. Both times this deception almost led to disaster, since the kings tried to take Sarah as their wife, thinking that it would be al1 right. Only the intervention of God restored her to Abraham. Abraham was reproved for his deception both times and was even expelled from the land one time. These incidents show that lying is wrong even when it is intended to protect someone, that it leads to disaster, and that God can deliver us without our resorting to deceit. They are also examples of lying by telling only half the truth and by deliberately creating a false impression, because Sarah actually was Abraham's half sister.

Remember, it is possible to "make a lie" by actions. What if you show a false graduation certificate as if it were your own? You are defrauding and lying by giving a false impression. What if you are given a

certain sum of money specifically to do a certain thing? Then suppose you get it done for less, but alter the receipt to show the larger amount. This is fraud and lying by what you have done. Similarly, what if you requisition a certain amount of money for one thing and then spend a lesser amount. If you keep the difference without either approval or offering a refund you are deceiving and lying.

As Christians we do not have to lie. If we have not done anything wrong, we can trust God to help us and protect us in difficult situations. As far as God is concerned, the old saying is true: Honesty is the best policy.

Idle words. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). He also told us in Matthew 5:22 to be careful of calling anyone a fool (which connotes a person who ignores God or is a reprobate). (See Psalm 14:1.)

Importance of the tongue. We realize how important the tongue is because of Jesus' statement that a man will be justified or condemned by his words. We also have James' teaching that a man with an unbridled tongue has a vain, useless form of religion, but a man that can control his tongue is perfect and can control his whole body. This means that if we want to be holy we must have "sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:8). "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man"

(Colossians 4:6). In the final analysis, we must turn to God; for only He can help us control our tongues. "Let the words of my mouth be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD" (Psalm 19:14). "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

V
THE EYE: LIGHT OF THE BODY

"The light of the body is the eye . . . If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (Matthew 6:22-23).

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psalm 101:3).

Gate of the soul. The Psalmist David made a covenant with his eyes when he promised not to place any wicked thing in front of them. He also asked God to give him the power to "turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity" (Psalm 119:37). Vanity refers to anything that is worthless, foolish, empty, and destitute of reality. Why did David place such emphasis on keeping his eye free from beholding wicked and vain things?

The reason is that the eye is a unique member of the body in certain important respects. Jesus told us in Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34 that the eye is the light of the body. If it is single (clear, whole,

not blinded), then the whole body will be full of light. If it is evil (wicked, diseased, blind), then the whole body will be full of darkness. If the light of the body is dark, how great is the darkness of the rest of the body! In other words, Jesus taught that the eye is the gate to the heart or soul of a man. It is the principal sensory organ that we use to receive information from the outside world. If our eye is constantly filled with evil sights, then our thoughts and actions will be drastically affected.

Psychologists have verified this statement, estimating that ninety percent of our thought life is stimulated by what we see. Also, experiments have shown that the human mind retains in long term memory about 65 percent of what it receives through the eyes and ears simultaneously, but only about 15 percent of what comes through the ears alone. As a simple illustration of the impact of the eyes on the mind, think of the difference between seeing a horrible accident as opposed to merely hearing about it. This explains why there is so much truth in the old saying, "Seeing is believing."

It is well established that what a person sees has a powerful influence on his thoughts. In turn, a person's thoughts determine what he is. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). As Jesus said, the condition of the eyes determines the condition of the body as a whole. What the eyes indulge in and enjoy is what the body will indulge in and enjoy. John recognized this when he included the lust of the eyes as one of the three major areas of worldliness and temptation (I John 2:16).

James 1:14-15 tells us that temptation is the first step towards sin. After lust has conceived it brings forth sin. There are many examples of temptation presented to the eyes which resulted in sin. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the eye so she took it (Genesis 3:6). Achan saw a garment, some silver and some gold. God had forbidden the Israelites from taking anything from Jericho, and no doubt Achan intended to obey, but when he actually saw these objects he said, "Then I coveted them" (Joshua 7:21). David "saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon" (II Samuel 11:2). This led directly to adultery and eventually murder. Satan showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world from a mountaintop in order to tempt Him (Matthew 4:8). All these incidents show how powerful the lust of the eyes can be.

Satan knows that the mind is most easily reached through the eye. He tries to bring all kinds of temptations before our eyes for several reasons. First, this is a way to bring suggestions to our minds about things that we had not previously considered. Second, these sights become embedded in our memories so they can return later to tempt us when we are weak or discouraged. Third, by constant exposure to certain sights and their associated ideas we gradually become accustomed to them. We may gradually come to accept them as permissible, normal, or inevitable. Finally, the devil knows that if he can get us to think about certain things long enough, we will sin. We can sin by simply entertaining and dwelling on these scenes in our minds, or we may be lured into a sinful act.

This means that we must guard our eyes from temptations. Of course, there are many situations which present themselves in front of us and over which we have little control. For example, we may see immodest dress almost anywhere today. What should we as Christians do in this kind of situation? We may not be able to completely avoid such sights, but we can discipline our eyes and minds. We must not entertain or deliberately prolong the temptation; for that can lead to sin, either in our minds or in our actions.

Important Scriptures. There are, however, three specific areas in modern society where we are able to exercise complete control over what we allow our eyes to see; namely, printed materials, television, and movies. Before discussing these particular subjects in detail, let us look at some applicable scriptures. We have already shown that evil enters our minds primarily through our eyes. So, whatever we are supposed to keep out of our minds, we should keep the same away from our eyes. Matthew 15:19-20 says, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man." Isaiah 33:15-16 gives this promise: he "that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high." Paul explicitly commands, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). It is also revealing to look at his description of apostasy in Romans 1. After listing twenty-three sins, he says that apostates are those "who knowing the judgment of God, that they which

commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:32). This teaches us that we should avoid looking at any representation of evil. Watching such sins being portrayed means we think about them, and this defiles us. In this context, Romans 1:32 makes it clear that people who take pleasure in seeing sin being portrayed are as guilty as those who have committed the sin. How can we enjoy these evils being described or displayed and then fulfill the commandment, "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil" (Psalm 97:10)? As the Psalmist prayed, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD." (Psalm 19:14).

Books and Magazines. Reading is one of the best means of self education. Someone who loves to read will probably have a large vocabulary, good grammar, and a general knowledge of a variety of topics. Reading helps to keep the mind active. It can be a valuable source for intelligent conversation and preaching. Although there is no need for sermons on politics, economics, or psychology, a well read minister can refer and relate to these subjects in a useful way. There are many good books, novels, and magazines.

At the same time, some are not good. Examples are: Soap opera type novels which are based on adultery or love triangles, novels that go into detail about sex, books filled with vulgar words, pornographic magazines, magazines filled with intimate confessions and scandal, and books dealing with witchcraft and the occult. We cannot feed our minds and hearts with this type of material and then expect God to give us clean

hearts. We must put them away from our lives and destroy those that we have, as did the church in Ephesus (Acts 19:19). If we read certain things and absorb certain scenes then they will be implanted in our hearts. Eventually, they will proceed out of the heart.

If in doubt about whether to read something or not, ask yourself if these meditations would be acceptable in the sight of God. For specific situations we have the Holy Ghost to lead and guide us. Be sensitive to the Spirit and to the impressions He gives. We also have the laws of God written upon our hearts by faith, so our consciences can be reliable guides. When we start to read something that is not good, the Holy Ghost will teach us and impress us not to continue. If we continue, our consciences will begin to bother us until we suppress them. By that time we know what to do.

Comic books. The worst thing about these is that they are time consumers. Reading novels or storybooks will impart some information and will help increase reading, spelling, and grammatical ability, but comic books have practically no informative or educational value. In addition, some may be unfit for children to read. For example, consider the extreme emphasis placed on violence in some of them. If comic books are read at all, parents should carefully select them and control their use.

Television and movies. This is a major area of concern in our day with respect to the lust of the eyes. As Christians we have decided not to own a television set or go to the movies, for the following reasons:
1. So many different types of sin are portrayed on the screen, and according to Psalm 101:3 we cannot place

any wicked thing in front of our eyes.
2. Romans 1:32 teaches that people who take pleasure in watching others sin are just as guilty as the doers.

Additional research on television. For those who are interested in further research, we have included additional information on this subject. For convenience, we discuss this mainly in terms of television, but bear in mind that most of the same evils are associated with movies. In this section we will first apply the scriptures we already mentioned to prove that television is not conducive to Christian living. Next, we will discuss the findings of many psychologists and educators on this subject. Finally we will answer some objections and try to give some practical advice.

Television is not conducive to Christian living. First, let us consider the kinds of things that are displayed on the screen. Violence and sex are the two most common topics. Immodest clothing, assault, adultery, fornication, lying, hatred, cursing, drinking, smoking, and murder are among the evils shown almost constantly. This sounds remarkably like the list of things in Matthew 15:19-20 which defile a man. Practically all of the programming consists in portraying or endorsing activities in which Christians cannot participate. Surely the scriptures which say, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes," and, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," and "Let the meditations of my heart be acceptable" are all applicable here. If they do not apply to television, then it is impossible to think of any situation where they would apply. How

can we profess to hate evil if we indulge in watching these scenes? How can we avoid the condemnation of Romans 1:32 on all those who take pleasure in watching others sin?

Let us spell out some of the spiritual effects of watching television. The viewer is constantly bombarded with evil scenes and ungodly behavior. This evil goes directly from the eyes to the heart or mind. What is the result? The basic resistance to sin in the life of a Christian is undermined. The mind is constantly being tempted and encouraged to sin. By seeing sin being repeated over and over, the mind gradually comes to the conclusion that it is not so bad after all. Television viewers subconsciously assume that society in general is similar to what they see on the screen and that everyone else is living like that. This leads to a compromising and permissive attitude. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact in psychology that TV is a form of escapism. The mind subconsciously identifies with the actors and plays their roles as a means of escaping the drudgery of life. Consider how much a person's mind is being polluted by participating in the type of scenes presented on TV. In summary, television is a constant source of temptation and pollution of the heart or mind. It gradually erodes defenses and alters attitudes towards sin through a form of subconscious brainwashing. It entertains the carnal man and feeds the lusts of the flesh. The conclusion is inescapable that constant TV viewing will completely destroy spirituality.

In addition to all of this, television is a waste of time. A person can be drawn to watch it hour after

hour. However, it teaches the viewer practically nothing of value about real life. It only introduces artificial lifestyles and false values. Television has an allure and attraction, but after watching it for a long time, the viewer often realizes how useless it is and how he has wasted his time. In short, television can be a form of addiction. It certainly fits the definition of vanity—something useless, worthless, and destitute of reality. It is this type of thing David referred to when he said, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

Even if TV did not display all the evils that it does, it would still be dangerous simply because it robs the Christian of valuable time. How many people have no time for prayer, Bible study, church services, or visitation, but spend several hours a day in front of the television? How many people would spend that much time in prayer? Christians neglect their walk with God, parents neglect their children, husbands neglect their wives, and students neglect their studies. It is a sad commentary on the American home to walk in at suppertime and see the father eating his dinner alone in front of the TV while the rest of the family is at the table, or to walk in at night and see the whole family sitting mutely in front of the TV. Another example of the addictive power of TV is for a visitor to come while the TV is on. Often the TV is left on, and the owner continues to watch it while entertaining the guest. In many homes the TV is left on practically all the time. Just think of the hours wasted by TV viewing! The admonition of Paul is particularly appropriate: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). (See also Colossians 4:5.)

Findings of psychologists and educators. Now that we have discussed the spiritual evils of television, consider the effects of this environment on a child. One study found that the average American child spends four hours a day watching television. By the time a child starts school, he has spent more time watching TV than he will spend in a college classroom. TV is used as a babysitter in many homes. We see how dangerous this is when we realize that the personality, morals, and values of adults are formed primarily in early childhood. Television is the best way to teach your child how to sin, and it is the easiest way to introduce him to lust and violence. It encourages him to sin and to break the law, suggesting new ways of doing so. It teaches the child that what he sees on the screen is normal, that this is what life is really like. Even if you feel that you are strong enough to completely ignore temptation (a faulty assumption in itself), your child definitely is not. A child is even more susceptible to the brainwashing, compromising process just described.

Psychologists, sociologists and other concerned individuals have begun to research some of the effects of television on the human mind, especially on the mind of a child. Here is a list of findings taken from three recent studies. Notice that these were written from a scientific, not a religious, standpoint. These are not our opinions, but findings of experts in their fields. Even so, they have discovered the power and the danger of television. As you read about the powerful influence of TV, keep in mind the constant temptation and evil which is presented on the screen. The

spiritual threat of TV combined with its psychological power is what makes it so evil.

Summary of "What TV Does to Kids," *Newsweek*, February 21, 1977.

1. After parents, TV is the most important influence on beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior. By the time a person graduates from high school, he has seen an estimated 350,000 commercials and 18,000 murders on TV.
2. Viewing violence tends to produce aggressive behavior. It also increases tolerance of violent behavior in others.
3. A study commissioned by ABC found that of 100 juvenile offenders, 22 of them admitted that they copied criminal behavior from TV.
4. TV instills paranoia. It generates an exaggerated fear of violence in the viewers' own lives.
5. TV displaces many of the normal social interactions between parents and children [note: also between spouses and between friends].
6. TV alters the development of childhood. It prematurely jades children and makes the normal experiences of growing up seem boring to them.
7. Addiction to TV stunts creative imagination. This causes a lack of imaginative, spontaneous play.
8. TV creates an attitude of spectatorship—a withdrawal from direct involvement in real life situations. It is an escape from reality.
9. It creates a low tolerance for the frustrations of learning. It shortens the attention span, so that the child needs gimmicks in order to learn.
10. TV is a principal socializing agent. This means it

shapes views of what the world is like and what roles people should play in life. For example, it teaches that might makes right, and that the rich, powerful and conniving are the most successful [note: and that sin is rewarding].

11. Advertising is a powerful force of deception on TV. For example, it teaches: Buy cosmetics to become beautiful and to get sex appeal. Take pills to cure any illness. Eating sugary foods is good for you.

Summary of *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, William Morrow and Co., 1978. The author is Jerry Mander, an advertising executive who now operates a non-profit advertising agency for special causes.

1. TV causes sensory deprivation—a lack of education in real world experiences.

2. TV creates false values. TV advertising creates false economic values and is a form of economic control.

3. TV has harmful biological effects. Physical harm results from the artificial lighting and the physical inactivity. Psychological harm results since TV is a form of hypnosis or brainwashing. It teaches while bypassing the conscious mind. Viewers actually become like the TV images they absorb. TV supresses imagination and gives a false impression of reality. It leaves us sickened, deadened, ignorant, mesmerized, and bored, yet hyperactive at the same time.

4. The programs have little value. By its very nature, it is easy for TV to portray emotions such as fear, hatred, and lust, but it is impossible for it to portray the subtleties of life and the deeper emotions such as

love, peace, and happiness. There is little potential for beneficial programming and democratic use.

Summary of a study on television conducted by the Australian National University Center for Continuing Education (Reported in *The Daily Texan, Austin,* Texas, Fall, 1978).

1. TV can cause the viewer to lose the ability to dream normally. This, in turn, can cause a lowering of self esteem, a confused sense of identity, and momentary forgetfulness.
2. TV can alienate the viewer from society.
3. TV stimulates impulsive, aggressive behavior.
4. TV is a factor in the increased use of tranquilizers and barbituates.

We encourage you to look up these sources and read them for yourself, because we have been able to touch only the highlights. The *Newsweek* article in particular is very good because it contains interviews with parents, teachers, and children which support its findings. As further proof of the evils of television and of people's realization of them, here is a list of some recent newspaper and magazine articles with a brief explanation when necessary. (Many of these were made available to us by Pastor B. E. Moore, United Pentecostal Church, Austin, Texas.)

1. "Sinful TV Sets Burned" A Nazarene church in Battle Creek, Michigan, burned TV sets because they felt their children's minds were being poisoned.
2. "Baptists to Set Temptations Afire" A Southern Baptist congregation in a Cleveland, Ohio, suburb burned television sets after being inspired by the Biblical account of evil books being burned (Acts 19:19).

3. "Astronaut's Family Will Borrow TV for Moonwalk" Moonwalker James Irwin's family does not own a TV because they have no time for it and because the violence shown on it is a bad influence.

4. "Television Addiction Affects Family Life" Austin *American-Statesman*, March 20, 1977.

5. "TV's Impact on Child Assailed by Writer, Critic" Waco *Tribune-Herald*, April 8, 1974. Alistair Cooke says TV has more influence than church and school. It helps trigger fads and sparks trouble.

6. "TV Dulls Child's Curiosity" This is the conclusion reached from experiments conducted by kindergarten teacher Helga Rundquist in Charlotte, North Carolina.

7. "Television on Trial in Murder Case" A fifteen-year-old boy killed an eighty-three-year-old woman after seeing violence on TV.

8. "'Police Story' Episode Lands 5 Chicago Teenagers in Jail" The youths involved copied a burglary shown on TV.

9. "Boy Admits Killing Woman" A seventeen-year-old boy killed a woman in re-enactment of a TV murder mystery.

10. "Murder of Boy, 6, Patterned After Japan TV Show"

11. "Psychologist Warns of Television Violence" Psychologist Philip Noble even refuses to let his children watch TV cartoons because of the violence.

12. "U.S. Television 'Too Violent' for Mexico" Mexico has banned 37 popular American TV programs.

13. "Too Much TV—Viewing Harmful to Children" Medical doctors advise parents to substitute other

recreational activities for TV due to reasons of physical and psychological health.

14. "TV Violence Deplored by 'Cisco Kid'" Interview of a famous actor in Western movies, Duncan Renaldo.

15. "Click! Good-By, Television" This is a 1978 *Reader's Digest* article about a real family who rediscovered family life after getting rid of their television.

16. "The Flick of Violence," *Time*, March 19, 1979. A movie called *The Warriors* has inspired brawls, gang fights, and at least three murders.

17. "Inventor of Television Says: The Thing I Like Best about TV is the 'OFF' Switch" Dr. Vladimir Zworykin of RCA says that TV is a bad influence, especially on the young, and that it is not informative.

18. "Learning to Live with TV," *Time*, May 28, 1979.

All of this is adequate proof of the adverse spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical effects of television. TV feeds the lusts of the carnal man, is a constant source of temptation, is a thief of time, destroys family life, warps children's character and morals, promotes crime, and is psychologically harmful. This should be enough to convince a sincere Christian that he will be better off in every way if he does not have a television. In addition, Oneness, Spirit-filled ministers have agreed as a body that television is not conducive to spiritual living. The ministry is given to the church for the perfecting of the saints and has been given power by Christ to bind and loose things on heaven and earth. On such a crucial issue, we would do well to abide by the decision of the body.

Answer to objections. There are several objec-

tions that have been raised to this stand. It is often said that many programs are good, or at least not bad. As examples, people mention the news, documentaries, and coverage of major historical events. It is true that some programs on TV are not bad in themselves and that there is nothing wrong with the physical machine itself. It may not be a moral sin to watch a particular program. However, even the news is often slanted and glorifies violence, crime, and rebellion. Even the commercials often convey undesirable messages. Then, too, it is almost impossible to be sure that some ungodly scene or language will not come on an otherwise good show. Of course, the major problem is that human nature being what it is, once people start watching TV they will look at just about anything that comes on regardless of their good intentions. It is hard to turn the switch off in the middle of an unwholesome but interesting program. The viewer is inclined to justify himself and say, "Well, it won't hurt me this one time," while TV's subtle influence is allowed to work. In theory, one could choose to watch only good things, but in practice it is just too difficult for a person to discipline himself in this way. There are so few really clean and worthwhile programs, that those who say they only watch the decent things should not mind giving up TV at all. If they really mean what they say, they watch TV so little that its absence should not make much difference. They should be willing to give it up for the sake of obedience and for greater spirituality. So little real knowledge is imparted by TV that a person can be just as well if not better informed

about society and current events without ever watching it.

A second objection is that while TV may show evil things, we see the same things every day anyway, so what does it matter? In answer to this, we must realize that there is a difference between seeing or hearing about sin in the world on the one hand, and inviting it into the sanctity of the home on the other hand. It is the same difference between having a temptation enter your mind (which is not sin) and entertaining that temptation in your mind until it becomes lust (which is a sin). The home is a person's place of security and safety. He may not be able to clean up the whole world, but he can try to keep his own house clean. After exposure to the sin of the world all day, it is important to be able to come to a home where there is rest, peace, love, and holiness. Bringing a TV into the home is an endorsement of the evils displayed on it, especially in the eyes of a child. It is one thing to recognize that sin exists, but it is another thing to endorse it, entertain it, flirt with it, and enjoy its display.

Our conclusion. What is the position of a Christian who watches television frequently? How can he love the things on television and yet hate evil? Apparently, his love is in the wrong place. This is very dangerous because, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). If a Christian brings a television into his home, spirituality will soon leave. It is difficult to remain spiritual and to maintain a close walk with God in that type of environment. It will sap his power with God,

and make him a spiritual weakling. It will subtly influence him in the wrong direction. Of course, if the head of the household is unsaved, the other family members may have no choice in the matter. In that case, they must still be extremely careful not to let the television get a hold on them. It will rob them of their spirituality if they watch it.

We cannot say that watching one program for one time is a sin, but even occasional viewing is dangerous. Frequent watching can easily become sinful, because the Bible teaches us that indulging in carnal lusts and taking pleasure in seeing evil displayed is sin. Furthermore, God has given Jesus name, Spirit-filled believers convictions about this subject. Therefore, Romans 14:23 and James 4:17 apply. What is not of faith is sin, and a knowing failure to do what is good is sin. This stand has been carefully and prayerfully considered, so do not take it lightly. Remember the words of the wise man in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

VI
SCRIPTURAL ADORNMENT AND APPAREL

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (I Timothy 2:9).

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5).

Outward appearance is an important element of holiness. There are a number of scriptures that specifically teach Christians how to dress and how to adorn themselves. We will approach these scriptures, two of which are quoted above, with the objective of discovering the underlying principles that govern the outward appearance of Christians.

It is important to understand these principles for at least two reasons. For one thing, styles of dress and customs have changed so drastically since Bible

times that we have to apply its teachings to situations unknown to that day. Also, there are few specific guidelines for men since apparently that issue was not in controversy then. If we can identify the basic principles of holiness, we know that they will apply equally to men and women.

Modesty. First of all, Paul stresses modesty in I Timothy 2:9. The primary meaning of the word modest is to be decent or chaste, especially in outward dress and deportment. Peter, in describing how women should adorn themselves, tells us that wives can win their unsaved husbands by their chaste conversation, which means chaste conduct (I Peter 3:2). The necessity for modesty in dress goes back to the sin of Adam and Eve. Originally they were created in a state of innocence and were clothed with the shekinah glory of God (Genesis 2:25; Psalm 8:5). When they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they lost God's glory and realized that they were naked. God then had to clothe them in animal skins (Genesis 3:21). Since that time, it has been His plan for mankind to be decently clothed.

Notice that the devil tries to do just the opposite to man. One of the things that the demon possessed man of Gadara did was to take off his clothes. When Jesus cast out the devil, the man was found fully clothed and in his right mind (Luke 8:27, 35). Immodest apparel indicates the presence of a lustful spirit—a desire to flaunt the body and to attract the opposite sex by lust. Immodesty is a strong temptation and enticement, especially for men, who are more visually oriented and more quickly aroused than women.

David fell into adultery because of this (II Samuel 11:2), and it is easy for a man to sin in his heart by looking at an immodestly clothed woman (Matthew 5:28). In such a case the man is guilty, but the woman is not completely innocent either. God's plan for us today is to dress modestly.

Modest apparel. Now let us apply these principles to questions that concern us today. What does it mean to wear modest clothing? It means to be clothed in such a way as not to indecently expose the body to the opposite sex. Immodest apparel attracts by exposing the body to the opposite sex or is careless about doing so. Here are some things to consider with respect to modesty of dress: sleeves, necklines, dress length, tight clothes, and thin clothes. Both men and women need to develop a personal sense of modesty. Standards we have used are sleeves to the elbow and dresses covering the knee.

Vanity. Next, Paul says that a woman should adorn herself with shamefacedness and sobriety, and not with various showy things such as elaborately braided hair, gold, pearls, or costly garments. Shamefacedness means reverence, self-restraint, modesty, and bashfulness. Sobriety means discretion, temperance, and self-control. In other words, it is the opposite of vanity. God hates pride (see Chapter III), so He does not approve of any pretentious or ostentatious display. Styles that are primarily designed to feed the ego are not in God's will. Women should not rely on outward adorning. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let

it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:3-4).

Moderation in cost. Closely associated with vanity is the principle of moderation in cost. "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5). This is the reason why we are not to adorn ourselves with gold, pearls, and costly array. The definition of costly array may vary somewhat depending on the culture, society, and income of the individual. A good way to think of it is to ask if this is an ostentatious display of wealth in the sight of acquaintances and fellow believers. Will it arouse envy? Does it represent a good stewardship of the money God has entrusted to your care? Surely it grieves God to see His people buying unnecessarily expensive clothes, automobiles, and jewelry while His work suffers in so many areas. There is a reason why God has blessed America materially and has blessed so many Christians. He wants us to use our prosperity as a means of winning souls, and not merely to satisfy our own lusts.

Distinction between the sexes. The scripture in Deuteronomy introduces another important concept to God—separation of the sexes. Not only are there biological differences between the sexes, but there are mental and emotional differences as well. In addition, God has established certain social methods for maintaining the distinction between male and female; namely, dress and hair length. (See Chapter VII.) This separation is important to God because He has designed different roles in life for the male and the

female. (See Chapter III.) Also, it is an important guard against homosexuality which God hates. (See Chapter IX.) The principle of sex distinction in dress is violated by unisex clothing, by men dressing in a feminine way, and by women dressing in a masculine way.

Deuteronomy 22:5 is applicable today. Many argue that this Old Testament scripture is not applicable today. We will establish that, first, it is applicable and that, second, other scriptures reiterate its basic teaching. To begin with, some say that both sexes wore robes in Bible days so there was no clear separation of the sexes. While it is true that both wore robes, it is also true that there were clear differences in the types of robes worn by males and those worn by females. A look at the history and culture of Eastern lands proves this, and so does this scripture.

A more serious objection is that Deuteronomy 22:5 is part of the law given to Israel and does not concern us as Christians. In support of this, people note that today we do not literally obey verses nine, ten, and eleven of the same chapter. These verses prohibit mixing seed when sowing, plowing an ox and an ass together, and wearing wool and linen together in one garment. To answer this, we must rightly divide the Word of God by looking at what these verses are intended to teach us. Verse five teaches separation of the sexes which is a moral law. It was not given just to the Jews but is still in force today. Verses nine through eleven teach separation from sin and the world in typology. We do not have to obey their cer-

emonial aspects, but we do fulfill them in typology. Our separation today is not between kinds of seeds, animals, and fibers but between holy and unholy, spiritual and carnal. The difference in the two types of law, moral and ceremonial, can be clearly shown in this instance because the word "abomination" is used in verse five but not in the other verses. Specifically, verse five says that it is an abomination **unto God** for a person to wear clothes pertaining to the opposite sex. An abomination is something God hates.

We know that God does not change in His likes and dislikes because He has declared, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). God has repented or changed His mind about whether to execute judgment or not depending on people's actions, but His basic character does not change. He is absolute in holiness and in His hatred of sin. God's people of all ages must shun what is an abomination to Him. Christians do not have to keep literally the purely ceremonial part of the Jewish law. (The only exception is Acts 15:29, if that is considered to be partly ceremonial.) The ceremonial law did not relate to something God hated, but only to specific methods of worship and of separation from the world. In many cases, God designated things that were to be an abomination to the Jews, that is, something the Jews were supposed to hate, but refrained from calling them abominations unto Him. As an example, God told Israel that certain animals were abominations to them and unclean to them (Leviticus 11). They were not called abominations to God or to us today. Wearing clothes of the opposite sex is an abomination to God, so it automatically becomes an abomination both to the

Jews and to Christians. No abomination will enter the New Jerusalem, but will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8, 27).

New Testament teaching. This standard for New Testament women is supported by Peter's use of Old Testament women as examples for us to follow. "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves" (I Peter 3:5). We know the holy women of old obeyed Deuteronomy 22:5, so Peter must have intended that it still be the standard today.

Several other New Testament scriptures prove that God still considers distinction of the sexes to be important. I Corinthians 11 teaches that men should have short hair while women should have long hair. (See Chapter VII.) I Corinthians 6:9-10 teaches that the effeminate shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Effeminacy refers to men who cross the sex line and act like women and dress is one important area of effeminacy. Notice that effeminacy is not identical to homosexuality which is separately listed in the same passage of scripture ("abusers of themselves with mankind"). Effeminacy means to look and act like the other sex in all things short of homosexual acts. This scripture makes it clear that God does not condone those who act like the opposite sex or who wear clothes that are identified with the opposite sex.

Sex distinction in dress. When we apply separation of the sexes to modern western society, we see that men should not wear dresses, skirts, and blouses, and women should not wear pants. The day has arrived when we must teach the men as well as the

women. Recently in America, a male office-worker filed a discrimination suit because females in his office were allowed to wear pants while he was not allowed to wear a dress. Most people would agree that it would be wrong for a man to wear a dress. For example, they would not approve of a male minister wearing one. Yet, they fail to realize that this is no worse in the sight of God than a woman wearing pants.

The scripture in Deuteronomy is written so that it covers all cultures. That which pertains to a man means any clothing traditionally associated with men in that culture, or anything patterned after men's clothing. This may be different depending on the culture. For example, it may be appropriate for a man to wear a kilt in parts of Scotland, but the same garment would be inappropriate for general wear in America. If a certain type of garment has been traditionally and culturally used by one sex and it is different from similar garments worn by the opposite sex, then it is permissible for the one sex to wear and not for the other sex. Of course, if people from another culture decide to wear western clothing, they must abide by the rules concerning that type of clothing.

There is no doubt that in the world today pants are a form of masculine apparel. Even pants that are now designed for women are still so closely patterned after men's clothing that they fit under the definition of "that which pertaineth unto a man." Pertain means to belong to as a part, attribute, feature, or function; to have reference; to relate. All styles of pants and pantsuits clearly have reference to, relate to and have basic features and functions of male dress. There is

especially no doubt about styles such as jeans where girls wear exactly the same thing as boys.

Historically, it was considered wrong for women to wear pants. In fact, the practice of women wearing pants did not gain widespread acceptance in America until World War II. At that time the woman began to take the man's place in the factory, as he went off to war. Around this time it also became widely accepted for women to cut their hair, smoke cigarettes, and drink alcoholic beverages. So, historically and culturally, pants have been recognized as men's apparel. It is only when society was disrupted and women usurped men's role that women began wearing pants.

Even today we have plenty of evidence that pants are primarily associated with masculinity. Pants are the basic apparel for men and are basic expressions of masculinity. Have you ever observed girls or women who wear pants almost exclusively? There is a definite change in their mannerisms and a decrease in their feminine behavior. They are apt to position themselves in unfeminine ways such as propping up their legs. A woman tends to act and look much more feminine in a dress. This is precisely what God intended when He revealed His will in this area.

We might also note that most women's pants are more immodest than dresses. This is an additional reason why they should not be worn.

Most conservative churches maintained a stand on this subject at one time. Since then they have compromised, just as they have compromised on smoking, drinking, and all other holiness issues. In the same

way, a majority of Protestant ministers rejects the virgin birth. So it is no argument to say that other churches do not have such a teaching about apparel. They have changed, but God has not changed. Are we going to follow God and the Bible, or will we follow the trend of the world which will eventually lead us to deny even the most basic teachings of God's Word?

Aside from what has already been discussed there are no specific restrictions on clothing. There is no teaching in the Bible concerning hats, for example. We can follow basic fashions as long as they are modest. Of course, good taste and custom will rule out certain types of dress for certain occasions. In particular, leaders should be careful to present a good image in public and should be well dressed. When finances prohibit someone from being well dressed, there is certainly no question of holiness involved. James tells us not to treat a poorly dressed man any worse than a rich, well dressed man when they come to church (James 2:1-9). Even in cases of poverty, however, Christians can be clean and neat. We are ambassadors of Christ, so we should try to represent Him favorably. We do not need to have new clothing to be good representatives, but it is important to have neat, clean clothing.

Separation from the world. At this point, let us recognize another important principle of holiness that affects outward appearance—separation from the world. God has always insisted that His people be separated from the world. (See Chapter I.) This includes outward manifestations of separation so that the world can readily identify true Christians.

God visibly separated the Israelites from the rest of the nations by their food, their dress, their farming practices, their worship ceremonies, and their sabbaths. A person could tell if someone was a real Jew simply by looking at him and observing his actions. As a result, the Jews have survived as the only ancient race in the Bible to maintain their complete cultural and religious heritage. The Egyptians today do not have the same culture, religion, or language as they did in the days of the Pharaohs. The Persians, Syrians, Greeks, and Romans do not have their ancient cultural, religious, and political systems. Most other tribes and nations that coexisted with Israel such as the Hittites, Babylonians, Edomites, Assyrians, Philistines, and Ammonites have not even survived as separate nations. Yet the Jews have maintained their cultural identity through the Babylonian captivity, the Roman occupation, and 1900 years without a homeland. The reason is that God's laws separated them from all other nations and preserved their identity.

Similarly, for Christians to exist as a chosen group of people, there must be points of separation, both external and internal. In relation to dress and adornment, God could have chosen a lot of things just to make us different. Instead, He has chosen certain standards that maintain separation but at the same time achieve His other objectives of modesty, moderation, humility, and sex differentiation. The point is, holiness standards of dress, conduct, and adornment also serve the very important function of maintaining a separation from the world. They help to put a dis-

tance between Christians and temptation, sin and the world. They serve as a means of identifying who is really a Christian. In line with this principle of separation, there are certain things which we should avoid, simply because they identify us with ungodly elements of the world. Certain styles of hair and dress may not conflict directly with specific scriptures, but they may be just too worldly. In another culture and time they might be permissible, but in our society they identify us with certain ungodly groups or attitudes. Remember, a person's appearance and dress tell much about his lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes. As examples, the hippies deliberately used their hair and their styles of dress to express their rebellion and to publicly identify themselves with certain political ideas and with sexual permissiveness. The Chinese and some of their Western sympathizers used Mao suits as a symbol of their Communist doctrine. Be careful of the latest fashions or fashions associated with certain groups of people. Ask yourself if this is a good witness of your Christianity to sinners. Does it identify you with a rebellious spirit? Does it present a godly picture to other people both in and out of the church? Could it be a stumbling block to others?

We must be careful about following all the latest fads and fashions of the world. By doing so, we can get trapped into identifying too closely with the world without realizing it. Also, the spirit of competition can get a hold on us. This spirit is opposed to modesty, moderation, humility, and holiness. We cannot allow ourselves to get caught up in the world, its desires, and its passions. Perhaps we should avoid some things

simply because they are too faddish and will identify us too closely with the world.

Separation from the world means that we have to draw lines in order to avoid all such identification with the world. Ministers should make this clear to saints. The laity should respect the specific lines drawn by the ministry even if they personally disagree in some particulars, because this is the only way to uphold basic standards. If some are rebellious when it gets to particularities, then the spirit of rebellion and compromise will gradually erode holiness completely. On the other hand, ministers can be so harsh, intolerant, unwise, and unrealistic that they provoke saints to rebellion and drive away newcomers.

Painting of the face. This subject is directly connected with vanity. In particular, painting of the face contradicts Paul's teaching that women adorn themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety. Shamefacedness means respect, reverence, self-restraint, modesty or bashfulness toward men; not being bold or forward. Makeup is obviously designed to attract the opposite sex. It does so by accentuating sensuality in the woman and arousing lust, not love, in the man. Both in the Old Testament and throughout history painting the face is associated with brazenness, forwardness, seduction, and prostitution. According to history, painting of the eyelids to enhance sexual appeal was first introduced in ancient Egypt about 3000 B.C. This practice is referred to in Proverbs 6:25 which says, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids." The type of woman this scripture describes is called an evil woman, a strange

woman, a whorish woman, and an adulteress, in the surrounding verses. Later, painting of the face was used for the same purpose of seduction. As a prominent example, read II Kings 9:30. Jehu was anointed king of Israel and given the mission of destroying the family of Ahab who hated the Word of the Lord. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, heard that Jehu was coming, and she knew what he was going to do. She immediately tried to seduce him in order to save her own life. As a means of enticing him, the Bible says she painted her face. When Jehu arrived, he saw her strategy, and ordered her to be killed.

Notice the contrast between Jezebel and Esther, the woman who saved her nation. She had at her disposal anything she wanted to get ready to appear before the Persian king. All the other potential brides asked for and received all kinds of paint and ornaments. What did Esther request to use? Nothing (Esther 2:13-15). She did not want to entice the king, but wanted to be accepted for what she was. She relied on the will of the Lord.

Two other scriptures tell us what paint represents. They ought to be especially important to us, because they reveal what God thinks about makeup. In Jeremiah 4:30, God likens the backslidden nation of Israel to a woman who tries to make herself beautiful with paint and ornaments to appeal to her lovers. A similar passage is found in Ezekiel 23:36-44. Verse forty describes two women, typifying Samaria and Jerusalem, who painted their eyes and wore ornaments. What is the significance of this? In the rest of the passage we find that these women were guilty

of adultery. So, we see that God associates painting of the face with adultery and prostitution. Nowhere in the Bible do we find it associated with a virtuous woman, but always with adultery and harlotry. Since this is what God thinks about this practice, we know that by avoiding it we will please Him.

Historically, bills were introduced in the British Parliament in the 1700's and the 1800's to outlaw painting of the face by women. In most of the American colonies the practice was either banned outright or frowned upon by society in general. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, it was not until after World War I that the barriers against cosmetics were gradually lowered and discarded. Even then, the use of cosmetics was sporadic and limited until after World War II. Before that time, women who cut their hair and wore makeup were generally considered to be prostitutes or the equivalent. As late as 1945, most conservative churches considered painting the face to be sinful. Gradually they began to accept the use of cosmetics along with other practices such as smoking, drinking, and dancing.

This shows us that painting of the face is not just the fashion, or just being modern, but it is the resurrection of an ancient practice which many of today's churches have accepted along with practically every other kind of evil. The pioneer evangelists of England and America condemned it. Early Christians in the Roman Empire consistently taught against it. Once again, shall we go the way of the modern church or shall we obey the Bible?

Painting the face is the opposite of shamefaced-

ness, sobriety and modesty taught by Paul and Peter. We need to ask the Holy Ghost to rule and reign in this area of our lives so that we will not love the world nor the things of the world.

Jewelry. Wearing of jewelry and ornaments is a form of vanity and is contrary to the teachings on moderation. Paul says women should not adorn themselves with broided hair, gold, silver, or costly array. Adorn means to decorate, ornament, beautify, or embellish. Peter says their outward adorning should not be in plaiting the hair, wearing of gold, and in apparel. The braided or plaited hair refers to the elaborate hair arrangement of that time, particularly to the intertwining of pearls and gold thread in the hair. These scriptures teach against all showy and expensive displays, even clothing that is too expensive. To understand all the ramifications let us look back to the Old Testament which is our schoolmaster and which Peter used to find examples of holy adornment.

A very revealing passage is found in Exodus 33:1-11. The Israelites had just sinned by making a golden calf and worshipping it. God had promised to lead them personally into the land of Canaan, but His justice now compelled Him not to appear in their midst lest He consume them. Then God's mercy spoke, and He promised to send an angel to lead them instead. When the people heard that God was not going to lead them they began to mourn. As a sign of their sorrow and their repentance they did not put on their ornaments. The Lord told them they were a stiff-necked people, and said, "Put off thy ornaments from thee." In response, they "stripped themselves of their

ornaments." They wanted to be stripped of their vanity in the presence of God.

Next, Moses walked towards the tabernacle, and all the people stood in the doors of their tents to watch. As a result of their consecration, the Lord came down in a cloud of glory that all the people saw. All the people worshipped Him, and He talked to Moses as a friend. The stripping of unnecessary ornaments had proved to God that the Israelites really wanted Him. It proved their attitude of self-denial. It is a lesson to us today that we cannot enjoy the fulness of God's presence and we cannot really draw close to Him unless we make this type of consecration. Those who are really consecrated to God will not adorn themselves with jewelry. It is vanity—the opposite of humility.

The vanity in wearing ornaments is described in Isaiah 3:16-26. The Israelites became proud, and this displeased God. As a result He told them He would take off all their ornaments, which were signs of the pride in their hearts. Here is a list of the ornaments and expensive apparel which displayed their pride (with definitions taken from Strong's *Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary* or from the Revised Standard Version where indicated by R.V.): Tinkling ornaments for the feet, cauls (netting for the hair), round tires like the moon (round pendants for the neck), chains (pendants for the ear), bracelets, mufflers (long veils), bonnets (headdresses), ornaments for the legs, headbands, tablets (R.V.—"Perfume boxes"), earrings, rings, nose jewels, changeable suits of apparel (R.V.—"festival robes"), mantles (cloaks), wimples (wide cloths),

crisping pins (R.V.—satchels), glasses (mirrors), fine linen, hoods (headdresses), veils, and stomachers (figured mantles for holidays). The various garments and the satchels (purses) usually were embroidered elaborately and were costly. The mirrors and perfume boxes were often hung from the neck or girdle. All of these things have the potential for vanity. In fact, the primary reason for wearing most of them is vanity.

The lesson to be learned is that we must show humility, modesty, and moderation. Practically speaking, this means not wearing excessive jewelry and costly apparel. The motive in wearing these things should be carefully considered. In deciding something questionable, ask yourself: Does this fit in with Paul's requirement of sobriety? Is it flashy or gaudy? What is my reason for wearing it? Does it serve any useful purpose? Even if it serves a useful purpose, is it extravagant? Is it becoming to a Christian?

Let us use some specific examples. Such things as earrings, necklaces, and bracelets are clearly ornamentation, while a watch is not, primarily. Even a watch, however, can probably be vanity if it is flashy and the person's motive for wearing it is not right.

In recent years there has been an increase of jewelry among saints, and this is contrary to the spirit of sobriety. In this day Christians who do not wear jewelry are to be appreciated.

Basically, saints should follow the leadership of their pastor, since he has the responsibility for the local church. However, saints should sincerely ask God to give them the personal convictions that He desires for them to have. God certainly does give laymen

convictions about these things. On some things it is wise for the pastor to give his personal conviction, his preference, or his advice but leave freedom to the saints. Remember that some things may not be sin but the motives behind them can make them sin. Why not consider less extravagant and less showy alternatives? Of course we advocate dressing well and in good taste, but Christians can be well dressed without being ostentatious. Most often those who are simply and tastefully dressed are the most elegant anyway. We should also consider giving up certain things just in order to draw closer to God and to establish a deeper consecration, if for no other reason. Even if something may not send you to hell, getting rid of it can draw you closer to God, and isn't that what we really want?

Those in leadership must be even more careful. Here is where we really need personal convictions. Some things that are not sin need to be shunned because they are not conducive to being a good leader. In the absence of specific standards in the Bible, a leader usually sets standards by his actions. Usually the members of a congregation will live a little lower than the standards that a minister and his wife set for their own lives. If you wear a small ring you think is acceptable, some of your saints will probably wear large rings which you do not think are acceptable. How will you be able to explain or justify the difference to them? As a result, a leader should ask God to give him strong enough convictions to correctly lead the people under him. He should set a somewhat stricter standard for himself than for oth-

ers. When in doubt, all Christians, but especially leaders, should choose the alternative which will lead to greater holiness rather than the possibility of greater worldliness.

Guidelines for children. One more question needs to be addressed, and that is, "How do these principles apply to children?" The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). We should teach holiness to our children. Of course, we realize that some things that would be immodest on an adult would not be considered immodest on children. However, we should not let them wear styles of clothing in public that are clearly immodest such as bathing suits, halter tops, and so on, because this would establish dangerous precedents for when they grow older. Neither should they be allowed to wear jewelry or makeup because this will create the wrong spirit and attitude in them. Girls should not wear pants and should not have their hair cut. Boys should not wear dresses or have their hair too long. Not only does this set a bad example, but the Biblical principle of separation of the sexes applies to children as well as to adults. Christian parents have the responsibility to see that their children learn about holiness from an early age. This is the Bible way, and it is the only way guaranteed to produce good results.

In summary, the Bible does not give detailed rules on specific things that can or cannot be worn. We do have the guidelines of I Timothy 2:9, I Peter 3:1-5, and Deuteronomy 22:5. We also have the law of God

written in our hearts, and we have the leadership of the ministry for our perfection. We surely must take a stand against excessive jewelry, immodesty, and worldliness because the Bible does. We need to strip ourselves of anything that would tend to make us be proud or even look proud. Remember that Satan was created as one of the cherubims, but fell when his own beauty made him proud. In short, we must be examples not of worldliness, but of genuine Christianity.

Early church history. In concluding this chapter on Christian adornment it is interesting to find out what the early Christians taught on the subject. A good example of what they believed is found in "On Female Dress," a treatise written by Tertullian in the third century A.D. (See *A Treasury of Early Christianity*, Anne Fremantle, editor.) In this article, Tertullian teaches against rouge, hair dye, wigs, elaborate hair styling of men and women, eyeliner, jewels, and ornaments. He calls Christians to temperance and sacrifice. He says that if God treats lust just like fornication, He will not fail to punish those who deliberately arouse lust in others by their dress. He also notes that the person who is accustomed to luxury, jewels, and ornaments will not be willing to sacrifice all, including life itself, to the cause of Christ. Here are some excerpts from the article. "You must not overstep the line to which simple and sufficient elegance limits its desires, the line which is pleasing to God. Against Him those women sin who torment their skin with potions, stain their cheeks with rouge, and extend the line of their eyes with black coloring.

Doubtless they are dissatisfied with God's plastic skill . . . Take not to yourself such robes and garments as play the part of pimp and pander . . . Let us cast away earthly ornaments, if we desire heavenly."

We have seen that holiness with respect to apparel and adornment is taught in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. It was practiced by the early Christians and was generally accepted in the nominally Christian nations until the twentieth century. The reformers, evangelists, and revival movements of the past taught it. Most churches observed it at one time, but have gradually discarded it.

The challenge today. The final decision rests with us. Will we retain the Biblical teachings on modesty, humility, and moderation in our outward appearances? Will we maintain separation of the sexes and separation from the world? Or, will we succumb to the pressures of the world and its so called modernization which is really a revival of ancient evils? Will we identify with God or with the world? God help us to hold fast to the truth and to the fulness of holiness. God help us to keep the old landmarks established by the Word of God, the teaching of our spiritual forefathers, and the leading of the Spirit.

VII
BIBLE TRUTHS CONCERNING HAIR

"If a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her" (I Corinthians 11:14-15).

The New Testament teaching about hair is found in I Corinthians 11:1-16. This passage plainly teaches that a woman should have long hair and a man should have short hair. Before going into a detailed study, let us briefly summarize the reasons.

Reasons why a woman should have uncut hair.

1. Uncut hair is a sign of her submission to authority.
2. The angels are watching to see if she has this "mark."
3. It is a shame for a woman to pray or prophesy with an uncovered head. Hair is her covering, and if she cuts her hair it is the same as being completely shaven.

4. Nature teaches her to have long hair as opposed to shorn hair (cut hair) or a shaven head.
5. Long hair is her glory.
6. She is a type of the church and her uncut hair is a type (sign) of the church's submission to Christ.
7. It is one of God's methods for maintaining a distinction between male and female.

Reasons why a man should have short hair.

1. Short hair on a man is a symbol of his authority.
2. A man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head (authority), which is Christ. Long hair is the biblical covering.
3. Nature teaches him to have short hair.
4. Long hair is a shame on a man.
5. Man is a type of Christ. Man's short hair signifies Christ's authority over the church.
6. It is one of God's methods for maintaining an outward distinction between male and female.

To fully understand and appreciate these reasons we need to look at the Old Testament significance of hair. In order to do this, let us establish the relationship between the two testaments. The Old Testament was written for our learning, for our example, and for our admonition (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11). The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). The Old Testament is part of our foundation (Ephesians 2:20). There are many types and shadows in it that help us to appreciate the depth of and understand the meaning of the New Testament (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:5;

10:1). Specifically, a careful study of the Old Testament will tell us much about the significance God places on hair.

Hair was a symbol of perfection and strength in the Old Testament. Among the Jews, an abundance of hair was an indication of perfection and strength. Lack of hair symbolized the opposite: imperfection, lost glory, and powerlessness. For example, the young men in II Kings 2:23 contemptuously called Elisha a baldhead. The word *baldhead* was an Old Testament expression that did not necessarily indicate actual baldness, but meant rather that the person so called was worthless, imperfect and without glory.

Cutting of hair was a symbol of disgrace or mourning. Throughout the Old Testament, the cutting of hair is symbolic of disgrace (Ezra 9:3; Nehemiah 13:25) and mourning (Isaiah 22:12; Ezekiel 27:31; 29:18, Micah 1:16). Lack of hair is used to signify barrenness, sin and the judgment of God (Isaiah 3:17, 24, 15:2; Jeremiah 47:5, 48:37; Ezekiel 7:18; Amos 8:10). In Isaiah 3:17-24 the judgment pronounced on proud women was that instead of having well set hair, they would be struck bald by God. This meant they would be without honor and would be ashamed. In Jeremiah 7:29 God used cut hair as a symbol of Israel's backslidden condition and her rejection by God.

Hair was symbolic of glory. A woman's long hair is symbolic of the blessings of God in Ezekiel 16:7. Grey hair is called a crown of glory (Proverbs 16:31). Ezekiel's hair was used by God as an object lesson. God told him to cut his hair and use it to

illustrate how the glory of God would depart from Jerusalem (Ezekiel 5:1-4, 12). First, His glory and presence filled the inner court of the temple (10:3). Then it moved over the threshold (10:4). Then, it was lifted up from the temple (10:5). Finally, God's glory mounted up from the earth (10:19). To start this whole description of the departure of God's glory and the resulting judgment, God used Ezekiel's hair. Ezekiel, without his hair, was symbolic of Ezekiel without his glory, which in turn symbolized Jerusalem without the glory of God.

Uncut hair was a mark of separation unto God. Other important meanings of hair can be found by studying the Nazarites or Nazirites (Numbers 6:1-21). The word comes from the Hebrew *nazir*, which Strong's *Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary* defines as "separate, i.e. consecrated." The Nazarites were people that were to be separated unto Jehovah. This separation was to be shown by three outward signs. A Nazarite was not to partake of grapes or any product of grapes, was not to touch a corpse, and was not to cut the hair on the head in any way. This last sign was the only one that immediately identified a Nazarite by outward appearance. Either a man or a woman could be a Nazarite (v. 2). The Nazarite vow could be taken for a temporary period or for a lifetime. Paul took temporary vows, while Samson was a Nazarite from his mother's womb (Acts 21:20-27; Judges 13:7). So the hair was a mark of separation. Since abundance of hair signified strength, perfection and glory, the free growth of hair on the head represented the dedication of a person with his whole

strength and power to God. The hair was "the consecration of his God upon his head" (Numbers 6:7).

Notice that the Nazarite could not cut his hair at all but was to let it grow. During the period of separation he was holy. At the end of the vow he was to cut his hair (v. 5). The reason he could not defile himself was that the mark of his separation was on his head for all to see (v. 7). If a Nazarite broke his vow and became defiled, then he had to shave his head (v. 9). Why was this so? If he did not cut his hair then it would indicate he was still separated unto Jehovah, while in fact his actions proved otherwise. His appearance and his actions would be in conflict, making him a hypocrite. Also, if he broke his vow he had to begin all over again (v. 12). His righteousness was not counted if the vow was broken. (See also Ezekiel 3:20; 18:24; 33:12-13.) When the vow was completed, his hair was cut and put on the altar for a peace offering (v. 18). It was called the hair of his separation unto God (v. 19).

There is another interesting fact relating to the Nazarites. Each seventh year in Israel was called the Sabbatical year. Trees and vines were not pruned, and fields were not plowed or sown. In particular, grape vines were left undressed (Leviticus 25:5, 11). In Hebrew, the word "undressed" is *nazir*, which is the same word translated "Nazarite" in Numbers. In fact, Strong's second definition of this word, in addition to the one already quoted, is "an unpruned vine (like an unshorn Nazarite)." These "Nazarite" vines were not cut or pruned, but were allowed to grow freely. This lets us know how long the Nazarites' hair was. It was

not cut, burned off, or bitten off, but allowed to grow freely unto Jehovah.

In summary, what did hair signify in the Old Testament? It was a sign of power, perfection, and glory. The absence of hair signified worthlessness and glory departed. We do not believe that Christians are Nazarites, but we have used the study of the Nazarite to show that in the Old Testament hair was the visible mark of separation from the world and consecration to God.

New Testament teaching. Now we are ready to turn to the New Testament teaching on hair as found in I Corinthians 11:1-16. The Catholic church interprets this passage to mean that women must pray with some type of cloth covering their heads. Protestant churches usually ignore the passage completely, concluding that it was not meant for today. Most fundamental churches began by believing that it taught women should have long hair, and some continue to do so today. We believe that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16). We do not believe that any Scripture can be ignored, but that each is precious and important. Let us analyze this passage in that light.

The Spiritual authority of Paul. Verses 1-2: Paul admonishes us to follow him and to keep the ordinances or doctrines which he has delivered to us. This includes his teaching concerning hair in the subsequent verses.

The Principle of designated authority. Verses 2-3: God is the head of Christ. This refers to the fact that the flesh of Jesus was subordinate to the Spirit

that dwelt within Him. Christ subjected His flesh to the plan and purpose of the eternal Spirit, even unto death (Philippians 2:8). Likewise, Christ is the head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman. This simply means that the man is the head of his family. He is designated as the spiritual authority and representative of the home. Man today is the legal representative of the whole human race, male and female, as Adam was in the beginning (Exodus 20:5). Regardless of women's liberation, a woman is to be subject to her own husband (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; I Peter 3:1).

Verse 4: A man should not have his head covered when he prays or prophesies. By doing so, he dishonors Christ who is his head. Prophesying includes any anointed preaching and testifying.

Verse 5: On the other hand, a woman who prays, preaches, or testifies without her head covered dishonors her head, which is the man. The sexes should not try to change places. The covering of the woman is a token of the position in which God has placed her. Long (uncut, unshorn) hair is a God-given covering for her according to verse fifteen.

Verse 6: If a woman's head is not covered, then it is a disgrace or a shame. It is the same as if her hair were completely shorn (cut) or shaven. This would mean her glory is taken away.

Verses 7-9: Man is the image of God (Genesis 1:26). He is the representative of the human race and should not have his head covered. So, among flesh he is the highest authority. However, the woman came from the man (Genesis 2:22). To show this relation-

ship, the woman should be covered. The sexes are to be distinguished. Woman is the glory of the man, and hair is the glory of the woman (v. 15).

Verse 10: Even the angels are involved with this subject. We know that the angels desire to look into our salvation (I Peter 1:12). We also know that pride and rebellion caused the fall of Satan and many of the angels (I Timothy 3:6; Isaiah 14:12-15). Here we are taught that the woman must have power (a mark, a sign) on her head because of the angels. She is to be an example even to angels. They are looking to see if she has the mark of consecration, submission and power with God, or if she is rebellious like Satan. Furthermore, the woman is a type of the church, and she signifies to the angels whether or not the church is being submissive to Christ, the head of the church. So her uncut hair is a symbol of submission to authority.

Verses 11-12: Paul explains that woman is not inferior to man, and man is not complete without the woman. This is especially true in the church. However, someone has to be chosen as the head—the representative and authority—and God has appointed the man.

Verse 13: Paul uses a question as a part of his teaching method. Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? His answer is that it is a shame for her to do so (v. 5).

Verse 14: Nature, not just custom, teaches that a man should have short hair but that a woman should have long hair. God's purpose is to keep a separation of the sexes in this area.

Verse 15: A woman's hair is given to her for her glory. It is given to her for a covering to satisfy the

requirements of the preceding verses. In this verse no other covering such as a hat or a scarf is meant. For one thing, this verse explicitly states that her hair is her covering for her head. Also, it would be difficult for a woman to have to stop, find a scarf, and put it on every time she wanted to pray or witness to someone. For a true Christian whose mind is in constant communication with God and who prays without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17), this would mean wearing a scarf or hat all the time. Paul is telling us that a woman does not have to wear a veil of cloth; her hair is sufficient covering.

For those interested in Greek, the word for "covered" in verse six is *katakalupto*, which Strong defines as "to cover wholly, i.e. to veil." The word for "covering" in verse fifteen is *peribolaion*, which Strong says is "something thrown around one, i.e. a mantle, veil." So verses five and six say that a woman's head should be covered wholly or veiled. Verse fifteen says her hair is a mantle or veil. Clearly, long hair is an adequate covering with respect to verses five, six, and thirteen.

Verse 16: The children of God are not contentious. The church has no custom of being contentious over the teachings of God's word. It has no custom regarding hair other than what Paul has just described. Some try to say this verse means that if anyone disagrees with these teachings then obedience is not required. However, if this is true, then Paul's whole teaching is in vain, and he is condoning contention and disobedience. It is foolish to think that Paul is saying, "If you do not have such a custom, then you

are not required to obey the word of God." Reading verses two and sixteen together, we can clearly see that Paul is telling us to be obedient to his teachings instead of being contentious.

Reasons for Biblical teaching on hair. Let us summarize the reasons behind the Bible's teaching that a man should have short hair while a woman should have long hair. Basically, the long hair of the woman is a symbol of her relationship to the man. It is her glory just as she is the man's glory. It shows that she came from the man, and that she is second in position to her husband. By showing submission to her own husband, it also shows submission to the plan and will of God. It is a sign to the angels that she is submissive to God and not rebellious. It is a sign of her glory and of her power with God. It is given to her for a covering for her head so she can pray, prophesy, preach, and testify without being ashamed. Long hair on the woman and short hair on the man is taught by nature, and signifies that the individual is following the natural plan and normal desires designed by God. Hair provides a distinction between the sexes which is a very important concept to God. (See Deuteronomy 22:5 and Chapter VI.) As an example of all this, we can look to the modernization and Westernization of many different nations. Historically, society's acceptance of women cutting their hair has been closely associated with women wearing men's apparel, smoking, drinking and lowering their moral standards.

In general, a Christian woman's long hair is a sign of separation from the world, just as it was for the Nazarite. God has always required His people to

have specific marks which separate them from the rest of the world. The Jews are an excellent example. They are the only ancient race of people to survive with a unique national identity, culture, and religion, even though they were without a homeland for almost 1,900 years. The reason is that God's commandments and regulations kept them separate. Likewise, the only way the church will survive is to maintain separation from the world. In order to do this God could have chosen almost anything as one of the specific points of separation. He chose hair, not arbitrarily, but for the reasons just discussed. Once we begin observing this command, we can see how beautifully it achieves the objective of keeping the church separate from the world.

Typology. As another reason for a woman having long hair, we must see how this teaching fits into typology. The man is a type of Christ. The woman is a type of the church, the bride of Christ. This type is taught in verse three and also in Ephesians 5:22-32. This being so, for a man to have long hair is to symbolize that Christ is not the head of the church. For a woman to cut her hair is to symbolize that the church is not in submission to Christ and that it has lost its glory.

Much of our discussion has relied on the importance of typology. Many people do not understand the beautiful typology of the Bible, and many do not think it is very important. Even though we may not understand the full significance of types, we should realize that God attaches great importance to them. Therefore, we should obey God's Word exactly, even when we can-

not understand why it is necessary to do so. Consider the Old Testament saints. They certainly did not understand all of God's commands and plans. Things that were mysteries to them have been revealed to us today. For example, the oil they used in ceremonies is a type of the Holy Spirit, the presence of God. The deliverance of Israel through the blood, the waters of the Red Sea, and the baptism by the cloud that led them to the promised land is a type of our own salvation (I Corinthians 10:1-2). The brazen serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness became a type of Jesus who was lifted up on the cross (John 3:14). The intricacies of the tabernacle have many applications to our present day plan of salvation. The Israelites did not understand this, but their obedience in these areas has caused us to receive understanding and blessing. Whenever they failed to fulfill typology by being disobedient, the judgment of God came upon them.

Take Moses as an example. He did not understand typology and was not expected to do so. He was only expected to obey God's commands. He was told to smite a rock on one occasion and speak to a rock on another occasion in order to provide water to the Israelites. Instead, Moses struck the rock the second time as well. This does not seem to be such a serious offense to us, but God kept Moses from entering the promised land because of it (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:8-12). This one act of disobedience prevented Moses from fully obtaining what he had prepared and worked for his whole life. Why? I Corinthians 10:4 teaches that the rock was Christ. Jesus was to be struck only on one occasion, so Moses'

disobedience partially destroyed God's intended typology. Clearly, this was a serious thing to God.

Since God's teaching concerning hair is so closely connected with several forms of typology, we should carefully obey it. We cannot lightly throw it aside. Regardless of the trouble it may cause or what others may think, our duty is to serve and obey God. This is the very definition of true love. Did not Jesus say "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15)?

What is long hair? As a practical matter, many people want to know what is the precise definition of long hair on a woman. From the study of the Nazarites, we see that it means uncut hair or hair that is allowed to grow freely. Any other definition cannot be supported by Scripture. By letting the hair grow freely we allow nature, the teacher that Paul appealed to in verse fourteen, to determine the proper length for each woman. Also, verse six indicates that if the hair is cut at all, it is the same as if it were completely shaved off for a woman. So we find three lengths of hair mentioned: long (uncut), shorn (cut), and shaven.

A man's hair should be at least short enough to distinguish him from women. This length may vary somewhat from time to time and culture to culture. In our own time and culture, we must remember that a man's hair has been used as a sign of rebellion against authority and morality. So a man's hair should be well groomed and short enough so that no one would think that he is rebellious. In determining the appropriate length of a man's hair we must consider the following questions. Is it shorter than that of the average woman in our society? Is it a reproach to the church and to

Christ? Is it a sign of rebellion against authority in the community? Is it a sign of rebellion against the pastor? Is it a stumbling block or an offense to other members of the church (I Corinthians 8:9-13)? Does it identify him with undesirable elements of the world from which he has been saved? Does it identify him too closely with the fads and fashions of the world? Is it a good witness to outsiders? These same questions can also be applied to facial hair. It is interesting to consider some of the laws that a number of countries have established for men's hair. Korea and Singapore, for example, have promulgated laws forbidding men to grow hair over their collars, ears, or eyebrows.

This is it good place to dispel the myth that Jesus had long, womanly hair. First, He was not a Nazarite as some believe, but a Nazarene, which means an inhabitant of the city of Nazareth. He drank grape juice and touched corpses, so we know He did not have a Nazarite vow. All the paintings showing Him with long hair were painted many centuries later and are without scriptural or historical foundation. Roman sculpture and coinage as well as other historical sources all show that men wore short hair in Christ's day. There is no historical representation of a man during that time period who had shoulder length hair. If Christ did have long hair, He would have contradicted His own inspired word and the nature that He designed.

Dyeing the hair. Some words are also in order about the dyeing of hair. According to Proverbs 16:31, grey hair is a crown of glory. By altering that color, the glory is lost. Jesus Himself assumed that people would not change the color of their hair (Matthew

5:36). The same reasons for not wearing makeup as discussed in Chapter VI also apply here. What is the difference between painting the cheeks, eyebrows, or eyelashes and dyeing the hair? Similarly, what is the difference between wearing false eyelashes and wearing a wig, particularly one that is not the natural color or length? What is the difference between cutting the hair and wearing a short wig? The safest course for both men and women is not to use anything in the hair that would change or alter its natural color.

Attitudes. There are two dangers concerning women's attitudes towards long hair. Some women are so resentful of the difficulty in caring for and fixing long hair. With moderate effort it is possible to fix long hair so that it looks modern, neat, and attractive. Many say, "I would do anything for the Lord," yet when it comes to the specific question of hair, they are unwilling to go to the trouble. Even forgetting for the moment all the reasons for having long hair, such an attitude shows self-centeredness, laziness, a lack of consecration, and a lack of love for God.

Another dangerous attitude is that of pride and ostentation. It is possible to take the very hair that is supposed to be a sign of submission and arrange it in an ostentatious display. Overly elaborate, gigantic hairdos and extravagant hairpieces draw attention to the self and not to the message of the long hair. This destroys the purpose and testimony of the long hair. Many people have been impressed with the beautiful, holy long hair on women in churches and conventions, but many have been perplexed, confused and repelled by seeing showy displays. This problem existed

in the apostles' day. Paul wrote against women having "broided hair" in I Timothy 2:9, which is translated as "[elaborate] hair arrangement" by the Amplified Bible. Peter warned against excessive adornment in plaiting the hair (I Peter 3:3). Both scriptures are evidently referring to several customs of that day including the use of large headdresses and the elaborate braiding of the hair often with silk cords having gold coins attached. So there must be moderation and temperance even in the adornment of hair. It would be a shame for a woman to destroy her holiness with the very thing intended to be a sign of holiness.

Shall we ignore I Corinthians 11:1-16? In conclusion, what should we do with I Corinthians 11:1-16? Surely we cannot afford to ignore it or treat it casually merely because we think it is inconvenient. It is just as important as speaking to the rock was for Moses. If we do not think it is for us today then what is to prevent us from similarly cutting out any other scripture in the Bible? Why not ignore the rest of the same chapter which tells us to observe communion?

What position should a minister take? He cannot be neutral concerning God's Word. If it is God's Word, a minister must teach it to his people or both he and they will be held accountable to God. The minister must find out what the Scriptures mean. If he does not understand the Word, he needs to ask God for wisdom and knowledge. Once he knows God's Word, he must preach it. Otherwise, he is a hireling—one who preaches for money or for the applause of the people. A true shepherd will love his people enough to preach the truth even though they may not

want to hear it. He will love all the Word of God, not just a part of it. He will not condone disobedience by appointing as leaders those who ignore and rebel against part of the Word. Someone who does not teach a certain part of the Word should not teach at all or he will have a greater condemnation (James 3:1). Leaders must take a stand.

The question is, are we going to omit I Corinthians 11:1-16 from the Bible, or are we going to follow its teachings exactly?

VIII
THE TEMPLE OF GOD

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? . . . If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (I Corinthians 6:19, 3:17).

Our bodies. The two scriptures partially quoted above teach us that our bodies are temples and dwelling places for the Spirit of God. For this reason, we are not to defile our bodies, but are commanded to keep them holy. This can be interpreted in a general sense to refer to all types of sin that we commit with our bodies. In this chapter, we will restrict our discussion to some specific things that actually harm and defile our physical bodies. The above scriptures may not apply solely to these things, but they certainly include all such activities which physically defile us. In particular, we shall discuss the relevance of food, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and drugs to these scriptures.

Food. Immediately after the creation, God gave to man all vegetables, grains, and fruits for food, with the exception of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. All green plants were given to the animals for food (Genesis 1:29-30, 2:16-17). After the flood, God allowed man to eat every living thing, both plants and animals. The only restriction was that blood could not be eaten (Genesis 9:1-4). Notice that when God gave the vegetable diet, He retained one tree as a symbol of His supreme lordship and as a reminder to Adam of that relationship. When animals became permissible food, God again retained a portion—the blood—to testify that He alone was the giver of life.

The law of Moses as given in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 restricted the diet in numerous ways. Basically, the Israelites were allowed to eat all animals that both chewed the cud and had a divided hoof (Leviticus 11:3). Animals forbidden by this rule were the camel, coney, hare, and pig. Fish without scales and fins were also unclean (Leviticus 11:10). Twenty kinds of birds, mostly scavengers and birds of prey, were listed as unclean (Leviticus 11:13-19). All flying, creeping things, primarily insects, were unclean with the exception of the locust, the bald locust, the beetle, and the grasshopper. The major purpose of the dietary laws was simply to separate Israel as a nation from all the other nations of the world. These laws were also designed to preserve the Israelites from unsanitary and disease carrying food. For example, pork is a well-known source of trichinosis if it is not sanitary and if it is not cooked properly. In those days, butchering, cooking, and sanitation were primi-

tive by our standards, so these laws were medically advantageous.

In Acts 15 we find a meeting of the New Testament church to establish which restrictions of the Jewish law are applicable in the present age. We find only four laws that Gentile Christians must keep. 1) Abstain from pollutions of idols. This means that we should have nothing to do with any type of idol worship, including food offered to idols and immoral sexual acts that are a part of idolatrous festivals. 2) Abstain from fornication. The word as used here includes all types of sex related sin such as adultery and homosexuality. (See Chapter IX.) 3) Abstain from things strangled. The reference here is to Leviticus 17:13-14. When an animal is killed, it must be butchered so that the blood will run out of the carcass. If an animal is only strangled, the blood remains in it, and anyone who eats the animal would be eating blood, which is forbidden. 4) Abstain from blood. All laws concerning blood are included here. Not only is the eating of blood prohibited, but all forms of bloodshed such as murder and suicide are likewise prohibited. (See Chapter X.)

The result is that the Christian is free to eat anything today except for blood and, in certain situations, food offered to idols. None of the Levitical laws concerning unclean animals are mentioned in Acts 15, so we can assume that they no longer apply. Paul teaches that the laws concerning food were a shadow of things to come. They foretold of the separation of the clean from the unclean in the life of a Christian. As to the specific dietary laws of Moses, Paul said, "Let

no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink" (Colossians 2:16-17).

Blood. Eating blood or eating a strangled animal which retains the blood is one of the two restrictions on a Christian's food. Why is this? We must realize that this restriction began before the law of Moses and continues after it. God prohibits the eating of blood many times in the Bible (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26; 17:10-14; Deuteronomy 12:23-25; Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25). The reason is that the life of an animal or a human being is in the blood (Leviticus 17:14). Modern science has verified this statement by the discovery that life giving oxygen and nutrition are carried to all parts of the body by the blood. In every age, God has chosen blood to represent life and to be the means by which sin is remitted (Hebrews 9:22). Consequently, man is not to eat blood in any form.

Food offered to idols. This is the other restriction on food that Christians must observe. Paul teaches on this subject in I Corinthians 8:1-13 and 10:23-33. These scriptures deal with Christian liberty and its relationship to food. Paul's basic line of reasoning is as follows: We who have been converted to Christianity have sufficient knowledge concerning idols and idol worship. We know that an idol is nothing, and that there is only one God. Therefore, to eat food that has been offered to an idol is nothing, for the idol itself is nothing (I Corinthians 8:4). In spite of this, there are certain restrictions we must observe so that others do not misinterpret our actions. We cannot eat at a feast where the food has been offered to idols, and we cannot help to prepare food offered to idols. If

we do, we are giving idolaters the impression that we are participating in or condoning their worship. Also, if a brother who is weak (that is, who does not have full Christian knowledge of this subject) sees us eating this food, it may become a stumbling block to him. In both cases, we harm other people by our liberty (I Corinthians 8:7-9). For this reason Christians cannot participate in festivals where food is offered to idols or spirits.

Now, let us suppose that someone gives food to a Christian, which, unknown to him, has been offered to an idol. Has the Christian sinned by eating it? No, because we know idols are nothing. In Paul's day, so much food was offered to idols in heathen temples that the priests could not eat it all. They sold the excess food on the market. The question arose among Christians whether it would be a sin to eat this food. If so, how could they tell if the food sold at the market had been offered to idols or not? Paul's answer is "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles [markets] that eat, asking no question for conscience sake" (I Corinthians 10:25). If you are asked to a dinner or feast where the food may have already been offered to idols, Paul says, "Whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake" (v. 27). If, however, the food is offered to idols at that feast, or someone tells you that the food has been so offered, then that food should not be eaten. This is for the sake of the person watching you (vs. 28-29). We must also remember that idol worship is actually devil worship, so we cannot have anything to do with idols for that reason (v. 20).

In the last days there will be teachers "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (I Timothy 4:3). Such teaching against marriage and against certain types of food is contrary to the will of God. Marriage is sanctified by the Word of God, and all foods are sanctified by thanksgiving and prayer (vs. 4-5). There is no New Testament restriction on certain kinds of food.

Temperance and gluttony. We must always remember to be temperate in our eating habits. We are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and we cannot defile our bodies. There is no list of things we can and cannot eat, but the Spirit can lead us individually. As a practical matter, we should refrain from foods that affect us adversely. If something irritates your body or makes you ill, then abstain from it!

We should not be guilty of gluttony—eating to excess. Excessive eating can be sinful (Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 23:21). Proverbs teaches us to use temperance and moderation in eating (Proverbs 25:16). Jesus warned us not to be overcharged with surfeiting, which is eating excessively or eating to the point of nausea (Luke 21:34). Some people would not dream of drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes since these things would harm their bodies, but they will literally eat themselves to death. Overeating and improper eating can cause a variety of diseases and eventually a premature death. This is an abuse of the temple of God. What kind of impression is made on sinners who see Christians self-righteously condemning intemper-

ance and overindulgence in some areas while being equally guilty in the area of eating? What kind of image is presented by a minister who is grossly overweight from too much eating and too little exercise? We do have Christian liberty in the area of food, but we must also follow our common sense and the leading of the Spirit. We must be temperate in all things.

Temperance means moderation and self-control. It should be our watchword when we consider any physical activity or fleshly emotion. We must strive for mastery in all things, which is accomplished by being temperate in all things (I Corinthians 9:25). He that rules his spirit is better than he that takes a city (Proverbs 16:32). He that does not rule his spirit is like a city without defenses (Proverbs 25:28). We must keep our bodies under subjection (I Corinthians 9:27). We must not yield our bodies to anything but the Spirit of God (Romans 6:12-13), as happened on the Day of Pentecost. For these reasons we must avoid using anything that could make us lose control of ourselves, either permanently as in addiction or temporarily as in intoxication. If we do not control ourselves at all times, then our defense against sin is weakened, and God cannot use us as He wills.

Beverages. The law was liberal concerning drinks (Deuteronomy 14:26), yet even in the Old Testament God condemned strong drink (Proverbs 20:1; Isaiah 5:11). The New Testament says that whatsoever we eat or drink, we should do it for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31). In considering what to eat or drink, we must ask ourselves, "Can I eat or drink this to the glory of God?" This excludes anything that

would addict us or cause loss of self-control (I Corinthians 6:12).

Coffee, tea and carbonated beverages. These drinks are mild stimulants because they contain caffeine. This is not necessarily bad unless the drink is harmful to your body or addictive. If you become nervous, irritable, weak, sick, or unable to fast unless you get your morning cup of coffee or your daily cola, then perhaps you should break that habit. As Christians, we cannot allow anything to control us or dictate to us. Our bodies are the property of the Holy Ghost. If we yield to anything else, we become its servant (Romans 6:16). The conclusion is this: If coffee, tea, cola, or anything else has harmful side effects on your body or is habit forming in any way, learn to control it.

Alcoholic beverages. The Bible is full of warnings against intoxicants, particularly wine. Proverbs has several condemnations of wine and other strong drink. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright" (Proverbs 23:31). The latter is a clear warning against drinking wine after it has fermented and has become intoxicating. The evil consequences of wine and mixed wine are listed as woe, sorrow, contention, babbling, wounds, bloodshot eyes, sexual sin, indecent talk, loss of balance and coordination, insensibility, and addiction (Proverbs 23:29-35). Lovers of wine will not be rich (Proverbs 21:17).

Throughout the Old Testament, all those who were

separated to God were forbidden to drink wine and strong drink. Nazarites were prohibited from drinking it (Numbers 6:3; Judges 13:7). John the Baptist did not drink it (Luke 1:15). It was not for kings and princes lest it cause them to forget God's law and to pervert justice (Proverbs 31:4-5). Priests were forbidden to drink it when they ministered before God in the tabernacle or temple (Leviticus 10:9; Ezekiel 44:21). All Christians today are separated unto God. We are kings and priests, a royal priesthood, and living sacrifices (Revelation 1:6; I Peter 2:9; Romans 12:1). Therefore, should we partake of strong drink?

Sin resulted from the first wine drinking recorded in the Bible. Noah got drunk and dishonored his own body, causing embarrassment to others and an opportunity for others to sin (Genesis 9:20-25). Lot became intoxicated and committed incest with his own daughters (Genesis 19:32-38). Many other Old Testament scriptures condemn intoxicating beverages. Isaiah pronounced a woe on drunkenness (Isaiah 5:11). He also said that strong drink caused the people, the priests, and the prophets to err, to lose the way, and to lose their spiritual eyesight (Isaiah 28:7). Wine takes away the heart of man, just as whoredom does (Hosea 4:11). Habakkuk pronounced a woe on anyone who gives to his neighbor to drink (Habakkuk 2:15).

In the New Testament, drunkenness is classified as a sin that will keep people from inheriting the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:19-21). Jesus, Paul, and Peter warn against drunkenness (Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; Ephesians 5:18; I Peter 4:3). Bishops, deacons, and aged women are specifically

required not to be given to wine (I Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7; 2:3). After reviewing all these scriptures, it seems clear that Christians do not need to indulge in alcoholic beverages. Many people, however, try to justify drinking by pointing to various Biblical references which seem to condone the drinking of wine. To understand these, it is helpful to study the Hebrew and Greek words for wine. The following study relies on Strong's *Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary* and *Dictionary of the Greek New Testament.*

There are two major Hebrew words that are translated "wine" in the Old Testament. Nine other Hebrew words for various types of wine and strong drink are used only a few times. *Yayin* is the most common word used, and it can mean any type of wine. It usually refers to fermented wine. Some scriptures which use *yayin* definitely to mean fermented wine are: Genesis 9:21; 19:32; II Samuel 13:28; Esther 1:10; Proverbs 20:1; 23:31; and 31:4. *Yayin* is also used to mean freshly made, unfermented grape juice (Isaiah 16:10; Jeremiah 48:33).

The other frequently used Hebrew word for wine is *tiyrosh.* It almost always refers to newly made, unfermented wine. Only this word is used for the wine that was to be tithed, because God wanted tithes first, before fermentation took place (Deuteronomy 12:17; 14:23; Nehemiah 13:5). It is the word used of prosperity in the phrase "corn and wine" (Genesis 27:28, 37; Deuteronomy 7:13; etc.). It is translated "new wine" in many places (Proverbs 3:10; Joel 1:10; etc.), and as "sweet wine" in one place (Micah 6:15). This word is also used in Isaiah 65:8 which speaks of "new

wine found in the cluster." From this scripture we see that the word *tiyrosh*, translated "wine" or "new wine" refers to unfermented grape juice, even juice still in the grape.

The Greek *oinos* is the original word for wine in the New Testament. It usually refers to fermented wine, but like its Hebrew counterparts, it can refer to unfermented wine as well. At least three New Testament scriptures definitely use it in this way (Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37). These scriptures say that new, unfermented wine is not placed in old wineskins because when the wine ferments it would burst them. The Greek word *gleukos*, is used only once, where it is translated "new wine" (Acts 2:13). It means freshly made wine (grape juice) or, alternatively, sweet wine.

As a result of our study, we see that the word "wine" in both testaments can refer to either fermented or unfermented grape juice. We also know from history that in New Testament days wine was usually greatly diluted before being served in households, and that methods of preserving grape juice in an unfermented condition were well known. In light of these facts and in light of the Biblical warnings against wine, we cannot interpret any Biblical reference to wine as condoning the drinking of strong alcoholic beverages.

We are not trying to prove that people in the Old Testament did not drink. They did. We can see, however, the many evil results that followed. Also, they were under the law and had no strength to overcome. The law only showed people how sinful they really

were. If it had been perfect, there would be no need for the dispensation of grace. Today, God gives us grace and power to overcome. We can and must live up to God's standards of perfection.

Some people rely on the fact that Jesus turned water into wine as an excuse for their drinking (John 2:1-11). Notice that there is no proof that the wine Jesus made was intoxicating. Verse ten does not say that the guests got drunk, but only that they had freely drunk the other wine provided by the host. The God that condemned drunkenness in the Old Testament would not make strong intoxicating wine for people to get drunk on in the New Testament. Drunkenness is a sin, and God tempts no man to sin (Galatians 5:21; James 1:13).

Paul's advice to Timothy also confuses some. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Timothy 5:23). Paul was recommending that Timothy drink juice instead of water in order to strengthen his body and soothe his weak stomach. It is very possible that Paul was advising Timothy to stay away from the unsanitary local water, or that he was recommending a small amount of wine for purely medicinal purposes. Surely he was not telling Timothy to drink a strong alcoholic beverage that would only aggravate his weakened condition.

It is significant to notice that the Bible does not say that wine was used at the last supper of Jesus with His disciples, but that "the fruit of the vine" was used (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). Undoubtedly, these words were deliberately inspired by the Spirit. As

a result, it is impossible to prove from the Bible that fermented wine and not unfermented grape juice was used. (In fact, the same reasons for using unleavened bread may be valid for using unfermented wine. The leavening of bread is a process of fermentation just like alcoholic fermentation. Both are processes of decay or organic chemical change which are effected by yeast (leaven), a type of fungus. It is true that some Corinthians got drunk at church, but this was at their love feast before the actual communion service itself (I Corinthians 11:20-22). This was a social meal where each person brought his own food (v. 21), and some evidently brought fermented wine. At any rate, this scripture does not condone their use of alcoholic beverages, but, if anything, condemns it. This discussion is not intended to prescribe a certain form for communion service, but merely to show that no one can rely on the last supper to justify drinking of alcohol.

Let us emphasize once again that the word "wine" is used of both fermented and unfermented drink throughout the Bible, and it cannot be determined which is the absolutely correct meaning in many particular passages. Regardless of how some of these scriptures are interpreted, two things are evident. First, we know that drunkenness is a work of the flesh that will keep people from inheriting the kingdom of God. Second, we can see the many significant evils of alcohol in the Bible and in our day. We can see the poverty, sickness, lost time, lost money, heartache, violence, evil thoughts, family breakups, sexual sins, physical injuries, mental injuries, and deaths that it causes. As proof, examine the 1978

report on alcohol prepared for Congress by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. (See *The Daily Texan*, October 18, 1978, Austin, Texas.) According to this report, seven percent of Americans, or ten million people, are problem drinkers. Alcohol is a major factor in 200,000 deaths a year in the U.S., including half of all traffic fatalities, half of all homicides, and a third of all suicides. It has been identified as a cause of a number of diseases including cirrhosis of the liver, brain damage, and, most recently, cancer of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, liver, and lung. It is the third leading cause of birth defects involving mental retardation. An estimated $43 billion is lost due to alcohol each year in the U. S., including lost production and medical costs. There is no way to measure the sin that alcohol induces, but we can see it every day. Surely, these evils are great enough to prove that the warnings of Proverbs 23:29-35 and 21:17 are true.

The Biblical and social arguments for abstention from alcoholic beverages are strong. Despite this, many ask, "Can't we drink just a little bit?" Each person should develop his own conviction, but we do not drink for the following reasons. First, it is practically impossible for someone to drink so little that they are never affected mentally or that they never get drunk. Inevitably, a person's behavior and actions will be affected to some degree. Then, the person is no longer in complete control of himself and will often do things he should not do. He is no longer able to fully guard himself against temptation and sin. The person becomes the servant of alcohol (and the devil)

since he has yielded his body to it (Romans 6:16). Since our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, we do not want anything else to gain control of them. Likewise, we do not want to use something that is physically dangerous and debilitating. Either way we are defiling our bodies.

Secondly, not everyone can resist the temptation presented by a drink, and not everyone can handle even a small amount of alcohol. The safest course is not to touch it at all. Even those who think they can safely handle it can easily offend, weaken, or trip a brother. This is a sufficient reason in itself for abstention according to Romans 14:21. Children, teenagers, and weaker adults will all benefit from a good example and will be harmed by a bad example.

Finally, the scripture tells us to avoid all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22). The way to obey this where alcohol is involved is to avoid it. We must consider our reputation within the church and the reputation of the church in the eyes of the world. To some, abstention may seem extreme, but it is a guaranteed solution to all the problems caused by alcohol. Without the Holy Ghost this may be difficult or impossible to achieve, but with the Holy Ghost it is not difficult to achieve. The Spirit gives power to overcome. God makes us completely new creatures with new loves and desires (II Corinthians 5:17), He takes away the very desire so that we no longer even want to drink. In addition, the Spirit gives us all the joy, peace, relaxation, and satisfaction that we need (Romans 14:17; Ephesians 5:18). Alcohol may give temporary joy and temporary escape from problems,

but the Holy Ghost gives us permanent joy and permanent solutions to our problems.

Drugs and Narcotics. Our discussion of the evils of alcohol applies to drugs as well since alcohol is actually a type of drug. Marijuana, for example, produces most of the same evils as alcohol. Its use causes lack of self-control, can cause psychological if not physical addiction, and can lead to use of hard drugs. For research on its harmful mental and physical effects see "Marijuana Alert: I. Brain and Sex Damage II. Enemy of Youth" in the *Reader's Digest*, December 1979. The hard drugs are clearly addictive and physically harmful, and are a major cause of crime. Basically, any drug that causes the equivalent of drunkenness (loss of self-control), leads to sin, causes physical harm, or causes us to become dependent on it (addicted to it) is not pleasing to God. To be consistent we ought to apply this to medications as well as to illegal drugs. We should practice moderation, self-control, and discipline when using painkillers, sleeping pills, and other drugs, if we even take them at all.

Tobacco. All organizations of fundamental Christianity at one time took a stand against the use of tobacco. Today there is a modern spirit that has compromised on this issue as on many others. There are still many Christians who refuse to smoke. Why?

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and God tells us not to defile them (I Corinthians 6:19; 3:17). To defile means to dirty, to make filthy, to dishonor, to corrupt the purity or perfection of, and to contaminate. Certainly tobacco does this. For years min-

isters recognized that smoking was filthy and harmful to the body. The Holy Ghost taught them that it was harmful long before science did. Of course, the Bible does not directly refer to tobacco since it was not used in Bible days. Tobacco was introduced to the Old World by the American Indians after the discovery of the New World. To take care of situations like this, God has given His Spirit-filled church the authority to set standards when necessary (Matthew 18:18; Acts 15:28). This applies in the case of tobacco and drugs.

Modern science has determined that smoking is indeed harmful to the body. Cigarette advertising is banned on television in the United States. Every package of cigarettes and every printed advertisement for cigarettes must have the message, "Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health." Smoking is a major cause of lung cancer and emphysema. It is also associated with many other types of cancer and respiratory illnesses as well as strokes and heart trouble. The latest Surgeon General's report estimates that 350,000 Americans die each year from cigarettes (*Reader's Digest*, April, 1979). Great Britain's Royal College of Physicians reported in a recent study that "each cigarette cuts 5¼ minutes from a smoker's life span." (See *The Houston Chronicle*, July 5, 1977, Houston, Texas.) The same study says that one in three smokers eventually dies because of smoking. An estimated fifty million working days a year are lost in Britain through illness caused by smoking. An estimated $27.5 billion are lost in the United States every year due to smoking, mostly in lost production and

direct health-care costs (*New England Journal of Medicine*, March 9, 1978). So even the world today recognizes that smoking defiles and destroys the body.

In addition, tobacco is habit forming which is against the will of God, as already explained in an earlier section. Many people try to break the habit but simply cannot without God's help. For all these reasons we do not use tobacco in any form.

Conclusion. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (II Corinthians 7:1). "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

IX
SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). "Abstain from fornication" (Acts 15:20).

The Bible is very clear in its teaching regarding marriage and sexual relationships. Numerous passages in both Testaments condemn adultery and fornication. When used in a general sense, these words refer to all unlawful sexual relationships. Basically, the Bible prohibits all extramarital sexual relationships.

Marriage. Let us first consider the origin, purpose, and nature of marriage. Marriage was instituted by God in the very beginning. He created Eve and gave her to Adam for a wife. God's purpose in ordaining marriage was to provide a help for the man, to provide for companionship and communion between husband and wife, and to devise a method of procreation (Genesis 2:20; 2:24; 2:18). His plan was for man and wife to leave their families and form a union with each other (Genesis 2:24). This union was to be

lifelong and monogamous; for God had joined them together. Divorce was permitted under the law only because of the hardness of men's hearts. In Matthew 19:3-9 Jesus reinstated God's original plan and superseded the law of Moses. According to that scripture, the Pharisees tempted Jesus by asking Him about divorce. If Jesus would have permitted men to leave their wives as the Jews did in that day, they would have condemned Him for not adhering to the law of God. If He would have condemned divorce, they would have accused Him of despising the law of Moses. In response to their questioning, Jesus gave the fundamental law of marriage: "They twain shall be one flesh . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. . . . Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." God states in the Old Testament that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:15-16). The Bible specifically insists on monogamy for kings, bishops, deacons, and elders (Deuteronomy 17:17; I Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6). Polygamy was introduced by Lamech, who was also the second recorded murderer (Genesis 4:19, 23).

Before going further, let us emphasize that there is nothing wrong with sexuality itself. In the beginning God created both male and female, and He is the one who placed an attraction between them. Some traditions in Christendom teach that sex is somehow degrading, carnal, or base. They regard it as an evil necessary for the propagation of the human race, but it is not supposed to be pleasurable and holy people are not supposed to indulge in it. This is simply not

true. The purpose of the sexual relationship is for the consummation and strengthening of the union of a man and a woman, as well as for procreation. Those who forbid marriage are teaching false doctrine (I Timothy 4:1-3). Hebrews 13:4 summarizes the truth about the sexual relationship. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

Under the Levitical laws, the various sexual transgressions were punished by death. This indicates the seriousness with which God views such sins. Although every sin is equally dangerous and will send the sinner to the lake of fire, there is still something particularly serious about sexual sins. The reason is that these sins violate the sacredness of marriage. Fornicators are joined together as one flesh, a result God intended only for a lifelong marriage relationship (I Corinthians 6:15-16). Sex and marriage are sacred because they involve the lifelong union of two people and because they involve procreation. By the union of male and female, a child is born. This child is a joint creation with God in which the man and woman give the body and the life, while God creates the soul. As a result of the union, a soul comes into existence that will live forever. God intends for this to occur only with the careful control and in the protected environment of marriage. This makes marriage sacred and sexual transgression especially serious.

Unlike some other sins, once a sexual sin is committed there is no way to make full restitution or put the sinner back in his original position of purity in the natural sense. For instance, a thief may be able

to return what he has stolen. A liar may correct his lie, and in a short time everyone will forget that he lied. However, a sexual sin cannot be undone, and it often marks a person for life. A minister, for example, is thereby disqualified from his position since he must be blameless, the husband of one wife, and of good report (I Timothy 3:2, 7; Titus 1:6). (See also Luke 9:62.) This does not mean that it is impossible or more difficult to obtain forgiveness for such sin, but only that its consequences in this life are more likely to be irreversible.

Let us consider the Bible's specific teachings on the subject. It is important to realize that the first general conference of the New Testament church accepted all the Old Testament teachings against extramarital sex. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to the church to list fornication as one of the four necessary parts of the Jewish law that all Christians, including Gentiles, must obey (Acts 15:19-29; 21:25). As used in this general sense, fornication refers to all unlawful sexual acts.

Adultery is prohibited by many scriptures (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:20; Deuteronomy 5:18). Death was the penalty under the law for both parties in a case of adultery with a married woman (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). When used in a specific or restricted sense, the word refers to sex where at least one party is married, but not to the other. Adultery is in all lists of the sins of the flesh (Matthew 15:19-20; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21).

Fornication, when used in a specific sense, refers to sex involving unmarried people. The law gave the

death penalty for it (Deuteronomy 22:20-21). Marriage is a suggested way to avoid the temptation of fornication (I Corinthians 7:2). Fornication is taught against many times in the New Testament (I Corinthians 6:13-18; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; I Thessalonians 4:3).

Incest is sex between closely related people. There were twenty laws concerning this (Leviticus 18:6-18; Deuteronomy 22:30). A man who committed adultery with his father's wife was punished by death (Leviticus 20:11). This sin was present in the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 5).

Bestiality, sex with animals, was punished by death for both the person and the animal involved (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16; Deuteronomy 27:21).

Rape was punished by death (Deuteronomy 22:23-27).

Uncleanness is a general word that indicates anything that is the opposite of purity (II Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19; 5:3; Colossians 3:5; I Thessalonians 4:7; II Peter 2:10). It especially includes all types of perversion, as evidenced by the wording of Romans 1:24. It also covers things not specifically defined elsewhere, such as child molesting.

Lasciviousness includes all types of unchastity, lustfulness, and lewdness (Mark 7:22; II Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19). Anything that promotes lewd emotions or tends to encourage lust and sexual sin falls into this category, whether or not an actual sex act is committed. Therefore, worldly places which have a lustful atmosphere and worldly activities which

arouse lust come under this definition. Movies, television, dancing, suggestive stories or jokes, and pornography are good examples of things that can produce lasciviousness. Certain books, songs, and types of music can also be lascivious. We must always remember that lustful desire and thinking is sin. Jesus said that even looking on a woman to lust after her is adultery (Matthew 5:28). However, temptation which comes to the mind is not sin unless it is entertained and allowed to develop into lust (James 1:14-15; Matthew 4:1-11).

At this point, a word should be said about petting. Intimate embracing is obviously sexually stimulating and arousing. Such petting can lead to lascivious thinking and often to fornication. When its purpose is merely to give physical pleasure and to satisfy lust, petting should be avoided; for example, on social dates. Even between engaged couples kissing and embracing should be controlled. A good discussion of dating, petting, and sexual self-control is found in Herbert J. Miles' book, *Sexual Understanding Before Marriage* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1971).

Masturbation. Is it wrong to masturbate? This is a very common and important question today. The Bible does not say anything about this subject so we will have to look to general Scriptural teachings on sexual matters. Ultimately, this is a question that each individual will have to answer in his own heart.

In Matthew 5:28, Jesus teaches, "That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Paul advised Timothy to flee youthful lusts, to keep a

good conscience, and to keep a pure heart (I Timothy 1:19; II Timothy 2:22). We have just seen that lustful, lascivious thoughts are contrary to the Word of God. Since masturbation is often associated with sexual fantasies, we must ask if we can masturbate without lusting in our hearts and without entertaining improper fantasies. At the least, it seems clear that fantasizing about sexual relationships with a specific individual other than your spouse would be contrary to the teachings of the Bible. Also we should ask if masturbation makes us feel defiled in body, heart, or conscience. Does it cause guilt and doubt? We must resolve these things in our own lives.

Another point to consider is the purpose of sex. God designed it to be an important component of the intense personal relationship between husband and wife. Sex is meant to be a shared expression of joy and love. Masturbation does not accomplish this. This leads us to believe that frequent, habitual masturbation or psychological dependence on masturbation is not really God's plan.

A Love Story by Tim Stafford (Zondervan Publishing House) has a good treatment of the pros and cons of this subject. The author, a single man, discusses Bible references, physiological needs, guilt, fantasy, and helps for avoiding habitual practice.

For a conclusion in this matter you should take your thoughts and temptations to God. The scripture says we can cast down imaginations and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). Do not limit God's power. Trust Him for

the right answers and for the ability to live above sin.

Effeminacy is listed in I Corinthians 6:9-10 as a sin that will keep men from inheriting the kingdom of God. It is often associated with, but is not identical to, homosexuality. The King James Version lists both the "effeminate" and the "abusers of themselves with mankind" in the above scripture. In the Greek, the former is *malakos*, while the latter is *arsenokoites*. Since the Bible uses two distinct words in the same passage, it seems to be expressing two separate ideas. The *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* translates the first as "voluptuous persons" and the second as "sodomites." Strong defines *malakos* as "soft, i.e. fine (clothing), figuratively a catamite." A catamite is a boy kept for purposes of sexual perversion. In other contexts, this word is translated as "soft," for soft raiment or soft clothing (Matthew 11:8; Luke 7:25). The Bible is referring to men who act like women. This includes those men who dress like women, or wear clothes designed like those of women. This type of behavior, which in its most blatant form is called *transvestism*, is explicitly condemned in Deuteronomy 22:5. That scripture prohibits both males and females from wearing clothing that pertains to the opposite sex. (See Chapter VI.) Similarly, Paul teaches against men with long hair and women with short hair (I Corinthians 11:14-15). (See Chapter VII.) In view of these scriptures, it is clear that God intends for there to be a distinction between the sexes. Men should not be effeminate and women should not be mannish in mannerisms, behavior, or dress.

Homosexuality is also called sodomy and, in reference to females, is called lesbianism. The Bible explicitly describes and condemns this practice in a number of places. Since this is a topic of such great concern today, let us examine the Biblical teaching regarding it. The law gave the death penalty for homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13). It was called an abomination—one of the things that will keep people from heaven (Leviticus 18:22; Revelation 21:27). Both prostitutes and sodomites were abhorred to such an extent that the money obtained by their activities could not be brought to the house of God (Deuteronomy 23:17-18). The "hire of a dog" is the phrase used in this scripture prohibiting the price charged by a male prostitute or sodomite from being offered to God. The Old Testament teaching against homosexuality was adopted by the New Testament church when it decided to abstain from fornication, a word which here includes all unlawful sexual practice (Acts 15:19-29).

One of the most familiar examples of homosexuality is found in the story of Sodom (Genesis 19:4-11). When two angels in the form of men visited Lot's house, the men of Sodom attempted to assault them sexually. They asked Lot to bring his guests out "that we may know them"—a Biblical euphemism for sexual intercourse. When Lot refused, they threatened to do worse to him than to his visitors. They refused to take Lot's two virgin daughters instead of the angels. Finally, the angels pulled Lot into the house, shut the door, and struck the men with blindness. Even then, the men "wearied themselves to find the door." Of

course, this was one of the main sins for which God destroyed the city. Some people claim that the men's sin was only their inhospitality rather than their homosexuality. This view is contradicted by Jude 7 which says that their sin was in "going after strange flesh," a clear reference to homosexuality. In fact, Jude says that Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities round about were destroyed with fire as an example to us because of their fornication and their going after strange flesh. (See also II Peter 2:6-22.) Also, God had decided to destroy the cities before the angels even went to Sodom.

A similar story is found in Judges 19:22-25. Certain men of Gibeah in Benjamin whom the Bible calls "sons of Belial" tried to assault a male guest in the town. They were appeased only when he allowed them to have his concubine, whom they raped until she died. The other tribes demanded that these men be executed, but the Benjamites protected them. A civil war resulted which almost completely destroyed the tribe of Benjamin.

There is another Old Testament incident which does not explicitly describe homosexuality but strongly infers that it was involved. Noah got drunk on wine one day and lay naked in his tent in a drunken sleep (Genesis 9:20-27). The Bible says that a son, Ham, saw Noah's nakedness and told his brothers. The brothers, Shem and Japheth, went in backwards and covered their father. When Noah awoke "he knew what his younger son had done unto him." He pronounced a curse on Ham, saying that Ham's offspring would be a servant of Shem and Japheth. Notice that Noah

knew that something had happened. Also, the wording indicates that Ham committed some specific act. Finally, the magnitude of the curse and punishment indicates that a serious crime was committed. If Ham merely looked upon his father it would not seem to be such a serious sin, especially in Eastern society where families are very close and personal privacy is not as available as in modem Western society. If homosexuality was not directly involved, then at least the possibility of it in such a situation made Ham's act a serious transgression.

There are other references to homosexuality in the Old Testament. Kings Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah removed sodomites from the land of Judah in accordance with God's will and as a part of their reform programs (I Kings 15:12; 22:46; II Kings 23:7). One of Judah's great sins was in allowing boys to be sold as prostitutes (Joel 3:3). The connotation of these scriptures is that sodomites engaged in their practices as a part of heathen worship. Most of the heathen religions of that day used both homosexuality and female prostitution as part of their ritual worship. Some have argued that this was the only reason why homosexuality was condemned in the Old Testament. However, this argument cannot possibly explain away all the New Testament scriptures, particularly the passage in Romans.

Paul gives a clear account of the step-by-step apostasy of the human race in the first chapter of Romans. He begins by showing that all men can know two things—the existence of God and the power of God. As a result, men are left without excuse (Romans

1:20). Men knew God but did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful. They turned from God and began to worship images of His creation instead of Him (vs. 21-23). As a result, God gave them up to uncleanness, "to dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (v. 24). Since they worshipped the creature more than the Creator, God gave them up to "vile affections." The women changed the natural use of their bodies into that which is against nature (v. 26). Likewise, the men left the natural use of the woman, and burned in lust towards each other, "men with men working that which is unseemly" (v. 27). They did not like to retain God, so God gave them over to a reprobate mind (v. 28).

What does this passage teach us? We learn that homosexuality is the final depravity that results from man departing from God after having known Him. It is the worship of the creature, that is, the body. It goes against nature. This means that it thwarts the design and purpose of God. Going back to the purpose behind marriage, we see that homosexuality does not provide for procreation, it does not allow the female to be a help to the male, it does not allow the male and female to complement each other in union, and it almost never provides a monogamous relationship.

The passage in Romans very clearly describes homosexuality and lesbianism and condemns it as a product of apostasy. This does not mean that a homosexual is an apostate. As an individual, he is not a greater sinner than anyone else. Rather, it means the age is an age of apostasy, and that this apostate age leads to greater incidence of homosexuality. The end-

times are more conducive to this sin. It becomes more prevalent as society gets farther and farther from God, as homes and marriages break up, as women usurp the male role, as men abdicate their proper responsibilities, and as evil spirits gain more freedom to operate. So, homosexuality is not a sign of extraordinary individual sin, but it is a product and a sign of the evil age in which we live.

Other New Testament scriptures also condemn homosexuality as sin. No homosexual can inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9). The word used here is translated as "abusers of themselves with mankind" in the King James Version, as "homosexuals" in the Revised Standard Version, as "those who participate in homosexuality" in the Amplified Bible, and as "sodomites" in the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament. This language is as clear and unambiguous as possible. Other scriptures condemn "them that defile themselves with mankind" and those "without natural affection" (I Timothy 1:10; II Timothy 3:3). The latter scripture is part of a list of the conditions that will exist in the endtime. In connection with this, Jerusalem will be called the city of Sodom and Egypt during the tribulation period (Revelation 11:8). In other words, it will be the headquarters of sexual perversion and spiritual adultery. Finally, we should note that the word "uncleanness" as used repeatedly in the New Testament includes all types of immorality, perversion, and homosexuality (II Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19; 5:3; Colossians 3:5; I Thessalonians 4:7; II Peter 2:10). This meaning can be ascertained from Romans 1:24.

We can conclude that homosexuality is a sin just like lying or stealing. It is not an illness or an alternative lifestyle. Since it has become so prevalent and visible in these last days, there is a real need for a better understanding of the subject. First, we need to understand some of its causes. Of course, it is the result of an individual exercising his free will to choose sin. It comes from man's sinful nature and from the working of Satan upon a rebellious life. However, in addition to these purely spiritual considerations, there are certain factors that make a particular individual more prone to homosexuality rather than other possible sins. There may be characteristics of culture, personality, or physique that make one person more vulnerable than others, just as some people are more prone to alcoholism than others; but these things can be overcome. There is absolutely no evidence that homosexuality itself is genetic in origin. Scientific studies have indicated that it is not hereditary. It is not correct to say, "I was born that way," or "God made me that way." God would not be just if He made someone a certain way and then punished them for it. There are, however, many psychological and environmental causes of a predisposition for homosexuality. We need to be aware of these in order to aid in prevention of and in counselling about homosexuality. We realize that these factors are no excuse for continuing in homosexuality, because similar factors help produce habitual criminals, alcoholics, habitual liars, prostitutes, and so on.

Every society, including primitive cultures studied by anthropologists, has some incidence of homosexuality. Of course, the same can be said about any

other sin. It is enlightening to see that among the vast majority of societies studied, lesbianism is very rare, and the exclusive, lifelong practice of homosexuality is practically nonexistent. Another thing to note is that effeminacy and homosexuality are not necessarily the same. Many homosexuals do not demonstrate feminine characteristics any more than other men. Also many homosexuals are bisexuals, and most have had some heterosexual experience.

Psychologists have identified a number of things which help to shape homosexual behavior. Basically, a child is likely to become a homosexual if he or she imitates the opposite sex parent. This usually occurs when there is an inability to identify with the same sex parent. For example, if the father is physically absent from the home, is grossly abusive, is ineffectual and weak, or is feared and hated, there is a great chance that his son will identify with the mother. This can also happen when the mother is very affectionate but controlling, or domineering. This can have one of several subconscious effects on the boy. He may actually learn to identify himself with the feminine role. He may learn to fear contact with other women. He may resent his mother's domination or feel inadequate in comparison to her, with these feelings being transferred to women in general. He may see all women as untouchable saintly figures like his mother. Or, he may become so overly loyal to his mother that he cannot have a normal relationship with another woman. Any one of these reactions can lead to homosexuality.

Another key influence is the first experience and

awareness of sexuality. An early encounter with a homosexual tends to shape behavior later on, especially if the experience is perceived as pleasurable. An early love affair that ends disastrously, or one in which an illegitimate child or an abortion is involved, may cause feelings of rejection, guilt, and fear that can push the individual away from the other sex. Feelings of physical inadequacy can do the same thing. Finally, adolescent alienation is very powerful. The lack of suitable same sex friends, and a lack of participation in typical activities of the same sex can create a need for companionship and acceptance which is later met by homosexuality. Alienation and ridicule from peers may also drive the adolescent into contact and relationships with homosexuals, who can easily influence him.

An understanding of these contributing causes can help a pastor prevent, correct, or at least counteract unhealthy situations. It also helps in counselling if a person can be shown some of the causes of his behavior. If he can be convinced that he was not born that way, but was influenced to become that way, then he can be shown how to change his behavior and habits with God's help. This can also help parents to train and rear their children in the proper environment. In particular, we see how necessary it is for a father to develop a warm personal relationship with his son, for the wife not to usurp the authority in the home, and for the son to have the proper male companionship with his peers. The son should not be pampered, overindulged, and overprotected, especially by his mother. We must also realize that in this day

we can no longer trust our society and our school system to provide the proper input in the area of sexuality. The parents and the church must give the necessary training about the distinction between the sexes, the different roles of the sexes, and the proper relationship between the sexes. Our children and young people need to be taught what situations to avoid and how to avoid them. They must be protected from situations and people that can influence them in the wrong direction at critical stages of their life.

We emphasize that none of these environmental factors are a justification for homosexuality. For one thing, every habitual sin can be encouraged or partially caused by environmental pressures and bad experiences. The person still has the ability to determine what is right or wrong and still has the free will to choose for himself. We should not ignore or minimize the spiritual forces involved. Many people have overcome under similar circumstances, even those who were in the same family and environment that produced a homosexual. Furthermore, God will give power to overcome through the Holy Ghost if the person will yield to Him.

Homosexuality is a very powerful force. One reason is that it is the result of experiences early in life that are hard to erase. Also, it usually has developed over a long period of time in an individual's life and has become an ingrained habit. In many, if not most, cases there is a spirit involved. The person may sincerely want to change but is unable to do so. Many things indicate that homosexuality is often closely connected with an evil spirit. First, it is very difficult to

overcome. Second, its prevalence in the endtime and in heathen worship indicates that it is linked with the increased and unrestrained activity of certain spirits. Third, there are cases where heterosexual Christians have become homosexual only after backsliding. They had no original tendency in that direction, but by backsliding they left themselves wide open to all the spirits of hell. Then, there is the well-known fact that most homosexuals can immediately identify another homosexual, even when there is no conscious, outward communication. It is possible to develop a discernment of homosexuals.

We can see, therefore, that homosexuality is a strong force that must be dealt with spiritually as well as naturally. In most cases, complete deliverance is a long, difficult process. As with all habitual sins, some people get complete victory and are never bothered again, while others must always be careful never to expose themselves to unnecessary temptation. Overcoming is accomplished by prayer and by being filled completely with the Holy Spirit. Complete deliverance can and should be obtained. There must be patience, determination to overcome, and a total love for God. Psalms 37:4 is literally applicable: "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." The first step is to be delivered from homosexual desires. Homosexuality is defined in terms of practice, so if one no longer participates in homosexual acts nor entertains lustful thoughts in that direction, then he is not a homosexual. The next step is for God to give the normal heterosexual desires that He intends for all to have.

The homosexual must not accept homosexuality as a basic part of his personality, but must regard it as a learned and chosen (whether consciously or unconsciously) habit that can be eradicated. He is a homosexual only because he chooses to commit homosexual acts. When he ceases these acts he is not a homosexual.

Homosexuals are people just like anyone else. They should be treated normally, with friendship and respect. They should not be looked on with ridicule and contempt, but should be shown Christian love and concern. They should not be personally condemned more than any other sinner. A homosexual may be very sincere, hungry for God, and highly moral in many areas. Often he is extremely lonely and desperate. He usually goes through an agonizing period of self-hatred, depression, and despondency until his conscience becomes seared. Our job is to reach them and introduce them to the Holy Ghost experience. Only through that experience will they receive power to change, so church members should not condemn them or try to change them on their own. They should not be excluded from church services unless they pose a real danger to the youth. This will probably be the case only with regular church members who are discovered to be homosexuals and who refuse to repent. The danger will come from within more than without.

Homosexuality is a real danger in the church today. Many large denominations have even ordained homosexuals to the ministry. The courts may one day uphold the rights of homosexuals to be church

members and ministers regardless of church policy. Pastors should be on guard in their churches. They should teach and preach against it. Men's meetings and women's meetings should be held, especially for the youth, where this subject is clearly explained. The pastor should meet with the young men and discuss dating, petting, fornication, homosexuality, and other similar issues. The youth should be given the opportunity to ask frank questions. Likewise it would be good for the pastor's wife to meet with the young women. Effeminate actions and effeminate styles of dress on men should be taught against and should not be allowed among those who are used in any way in the church. Proper attitudes towards the so-called women's liberation movement should be taught. (See Chapter II.) The prevailing spirits of the world always attack the church, and sooner or later they make their presence felt in the church. Homosexuality and effeminancy are fast becoming major problems in our churches, even more so than fornication. We must meet the challenge of the endtime in this area.

At the same time we should guard against the spirit of suspicion. Just because a man has a few characteristics or mannerisms that seem feminine to some does not mean he is a homosexual. He may just be a more sensitive or talented person than some. In fact, many homosexuals take pride in their extreme masculinity. Many of them are indistinguishable from the average man. We cannot stereotype them. A masculine man can be a homosexual as easily as a more feminine type man. As a result, we should not assume or insinuate that someone is a homosexual. We can

protect our children from unhealthy influences and experiences. Aside from that, it is the pastor's responsibility to guard the flock and to warn against sin.

In conclusion, let us emphasize that homosexuality can be overcome. Everyone has a latent desire for the opposite sex if only the layers of habit and experience can be removed. All sin can be overcome. The Holy Ghost will give the power. The pastor and friends must be patient and the person must pray continually. Most importantly, the person must have a sincere determination to change his life and a desire to live for God. There are many cases of overcomers. As Paul said to the Corinthians, after listing fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, and homosexuals, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11). All sin can be conquered through baptism in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Ghost.

X
ABSTAIN FROM BLOODSHED

"Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). "Abstain from blood" (Acts 15:20).

A basic law. One of God's basic laws is that one person should not take the life of another person. The first law against murder was given to Noah in Genesis 9:5-6, where God pronounced judgment on all those who shed man's blood. The Ten Commandments include a condemnation of all killing (Exodus 20:13), and the New Testament church reaffirmed this teaching (Acts 15:20). (See Chapter VIII for a complete discussion of that scripture.) There are numerous other scriptures classifying murder as a sin (Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21; Galatians 5:21).

Murder. What makes killing a human being a sin? First, it is a crime against God who created man in His own image (Genesis 9:6). It destroys God's likeness. God has a purpose and a plan for each individual life. Each person is unique and fits into God's

plan in a way that no other person can. God desires the special worship that each person gives in his own unique way. Murder deprives God of that individual's worship and of his part in God's perfect plan. Murder is also a crime against the family unit. Family, friends, and loved ones are all victimized by the loss of the one who loved and supported them.

Finally, murder is a crime against the individual whose life is taken away. It cuts him off from completing his duties to both God and man. If he is a sinner, then he has no further chance to learn about God or to repent of his sins. In this situation, the killer has sent his victim into eternity. If he had lived, perhaps he could have learned about God. Perhaps he was a good and needed influence on someone's life. Perhaps he could have led others to God. Man does not have the right to take this potential away. No one has the authority to condemn another to eternal punishment or to take away from him the opportunity to hear about and serve God.

Many people bring up the question, "Why did God command the Israelites to kill in the Old Testament? Doesn't this fact permit us to kill in wartime?" To answer this question correctly, we must remember some basic facts about the Old Testament. During that time God had one chosen nation. Of course, God created all of mankind and wanted all of mankind to serve Him. In return, however, only a few people chose Him. To those people, God made special covenants and gave special promises. In return, they promised to worship God and keep His commandments. In this way, God chose Abraham and promised to make out of him

a great nation. When God delivered Israel from Egypt He promised them a land. The whole purpose of the Promised Land was to provide a place where the Israelites could live a holy life, separated from the rest of the world. Israel was to be a light and an example to the world so that all could see how great Jehovah, the God of Israel, was. Consequently, all the nations would want to serve Him. So, God's plan was to deal with people on a national basis and to provide a means of national salvation.

With this in mind, we can see two major reasons why God commanded Israel to destroy certain nations. First, they stood in the way of God's plan. As nations, they opposed Israel's existence and Israel's worship of Jehovah. This jeopardized God's promises to Israel and His plan of salvation for that age. As a result, these nations had to be destroyed. Secondly, they had completely rejected God, and the time for their judgment had arrived. God simply used Israel as an instrument for executing that judgment. The nations had already made their choice to be destroyed.

Today, God no longer deals primarily with nations, but with individuals. The plan of salvation for this age is completely individual. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). God's chosen people are not a single nation which must fight for its natural existence and identity, but are individuals chosen out of every nation and spiritually separated from the world. Under the law of Moses, judgment was swift, and the sinner received what he deserved. He was often immediately punished by death. Under grace, judgment is deferred, and mercy is

extended in a much greater measure. God deals on an individual basis and decides how to judge and punish. We can judge no man (Matthew 7:1). As a result, the reasons for killing in the Old Testament are not applicable in our age.

We must also remember that Christians under grace are called to a higher standard of holiness. The law gave an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The law said to love your neighbor and hate your enemy (Matthew 5:38, 43). When Jesus came, He taught that we must turn the other cheek, love our enemies, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us (Matthew 5:39, 44). Israel did not have the baptism of the Holy Ghost and grace as we know it. Therefore, they did not have the power to attain this standard of perfection. God allowed them to fight their battles physically, but our warfare today is spiritual and not physical (Ephesians 6:12). We are expected to live up to God's perfect standard as taught by Jesus (Matthew 5:48). We do not want to kill a human being regardless of the reason. Surely, we cannot claim to be loving our enemy when we kill him, and we cannot be praying for him when we cause him to be eternally damned. We should rely on God to help us avoid and to deliver us from situations where we would feel forced to take another life. We can trust Him to confirm His word and work everything out for all who do His will. We should be prudent and not place ourselves in a position where we would be faced with a choice of killing someone or not.

Warfare and self-defense. This includes war and killing for self-defense. If we are going to accept the

words of Jesus in Matthew 5 literally, we cannot kill, even in these situations. Stephen, when stoned, did not throw stones back, but literally looked to Jesus and prayed for his murderers (Acts 7:55-60). When Peter tried to defend Jesus with a sword, the Lord rebuked him saying, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52).

This raises a question as to whether Christians can conscientiously carry deadly weapons for self-defense. What is the purpose? What would you do if a situation arose where you wanted to use that weapon on someone? How would you feel if you killed someone? Would you ever kill someone? You need to answer these questions before you decide to carry a weapon.

With regard to military service, we do believe in patriotism and in obedience to governmental authority as the Bible teaches (I Peter 2:13-17; Romans 13:1-7). We believe in working for our country but we cannot kill human life. Many Christians have sacrificed their lives for their country in wartime while serving as medical or supply personnel in the Armed Forces.

We find this teaching followed in early church history. According to a Yale University historian, "Military service was allowed but warfare rejected. This appears in the Canons of Hippolytus who said that a Christian might be a soldier provided he did not kill." (Roland Bainton, *Early Christianity*, Van Nostrand Co., Princeton, 1960, p. 54). On page 50 of the same book, we find that "Gladiatorial combats were condemned and the Christians could not witness them. Christians could assume no magisterial post that car-

ried with it the possibility of passing a sentence of death."

Hatred. The definition of murder is greatly expanded in I John 3:15. Here we are told that no murderer has eternal life. The startling part of this scripture is that hatred is classified as murder. In the sight of God, anyone who hates his fellow man is guilty of his blood just as if he had actually murdered him. We should remember this when hatred starts to rise up in our hearts.

Abortion. All the reasons for not killing a human apply when we discuss abortion. It is a biological fact that, at the time of conception, the sperm and the ovum unite to form a living, growing organism. One month after conception, the eyes, feet, and head can be clearly distinguished. The baby breathes and is nourished through the mother. As Christians, we believe that the unborn baby has an eternal soul. If it does not receive this soul at conception when does this happen? Surely it must have a soul by the time it is recognizable as a human, which is only forty days from conception (*Time*, March 14, 1977). If the soul comes only after nine months then what about the premature baby? If it comes only when the baby leaves the womb, what about the test tube baby who is conceived outside the womb?

The Bible indicates that God considers a child in the womb to be a human being in every sense of the word. God sanctified, or set apart, Jeremiah for a particular purpose while he was still in his mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5). David stated that the Lord was his God from his mother's belly (Psalm 22:10). He

also said, "In sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5), meaning that he received his fleshly, human nature at conception.

To abort a child on purpose means that this living child is killed. What is the difference between killing a child that is a few months old in the womb or a few months old out of the womb? What is the difference between an aborted baby who is allowed to die and a premature baby who may be only a few days older but is allowed to live? Can one have a soul and not the other? We have no scriptural authority for drawing a line at a certain point and deciding that the fetus is not a human being before then. We are playing God if we decide that one is a human being and the other is not, or that one deserves to live and the other does not. Pregnancy is procreation. God, along with the man and the woman, is creating another human being. After pregnancy begins, the decision is out of human hands. God's purpose, the sanctity of human life, and the right to live of the unborn child then take control of the situation.

A natural abortion (miscarriage) is simply nature's way of rejecting a child that has a defect and cannot live. It is not murder, but it is the body's way of disposing of the fetus. If the mother's body is weak, however, and she has difficulty in carrying the child, of course, she should be careful not to injure the child.

Deliberate abortion (induced abortion) is the killing of a human being. This must be taught or people who practice it will lose their victory with God. Abortion may be popular, but it cannot be justified by

the Bible. There are many ways to have planned parenthood without resorting to abortion. Planned conception is perfectly acceptable since it does not involve destroying an individual that has already been conceived. After a human being comes into existence, the time for decision making is over. In cases where life is in danger we should remember that God is a miracle worker and healer. He has promised to save the righteous woman in the time of childbirth (I Timothy 2:15).

Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Willke have compiled a very useful reference on this subject called *Handbook on Abortion* (Hayes Publishing Co, 6304 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45224, 1975 edition). According to this book, all human body systems are present in the fetus by eight weeks. A heartbeat can be detected at eighteen to twenty-five days. Brain waves have been detected at forty days. This book thoroughly answers all questions on the abortion issue. It also contains color pictures of fetuses at six weeks, eight weeks, and ten weeks, as well as of fetuses aborted by salt poisoning, suction, and scraping. They show minute but perfectly formed human beings.

Another good book on this topic is *Abortion, The Bible, and the Christian* by Donald Shoemaker (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan). It treats the lack of justification for abortion when there is economic hardship, social hardship, a possibility of mental or physical birth defects, a maternal psychiatric problem, rape, or incest. We note that doctors sometimes use the hormone DES (diethylstilbesterol) to prevent pregnancies in rape victims. It is possible to

take this action prior to conception.

In summary, there are two very important questions that abortionists must answer. What gives us the right to take the life of one human being because of a mistake made by someone else? If abortion is morally justifiable, for whatever reasons, what is to prevent us from killing the newborn infant, the mentally handicapped, the physically handicapped, the orphan, or the aged for the same reasons?

Suicide is also contrary to the word of God. God will require the blood of everyone whether a person kills someone else or himself (Genesis 9:5). A sane person who commits suicide is sinning in the sight of God. He does not have the authority to take away the life that God has given him. Of course, Christians should never think of suicide. The Holy Ghost can and will give us happiness, joy, and peace (Galatians 5:22). If problems arise that we cannot face or cope with, then that is the time for prayer and fasting. We have a promise that God will never allow us to be tempted above that which we can bear, and that He will always make a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13). Suicide is actually an attempt to evade problems and responsibilities. It is not really an escape because everyone will have to face reality on judgment day. If we do not resolve our problems and temptations in this life, then we will have no other chance to do so, and we will suffer the consequences eternally. A person who commits suicide is claiming that God cannot solve his problems. He is taking from God the prerogative to control life and death. He is rebelling against God's plan and purpose for his life.

In conclusion, we see that God has created every person in His image and with a special purpose in mind. It is a sin for anyone to deliberately take away the life that God has given to a human being.

XI
HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

"Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15).

"Do not steal . . . Defraud not" (Mark 10:19).

In this chapter we will study various questions related to personal honesty and integrity; namely, theft, extortion, fraud, and bribery. Lying is covered in Chapter IV.

Theft. One of the Bible's basic teachings is respect for the property and possessions of others. Stealing is simply the act of taking someone's property without his consent. This applies regardless of whether the value of what is stolen is large or small. Likewise, theft is wrong even when the victim is very wealthy and the thief is very poor. The Bible's solution in such a case is, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28). Also, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10). Some

philosophies teach that if a poor person really needs something, he can take it from a rich person who can easily replace it. Others teach that if something is not guarded, the owners do not consider it to be valuable, and so it can be taken. However, these are merely man's philosophies and not the Word of God. Both the law of Moses as given by God and the teaching of Jesus Himself give no such exceptions, but simply say, "Do not steal."

The concept of stealing is clear, but let us give several examples to define it in a practical way.

1. Taking a book from a library and not returning it is theft.
2. Taking supplies from an organization without payment or consent of one in charge of them is simply stealing.
3. Borrowing money without intending to repay or without attempting to repay is theft. This is true even when a local church is borrowing from its organization for a building program.
4. According to Malachi 3:8-12, a man can rob God by withholding tithes (ten percent of income) and offerings (free will gifts of any amount). This is not the place for a study of tithing, but let us briefly note a few facts about it. Tithing was **not** instituted under the law; for, Abraham and Jacob paid tithes (Genesis 14:20; 28:22). Jesus endorsed it (Matthew 23:23), and Paul gave lessons on tithes and offerings (I Corinthians 9:7-14). (See also Hebrews 7:5-10.) Note that even the ministry pays tithes (Nehemiah 10:38; Hebrews 7:9). Many other scriptures teach that we should pay tithes. (See Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:21;

Deuteronomy 14:22; Proverbs 3:9; Luke 11:42.)

5. Sometimes people take supplies or money belonging to a church or an organization, with the following rationale. "This belongs to the organization and I am a member of the organization, so this is mine." One man took money given to him to rent a church building and instead rented another building in his own name. He reasoned, "This is God's money and I am God's child, so I have just as much of a right to use the money as anyone else does." This type of reasoning is clearly wrong. It would lead people to say, "I am a citizen of the nation so I have a right to take government property. I have a right to use tax money the way I want." Anyone who actually tried this would probably end up in jail. Even Jesus paid taxes and taught others to do so (Matthew 17:24-27; 22:15-22). This twisted reasoning would also say we do not have to pay tithes, but as we have already seen, Jesus said that we should.

The people who have used these arguments are distorted in their thinking. What they forget or ignore is that the organization or the church has a line of authority which must be followed. In the situations we have described, money has been given or designated for a certain purpose, and there is a steward over that money. If someone takes that money (or those supplies) without the steward's permission, he is stealing from the steward and ultimately from God. If he uses money (or supplies) in an unauthorized manner, he is violating his own stewardship. Even human laws recognize the authority of a church or an organization and classify such actions as theft.

All the above cases are examples of outright stealing. Regardless of the excuse, these people have taken something that was not theirs, and without authority or permission from the true owner.

Fraud. In addition to simple theft, there are other dishonest ways of taking money or property. Both Testaments tell us not to defraud (Leviticus 19:13; Mark 10:19; I Corinthians 6:8; I Thessalonians 4:6). To defraud means to cheat, swindle, take by trickery, or take by deception. Again, we will give some practical examples to illustrate the concept.

1. **Merchants.** Merchants can defraud by having incorrect weighing scales, by deliberately shortchanging a customer, or by deliberately measuring out less than what a customer actually pays for. They can also defraud by giving damaged goods to an unknowing customer.

2. **Sales.** A seller can defraud by giving exaggerated descriptions and creating false impressions. If you are a salesman, sell something about which you can give a good recommendation without lying. If you sell something, answer the buyer's questions honestly, and do not actively conceal important facts about the thing being sold.

3. **Money.** If someone is given money specifically for a certain purpose, but spends it for something else, that is fraud. For instance, if someone requisitions money specifically for a first class ticket on a train then he should use it for that. If he spends the money for something else, or, if he buys a cheaper ticket and pockets the difference, he is defrauding. If a minister is given a certain amount to build a church and

actually builds it for less, he cannot spend the difference on something else without the donor's permission.

4. **Receipts.** If someone is given $15 to buy something, and it costs only $10, he must return the difference. If he alters the receipt to show a cost of $15, he is lying (on paper) as well as defrauding.

5. **Documents.** If someone creates false documents such as a false graduation certification he is defrauding the recipient. If the recipient takes such a document knowing that it is false, he is in turn defrauding the organization for which he is accepting it.

6. **Information.** A person can be guilty of fraud if he omits valuable and pertinent information when asked to explain something. Telling only a part of the truth can be misleading.

7. **Workers.** When a person works for an amount of money, he is selling his time in exchange for that money. Therefore, he should endeavor to give his employer the agreed upon amount of time or output. If he quits working early or leaves when the boss is not there, he is defrauding.

Of course, there are times at work when you need to relax or take a break, simply in order to be more effective. Also, there may be times in an office, for example, when there is not much work to do. If you are not busy, it may be permissible to do some personal things. However, we should not neglect our work because of them. In this case, your boss thinks that you are busy with his work, but you are cheating him of his time and giving him a false impression.

Let it never be said that a Christian cannot be

trusted to keep time at work. Try to be on time. If you need to take off time for personal reasons, get permission. If you are late without excuse, work extra to make up the time. Remember, we are representatives of Jesus Christ, and our lives are a witness of Him. Since we are Christians our employers should be able to trust us to be honest whether they are present or not. Remember that God sees you when you cheat and defraud, even if no one else does.

A word to ministers is appropriate here. Ministers accept people's tithes, so they owe a responsibility to those people. One of the most important jobs of a minister is visitation, both of believers and unbelievers. He should especially contact the sick, absentees, visitors, and prospects. Ministers are called by God to be His workers. However, some do not even discipline themselves to get up early in the morning. This is laziness. If you are a minister and your area of labor is too small, then get out and witness in a neighboring town or village. There is always an opportunity to spread the gospel. There is always more work that can be done. A question for ministers: Apart from time spent in church, do you spend even forty hours a week actively working for God?

Owe no man. Romans 13:8 says, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Does this mean we cannot borrow anything or purchase anything on the installment plan? No. If you borrow money and promise to pay it back by the tenth of the month, then you do not legally owe that money until the tenth of the month. This scripture applies only if you do not pay by the day that you promised. You are in

trouble with God if you do not pay on time. You can borrow, but you must repay. Borrowing something without returning it is theft. Borrowing without any intention of repaying is fraud.

If you have faithfully promised to pay and cannot because of some unforeseen problem, then you must go to your creditor, give an explanation, and ask for an extension of time. Then, you can pay him later. If you do not ask for an extension, you have broken your promise to repay him, and you owe him, in violation of Romans 13:8.

Occasionally a problem arises when someone starts a project "by faith." One pastor did not have the funds to build a church, but he ordered the materials "by faith" and began to build. Later he could not pay his debts. The result was that the minister and the church obtained a bad name in the community. He caused unbelievers to revile and scorn Christianity by his actions. This is not operating by faith but by foolishness. If you want to build a church by faith, save your money by faith, and build as the money comes in. Do as much as you can and wait for the next development by faith. Why not have faith to receive the money before you spend it? Jesus said, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28).

Problems also frequently arise when someone borrows from another person in the church. One deacon borrowed money from an individual, saying the church needed it. Actually he needed it personally, and had no means of repaying the debt. By doing

this, he lost his Biblical qualifications for his office. Because he lied, he owed money which he could not repay; and he caused others to lose confidence in the church.

The conclusion is that when you borrow you must have an intention to repay on time and some expected means of doing so. You must repay what you have borrowed, unless the lender releases you. Otherwise, you have acted contrary to the Word of God.

Extortion. Extortioners will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:10). In fact, Christians are commanded not to fellowship with those who call themselves believers but who are extortioners (I Corinthians 5:11). To extort means to obtain money or favors by violence, threat, or misuse of authority. This is a sin according to the Bible. Usually we think of extortion in terms of money, but money does not have to be involved. One form of extortion is blackmail—using a threat of exposure. Here are some examples of extortion:

1. Mr. A stole money before he became a Christian. An old acquaintance, Mr. B. demanded that A help him get a job at A's office. If not, then B threatened to reveal A's past life with the result that A would probably be fired. B is guilty of extortion, even though a favor is involved and not money.
2. Mr. A. always left the office when the manager was gone. Once Miss B asked A for some office postage stamps he had. When A refused, B threatened to tell the manager about A's absence. A is guilty of defrauding, but B is guilty of extortion.
3. A preacher lives in a house owned by the church.

He has been asked to resign, but he refuses to leave the parsonage unless the church gives him a large sum of money. Of course, his remaining would create church trouble and would drive away many people. Even though the preacher has not used physical force, he has used force nevertheless. This is extortion just the same. Ministers (or any others) who do something like this are ignoring God's Word. The Bible tells us not to fellowship them, and states that they will not go to heaven.

Usury. Since we are dealing with financial matters in this chapter, this seems to be a good place to explain usury. Several scriptures in the Old Testament condemn usury (Psalm 15:5; Ezekiel 18:8-17; 22:12). The word in its original general sense refers to interest on loans. In more modern and restricted usage it means exorbitant, unconscionable, or excessive interest. In our day we can equate this to interest charged by a loan shark. Under the law, Israelites could not collect usury from the poor or from brethren (Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 23:19-20). Traditionally, Jews have considered this to be a prohibition on collecting any interest from fellow Jews. Proverbs 28:8 implies that unjust or excessive interest is what God particularly dislikes. The New Testament does not have any specific teaching on the subject. Jesus did tell a parable about a slothful servant who was rebuked for not lending his master's money in order to earn interest and make a profit (Matthew 25:27; Luke 19:23).

Bribes and gifts. This subject is of vital importance in discussing integrity, especially the integrity of

leaders. The Bible teaches about the evil of taking bribes. It speaks out against receiving a gift so that justice is perverted. Notice that a bribe does not have to be money, but can be a nonmonetary gift or a favor given in exchange for a favor. Exodus 23:8 says, "And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous." Gifts can blind the wise and can cause the righteous to sin. Deuteronomy 16:18-19 repeats the same words and also proclaims, "Judges and officers . . . shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift." A wicked person takes a gift to pervert the ways of judgment (Proverbs 17:23), and the hands of evildoers are filled with bribes (Psalm 26:10). "A gift destroyeth the heart" (Ecclesiastes 7:7).

Of course, there are times to give gifts, and there are times to receive them. However, we must be very careful. According to these scriptures, any gift that obligates you to the giver can be an occasion for sin. If a gift affects your judgment or causes you to grant an illicit favor, then you are guilty of receiving a bribe. If you demand a gift, either directly or indirectly, for mere performance of your duty then you are guilty of extortion, even if the favor you perform in return is legitimate. If a bribe is given to circumvent justice, both the giver and the recipient have sinned in the eyes of God. The sons of Samuel are examples of people who sinned by accepting bribes (I Samuel 8:3).

Isaiah 33:15-16 describes the type of person who pleases God. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions,

that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, . . . He shall dwell on high." This type of person despises deceit and unjust gain. He does not extort, oppress the poor, take advantage of people, or deal falsely. He does not seek or expect bribes, and refuses to accept them if they are offered. This is a good example for those in positions of leadership and authority.

At this point, we want to warn against ministers accepting money for praying for someone, or baptizing someone. This may not be a bribe, but it is a gift that is inappropriate to receive. The gospel and its benefits are free. No man should try to charge money for blessings, healings, baptism, or salvation. Peter rebuked Simon for trying to purchase the Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 8:19-20). The prophet Elisha refused to accept a gift from Naaman when the latter was healed of leprosy. When Gehazi, Elisha's servant, secretly accepted gifts from Naaman anyway, he was stricken with leprosy. Elisha rebuked him, asking, "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments?" (II Kings 5:26-27). If people who receive blessings from God want to give an offering of thanks, let them give it to the church.

As a general word of caution, remember that many times a gift is given to obligate a leader. After the gift is accepted, the giver asks for a favor. If this happens, the gift can become a bribe to destroy a conscience, to pervert justice, or to obtain an impermissible favor. Use wisdom in accepting gifts. Depending on the circumstances, you may have to refuse a gift, return it, or at least not let it influence you.

Let us consider a few difficult situations. Suppose you are in charge of hiring a worker for a job, and someone you do not know gives you a present. They may be giving this to influence you or obligate you. You may feel obligated to hire them. In itself, this may or may not involve your doing anything legally wrong. However, you are not being fair or just to the other applicants. Also, you may pass up a more qualified candidate and cheat yourself or your company.

Suppose a saint does something wrong in the church and hurts many people. The Biblical requirement is for that saint to ask forgiveness. Instead he or she comes to the pastor and brings him a cake. No matter how good the cake tastes or how friendly the pastor feels as a result, the person needs to confess the wrong. Presents cannot be allowed to override Biblical requirements and solutions.

Once again, we emphasize that a bribe is not always monetary in nature. For example, suppose you are a new employee at a certain company, and you want everyone to like you. A fellow employee wants you to do something wrong, such as accepting false documents. Can you do this? No. Even though you are not receiving money, you are doing an illegitimate favor in return for job security or goodwill or a future favor. This is still bribery and still dishonest.

There is one more situation that causes problems in many parts of the world. Often, in dealing with certain officials, you find that you are unable to get anything accomplished. They refuse to pass you in an inspection, approve of your plans, or let you conclude your business unless you give them extra money. Is

this bribery? Can you give them money with a clean conscience? This is certainly illegal and immoral behavior on the part of the official. As a nation, we should try to eliminate such a system of bribes and kickbacks. If you are asking for a special preference over others, or for the official to overlook some defect on your part, then giving the gift is bribery on your part as well. However, if you are just trying to get him to do his job, or to be as fair to you as to others, then it is not wrong. You are not asking for anything illegal or unethical, but simply are being forced to pay extra for him to perform his obligation. Unfortunately, this is an established system in many places. Of course, a Christian cannot demand such payment since that is extortion. If you are not asking anyone to do wrong or to be unfairly partial to you, however, then you have not done wrong in meeting that demand.

In short, the Bible says not to accept bribes. We can accept gifts only if they do not obligate us. We must not let any gift or favor destroy our consciences or pervert judgment. In turn, we must not try to obligate anyone else through gifts, favors, or bribes.

Honesty and integrity today. As in the days before the flood, it seems as if the whole earth is corrupt (Genesis 6:11). Corruption has been uncovered in high governmental, political, business, and even religious positions. There are many religious charlatans and extortioners. Businessmen, government employees, lawyers, leaders of all kinds, and even ordinary workers are being exposed to constant temptations where honesty is concerned. Integrity is fast disappearing, but it is still something to be cherished

and protected. Blessed is the man who keeps his word even when it hurts him to do so (Psalm 15:4-5)! How blessed is the man who will not sell his integrity at any price! "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

XII
AUTHORITY AND ORGANIZATION IN THE CHURCH

"And God hath set some in the church . . . governments" (I Corinthians 12:28).

Our study of holiness brings us in contact with the subject of church organization and authority in several ways. Here are some questions that we hope to address in this chapter: What is the extent of authority in the church? Does the church have the authority to establish standards of holiness? Does the church have the authority to disfellowship those who violate basic principles of holiness? To what extent is an individual minister or saint obligated to follow church decisions? Does everyone have a human authority over them in spiritual matters? What does holiness teach about relationships between saints?

Church government was instituted by God. We will start this inquiry by establishing that God has indeed instituted authority and organization in His church. From the outset we want to emphasize that

the church is the body of called out believers who have experienced the full plan of salvation and who are living holy, separated lives. It is not synonymous with any human organization, nor is it limited to such. Membership in a particular denomination is not a prerequisite of salvation. Also, each person is individually responsible for his own salvation. We cannot follow leadership that would have us act contrary to the Word of God or God-given convictions, or that teaches false doctrine. However, human organization has been blessed and recognized by God, and has done much to further the gospel. When we speak of authority and organization in the church, we are speaking of the relationships that God has ordained between believers. This includes fellowshipping among God's people and working within an organized framework established by God's people.

From the beginning of the church God had organization in His church. Jesus personally chose and trained twelve apostles to be leaders of the church, and He appointed Judas to be the first treasurer of the group (John 13:29). When we read the Book of Acts, the history of the church, we find many instances of organized effort, of recognition of leadership, of unified decisionmaking, and of mutual fellowship.

Organization in the early church. In Acts 1:15-26, the 120 believers who became the founding members of the Pentecostal church gathered together to choose a successor to Judas. Peter was the chairman of the meeting. Qualifications for the office were established, two men were nominated, and finally Matthias was chosen. After the outpouring of the Holy Ghost,

the people "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship" (Acts 2:42). In other words, they acknowledged the leadership of the twelve (including Matthias who was chosen by man) in doctrinal teaching and in establishing methods of fellowship. Furthermore, they acknowledged the apostles' leadership in the collection and distribution of church funds (4:35). In Acts 6, the twelve once again called a meeting of all believers, this time to institute a system for taking care of church business matters. The assembly chose seven men to administer business affairs under the leadership of the apostles, so that the latter could devote more time to prayer and preaching. The apostles first stipulated that the men be full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Then the assembly chose the seven, and the apostles prayed and laid hands on them. Laying on of hands is one of the basic doctrines of the church (Hebrews 6:2), and it is administered so that God will bless, heal, or separate someone for a special purpose. In this instance, it showed that God, through the leaders, had authorized and approved of the election of these men. Philip, one of the seven, later brought the gospel to Samaria. When revival broke out there, the apostles sent Peter and John to investigate, oversee, and help. It was then that the Samaritans began to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-17).

In Acts 11 we find that the apostles and elders (the leadership and ministry) of Judea called Peter in for an investigation. Peter had just preached to Cornelius, a Gentile, and the Judean section of the church wanted a full report on his activities. They wanted to find out if his actions were valid or not.

Even though Peter had been the most noticeable leader up to this point, had received the keys of the kingdom from Jesus, and had received direct orders from the Lord to preach to Cornelius, he still submitted to the authority of the church. He was examined, criticized by some in the meeting, and had to answer to those in authority. In the same chapter, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch to investigate a church which they had heard about but had not founded (11:22-30). His mission was to find out about them and give them teaching and leadership. Barnabas stayed in Antioch, later bringing Paul in as his assistant. Prophets also came from Jerusalem to help. Soon afterwards, the Antioch church took up a collection for the needy in the Jerusalem church, and sent the offering to the Jerusalem elders by Barnabas and Paul.

The Antioch church grew and developed prophets and teachers of its own. God called Barnabas and Paul to missionary work, revealing this call not only to them but also to the leadership in Antioch. The Antioch ministry then prayed for them, laid hands on them, and appointed them as missionaries (13:1-4). They went out, establishing churches and ordaining ministers to take charge of them (14:23).

The next big meeting of the church is recorded in Acts 15. By this time, the church had grown tremendously. It was no longer just a local congregation in Jerusalem, but had spread all across Judea, Samaria, and the Gentile nations. In what can be called the first general conference of the church, leaders and ministers from the various churches gathered together in

Jerusalem to discuss a hotly debated issue. The question was whether Gentile Christians had to be circumcised and had to keep the law of Moses. There was much discussion and disputing, with Paul, Barnabas, and Peter taking the position that the Gentiles did not have to do these things. Certain believing Pharisees took the opposite point of view. James, the brother of the Lord, was the chairman of the meeting, and he gave the final decision which the majority of the convention supported. After the decision was made, the whole church united behind the result and chose representatives to communicate the statement of doctrine to the local churches. Clearly the church exercised its authority to decide what was binding on the Gentiles as far as the law of Moses was concerned. Specifically, they decided on four things that Gentiles were required to keep, because, in their words, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (15:28-29).

After this meeting, Paul becomes the major figure in the book of Acts. Although his position had been fully vindicated, Paul came to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey to give a full report to James and the other leaders in Jerusalem. They rejoiced to hear his report, but then advised him to take certain Jewish vows in order to appease the Jewish Christian community. He followed their advice in order to foster unity and in submission to their authority (Acts 21:18-26).

In the epistles we find further evidence of a healthy, close knit organization for the purpose of mutual fellowship, establishing ministerial standards, and collecting offerings. James, Peter, and John were

pillars, or general leaders of the church (Galatians 2:9). This fact did not prevent Paul from rebuking Peter and others for hypocrisy and false doctrine (Galatians 2:11-14). Peter's error was in backing down on the decision of the church in Acts 15, and it resulted in his not walking "uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." Paul was the overseer of a number of churches which he had founded on his missionary journeys and to which he wrote letters of instruction, encouragement, and warning. He appointed overseers and ministers to work under him, such as Timothy and Titus. Titus was appointed overseer of Crete and was given the responsibility for ordaining ministers in that area (Titus 1:5).

In order to aid these two ministers in organizing their respective areas, Paul gave them a list of qualifications for preachers (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-16). Paul used the terms bishop and elder interchangeably in these verses to mean minister or pastor. He also gave the qualifications for deacons (I Timothy 3:8-13). We also find that Paul wrote a recommendation for Titus and another brother, and sent them to various churches to receive offerings for the Jerusalem church (II Corinthians 8:16-24). Paul established a system of receiving offerings every Sunday, and once he asked the Corinthian church to recommend by letter someone who could bring an offering to Jerusalem (I Corinthians 16:1-3).

The apostle John also sent a letter of recommendation for an evangelist named Demetrius. In the same letter he sent a warning for the church not to accept Diotrephes as a minister of the gospel (III John

9-12). Jesus and Paul outlined procedures for settling disputes in the church, for judging sinners in the church, and for disfellowshipping (excommunicating) members if necessary (Matthew 18:15-18; I Corinthians 5:1-13). Paul warned the elders in Ephesus about false prophets (Acts 20:28-30), and that church was commended by the Lord for discerning and trying false apostles (Revelation 2:2).

All these scriptures show that there was a close degree of cooperation among the churches and there were ways of handling problems. In addition, there was a clearly defined line of authority. First, there were elders (local pastors and assistants) in charge of the local churches, along with deacons who helped with local church business. Then there were overseers in charge of regions or groups of churches, such as Titus in Crete. In turn, Paul was over Titus and supervised many churches he had founded. His special ministry was directing the missionary outreach to the Gentiles, even as Peter directed the outreach to the Jews (Galatians 2:7-8). Peter seems to have been a major spokesman and representative of the early church, while James seems to have been the chief leader in Jerusalem.

Thus, each church and each minister was under the care of someone higher in authority. Even the highest leaders such as Peter and Paul exhorted each other and were subject to the church as a whole. Both of these leaders gave reports to and received advice from the assembly of ministers that gathered in Jerusalem. This shows that the church government supersedes personal position, even position given by God.

The authority of leadership. The Bible has much to say about the authority of leaders in the church. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thessalonians 5:12-13). Notice that these scriptures apply just as well to the authority structure among churches as within local churches. Notice, too, that we must have means of knowing the character of leaders. Also we must esteem those in authority for the sake of the work they do. We do not esteem or fear a man, but we esteem and fear the office of the man. A man in authority is not God, but he has received authority from God and we esteem him for that reason. "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" (Romans 13:1). (See also vs. 2-7.) This applies to both ministers and saints, to both church and civil matters. Of course, there are legitimate ways to remove someone from office in accordance with the will of God, and we will discuss some of these situations further. Here is another scripture on the necessity of esteeming those in leadership positions: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (I Timothy 5:17).

The purpose of leadership in the church is "for

the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12). The job of a minister is to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2).

A saint or even a minister who does not heed the voice of authority is on dangerous ground. Those who "despise dominion and speak evil of dignities" are the apostates of which Jude speaks in verse 8. Peter also teaches against those who "despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." They shall "utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness" (II Peter 2:10-13). A sign of the end-times is an erosion and a challenging of God-given authority in the home, in society, and in the church (II Timothy 3:2, 8).

Summary. What can we conclude from all this? We know that God has placed government in the church (I Corinthians 12:28). He has given the five-fold ministry to the church (Ephesians 4:11). There are different "offices" in the church occupied by those who prophesy, those who minister, those who exhort, and those who "rule" (Romans 12:4-8). This government is present in the local church and also extends beyond it. We have seen that the New Testament church was organized to accomplish many objectives. The church sent ministers to inquire about local congregations, sent missionaries to establish new churches, sent ministers to teach local congregations, resolved doctrinal disputes, organized collections of money, sent letters of recommendation for evangelists, disfellow-

shipped church sinners, warned local churches concerning false prophets, and judged false prophets.

As we have seen, the church has the authority to make a decision on new issues that confront it from time to time. The New Testament church established standards of holiness for Gentile believers in Acts 15 by means of a general conference. It also set forth qualifications for apostles, missionaries, ministers, and deacons and chose eligible people to fill these offices. Notice that Jesus did not explicitly address many of these issues. No one man made a decision on these new issues; but the church as a whole did make and promulgate such decisions. In our day, the church still has authority to resolve new holiness issues or to define holiness more specifically with respect to modern conditions. For example, the church has validly exercised its authority in taking a stand against smoking.

Judgment in the Church. In specific situations, the church is given the authority to judge individual members. In general, Christians are not to judge a man, his actions, or his convictions (Matthew 7:1; Romans 14:10; James 4:12). Even so, there is a responsibility to judge prophecy and to try the spirits to see if they are of God (I Corinthians 14:29; I John 4:1). As far as the church as a whole is concerned, both Jesus and Paul provided for judgment in case of disputes between saints. The result is that an individual is forbidden to judge on a personal basis, but the church has been given authority to judge between saints and to judge unrepented sin in the church. Here is the procedure of judgment outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18:

1. If two saints have a problem between them, then the aggrieved party should go to the other privately and try to resolve it. Of course, if a saint knows that another brother has something against him he should stop everything, go to him, and be reconciled. After doing that, he can come to the altar and offer gifts to God (Matthew 5:23-24).
2. If the attempt at resolution does not work, then the aggrieved person should take two or three witnesses with him and try to settle the problem with the other.
3. If the offender still does not make things right then the matter should be brought before the church. This means it should be turned over to and handled by those in church leadership, such as the pastor and the board. The leaders then have the authority to judge the matter.
4. If the offender does not obey the verdict of the church then he is to be excommunicated and classified as a heathen. According to verse eighteen, God will honor the decision of the church and its leadership. If they have been honest and fair, God will treat the decision as His own and will enforce it. This means that church people should abide by the decision of the church. If one does not, he can be declared a heathen.

Suing. The above procedure is the correct way to handle all disputes in the church. One saint cannot sue another saint under the civil law (I Corinthians 6:1-8). The reason is that saints are in training to be judges of angels and of the millennial kingdom. If we cannot settle our own disputes now, how can we judge angels and the world later? Furthermore, this sets a

bad example before unbelievers. It is better to be defrauded than to present a picture of church strife before the eyes of the world.

This scripture does not teach against suing someone in the world who has done wrong; and the above reasons do not apply in that case. We do have Christ's teaching to be generous and not to retaliate (Matthew 5:38-42). It would be appropriate, for example, to sue an unbeliever for automobile accident damages or to go to court to defend constitutional rights such as freedom of religion.

What happens if a man fails to repent and submit to the judgment of the church? As discussed above, he is excommunicated and declared a heathen. At this point, he is not a saint in the church, but a sinner, and in some cases it may be proper to go to the civil courts to obtain a remedy. As an example, what if a church officer falsely puts church property in his own name? Two or three representatives of the church should go to him and confront him. If he refuses to change the papers the pastor and church board should judge the matter. If he still refuses, he should be officially disfellowshipped. The purpose of this is to impress upon him the seriousness of his sin, to cleanse the church of sin, and to dissociate him from the church in the eyes of the world. After this, the church can treat him as a heathen, and can take him to a civil court.

Disfellowshipping. We have just discussed one reason for disfellowshipping or excommunication; namely, for a refusal to submit to church judgment. In I Corinthians 5:1-13, Paul gives other valid grounds. (These are defined in more detail in Chapter XIII.)

The particular problem in Corinth which gave rise to Paul's teaching was that a man in the church was committing incest. The church was so proud of its spiritual gifts that it had overlooked this sin. Paul rebuked them for not judging the sin and removing the offender.

The correct procedure in such a case is to excommunicate the sinner. He is to be delivered over to the world, to the kingdom of Satan. By doing this publicly, the man may be jarred into repentance. Also, he may suffer at the hands of Satan to such an extent that he will want to repent and return to the church. Thus there is hope that he can be saved as a result of being disfellowshipped. As long as his sin is covered or ignored, however, he will never see the need for repentance.

Paul extends this type of judgment to those who call themselves brothers but who are fornicators, covetous, idolaters, railers, drunkards, or extortioners. When a person is disfellowshipped for one of these reasons, Paul says the saints are not to keep company with or even to eat with him. This is church discipline. Sometimes we think we know better than God, and we do what we want to do, in spite of God's Word. The church disfellowships someone for sin, and we turn around and associate with that person. We go out to eat with him, run around town with him, and comfort him. All we are doing is helping him become more rebellious. We are fellowshipping the rebellious and unclean spirit in that person—a spirit which can easily affect us in the same way.

Once, a minister was disfellowshipped for getting

drunk in the village where he pastored and for immoral advances to a number of girls. Within a few months, he went to another area and began to preach and hold revivals. He showed no signs of repentance. Some who knew him went to help him out, saying, "Well, he is a preacher." This is totally contrary to the Word of God. How can someone fellowship an unrepentant, disfellowshipped man in view of what the Bible says? How can someone aid the ministry of a man who has lost the biblical qualifications for being a preacher?

Silencing. There is a difference between silencing and disfellowshipping a person. When a person has done wrong, but repents, he may lose qualifications for a position in the church. In this case, his position must be taken away, either temporarily or permanently. Similarly, someone who is used prominently may have some or all of their duties taken away for a time. This is called silencing. The Bible lists qualifications that leaders must have, so it logically follows that a leader who loses his qualifications should be removed or silenced until he regains them.

By contrast, disfellowshipping is for someone who has committed sin but refuses to acknowledge it or to repent, and does not listen to the judgment of the church. This person is considered a heathen.

A leader in the local church may be silenced for a certain period of time if he sins but repents. This type of discipline should be used when the sin is such that he needs to prove himself again for a period of time. It is also necessary if he has lost his good reputation. Otherwise he may bring reproach on the

church or create a stumbling block for someone if he is used in the church as if nothing had happened. If a silenced person is truly repentant he will not go to another organization or church, but will take his chastisement for his own good and will continue to serve God in his local church. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11). The silencing process will usually reveal whether or not the person has repented, and whether or not he has the patience and humility to prove himself faithful. If he is patient, he will be rewarded, as the above scripture indicates.

If a minister commits a sin that does not permanently disqualify him as a minister, he can be silenced or put on probation by those in authority over him. After a certain time, the minister can be reinstated fully, if he has been faithful during the time of his probation. Do not think that humans are taking the calling of God away from him. Government in the church was given by God, as were the qualifications for the ministry. Those in authority are only following God's plan, and we cannot despise those who administer it. Many times those who sit on church boards and general boards have had their hearts torn and wounded because of talk and actions by those they disciplined. Many times they must discipline those they love and those who are personal friends. They cannot condone or tolerate sin, but are forced to apply the Word of God even to their good friends.

A minister can permanently disqualify himself from

the ministry. For, example, this can occur if he is not the husband of one wife, or if he permanently loses his good report in the community by committing a sin such as adultery (I Timothy 3:1-7). He can still repent and be recognized as a saint. He then can become a worker in the local assembly. There are many in such a situation who have done just that. They did not try to re-establish themselves as ministers by going to another denomination, but became faithful and valuable workers in local churches. Regardless of personal feelings, they knew that obedience to the Word of God was more important than anything else.

Let us not be self-willed, disobedient, and sinful. If we ever do wrong, let us take our chastisement from our pastor or leaders. Let us repent, prove ourselves faithful to God's Word, and work even harder for God.

Public rebuke. Is there ever a time to publicly rebuke someone? In general, it is best to teach the people collectively from the pulpit or to handle problems privately on an individual basis. It is almost never beneficial for the pastor to publicly rebuke someone by name. However, there are times when those who sin are to be rebuked before all so that others may learn. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Timothy 5:20). This does not mean that whenever someone makes a mistake or does not do what he should that the pastor should rebuke him publicly. Galatians 6:1 says, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We have also seen that it is not appropriate for a minister (or anyone else) to become

personally angry, resentful and bitter against anyone. Open rebuke is for those who are openly sinful and rebellious. It is appropriate in certain circumstances when a person is disfellowshipped or is on the road to being disfellowshipped if he does not repent. For example, if someone is tearing the church apart, or is completely blocking the move of God, public rebuke may be justified. It is not necessary to issue such a rebuke when a person sins and repents. He can be silenced, if necessary, with no public explanation being necessary. In general, a minister should not rebuke openly unless he has prayerfully considered the matter for some time and feels that he is constrained to do so by the Holy Ghost.

This type of ministry does have its place, and it is important. It is most difficult, since the person is rebellious and will probably remain so. This is when family ties and personal feelings must submit to the calling of God.

Reproof and rebuke are part of the ministry of II Timothy 4:2. See also John 16:8, which says that the Spirit of God will reprove the world of sin. The word "reprove" includes in its meaning to test, put on trial, examine, convict, refute, expose, and bring to shame the person reproved. As the meanings indicate, this is sometimes done in private and sometimes in public. In addition to public and private rebuke for sin, it may be necessary for the pastor or leader of the service to rebuke someone who is causing confusion in a church service. This can often be handled diplomatically by changing the order of the service, but sometimes the person who is out of order must be called

down. The pastor as shepherd has the authority to do this so that everything will be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:33, 40). He must ensure that the worship is in spirit and in truth—in accordance with the moving of the Spirit and in accordance with the Bible. For example, there should be no more than three messages in tongues and interpretation or prophecy in one service, and the leader should see that this teaching is followed (I Corinthians 14:27-29).

Rebuke works together with and is often a part of church judgment and disfellowshipping. The purpose of them is to cleanse the church of sin and rebellion, and to serve as a lesson for believers.

"Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (I Chronicles 16:22). This is a very important scripture dealing with the subject of authority. It teaches us two things. First, we must have a respect for the man of God. As already discussed, we must esteem the office that a man holds. God often uses someone in authority to accomplish His plan even if that man is not always doing His will. He appointed the heathen king, Cyrus, to fulfill His purpose (Isaiah 44:28-45:3), and He spoke to His people through the Egyptian king, Necho (II Chronicles 35:20-24). God sent a spirit of prophecy upon backslidden King Saul (I Samuel 19:23-24). He also gave a word of prophecy to the hypocritical high priest Caiaphas specifically because of the office that he occupied. Caiaphas actually was plotting to kill Jesus and did not realize the meaning of his own words, but God spoke through him in spite of him (John 11:49-52). If God could use these evil men because of their positions, how much

more can He use sincere, honest, godly leaders even when we think they are making a mistake?

Second, this scripture prohibits individual action against a leader before God has removed him. It is unscriptural for someone to conspire or rebel against a God-called leader. God enforced the authority of Moses against the murmuring of his older brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, and against the rebellion of Korah. Even when the leader is mistaken or wrong, it is dangerous for an individual under his authority to rebel. Saul had backslidden and Samuel had anointed David to become the next king, but even then David refused to oppose Saul. Out of jealousy Saul tried to kill David and tried to hunt him down. On two occasions during this time David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but he did not, even though he would have seemingly accomplished God's will. As long as Saul was king, David respected his position and anointing. No matter how justified you think you are, it is extremely dangerous to murmur or rebel against the authority God has placed over you.

However, some leaders try to use this scripture to establish a kind of dictatorship or an exemption from control. They are forgetting that they in turn have an authority placed over them by God. Everyone must submit to a higher authority, as was the case in the early church. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1). In this regard, notice the story recorded in I Kings 2:13-27. Solomon was chosen by God to take David's place as king. His older half brother Adonijah had plotted to become king, but Solomon was the one anointed. Adonijah continued to

plot with Abiathar the priest and Joab the general. Specifically, he attempted to obtain a wife of David as his own wife. The custom at that time was for the wife of a deceased monarch to remain a widow or else be given to the monarch's successor. So Adonijah was really trying to establish himself as the true successor in the eyes of the people. Solomon realized this and had Adonijah and Joab executed. He also removed Abiathar from the priesthood, but did not kill him because of his past services to God and to David. Solomon had respect for him and his position as priest, but still removed him from his office. He had respect, but also judgment.

The lesson is this: Solomon had the authority to remove Abiathar from the priesthood because Abiathar had lost his qualifications to be a priest by his own rebellious actions. Solomon was God's chosen ruler over the nation, and he had the authority to judge Abiathar.

Some say that if a minister is silenced, disfellowshipped, or judged in any way that the church is interfering with God's calling and anointing, in violation of the scripture we have quoted. However, according to the Bible, those in authority do have the power to judge. The church is not taking away God's anointing, but that person has disqualified himself from his position by his own actions. In fact, Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for **not** judging sin in a certain situation. He asked if there was no one wise enough to judge. If not, he wanted to know how they would be able to judge the world later (I Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:1-5).

Just because someone has been anointed of God for a position does not mean they cannot be taken out of that position. It is true that just any individual should not try to do this, but God has given the authority to the church to do so. Otherwise why would God have given qualifications for the offices of minister (elder, bishop) and of deacon? God Himself has put government in the church (I Corinthians 12:28), and rulership in the church (Romans 12:8). Why would He do this if that government has no power and that rulership cannot be exercised? We realize that we need to follow God's timing and God's leading. However, we must also realize that God has already revealed His will and His timing in certain situations. In particular, He has already stated in the Bible that when a leader sins and fails to meet certain listed standards, then that is the time for those in authority over him to take action. The church people do not have a right to rebel, but they can inform those in authority of a situation, and those in authority have the right to judge the matter. So, "touch not mine anointed" does not give any leader or minister immunity from control and discipline. It did not save Abiathar from being put away from the priesthood when he rebelled. Neither did it prevent Ezra and Nehemiah from removing from the priesthood a large number of men who did not have the proper qualifications (Ezra 2:61-63; Nehemiah 7:63-65).

Error in leadership. What should we do if we think our pastor or leader is in error? If this relates to a method, program, or particular teaching, we should be humble and submissive. We can have dif-

ferences of opinion and conviction but even so we need to uphold and respect godly leaders. We never have the right to murmur, complain, or sow discord. (See Chapters III and IV.) If we want to change things we can pray and wait for God to work things out. Sometimes it is appropriate to offer respectful suggestions directly to the leader. If you do not actively cooperate with a certain thing then at least do nothing to obstruct or undermine it.

If a leader is operating unethically, living in sin, or teaching false doctrine, then we should bring the matter before those in authority over him and let them handle it.

Although we have stressed the importance of obeying authority, we do want to make clear two things with respect to leadership problems. First, leaders can be replaced or changed if this is done with the right attitude and with the proper authority. Second, no one has to follow leadership into spiritual error or into positions contrary to the Word of God. We follow leaders as long as they follow Christ. (See I Corinthians 11:1; Galatians 1:8.)

Independence. We have seen how everyone has a God-given government over them. Even Peter who had the keys to the kingdom was submissive to church government. This means that it is very dangerous to go independent; for then who has rule over you? Some say, "I am called of God. I am directly under God and I need no one to tell me what to do." This is true as far as preaching the truth and delivering God's message to the people is concerned. However, it is not true that the church has no control over you. According

to the letters to Timothy and Titus there are certain qualifications for a preacher. For example, the inability of a man to rule his own house would disqualify him from becoming or remaining a minister (I Timothy 3:4-5). There must be some means of implementing these requirements.

People who cannot work with others need to be very cautious and need to examine themselves. Why cannot they work with others? Why do they think only their ideas are the best? Why do they think they are always right? Why do they want to be independent?

Usually a lack of submission is involved. Many ministers emphasize that their church people be submissive to their authority, but they themselves refuse to submit to any kind of church government. They demand tithes from the people, but to whom do they pay tithes? They often direct and control their people, but from whom do they accept advice and leadership? Remember, God is the One who put government in the church.

There are some who hop from church to church, and even from organization to organization. They usually have the same problem: they cannot accept leadership, standards, judgment, or rebuke. If this is the case, they are rebelling against God. Such people need to examine themselves carefully to see why it is that they cannot be content where God has placed them. Is everyone else wrong, or is it that they will not accept leadership?

We say again that joining a particular denomination is not a requirement of salvation. It is God's will, however, for every saint to be associated with a local

group of believers. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25). In light of Ephesians 4:11-16; II Timothy 4:1-4; Hebrews 13:17; and other scriptures, it is clearly God's will for each local congregation to have a definite line of authority and leadership in the form of a God-called ministry.

In addition, we believe it is God's plan for each local congregation and minister to be associated and organized with a larger group of believers. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). In most cases those who switch churches or go independent are not doing God's will but are being rebellious or self-willed. If you have examined your heart in the light of the scriptures we have given, however, and you still feel that it is God's will for you to take such a step, then at least find some group of true Bible believers with whom you can work and fellowship and godly leadership that you can follow.

Every group will eventually fellowship with someone, and it is extremely important whom you fellowship. (See Chapter XIII.) It is so good to fellowship those who have proved themselves to the church and. who have the same basic doctrine and convictions. We recognize that God is moving among many different religious groups, but we also know that it is dangerous to enter indiscriminately into close fellowship with all such people that God is trying to lead to greater truth. You can work with them to some extent, try to lead them, and be friends with them, but if you fellowship closely with them you will eventually weaken

your own standards and beliefs. What frequently occurs with an independent group is that they are forced to seek fellowship with people who do not have strong standards, or whose doctrinal position and attitudes are an unknown factor. Also, they may accept anyone who comes to them from another church, feeling no responsibility to contact the former pastor. This can lead to a church full of hypocrites, disgruntled people, and people who have a history of rejecting authority. Historically, it has been very difficult for an isolated group to maintain holiness and doctrinal purity, but in unity there is strength. By submitting to God's authority in our lives we will have His protection, blessing, and guidance.

Benefits of unity. We believe some type of organization is God's will to prevent the situations described above, as well as for the other reasons that the New Testament church had organization. Organization promotes evangelism and outreach. It promotes unified effort, pooling of financial resources, and pooling of talent. It reinforces beliefs and convictions. It is an important aid in missionary work (as it was in the early church), and it is important so that a local church can have its share in fulfilling the commission to preach the gospel to every creature.

Organization is a good protection against the infiltration of Satan and sin. As in the early church, it provides a means of knowing who is good, who is evil, and who is a false prophet. We can knowingly fellowship people of like precious faith. We can use God-given authority to establish standards and to maintain Bible qualifications for leadership. When faced

with new situations and crucial decisions, we can bind together and get a Spirit-inspired consensus as the church did in Acts 15. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). "Two are better than one . . . and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). God honors the collective decision of His church, and He will use this method to reveal His will (Acts 15:28).

As this chapter has emphasized, there must be a means by which God can set up His system of authority. This authority is necessary for the perfection of each individual, ministers included. It is a necessary safeguard to keep local groups in the mainstream of God's will. The diversity of viewpoints within a large group serves to keep the whole group in balance—neither too narrow minded nor too liberal. It also keeps the whole body invigorated and progressive in outlook.

Let us take care to submit ourselves to God's appointed authority and leadership. Ministers especially examine yourselves! The ministry should be the best example of all, and it should be clean and holy. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:3). No one is exempt from authority, but everyone can profit from counsel, advice, warning, and rebuke if necessary. The church as a whole will profit from strong leadership and from a careful upholding of precious truths.

XIII
FELLOWSHIP AND ALLIANCES

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6:14).

Fellowship with the world. Separation from the world is a key component of true holiness. (See Chapters I and VI.) In previous chapters we have seen that holiness requires a separation from certain worldly practices and certain things that defile us. Now we will consider the circumstances in which holiness requires a separation from certain types of people.

The Bible tells us that it is important what kind of company we keep and what kind of friends we have. Proverbs 22:24-25 says, "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul." This scripture refutes those who think they

can fellowship anyone they wish and still maintain their holiness. Inevitably, the attitudes and spirits of your companions will influence you. Paul states emphatically, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33). In other words, evil associations will corrupt good morals. If you insist on associating closely with evil people you have the biblical guarantee that you will be adversely affected.

Does this mean that we should avoid all association with sinners? No. The Bible gives two reasons why we cannot do so. When Jesus was criticized for eating with publicans, and sinners, He explained that it was His mission to save them (Luke 5:30-32). Likewise, if we expect to win souls, we must associate with them to some degree. The best way to win souls is to be a friend. The second reason is that some communication and dealing with sinners is necessary simply as a result of daily living. Although we are not of the world, we are still in the world. Paul writes that we should not keep company with a fornicator, but then explains that this is impossible to the extent of avoiding all associations with people in the world (I Corinthians 5:9-10).

Having acknowledged this, we must realize that there are still some areas where we must draw a line. According to Ephesians 5:11, we cannot fellowship with works of darkness. This means we cannot endorse or participate in sin. When acquaintances begin to indulge in their worldly activities we must politely withdraw. For this reason, there will always be a certain barrier between a Christian and his

worldly friends. They can be good friends, but only to a certain point. There will always be something in which the Christian will not participate, and there will always be something the sinner will not understand about the Christian's experience. Also, the Christian must be careful not to become identified in the eyes of others with sinful activities or worldly attitudes by reason of his associations. As the saying goes, "A man is known by the company he keeps." "Birds of a feather flock together." We should consider this when making certain friends or when joining certain activities.

The result is that Christians will associate with sinners to some extent in order to win them and in order to live a normal life in this world. The limitations on this association are that Christians cannot participate in sinful activities or allow themselves to be identified too closely with worldliness. In addition to these general considerations, the Bible gives specific directions in two areas. First, we are explicitly commanded not to fellowship at all those people who call themselves Christians but who have certain types of sin in their lives. Second, we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. We will consider these two situations in that order.

Fellowship with church sinners. Jesus gave several parables in Matthew 13 which reveal that Christendom, or the outward church, contains both sinners and saints. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a field of wheat and tares, to a mustard tree with all manner of birds nesting in it, to a quantity of meal with leaven in it, and to a net filled with all

kinds of fish. The point is that professing Christianity contains many that are not true Christians. The outward church contains false prophets and those who teach doctrines of devils. In fact, Christianity as a religious system today can be compared to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:14-22. We believe that these are the last days, and that Laodicea is a description of the last church age. Modern churches have beautiful buildings, talented choirs, and elaborate rituals, but Christ is on the outside, knocking for admittance. Although this accurately characterizes Christianity as a whole, there are still some churches that are on fire and that can discern false prophets. Some still have the apostolic doctrine and the Spirit of God in their midst.

We should always remember, however, that many organizations and religious traditions do not have the full gospel. This means we cannot embrace all professing Christians and fellowship them as born again believers. Of course, we do not believe that one must belong to a particular denomination in order to be saved. Also, there are those in every group who will profess to be Christians but whose lives will show that they are not. In certain cases, the church has the authority to judge these people and disfellowship them from the church (Matthew 18:17-18; I Corinthians 5:5; 12-13). (See also Chapter XII.)

If such a person has been judged and disfellowshipped, other saints and ministers cannot fellowship him, according to the Bible. If they do, they are putting their own individual judgment ahead of the God-given authority and judgment of the church. One

purpose of this judgment is to separate the evil from the good—to get rid of the leaven before it affects the whole loaf. If people continue to associate with such a person they will harm themselves.

They will also harm the individual who has been disfellowshipped; for another purpose of disciplinary action is to embarrass the wrongdoer, help him to see his fault and bring him to repentance. If he is fellowshipped and comforted, he will not learn this lesson but will instead learn to be insincere and hypocritical. Often, someone who has been disfellowshipped will simply change churches or organizations without repenting, making restitution, asking forgiveness, or meeting Bible qualifications. Those who help him in this are condoning his sin and will be held accountable before God (II John 11).

The Bible lists several types of people that should be disfellowshipped. If a person is disfellowshipped for one of these Biblical reasons and some continue to fellowship him, those people are placing themselves in direct rebellion against the Word of God. Even when someone has not been officially disfellowshipped, if he displays these characteristics or these sins, Paul advises us not to associate with him.

Specifically, Paul says, "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 no not to eat" (I Corinthians 5:11). This is so strong that we cannot even eat with such people. Also notice that this scripture refers to those who call themselves Christians but

who are guilty of one of the listed sins. It does not mean that we cannot have contact with people in the world that come under the same categories (I Corinthians 5:9-10). Let us briefly list and identify the sins involved.

1. Fornicator—one who is guilty of an immoral sex act of any kind. (See Chapter IX.)
2. Covetous—one who wants what others have, which is closely connected to greed. A person may covet money, clothes, or even a position in the church. This attitude usually displays itself in the form of jealousy, hatred, or evil talking.
3. Idolater—a worshipper of idols (images or false gods).
4. Railer—one who abuses others by words. This is manifested by speaking evil of others, by constant criticism, and by slander. (See Chapter IV.)
5. Drunkard—one who is habitually drunk (under the influence of alcohol).
6. Extortioner—one who obtains money, favors, behavior, or promises by force, fraud, blackmail or other undue pressure. (See Chapter XI.)

In addition to these six kinds of hypocrites in the church, we are commanded to withdraw from and have no company with those who walk disorderly, those who refuse to work, and those who are busybodies (II Thessalonians 3:6, 11, 14).

1. Those who walk disorderly—those who walk contrary to God's Word and to the guidelines established for the church. Paul says to have no company with those who refuse to obey his epistle (v. 14). In another passage we are told to avoid those who "cause

divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine" (Romans 16:17).

2. Non-workers—those who are lazy. They are able to earn an honest living but will not do so.

3. Busybodies—meddlers in the affairs of others and in things outside their authority. (See Chapter III.)

We are also told to withdraw from false teachers and from those who produce envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings (I Timothy 6:3-5).

1. False teachers—We cannot fellowship those who teach false doctrine. We can try to help them learn the truth, but we cannot associate too closely with them or treat them as leaders in the true church.

2. Envy—includes those who are envious of position, responsibilities, or money. A true Christian will not become envious and will not let anything offend him. (See Chapter III.)

3. Strife—discord, dissension, contention, struggle for superiority, division into factions, or personal clashes. None of this has a place in the church.

4. Evil surmisings—thinking evil about someone. This includes jumping to conclusions, assuming evil things, or assigning evil motives to others. It is displayed by criticism and gossip. A person with this spirit will often accuse innocent people based on some insignificant thing he has seen or heard (or thought he saw or heard).

Finally, II John 9-11 tells us not to receive or aid people who do not accept the doctrine of Christ, which is the doctrine that God has come in the flesh. If a person understands the correct doctrine about Jesus Christ he will have both the Father and the Son

(v. 9). He will acknowledge Jesus as the eternal God who has come in flesh as the Son. John tells us that if a person does not accept this doctrine, we cannot help his ministry by receiving him into our homes. We cannot even tell him "God speed," which means "God prosper you" or "God give you success," lest we partake of his evil works. In other words, we cannot help teachers of false doctrine in their ministry, even to the extent of wishing them success in their endeavor. Of course, in those days, most of the churches met in houses, so John was warning particularly against allowing a minister of false doctrine to take control of a worship service.

There are good reasons why God has commanded us to separate ourselves from these kinds of people. These people have dangerous attitudes and spirits. When you entertain someone who is guilty of unrepented envy, strife, railing, evil surmising, false doctrine, or fornication, you are actually entertaining a spirit in that person. This spirit can overcome you, too. Of course, we know that an evil spirit or an evil attitude cannot overcome someone who is full of the Holy Ghost and living according to the Bible. If you are fellowshipping this type of person, however, you have ignored the Word of God and have gone against His will. You have already stepped out from under His authority and, therefore, you no longer have His protection in that area. As a result, that spirit can easily affect you.

If you find yourself fellowshipping these kinds of people, you need to check yourself closely. Usually people associate with others that have something in

common with them!

Unequally yoked with unbelievers. This is an important aspect of separation from the world. Paul explains this teaching by asking five questions (II Corinthians 6:14-16). What fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness? What communion does light have with darkness? What concord (agreement) does Christ have with Belial (a name of Satan meaning worthless one)? What part does a believer have with an infidel? What agreement does the temple of God (your body) have with idols? On one side is righteousness, light, Christ, faith, and the temple of God. On the other side is unrighteousness, darkness, Satan, unbelief, and idolatry. These things are opposites and cannot be brought together in any harmonious arrangement. For this reason God says to us, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (v. 17). This commandment comes with a promise if we obey. If we do separate ourselves and refuse to be unequally yoked, the Lord will receive us and be a father to us. He will be our God and will dwell in us.

What are the practical implications of this scripture? To find out what it means to us we must understand what it means to be yoked and what it means to be an unbeliever.

To be yoked means to be joined together or closely united. In its original usage, the word describes animals such as oxen that are paired and fastened together for work. *Webster's Dictionary* gives the following examples of relationships which are analogous to yoking: bondage, servitude, brotherhood, and marriage.

The dictionary defines a yokefellow as a companion, partner, associate, husband, or wife. The yoke relationship refers to a close, intimate union in which one person can drastically affect or influence another, in which one person can speak or act for another, and in which there is a sharing of responsibility. The most obvious example that affects us today is marriage. In certain cases, business partnerships and fraternal organizations may come under this definition also.

Marriage is certainly a yoke relationship, because two human beings cannot enter into a closer, more intimate relationship. If this scripture does not refer to marriage then it is impossible to think of any case where it would apply. Marriage is a lifelong bond, and God views the couple as a single unit, except in matters of individual salvation. Paul indicates that a Christian is free to marry, but only in the Lord—that is, to another Christian (I Corinthians 7:39).

An employer-employee relationship is not a yoke but a relationship of superior to subordinate that either party can terminate. A joint business venture or a partnership can be a yoke if both partners have equal control and are bound by the actions of the other. A fraternal organization can be a yoke depending on how the members are pledged to help each other. A secret society bound by oath is a yoke.

Definition of a believer. As believers we cannot be bound with unbelievers in any of these ways. The question then arises, What are the biblical definitions of a believer and an unbeliever? A believer is not just one who merely confesses or mentally assents. The biblical proof of belief is obedience to the Word of God

(I John 2:3; 5:1-3). Romans 10:16 tells us that a lack of obedience is due to a lack of belief. According to John 7:38-39, a true believer of the Scriptures will receive the Holy Spirit. According to Mark 16:16-18, a believer will be baptized, and one of the signs that will follow is speaking in tongues. Cornelius and his household received the Holy Ghost as evidenced by speaking in tongues when they believed (Acts 10:44-48; 11:17). The Philippian jailer was baptized around midnight after Paul told him to believe (Acts 16:31-33).

Of course, believing is a process that first begins with hearing of the Word of God and continues throughout a Christian's walk with God. When the Bible uses the term "believer," it is referring to someone who has experienced the full plan of salvation. (See Acts 2:38.) There are many instances where people have believed to some degree but have not believed to the extent of obeying God's plan of salvation. As a result, they cannot be called true believers. Here are some biblical examples: the devils (James 2:19), many people in Jerusalem (John 2:23-25), many religious leaders (John 12:42), many miracle workers (Matthew 7:21-23), Cornelius before Peter's sermon (Acts 10:1-6; 11:14), Simon the magician (Acts 8:13; 20-23), and the Samaritans before the arrival of Peter and John (Acts 8:12, 16). The point of these examples is to show that a person is not a believer just because he says he believes on Jesus Christ. He must have the correct foundation (Matthew 7:21-23). He must obey all of God's Word, and he must have the signs that follow a believer. We cannot yoke ourselves with so-balled Christians if they do not have the right

foundation (which includes basic doctrine), or if they are not living a holy life.

Old Testament examples. The reason why we cannot be yoked with unbelievers is that this leads to compromise with the world. In every age God has demanded separation from the world. (See Chapters I and VI.) Abraham was called out from his country, his kindred, and his father's house (Genesis 12:1). He made plans so that Isaac would not marry a heathen wife, and Isaac did the same for Jacob (Genesis 24:2-3; 27:46; 28:2). Esau grieved his parents by marrying unbelievers (Genesis 26:34-35). God told the Israelites to avoid heathen customs and marriages with unbelieving nations (Deuteronomy 7:3). Balaam shrewdly advised the Moabites to use intermarriage and idolatry as means to destroy Israel (Numbers 25:1-3; 31:16). Samson's downfall was Philistine women (Judges 14:2-3; 16:4-5), and Solomon's heathen wives caused him to sin (I Kings 11:4-8). God had to cleanse Israel of unholy marriages a number of times before He could use them as a nation (Numbers 25; Ezra 10; Nehemiah 13:23-31). So we see that the teaching of II Corinthians 6 is just another application of the principle of separation. It is not a new concept, but a basic principle throughout God's Word.

Marriage. Let us try to answer some practical questions that this raises, particularly in the area of marriage. Can a Christian marry an unbeliever (someone who is not saved according to the Word of God)? No. If he does, he is being rebellious and disobedient. Can unbelievers marry unbelievers? Yes, because they are equally yoked. This means that a minister

can perform a marriage ceremony between two unbelievers. If he performs a marriage ceremony between a believer and an unbeliever, however, he is performing that which is against God's will, and is helping others to rebel against God. Either he does not fully realize what he is doing, or he is a hireling. Can a Christian marry any so-called Christian? No. They must have the same basic experience and belief. Otherwise they will not be equally yoked. The devils believe, but we would not consider being yoked with them! If a person already has an unbelieving spouse, of course, it is God's will for them to remain married. God honors the marriage vow and is not in favor of it being broken (I Corinthians 7:10-13, 39). In such a case the believing spouse sanctifies the unbeliever (v. 14). This simply means that the relationship is made lawful and also that the believer will have a spiritual influence on the unbeliever and on the children. In this situation, the believer's duty is to try to win the unbelieving spouse through prayer and holy living (I Peter 3:1-2).

Some argue that marrying an unbeliever is a good way to win that person to the Lord. This argument ignores the written Word of God. It would be like going into a saloon and having a drink with the boys in order to win them. We cannot lower our standards or disobey the Word of God and expect good results. In the vast majority of cases, when such a marriage takes place the unbeliever never comes to the Lord. If the unbeliever is sincerely interested in the Word of God, he will become a believer before the marriage. If he does not receive the Holy Ghost before

the marriage, it is most likely that he never will. In fact it is far more common for the believing spouse to eventually backslide than for the unbeliever to be saved. King Solomon is a prime example. Usually, the believer will compromise some beliefs. At the very least, the believing spouse will be forced into certain accommodations in order to maintain the marriage. The believer will not be free to do God's perfect will in all things and will have less time to devote to God. In almost every case some or all of the children will follow the example of the unbelieving spouse and will not be saved.

Dating. This means that it is very dangerous to date unbelievers. In view of what has already been discussed, how can it be God's will for a Spirit-filled young person to have a steady boyfriend or girlfriend who is not in the church? You will probably marry someone whom you have dated. If it is not God's will for you as a believer to marry an unbeliever, can it be His will for you to establish the kind of close relationship that might result in marriage?

Some casual contact, fellowship, or going out together as part of a Christian group may be permissible and may even help win someone to the Lord. Once a dating relationship is established, however, the possibility of winning the unbeliever has been subordinated to the attraction between the two. At this point the Christian will be expending great effort just to maintain his or her own convictions and will be especially vulnerable to temptation. There will usually be a problem with upholding Christian standards of conduct in dating. Then there is the possibility that

love will develop, causing the Christian to face the agonizing decision of breaking up, waiting for a conversion that may never occur, or going against God's will by marrying an unbeliever. No Christian should deliberately expose him or herself to these tensions, even if he or she is spiritually strong and confident. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). If you invite problems and temptation in this manner you cannot rely on God's promise that He will not put on you more than you can bear. You may get in a situation where the temptation to go against God's will is too great to resist and you lose control. Also, by dating out of the will of God, you do not have the assurance that His perfect will for your life will be done. You may miss God's choice for your marriage or for your life's work while you are dating a sinner.

As a final word of warning, and especially for leaders, do not play God in this area! You cannot give your opinions or ideas of what the result of such a marriage might be, but you must go by the Word of God. Sometimes people come to God and sometimes they do not. Do not think that since there is a good chance of a favorable outcome in a particular case that it is all right to try it or endorse it. You are gambling with souls. Remember, also, that the end does not justify the means. Even if the result is good, if the method is wrong, we will have to answer to God.

Do not try to outguess or outsmart God. We must follow His Word and His declared will if we want His protection, promises, and blessings. The solution is to seek the will of God. Pray and fast, if necessary, until

you find Gods will for your life and your marriage. *If* you seek Him first, *then* you have the promise that He will take care of everything else (Matthew 6:33). Seek the perfect plan God has for your life.

XIV
WORSHIP, EMOTIONS, AND MUSIC

"Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (I Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2; 96:9).

"Worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

True worship. Worship is an integral part of true holiness. In turn, holiness is an essential ingredient of true worship. The truest form of worship is obedience, not sacrifice or offerings (I Samuel 15:22). God will reject worship unless it comes from a holy life. (See Amos 5:21-27; Malachi 1:10.) The kind of worship that God accepts is worship that comes from a sincere heart and is supported by a surrendered life. We must worship God both in spirit (small s, meaning the human spirit and human enthusiasm) and in truth. From this perspective, this whole book is intimately connected with the subject of worship. For this reason, we feel that it will be both relevant and beneficial to include a short study of biblical worship. The rest of the book deals with the ways we worship

God in our everyday lives. In this chapter we want to concentrate on how God's people worship Him with their outward expression and with their emotions. Because music plays such an important role in worship (in the Bible as well as today), we will include a discussion of it also. With our investigation of music in worship, we will also deal with worldly music.

Emotions and expression. One of the most striking things about worship as portrayed in the Bible is that it affects every aspect of the human being. God requires that we love Him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). This covers the emotional, the spiritual, the intellectual, and the physical sides of man. Worship definitely includes, but is not limited to, the emotions, the intellect, and physical expression. Ultimately, it is our will, not our emotions or natural understanding, which must give the commitment and stability to worship.

Some say that emotion and physical expression should play a very minor role in worship. Others say that they are not emotional or demonstrative by nature. Of course, people have different temperaments, but we believe that true worship involves all of a person, including the emotional component that exists in everyone.

God is a God of emotions. Throughout the Bible He displays such emotions as love, joy, sorrow, and anger. When God appeared in flesh, we find Him crying at the tomb of His friend Lazarus (John 11:35) and over the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). We are created in the image of God, and we share the same emotions (Genesis 1:27). Those who say they are not

emotional when they come to church are the very ones who lose their temper and scream at the children or kick the dog. They scream almost hysterically at football games. They vehemently assert their rights and argue over many things. They shove and push to get on a bus or taxi. They make a scene when they don't get their way. They will caress and embrace their loved ones. Yet these same people will tell you that emotion has no place in church. They insist on formalism and ritual. The fact is that we are emotional beings. Emotion plays a part in every aspect of our lives, so why not in church? Of course, emotion is not the only component of worship. As already stated, reason is important also, and, most of all, our will must provide the control as it is controlled in turn by faith and by the will of God. Still, emotion must be a part of our worship.

Emotion leads to physical expression. It is impossible to feel intense emotion without expressing it. By itself, physical expression is only a small part of worship. Indeed, "bodily exercise profiteth little" (I Timothy 4:8). Yet, physical demonstration is a natural and inevitable result of emotion. When motivated by a sincere heart that has been touched by God, physical expression is a very important part of worship.

To prove that emotion and expression are essential elements of outward worship, we can go to both the Old and New Testaments. The Book of Psalms is full of expressions and examples of praise. The Psalmist said, "I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation" (Psalm 111:1). How did he praise God in

the congregation (in church)? Here are a few examples taken from the Book of Psalms: lifting of hands (141:2), singing and playing musical instruments (33:2-3), making a joyful noise (95:1-2), clapping hands (47:1), and dancing (149:3). Psalm 98:4 tells us to make a joyful noise, to make a loud noise, to rejoice, and to sing praises. For those who are reluctant to praise God in this manner, the Psalmist says, "Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (150:6).

Examples of worship. The Old Testament is full of examples of worship, prayer, and praise. At the dedication of the temple, Solomon prayed while standing and lifting his hands, and also while kneeling (I Kings 8:22, 54). When the ark of God returned to Jerusalem, David was so overjoyed that he took off his kingly garments and danced in the sight of all Israel. The Bible says, "David danced before the Lord with all his might," and came shouting and leaping. His wife, Michal, despised him when she saw this, because she thought he was degrading himself in front of all the people. When she rebuked him, he vowed to act even more "vile" and "base." As a result of this incident Michal bore no child for the rest of her life. (See II Samuel 6:14-23.) David was an Oriental king who had great power and dignity, yet he worshipped freely when the ark, symbolic of the presence of God, returned to Jerusalem. Why should not we do the same when the actual presence of God comes in our midst? (See also Nehemiah 8:6-9; 9:3-5.)

Turning to the New Testament, we find the same type of worship. When the 120 believers received

the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, they rejoiced and made so much noise that a large crowd soon gathered. The Spirit-filled believers were so demonstrative that the onlookers thought they were drunk (Acts 2:13). Everyone knows what a drunk man looks like. No doubt some of the believers were dancing, some were shouting, some were laughing, some were crying, some were staggering, and some looked as though they had passed out. If we have received the same Spirit, why should our experience be any different?

This type of experience continued to occur. When the lame man was healed, he entered the temple walking, leaping, and praising (Acts 3:8). When John saw the Lord on the island of Patmos, he fell as one dead (Revelation 1:17). Paul on the road to Damascus and the jailer in Philippi both literally trembled under the convicting power of God (Acts 9:6; 16:29-30). When Peter repented of his denial of Christ he wept bitterly (Luke 22:62). The publican smote his breast in repentance (Luke 18:13), and a sinful woman wept tears of repentance, joy, and love when she met Jesus (Luke 7:37-47). Paul wept over the letters of rebuke that he had to send to the churches (II Corinthians 2:4). When the early church gathered, they all prayed aloud together and the whole building was shaken by the power of God (Acts 4:24-31). In the epistles, Paul refers to groaning in the Spirit (Romans 8:26), praying and singing in the spirit (I Corinthians 14:15), and lifting of hands (I Timothy 2:8). Notice the universality of this type of worship in the last scripture, and notice its connection with holiness. "I will there-

fore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

All these examples (and more) show that sincere worshippers of God do express their emotions freely. Of course, not everyone will worship or respond in exactly the same way. Some will show more outward emotion, but everyone will be affected. There is room for freedom and diversity of worship. If you are truly worshipping God you will express yourself when God touches you, and you will refrain from excessive demonstration when God is not in it. If you are truly sorry for your sins you will cry. If a minister truly has a burden for lost souls, he will shed tears over his city.

Quenching the Spirit. We must not quench the Spirit in our worship (I Thessalonians 5:19). This is often done by unscriptural tradition and formalism. Some people do worship freely during revival services but go right back to formalism and quenching the Spirit the rest of the time, especially on Sunday mornings. Many are bound by preconceived ideas of how God must move and by set patterns of worship. On the other hand, we must not try to force a move of God or drum up a demonstration. If God is in control, everything will be done for edification—building up (I Corinthians 14:26). It will not be done in confusion but in peace, in decency, and in order (I Corinthians 14:33, 40). One role of the pastor as leader and shepherd is to keep order in the church and prevent confusion from arising. There is no place for fleshly demonstration, fleshly exaltation, or hypocrisy in worship.

The church is designated as a place where we

meet God. It is wrong to hold back our emotions from God when we meet Him. If a church is a place where saints are crying, worshipping and praising, then it will be a place where people are always finding God and receiving the Holy Ghost. People rarely receive blessings or the Holy Ghost in an unemotional, formal atmosphere.

All God requires is for you to surrender your whole self to Him in worship. He will take care of the rest. Let the Spirit in you have His way. The Holy Ghost will help you to pray, to cry, and to rejoice. Emotions are nothing to be ashamed of—they are God given. Let God use them.

The key to understanding worship in a Spirit-filled church is this: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Corinthians 3:17). The Spirit gives each of us the freedom to worship and respond to God's presence in our own way.

Music in Worship. Music can drive away worries and evil thoughts and can bring peace, encouragement and a closeness to God. As indicated in the Psalms, music is a very important means of worship. (In fact, the book was written originally as a hymnal for Israel.) We come before God's presence with singing, enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise (Psalm 100). Many verses in the Psalms admonish us to worship with singing and with musical instruments. Psalm 150 lists the following instruments used in worship: trumpet, psaltery (a stringed instrument), harp, timbrel (tambourine or drum), stringed instrument, organ (a wind instrument), loud cymbal, and high sounding cymbal. A

study of the Old Testament shows how powerful both singing and instrumental music can be in helping people to worship and to respond to God's Spirit.

The music of David soothed King Saul and drove away evil spirits that troubled him (I Samuel 16:23). After David became king, he appointed musicians to minister in the house of the Lord (I Chronicles 6:31-47). He appointed singers, psaltery players, harpists, and cymbalists to praise the Lord before the ark (I Chronicles 15:16). There were four thousand musicians including 288 highly trained and skilled in song (I Chronicles 23:5; 25:7). We also read of Jeduthun who prophesied with a harp (I Chronicles 25:3). Later, when Solomon dedicated the temple, he arranged for the trumpets and singers to lift up their voices in praises and thanksgiving, together with cymbals and other instruments of music. When they did this with one accord, the glory of God filled the house. His presence was so strong that the priests could not stand to minister (II Chronicles 5:13-14). When King Jehoshaphat of Judah asked the prophet Elisha to declare the counsel of God, Elisha first asked for a minstrel to come. "And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him" (II Kings 3:15). Then, Elisha was able to reveal the plan of God which gave victory over the Moabites. Notice that it first took music to prepare Elisha's heart and to set the stage for the moving of God's Spirit. Jehoshaphat himself knew how powerful worship and music could be. Once, when he faced a battle against Ammon and Moab, he appointed singers unto the Lord to praise the beauty of holiness. When

they began to sing, the Lord destroyed the enemy (II Chronicles 20:21-22). God began to move when His people began to sing and worship.

Turning to the New Testament, we find there also a strong emphasis on musical worship. Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn at the last supper (Matthew 26:30). When Paul and Silas were beaten and jailed at Philippi they prayed and sang praises at midnight. What was God's response? He sent an earthquake which freed them and brought about an opportunity to baptize the jailer. Paul instructs us in several places on how to worship God with music. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). "Psalms" undoubtedly refers to songs from the Book of Psalms, while "hymns and spiritual songs" refers to other gospel songs. Those who do not believe in worshipping God with a joyful noise, clapping of hands, raising of hands, dancing, and playing of musical instruments would have a difficult time singing all the psalms which recommend these forms of worship. Paul did not have any such qualms since his worship was the same as that described in Psalms. In another place, Paul endorses both singing with the spirit (singing in tongues) and singing with the understanding as part of personal devotion (I Corinthians 14:15). Singing should be an important part of our worship services and our everyday lives (I Corinthians 14:26; James 5:13).

Since music can be such a powerful element of

worship, we must be careful to use it as worship and not as entertainment in church services. Many people have a misconception about music in church. They think the church is a stage, the congregation is the audience, the musicians are the actors, and God is backstage giving cues. Actually, the congregation should be the actors (worshippers), with the musicians giving cues, and God being the audience. Singers and musicians in church should have two goals in mind. Their primary goal is to worship God from the heart, creating music that He will be personally pleased to hear. Their other function is to create an atmosphere of worship that will encourage the congregation to worship and will make it easy for them to feel God. Many people have reconsecrated their lives and many have gone to the altar through the inspiration of anointed singing.

This means that musicians, singers, and song leaders have a great responsibility. They can make or break a service. They should fast and pray that God would use them to bless the service. Just as they practice and prepare to make their song beautiful, they should pray so that God would anoint them and use them spiritually. We do not need people who just want to show off their talents, but we need people who want to worship God and who want to inspire the audience to worship. Today, many groups sound polished and professional, and many groups have elaborate equipment. This is good. However, if they put entertainment above worship, then God is not pleased. I like to hear a group with beautiful harmony and instrumentation, but I want to be able to worship and to feel God while they sing. Otherwise, they may be

excellent for a concert but not for a church worship service where souls are at stake.

Singers and musicians need to be good examples of Christianity. They are being used to promote worship and are set up as examples to the congregation, and their lives should reflect this. They need to lead holy lives in accordance with Biblical and pastoral teaching. The congregation should be able to feel the sincerity of the singers. There is nothing that destroys worship like knowing that the singer is not really worshipping, is singing for self-exaltation, or is not living a holy life.

Singing and playing in church is a privilege. If you have talent, then you should use it for God. This is a way for you to worship and thank Him. For this reason, singers, choir members, and musicians should not be paid by their local church. This robs them of their privilege of worshipping God. Of course, a full or part time director of music can receive wages, since that is his job.

Congregational singing is most certainly a form of worship. As such, it is an area in which we need to be led by the Spirit. We need song leaders who have a burden for each service, who are sensitive to the leading of the Spirit, and who have a talent for leading songs. An excellent time for people to receive blessings is during congregational singing. The song leader's job is to inspire worship, to help the people open their hearts, and to prepare them for the preaching of the Word of God. The song leader should feel free to follow the moving of the Spirit—to sing a chorus over, to change songs, to sing a song he had not

previously considered. Sometimes God uses one particular song in a particular service to reach an individual or to break that service wide open. The song leader has to be sensitive in order to discern when God wants to do this. He should be prepared for the service, but also be ready to change his plans. Of course, he should work closely with the pastor and under his direction.

We often sing short, simple choruses. The reason is that they are easy to understand and to learn; and the congregation can concentrate on God instead of on reading from a book. It is useful to have a variety of such songs, because they can create atmospheres conducive to different types of services. It is easy to evoke true worship, with such songs.

There are many different types of songs which are appropriate for worship. They will vary depending on the spirit of the service, the needs of the congregation, and the cultural background of the congregation. A congregation that includes people of various backgrounds and cultures should have a musical program that meets the needs and tastes of all. There needs to be a variety of styles in such a case. There are times to sing a new song unto the Lord (Psalm 96:1). We must recognize that some songs do not appeal to our personal musical tastes but appeal to others and are valid forms of worship. The most important thing is for the performers to be worshipping sincerely and for the congregation to be feeling the Spirit of God. Some styles of singing are good for certain cultural groups, but others who use them can seem insincere, out of place, or even absurd.

There is one exception to allowing a variety of musical styles in worship services. We must not use music which appeals directly and primarily to the sensual or carnal nature of man. In making this statement we are referring primarily to hard rock music. We do not say this merely because it is personally distasteful or because it is popular in the world. Most songs throughout the history of the church have to some extent followed the musical styles of the times. We single out rock music because the music itself so easily arouses emotions and desires which are incompatible with worship and praise. We will analyze this further in the following section.

Modern Music. Aside from music as a form of worship, what does holiness say on the subject of music in general? Certainly, a Christian can enjoy songs and music which are not religiously oriented. There are many different kinds of music to listen to and to perform. At the same time, not all music is permissible if a Christian is to maintain holiness. Once again, this is where we must rely on personal convictions and on the convicting power of the Holy Ghost. We are temples of the Holy Ghost, and we do not want to fill our ears with garbage.

Basically, a song can be unholy because of the lyrics or because of the music itself. Any type of song can be unholy if the words are evil. This is a problem with all types of modern music. Often the music of pop and easy listening is beautiful, but the words are very suggestive. Much of country and western music dwells heavily on unwholesome themes such as adultery, fornication, divorce, and drinking. Rock music is

noted for its not so subtle glorification of illicit sex, drugs, rebellion, mysticism, and even Satanism. Even if you enjoy some of these musical styles, you cannot remain holy if you continually listen to songs which have ungodly lyrics. I have seen young people who enjoyed a tune so much that they would listen to or even sing a song that was obviously about fornication, adultery, or drug use. They were actually glorifying and worshipping those things even though they did not really intend to do so. The words will have an effect, even if only subconsciously. How many times have you had a song repeated over and over in your mind and you could not seem to forget it? How wonderful a blessing you can receive if it is a song of praise, but how dangerous it can be if the song is evil! The message is being engrained in your mind and soul, to surface in times of weakness and temptation. If you are listening to the radio and a song comes on that glorifies sin, the safe and holy thing to do is to turn it off.

Some music can inspire evil, not just by words but by the music itself. Such is the case with hard rock. Rock and disco music cause physiological changes in the human body, affecting the pituitary and sex glands. The heavy beat stirs up the emotions, especially the sex drive. The effect of hard rock is to increase tension, stress, disorientation, and loss of self-control. For proof of this, just observe the actions of an audience at a rock concert, the motions of dancers to rock or disco music, and the frenzied adulation of young rock fans. Compare the rock music beat to the beat used by voodoo practitioners, Satan worshippers, and idol worshippers in remote parts of

the world. There is a strong resemblance, which is not surprising since all are used by Satan. If this is so, how can we use hard rock and disco music to worship God? Far more often than not, it will excite the listeners physically and psychologically, but not in a godly way.

In connection with this subject, an excellent book to read is *The Day Music Died*, by Bob Larson, a former professional rock musician. In the book, the author discusses the various physical, mental, and spiritual effects of rock music, as well as the influence of the lyrics and of the performers' lifestyles. He describes some of the major rock groups, and also has a chapter on dancing.

We have seen that music can be used both for worship and for personal enjoyment. In church services, we must be careful to emphasize its role as worship instead of entertainment. In our personal lives, we must guard against the filth of the world that can enter through certain kinds of music.

XV
SOME AREAS OF WORLDLINESS TODAY

"Love not, the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

"Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22).

Guidelines. In the preceding chapters, we have tried to investigate and discuss the Bible's teachings concerning major aspects of holiness. In this chapter we want to consider what holiness means in addition to these particular subjects. We want to find some basic guidelines and then apply them to modern day situations that did not confront Christians in Bible days. There are a number of activities that fundamental and conservative Christians have classified as worldly. We want to take a close look at these beliefs with a view toward provoking thought and discussion. Are they merely traditions or are there important principles of holiness involved?

For some of the specific issues discussed in this chapter, there are no scriptures that speak directly to the point in question. In these cases we must follow basic principles of holiness as given by the Bible, and we must be led by the Spirit in us. We must decide as a fellowship, as pastors, and as individuals where to take a stand and where to draw a line.

We have already mentioned in Chapter I the urgent need for personal convictions. As taught in I Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:23-33; and Romans 14:1-23, we have Christian liberty but also Christian responsibility. These scriptures give instructions on how to deal with doubtful things that are not otherwise covered in the Word of God. First, we must follow the convictions that God gives us personally. At the same time, we should not do anything that might cause someone else to misunderstand, to stumble, or to fall. This means we should not judge one another, or belittle the convictions of others, or take our Christian liberty too far. From the discussion of eating food offered to idols (see Chapter VIII), we discover that there are some things which are harmless in themselves but are nevertheless unwise because of their effect or impression on a weaker brother or an unbeliever. Appearances and associations are important both in the sight of man and of God.

There are many things that God's Word clearly teaches against and designates as sin. Of course, there are also many activities in which Christians can and do participate. The problem comes in borderline areas. Our guiding philosophy in these areas will be "When in doubt, don't do it." "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). The question we want to ask is,

"What would Jesus do in this case?" "What would we do if Jesus was physically accompanying us or visiting us?" Our objective is not to see how close we can get to the world and still be saved, or how many worldly things we can do and still not be considered a backslider. Rather, we want to be sure that we are doing God's will at all times and that we are always identified with God in the eyes of others. Where there is temptation and a possibility of sin, "it is better to be safe than sorry." Besides, as we draw closer to God in prayer, dedication, and holy living, we will not want to do anything that might identify us with the world or that would be unpleasant to Him.

In order to get to specifics, we must find out what it means to be worldly or to love the world. When the Bible says, "Love not the world," it is speaking of the world system—the attitudes, desires, loves, cares, and priorities of sinful, unregenerated man. It is difficult to give a more precise definition, but all those who have the Spirit in their lives should be able to recognize the feeling of worldliness in many things. We will try to examine this concept in terms of worldly amusements, worldly atmosphere, and worldly appearance.

Amusement. God is not against amusement in itself. There is nothing wrong with most sports and games in themselves. There is nothing wrong with pleasure, enjoyment, laughter and having fun. We do not advocate a concept often found in medieval Christianity and in Puritanism that something is automatically wrong because it gives pleasure or because it is fun. God created our minds and bodies with the

capacity to have pleasure, both alone and with each other. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, which connotes an exuberant, zestful, enjoyable life.

On the other hand, mankind has often placed too much emphasis on pleasure to the exclusion of God. Anything that comes between you and God is wrong. Anything that interferes with regular church attendance, prayer, and Bible reading is not the will of God. The Bible warns us that especially in the last days people would be so caught up in pleasure that they would ignore and neglect God. As in Noah's day, people will be eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and will be unprepared when the Lord comes (Matthew 24:37-39). Notice that these activities are good in themselves but not when done to the exclusion of God, and not when perverted by the world. A key sign of the endtimes is that "men shall be lovers of their own selves" and "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:2, 4). From these scriptures we know that there are some worldly pleasures which are off limits to Christians, and that at a certain point too much attention to pleasure is wrong. (See also Titus 3:3; Hebrews 11:25.)

Atmosphere. There are some activities which can be wholesome but which are often corrupted by the world. A spirit of lust, or pleasure madness, or mob violence has infiltrated them to such a degree that Spirit-filled Christians feel uncomfortable participating in them. This is true of many parties, games, spectator sports, and shows of various kinds. Here are some examples of worldly atmospheres: shows, plays,

and parties that are filled with lewd insinuations and sexually provocative incidents; concerts, parties, or spectator events filled with drug use, drinking, violence, obscenity, argument, and mob spirit; and game rooms filled with smoking, irreputable characters, and gambling. Sometimes the world takes things which can be genuinely enjoyable and corrupts them in these ways. Attendance one time may not lead to a commission of sin, but the atmosphere is simply not conducive to Christian living. A Christian, if he lets his conscience guide him, will feel out of place. If he continues to participate he eventually will be robbed of all spirituality and spiritual sensitivity. At that point, he will not be able to discern holy from unholy, and right from wrong in this area.

Appearances. There are some situations where we feel that neither the amusement itself nor the atmosphere is excessively worldly, but participation may still appear worldly in the eyes of others. Many people know what fundamentalists and Pentecostals stand for, and many people observe Christians closely. They are trying to see if you really can live a Christian life. Often, they are under conviction or condemnation, and will latch on to any small fault on your part to justify their own sin. So we must not do anything that might be a stumbling block to others or might damage our own testimony. For example, if you buy cigarettes for the boss what will a casual observer think? If an acquaintance sees you playing cards will he associate that with gambling? This is an area where each person must have a sensitive conscience. We cannot rely on rules, but each individual must be

motivated by a genuine love for God and a love for sinners.

Now let us deal with some particular situations and practices which concern modern Christians.

Gambling. The Christian world as a whole has traditionally condemned gambling. Spirit-filled believers have consistently felt that it is contrary to Christian principles. No scripture speaks directly on the subject, but gambling is a combination of worldly amusement, atmosphere, and appearance. It is and always has been closely allied with cheating, violence, and organized crime. It has caused much financial ruin and much suffering on the part of innocent families. It can be addictive as demonstrated by the existence of Gamblers Anonymous. (This is an organization of compulsive gamblers who seek to kick their habit by methods similar to those used by Alcoholics Anonymous.) The Bible teaches us not to fall under the control of something like this (Romans 6:16). It also teaches us not to incur debts that we cannot or will not repay (Romans 13:8), and stresses the necessity of providing for our own families (I Timothy 5:8). To avoid the danger of violating these scriptures and to avoid the appearance of evil, Christians have avoided gambling. To be consistent, if we have a conviction against gambling, this should include all forms of betting and lotteries, if only to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Dancing. There is no doubt that the primary motivation behind social dancing is sexual. The close physical contact of ballroom dancing is designed to sexually arouse the dancers. Anyone who has seen people dancing to rock or disco music will realize that

the bodily gyrations cause sexual excitement and arousal. The motions of the dancers are determined, even if subconsciously, by sexuality. Dancing arouses lusts between unmarried people, and often leads to temptation and sin. Also, modern dancing is often an expression of egotism and exhibitionism, and as such is completely out of tune with the Spirit of God. For a detailed discussion of the physical, psychological and spiritual effects of dancing see "Dangers of the Dance" from *The Day Music Died* by Bob Larson, a former professional rock musician.

Music. The important subject of worldly music is treated in Chapter XIV.

Sports. There is nothing wrong with sports in themselves. They can be wholesome activities that promote physical health, fellowship, enjoyment, and character development. When played in a casual, friendly, Christian atmosphere, sports such as football, basketball, softball, and soccer are fine. However, there are several problems associated with playing or attending high school, college, and professional games. These often demand such time and dedication that the players' relationship with God suffers. It may interfere with church attendance, prayer, and fellowship with God's people. Often it means close fellowship with sinners whose lifestyle and idea of a good time are opposed to Christian principles. The participant may have to wear clothing which is contrary to Biblical teaching. (See Chapter VI.) Experience has shown that, for these reasons, a large number of Christians who participate seriously in such sports eventually compromise

their beliefs and even lose out with God altogether.

Another major problem affecting both spectator and player is the spirit, the attitude and the atmosphere of the games. In the larger games, there is a spirit of mob violence. The spectators start fights, throw objects, curse, bet, and get drunk. The players themselves are conditioned to hate their opponents. They are often trained to maim and injure deliberately. Sometimes the strategy of a game is built around injuring an opposing player. The crowds often come specifically to see blood, injury and accidents. Boxing, ice hockey, and automobile racing are good examples of sports where this is particularly true. The crowds often urge the players on to more violence, much as they did in the days of the Roman gladiators. In many cases, crowds get out of control and begin to riot. On an international level, soccer games are notorious for resulting in riots. Many famous coaches and players are noted for their poor sportsmanship and quick, uncontrolled tempers. Fights and shouting matches are started all the time by players, coaches, and spectators. All these attitudes are incompatible with Christianity, and Christians feel uncomfortable in such an atmosphere.

Even the world has noticed these problems. Here are some facts taken from a 1977 *Reader's Digest* article, "Savagery on the Playing Fields," which was condensed from *The Physician and Sportsmanship*, May 1977:

1. There is increased aggression and hostility in the stands, which authorities believe is a result of increased violence on the field.

2. Serious injuries jumped 25 percent in the National Football League in 1974.
3. A football player (high school, college, or professional) is 200 times more likely to be injured than a coal miner in the U.S.
4. Pittsburgh Steeler star Lynn Swann says, "Extra curricular violence is increasing and nothing is being done about it."
5. Hockey star Bobby Hull refused to play for a time because of his concern over the effect of hockey violence on children, including his own two sons.
6. Physicians are concerned over the influence on children of televised professional games because of the violence.

In 1978, *Sports Illustrated* ran a series of articles called "Brutality" that said much the same thing. The August, 1978 article explained how many players took or were given drugs to make them more aggressive and less sensitive to pain. This has caused an increase in violence, in injuries, and in gate receipts.

Our conclusion is that the atmosphere of most organized competitive sports, especially in large high schools, in colleges, and in the pros, is not conducive to Christian living. It is difficult to participate or even to be a spectator and still maintain spirituality. We recognize, however, that the sports themselves are fine, but sinful man has polluted them. If sports can be played in a Christian atmosphere then there is nothing wrong with doing so. Basically this means crowds and tempers are under control, the opponents are friendly, and good sportsmanship is displayed by all. Also, let us avoid becoming too preoccupied and

interested in worldly sports, so that we are not caught up in their spirit.

Other games. Christians have taken a stand on several other types of games. Sometimes this has been because of a worldly atmosphere and sometimes because of evil associations or connotations. Usually there is nothing wrong with the games if they can be played in a wholesome setting and if they can be divorced from the sinful associations they have in people's minds. As a personal example, we have avoided playing cards and shooting dice because of the close association with gambling. Yet we have used dice in a game such as Monopoly where there seems to be no mistaking that the use is innocent. Yet, even then we have sometimes used a number spinner instead of dice if we thought someone would be offended or would misunderstand.

In the final analysis, we want a Christian atmosphere in which to amuse ourselves, or at least a family atmosphere where sin is not blatantly advertised. We must be careful not to bring a reproach on ourselves or our church, or create a stumbling block for others by participating in things which have an appearance of evil. The best thing to do is to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit as it impresses your conscience and to adhere to the teachings of Spirit-filled, God-called pastors.

Some may not understand the necessity of standards set by their pastor which other groups seemingly do not have. Remember, there are different levels of perfection. God knows what He is doing, and He may guide one pastor to set a certain standard because

that church has a particular need, or because it has a particular type of environment, or because it has a special relationship with God and a special task to accomplish in His plans. We are not to compare among ourselves, but we must compare ourselves to the Word of God.

Witchcraft. This is a very deadly practice that has been gaining power in the world and has crept even into Christian circles. All forms of witchcraft are condemned in strong terms by the Bible. The law sentenced witches to death (Exodus 22:18). Deuteronomy 18:9-12 lists the following types of people who are abominations in the sight of God:

1. Those who practice human sacrifice
2. Those who use divination—mystical insight or fortune telling
3. Observes of times—those who are superstitious, who observe lucky and unlucky days, signs, and practices
4. Enchanters—those who practice magic
5. Witches—those who practice various types of magic in league with evil spirits
6. Charmers—those who cast or attempt to cast spells
7. Consulters with familiar spirits—those who communicate or attempt to communicate with evil spirits (demons)
8. Wizards—male witches and
9. Necromancers—those who attempt to communicate with the dead.

All abominable, sorcerers and idolaters will have their part in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Witchcraft is one of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

Paul recognized that all such things were of the devil. He discerned that a certain girl who was a soothsayer was possessed by "a spirit of divination." He took authority over the spirit and cast it out in the name of Jesus (Acts 16:16-18). He also organized a public burning in Ephesus in which occult books worth 50,000 pieces of silver were destroyed (Acts 19:18-20).

In modern times, many people have assumed that the practice of witchcraft would diminish, but in fact the opposite is true. There has been a resurgence of all forms of witchcraft in America and around the world. Look at the rise of Satanism, eastern religion, paganism, and mysticism. Look at the dramatic increase in fortune tellers, occult books, horoscopes, and astrological signs. All of this is nothing less than a revival of witchcraft inspired by satanic forces.

This is most definitely true of astrology. The Bible tells us that astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators cannot help us but will themselves burn in fire (Isaiah 47:12-15). Jeremiah 10:2 tells us not to be dismayed at the signs of heaven as the heathen are. Both scriptures are referring to the use of horoscopes and zodiac signs for advice or to predict the future. Astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers failed to reveal God's will to Nebuchadnezzar and to Belshazzar. It took a man of God to give them the true message of God (Daniel 2:27; 5:15).

We cannot overemphasize how much God hates all of these practices. They are an abomination to Him. The practitioner is actually worshipping Satan. As a result, Christians cannot participate in anything

associated with witchcraft. It is against the will of God to believe in astrology, to consult a horoscope, or to visit a fortune teller or palm reader. The Christian should not use tarot cards, ouija boards, zodiac signs or the like, even in games or for fun. These all represent Satanism. They open up the mind to the devil and allow him to operate more freely. For the same reason Christians should not participate in a seance, even in jest. What actually happens in a "successful" seance is that an evil spirit is contacted.

Those who participate in one of the oriental martial arts should be careful since these sports are often associated with mysticism, eastern philosophy, and spirit worship. Make sure you do not end up participating in that aspect of it. Yoga and transcendental meditation can be dangerous spiritually. They are based on Hinduism and Buddhism, and can open the mind up to the world of evil spirits. Many of the nonsense words used in such disciplines are actually prayers to heathen gods (demons).

In general, be careful about opening your mind up to the spirit world. There are evil spirits that will take advantage of you and will influence you. Many people open themselves to them through rock music, drugs, and meditation. It is even dangerous to pray or speak in tongues without concentrating on God and without maintaining some awareness and control. Even the spirit of prophecy is and should be under the control of the prophet (I Corinthians 14:32).

Superstition is a related evil that has no place in the mind of a Christian. There are no lucky or unlucky days, numbers, or rituals. A Christian has no

business regarding omens or wearing lucky charms. The Bible tells us that God is in control of all events, that He will protect His own, and that He will work all things together for our good. (See Ephesians 1:11; Psalm 91:9-12; Romans 8:28.) Satan could not touch Job's possessions or his health until God lifted the hedge around Job. Even then, Satan did not have the power to take Job's life (Job 1:9-12). Curses, charms, unlucky portents, or deaths of people in certain places have no power over God, His church, or His children.

Satan's power. We do recognize that Satan has power. Some witches, magicians, and fortune tellers actually do wonders by his power. The magicians of Egypt did miracles, but Moses could overpower them. There came a point where they were rendered powerless in the face of God's power (Exodus 7:10-12, 22; 8:7; 18-19). Jesus predicted that false prophets would come with great signs and wonders (Matthew 24:24). The antichrist will have power and signs and lying wonders after the working of Satan (II Thessalonians 2:9). The false prophet of the antichrist's system will call fire from heaven and will cause an image of the beast to speak (Revelation 13:11-15). Spirits of devils will work miracles (Revelation 16:13-14). All of this should not surprise us. Under the law the test of a false prophet was not just whether or not he could perform a miracle but whether or not he worshipped the Lord. If he had a dream, sign, or wonder, but turned the people away from God then he was to be killed (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). We conclude that people can do miracles by the power of the devil. We know, however, that God's power is greater and that Satan

can have no power over a Spirit-filled child of God who is doing His will (John 10:29; James 4:7; I John 4:4). Of course, the devil cannot be cast out by holy water, signs, crosses, incantations, or rituals, but only by the name of Jesus called in faith (Mark 16:17; Acts 19:13-17).

We should note that many fortune tellers, magicians, mediums, and the like are merely tricksters and imposters. They can still fit into the devil's scheme by hoodwinking the credulous and diverting worship from God.

In our discussion of witchcraft, we are not referring to innocent tricks based on sleight of hand, optical illusions, mathematical facts, or secret communication between participants. The word "magic" as used in the Bible refers to real or attempted association with satanic power. We are not talking about parlor games and stage tricks unless they are somehow associated with Satanism, or unless the performer is seriously holding himself out as a miracle worker with supernatural power.

Summary. In sum, let us be careful not to let the powerful spirit of witchcraft creep in on us. Be on guard against all forms of superstition and divination. In particular, beware of astrology which is insinuating its seemingly harmless but demon-inspired practices in our lives. Also, remember that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (I Samuel 15:23). Let us be resolved to avoid all forms of witchcraft, whether by outward appearance, by a superstitious mind, by heathen practices, or by a rebellious spirit.

This chapter has covered a wide range of topics that relate to everyday life. The important point is not

that we need to make a list of do's and don'ts, but that we need to scrutinize every area of our lives. We should be on guard against the spirit of worldliness in whatever guise it may appear. We are well equipped to overcome this spirit and to avoid all appearance of evil. The Holy Spirit, the Bible, the ministry, and a tender conscience will work together to guide us in the paths of righteousness if we will yield our lives to their influence, teaching, and leadership.

XVI
PRACTICAL HINTS FOR HOLY LIVING

"Perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1).

This book has covered a wide range of topics and issues that relate to everyday Christian living. Our purpose has not been to establish rules and regulations, but to sincerely discover what the will of God is for our lives. We have tried to give scriptural guidance that would be of practical use in facing the situations of modern life. We trust that we have raised questions, provoked thought, inspired studies of scripture, and provided at least some answers. We hope that you will study the Bible and examine your convictions to find out why you believe what you believe. We also hope that you will inquire of God and develop real personal convictions of your own in each of the areas we have discussed. If you have not received the Holy Spirit baptism of Acts 2, we strongly encourage you to do so; for this is what will lead, guide,

illuminate the scriptures, and give you the power to live a holy, overcoming life. We are changed into the image of Christ by the Spirit (II Corinthians 3:18). Without the Spirit we simply do not have the power to overcome sin and do God's will. If you are a new convert, do not be worried if you do not understand everything about holiness. Just be willing to grow and learn. Sincerely seek the will of God. Follow the leading of the Spirit, listen to your conscience, and follow your convictions as God develops them in you.

There may be some readers who disagree with us on some points. Maybe you have a better understanding in some areas than we do. We only ask that you sincerely seek the mind of God. Do not merely adopt the teaching of others (including our own), but develop your own beliefs through prayer, thought, and study. Do not merely rely on what others say or do not say. Do not be afraid to ask God to lead you further into His truth, and do not be afraid to change your views if God is leading you. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (II Corinthians 13:5). Do not be afraid of what God's will may mean for you: we will always profit by drawing closer to God and doing His perfect will. We will never lose by living holy.

Of course, holiness does not come simply by mental knowledge. It must emanate from within, which is why the Holy Spirit is essential for Christian living. Holiness **must** be within you, but if it **is** within you, it will cause changes on the outside. Holiness will change your attitudes, your talk, your appearance, and your actions. If it does not, something is wrong.

"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). When we are born again, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 15:17). The things we once loved we hate; and the things we once hated we now love.

General suggestions. Holiness can only be maintained by letting the Holy Spirit have control of all areas of life. Regular prayer, Bible study, and church attendance are all necessary. In reading the Bible, Psalms is a good book to read for praise and worship, Proverbs is full of wisdom and practical advice, and the New Testament epistles give much practical guidance on Christian living. For certain important decisions, difficult trials, or strong temptations, both prayer and fasting are beneficial. We do well to seek continually the will of God, by communicating directly with Him and by listening to the leaders He has placed in the church. It is important to follow the teachings and advice of your pastor. If you have certain convictions that he does not emphasize, follow those convictions anyway because God has given them to you. If he teaches certain things that you do not have strong convictions on, follow his teaching anyway for the sake of unity and discipline, and also out of a realization that he is probably closer to God's will in this matter than you are.

In addition to prayer, Bible study, church attendance, obedience to godly leadership, fasting, and development of personal convictions, there are some attitudes and concepts that will help you in living for God. We have compiled a few hints on holy living which are of practical benefit and which are important for Christians

to keep in mind. These guidelines will help us to perfect holiness in our lives.

Twenty practical guidelines.

1. Shun the appearance of evil. Even though something may not be evil in itself, if it can be misunderstood, avoid it (I Thessalonians 5:22).

2. When in doubt about something, don't do it. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). (See also James 4:17.)

3. Mob demonstrations and unruly manners are not Christian (Romans 13:13). If we do not agree with something, we must express our opposition in an orderly, controlled, Christian way.

4. "If any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). It may be beneath your dignity to take a certain job, but if you need a job and this is the only one available to support you and your family honestly, then take it and work. It may be against custom for a minister to grow a garden, do manual labor, or do something that would help financially as he does God's work, but Paul made tents to support himself and his helpers when they ran out of money. Of course, it is God's will for the minister to devote as much time as possible to the ministry, and if the church can support him he should not work. However, no scripture teaches that it is wrong for a minister to work with his hands. It **is** wrong if a Christian does not try to provide the necessities for his family.

5. Be an example to the believer first (I Timothy 4:12). The believer knows what God expects of us—

how we should act, dress, and talk. It is always easier to be an example to unbelievers because they usually do not know what God wants and expects. Become an example to believers in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity. For example, do not scream at others, revile, walk out of a meeting in anger, or show a bad attitude—especially when believers are involved.

6. In these last days people do not like a doctrinal preacher (II Timothy 4:2-4). They want love and blessings, but all too often they do not want to hear the truth about, sin, salvation, and holiness. They will "not endure sound doctrine" but will turn from the truth, and will enjoy "fables" more than the written and preached Word of God. They will have "itching ears" and will go to preachers who will tickle their ears and will allow them to satisfy their own lusts. Ministers, do not give in to this spirit. Pastors, do not be men-pleasers, but God-pleasers. Saints, do not allow yourselves to be caught up in this last day attitude. It will rob you of your desire for holiness and your sensitivity to the voice of God.

7. When a person gossips about someone else, stop them. Tell them, "That is my brother you are talking about. That is a member of our family—the family of God." We are members of one body. When one member is hurt, we are all hurt. How can we slander or gossip about one another? Instead of gossiping, the Bible tells us to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtue, and of praise (Philippians 4:8).

8. If someone has something against you, go to them to straighten it out. If a gossiper tells you that

someone does not like you or has something against you, go directly to that person and clear it up. Before you present yourself to God, you need to find this person and talk to him. This is the Bible way (Matthew 5:23-24). The carnal way is to retaliate—to give him evil for evil.

9. Let us never be guilty of betraying or discouraging our brothers in the Lord. Joseph was betrayed by his own brothers. Moses was discouraged by fellow Israelites. Jesus died in the house of His friends; betrayed, denied, and forsaken by those closest to Him. Most of us are not discouraged because of persecution from the world, but we are often discouraged by the thoughtlessness of a "brother." It is true that if a person is living in sin that the church leadership needs to rebuke him. All too often, however, there are those in the church who are merely fault finders. This type of person finds fault with everything. Usually he is not doing anything himself and he feels guilty or jealous. He thinks no one can do it as well as he can. Do not discourage saints by constant fault finding, a superior attitude, or a reluctance to work. On the contrary, encourage them with the words, "Jesus is coming soon" (I Thessalonians 4:18).

10. Be desirous of more spiritual things. If you are working for God, be content in the physical state in which you find yourself. Do not be very concerned with possessions, styles, and luxuries of the world. "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11).

11. "Let no man deceive you with vain words" (Ephesians 5:6). "Beware lest any man spoil you

through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). Be careful of the words you listen to and heed. For this reason, be careful about going to different churches, prayer meetings, and revivals. Some people go to so many different kinds of churches and revival meetings that they do not know what to believe. Also, learn and know your Bible. Many times people are deceived by a preacher who preaches his own thoughts or teaches men's tradition and not the Bible. New converts or people who do not really know the Bible are especially vulnerable. Do not be deceived.

12. Do not say, "I wish I lived in Jesus' day," or "I wish I lived in Paul's day." What makes you think you would have accepted Jesus then, or listened to Paul then? The vast majority rejected Jesus. The multitudes did not love Him, but followed Him for the miracles and blessings. Paul had problems in almost every church he founded. They said that he broke his promises, that he was weak in body but tried to terrify them with letters, and that his speech was contemptible. They doubted his apostolic authority and even questioned his handling of finances. Does this sound familiar?

People always think the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. Actually this is the greatest day of all time in which to live. More people have the Holy Ghost now than at any other time in history. God is sending revival to everyone who will believe. If you will not live for God now, you would not though Jesus Himself were here to preach to you. If

you criticize and rebel against church authority now, you would have done the same if Paul had been your pastor. If you reject God's Word and ministry for your day, you will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead (Luke 16:29-31).

13. "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Proverbs 25:19). Just when you need it most, it will give way. It will cause severe pain when you least expect it. So in time of trouble, why not go to the Lord? Sometimes even your best friend (you think) will let you down. Sometimes the person you have confided in will tell someone else, and your personal business will be broadcasted throughout the church, school, or organization. Rather than discussing your problems with everyone, take them to the Lord.

14. Remember a key concept in holiness: "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Proverbs 25:28). In ancient times, a city without walls was a city without protection. Likewise, a man without temperance and self-control is a man that has no protection for his spirit. Never let your spirit get out of control. We have the power even to cast down imaginations and to control every thought (II Corinthians 10:5). If you excuse yourself by saying, "That is my personality," then what you are really saying is "I do not have the personality of Christ." This means your wall of protection has fallen.

15. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Proverbs 22:1). Your reputation is important to you personally, but it is also important because you

are a part of the family of God. You have received the family name of Jesus, and everything you do reflects on that name. If you are a real Christian, you will not want people to say of you: "Oh, he talks so much about others," "He exaggerates," or "You know you really cannot believe everything he says." It is even worse if others think you are a hypocrite. This can be a serious stumbling block to both believers and unbelievers. When people hear your name what do they think about? Does your name evoke words like rebellion, pride, worldliness, troublemaker, gossiper, or talebearer; or do they associate your name with sincerity, hard working, honesty, spirituality, and truthfulness. A good name is important. Let us keep our personal names and the name of the Lord above reproach.

16. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:5-6). Humility is something that we must work towards, something that we must acquire by effort. Humility will not push and promote self. It is not proud. It will not act, look, or feel superior to others, especially sinners. It will not bring someone else down in order to go higher up. It will not criticize others in order to get their jobs or positions. If God has given you a gift, use it and give God time to work. We are in a race, but in our race everyone who makes it to the finish line will receive a prize from God. It is not necessary to trip up someone else or pull others back in order to win. We can all be winners.

17. In Proverbs 6:16-19, God took the time to list

seven things that He especially hates. We should take the time to ponder and even memorize them. "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." These have been discussed in previous chapters but they are worth this reminder. If you are guilty of one of these seven, you are in serious trouble with God. The abominable will not go to heaven (Revelation 21:8, 27).

18. Have your own convictions. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). We do not do something just because a man teaches it or because an organization teaches it. Have a teachable, leadable spirit and accept by faith the Word of God and the voice of experience. However, you must also read the Bible and learn these things for yourself. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

Saints, do not try to force holiness on others, except by being living examples. Pastors, use wisdom with your people. Visitors and those who do not have the Holy Ghost are not able to understand many things, and if they do understand some things, they do not have the power to live holy. Pastors, be careful with new converts. Do not force them to grow faster than they are able. Lead them, but make certain they understand each step of the way. Give them time to develop personal convictions and understanding of holiness principles. Do not try to legislate holi-

ness unto them, but preach and teach the Word with wisdom and in a spiritual atmosphere so that God can have an opportunity to change them. In our day, many people that come to God are so deep in sin that it takes time and patience to bring them to Christian maturity. Your goal should be to help them understand holiness principles so that they will learn to think, read the Bible, pray, and develop their own convictions. Ultimately, if their hearts are not changed by the Spirit of God and if they do not understand the reasons for certain teachings, they will not follow them. It is better to give them teaching and time to develop personal beliefs than to confront them immediately with convictions that we have received through maturity.

19. Always remember, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil" (Proverbs 8:13). There is no neutral way with God. Either you are for Him or against Him. If you hate evil then you will not perform that which is evil. Love for God and hatred of evil is the most powerful defense against Satan. All his devices are useless if we hate evil. Evil talk, actions, and appearances will all vanish when we hate evil itself.

20. Finally, ask yourself what it means to be a Christian. Literally, a Christian is someone who is Christ-like. Holiness is no more and no less than imitating Jesus Christ. We must let His personality replace our personalities and His mind replace our minds (I Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5). In every uncertain situation, ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?" Do not ask if there is a rule or regulation against something, but ask, "Would Jesus do this?

Would He feel comfortable with this? Would He take pleasure in this? If He were here [He is!] would He like this?"

The ultimate goal of holiness is to be truly Christ-like. We can and must be holy because God is holy (I Peter 1:16). We can achieve holiness if we will let "Christ be formed" in us (Galatians 4:19). "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). By "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," we can "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12) and grow into "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

Accept the challenge to seek and perfect holiness. Be a Christian—be like Christ.

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