

**Christian Ethics, Part 1: Love, Sex, and Marriage**

Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-4

Code: 1639

Tonight we come in our study to the 13th chapter of Hebrews, and I'd like to ask you to turn to that in your Bible. I don't know how many messages it's going to take to get through the 13th chapter because there's so much practical information here, and I've entitled the entire chapter "Christian Ethics." You received a portion of the chapter by an outline; that will just take us through a beginning, and when the outline is completed the chapter will be completed. There are so many practical things in this chapter for us to take a look at that it's very difficult to go very rapidly, and so we're going to take the time to be careful to give you information I believe the Lord would have us know regarding each of these things. But as we come to the 13th chapter of Hebrews the title is "Christian Ethics," or "The Behavior of the Believer." What does God expect out of us? What are the practical guidelines for the life of a Christian, and covers many areas.

Peter said "For so is the will of God that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Peter said you need to live so that no one can cast any doubt on Christianity by the kind of life that you're living. Christians are to so live that they shut the mouths of the critics of Christianity. When Pliny the governor of Bithinia examined the Christians and reported back to Trajan, the emperor, he had to admit, although he was looking for a charge on which to condemn them, that "they bound themselves by an oath not to any criminal end, but to avoid theft or robbery or adultery never to break their word, or repudiate a deposit when called on to refund it." He said, characterizing the Christians, they do not commit crimes and they pay their debts.

In many cases in the early church, the Christians were presented, presented themselves to the world as a rebuke, and so the world was in a hurry to find something for which to blame them, but very often was unable to do so. Examining the case very closely, they often came up empty.

Paul had this in mind, I think, in the words he spoke to Titus, in chapter 2, verse 7 "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity (which is dignity) sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." In other words, so live that there aren't any valid criticisms. Over in verse 14 of chapter 3, he says, "And let ours also learn to maintain good works, for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." If you know anything about fruit in the New Testament, fruit includes the winning of people to Christ. And part of that is living an exemplary life. If we are to be fruitful, we are to maintain good works. This results in the salvation of some.

In Hebrews chapter 13 we find that it is important for us to do good works, not only because some people get saved, but because God gets glorified. In verse 21, it talks about God making us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, so let it be. So the glory of God is another reason that the believer is to live a pure life. A life that is without rebuke. We are to so live that when the world slanders us, the only valid slander they can make is when they slander us for doing good. If we are to be criticized for something, let us be criticized for our well-doing, not for our evil.

Now if we are to live a pure life, and if we are to be criticized for good, then we ought to know what to avoid, and we ought to know what's good. And so in Hebrews 13, there is a very careful statement regarding the practical ethics of the Christian life that results in a portrayal of Christianity to the world that is without rebuke. And this is important as we said, for it wins people to Christ, and it gives glory to God. He gives the standards of Christianity here in a very condensed sense, and we'll try to expand them a little bit.

And we can ask ourselves some very pertinent questions as we approach the chapter, such as what are Christian standards for living? Or what are the principles of life that will make my life a positive testimony? Or how am I to act in the face of a Christless world, to bring them to Christ? Or what do I do to really bring glory to God?? All of that is wrapped up in this chapter.

The philosopher, Bertrand Russell, whom I read from time to time just to get inspired a little bit in defending the faith, has written a very famous essay, which has become the title of a composite book of his essays, and the title of the essay is "Why I am Not a Christian." In that essay, and the subsequent essays in that edition, he states the reasons that he doesn't believe in God, the reasons that he doesn't believe in Christ and the reasons that he doesn't believe in the Bible. First of all, he gives some philosophical rationalization, and all of it is obviously colored by an apparent preoccupation with sex. It sort of exudes from everything he says, but the big monster that keeps rearing its ugly head in all of Russell's arguments is the issue of how Christians live. And his constant condemnation of Christianity keeps boiling down to certain Christians that he has seen do certain things that disqualified Christianity in his mind. Sample statements I give you. He says "I think there are many good points upon which I agree with Christ a great deal more than many professing Christians. I do not know that I can go all the way with Him, but I could go with him much farther than most professing Christians can. I do not profess to live up to them (that is, Christ's standards) myself, but then after all, it is not quite the same thing as for a Christian, is it?" He went on to say this, "There is the idea that we should all be wicked, if we did not hold to the Christian religion. It seems to me that the people who have held to it have been, for the most part extremely wicked. The Spaniards, for example, in Mexico and Peru, used to baptize infants of the Indians, and immediately dash their brains out by this means securing for them a place in heaven." And he goes on from there. But he continually goes back to the fact that he is not a Christian because of what Christians do.

Now, while it is very true that people like Bertrand Russell, and a lot of others of the same persuasion, see exactly what they want to see in people that they look at, because they choose very carefully the worst there are, to rationalize their own preconceived ideas, and though they have a very sinful and very sordid perspective on everything, that in no way lessens the Christians' responsibility. In fact, it heightens it, if anything, because if there are invalid judgments, then we better make sure that they remain invalid, right? And we don't want to say, well, they think that anyway so we'll live like we want, or else they say we will accredit their own philosophies. (The above sentence I am unsure of?) Sure they always pick out the worst, but that behooves us to be nothing but the best.

Russell summed up his view of really nice people by these words. "In a word, really nice people are those who have nasty minds." That'll give you a little idea of his preoccupations. The problem was his, I grant you that. The guy was sick in terms of lust, and sin. It's interesting that after 96 years as a philosopher, he closed his life by saying this "Philosophy has proved a washout to me." That's a 96-year washout. That's a long time to be running along the wrong road. But believe me, he continually went back to the criticism of Christianity on the basis of personal lives of individuals and what was done in the name of Christianity.

Friends, we have a very serious responsibility in the fact of the world. We have a continuing, permanent obligation and privilege to live to the glory of God and to shut the mouths of, the critics, and if anybody's going to criticize Christianity, let them criticize Christianity unjustly, not justly. I'll tell you, from my own perspective, this is a real problem. I may have told you about the guy I met in jail once, I was visiting, let's get that straight. And he came up and said, "Man, that was a terrific sermon, I really enjoyed it, it was great." Oh, he said, "Praise the Lord." He had on a striped suit and a number, and I said "You a Christians?" And he said "Yes, I'm a Christian" and I said "What are you doing here? Did you get persecuted for your faith?" He said, "No, it's a long story." I said, "I got time, go ahead. I know you've got time." He said, "Well, I had 20 or 30 tickets, etc., and I never paid them, etc." And he went on, and when he got all done, I said, "Do me a favor. Don't tell anybody you're a Christian. Keep your mouth shut, will you, because you're just messing up the testimony for the rest of us." And he looked a little bit shocked, and rightly he should have. I think he got the point, and that's the point that we need to make here as we look at this chapter to begin with. If you're going to live like a Christian, tell people you are one, if you're not, don't.

"The world" said Alexander McClaren, "takes its notion of God most of all from those who say they belong to God's family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us, they only hear about Jesus Christ." How do you usually learn about Mom and Dad? Watching junior! People make their evaluations about God on the basis of you and me, and of Christ. Jesus says the same thing in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, who is in heaven." A good son brings honor to his father. That's true spiritually also. And we should so live, that when men see us, they give glory to

God. Not only do they not criticize, but they wind up glorifying God because of our lives. And believe me I'm not talking about theatrical goodness. I'm not talking about that kind of artificial facade.

There was a conference at which D. L. Moody was present, and I just wish that I had the nerve of some of these old saints. But anyway, he was at this conference, and there some of these zealous young people there who took the Christian life very seriously. And they decided to have an all night prayer meeting, and they did, they prayed all night. And as they were leaving in the morning, they met Mr. Moody on the way out, and he asked them what they'd been doing. And one young man spoke up, and said "Oh, Mr. Moody, we've been having an all night prayer meeting. Mr. Moody, see how our faces shine." And Moody looked the guy in the eye and said, "Moses knew not that his face shone." The goodness that is selfconscious is hypocritical. And I'm not talking about that kind of goodness. I'm talking about the goodness that results in the glory of God, not the glory of me. And so we are to satisfy God's glory by maintaining a pure type of goodness in the face of the world that shuts the mouths of the critics of Christianity.

Now as we look at this chapter, I want to show you three things over the period of time whenever the Spirit designs for us to be here. The ethics, the example, and the energy. What are the ethics? Who is our example, or whom are our examples? What is the energy to carry out the ethics? All three are very important; the ethics, the example, and the energy. And we'll look at those in the days to come. Now before we enter the text specifically, one more word of necessary preparation.

If you have been with us in our study of Hebrews, so far, you have become very aware of something that is important. For the first 11 chapters, there is not one single, specific command given to a Christian. Not one. There is no practical explanation of anything, for 11 whole chapters. The only exhortation in those 11 chapters is the warnings to those on the edge of Christianity to come all the way to Christ. The rest is pure doctrine--pure theology. The new covenant as over against the old covenant; the better priesthood, the better promises, the better covenant and so forth and so on. The better sacrifice. It is all doctrine.

It is not until you have 11 chapters of doctrine that you finally have in chapter 12, now wherefore...and we move into running the race with patience that is set before us. And then we begin to see some general commands in chapter 12, don't we. He says run with patience, accept God's discipline, follow peace and holiness, examine those you see in the church and make sure that they're really saved. So there are some general things that you find there in chapter 12. The specifics come in chapter 13. He gets very specific in terms of commands. And believe me, this is always the pattern of the New Testament. You never do give commands on any other basis than the basis of sound doctrine. It is first doctrine; then it is duty. It is first the statement of position; then it is practice. This is all through the New Testament. Chapter 13 is not tacked on, chapter 13 is the climax. It is the pinnacle of the book. Because you have that kind of doctrine, because you have that kind of faith here's what is required of you. Paul did the same thing, didn't he, when he wrote the book of Romans. Eleven

chapters of doctrine; he simply turns the thing in chapter 12 and says all right now, on the basis of that doctrine, because of the mercies of God, present your bodies a living sacrifice, and he takes off in chapters 12-16 and says here's what I want you to do about it. This is the pattern of the New Testament.

And may I hasten to say this. There can be no ethics unless there is doctrine. Did you get that? Because if there's no doctrine, then there's no foundation for the ethics. That's why people in our world have crisscrossing ethics, because there is no solid, universal grounds or standard of absolutes. You cannot have ethics until you have a solid, moral base. You see? So ethics always followed doctrine in the New Testament. Always. You cannot require something of somebody unless there is an underlying, under-girding, universal moral law that gives the right and the necessity of that ethic to exist.

People say, well, the world would be such a beautiful place, you always hear about that, if only we would forget all of our doctrine and our dogma, and just love each other. Oh, yech! That won't work. That doesn't work. You can't do that. You just put a whole lot of people in a big room and say, go ahead and love each other. They won't know how to love each other. There are no absolutes. One guy thinks love is one thing, and somebody else thinks it's something else, and one guy goes over to another guy's wife, and says I think I'll love you, and the other guy says, oh, no, you won't. You can't operate on that basis because there's no foundation. There are no absolutes; there's no morality to underlie the ethic. And so you don't require of a guy anything until you have laid a foundation for the requirement. That's what Russell wanted to do. He said let's have the Christian ethic without the Christian theology. And he picked out certain parts of the Christian ethic that he wanted. Like helping poor people, and giving away your money, and things like that. He says, let's have the ethics, but let's forget the claims of Jesus; those are extraneous, those are immaterial, inconsequential, we just want the good ethic. Well, you can't do that, because you're just going to keep smashing into everybody, because everybody's going to end up with his own ethic. There's no uniform morality without a standard. And there's no standard without God. And so you've got to start with Him.

Believe me, let me say this at the very outset, you'll never be able to maintain Christian ethics unless you're a Christian. For two reasons: 1) you don't have any desire to; 2) you don't have any ability to. The Sermon on the Mount, Romans 12:16; Ephesians 4:6. Hebrews 13--that's all ethics. But it all, in every case, mark it, it all presupposes that you have faith in Jesus Christ. That gives you number 1, the desire, and number 2, the standard. And number 3, the energy. So all kinds of ethics are founded on doctrine. And they're only possible for Christians. If you're here tonight and you're not a Christian, don't try to live the Christian life without Christ; you can't do it. And don't try to follow God's standards without God, it doesn't work.

All right, let's begin by looking of the ethics of chapter 13. And they really go all the way down through verse 19, and we'll break it up and just take a little of it tonight. The ethics. Now the term ethics, just

to give you a frame of reference, means the standard of conduct or moral judgment. There are classes in ethics, and in most cases they haven't got the faintest idea what the ethics are, they just kind of rattle around, and they wind up with Pletcher's Famous situation ethics-whatever accommodates the situation, that's the ethic you apply, which is the elimination of absolutes. And that's why you have problems. Ethics are standards of conduct and moral judgment. And we believe there are absolutes.

Now you have a little outline that I gave you because it's going to be difficult to follow the sequence if you don't watch it, so you might just stick it there in your Bible in the page, and follow along.

Now the ethics of this chapter are divided into three categories, and they're very simple categories, but they help us to kind of pigeonhole some of these thoughts. Three basic categories for the ethics in the chapter: 1) in relation to others. Ethics in relation to others, or how we act toward others. 2) Ethics in relation to ourselves, or how we act toward ourselves, and this will be in the future. 3) ethics in relation to God. How we act toward God.

First of all, let's begin with ethics in relation to others. What are the standards for Christianity in relation to others? Now remember people, we are presupposing that you already have met Christ. Right? We're presupposing twelve chapters of solid doctrinal foundation. You know Christ, you know the new covenant, you understand the difference between Sinai and Calvary, you've been brought through chapter 12, you know that you've come to Christ, you've come to the mount of grace, the heavenly Jerusalem and all such things as that, and you know where you stand in Christ. On the basis of that, here is what is required of you. First of all, in relation to other people.

Number one, first ethic, sustained love. And this will be a review for most of us, but it's very important. Verse 1, here is the first ethic, and it's a dominant one, because it really is a feature that overrides everything else. "Let brotherly love continue." That's it. Verse 1. Now this is sustained love. This is the supreme ethic for the Christian to follow, and that is that he love his brother. Brotherly love is one word in the Greek, it's the word philadelphia, the city of brotherly love taking its name from it. It comes from two words, phile, to have a great affection for, adolphas, brother, from the same womb. So it means to have a great affection for those who came from the same womb.

Now this can have two significant applications. Think of this. All through the book of Hebrews, this is an interesting feature, he has been telling them to separate themselves from Judaism, right? The new covenant is it, that's all you need, sufficient, complete, so forth. Just separate from Judaism. They were getting hassled by the Jews, they were getting persecuted by the Jews, and they were told to separate. Now a great, serious conflict could have come back right in the face, in sort of a backlash type of thing, and so they are warned here to let brotherly love continue.

And it may well be the brotherly love concept includes Jews. Because one of the very familiar terms in the New Testament for Jews, and even used by Christians to speak of other Jews who weren't saved, was, they considered them as brethren. For Jews were, in the pure sense, adelphos, from the same womb. They were all physically children of Abraham. So it may be that in one sense he is saying don't begin to hate the Jews. Don't separate yourselves to the place where you have ceased to love your people. Remember Paul, who said even though I have separated myself from Judaism, my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved, and he had a deep passionate love for Israel. And it may be that implied in the statement, "Let brotherly love continue," is the fact that he doesn't want them, in separating from Judaism, to begin to do anything else but to continue to love the Jews. And it behooves us, my friends, to do the same. And the word "brethren" is used at least three times, Acts 2:29, Acts 13:38, Acts 13:35 to speak of Jews. A very common term for the Jews.

In fact, let me just give you a footnote on that, chapter 3:1, he makes a distinction here that is most interesting. Since the term "brethren" could refer to Jews, he distinguishes it when he wants to refer strictly to Christians. Verse 1 of chapter 3, "Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." So here when he's talking to Christians, he throws an extra word in just to make that obvious. He didn't want to say therefore brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, or all the Jews in town might have said Hey, we're in. So he qualified it—"holy"--and a man is only made holy in Christ. And so the writer of Hebrews then, may be implying in this statement, a continued love for Israel.

But I think there's a greater significance than that, and I think it's a significance that is most obvious to us, and that is the fact that we need to love our brothers in Christ. For they are, though not physically from the same womb, spiritually from the same womb, having been born again, having gone through the new birth. We're all brothers in Christ, is that so? He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, we're one, we're all children, we're brothers of Christ, He's not ashamed to call us brethren, we're heirs and jointheirs with Christ, we've been adopted as sons, Romans says, we've all the rights of sonship, we are His children, Ephesians 1. God has brought us in as sons. All those statements in Scripture indicate we are brothers in Christ. We are all sons of the same family, therefore we are all brothers. And so he says, as Christians, let brotherly love continue.

Now I want you to notice something wonderful here. Look at the word "continue." It doesn't say, and I'm so glad about this, it doesn't say get brotherly love started, does it? It doesn't say whip up brotherly love. Invent brotherly love, or generate brotherly love, it says let brotherly love continue, which implies it already is there. And you can usually tell when somebody is saved, immediately they have a desire to be with a believer. It's only after awhile that they find out that the believers are rather cantankerous, and they begin to pick and choose, and then you get division. It doesn't usually happen with baby Christians. They just kind of enjoy the fellowship. Then they find out later that there's some certain people that do funny things that they're not supposed to like.

In I Peter 1:22, and I want you to get it from Peter's standpoint, it's very clear the way he puts it, "Seeing that you have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." You say hey, is that a part of salvation? Listen, I'll read it again, "Seeing that you have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." One of the byproducts of obeying the truth is what? Unfeigned love of the brethren. Now seeing that you've come into unfeigned love of the brethren, listen, see that you love one another, with a pure heart, ectinase (?) stretched, fervently reach out for the unlovable one. Stretch yourself.

Well, what is he saying? Seeing that you have brotherly love, exercise it. That's what he's saying. And do you want to hear something wonderful, beloved. That's exactly what the whole New Testament's about, seeing that you have all these things, use them, isn't it? How many times have we talked about the fact that you don't have to go scrounging around, like you were in some spiritual treasure hunt, to find the goodies that God has stashed? They're all your in Christ. Peter says "You have all things that pertain to life and godliness." Therefore, it's not a question of getting anything; it's a question of using what you have. Right? All right, so he's not saying whip up, or generate brotherly love. He's saying let it be sustained. It is granted to you at salvation, said Peter. It's a result of obeying the truth. Unfeigned love comes. See that you love one another. Let it continue is exactly what he's saying. That's the key. You know, this is true.

Let me give you another illustration that comes to mind. Ephesians 4 in verse 19, "I therefore, a prisoner of the Lord beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called, with all lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." Look at this "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit." Does it say endeavoring to invent the unity of the Spirit, endeavoring to start the unity of the Spirit, endeavoring to whip up the unity of the Spirit? No. Endeavoring to what? Keep it. What does that imply? It's already there. When you become a Christian all these things are yours. It's only a matter of sustaining them in your living. Now that affection is yours. He just says don't destroy it. Don't pollute it. Don't mess it up. Don't blacken it. Let it continue.

Let me take you a step further to prove that you have brotherly love. 1 Thessalonians 4:9 just listen. I'm going to be going pretty fast, so maybe you're better off just writing them down. And listen. 1 Thessalonians 4:9: "But as touching brotherly love (philadelphia, listen) you need not that I write unto you." You say, what do you mean, you don't need to tell us? Why? "For you yourselves are taught of God to love one another." Did you hear that? When you were saved, part of being saved was the love of Christ, was what? "The love of God," Romans 5:5, "was shed abroad" where? "in our hearts." You were taught of God to love, all you need to do is go ahead and use what you have, you see? And I think that this is an exciting point, because so many Christians are scrounging around looking for what they've got. I need more love. I need more peace. No, no I need more unity. No, you have it, use it! It's in your bank account, just check it out.



First John 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Now listen to this, "And everyone that loveth Him that begot loveth him also that is begotten of Him." What does that mean?? That means if you love Him, you're going to love all the others that love Him. That's just part of being saved. If you don't, you've corrupted what you have. You haven't failed to get it, you got it, you corrupted it. And you're living crossgrain with your own nature, as a believer.

Look at Jude 21, same statement. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Isn't that beautiful? Don't find it, and hunt for it, and pray for it, and ask for it. You've got it, just keep yourself in it. That's the point. All right, enough on that. You get it. You've got it, use it! Let brotherly love continue.

Now this group had already shown it. Oh my, they had shown the love of the brethren back in 6, isn't it? Verse 10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you've shown toward His name, and that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister." So this group here, the little congregation to whom he's writing the book of Hebrews, they had shown love. They had brotherly love, and they had exercised it, and he says let it continue.

Now you know, the Holy Spirit knows that there is a tremendous danger in the dissolution or decay of brotherly love. Brotherly love operates on some very, very simple principles. And I've shared them with you. I will repeat them, after I read you one verse, Romans 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned, one toward another, with brotherly love." Now, you say, that's fine. All right, MacArthur, that's good, brotherly love. Give me a practical handle, so I can grab it. Here's the next statement, "In honor, preferring one another." That's brotherly love. Brotherly love is me caring more about you than I do about me. That's pretty simple, isn't it? When I am preoccupied with myself, I have not really continued in brotherly love.

Remember what I told you, in Philippians 2, how brotherly love operates? Paul says to the Philippians I want you to be of the same love, and you say well how am I going to do that? What does he say? "Let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus, who thought it not I something to hang onto, but gave up what Me had in heaven, and humbled Himself, and took upon Himself the form of a man, and was obedient even unto death." That's humility, and that's the essence of love. Love, brotherly love, is spawned out of humility. Humility grows out of right spiritual knowledge, which we've shared many times. Right spiritual knowledge is setting your life up against the right standard. As long as you measure yourself by some other guy in this world, you're going to come out all right, because you'll pick the guy, and he won't be anywhere near where you are. But when you begin to measure yourself by the standards of the Word of God, and by the person of Christ, you come out humble; when you come out humble, you're able to love, and not until.

Now you say, well, John, why is brotherly love important? It's important, number one, because it reveals who we are to the world doesn't it? John 13:34: "A new commandment write I unto you, that you love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love, one for another." And God gave the world the right to evaluate who we were on the basis of our love. So it's important that we have brotherly love, that we consider others better than ourselves, that we condescend, that we are meek, and humble, that we are giving in granting the needs of others, whether we sacrifice everything we have, to do it or not, it's important, because if we don't, the world's not going to be sure, too sure, who we belong to.

Second reason it's important it reveals our identity to us. And this is a tremendous thought. In 1 John, we read one verse there, let me read you a couple more. First John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life." Do you know that? Do you know you're saved? How? "Because we love the brethren." Did you hear that? Do you know how you can tell in your own heart? That you're saved? Do you love other Christians? Forever people are coming to me and saying how do you know you're saved, how do you get security, etc.? That's one great way, right there. Do you love other Christians? Do you love their fellowship? Do you love to be with them? Do you love to minister to them? That reveals our identity to us, as it does also to the world.

A third thing that I think is important in brotherly love is it delights God. I love the statement that God made in Psalm 133:1. Have you ever heard this? "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity." God said that. Do you know that God gets happy about that? If you really want to give glory to God, live in brotherly love. And when I talk about brotherly love, I'm not talking about some saccharin, sweet sentimentalism. I'm talking about the kind of brotherly love that issues in commitment.

Verse 16 of 1 John 3. Listen. "By this perceive we the love of God, because he laid down His life for us." Now here it comes, are you ready for this? Can you handle it? "And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." I'm not talking about some insignificant little condescension. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. "But whosoever has this world's goods" you've got some of the goodies the world has to offer, you got money, you got things, "he sees his brother has need, and shuts up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" You see a need, and you've got the supply, and you don't supply, John says, don't tell me you're a Christian, it just doesn't square. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and truth, and by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts." If you have trouble doubting your salvation, check on your love for your brethren.

Tragically, you know, we have to admit in the church that brotherly love isn't what it ought to be, but Jesus knew that would happen. In Matt. 25:12 He said "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall be cold." You know what makes love cold? Iniquity. What kind of iniquity? Well, the major iniquity is selfish pride.

James 4: "From where come wars and fightings," where do they come from? Why do we have them? "Come they not here, even of your lusts that war on your members. You lust, and have not. You kill, and desire to have, and do not obtain. You fight and war, yet you have not because you ask not. And you ask and receive not, because you ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. You adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Verse 10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren." Verse 16: "But now ye rejoice in your boastings; all such rejoicing is evil." What's James saying? He's saying iniquity brings division, iniquity shatters love, and it is the iniquity of selfish pride.

In Titus 3:2, Titus enjoins Christians to speak evil of no man. Isn't that good? There's no room for criticism. "To be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." You ought to condescend to everybody. So should I. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." You weren't so hot yourself, once. "But after that the kindness and love of God our savior toward man appeared" He changed all that. "He shed it on us abundantly [verse 6] through Jesus Christ." Verse 8, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." Listen, as long as you're going to be divisive, as long as you're going to be critical, as long as you're going to be a brawler, as long as you're going to hate instead of love, brotherly love cannot exist, the testimony of the church is ruined, your own confirmation of your own salvation into a kind of unassurance, and God is not glorified. Love only grows in the garden of humility.

In Proverbs 30:15 there's a good illustration of this. It's an interesting verse; you probably have never read it. It says this: "The horse leech has two daughters, crying 'Give, give.'" The horse leech apparently was a giant, repulsive leech that had two forks in its tongue, which it set into the skin of the horse or animal, and used to gorge itself on the blood of the victim, and it was said that the leech would gorge itself on the blood of its victim until it exploded. Spiritually, the horse leech represents self-love, and the two daughters are self-righteousness and self-pity. And as the leech is never satisfied, self-love is never satisfied, and what does the horseleech say? "Give, give." And there are many, sad to say, even who claim to be Christians, who are like the horse leech, who have only to take and call all others to give to them.

My friends, self-love perverts everything, even Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Self must die if brotherly love is to continue. I say it, it's simple; it's practical, there it is. Pride and self-love is fatal to brotherly love. Pride holds grudges; pride holds grievances. Jesus had a lot to be

proud of, more than anybody. Jesus said "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." John 13 the disciples are arguing about who's the greatest in the kingdom, and Jesus got down and washed their feet. Then He said do you see what I did to you? Do it to each other. Condescend; don't exalt yourself. And so selflove and pride just destroy love.

Well, sustained love should exist then, verse 1. Verse 2 gives us another dimension: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained strangers unawares." Now the term strangers here could refer to believers and unbelievers. The Bible says that we are to show love to strangers, even who are unbelievers. In Gal. 6:10, "Let us do good to all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith." But not just to them, to all men. First Thessalonians 5:15 "See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good both among yourselves, and to all men." And so we are to be careful to show love to all men. And then the one that I love and we know it well. We need to be reminded of it perhaps. Matt. 5:43: "You have heard that it has been said Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you Love thy enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do go to them that hate you. Pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Then He goes on to say if you love those in verse 46 who love you, big deal. That's in the MacArthur vernacular. Tax collectors do that. And if you greet your brother only, what do you more than others. Do not even the heathen do that? Learn to love your enemies.

And so there's a sense in which we are called upon to love those who are outside Christ. Even strangers. You say, I tried that and I got taken! Join the club. A guy stumbles in and says I'm destitute and this and that, and I need \$10. You say, "Oh, you're going to go buy drinks with it." "No, I'm going to feed my starving family," and you get a big sob story. What do you do? Give him the \$10. Use your head, if it's obvious what he's going to do. But if you can't make an ultimate decision, make a decision immediately to love the guy, and let him worry about the consequences of what he does with the money, and God will honor you for loving a stranger. Everybody gets taken. But love is like that; it gets stepped on, but that doesn't mean that we eliminate it. Don't get sour on love just because people have burned you.

The Jews used to have a saying, "There are six things, the fruit of which a man eats in this world and by which he is raised in the world to come." And then the list begin this way, "Hospitality to the stranger, and visiting the sick." So the Jews had a very, very deep sense of hospitality. And in the ancient world, it's interesting if you look back in history books, you'll find that the most disastrous places in any given town were the inns. They were nothing but lowrepute, filthy brothels for the most part, and they were very expensive. In the writings of Aristophenes, Dionesius asked Herocles, when they are discussing to find lodging, says, "Do you know of one with a limited number of fleas?" When Theophrastis wrote his character sketch of the reckless man, he said that the man was so bad he was fit to run an inn, or a brothel. Put both occupations on the same level. So it was a very bad thing.

And of course, in Christianity, there were a lot of traveling people; people were moving around, preaching and teaching and carrying out missionary work, and there needed to be accommodations for these people, and so the homes had to be opened up. They did it in Jerusalem historically. Remember at Passover, how open the homes were to all of the pilgrims. And so, Christianity shouldn't change this. Can you imagine the Jews all welcoming strangers, and then people becoming Christians and slamming their doors to everybody. So hospitality was a great virtue. In fact, among the Jews, Abraham was regarded as outstanding for his hospitality, and a true son of Abraham must love strangers, and Christians shouldn't do anything less than that.

Christians should have a love for strangers. It is required of a bishop in 1 Timothy 3:2 that he be given to hospitality, and also Titus 1:8. A pastor or leader in a church should have an open home, where people can come and take part in his life, and have their needs met, if needs exist that can be supplied by him. When they were going to choose some older ladies to serve in the church in 1 Tim. 5:10, here's the ones you want to choose: those well reported of for good works, if she's brought up children, if she has lodged strangers. Very important. And showed a loving heart. And it showed somebody who was willing to get burned just for the joy of expressing love.

And then he adds this little footnote, just as a motive, "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." You just don't know who you've got. Now he's not saying here do it because you will entertain angels; he's saying some have. And he's, of course, going back to Genesis 18. Remember Abraham had the three come in, and it turned out to be God, and two angels? And Abraham was showing all kinds of hospitality, and he found out later it was Jehovah God he was showing hospitality to. Later on, Gideon and Minoah did the same thing.

I'll never forget a fellow who recounted a story to me, and he was driving on a freeway and he saw a lady with a flat tire. He didn't know her, but he knew that she couldn't handle a flat tire. It was a big car, a Lincoln. And so he thought, well, I'll pull over and I'll help her, which most of us wouldn't even dream of doing. So he pulled over and he helped her; he fixed the tire, and he was so nice, and it was a couple of weeks later that a truck pulled up to his house, and a guy came up to his door, and said, we have a color television set to deliver. And so they brought in a big huge color television and it was signed, Thank you, Mrs. Nat King Cole. Now we all want to head for the freeway to find the nearest....I know about that materialism. But that's the idea here; the idea is, you take care of strangers, you don't know who you've got on your hands. And you don't know what God might do in his life, just because of your love shown to him. That's so very important.

Jesus even took it a step further, and I love what he said in Matthew 25, and I need to be reminded of it so much, when I think sometimes I ought to turn somebody off. Verse 43: "I was a stranger and you took me not in, naked and you clothed me not, sick and in prison, and you visited me not. Then shall they also answer Lord when saw we you hungry or athirst, or a stranger or naked or sick?" Verse 45: "Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

Earlier He had said the same thing in commendation, here it's in condemnation. How you show your love to a stranger reflects your attitude toward Jesus Christ. So sustained love is basic to the Christian ethic. Sustained love to brothers, and sustained love to strangers, be they believers or unbelievers.

The second statement of ethic: sympathy. Sustained love is first, and then comes, quickly, sympathy. Verse 3: "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." That's compassion, friend, when you can be bound with the people who are bound. And those Christians, in those days, had a lot of trouble staying out of jail, because they were always being thrown in for their faith. He says "remember them that are in bonds as though bound with them, and them who suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body." Remember that you're physical, and you can feel the pain that they'd be going through. Empathy, compassion, sympathy. And many Christians, as I said, were placed in bonds. One of the most unChristlike characteristics of all is the selfish callousness which says, "I've got troubles of my own, without getting involved in anybody else's." That is terrible, callous, selfish indifference--the antithesis of the ethic of Christianity, which is sympathy for someone in need.

You want to know what you ought to do replace your selfpity with love for others. And you know the best way to get rid of your own problems? Start working on getting rid of other people's problems. And you'll lose yourself in them. People who are preoccupied with their own problems, preoccupied with selfpity, are really not sympathetic. You can couch it in a lot of terms, but it turns out to be self-centeredness.

Tertullian, in his apology, writes "If there happen to be any in the mines, banished to the islands, or shut up in prisons, the Christians became carriers of their confession."

Aristodes, the heathen orator, said of the Christians, "If they hear that any one of their number is in prison or in distress for the sake of their Christ's name, they all render aid in his necessity, and if they can, they redeem him, to set him free." In other words, if he was in jail, they'd pay the price to get him out.

The Apostolic Constitution said this "If any Christian is condemned for Christ's sake to the mines, by the ungodly, do not overlook him, but from the proceeds of your toil and sweat, send him something to support himself, and to reward the soldier of Christ. All money accruing from honest labor do ye appoint and apportion to the redeeming of the saints, ransoming thereby slaves and captives and prisoners, people who are sore abused, and condemned by tyrants."

The Apostolic Confession commanded the Christians to go out and redeem slaves, buy back people from prison, spend their money for their comfort. You know it's amazing--many people sold themselves in the early years of Christianity, sold themselves into slavery to get the money to free somebody else.

Now we don't have slavery today, but we have a lot of things for which we need to be sympathetic. There are a lot of people with a lot of needs, and one thing the church needs to do is to learn how to share burdens; the Bible says, Paul said it, "Bear ye one another's burdens," Galatians 6:2, "and so fulfill the law of Christ." And what is the law of Christ? Love. We need to bear each other's burdens; we need to feel what they feel. Christ did. We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are. He knows everywhere we've ever been; he's felt every pain we've ever felt. Sympathy. You're in the body; look at it in verse 3. You know how they feel. Lose yourself in the care of others.

All right, there's the first category. The Christian ethic begins with the relation to others. What is the relationship? It's just this simple sustained love, and sympathy. It's loving them, and it's caring for them. Be they brothers or be they strangers.

Secondly, we come to the area of responsibility to yourself. What is the believers' responsibility to himself? And this begins in verse 4. Number one: sexual purity. Now this follows the discussion of love, fast, because love, when it gets perverted, turns into lust. Lust soon brings about sexual impurity. So it fits well. Beginning in verse 4: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. But fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

Now, sexual impurity is not only a sin against others, but it dominantly is a sin against ourselves. You say, why do you say that? Well, that's what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:18, so I'm just getting it from him: "Flee fornication." Pornography, sex sin. When you see it, run, "Every sin that a man doeth is outside the body. But he that committeth fornication sins against his own body." So this is your responsibility to yourself, that you be sexually pure. Christian love is to be kept on a right basis, morally pure.

Now I want to look at this verse for a moment because it's important. Notice the "is" is in italics, which means it was added. The literal Greek says marriage honorable in all, which means that the verb "to be" is implied. It could be that "is" could be used. The Authorized Version has "marriage is honorable." If that's true, then it's a statement of fact. Marriage is honorable in all, and that's a true statement.

God looks at marriage as an honorable thing; He invented it. It's not honorable in the world today; people laugh at marriage. You hear all these arguments about the fact you don't need a certificate, all this kind of thing, and men have poohpahed marriage. In our world it's kind of a thing for oldfogies, and people from another dimension, but in God's eyes, marriage is honorable. That is a true statement. And maybe he's making this in reference to certain ascetics, who have taken the vow of chastity. Some of them, like famous Origen, had even had himself castrated, as he felt that that would bring about greater devotion to God. Well, here the Holy Spirit just ruins that ridiculous concept, ridiculous theory. It's just as ridiculous as is the celibacy of the priesthood of the Roman Catholic

Church. That is not particularly pleasing to God, if God designed marriage, then God expects marriage to be honorable, God so stated that it's honorable. There's nothing wrong with it at all. In fact, 1 Timothy 4 says, "In the last days, false prophets will come and they will despise marriage, forbidding to marry." So it could be just a blanket statement. If it is, he's saying marriage is honorable in all.

Then he's saying and the bed undefiled. That simply means that sexually, in your bed, between you and your wife, or you and your husband, there is nothing you can do that is wrong. In God's eyes, everything in the bed is pure if you're married. That's a fantastic concept. You don't need to be hung up on guilt, because whatever you do is undefiled in the sight of God. You belong to each other, and that's of course within the bounds of sanity, and within the framework of health and hesitation from injuring the other person. But there's nothing you can do that's defiled. The bed is undefiled. He doesn't qualify it any further than that; that's a true statement. When you were married to the one you love, you became that one's property; for the expression of that love, there is no impurity whatsoever in any thing that you would do, together. That's a true statement.

But beyond that, I think it's better not to use the word "is." It's better to use the verb "to be" in this way: "Let marriage be honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." You can use it either way, but since this whole context is exhortation, verse 1, "Let;" verse 5 uses that, "Let." He's talking about exhorting them. Verse 13, "Let." The idea here is that he is saying do this, do this. This is exhortation. And so I like to think that he's saying, let marriage be honorable, and let the bed be undefiled. And he's really calling for sexual purity.

Now God designed marriage as an honorable thing. In California it's not too honorable. There's now one divorce for every marriage. One to one. God honored marriage by creating it. Jesus honored marriage by attending one, and starting there His miracles. The Holy Spirit honored marriage by making it the picture of the church in Ephesians. The whole Trinity has called together the testimony that marriage is honorable. And don't anybody come along and disparage marriage, let it be honorable. And more than that, let marriage be honorable in the sense of its purity. Don't defile your marriage by sexual impurity outside that union.

Scripture gives three reasons, at least, for marriage. One, propagation of children. Genesis 1:27, He said now you get together, you're one flesh, now propagate. Replenish the earth. Marriage is not only for the propagation of children; it is for the prevention of immorality. It is for the prevention of immorality. There are some people who couldn't stay pure, single. First Corinthians 7:2, "Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband." Get married, it prevents immorality. Thirdly, it eliminates solitude. God said it is not good for man to be alone. Marriage propagates children, prevents immorality, and eliminates solitude. Those are theological reasons. Add to that the fact that marriage is an enjoyable and fulfilling relationship. Marriage was meant to be the expression of the fullness of love. So God has portrayed



marriage in scripture as a very honorable thing. Keep it that way. You say, well, John, how can I be sure that I really have a marriage that honors God?

All right, let me talk to you that are not married, for a minute. In number one, the mate you choose. How do you know who to marry? Number one point, don't choose someone related to you--you can't have anybody who's your near kin, according to Leviticus 18.

Secondly, don't marry anybody who is unsaved. And that is clear in the scripture. Second Corinthians 6:14, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." It couldn't be more clear. Don't marry an unregenerate person. Don't marry someone who is not a believer. Dr. Pink says, "If a child of God marries a child of Satan, that makes God the father-in-law of a child of Satan." He says God doesn't like that. And he's right. Just read about Samson, find out what happens when you mess around with someone who's not a believer. And if that doesn't do it, read about Solomon. And if that doesn't do it, read about Ahab. Marry somebody who is saved.

Thirdly, not only not near kin, the Bible says, not unsaved, thirdly, marry somebody in the Lord. What does that mean? In the perfect will of God--obviously a believer--but totally in the will of God. You say, well, those are general. How do you know who's the right one? All right, I'm going to give you some good little keys.

One, reputation. Make a value judgment on the basis of their reputation. Proverbs 22:1 says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Don't pick out the rich one, pick out the one with the good reputation. What do other people think of the individual? It's very important, reputation.

Secondly, appearance. You say appearance? What am I supposed to avoid? Two things the Bible says, a wanton look. You know what a wanton look is? You know what it is! Second thing, a proud look. Isaiah 3:9 says, "The show of their appearance does witness against them." Watch what somebody looks like. Can you tell a proud look? You can. Can you tell a wanton look? Sure. Reputation, and appearance.

Third thing, speech. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." What do they talk about? What's the conversation?

Fourth, clothes. You say clothes? That's right--modesty. If clothes are vulgar, if clothes are showy, then the heart is vain. First Timothy 2:9. Read it; it's right there. Women are to be adorned with a quiet spirit in meekness and humility.

Lastly, companions. Reputation, appearance, speech, clothes, and companions. And you're going to find out a lot about them. Who does he keep company with? Who does she keep company with? Remember the old adage, birds of a feather flock together. A person is known by his company, read

Psalm 1, it's all there, isn't it? Now, on top of that, let me say, don't expect perfection. Those are all good principles, but if you look too long, you may pass the day of grace. And just remember that a sweet apple can have a worm. Now that's to begin with in the terms of the choice. That's just basic thought.

What about if you're already married? How do you make your marriage really honorable? If you're to let marriage be honorable, how are you to do that?

Number one, the head is the husband. God is glorified in a family where the husband is the head. Ephesians 5 it's all right there. First Corinthians 11:3, "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.

Secondly, the subjection of the wife--a loving subjection. Remember how God commends the woman in 1 Peter 3? He says this, regarding Sarah, "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." And in verse 5, "For this was the manner in old time of holy women." In subjection to their husbands--that is pleasing to God.

Third thing, marriage that is honorable is not only where the husband is the head, and the wife is submissive, but where it is regulated by love, regulated by love. And that means that you have set about in your marriage, not to take, but to give. Your whole attitude is how can I fulfill the one I love? What can I do to please that one? Whether you're talking about physical things, or economic things, or whatever it is, in all your relationships of marriage, your attitude is not what can I get, it is what can I give.

And so he says, marriage is honorable. Let it be so. The bed is undefiled in marriage, keep it undefiled. Don't ever have any kind of sexual entertainment or activity outside the purity of the marriage relationship. Why? Fornicators, adulterers, God will judge. Do you know that that's the only time that a judgment statement goes along with an ethic in chapter 13? God's serious about sexual purity--very serious. You may fool around with illicit sex, you may fool around outside your marriage, and you may get away with it from the judgment of man standpoint, but you'll never get away with it from the judgment of God. God will judge; somehow and somehow chastisement, punishment comes.

He says in verse 6 of Ephesians 5, "Let no one deceive you with words that are vain, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God, on the sons of disobedience." God judges unbelievers who fool around with sex. Oh, they might think they're really whipping it up in this world, really making it, really having a great time. The world is so bent on sex; everything from advertising to zoos is featuring sex. Every time you turn on the television they try to sell you something through the avenue of sex. It's unbelievable. It's now, of course, blatant. Sex is accepted, it's normal. Don't deprive me; it's innocent pleasure. I must have sex before marriage, how else will I distinguish whether my love is lust or love.

Hugh Hefner says, and I quote. This was an article I read in Eternity magazine which quoted Playboy. That's true! This is what he said, "Sex is a function of the body--a drive which man shares with animals, like eating, drinking, and sleeping. It's a physical demand that must be satisfied. If you don't satisfy it, you will have all sorts of neurosis and repression psychoses. Sex is here to stay, let's forget the prudery that makes us hide from it. Throw away those inhibitions. Find a girl who's likeminded, and let yourself go." That's his philosophy. You know, it looks like he's getting away with it, but believe me, he's not. He may escape the judgment of man; he'll never escape the judgment of God.

The results of such a philosophy are pregnancies preceding more than one-fourth of all marriages, forcible rape in the United States every 20 minutes, hundreds and thousands of illegitimate babies. The last statistic I saw was somewhere around 30,000 illegitimate babies born to girls ages 9 to 14. Teenagers account for 40% of out-of-wedlock births. Teenagers. Syphilis, gonorrhea is not only epidemic, it's pandemic everywhere. The morality of our world would make a pigpen look clean. Dirty movies, books, plays. Billy Graham says the writings that are coming out of men like Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, and hundreds of other lesser lights are like the drippings of a broken sewer. He's right. One girl that I read about had given 134 names of men that she had been with in the last month, when she was tested for V.D. Look magazine ran a survey: forty-five percent of teenagers believe it's O.K. to live together if you love each other, as if they knew what it was. Forty-six percent think it's not wrong to have sex, and eighty-two percent said their morals are no lower than their parents. Dr. Margaret Mead, an anthropologist, suggests that we ought to hand out birth control tablets to 16-year-olds. Perhaps we ought to even have them in vending machines.

And you believe it folks. The judgment of God comes, doesn't it? It comes in the collapse of marriages, it comes in V.D., it comes in drugs, it comes in family breakdown, it comes in murder, it comes in suicide--it comes because you can't live against the grain of a morality that set in motion in the universe and beat the consequence.

You say, well, John, how do I govern my activity that way? Well, I take you to 1 Thessalonians 4:3, here's the standard for sexual conduct: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." Number one, that you should stay away from fornication. That's the word pornea, and it means any kind of sexual activity. It's usually referred to before marriage. Adultery, moikos (?), means sex activity while you're married with somebody other than your wife, or husband. But fornication is just everything from homosexuality to heterosexuality to bestiality, sex with animals, and everything in between is included in this term. Number one principle, here's God's will, that you abstain from fornication. Principle one, stay away from sex sin. And somebody always says how far away? And the answer always comes back, this is the will of God, even your sanctification. Far enough away to be pure. One hundred percent set apart unto God. That's principle number 1 stay away from sex sin.

You can take it a step farther, in principle number two, in verse 1, "Everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel," and I take that to mean body, "in sanctification and honor." Principle two, know how to handle your body so it honors God. What does that mean? To possess means to control. Is your body under control? Some of you young people, you go out on a date, and you sit there, and you begin to engage yourself in a little extracurricular activity, what happens? Pretty soon, you are not able any more to control your body; your body is controlling you. Paul said, "All things are lawful," but he didn't stop there; everybody would run to that and claim that as their life verse, "but I will not be brought under the power of any." It's not what I do that gets me in trouble, it's what does me. And he's simply saying here your body ought to be in control so it honors God. You ought to maintain the control of your body, so it honors God. Paul said, that's not easy, "I beat my body to bring it into subjection, lest in preaching to others I myself should become a castaway." How many men do you know in the ministry who didn't do that, and rendered themselves a castaway in their ministry, because they couldn't control themselves in a sexual fashion? It's happened, many more times than any of us would like to think. And so the principle is there people. Control your body so it honors God. Stay away from sexual activity.

Verse 5: "Not in the lust of evil desire," sensuality, concupiscence, "as the heathen who know not God." Principles three, don't act like the heathen. One, stay away from sex sin, two, control your body so it honors God, three, don't act like the rest of the world. How do they act? They're guided by their lusts. Whatever the world's promoting they're buying. I mean if the world kicks down the traces, and throws open the floodgates for sex, they're the first ones in the door. I mean, it used to be that years and years ago, there were little sneaky places where you went and saw girlie films. Now you open the L.A. Times and the whole thing is full of those things. It becomes a big issue and some character gets on television and says Well, you don't have to come if you don't want to come, and so forth. And you hear it constantly, all over, everywhere, topless, and bottomless and all the other stuff that's going on. All of a sudden the flood's open, and everybody's running in. Why? Because everybody will go just as far as society will let them go without throwing them in jail. That's depravity. Don't act like that, not in the lusts of evil desire.

Lust, you see, drives you to a further pleasure. You know, we have three tricycles in our garage, and I don't ride any of them. You know, I'd look kind of funny anyway--there goes the pastor on his tricycle, so I avoid it. But I have a little motorcycle that I ride. You know why I don't care about riding a tricycle? It doesn't do a thing for me. Motorcycle I enjoy, over the hills. That's how lust works.

I remember the first time I ever held a girl's hand. This is personal testimony time, don't tell on me. I wanted to hold her hand, and I got paralysis of the right arm, just trying to get it over there, you know. Ooh, that was tough. After I held her hand for awhile, I thought, is that all there is to life? You know, just a sweaty palm, and all that. And it was this constant progression, well, you know how it operates, I don't need to say any more than that. You begin to become victimized by the sensual. Better that you should stop before you ever get to that place. And I'm not saying that you can't greet one another

with a holy kiss. The Bible is clear about the standards.

Well, there's another standard in verse 6, and that is that you don't go beyond and defraud your brother in any matter. Don't take advantage of other people. You know, some people just use people to get what they want, to satisfy them. I love one article that Ann Landers had. She said that a lemon that has been squeezed too many times is garbage. That says it. And you're not to be using other people for what you need, nor are you to be stepping on their neck. Defrauding means taking advantage. There are some principles friends. Stay away from sex sin, control your body so it honors God. Do you honor God with your body--the way you dress, the way you walk, the things you do? Don't act like the rest of the world acts, guided by lust. Fourth, don't take advantage of other people; don't use other people to fulfill your needs and pleasures. That's Godcentered.

You say I don't like those rules. Verse 8 was written for you. "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God." If you don't like it, you'll have to talk to Him; He wrote them. Now what is God saying. God's saying, I expect purity, sexually. I remember when I went to Rabbi Kramer's class at Cal State North-ridge last year, and they asked me to speak on the Christian's sex ethic to a philosophy class. Well, I went in there, and I knew I was just going to get laughed out of the place if I didn't plot my strategy carefully. So I went in, and this is what I began by saying. "I'm happy to be here today; I don't expect any of you to believe anything I say. I don't expect any of you to want to do this, and I don't expect that any of you would have the capacity. You wouldn't have any desire to live like this. You'll think I'm very strange. It'll be totally foreign to you, and I understand that." If you know anything about the college mentality, their first reaction was, "Oh, yeah?" which is exactly what I had hoped it would be. And then I proceeded to present to them the ethic of Christianity, and I said it's assumed in my mind, and in the mind of God, that unless you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, you haven't got the slightest idea how this works, nor do you have the slightest inclination to obey it. So I said, "What it all boils down to is a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ," and I spent the last half hour explaining what that was. Apart from Jesus Christ, this whole concept is meaningless. When you come to know Jesus Christ, it becomes the desire of your heart to fulfill His will, doesn't it? Sexual purity.

Let's bow in prayer. Our Father, we thank you for showing us some of the practical things tonight. We haven't really tried to cover a lot of deep theology, but we've tried to show some practical things here that You have in this chapter. Father, we know that you have called for us to live pure in this world. We know that the world is examining our lives; that they're looking right at us, and they are either validating or invalidating Christianity even as Bertrand Russell did so many times, on the basis of the way we live. And Father, if we have a strong doctrinal basis, and we have a strong foundation, and we know the truths, that we are to obey them, and that in obeying them, the world will see that we are Yours, we will have confirmation in our hearts that we're Yours, and most of all, You will be glorified. Father, help us to take the responsibility toward others of sustained love and sympathy. Help us to get outside of ourselves. And then Father, help us to take the responsibility to ourselves of sexual

purity; in our marriage relationship, may it be an honorable one. Father, keep us pure. God, we know men can ruin so many homes that You have made. That they can destroy so many things you have brought to pass by sexual impurity. God we pray that You would keep this people pure. Help us to follow your principles, to stay away from sex sin, to control our bodies so they honor God, to not do what the rest of the world does, guided by their lusts and passions, and to not use other people, and take advantage of them. Help us to realize even as Paul said, in that same chapter, we are called unto holiness, not unto uncleanness. Make us a holy people, Lord, that the world may see us and glorify your Father in heaven. We pray in the name of our blessed Christ. Amen.

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