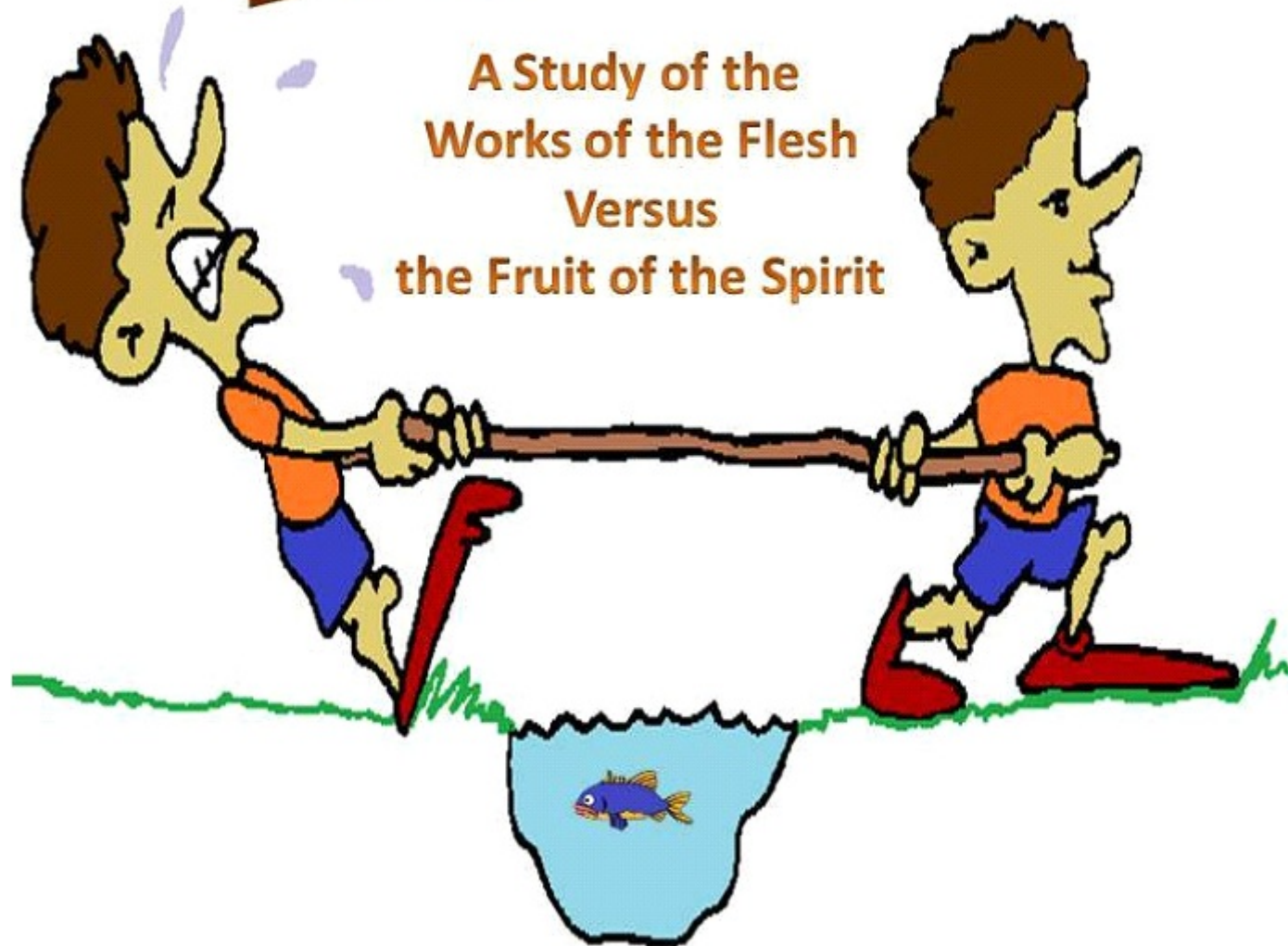


Tug of War

A Study of the
Works of the Flesh
Versus
the Fruit of the Spirit



The Forum Terrace Church of Christ

Wednesday Night Adult Bible Class – Winter 2024

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Table of Content

Lesson 1: The War of the Flesh Against the Spirit, Galatians 5:16-18	5
<i>Wednesday Evening, January 3, 2024</i>	
Lesson 2: Adultery & Fornication	11
<i>Wednesday Evening, January 10, 2024</i>	
Lesson 3: Uncleanness & Licentiousness	17
<i>Wednesday Evening, January 17, 2024</i>	
Lesson 4: Idolatry & Sorcery	22
<i>Wednesday Evening, January 24, 2024</i>	
Lesson 5: Hatred, Contentions, Outbursts of Wrath & Murders	27
<i>Wednesday Evening, January 31, 2024</i>	
Lesson 6: Jealousies, Envy & Selfish Ambition	32
<i>Wednesday Evening, February 7, 2024</i>	
Lesson 7: Dissensions & Heresies	37
<i>Wednesday Evening, February 14, 2024</i>	
Lesson 8: Drunkenness & Revelries	42
<i>Wednesday Evening, February 21, 2024</i>	
Lesson 9: Love	47
<i>Wednesday Evening, February 28, 2024</i>	
Lesson 10: Joy & Peace	53
<i>Wednesday Evening, March 6, 2024</i>	
Lesson 11: Patience & Kindness	58
<i>Wednesday Evening, March 13, 2024</i>	
Lesson 12: Goodness & Faithfulness	63
<i>Wednesday Evening, March 20, 2024</i>	
Lesson 13: Meekness & Self-Control	68
<i>Wednesday Evening, March 27, 2024</i>	

Now the **works of the flesh** are evident, which are:

adultery,
fornication,
uncleanness,
lewdness,
idolatry,
sorcery,
hatred,
contentions,
jealousies,
outbursts of wrath,
selfish ambitions,
dissensions,
heresies,
envy,
murders,
drunkenness,
revelries,
and the like;

of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the **fruit of the Spirit** is

love,
joy,
peace,
patience,
kindness,
goodness,
faithfulness,
meekness,
self-control.

Against such there is no law

War Between the Spirit & Flesh

Galatians 5:16-18, 21b,24-25

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ...21b and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God...23b Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

In the fifth and sixth chapters of Paul's letter to the Galatians, he uses the words "spirit" and "flesh" ten times each. Christians are thus informed that there is a war going on in the world and in their personal lives. We must take care lest the worldly ways change the direction of our spiritual walk. It is not easy. In contrast, Satan would have you to believe that these two (flesh and spirit) can be compatible. Yet, Paul clearly delineates between the two by giving us a list of both the works of the flesh in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit. Paul further, explains that they have opposing outcomes as well.

Paul begins his next point by referring back to the previous one: "I say then" (Gal. 5:16a). He had reminded the Galatian brethren that they "have been called to liberty, only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (5:13). Freedom in Christ does not give a Christian liberty to give into the desires of the flesh. He is free to love not free to hate and devour a fellow saints.

How to Win the Tug of War With the Desires of the Flesh

■ Keep Walking in the Spirit

First, you must "walk in the Spirit" (5:16b). "The fact that *peripateo* (walk) is used here in the present tense indicates that Paul is speaking of continuous regular actions, in other words, a habitual way of life" (MacArthur 152). To walk is to follow and live every day in the guidance provided by the Holy Spirit revealed will of God.

The end result of those who continue to walk in the Spirit is they "shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (5:16c). The desires are not necessarily evil. And man's flesh or body is not inherently evil.

■ Flesh and Spirit Have Different Appetites

Not only will one not give into his fleshly desires by walking in the Spirit, Paul gives an additional reason. "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (5:17a).

The term used for "lusts" is neutral and can applied negatively to the flesh or the Spirit. When one is born physically he has inherent God created desires built into his nature. These desires pull a man far too often in the opposite direction of God's Will. For example, Eve's desire for the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden led her to violate God's Will. However, walking in the Spirit pulls us away from carnal desires in the direction of the Will of God.

■ Flesh and Spirit are Mutually Exclusive

The flesh and Spirit are diametrically opposed to each other. "These are contrary to one another" (5:17b). They are hostile or at war with one another within the hearts of men. Paul gives the reason for this in Romans 8:5: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit". The desires of the flesh focus our minds and thoughts on gratifying God-given desires in ways that are sinful. The Spirit encourages

Christians to focus on the virtues when thinking about their desires. For example, if someone in an outburst of wrath curses you out and hits you, your fleshly desires tempt you to respond in kind. But the Spirit has revealed that vengeance belongs to God and Jesus did not revile in return when he was reviled. This gives one a choice.

Paul explains one another way the flesh and spirit *are* antagonistic to each other. One cannot live and walk in the Spirit and continue practicing the works of the flesh. *“So that you do not do the things that you wish”* (5:17c). If you give into the desires of the flesh by doing the works of the flesh, you will not be able to practice the fruit of the Spirit. Conversely, if you walk on the Spirit you will practice the nine virtues produced in one by the Spirit. Since you thus live according to the Spirit you will not do the things you want to do: the works of the flesh.

■ **Spirit Leads Away from Flesh**

One is to Walk and Live in the Spirit by being *“led by the Spirit”* (5:18a). Christ was led by the Holy Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil (Luke 4:1-2). It is like a Shepherd who leads his flock. We as lambs do the walking, the Shepherd does the leading. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”* (Rom. 8:14).

Some believe the Calvinistic view that man’s soul is so tainted by his sinful nature that he cannot do anything to overcome desires of the flesh. The Holy Spirit must therefore indwell in him to give him such power.

■ **Spirit Not Law Leads**

The Judaizing teachers argued that the Law of Moses was indispensable to overcoming the desires of the flesh. This is not so, if one is led by the Spirit: *“you are not under the law”* (5:18b). The guidance of the Holy Spirit is the answer to dealing with the desires of the flesh and not the Law of Moses. The moral restraints of the Law are not necessary to keep one from practicing the works of the flesh.

Test Whether Actions & Thoughts Are Works of the Flesh

After Paul lists of the works of the flesh he adds *“and such like”* (5:21). He is simply saying the list of sins do not stop here but it can go on and on. The list of sins are representative of the works of the flesh and not exhaustive or complete. Man will continue to find ways to violate God’s Will. There are similar things which fit the description of a work of the flesh and therefore he adds “etc.”

During renovations of the area around city hall in a California community, the demolition crew mistook a large sculpture of twisted metal as junk and bulldozed it. It was some time later before anyone ever began to notice this piece of “art” was missing. The city council then had to pay tens of thousands of dollars to have it replaced.

Not being able to distinguish between art and junk may have its costly consequences. However, the inability to tell the difference between right and wrong is a far more serious matter. In the old movies the good guys wore white hats and the bad guys wore black hats making it easy to know who was good and who was evil. Yet, when it comes to moral issues it is not as easy. For this reason many would like to place various ethical issues into a “gray area” where no one really knows for sure if it is right or wrong.

In Galatians 5:19-23 the apostle Paul gives us just two categories: the first one is the works of the flesh, which are immoral and the second is the fruit of the spirit which is not wrong, but right. By comparing the two categories of right and wrong we can develop a test the so-called “gray areas” in the moral spectrum.

Far too many would rather test the morality of a given action based upon the consequences they cause or “blessings” they produce. If the action results in bad things happening, such as, illness or destruction to a relationship then it is deemed wrong. If it produces good or neutral results, then the action is good. Still others believe an action is okay until someone can prove it to be wrong. If we cannot tell whether a practice is right or wrong, common sense would demand that we surrender that practice instead of foolishly holding onto something that might endanger our soul. If I am uncertain whether or not a certain glass contains a refreshing beverage or a poison, it would be the height of

insanity for me to drink it and if didn't taste bad or did not make me ill then it must be okay. First, prove an action is right and safe, then pursue it. Paul said, "Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21,22). Suppose you come across a snake. You do not know whether it is alive or not, or whether it is poisonous or not. So you pick it up? If it moves it is alive and if it bites you and injects poison into your body, then you know that it is alive and poisonous. No! The first thing you have to do is quickly put a safe distance between you and the snake. Next, you test using a thirty-seven foot stick. If it is dead you do not have anything to worry about. That same thing with an action. First, stand back and test it. If it is good do it and if it evil avoid it. So instead of asking: "Well, what's wrong with gambling, dancing and a little drinking?" ask: "Is it good or evil? How shall I put it to the test".



Test any questionable action using the chart to the left. Into which category does it fit? Note the works of the flesh ends with "and things like these" meaning "similar, i.e., resembling...in nature" (Thayer). The list is not complete. There are other sins like these. Further note that sins involving a class or practice are all condemned without specifying every sinful act by name. Murder would include suicide, abortion, euthanasia, dueling, etc. Every form of present-day sin is identified, described, and condemned in the Bible. Men are constantly inventing new ways to commit the same old sins (Ec. 7:29). New names and phrases may be given to old sins, but they still belong in the category of the works of the flesh and therefore must be avoided.

✓ **Testing Drug Abuse**

Some might take a look at a Bible concordance and falsely conclude that the Scriptures have nothing to say about drug abuse. Yet, the word "sorcery" in our list is

from the same Greek work from which we derive the English words: "pharmacy", "pharmacist", and "pharmaceuticals". Thus, the ancient sorcerer was a man or woman who through the use of drugs deceived their followers with the effects of their potions.

✓ **Testing the Lottery**

The lottery is a form of gambling. Gambling is actually a form of stealing. Stealing is taking something from someone else when you have not earned it and they do not really wish to give it to you. Gambling fits in with the other works of the flesh such as, covetousness, jealousy and envy, and selfish ambition. Gambling would be opposed to the fruits of the Spirit, such as, love for others; respect for another's property and goodness. If the golden rule belongs on the side of the fruit of the Spirit then the lottery cannot.

✓ **Testing the Modern Dance**

Many schools and even churches hold dances. Proms are considered an American rite of passage. Dancing is a form of lasciviousness, "unchasted handling of males and females, indecent bodily movements." A definition of "revelling" would include dancing. Dancing often leads to fornication and adultery. It is in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit which requires self-control and proper love for one another.

✓ **Testing Social Drinking**

Most would defend a little drink now and then because it does not involve drunkenness.

However, 1 Peter 4:3 condemns being drunk, half drunk and drinking. The word for “*drinking*” in the Greek is *potos* meaning literally “a drink”. The word does not define how much. When you take one drink you are one drink drunk and drunkenness is a work of the flesh. Drinking is opposed to self-control and sober-mindedness.

Remember, this test is vital. If you do those things which belong among the works of the flesh you will not inherit eternal life.

Remember the Warnings

Paul had already warned these Christians concerning the works of the flesh: “*of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past*” (5:21c). Teaching is redundant. Mankind can be very forgetful and in need of constant reminders.

Consequences of Fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh

Paul warns “*those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God*” (5:21d). The verb “practice” is not referring to a one time slip up where one takes drink or has a rare outburst of anger. But it refers to a habitual or continual practice of these works of the flesh.

Encouragement to Practice the Fruit of the Spirit

◆ Fruit of the Spirit has Oneness

Notice the works of the flesh are plural. In contrast the fruit of the Spirit is singular. Often when teaching the virtues which make up the fruit of the Spirit, they will be pictured on a tree with multiple types of fruit with each fruit labeled “love”, “joy”, “peace”, etc. However, it would be more accurate to think of an orange made up of nine different wedges representing the various virtues.

Someone might only be involved practicing a few works of the flesh at any given time and still be endanger of losing their soul. Whereas those who live according to the Spirit must practice all nine of the virtues that make of the fruit of the Spirit. Thus they are truly being led by the Spirit to live and walk in the Spirit.

Also, keep in mind that the fruit of the Spirit is not the same as the gifts of the Spirit.

◆ Fruit of the Spirit is Compatible with All Law

Another encouraging thing about the fruit of the Spirit is: “*against such there is no law*” (5:23b). Not even atheistic communist country’s make laws against the fruit of the Spirit. In the context of the Galatian letter Paul most likely has in mind the Law of Moses. All nine virtues that make up the fruit of the spirit are not only compatible with Moses’ Law, but the Old Testament exults and encourages and rewards the practice of these. In fact, Jesus said that loving God and one’s neighbor (Matt. 22:37-49. and the same is said for keeping the golden rule (Matt. 7:12) results in fulfilling the Law and the Prophets.

◆ Christians Crucify the Flesh

When one becomes a Christian they begin to cultivate their heart to grow and produce the fruit of the Spirit. They also must put to death the various passions and desires of the flesh. “*And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*” (5:24). “The Greek verb (“*crucified*”) is in the aorist tense, indicating that this is something we did decisively at the moment of conversion” (Stott 151). Christians have already in the past personally chosen to put to death the old man of sin. This choice was made at baptism. This is when they became dead to sin and were buried in baptism so they could resurrect with Christ (Rom. 6:3-6). Just as crucifixion was a slow death, so the desires flesh are not put to death instantly at baptism. This involves an on going daily effort. Jesus said, “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [a]daily, and follow Me*” (Luke 9:23). This can be a painful process. After all, the term describing great pain is excruciating comes from the word crucifixion.

◆ **Keep in Step with the Spirit**

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (5:25). Since a new life in Christ results in a new way to live life. Becoming a Christian requires one to keep in step with the Spirit. The verb used here for "walk" is different from the one used in verse sixteen. "The verb...is a military term meaning to 'be drawn up in line,' to 'stand in a row'" (George 406). Fruit is not just to be seen as wax or wooden apples displayed on a table. They are to be eaten every day of the Christian life.

Questions:

1. How many times does Paul use the terms "*flesh*" and "*Spirit*" in Galatians chapters five and six?
2. What does it mean to "*walk in the Spirit*"? What is one of the results according to verse sixteen?
3. The term "*lust*" is always used in a negative manner in the New Testament.
4. Why are the flesh and Spirit hostile or at war with each other?
5. What does it mean that Christians are not "*under the law*" in verse eighteen?
6. How many works of the flesh are listed by Paul? Is this a complete list? Explain.
7. Does Paul allow for an area of activities and attitudes to follow into some gray area between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit? Explain.
8. Why is it important to test and action or attitude according to the Scriptures before practicing it?
9. Be ready to explain why gambling, abortion, social drinking, and modern dancing belong with the list of the works of the flesh?
10. What is the consequences of practicing any of the works of the flesh?

11. Why do you think "*works of the flesh*" plural while "*fruit of the Spirit*" is singular?

12. What does it mean that there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit?

13. What does it mean crucify the flesh?

14. True/False The word for "*walk*" in verse twenty-five is the same Greek term for "*walk*" in verse sixteen, thus forming an inclusio.

Application & Discussion:

1. List other virtues which are produced by walking in the Spirit other than those nine listed here.

2. Make a list of the works of the flesh which tempt you most and a list of the virtues listed among the fruit of the Spirit in which you need to working on cultivating in your life.

Homework: Memorize the works of the flesh and the fruit fo the Spirit.

Adultery & Fornication

As Paul begins his list of the works of the flesh he reminds them that these sins should be “evident” (Gal. 5:19a) meaning they are clearly seen, plainly understood or obvious to any observer. You do not have to be educated as a theologian to comprehend what is a work of the flesh.

Adultery

Definition

The work of the flesh called “adultery” is translated from the Greek word *moicheia* (moy-khi'-ah). According to Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words an adulterer is someone “who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another,” Adultery is distinct from the sin of fornication in that adultery is a form of fornication. Fornication being the general term for all forms of sexual immorality. It is used “of illicit sexual intercourse in general” according to Thayer but can also be used for the sin of adultery (Thayer 532). Fornication as a general term would include not only sex between those who are not married but also adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, etc.

According to Jesus the sin of adultery could be applied to a situation where a man and woman are legally and literally married to each other, but because the marriage is an unscriptural marriage they are guilty of adultery. *“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery”* (Matthew 5:31-32)

Examples in the Bible

The most infamous case of adultery is that of King David with Bathsheba. David wrote Psalm 51 demonstrating his remorse and repentance of this sin. He suffered greatly for this sin. Although he was spared the death penalty.

John the immerser confronted Herod and told him. *“For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, ‘It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife’”* (Mark 6:17-18). Although his marriage with Herodias was legal and a real marriage according to the laws of Rome, it was not a scriptural marriage according to the Law of Moses.

When Jesus dealt with a woman caught in the act of adultery by the Pharisees in John 8, He would not condemn her to stoning because there were not two witnesses and the man was not brought to be punished. He did command her to *“go and sin no more.”*

Evil of Adultery

Adultery has been called the “death warrant of marriage.” According to Jesus it was the only reason for divorce. *“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery”* (Matthew 19:9). The consequence for adultery under the Law of Moses was death by stoning. *“Thou shalt not commit adultery”* is one of the Ten Commandments. God says He hates divorce *“For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce”* (Mal. 2:16). The reason God hates it so is because adultery is a breach of the marriage contract between a man and a woman. The prophet Malachi dealt with the consequences of unlawful divorce. *“Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of*

your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant" (Mal. 2:14). God has witnessed this covenant. He has joined the two of them together (Matt. 19:5-8). Marriage is to be a life long commitment of mutual faithfulness between a man and a woman and they also being faithful to God (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39). Unfaithfulness of this contract is a sin not only against one's spouse but God as well. The story of Joseph's temptations by Potiphar's wife. *"And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.' But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'"* (Gen 39:7-9).

Many passages warn of the consequences of adultery. It will violate the marriage bed and defile it (Heb. 13:4). The pain of jealousy and anger is produced by unfaithfulness (Prov. 6:34-35). This sin brings self-reproach upon the adulterer (Prov. 6:29). This comes in the form of public shame as the adulterer is exposed before his family, friends and the children of God (Ps. 51:3; Prov. 5:9; 6:33). Adultery is known to infect the body with a myriad of diseases (Prov. 5:1). The marriage is often dissolved in divorce and the children will suffer greatly as a result. Worst of all the impenitent adulterer will suffer eternal fire for their sin. *"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death"* (Rev. 21:8).

Fornication

Definition

The modern definition of fornication is more limited than its use in scripture. *"voluntary sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons or two persons not married to each other"* (Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, p. 558). The Biblical definition was used in a more general way and includes adultery and every kind of sexual immorality. Vine informs us it *"is used of illicit sexual intercourse (i.e., communication or contact, DRV)..."* (Vine, p. 455). Whereas adultery as a specific form of fornication implies that at least one of the parties is married. Jesus includes as adultery those who have divorced and remarried unscripturally in Mt. 19:9, *"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery."*

Fornication includes many other types of sexual immorality, such as, homosexuality (Rom. 1:26,27; I Cor. 6:9-11; I Tim. 1:10); unmarried couples, adultery, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, rape, pornography, even some forms of dancing, and prostitution of any form.

Sexual Immorality in the First Century

During this age there was no strong body of opinion against immorality. To the Greco-Roman world immorality in sexual matters was not immorality; it was established custom and practice. Barclay wrote: *"...chastity was the one completely new virtue which Christianity introduced into the pagan world."* Perhaps, this is why the apostle Paul chose this work of the flesh at the top of the list.

According to the Greek, Demosthenes, *"We keep mistresses for pleasure, concubines for the day-to-day needs of the body, but we have wives in order to produce children legitimately and to have a trustworthy guardian of our homes"* (William Barclay, *Flesh and Spirit*, p. 24). In Rome, Seneca says that Roman women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married. Seneca also remarked that innocence was not rare in Rome, it was non-existent.

Application

A billboard along a major freeway stated: *"If you can't say 'No'..."* then proceeded to advocate the use of a popular birth control device. The implications are that one 1) "can't say 'no'" and 2) the seeming approval of promiscuous behavior. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett declare,

"Young people should be told that the best way to prevent the sexual transmission of AIDS is to refrain from sexual activity until as adults they are ready to establish to mutually faithful monogamous relationship."

An article in Psychology Today reported that: Studies of couples who lived together before marriage showed cohabitation did not improve the chances of marital happiness, but did point to a higher incidence of infidelity after marriage. The Scriptures illustrate the consequences of sexual immorality: Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Gen. 19); David with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12); 23,000 Israelites perished in one day for committing fornication (Num. 25:1; I Cor. 10:8) and many others could be cited.

Why Should One Wait Till Marriage?

First, reason to wait to have sex until married is to avoid the physical consequences of fornication. The so called "free sex" is costing them too much. Abortions, suicides, pregnancy, herpes, AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, poverty, dropping out of school, prostitution, sexual perversion, date rape, sterility, are all too often the high price these young people pay.

For years there were only a couple of known sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). Today there are at least twenty-seven. There is a new army of STD's invading our promiscuous nation, such as, trichomoniasis, chlamydia, and papilloma which is a virus believed to be responsible for 90% of all the cervical cancers. With the introduction of penicillin during World War II, Syphilis was nearly wiped out in 1955. Today, it still is causing brain damage, heart disease, paralysis, insanity and death.

As one researcher said, "Unless you're monogamous for a lifetime, with a monogamous partner, you're at risk. And the more partners you have, the greater the risk." Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said, "Young people should be taught that the best precaution is abstinence until it is possible to establish a mutually faithful monogamous relationship ...a monogamous man with a monogamous woman in a monogamous relationship."

Additionally, God has made it clear throughout the Bible that all fornicators who have not repented will go to loss their soul in eternal punishment (Rev. 21:8). God is seen pouring out his wrath upon Sodom and the other cities of the plain because of their gross sexual immoralities. Lust for a wicked philistine woman led to the downfall of Samson (Jg. 14-16). Using the Israelites of Moses' day Paul wrote: *"We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died"* (I Cor. 10:8). Waiting till marriage to gratify our sexual desires is worth it because Hebrews 13:4 says that *"marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral"*.

How to Avoid Fornication

Remember, the body God gave you is not yours to use anyway you wish. In the eyes of the world sex is seen as a bodily function. Just as food was for the body, they thought sex was for the body and the body was for sex. *"Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body"* (1 Cor. 6:13). Just as the human appetite for food, drink, rest, etc. naturally need to be satisfied by all, so sexual desires are to be met.

Paul responds to this pagan, carnal argument by reminding the saints at Corinth,

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:15-20).

Notice Paul tells us to *"flee fornication"* (I Cor. 6:18). This reminds us of Joseph running away

for the temptress to avoid sinning against God. Paul gives further warnings in his letters to the churches.

“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints” (Eph. 5:3). *“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire...”* (Col. 3:5). *“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”* (2 Tim 2:22).

Jesus gives a very graphic warning in his hyperbolic metaphor of self-mutilation to avoid fornication. *“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell”* (Matthew 5:28-29).

Despite these warnings there are those who do not flee or avoid or cut off fornication. Instead they seem to get as close to it as possible and think they can handle the temptation. Proverbs warns, *“Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?”* (Pr. 6:27). No! The closer you get to sexual sin, greater is the danger in being burned by it. David a man after God's own heart gave into sexual desires and was burned. Are you a stronger man or woman? So do not look at television shows or movies or internet sites that promote sensuality. Avoid listening to music that will fill your mind with impure thoughts. Turn your eyes away from looking at women or men who dress in tantalizing ways. Young people, if a boyfriend or girlfriend pressures you to commit fornication by saying, "If you really love me you would let me" you must counter with "If you really love me you wouldn't ask". Furthermore, to avoid fornication don't touch others in a way that only married couples should touch or allow any others to have this kind of physical contact with you. A saint can try to maintain his sanctification by not frequenting places of temptation; by saying "no" to fornication, extramarital sex, homosexual sex, and pornography; by not flirting with others; by not fantasizing in the mind; by turning away the head from immodesty, by turning off the channel; by turning over to another page, by keeping yourself modestly dressed before the opposite sex, and by running from it.

Finally, Christians should value the virtue of virginity. Barclay wrote: "...chastity was the one completely new virtue which Christianity introduced into the pagan world." (William Barclay, *Flesh and Spirit*, p. 24). According to the Bible and God virginity is now and has been from creation a virtue not a vice. Although the Bible speaks well of being a virgin, most kids today treat it as a joke or part of a "nerd's" personality. Such movies as "The Last American Virgin" portray this Bible virtue in this manner.

Questions:

1. What does Paul mean that the works of the flesh are "evident"?
2. Can someone be guilty of adultery just by being married to someone?
3. Make a list of sexual sins which would be included in the term fornication.

4. What was the consequence of David's adultery with Bathsheba?

5. Did Jesus condemn the sinfulness of the woman caught in adultery in John eight? Explain.

6. What are the consequences of adultery in the New Testament?

7. Demonstrate how prolific sexual immorality is throughout our society by listing some examples. Compare that with the problems of fornication in the first century.

8. How can the saints please the Father in regard to sexual morality?

9. True/False Fornication is a sin than can only take place between two people who are unmarried.

10. True/False It is alright for a boyfriend and girlfriend to engage in premarital sex so long as you plan to get married.

11. True/False Sexual immorality is far more common today than it was in Paul's day.

12. True/False The reason for sexual immorality among the Gentiles was their ignorance of God.

13. True/False Sexual immorality only hurts the people directly involved.

14. True/False Paul had not previously warned the Thessalonians about God's wrath upon the sexually immoral.

15. The Christian who commits sexual immorality rejects not only men like Paul but
 - a. God and the Roman community
 - b. God and His Church
 - c. God and the Holy Spirit
 - d. The saints and their own bodies

Application and Discussion:

1. What things can Christians do to protect themselves and their children from this world which is filled with sexual temptations?
2. Can a man or woman take fire (sexual temptation) to his bosom and not get burned? Explain.

Homework: Be alert this week to all the messages in media (via TV, internet, billboards, conversation) which promote fornication.

Uncleanness & Licentiousness

Uncleanness

Definition

Literally "*uncleanness*" referred to physical and material dirt. In the papyri - in a contract concerning the transfer of ownership of a house, the outgoing tenant undertakes to leave house clean for all - aktharsia. The word also had a medical use. Hippocrates used it to describe the impure material that gathers around a wound. According Thayer it means "*not cleansed, unclean; a. in a ceremonial sense...b. in a moral sense, unclean in thought and life...*" (Thayer, p. 21.) "*impurity, dirt...1. lit. refuse...2. fig., in a moral sense, of men...immorality...*" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 28).

In the Greek Old Testament it is used to refer to Ceremonial impurity - twenty times in Leviticus. This ceremonial uncleanness is that, when a person is in such a condition, he or she cannot approach God.

Modern Application: Pornography

The context includes "uncleanness" among sex related sins. Today, the most apt illustration of this would be such things as movies, TV programs, books, paintings, and magazines that display lewd, indecent and suggestive scenes promoting uncleanness.

Although pornography is abundant everywhere there is a way to keep yourself unspotted from this uncleanness. First, make a covenant with your eyes. Job did, "*I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze...*" (31:1). Remember, the eyes are the door of the mind. David said, "*I will set no worthless thing before my eyes*" (Ps. 101:3). What you allow to pass through will effect the way you think.

Next, commit yourself to Bible memorization. We must fill our minds with God's Word. "*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.... Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*" (Ps. 119:9,11). Fill your mind with that which is pure (Phil. 4:8). Don't forget, you are what you think (Prov. 23:7).

Third, don't put yourself in a position to be tempted. One day a mother was scraping vegetables for a salad when her daughter came in to ask permission to go to an "adult" movie. "But all the kids are going," she said, "...and their folks don't think it will hurt them." As she talked, she saw her mother pick up a handful of scraps and throw them into the salad. Rather startled, she shouted, "Mother! You are putting garbage into the salad." "I know," her mother replied, "but I thought if you didn't mind garbage in your heart and in your mind than you wouldn't care about a little in your stomach. "Thoughtfully, the girl picked the peelings from the salad and said, "I guess I won't go tonight! Remember, "*God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness*" (1 Th. 2:3).

Licentiousness

Definition

Aselgeia is the Greek term translated lewdness, Lasciviousness, licentiousness, indecency, sensuality, loathsomeness, wantonness, eagerness for lustful pleasure, wild living, sexual irresponsibility, debauchery. The very concept of this word is incomprehensible to modern man. The various synonymous terms for this sin are not even used in today's vocabulary. The definitions which follow will assist us in

comprehending what this sin entails.

The Greek word *aselgeia* is defined as "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence:...Plur. wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." (Thayer, pp. 79,80.) "It includes everything tending to promote or fulfill fleshly lust and give one's self to it, to delight in and to practice it without shame or remorse" (Fallow's Bible Ency.) It involves anything "tending to excite lustful desire" (Web. New World Dict., p. 824). "It is completely indifferent to public opinion and to public decency. Sin may get the best of a man in secret and he be ashamed. It is an act of a character which has lost that which ought to be its greatest defense - its self-respect, and its sense of shame" (Barclay, *Flesh and Spirit*, 33).

This sin involves absence of restraint. *Aselgeia*: a love of sin so reckless and audacious that a man has ceased to care what God or man thinks of his actions. It is open sin without shame. It is used of the men of Sodom in 2 Pet. 2:7. These men were involved in open and aggressive homosexuality.

Licentiousness destroys one's sense of shame. Paul wrote, of those who practice the ways of the old man of sin as "*having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness*" (Eph. 4:19).

The New King James uses "licentiousness" instead of "lasciviousness". This term means: "lacking legal or moral restraints;..." (Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dict., p. 688). The idea of a legal license. The license to sin. Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language defines licentious as "sexually unrestrained;...unrestrained by law or morality, going beyond customary or proper bounds of limits; disregarding rules." (p.826). In defining lascivious it states: "inclined to lustfulness ...arousing sexual desire; lascivious behavior; lascivious photographs...indicating sexual interest or expressive of lust or lewdness;..." (p. 808). Licentious comes from the same Latin term from whence we derive the word "license". The idea of license is to authorize someone or something to engage in or perform certain actions, such as, getting married or driving a car. The licentious man behaves himself so shamelessly with regards to his sexual desires it is as if he has a license to sin.

When Shame Is Dead

Basically, licentiousness is an attitude. It is a readiness to indulge in any pleasure without any restraint because the individual's sense of shame is inert. It is sin so open and so blatant that it has ceased to have any regard for what anyone may think or feel or say. Jeremiah described Jerusalem as being so corrupted that they didn't know how to blush (Jer. 6:15). Things that were only whispered in the days of my childhood are now openly paraded and flaunted without so much as a hint of shame by those who participate in them. "*Whose glory is in their shame*" (Phil. 3:19). Lasciviousness is directly opposite to being repulsed and embarrassed by sin. It is that has forgotten how to blush at shamefulness. J.J. Chapman in describing the first half of the second century, wrote, "an age when shame seems to have vanished from the earth." The Greco-Roman world never had shame in pre-marital and extramarital relationships or even in regard to homosexuality.

Modern Application

Many examples of licentiousness could be gleaned from current moral trends. Blatant pornography found without shame on cable, in movies, and even in prime time television programs is a perfect example.

Perhaps, the most overt sample of this attitude can be seen in America's demeanor toward homosexuality. Since homosexuals came out of the closet a decade ago, they have been clamoring for Gay Rights. They wish for their right of an "alternate lifestyle" to be recognized. They cry for their rights as they openly and shamelessly flaunt their Gay Pride, but what does the Bible have to say about the rights of the gay or homosexual. Well, the Bible is very plain concerning this: "*For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function committing indecent acts*

and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (Rom. 1:26,27). God's law condemns homosexuality. Ignoring His law man acts without shame and as if he has a license to commit sin. His flagrant disregard demonstrates the demeanor of one who considers himself above the Law.

Although seen as a harmless recreational activity that is often promoted by schools and churches, modern dancing is a form of licentiousness. Many dances of the day fit the definition of licentiousness. "Wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females" (Thayer, pp. 79,80). Dr. A.C. Dixon wrote, "The modern dance is the fine art of covering with music, indelicate, immodest, and oftentimes indecent attitudes, and postures between men and women." Dancing is an appeal to the sexual desires. In defense of dancing, Dr. Leta S. Hollinsworth of Columbia Univ.: "Dancing is thus an exciting and pleasurable recreation, as it affords a partial satisfaction to the sex impulse. ... it seems that partial satisfaction of a normal craving is better than no satisfaction." Dancing produces lust in the heart. In an audience of 1500 men, the question was asked, "how many of you can dance with a woman and not have evil thoughts?" Not one hand was raised. Jesus condemned lust itself as mental adultery (Mt. 5:28).

Brooke, in LE BLANC'S TRAVELS says, "Their garments are something lascivious, for being cut and open their skin is seen." Immodesty is licentious. It is supported by the view that a person can dress or undress in the presence of the opposite sex and time and anywhere. The sin of lasciviousness led to King David's demise and has led to many, many others, since. Bathsheba was bathing in a place so public that David saw her and committed several grievous sins. If she had a better sense of shame she wouldn't have exposed herself. If he had a better sense of shame he would have looked away. Job said, "*I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?*" (Job 31:1).

Nudity or partial nudity is always a symbol of shame in the Bible. Proverbs 7 mentions "*the attire of a harlot*". Mary Quant, the mother of the mini-skirt, said, "Mini clothes are symbolic of those girls who want to seduce a man." God wants one man and one woman to be one. No one is to see a woman except her husband and no one is to see him except his wife. For a woman to appear immodest before any other man than her husband is lascivious.

Licentiousness can include pornography. T. Fitzherbert says, "how many are there...that... make no scruple to keep lascivious pictures to provoke lust." (1602). This not only includes those men and women who shamelessly view pornography but also the men and women who shamelessly expose their bodies.

One's speech can use licentious vocabulary "...such as, filthy words..." (Thayer). Shakespeare says, "he capers nimbly in the Ladies chamber to the lascivious pleading of a Lute" (1594). Many conversations relate to shocking and uncontrolled conduct is vividly illustrated in modern day speech. radio, television, movies, newspapers, periodicals, even the funny papers. When just one curse word was used in the movie *Gone with the Wind*, people gasped - the nation's face turned red. Lyrics of songs can be found to be highly blatant and offensive as are the music video's. Today; the nation doesn't even blush over the gross and graphic language that abounds.

How to Live in a Licentious World

It is apparent from the Bible that this is not the only time in which mankind has developed a licentious culture. During the days of Noah "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Lot had been in Sodom some sixteen years because of a previous choice. That city along with its neighboring cities were destroyed by God: "*turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among the, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under the punishment for the day of judgement*" (Gen. 19:6-9).

Sodom's licentiousness greatly "oppressed" Lot. The term "oppressed" literally means to wear down, to tire out, to harass beyond endurance. Distress which Lot felt at the open and shameless ungodliness which was practiced around him. The ungodly conduct characteristic of his own family. "He

seemed unto his sons-in-law as one that mocked" (Gen. 19:14).

The first thing to note is that Lot maintained his righteousness. Furthermore, Lot is called just because he preserved himself uncontaminated among this. When the consequences of his choice became apparent to him it appears that he often desired to leave but was not able. To see and to hear it constantly, he vexed or kept on tormenting his righteous soul. Lot did not become desensitized to the sin around him. The pain that a naturally sensitive and righteous man would experience at the sight of such flagrant lawlessness as that which existed in Sodom. Lot was not a mere passive observer of their conduct, he spoke out. Lot's plan for living in a licentious world involved righteous living, not corrupted by others, not becoming indifferent, being daily concerned and seeking to do good to others though they sought evil for him.

God knows how to deliver us from this licentious world. He *"delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked"* (2 Pet 2:7)

Most sin affects the mind or the actions - one or the other. Licentiousness affects both. You see, it can be both the object of sin and the sin itself and the body is the instrument used for the fulfillment of both. May we never become desensitized to sin. Always ashamed of sin in our lives and able to blush at the abominations committed by others around us.

Questions:

1. What was the consequence of being ceremonially unclean in the Old Testament?
2. What are some things you can do to keep yourself pure from pornography?
3. What are some other synonymous terms for licentiousness?
4. Give your definition of "licentiousness".
5. Explain how licentiousness is the opposite of shamefastness.
6. Explain how public nudity, homosexuality, and pornography can involve the sin of licentiousness.
7. True/False What you fill your eyes and mind with will determine what kind of person you will be.
8. Does modern dancing fit Thayer's definition of lasciviousness?

9. True/False It is a great sign of maturity not to blush when a obscene scene pops up unexpectedly on your TV screen or when you accidently hear a dirt joke.
10. If we state that we are against homosexuals are we guilt of prejudice?
11. When God created man and the marriage relationship did he leave room for any homosexual relationships?
12. Why did Lot end up in Sodom?
13. How wicked were the peopl of Sodom and the other four cities of the plain?
14. How did Lot react to their sinfulness?
15. How was he able remain righteous?

Application & Discussion:

1. What are some things you can do to keep my soul clean in the midst of a filthy, sin filled world?
2. What are some ways you can protect and increase your sense of shamefastness?

Homework: Remember it is up to you to keep yourself unspotted from the world and be able to blush and feel ashamed at sin in the world and especially in your life.

Idolatry & Sorcery

Idolatry

Definition

The word "*idolatry*" is translated from the Greek term "eidololatreia (i-do-lol-at-ri'-ah); from 1497 and 2999; image-worship (literally or figuratively): KJV-- idolatry. (Strong's # 1495). The Greek word is found in the New Testament in 1 Cor 10:14; Gal 5:20; Col 3:5; and 1 Pet 4:3.

The function of the idol was to localize and visualize the god it represented. "This began as an expression of gratitude for the safety, the security, the justice and the good order Rome had brought to men....This began as an expression of gratitude for the safety, the security, the justice and the good order Rome had brought to men....First the unseen spirit of Rome, then the visible Emperor, then the present statue - that was the course of development....A man's God may rightly be said to be that to which he dedicates his time, his substance, and his talents, that to which he gives himself."(Barclay, pp. 33,34).

Ancient Idolatry

It is hard for us to see how mankind could worship a hunk of wood or metal. But through the years people became so accustomed to this familiar object that they were soon the very objects of worship.

When Israel came to possess the land of Promise the inhabitants all had their own idols. God warned his people that the death sentence awaited any idolater (Dt. 17:2-5). The Philistines had Dagon, the Ekronites had Baalzebub, the Moabites had Chemosh, the Ammonites had Molech or Milcom, the Phoenicians had Astarte and the Canaanites had Baal and Ashtoreth. Soon Israel turned to foreign gods. This idolatry eventually led to captivity for the kingdom of Israel and Judah (2 Ki. 17:6-18; 19-23).

Paul found the city of Athens was given "*wholly to idolatry*" (Ac. 17:16). An idol erected to everything under the sun and more. Idol gods were made of brass, gold, wood, and stone and evidently the people of Athens were quite satisfied with this condition. When the apostle preached to them of the one, true and living god, "*In whom we live and move and have our very being*" their curiosity became much aroused for they sought to know more about this strange and new teaching (17:28). They even remarked, "*We will hear thee again on this matter*" (17: 32). Some left idolatry and obeyed the gospel (17:34).

Paul condemned the Gentiles for worshiping the created things not the Creator (Rom. 1:19-23). Paul speaks of in Rom. 1:23 and "*changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image...*", the images of today are mental ones.

Modern Idolatry

Where have all the idols gone? Can an ancient evil really be a modern menace? Idolatry is seen in many forms today. Seldom is it seen in the form of carved images. Idol worship is the placing of anything ahead of our service to God, including families, jobs, school, friends, pleasures, cults sects, and denominations, a fishing pole or a gold club even Dallas Cowboys. When Christians forsake their duties to God to watch a football game or turn Sunday night worship service into a mini-Super Bowl with a ten foot TV screen to watch the game it has become idolatry.

Idolatry can be committed without any physical object being involved. Anything that competes with God for first place in our hearts. Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). The pursuit of material possession is their religion. Jesus warned about this form of idolatry throughout His ministry. In 17 of

Christ's 36 parables he dealt with such things a property, stewardship, and covetousness. Remember, material possessions will make great servants, but terrible gods.

The idols to Baal our prevalent today. Baal was the deification of nature, the Sun-god, thus Lord of the heavens. Science and Evolution are the idols dedicated to him today. It is the same attempt to explain man's origin apart from God the Creator.

Modern Molech worship is thriving. Molech was a idol to whom the people would gather around and commit fornication while the fire in the idols abdomen grew hotter. This "worship" came to a culmination with a child of one of the participants being placed in Molech's outstretched arms allowing the child to slide down into the fiery cavity of the idol. Today, fornicators "worship" the flesh until the girl is pregnant, then she sacrifices her innocent unborn child through abortion.

Idolatry has become easier with the advance of technology, producing shopaholics; pornography, sport Addicts, etc. Technology itself hasn't become a god. People who simply cannot put their phones and tablets down. Not while they're driving, not while they are having dinner with the family, not even when they are in church.

Misplaced trust is idolatry. Any ultimate concern becomes our god, become rivals to God, then we are idolaters.

"Little children, Keep yourselves from idols" (1 Jn. 5:21).

Why does God hate idolatry so much? God hates idolatry because it is dumb. How foolish is it to take a block of wood and create a god that can not hear and dumb (Is. 44:19). God hates idolatry because it is progressively sinful. Idols take one further and futher away from the true God and lead man into great wickedness (Rom. 1:18ff). God hates idolatry because it is contagious (Deut. 7:1-4). All the Kings of Israel followed the sin of Jeroboam who set up calves to worship at Dan and Bethel. God hates idolatry because he is jealous (Exodus 20:5; 34:14). Daniel Seagran: "God is not an add-on. When He permeates every aspect of our lives, our plans, our hopes, dreams, careers, vacations, and those times of stress and strain, we'll soon discover that He is not a meddlesome person to have around but an indispensable and very welcome presence." Do not make room in your heart for and other throne except for God.

Sorcery

Definition

Sorcery is another one of those terms which has been deemed an anceint relic of the past. The only time we consider the possibility of those involving themselves with it in contemporary times is some strange cult. However, the essential elements of this sin are teeming in today's world. The following definitions will help you comprehend the the gist and extent of this work of the flesh.

The "Greek pharmakeia means the use of drugs, charms or magic words" (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, p. 897). Its "primarily signified the use of medicine, drugs, spells; then, poisoning; then, sorcery,..In sorcery, the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the provision of various charms, amulets, etc., professedly designed to keep the applicant or patient from the attention and power of demons, but actually to impress the applicant with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer" (Vine, pp. 1064, 1065). *Pharmakeia* "literally the act of administering drugs and then of giving magical potions" (ISBE, vol. 5, p. 3097). "Sorcery is a perversion of the use of healing drugs in medicine" (William Barclay, FLESH AND SPIRIT, p. 36). Robertson says "a drug, the ministering of drugs, but the sorcerers monopolized the word for while in their magical arts and used it in connection with idolatry" (A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol. 4, p. 312). "...in Latin, are also often used with reference to the employment of drugs in charms and incantations;..." (Pulpit, Galatians, p. 256). Adam Clarke wrote, "...because in all spells and enchantments, whether true or false, drugs were employed."

Simon and Bar-Jesus engaged in magos, not pharmakeia (Ac. 8:11; 13:6,8). The word magos refers

to a "wizard, sorcerer, a pretender to magic powers, a professor of arts of witchcraft" (Vine).

Modern Pharmakeia

Does the Bible speak out directly against drug abuse? Many fail to see that the Bible condemns drug abuse because the King James Bible is written in 16th century terminology. Thus it is believed that drug abuse is a 20th century phenomenon. The Greek word, *pharmakeia* is translated "witchcraft" or "sorcery". From this Greek word one can clearly see that such words as "pharmacy", "pharmacist", and "pharmaceuticals" are derived. In the beginning, "pharmakeia" was a medical term; it had to do with the proper use of drugs. The learned William Barclay says that *pharmakeia* began "to denote the misuses of drugs, that is, the use of drugs to poison and not to cure. So we read about the law regarding poisoning in Plato and Demosthenes accuses a bad man of poisoning and all kinds of villainy. This is the beginning of the bad use of the word" (Flesh and Spirit, p. 36). "This word literally means the use of drugs. it can be used for the beneficent use of drugs as a doctor uses them; but it can also mean poisoning, and it came to be very especially connected with the use of drugs for witchcraft and sorcery of which the ancient world was full" (LETTER TO GALATIANS AND EPHESIANS, p. 53, William Barclay). "This was the age when men thought they could control the world and manipulate the gods. This was the age of Magic, and drugs played a major part in that age" (R. A. Morey, DRUG ABUSE, p. 33).

So the fact of the matter is, every time the Bible mentions sorcery, it also refers to drug abuse, which was an integral part of ancient sorcery. And every time the Bible mentioned sorcery, it condemns it. Therefore, the Bible condemns drug abuse.

Some see drugs as a religious experience. They believe they can get closer to God through drugs. The way to God is through faith and not drugs. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). Therefore, a drug-induced experience cannot be a true religious experience.

Despite the reason for the use of drugs, the Bible clearly condemns their abuse. Other passages teach that our bodies are not our own to use and abuse now we please (1 Cor. 3:16,17; 6:15-20).

Dangers of Drug Abuse

■ Drug Abuse Harms Our God Given Body

Scripture teaches that the human body is a gift of God and deserves the utmost respect not destruction through drug abuse. Genesis, the first book of the Bible, reveals the holiness of its creation. Man was created in God's image (Gen. 2:7). Christians should present their "bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). The fact is drug abuse is really the abuse of oneself.

■ Drug Abuse Will Cost Some Their Souls

The Bible places a severe consequence on those that abuse drugs. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, **sorcerers**, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). "But outside are dogs and **sorcerers** and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie" (Rev. 22:15).

■ Drug Abuse Violates the Law

Christians are commanded by God to obey the Laws of man. "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1). The laws of the land have criminalized the use of certain drugs without a prescription.

■ Drug Abuse Enslaves Users in Addiction

Many drugs are addictive. Despite the arguments make but advocates of legalization, marijuana can be addictive. Marijuana has long been known as a threshold drug. After one uses it for a while, it begins to take more and more marijuana to achieve the same high. Stronger drugs are required to produce the desired high, such as, speed, cocaine, and crack. Christians are to be slaves to God and righteousness not slaves to sin and lusts of the flesh. "For by what a man is overcome, by this he is

enslaved" (2 Peter 2:18). The best way to prevent addiction is never to begin using marijuana

■ **Drug Abuse Does Not Result in Finding Joy and Peace**

As is often the case with getting high on drugs, they produce a gratifying experience which is short-lived. After it is over the user is left with a feeling of emptiness. Some use drugs to escape the pain and problems of life. However, when they come down off their high, their problems are still there.

The fruit of the Spirit includes "love, joy, peace" (Galatians 5:22). We are to "*be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:6-7).

■ **Drug Abuse Destroys Sober-Mindedness**

Most illegal drugs intoxicate thus hindering self-control while at the same time lowering inhibitions. Drugs impair judgement. If a person is high, they are more likely to sin. Christians are to be sober-minded. "*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **live soberly**, righteously, and godly in the present age*" Titus 2:11-12). "*For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night...therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and **be sober***" (1 Thessalonians 5:2,6). "*Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 1:13). "**Be sober**, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). "*Likewise exhort the young men to **be sober-minded***" (Titus 2:6).

Questions:

1. What function did an idol serve?
2. What were the consequences of Israel's and Judah's idolatry?
3. What did Paul find in the city of Athens?
4. What do people worship as idols today?
5. What is the modern day equivalent of Baal worship?
6. What is the modern day equivalent of Molech worship?
7. How is covetousness, idolatry?
8. What English words do we derive from the Greek *pharmakeia*?
9. Some use drugs as an escape for the burdens of life. What does Jesus want us to do instead?

10. True False There is a drug to solve every problem for modern man.
11. Explain why drugs cannot bring about a true religious experience with the true God.
12. How can youths combat the peer pressure to do drugs?
13. Why cannot Christians use their bodies any way their want? How should Christians use their bodies?
14. What will be the eternal outcome the sorcerers and those who practice sorcery?
15. Why is addiction to drugs wrong?
16. How does drug abuse stunt spiritual growth?
17. Instead of using drugs how does one find joy and peace in this life?
18. What is sober-mindedness? How does drug abuse interfere with this virtue?

Application and Discussion:

1. Explain how materialism, technology, evolution, and our own bodies can become a idol.
2. What are some things parents can do to keep their children from engaging in drug abuse?

Homework: Examine your heart and dethrone all the idols found within. Examine the roll drugs (legal or illegal) play in your life. Do you rely too much on chemicals and not enough on your relationship with God?

Hatred, Contentions, Outbursts of Wrath & Murders

Hatred

Definition

The Greek word used for "hatred" here is *echthros* which is the normal Greek word for an enemy. The English word "hatred" is defined as, "An extreme feeling of dislike or animosity; hatred" (Funk & Wagnell's Dict., Vol. I, p. 294).

Not all hate is bad. Some things are to be hated. God hates. *"These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to [a]Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren"* (Pr. 6:16-19). We must hate sin, but love the sinner. Explaining how it was possible to hate what a man did but not hate the man, C.S. Lewis explained, "it occurred to me that there was one man for whom I had been doing this all my life - my self".

Hatred for our enemies is forbidden (Mt. 5:44). Hatred as retaliation, envy, various sins of the tongue such as talebearing, backbiting, slander, gossip, whisperings, lying, etc. will cost us heaven.

Hatred will rob you of happiness, health, friends and even heaven. Absalom hated his half-brother Amnon for abusing his sister, Tamar (2 Sam. 13:21-29). His hate for him grew to the point that he killed Amnon to avenge his sister. In the end, Absalom rebelled against his father David and was killed. When the honey bee drives his barb into the flesh he imbeds it so firmly that the only way for him to escape is to leave the stinger behind. Within three minutes He will die. For humans hatred is just as certain a form of spiritual suicide.

Suggestions for coping with hate: 1) Try sincerely to understand the person you hate. 2) Don't misconstrue either the words or actions of others. 3) Endeavor to see others as God views them (Mt. 16:26). 4) Treat others like you would like to be treated (Lk. 6:31). 5) Pray for the person hated and for the one who hates (Lk. 23:34). You cannot hate a man whose name you mention in your daily prayers to God. You will either stop hating him or stop praying. 6) Do something good for the person who is hated and help him when the occasions arise.

Contentions

Definition

The Greek term translated "*contentions*" is *eris*. Eris was the Greek goddess of strife and discord. Her opposite was the goddess Harmonia. The Romans called their goddess of contentions and discord, is Discordia whose opposite was Concordia. It was Eris who used the "Apple of Discord" to cause the strife that led up to the Trojan war.

Strong's Greek Dictionary defines *eris* as "a quarrel, i.e. (by implication) wrangling:--contention, debate, strife, variance." The term represents someone who is fond of a good fight over things which only cause strife and promote further rivalry. The contentions persons loves to stir up a good fight between brethren.

Uses in the New Testament

Besides here in Galatians five, Paul uses this term eight more times in his various letters. He

used it in Romans 1:29 when listing the sins of the Gentiles. In chapter thirteen and verse thirteen he reminds them that it is time from them to walk properly and not in contentions. Paul used it to describe the contentions among the members of the church of God at Corinth which result in divisions (1 Cor. 1:11). Later in chapter three and verse three he said that their contentions and divisions were proof they were "carnal and behaving like mere men." In his second letter to the Corinthians he feared that when he came you would find contentions among them (2 Cor. 12:20). He warned the church at Philippi that "some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife" (Phil. 1:15). He tells Timothy that those false teachers who refuse to submit to sound teachings in the words of Jesus are "proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, **strife**, reviling, evil suspicions" (1Tim. 6:4). To Titus Paul warned that it was among those things which need to be avoided because "they are unprofitable and useless" (Tit. 3:9).

Outbursts of Wrath

The word used here is akin to "2. anger, wrath, rage..." (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 365-66). "Thumos is a word with an almost unlimited potentiality for good and for evil. Thumos is in fact, as we shall see, the only possible word for the rage of an animal." (Barclay, p. 50). It is used of God, it is also used of the devil. "Quite clearly thumos is a word with a wide range of meaning, including wrath human and divine, wrath devilish and beastly, wrath noble and destructive." In secular Greek "always poised upon a razor's edge... It is like an explosive which can equally well be used to blast a way through obstacles in the way or to blast a town into ruins." (Barclay, p. 51). It is found in the LXX 300 times. It is used of men in a bad sense; and in the good sense of righteous indignation.

A related word to thumos is the word orge, which is sometimes translated "wrath" and sometimes, anger." Orge is, for instance, Paul's word for the wrath of God. Thumos is violent but brief; great but transient; temporary, momentary; like fire in straw quickly blazing up and just as quickly burning out. On the other hand, orge is long lasting. It is distinguished from orge, in that, wrath indicates a more impassioned state of the emotions. Wrath expresses more of an inward feeling. Causes someone to quickly ignite in a hot rage, but then quickly subsides. A temper would probably be a good synonym.

"Thumos is a blaze of sudden anger which is quickly kindled and just as quickly dies...Orge is anger which has become inveterate; it is long lasting, slow-burning anger, which refuses to be pacified and nurses its wrath to keep warm. For the Christian the burst of temper and the long-lasting anger are alike forbidden" (The letters To the Phil, Col., and Thess, p. 153).

Some know they have a violent temper. "I know I have a temper, but I just can't help it." "Because he blazes and forgets he thinks that others should equally be able to forget the pain he has inflicted" (Barclay, p. 53.) Brother John Clark once related a story about a woman who told a preacher she had a bad temper, but that it was over in a minute. "So is a shotgun blast, but it blows everything to pieces," was his reply.

Anger is a God given emotion. God himself is often angry. Righteous indignation is always right. We should get angry about abortion, pornography, alcohol. The formation of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) and MAD (Mothers against Drugs) says it well. It is not a sin to have the emotion of anger. In fact, being angry is commanded. Paul said, "be angry, and sin not" (Eph. 4:26) and this is found in the same chapter where he commands up to "be kind to one another" (Eph. 4:32). Anger and kindness are not mutually exclusive of one another. Sometimes by showing anger one is being kind.

If you will examine the word "anger", you will find that it is fittingly only one letter short of "danger". Cain was angry at God. The end result was he killed his brother and found himself in real danger. This kind of anger must be put away (Eph. 4:31) it cannot be prolonged (Eph. 4:26). Anger is an emotion which far too often is misused. "The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression" (Proverbs 19:11). Also, "an angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression" (Proverbs 29:22). There is a right time and place for the emotion of anger. To be sure needless words of strife just before worship is not appropriate.

Murders

The sixth commandment ("thou shalt not murder" Ex. 20:13) was give to keep men from taking an innocent life. Murder is a common crime. Homicide was the first criminal act recorded in the Bible (not counting the eating of the forbidden fruit). The Old Testament lists many murderers beginning with Cain. Homicide is very common in the U.S.

Murder is treated very seriously by God in the Bible. To take the life of a fellow human being is to assault the sacredness of the image of God (Gen. 9:6). The Law of Moses condemned murder as a capital offence. Murder demanded the death penalty for the murderer (Ex. 21:12). Yet, according to the Law of Moses the executing of a criminal, just warfare, accidental homicide, killing of animals, and self-defense are excluded from the definition of murder.

The Heart: Most Common Murder Weapon

Pharisaical righteousness deals with murder as a mere civil issue. It consisted of avoiding the act of murder. Evil was confined to the physical realm and then it was only an overt act. Criminal intent which remained in the heart was of no real consequences.

Jesus implies that the guilt for murder does not begin just when the victim dies. Murder begins in the heart (Matthew 5:21-26). Just how could one be guilty of murder without taking the life of another? Jesus gives three ways this can be done. First, one may murder his neighbor by being angry with him without a just cause. Jesus is not condemning righteous indignation. The second means by which a hater can murder is by calling his neighbor "*raca*." This was a commonly used slur used by Jews in the first century. It seems to be an attack on the intelligence of a man. Perhaps, calling him an empty headed, stupid fool." It implies one has very little brains to work with. Jesus tells us there is a third method of murdering with the hateful heart. It is by calling a man "*fool*." Is Jesus condemning the mere use of the term "fool" in relation to another human being. NO! Jesus Himself called the Pharisees "*blind fools*" (Matt. 23:17). God calls atheists fools (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). The word "fool" is translated from the Greek term *moros* from which the English word "moron" is derived. It is a disparaging comment expressing the idea that someone is morally worthless. Character assassination is murdering someone with words.

So, what can a hater who murders by mouth do to avoid judgment. First, recognize your guilt. Find the injured part immediately and make restitution. Then turn to God for forgiveness. Next, time you get angry do not let it fester into hatred. Sooner or later Jesus will come again and arrest you for murdering another in your heart and with your mouth. Instead, arrest murder in the making by controlling you anger and your speech.

Abortion is Murder

Although the term "abortion" is not found in the Bible, it is a form of murder. It takes the life of the most innocent and vulnerable. Just how is guilt of murder in abortion.

◆ The Mother

In the nine wars since 1775, there has only been 667,286 American battle deaths. Today, it takes American mothers only five months to kill as many. An estimated 1.5 million abortions are performed in the U.S. every year.

Mothers lament the lose of this children to war are waging war on their unborn children. Some mothers may argue: "I have a right to my own body." God is the Creator. He made men and women. He has the first right over our body. When a woman is pregnant she there are two bodies and souls under consideration. No woman has a right to interfere with a life God has created.

◆ The Doctor

The pregnant mother puts a contract out on the fetus' life, pays the doctor, and he is the official murderer. He is just a guilty of murdering the child as were the Romans who murdered Christ being delivered to them of the Jews. Abortion is now one of the most if not the most frequently performed

operation in the world. How inconsistent that one group of doctors are working to save human life by operating on babies before they are born and another group of doctors are methodically killing these unborn babies. Adding to this irony is a Memphis doctor who was fined \$5,000 for killing an Eagle. However, he could go out the next day and perform five abortions and be paid \$5,000 each.

◆ **The Father**

If the father of the child suggests or requests that the mother abort, he is also an accessory after the fact. If he pays for it and promotes it in any way, he is just as guilty. If he is apathetic about the aborting of his child than he is also guilty. Unfortunately, many fathers never have a chance to defend the life of their unborn child.

◆ **Anyone Who Encourages it**

In short, anyone who encourages abortion in any way or anyone who looks the other way and will not help stop abortion is just as guilty as the mother, father or doctor. Added to this list could be anyone who is just being apathetic about abortion and not trying to do good (Js. 4:17).

We should never forget that if ever there was a killing without mercy, a death without dignity, it was on Calvary. Yet from that killing, came the grace of God to be poured out upon all men throughout the subsequent ages. Like a murderer long ago prayed, so all abortionist can cry out "*Deliver me from blood-guiltiness...*" (Ps. 51:14) and God through Christ can even forgive murderers.

Questions:

1. Name some things we should hate.
2. Is it possible to hate the bad things some people do without hating the person?
3. What are some of the consequences of hating someone?
4. What was the end result of Absalom's hatred for his half-brother Amnon?
5. What are some things we can do to keep from or overcome hate for another?
6. True/False Debates always cause strife and variance or contentions.
7. The term "*contention*" is translated from what Greek goddess?
8. Name some of the problems in the church at Corinth which caused strife or contentions.
9. Describe some useless quarrels your have witnesses or heard about.

10. If one has a short temper he should a) simply apologize for his outburst b) use better self-control c) blame it on his parents.
11. List some things we should get mad about.
12. Why should we deal with our anger in a timely manner?
13. How does one murder with heart and tongue?
14. Who all is guilty of murder in an abortion?

Application and Discussion:

1. What do all four of these works of the flesh have in common?
2. How should Christians react to the murdering of innocent babies in abortion?

Homework: Replace the negative attitudes of your heart toward your fellow man with love.

Jealousies, Envy & Selfish Ambitions

Jealousies

Definition

The word here for "jealousies" can be used in a good sense or a negative sense. *"Zelos, zeal or jealousy, translated 'envy'...is to be distinguished from phthonos, and, apart from the meanings 'zeal' and 'indignation,' is always translated 'jealousy' in the R.V. The distinction lies in this, that envy desires to deprive another of what he has, jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself"* (Vine, p. 367). "1. in a good sense zeal, ardor...2. in a bad sense jealousy, envy..." (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 338). "1. zeal, ardor in embracing, pursuing, defending anything...2. an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy." (Thayer, p. 271). Referring to its positive sense Barclay said, *"this zeal is the passion for God which burns a man up, and sets him aflame for God."* (p. 45). Barclay says *zelos* could denote a great thing which degenerated into a sin. Desire to "emulate" or "imitate" with a view to achieving the same worthwhile thing in oneself. Thus, the use of the word "emulation". The holy jealousy of God (Ezk. 16:37,38; 23:35). In the LXX, God's zeal will perform this (Is. 9:7). *"This zeal is the passion for God which burns a man up, and sets him aflame for God"* (Barclay, p. 45) God is never said to be envious, but He is a Jealous God (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Dt. 4:24).

Jealousy is indeed a sin when it is misdirected without knowledge or with the wrong desires. In a positive way one can be jealous with a vigilant guarding of a possession. God is jealous of the worship and service which is due to Him alone because He is God and there is none other. His jealousy is not selfishness but a natural expression of His holiness. His jealousy is never produced out of insecurity, covetousness or an over inflated ego. Instead, it is totally consistent with His love and holiness.

Meaning of Envy

Although in modern English we often use these two terms interchangeably, in the Greek they had distinct meanings. "envy, is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others; this evil sense always attaches to the word,..." (Vine, p. 367). Envy is "incapable of good is used always and only in an evil signification" (Trench, p. 87).

The English word "envy" comes from the Latin word "invidere" (in - against; videre or video - to look at) meaning "to look askance at or to have hatred or ill will toward another. It is a feeling of displeasure and ill will because of another's advantages, possessions, etc." (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Ency., Vol. 2, p. 314). The word is always used in a bad sense.

Contrast Between These Two

William Barclay explains that *zelos* is "that feeling is not sorry that the other person possesses the fine thing; it is sorry that it itself does not...On the other hand, *phthonos* is 'a kind of pain at the sight of good fortune,' 'pain at another's good,'. The man who has *phthonos* in his heart is not fired with noble ambition; he is simply embittered at the sight of someone else possessing what he has not got, and he would do his utmost, not to possess the thing, but to prevent the other person from possessing it." (Barclay, p. 47).

While *zelos* simply covets the wealth and honor of others *phthonos* is a grudging thing. Envy is not necessarily wanting for yourself, but merely wanting it to be taken from another. Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing the advantage or prosperity of another. The envious are annoyed at their friends' successes. They will do things just for spite. The Corinthian's jealousy over preachers

led to strife and division. *“For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?”* (1 Cor. 3:3-4).

Consequences of Jealousy & Envy

Though envy and jealousy have a different meaning they have the same causes, characteristics, and consequences, and cure.

In South America, there is a parasitic vine called the "matador." The vine starts growing at the foot of a tree. As it grows upward, it clings to the trunk of the tree. It ultimately kills the tree. When it reaches the top, it sends forth a flower to crown itself. Matador means "killer." Envy is also a killer. It seems harmless as it begins its upward climb - it is so small. If envy is allowed to grow, it will harden into hatred. Hatred sometimes leads to murder.

Devastating results have come from envy, Jesus was delivered to Pilate to be murdered on a cross. Cain envied Abel to the point of killing him (Gen. 4:4,5; 1 Jn. 3:12).

Jealous can be an ugly word when it results in resentment and hostility toward another because they are enjoying a blessing one wants for themselves. Jacob favored Joseph and "his brothers were jealous of him" (Genesis 37:11). This resulted in their sins against their younger brother by selling him into slavery and deceiving their father causing him to think his son was dead.

If Joey has a new bike, then I should rejoice with Joey. Some might go over and try to find some flaws so that his joy might be diminished. To just keep abreast of Joey is bitter rivalry or jealousy. To desire that Joey lose his new found joy is envy. Envy will try to remove that source of joy. If another boy or girl is a better athlete or Bible student, then try to duplicate those good qualities out of admiration, not from envy or jealousy. Effect the good thing in our own lives rather than with the competitive spirit.

Jewish folklore has many stories depicting the ugliness of envy. A certain store owner who was visited by an angel. The angel offered the man a wish that would give him anything he desired. However, there was one condition - his rival, whom he envied intensely, would receive double what the wish granted. Without hesitation, the envious man wished to be blind in one eye.

God is Jealous

Jealousy can be a bad character trait. Yet, the fact is, "the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. 34:14). How can God be jealous? "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8) and "love is not jealous" (1 Cor. 13:4 NAS). Can God be sour and selfishly possessive? The word "jealous" is specifically used at least twenty times in Scripture to describe the character of God. Since God does not change (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8), He has always been jealous. Again, please note that it is one of His names is Jealous.

The Hebrew word for jealousy means "redness of the face that accompanies strong emotion" (Feinberg, 1942, p. 429). The term can be associated with fire. *"For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God"* (Deut. 4:24).

Whereas jealousy can be a flawed emotion in mankind, it is not that way with God. So, why is jealousy in man sometimes sinful, but jealousy of God is a Divine attribute? Perhaps comparing it to the husband/wife relationship will make the issue clearer. If a man sees some other man actually trying to alienate his wife's affections from him and seduce her, then he has reason to be righteously jealous. God gave her to be his wife. Her body is to him just as his body is her. As her husband he has the exclusive right to enjoy her fully, and for someone else to assume that right would be a violation of God's holy standards. If a husband was not jealous over the other man's amorous advances toward his wife he would not be a loving or holy husband. In a marriage, a wife has the right to expect faithfulness by her husband. She would be right to be jealous if her husband was sharing his body with another woman because their marriage covenant made their relationship exclusive of all others. If a husband sees another man flirting with his wife, he is right to be jealous, for only he has the right to flirt with his wife. This type of jealousy is not sinful. Rather, it is entirely appropriate.

In the same way, God is jealous for His wife. He will not accept the idea that He has to share our passion and affection with anyone or anything else. Israel was warned against playing the harlot with

other gods, "lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods" (Ex. 34:15,16). They prostitute themselves by "playing the harlot" (Jeremiah 3:6-10). God called Israel's idolatrous practice "adultery," and for this reason He had "put her away and given her a certificate of divorce" (3:8). The man or woman who worships other gods is committing spiritual adultery against God. Surely, God has a right to be jealous.

Selfish Ambitions

Definition

In the beginning of its usage the word meant working for hire, but it came to mean the man who works only for the pay. It came to mean one who seeks office for personal or party ambition without any intent to serve. The motive is not so much a desire for financial, but for personal prestige and power. Therefore, the best translation would be selfish ambition which often results in rivalry and division among men. Consider the following definitions:

"Denotes ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self-will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes party-making. It is derived, not from eris, strife, but from erithos, a hireling; hence the meaning of seeking to win followers, 'factions,'...not improbably the meaning here is rivalries, or base ambitions..." (Vine, p. 398).

"found before NT times only in Aristotle ...where it denotes a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means." (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 309).

"a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts;..." (Thayer, p. 249).

"...primarily, labor for hire and is applied to those who serve in official positions for hire or for other selfish purposes, and in order to gain their ends..." (Vincent, p. 165).

"...personal ambition and partisan rivalry, can never even begin to appear; but when Christ is removed from the center and when any man's ambitions and policies become the center, then inevitably and certainly eritheia, personal competition, will invade the Church and will disturb the peace of the brethren" (Barclay, p. 56).

Bible Examples

While Jesus still walked among them, the Twelve were constantly demonstrating this work of the flesh in their desire to be the greatest. As Jesus and his disciples traveled to Capernaum one day, they were arguing over this. When they arrived at the house, Jesus asked them what they had been talking about. *"But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest"* (Mark 9:34). He called them to set down and told them that the way to be first was to be last and servant to everyone (v. 35). Later, James and John came to Jesus with selfish ambition and asked if they could be seated on his right and left hand when He established His kingdom (Mark 10:35-37). Jesus told them they didn't know what all was involved in their request. Their ambition was too self-centered and misguided to see what all was involved in His coming Kingdom (vv. 38-40). When the other disciples heard about this they were upset, not because James and John's self-seeking desire, but because of their rivalry over being the greatest (v. 41). *"But Jesus called them to himself and said to them, 'You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'"* (vv. 42-45). Even on the very night that Jesus was to be betrayed the disciples' rivalry surfaced after the instituting of the Lord's Supper. Again, He points out that only by service to others and suffering for the cause will they find greatness (Lk. 22:24-30).

Instead of seeking great position and recognition for yourself we should *"...in honor give*

preference to one another;" (Rom. 12:10) and "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3,4).

Questions:

1. Describe the difference between envy and jealousy.

2. True/False Jealousy is sometimes used in a good sense in the New Testament.
3. True/False Envy is always used to in a good sense in the New Testament.
4. In what ways should we be jealous?

5. What role did jealousy play in the conflict what Joseph and his brothers?

6. What role did jealousy play in the crucifixion of Christ?

7. Explain why jealousy must be an inherent part of God's nature.

8. Selfish ambition means a) seeking to serve others b) desiring a position of leadership c) self-seeking pursuit of prestige and power.
9. Why didn't the disciples want to tell Jesus what they had been discussing on the road to Capernaum?

10. According to Jesus what is the proper way to obtain true greatness in His kingdom?

11. True/False We should put the interests of others before that of our own interest.

Application and Discussion:

1. Does jealousy have a place in the marriage relationship? Explain.

2. List ways you can overcome selfish ambitions.

Homework: Make sure you have a scriptural estimate of yourself in relationship to others.

Dissensions & Heresies

Dissensions

Numerous times people have written, prayed, and preached words of thanksgiving for the various denominations so abundant in America. Although there is nothing wrong with our love for the religious freedom enjoyed in this country, Paul condemned party spirits and religious division when he listed dissensions among the works of the flesh. It is just as much a work of the flesh as fornication, adultery, drunkenness, murder, etc. Galatians 5:21 warns against practicing any of these: “...of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Since our soul will be in jeopardy if we are guilty of this sin it makes good sense to understand what it is.

Definition

“*Dichostasia* (dee-khos-tas-ee'-ah) is found three times in the Greek New Testament: Galatians 5:20; Romans 16:17; and 1 Corinthians 3:3. Some disagree with the inclusion of *dichostasia* in 1 Corinthians 3:3 due to the lack of support from ancient manuscripts. It means “lit., a standing apart (dicha, asunder, apart, stasis, a standing),...” (Vine, p. 1008). Thayer defines it as “to cut into two parts, cleave asunder, dissever” (p. 158). The prefix “di-” means “to divide” in many words in numerous languages. As can be seen in the words “dialogue” (two or more speakers); “diameter” (cutting a circle into two equal parts); “dissect” (dividing an organism into various parts); etc. Thus, dissension takes place whenever two or more parties are created by drawing a line between what one believes. Dissension also encourages others to choose sides.

Extra-Biblical uses of this term are not much more abundant than what we find in the New Testament. In secular Greek Herodotus uses this word to describe what happened when a commander changed sides in the middle of a campaign. One of the early Christians works known as “The Shepherd of Hermas” continually warns against it. It is found only once in the Septuagint (1 Maccabees 3:29, one of the books of the Apocrypha).

The Party Spirit Afflicted Corinth

The church at Corinth had serious problems with dissension. “*for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and **divisions** among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*” (1 Corinthians 3:3). Paul began his letter declaring that he was against religious divisions among followers of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 he condemns religious divisions and gives his reasoning.

“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I am of Apollos,’ and ‘I am of Cephas,’ and ‘I am of Christ’. Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

Today, it is “I am of Martin Luther”; “I am of the Baptist”, “I am a Mormon”, “I am a Jehovah’s Witness”, etc.” To prove his point Paul asked three questions which demonstrate the illogical position and unscripturalness of religious divisions. First, he asked, “Has Christ been divided?” That is, “Are you

to be divided up into distinct religious parties by standing apart from each other?" Paul answers his own question in 1 Corinthians 12:25: *"that there should be no division in the body,..."* What is this "body"? *"Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it"* (1 Corinthians 12:27). The body of Christ is the church made up of individual Christians. If Christ is not divided and the church is His body, then it naturally follows that His church is not divided up into various parties. Corinth was divided up into various parts instead of being a united body in Christ. Next, he asked, *"Paul was not crucified for you, was he?"* No. Only Christ could have died for the salvation of the Corinthians. The final question, "Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Again, the answer is "no!" They were baptized in the name of Christ. Therefore, they should put on His name and no one else (Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 3:26,27; Acts 18:8).

Paul tells the Corinthians how to exorcize this party spirit which was haunting Corinth. They must *"speak the same thing"*, *"let there be no division among you"*, and be of the *"same mind and same judgment"* (v. 10). Jesus prayed in Gethsemane on the night He was betrayed that His disciples have the same oneness that He and the Father enjoyed (John 17:20). God and His Son do not stand apart from each other, but they stand together on all things. Jesus warned, *"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 'And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand'"* (Mark 3:24,25). We either stand together or fall apart.

Troublemakers in Rome

Paul wrote the church at Rome, *"I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you"* (Romans 16:17-20)

Paul called the brethren in Rome to notice the danger of troublemakers who would come in bringing dissensions. He goes on to give a clear profile of these dissenters.

- They cause offenses or create difficulties. Elsewhere the word is used to indicate stumbling blocks.
- They stand in opposition to sound doctrine. Thus, in dissension the standing apart is not just from one another, but from the Gospel itself.
- Not only are they disobedient to the Word, but they are devoted to their bellies instead of the Lord. Their desire is to benefit their own appetites and bank accounts. They do not glorify their God, instead their god is their belly (Philippians 3:19).
- Deception of the simple happens to be their key method to enlist new dissenters into their ranks. They specifically target the simple. "Simple" does not mean weak-minded, but rather unsuspecting. Thayer defines it as "fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one" (21). Keep in mind these troublemakers do not come in half-drunken, tatoos everywhere, and a mean attitude. Instead they are likened by some to child-molesters. "They pervert and exploit innocence" (McGuiggan, p. 444).
- Next, Paul informs us how they deceive the simple. Their main mode of operation is with smooth words and flattering speech. Speech that sounds like the truth and words that sound good. Things that people like to hear (2 Timothy 4:3-4). They are con artists who cry out peace even when there is no peace, because that is what everyone wants to hear. Acting like perfect counterfeits to the real thing they deceive the simple, but not those who are looking closely.

More importantly Paul informed the church at Rome how to disarm those who cause dissensions. First, the saints in Rome were to "mark them". Definition of *skopeo*: "to look at, observe, contemplate, to mark...to fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to, anyone: Rom. 16:17; Phil. 3:17;..." (Thayer, 579). The thought is that they are to watch for, and to be alert to, those who would bring about such a condition among them. The New Testament is resplendent with examples of warnings to keep one's eye on false

teachers. Jesus warned the disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees (Matthew 15:14; 23:1-39). He told them to keep a close eye on what these people taught and how they behaved. Peter marked sinners and false teachers (Acts 2:22; 4:8; 2 Peter 2:1-22). Paul marked false teachers (Acts 13:8-11), such as Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Timothy 2:16-18); Alexander the coppersmith, Hymenaeus and Alexander, and Demas (2 Timothy 4:14,10; 1 Timothy 1:19,20). Do not close your eyes to what they are doing. Next, they are to avoid them. The Greek word for avoid is *ekklineo* which means "not only keep out of their way, but remove from it if you fall in with them" (Vincent 3:181). Webster defines the English word: "to depart or withdraw from: to keep away from; stay clear of." Ironically, Paul is commanding them to stand apart from (avoid) those who cause others to stand apart (dissension).

Too many this seems to be a bit extreme for our tolerant society. We have become a kinder more tolerant people. However, when we have superior attitudes and practices than our Lord and His apostles we are in danger of calling good evil and evil good.

Knowing that there will be troublemakers and knowing how to deal with them is one thing. However, the Christians in Rome needed to know how to prevent themselves from becoming troublemakers or becoming a victim of one. Paul reminds them of his gratitude for their reputation for obedience and encourages them to continue to obey. Obedient servants of God are not likely targets of false teachers. They must be wise or skilled experts in what is good. Contrasted with this skill is their innocence or inexperience in what is evil. If they practice these three things then the God of peace will not only bring an end to all troublemakers, but will crush Satan himself.

Heresies

Definition

Whenever we hear this word today we tend to think only of a belief contrary to orthodoxy and true doctrine. However, this Greek word meant something different, though not altogether distinct. In Greek, heresies is not entirely bad. It can mean either an act of choosing or a choice. "*...a body of people who have all made the same choice.*" (Barclay, p. 58).

According to Vine's it means "*denotes a choosing, choice (from *haireomai*, to choose); then, that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects,...*" (Vine, p. 547).

The factious or self-willed person presses his opinions to the point of division within the church. When any such group crystallizes itself about the specific point (negative or positive) excluding all others who do not share such views the result is a party.

The process of development went something like this: 1) he makes a choice; 2) this becomes an opinion; 3) he becomes self-willed; 4) he then becomes opinionated and substitutes his opinion for truth and thus makes it law; 5) this causes division and the formation of sects and parties. Thus, the opinion becomes the false dogma which ends up producing a sect or division within the church.

Bible Examples

The word is used in 1 Cor. 11:19 to describe the condition in the church at Corinth when they "observed" the Lord's Supper. They disgraced the Lord's Supper by making it the common feast. Fabricating a common meal similar to our "pot-luck" dinners where everybody ate their own pot; the rich dined in luxury while the poor went hungry.

The Pharisees were prone to this work of the flesh. Jesus condemned their traditions (or opinions) of men. Their practices were based on human opinion, thus nullifying the commands of God. Therefore, a simple matter like the washing of hands before eating became a religious service, resting on human opinion (Mt. 15:1-14).

Application

God spoke to Moses in a burning bush (Ex. 3:4). What kind was it? One may have a right to an

opinion in this case, provided he does not force it upon someone else nor makes an issue of it. The fact is we may never know. This happens to be one of those secret things that only God knows. *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."* (Dt. 29:29).

We have a right to our opinions. However, we do not have a right to hold any opinion that is in direct opposition to the revealed Will of God. Many people argue over what is right or wrong but never turn to God's Word for an answer. Instead, they hold onto opinions based merely upon their human traditions and limited knowledge. They are like the two fellows in totally dark room arguing over the color of carpet in the room, but refusing to turn on the light so as to take a good look at it. Where the Bible speaks it is right for us to listen, but we do not have a right to formulate our own opinion.

Once a church in the southwest held the opinion that it was wrong for a preacher to part his hair in the middle. One day a newcomer to the congregation was given the responsibility of bringing in a preacher for a gospel meeting. On the morning the meeting was to start the other members thought to ask him if he remembered that they were against having any preacher who parted his hair in the middle. He said he did, but had invited a man who parted his hair in the middle anyway. They were quite upset with him, but it was too late to do anything about it. A few minutes later the preacher walked in. Sure enough, he parted his hair in the middle, with a SIX INCH part. He was bald.

Remember, you have a right to your opinions, but you do not have a right to force them upon others and some opinions are best kept to yourself.

Questions:

1. Dissensions literally mean a) a standing apart b) choice or opinion c) laborer for hire.
2. Explain who denominations met the definition of dissensions.
3. Why couldn't the Corinthians call themselves after Paul's name?
4. What was the solution to dissension among the Corinthians brethren according to Paul?
5. True/False Dissension also encourages others to choose sides.
6. Who was causing dissensions at the church in Rome?
7. What was to be done in regard to these troublemakers?

8. What are some modern examples of dissensions?
9. What will become of these guilty of dissension?
10. True/False Heresies in the N.T. means making choices or opinions.
11. Give some examples of heresies from the Bible.
12. What do you believe was Paul's thorn in the flesh in 2 Cor. 12:7f? If your belief about this opinion or fact? Who really knows the answer to this question?
12. True/False Everyone has a right to their opinion about any Bible subject.

Application & Discussion:

1. How are the works of the flesh: dissensions and heresies related? How can the opinion that one should not eat meat sacrificed to idols produce dissensions and heresies?
2. Discussion: "I have a right to my opinions, but sometimes I have a responsibility to keep them to myself."

Homework: Remember not to contend for your opinions to the point of being contentious.

Drunkenness & Revelries

Drunkenness

Definition

The final two works of the flesh involve sins of fleshly gratification. They are most common in today's society. The word for "drunkenness" here condemns someone who is drunk. "*Strong drink (akin to methu, wine,...denotes drunkenness, habitual intoxication.*" (Vine, p. 334) "*Intoxication, drunkenness:*" (Thayer, p. 395.)

Is Drunkenness a Disease?

The sin of drunkenness, which is found and condemned throughout the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation has disappeared. In its place is a sickness or disease causing individuals to drink irresponsibly - alcoholism. So, how can any descent human condemn person another just because he is suffering from a disease?

The Bible places drunkenness on a list of sins (e.i., works of the flesh) not a list of diseases. No matter what name we give it, drunkenness is still a sin. Paul reminds us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:13-20). Sin against the body is sin against God. Alcoholism is a euphemism for drunkenness. With words they reduce the sense of personal moral responsibility for the choice to drink. We have ignored sin and found either a medical, emotional, or social phenomenon to blame for our problems. Dr. Donald R. Young, staff member of the Menninger Foundation, said, "It is a mistake to describe alcoholism as a disease, because it makes the alcoholic feel he is not morally responsible for his behavior. It is important, some assume, to remove some of the social stigma from alcoholism by calling it a disease". If alcoholism is a disease, why are millions of dollars spent annually in advertising to persuade people to run the risk of contracting such a devastating malady?

Alcoholism can be easily be avoided by everyone. That is, if everyone chooses never to drink alcohol. Solomon in his great wisdom, warned, "*do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper*" (Proverbs 23:32,33). Do you hear what he said? Do not even look at it! Solomon is not say it is okay to drink alcohol so long as you are blindfolded.

The Physical Dangers of Alcohol

Did you know that by the time your child reaches legal drinking age, he will have had the opportunity to see alcohol consumed on television 75,000 times? Perhaps you already know that the average age when boys and girls begin to drink in America is twelve. Our children imitate what they see on TV. And TV ads give a false image of alcohol. If all you knew about alcohol was what you saw on TV commercials, you would think that all athletes drink beer...that you can't have a good time without alcohol...and that drinking wine will make you successful and attractive. Some beer ads make it seem that the greatest reward for hard work is a brew with the boys, and it all seems so harmless.

One of the high cost of alcohol is that it hurts every part of the human body.

As an example of the ravages of brain damage, the bodies of "skid row" drunks show such extensive destruction of brain cells that their brains are worthless for use in teaching basic brain structure to medical students. Just about the time one starts to feel the effects of the alcohol it is a sign that brain cells have already been destroyed. Brain cells are not replaced. What you are born with is what you have. Let's face it some of us can't afford to sacrifice any by drinking. We need all the brain cells we've

got.

Drinking contributes to heart disease making the "heart beat faster, causing a marked fatigue of the heart. It causes an enlargement of the heart called a "beer heart".

It is the liver that detoxifies alcohol from the blood. After many years of alcohol consumption the organ becomes uneven, hard and lumpy, and shrinks in size. This slows the flow of blood and causes dilation of the veins. Thus, alcohol is the leading cause of cirrhosis or loss of liver function.

Alcohol disrupts the filtering apparatus of the kidneys which helps clean out the blood.

Alcohol affects the blood and makes your body less resistant to disease. A new report has appeared to the effect that even moderate amounts of alcohol damages the bone marrow, which in turn affects the production of red blood cells.

It irritates the digestive tract from the mouth on down. Digestion, instead of being a pleasant process, becomes a serious problem. In short, alcohol damages every gland and organ of the body. Over 200,000 people die of cancer every year and the most common site of cancer is the digestive tract.

One of the reasons the Bible condemns drinking is because of its harm to the body. According to I Cor. 6:19,20, God didn't give us bodies to be destroyed by drinking or any other substance or habit. *"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, which you have from God, that you are not your own. You have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body."*

Consider what the Bible says on the effects of drinking: *"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things. and you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, or like one who lies down on the top of a mast."* (Pr. 23:29-34). Additionally, the Bible warns in Proverbs 23:35 of the addiction, *"They struck me, but I did not become ill; They beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink."* We conclude that drinking in moderation is not the solution to alcoholism. It is the main cause of it.

Alcohol Destroys Sober-mindedness

God expects Christians to use their mind to serve Him faithfully and fight temptations. ***"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"*** (1 Peter 5:8). The term "sober" is translated from the Greek word *nepho* meaning "to abstain from wine (keep sober)" (Strong).

God had always required his leaders and special servants to abstain so they can fulfill their duties with a sound mind. It is interesting to note that Old Testament priests were forbidden the use of wine because of their work in the Tabernacle (Lev. 10:8-11). Today, the office of a bishop and the drinking of alcoholic beverages do not mix any better than water does with oil. John the Baptist who was sent with a special mission by God was not to drink any wine or liquor. As the angel instructed Zacharias, *"For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb."* Elders and deacons are told to not be found along side of alcohol according to their qualifications in 1 Timothy chapter three.

Some teach and believe that alcohol can be used harmlessly in moderation. Earl L. Douglas wrote, "the moderate use of a habit forming drug is something that cannot be taught." The attempt at moderate drinking has led many down the path to alcoholism. Not a single drunk on Skid Row meant to be there when he took his first drink. Every person who has become an alcoholic did so unintentionally by taking his first drink. Dr. A. D. Ivey has said, "When a person starts to drink occasionally, he or she takes a 1 in 9 chance of becoming a heavy or addicted drinker or alcoholic. There is no way of telling in advance which drinker will become an alcoholic."

Sober-mindedness is affected with the first drink of alcohol. Dr. Ralph Overman of the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies said, "when you have drunk one drink, you are one drink drunk!" Moderate drinkers are trying to justify light drunkenness or being slightly intoxicated. They are trying to get as close to sin as they possibly can, enjoying its pleasures while not being held accountable. The truth is: one is as drunk as he drinks and that begins with the first drink.

Revelries

Definition

Although this word is still used to some extent. Most people do not use it in their daily conversations. The definitions of the Greek term *komos* for "revelries" include:

- ▶ *"orig. a festal procession in honor of Dionysus, then a joyous meal or banquet, in the N.T...only a bad sense excessive feasting...carousing, revelry..."* (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 462)
- ▶ *"a revel, carousal, i.e. in the Greek writ. prop. a nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry..."* (Thayer, p. 367)
- ▶ *"Revellings (komoj, old word also for drinking parties like those in honor of Bacchus, in N.T. only here and Rom. 13:13; I Pet. 4:3" (A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the N.T., Vol. 4, p. 312.)*
- ▶ *"A komos was a band of friends who accompanied a victor of the games after his victory. They danced and laughed and sang his praises. It also describes the bands of the devotees of Bacchus the god of wine. It describes what in regency England would have been called a rout. It means unrestrained and uncontrolled revelry, enjoyment that has degenerated into license" (Barclay, The letters to the Gal. and Eph.,).*
- ▶ *.The word...comes from... Comus, the god of feasting and revelling...he was a god of the obscene...and his rites consisted in feasting and drunkenness, and every kind of obscenity. Hence,...Comus, denotes revelling, that is, feasting with lascivious songs, accompanied with music. According to Suidas,...The Comus is a drunken dance, which, when the drinking is continued, provokes lasciviousness, and makes the feast a scene of very dishonorable actions" (Mackintosh on the Epistles, Vol. I, p. 454).*

Modern Application

Revelry can be seen in the modern cocktail parties, falsely so called "happy hours" at bars and taverns, most all rock music concerts held out of doors, some celebrations of victory by sports fans and office Christmas parties. The modern dance hall, is indeed a place of revelry, with its loud sensual music, suggestive, provocative, even obscene songs, and drinking.

Resplendent throughout the definitions of "reveling" is dancing. *"a jovial festivity, with music and DANCING; a carousal, merry making."* (Lidell and Scott.) *"the revelling referred to was festival entertainment that was accompanied by carousing and DANCING."* (M. R. Vincent.) *"A jovial assembly of friends, who meet at an entertainment, or to celebrate a festival, with music, DANCING,...singing, dancing, and indulging in wanton and boisterous merriment;..music, DANCING,..."* (Donnegan's Lexicon). Even in the modern english dictionaries dancing is an inherent part of this term. *"An occasion of merrymaking or noisy festival with DANCING."* (American College Dict.) *"Specifically a kind of dance...the revels were DANCES of the more free and general nature."* (Century Dict.)

Even some night clubs and dance halls have included as a part of their names "revelry", "revelings", and "revelers".

The lambada, is a Brazilian dance. The lambada's trademark is constant body contact, and a grinding pelvic motion that keeps the action certifiably steamy. Arthur Murray dancers Michael Hamilton labels it "the safe sex of the '90s."

Dancing leads to fornication. Edward Stevens preaching at the Florence Crittenden Home asked the matron as to the cause of all these unwed-mothers. "Most of them say they started toward their ruin when they learned to dance." Thousands of men have used the dance as the surest way to trap a girl. Young people are told not to, but wait till marriage. Then allowed to practice things that stimulate the sexual desires via a dance. Young people cannot flee fornication when they run to a dance. Dr. A. C. Dixon, said it well, "The modern dance is the fine art of covering with music, indelicate, immodest and

ofttimes indecent attitudes and postures between men and women. It is too bad for reformation. Its only remedy is extermination" (The Carnival of Death, P. 70).

Dancing of today is "Lasciviousness and Reveling set to music". And *"those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Gal. 5:21b). Young people, remember what you are giving up. You are giving up Heaven if you do.

Questions:

1. True/False The final two works of the flesh involve sins of fleshly gratification.
2. Does the Bible treat drunkenness as a disease? Explain.
3. How can drunkenness be easily avoided by anyone?
4. How does the world, commercials and entertainment portrait drinking of alcohol?
5. True/False One of the high cost of alcohol is that it hurts every part of the human body.
6. What does drinking do to the brain?
7. What does drinking do to the liver and kidneys?
8. What is it wrong to harm our bodies with drinking?
9. Can one practice the virtue of sober-mindedness while being under the influence of alcohol? Explain.
10. Why is sober-mindedness so important among those who are in positions of leadership?
11. Give you own definition of *"revelries"*.

12. Show how modern dancing fits the definition of "*revelries*".
13. What connection does modern dancing have with fornication?
14. True/ False The Holy Spirit could not have used two words (licentiousness and reveling) to more accurately describe the evil of modern dancing.

Application & Discussion:

1. How would you argue against social drinking and/or drinking in moderation?
2. What are some other forms of revelries practices today?

Homework: Be sober-minded by minding the things you drink and do.

Love

Definition

"Love" is a misused, misunderstood word. It has been commercialized and equated with sex. If one's understanding of love is what commercials, motion pictures and TV specials portray, one has a terribly distorted picture of love! Really what they describe could more aptly be called lust! It is not the same love defined by Webster's "...passionate affection for a person of the opposite sex...a feeling of warm personal attachment...sexual desire or passion..." (p. 849). Robert Frost said, "There ought to be a quota on one's use of it."

The Bible speaks a great deal about "love". It tells us what love is in the great chapter on love: 1 Corinthians 13. We are also informed on who and what we are not to love. Christians are not to love themselves (2 Tim. 3:1,2); love pleasure (2 Tim. 3:4); love money (1 Tim. 6:10); love the world (2 Tim. 4:10); love preeminence (3 John 9); and love the praise of men (John 12:42,43). Our focus in this lesson is on the proper objects of love and how to love.

The main Greek word translated "love" in the New Testament is *agape* ("ag-ah'-pay); from 25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast: KJV-- (feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love. (Strong's # 26). Vine defines it: "Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those from whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to all men,..." (Vine 693).

Agape seeks the best interests of everyone, no matter the situation or circumstances. It is the love we are to have for men not because of any pleasure they may afford us, not because we may like them or agree with them, but because they are men, human beings, made in the image of God.

An intense desire to please God, and to do good to mankind. This comes without regard to what man feelings about our love.

When it comes to the fruit of the Spirit, Love is at the top of the list. It is preeminent in scripture. "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8). When considering faith, hope and love, it is love that is the greatest. (1 Cor. 13:13). It is love which binds all things together in perfect harmony (Col.3:14). Love of God and man is the fulfilling of the law and the prophets (Mt. 22:34-40).

Love Personified

It is one thing to describe the emotion love with adjectives. On the other hand, to present love as a person, as an entity with definitive qualities, enables us, by association, to comprehend better the emotion. Paul pictures love as a person in such a way that shows love to be truly a beautiful person. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Paul personifies love. That is, he personifies it, saying that if love were a person, here is how it would act: *"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*

♥ Love Is Patient.

Exasperation is never so great as it is with people. You can fix the broken window and you can replace a lawn mower, but you cannot fix people so easily. To fix people calls for love. And love is patient. The patience here is being able to endure people problems. Jesus demonstrated this as He dealt with His disciple's slowness in understanding His mission.

♥ Love Is Kind.

The present day "macho" image is so popular with young people it seems they think kindness to

be a sign of weakness. Kindness involves being gentle, gracious, pleasant.

The story is told about a man who carried a little can of oil with him everywhere he went, if he passed through a door that squeaked, he poured a drop of oil on the hinges. If a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch. He passed through life lubricating all the creaking places, reducing the friction and rust that would weaken and destroy the hinges or latches. He made it a bit more pleasant for those who followed him. Love carries a can filled with the oil of kindness to make relationships squeak less and rust-less.

♥ **Love Is Not Jealous.**

Envy is a first cousin of jealousy, the difference being envy actively seeks in some way to rob the object of what he has, while jealousy, merely desires it. Contrariwise, love rejoices at another's good fortune. "When Carl Lewis won several gold medals at the Olympic games. His feet and legs did the work, but they hung the medal around his neck. And his face smiled at the whole affair." (Dee Bowman, via CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE). Jesus complimented progress in even the smallest and most evil men. Love is always happy to see others prosper, love rejoices with those who rejoice.

♥ **Love Does Not Brag.**

"Love does not parade itself." To "vaunt" (KJV) is to boast, to make an ostentatious display of one's achievements or minimizes the achievements of others. Love is not characterized by the alms givers in Matthew 6:2-4. Love never plays the game of "can you top this?"

Love has a genuine humility. Unlike the man who said, "if you don't believe I am humble, just ask me." Or another who remarked, "last year my worst fault was that I was too proud and arrogant, but this year I don't have any faults at all." Love does not blow its own horn.

♥ **Love Is Not Arrogant.**

"Puffed up" means "self-inflation" which is most unbecoming. Self-inflation means blowing oneself up in an effort to make himself appear to be bigger, better, stronger than he really is. Like a balloon inflated with hot air which causes it to rise. Love comes along and will let the air out of our inflated egos.

♥ **Love Does Not Act Unbecomingly.**

The word "unseemly" means unbecoming, disgraceful or indecent. It would include such things as coarse-speaking, disrespectful talk, rude body noises, etc. Such an individual does not care how offensive his conduct is to others. Love, however, is careful not to be rude. Love makes us "mind your manners."

♥ **Love Does Not Seek Her Own.**

Love is more interested in giving than in getting. Love takes careful consideration of people first. Love lives to be the servant. But Selfishness says, "let me do my own thing".

♥ **Love Is Not Provoked.**

Love doesn't get upset or mad very easily. Love helps keep one calm in the conflicts of life. You are aware of how easy it is to magnify the faults in those for whom we have little affection. Think of your closest friend or loved one and how you react when some uncomplimentary things are said about them. Isn't your first reaction to defend him? Certainly it is! You have noticed in yourself or in others how easily you or they may be provoked to negative emotions and behavior by the actions of others? This reaction happens due to a lack of love for the one and a feeling of love for the other.

♥ **Love Does Not Take into Account a Wrong Suffered.**

The word "account" is an accountant's term and means to store up an entry to be used for a future reference. The point is love does not keep a little black book. Love does not play the role of the FBI. Love suspects no evil. Love writes personal wrongs in dust, not marble. Love is like Jesus on the cross "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do*" (Lk. 23:33,34). Love is ready to forgive, that is, wipe the slate clean. Love is not a faultfinder. Love always practices the rule, "innocent until proven guilty".

♥ **Love Does Not Rejoice in Unrighteousness.**

In Albany, New York a mentally unbalanced youth of 19 years climbed out on the top ledge of the eleven story hotel building and threatened to plunge to his death. One observer among the spectators below called to the youth, "Jump!" The crowd took up the chant, "Jump!" They waited expectantly until

firemen finally rescued the youth. Did the crowd applaud the brave firemen who hazarded their lives to rescue the troubled youth? No. Love shouldn't find pleasure in seeing others sin or harmed.

Love attempts to correct those in error. Love will not turn away and ignore unrighteousness, (James 5:19,20).

♥ **Love Rejoices with the Truth.**

Love shares the joy of truth's triumph over evil in any person. How we ought to rejoice when the truth is preached and men and women obey it and when seeing people do good works.

♥ **Love Bears All Things.**

Lots of things in life are hard, but worth it. Education is hard but worth it. Even if it is hard, love bears. "Bear" is also translated "cover". Love enables us to bear up in all kinds of discouraging and trying circumstances. To bear his own burdens and the burdens of others. Love bears the disappointments of life.

♥ **Love Believes All Things.**

It is easy - sometimes even pleasurable to believe a bad report about someone we do not like. Love will believe the best as long as it can.

Obviously, "all" would not mean to believe a lie. In the context, it refers to the gossip or judgements about people, and that the Christian will not believe "everything he hears".

We should believe all things that God says; there is no debating with God.

♥ **Love Hopes All Things.**

Hope is composed of desire and expectation and both must be present before the hope is legitimate. Love see no one as hopeless. When you love someone, you never give up on them; you always see hope for them.

♥ **Love Endures All Things.**

Love will hold up under pressure. A mother who loves her child will endure all sorts of hardships for the good of the child. Provides for her child, watches over it in the stillness of the night when the child is sick, toils that its needs may be met, and she protects the child in time of danger, even at the risk of her own life. The soldier who loves his country endures sleepless nights and weary marches.

No matter how rough the road, Love does not quit. It was this kind of love for Christ and His church the enabled Paul to endure all kinds of persecution and trials (2 Cor. 11;23-27).

♥ **Love Never Fails.**

When you have tried everything imaginable to "get through" to another person, why not try love?

Love is not temporary; it abides. And love is the greatest in the trio mentioned. Love is eternal. One day faith will become sight when Christ returns. Then hope will become reality as we enter into heaven. However, love will never die nor become obsolete.

Love God

Jesus was in Jerusalem in the final week of His. Pharisees and lawyers asking Jesus questions tempting or testing Him. A single scribe asked about the greatest commandment. "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." This is the first commandment" (Mark 12:28-34).

A person's duties begin with an unqualified love for God. With regard to our love for God, "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Mark has listed four ways one shows the extent of his love for God.

♥ **With All Your Heart - Emotionally Involved**

The heart was associated with the intellect, the emotions, and the will. Since "mind" is already mentioned, this is dealing with the "emotions". What Jesus is saying is that we are to love the Lord without pretense. Love Him without reservation or just a portion of our devotion.

♥ **With All Your Soul - Eternally Focused**

The soul is the part of one that is immortal - the I, the person who controls what one thinks and

says and does. Love has been abused and watered down by a liberal mind set as a sentimental, syrupy gush about God. Our love is taking time for the eternal relationship. A. W. Tozer once said that, "We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God." True love of God involves total commitment. "

♥ **With All Your Mind - Thoroughly Considered**

The mind is the seat of our reason, knowledge, and wisdom. Mind emphasizes the place of the intellect in conversion and maturity in faith and life. We are not to serve God emotionally, while committing intellectual suicide. Love is not just a momentary feeling. Like turning cartwheels down the aisle in worship. This love is not mindless and empty-headed.

♥ **With All Your Strength - Fully Lived Out**

Strength represents the whole person. Loving God means we may have to say no to some things that we might want to do. It may mean that we can't go places others can go, watch what others watch or what they enjoy. God's greatest desire for us is to love Him. We demonstrate our love for God through keeping His commandments. This is the love of God (1 Jn 5:3). This is evidence that we love Jesus (Jn 14:15)

Love the Brethren

Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? Are you a lover of truth? Do you love God? Do you love what is good and hate what is evil? Do you wish for all Christians to improve and prosper in life? Are you motivated to do good for others? If you can answer yes to all of these, then you can truly say you have love for the brethren.

To love fellow Christians involves more than mere lip service. It is interconnected and interdependent with many other things. According to John 13:34,35 you can only prove to the world that you are following Christ if you have the same kind of love for the brethren that He has shown by giving His life for all men. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* Christ gives his disciples a new commandment. It is the first time they were told to do so in the likeness of Christ's love for mankind.

Do you love your brother? Then prove it. "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:15-18).

Do you love the idea of going to heaven forever to be with God and fellow saints? Then love the brethren on earth now and you will be blessed with loving them forever in heaven. Think about this: God isn't going to allow two brothers into heaven if they have never learned to love each other on earth. He has reserved another eternal abode for those who hate.

Love the Truth

Paul spoke of those who will perish in unrighteousness, "because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10).

Love of truth is manifested in the life of a Christian by 1) meditating on the Word (Ps. 1:2); reading the Bible; obey God's Will (Rom. 2:8); speaking truth in love (Eph. 4:15,25).

Love Self

Loving self is not the same as that which Paul condemns in 2 Tim. 3:1-5 "lovers of themselves". These are those who are self-centered and selfish.

Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor "as thyself" (Mt. 22:37-39; 19:19). Paul said, *"husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies, he who loves his wife loves himself"* (Eph. 5:28). The Golden Rule implies a love of self (Mt. 7:12).

Just how does one properly love himself? Love yourself by presenting your body in service to God (Rom. 12:1-2) and caring for it as God's temple (1 Cor. 6:13; 18-20). Loving self involves a healthy

self-esteem (Micah 6:8; Gal. 6:3). To love self, you will want what is best for the soul. What of this life is worth losing your soul over (Mt. 16:26,27; Rom. 2:6-11). Loving oneself is essential to getting to Heaven.

Questions:

1. True/False We can only love those for whom we feel an emotional attraction.
2. True/False We cannot love those who hate us, (Mt. 5:44).
3. True/False We do not love God if we do not obey Him, (1 Jn. 5:3).
4. If someone tells us something bad about another person what will love motivate us to do?

Matching:

- | | | | |
|----------|------------------------|----|--|
| 5. ____ | 1 Corinthians 13 | a. | Emotionally in love with God |
| 6. ____ | With all your heart | b. | Intellectually in love with God |
| 7. ____ | With all your soul | c. | What Jews called Deut 6:4 |
| 8. ____ | With all your mind | d. | Great chapter on love |
| 9. ____ | With all your strength | e. | Loving God with your eternal being |
| 10. ____ | Shema | f. | Loving God with every bit or your effort |
11. True/False We are to love each other like Christ has loved us.
 12. True/False Speaking the truth is more important than love.
 13. In the last days (2 Tim. 3:1f) men will be a) lovers of pleasures b) lovers of themselves c) both.
 14. We are to love our neighbors and wives as a) God loves us b) as Christ loved John c) as we love ourselves.

Application & Discussion:

1. Explain the relationship between love and obeying God's commandments (1 Jn. 5:3).

2. Discuss how love involves the other fruits of the Spirit and is opposed to the Works of the Flesh.

3. How is one to develop a healthy self-esteem?

Homework: Make a list of those you have trouble loving (or liking) and pray for them. List ways you can go about changing your attitude about them.

Joy & Peace

Joy

Definition

The word is used sixty times in the N.T. The verb, *chairein*, is the normal Greek word for "Greeting." Lit. "joy be with you."

There is a big difference between happiness and joy. Modern man often defines happiness or joy in relation to delightful and pleasing circumstances. Happy: "delighted, pleased, or glad, as over a particular thing" (Web. p. 772). Joy: "the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something good or satisfying." (Web. p.). "Joy is often equated with happiness, but the two are quite distinct. Happiness depends largely upon happenings: Good health; congenial company; pleasant surroundings, etc. Happiness and unhappiness do not exist together; but joy and sorrow can and do" (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dict., p. 452). In the Bible happiness or joy is based on one's relationship with Christ, thus remain unaffected by unpleasant circumstances or conditions.

Finding True Happiness

Dr. Peter Rossi, a sociologist at the Univ. of Chicago, said, "all it takes to be happy is youth, money, success, good health and a wife. Possessing these requisites, one has found a wellspring of happiness."

However, true happiness is not found in worldly pleasures or possessions or professions. Today, people seek happiness in a bottle of alcohol or pills, a pack of cigarettes or fornication. There are those who judge how good a time they had the night before by how bad they feel the next day. Yet all these are temporary thrills that soon end in more misery and pain. Nero, emperor of the Roman Empire, lived only for glories and pleasures of the world. He grew so weary of passing pleasures that he offered rich rewards to those devising new ones. He died a suicide. Moses learned that these cannot produce true happiness because they are temporary pleasures (Heb. 11:24-26).

Neither is happiness found in great riches. Some people think to themselves, "If I only had a million dollars, a red lamborghini and a condo on the beach, then I would be happy." Yet the pursuit of such does not satisfy the soul, but often brings anxiety. *"He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity...The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep"* (Eccl. 5:10,12). A few decades ago John D. Rockefeller, the first billionaire, told Dr. Carter Helm Jones at the close of a sermon in Cleveland that "great wealth is a burden destroying the real zest of life and banishing peace from the heart." True happiness can be found in Christ *"in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* (Col. 2:3).

Paul Finds Joy at Philippi

Paul saw a vision in the night; *"there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him saying, come over into Macedonia, and help us."* (Ac. 16:9). As Philippi he met Lydia who accepted the Christ preached by Paul and determined to be baptized. She then extended the hospitality of her home to Paul. After leaving her *"a certain maid having the spirit of divination"* was encountered. She was the possession of certain men who had been capitalizing on her powers for their personal gain. Following after Paul, she was heard to cry out, *"these men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto*

you the way of salvation. And this she did for many days" (Ac. 16:17,19). Testimony of this nature, though true, could not be tolerated from a source not divinely sanctioned and Paul commanded the spirit to come out of the woman. Her masters were incensed, brought Paul and Silas before the rulers in the market place and falsely accused them. They were beaten with many stripes, cast into the inner prison, and had their feet fastened in stocks.

Paul's beating, imprisonment and humiliation in Philippi, had he allowed himself to dwell upon it, could have caused bitterness toward the city generally. To become bitter, one has to dwell upon the unpleasant; to have a pleasant attitude one has to cultivate a remembrance of the good things. Both he and his partner, Silas, began to praying and singing hymns at midnight while others in the jail listened. God set an earthquake which loosed all their bonds and opened the doors. The who was commanded to keep them securely sprang in and thinking his prisoners had escaped was about to commit suicide. Paul called out *"do thyself no harm: for we are all here"* (Ac. 16:28). There is a beautiful ending to this part of the story, the jailer and his family are baptized (16:34).

Years latter as Paul writes his letter to the Philippians. He is a prisoner of Rome awaiting his trial. before Caesar. Paul expects to be released, but is not certain of this outcome. What is his attitude toward his bonds in the face of these circumstances? Is he bitter and unhappy. No! He sees such as an opportunity to *"the furtherance of the gospel"* (Phil. 1:12). He rejoices over those he led to Christ (Phil. 2:2). Paul commands the Philippians to have continuous rejoicing (Phil. 4:4). The sum of this epistles is "I rejoice, You rejoice".

Christians are to be Joyful People

The late Ardy Brown use to say in a sermon "many Christians walk around like they were weaned on a dill pickle." Does being a Christians suck all the joy and happiness our of life? Can a one find joy while living the Christian life?

Peter claims the it is in through our faith joy is found. *"Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls"* (1 Pet. 1:8,9). Without faith one cannot be saved (Mark 16:16). Without faith one is without God and without hope.

Joy is found in having a personal relation to God. *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"* (Phil. 4:4). Paul source of true happiness can be summed up, "I have joy because I have Christ. You have joy because you have Christ". The one person who can be truly happy is the Christian. Truly, "joy is the flag which is flown from the castle of the heart when the king is in residence there" no matter how many enemies besiege it.

Pleasing God our Father in loving obedience to His will can bring joy.

Having hope in eternal life provides a life-time of joy. *"In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began"* (Titus 1:2). Hope anchors the soul to Heaven where there is eternal joy.

A Christian can even find ways to rejoice in times of temptation (James 1:2-3) and even persecution. After the aposltes suffered persecution they left the Sanhedrin *"rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name"* (Acts 5:41). Peter tells us during times of persecution.

"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Peace

Definition

According to Thayer the Greek word *eirene* (translated "peace") means "1. a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war...2. peace between individuals, i.e., harmony,

concord...3. security, safety, prosperity...4. spec. the messiah's peace... 5. the tranquil state of soul assured of its salvation through Christ...6. the blessed state of devout and upright men after death".

The Greek word *eriene* is used eighty-eight times in the New Testament. The word "peace" is found at the beginning or end of every epistle except for James and 1 John.

Today, the word "peace" is often limited to the end to tension, domestic tranquility, and absence of war. Someone had said, "peace is that glorious moment in history when everyone stops to reload." The world would define it as the absence of conflict or war. Peace is not the absence of something, rather it is the presence of something. Webster's defines it as "the non-warring condition of a nation,...an agreement or treaty...a state of mutual harmony...freedom from civil commotion....freedom from an strife" (Web., p. 1060). Peace in the New Testament is primarily tranquility of mind, or spiritual well-being. It involves peaceableness of temper and behavior towards others.

A New Testament Greeting

At least seventeen epistles begin with the greeting: "grace to you and peace". "Grace" here is from the Greek word *charis* which is derived from the same root word as joy. It means "joy be with you," and is the typical Gentile greeting.

Shalom is the Old Testament equivalent of peace (*eirene*). This word was the most common greeting and farewell among the Hebrews. *Shalom* means more than absence of conflict. The adjective form, *Shalem*, is translated "full:" or "whole" and conveys completeness. Thus, the meaning of completeness, soundness, wholeness, or well-being. It describes the health, well-being or safety of a person. To greet a friend with "peace" was to desire that all would be well in his life, and wish for all the makes for his highest good.

In the compound greeting "peace and grace" resided a desire for the benefactors highest good and favorable existence.

Sin brings unhappiness, conflict, and chaos into our lives. S. I. McMillen, M.D. said, "Peace does not come in capsules. It is regrettable because medical science recognizes that emotions such as fear, sorrow, envy, resentment and hatred are responsible for the majority of our sicknesses - over 60%." The peace of God, however, can guard us from the consequences of such. "*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 4:7). The term guard here is a military term. God has set a spiritual garrison about our hearts to keep peace in our lives. All should strive for this peace which comes only through God and the Prince of Peace. We need to realize that it is a mistake to traded the "peace of God" for a piece of the world that they cannot keep very long, and that will be burned up when the day of the Lord comes.

One of Jesus' beatitudes states "*blessed are the peacemakers*" (Mt. 5:9). It necessarily follows that cursed are the "peace breakers". Against bigotry, hobbyism, opinionated, intemperate zeal and quarrelsome spirit. On her way to investigating a family - disturbance call, San Francisco police officer Adelle Roberts saw a television set crash through the window of the disputants' house. Knocking at the door, Officer Roberts heard the sounds of a heated argument. When a gruff voice demanded, "Who is it?" she didn't say "Police." Instead she said, "TV repairman." Her response dissolved the angry shouts into laughter, and set the scene for a peaceful solution.

We are in great need of more peacemakers today. One of Jesus' beatitudes reads: "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*" (Matthew 5:9).

Man is at war with God. Sin separates you from God, thus destroying peace (Is 59:1-2). As sinners we are enemies of God (Js. 4:4). The first step in finding peace with God is to stop fighting Him. To become friends through reconciliation. "*And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself...*" (Col. 1:20; cf. Rom. 5:10).

Because of our vertical peace with God through the "Prince of Peace" we have a change in our horizontal relationships, that is, with our fellow man. As in practicing the Golden Rule. "*Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets*" (Matt. 7:12). When Abraham and Lot had to deal with the conflict between their herdsmen. Abraham gave a magnanimous offer to let Lot choose the pastures he wanted. Abraham would go the other way (Gen. 13:7-11).

The Jewish Rabbis held that the highest task which a man can perform is to establish right relationships between man and man. God is the God of peace (Rom. 15:33). He is the author (1 Cor. 14:33) it is His nature (2 Cor. 5:19). Jesus the Savior is the "*Prince of Peace*" (Isa. 9:6). At Jesus' birth the host of heaven declared "*peace on earth among men*" (Lk. 2:14). He established a Kingdom of peace (Rom. 14:17) with the Gospel of peace (Rom. 10:17; Eph. 6:15). As we dress in the armor of God to spread the borders of the Kingdom our feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15). We are to go out and preach the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

Questions:

1. True/False The word for "joy" is a common Greek greeting.
2. What is the difference between happiness and joy?
3. In what worldly pleasures to some people seek happiness?
4. What did Moses learn about worldly pleasures?
5. Why can't true happiness be found in great wealth?
6. What did the city officials have done to Paul and Silas? Why?
7. What did Paul and Silas do in jail?
8. After the prisoners were freed by an earthquake what did the Jailer attempt? Why?
9. Why did the jailer and household rejoice?
10. Where was Paul when he penned the letter to the Philippians?
11. What does the Hebrew word "Shalom" mean?

12. Is Webster's definition of peace the same as the Bible's definition?
13. What can the peace of God do for a saint?
14. Can we personally have peace when the world is at war, there is civil unrest, people hate and abuse us, our health and wealth are all gone? Explain.

Application and Discussion:

1. If Christians are to rejoice in the Lord always does this apply to times when we sin or other sin against us? If so, how?
2. What are some practical day to day ways a Christian can act and serve as a peacemaker?

Homework: This week cultivate joy in the midst of life's trials and peace in a world of war.

Patience & Kindness

Patience

Definition

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament words the Greek term (*macrothumia*) for patience came be translated "forbearance, patience, longsuffering (makros, long, thumos, temper)" (Vine, p 684). Trench defines the term as "a long holding out of the mind, before it gives room to action or to passion". Long-suffering is "the self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong" (T.K. Abbott). Barclay explains that long-suffering is "...a certain attitude both to people and events...It expresses the attitude to events which never admits defeat, and which never loses its hope and its faith, however dark the situation may be, and however incomprehensible events may be, and however sore the chastening of God may be" (Barclay, p. 91).

We speak of a short-temper or being short-tempered. It is unfortunate that we do not have the corresponding term to describe a "long-tempered" person. After all, makros means long and thumos means temper. It is moral "stick-to-it-tiveness" or the strength and endurance to see things through no matter what the trial or opposition.

Bible Example: Job

Job may be an example of many things, but the New Testament says he is an example of patience. *"Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful"* (James 5:11). Job was a very good man. As a matter of fact, he was perfect, he was straight, honest, truthful, he feared god, reverently he worshiped, and he avoided evil (Job 1:1).

He was blessed with a large family of seven sons and three daughters (Job 1: 2). He still was very concerned about their spiritual well-being even though they lived in homes of their own.

God also blessed him with great wealth (Job 1: 3). A modern ranch with seven thousand sheep can produce about thirty-five tons of wool each year. Five hundred yoke of oxen can plow ground enough for a huge crop of wheat. With five hundred donkeys and three thousand camels he could have had long caravans carrying surplus wheat to the merchants of Phoenicia, and other caravans loaded with wool for the weavers of Mesopotamia and Egypt.

If a man ever had it made it was Job! *"He was the greatest of all the children of the east"*. One day he was sitting on top of the world, he had it all. Then in one day he lost it all. How does a man handle a thing like that?

Unknown to Job trouble was brewing behind the scene (Job 1:6-11). Satan came before God one day and tells Him that he has been wandering around upon earth. God suggested that he consider Job, His faithful servant. Satan insists that Job was only faithful because God blessed. So, God allows Satan to afflict Job to test his faithfulness.

Suddenly, a series of calamities fell upon Job's world falls down like the proverbial "house of cards." Four unexpected messengers brought back to back news of tragedy with hardly any breathing time in between. Without a word's notice, he lost his live stock, his servants, his financial security, and finally, his family (Job 1:11-19).

Job's reaction to all this requires our attention (Job 1:20-22). He did not react with tight fists shaken toward heaven screaming, "God! How dare you do that to me!" Job trusted God even when he did not understand.

Satan was saying that Job could accept the loss of his possessions and family because his own person was unhurt. Then Job was tormented by *"sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown,"* and sat among the ashes and scraped himself with a potsherd (2:7,8). Bodily afflictions can cause the trying of our patience. In his pain and misery he cursed the day he was born, and like many on beds of affliction wished he had died at birth or had been the victim of miscarriage. God accepted the challenge by Satan and Job became a battleground.

Then Job's patience was further tested by the discouraging words of his wife (2: 9,10). She asked, *"Do you still hold fast to your integrity?"* (Heb. word is related to the word for "perfect" in 1:1) Then suggested that he *"Curse God and die!"* She felt that since God was now doing him harm instead of good, it did not pay to be perfect man and fear God. Today many have been led to believe that a good God does ONLY good, and never allows pain and grief to come to His people.

Notice Job's response: *"Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"* He believed that God has created a world in which many more good things than bad things happen. Life's disasters are painful but exceptional. Most illnesses are curable. Most airplanes take off and land safely. So far, Satan's worst brought out Job's best.

One day Job's three closest friends came to give him comfort, but instead, add to his misery. Lack of encouragement from others can also affect our patience. His three friends try to convince him that it was for some great sin that he suffered so. In essence they were saying, "You're suffering, Job. Only those who have sinned suffer; therefore, you have sinned." Bildad, Zophar, and Eliphaz all took their turn trying to convict Job of sin. Job maintained his silence and did not repent of anything. He was greatly discouraged by their words (19:2, 14-19).

Job wanted answers. His heart began to cry out "Why me Lord?" It seemed to Job that God was hiding from him. Then he charges God with cruelty and persecution (30:20,21).

In his confusion and pain he began to express an erroneous view of God. Job felt God counted him as an enemy; hand taken away his right; that his righteous life counted for nothing. God humbled him by asking him questions concerning his limited human knowledge and his power. Job repented (42:1-6).

In the end, God blessed Job by doubling his possessions (42:11,12). He also gave him the same number of children he had before. He went on to live to be 140 and died "an old man and full of days." (42:17).

Job's suffering has three noble benefits: 1) it strengthened Job's patience and faith. 2) it showed that God allows suffering but does not arbitrarily inflict it upon us; 3) it leaves us an excellent and vivid example of patience (Js. 5:11).

We must look on our suffering as the testing of our faith and the strengthening of our patience *"Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience"* (James 1:3). Job never learned what was behind all his afflictions. But through them all his faith became stronger and He was greatly blessed of the Lord. When we endure, we receive the crown of Life the Lord has promised. *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him"* (James 1:12).

Patience in Persecution

Job is not the only example of in the Bible of great longsuffering. Paul was stoned and thrown out of the city of Lystra and left for dead. What did he do about this ungrateful audience? He got up and went right back into the city to preach (Acts 14:19). When a stamp gets a licking, it doesn't give up. It carries the message far and wide. *"But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"* (2 Tim. 2:10-12).

Paul suffered patiently in far more persecuion than must Christians ever have. Remember, that in all your persecution you have probably never had to endure people spitting in your face. Or dressing you up, mocking you, and cursing you. It is presumably safe to say that you have never been stripped, scourged and had a crown of thorns beaten upon your head. Finally, in all probability you have never

been crucified.

Kindness

Definition

The fruit of the Spirit translated "kindness" comes from the Greek word "chrestotes (khray-stot'-ace); from 5543; usefulness, i.e. moral excellence (in character or demeanor): KJV--gentleness, good (-ness), kindness. (Strong's # 5544). *Chrestotes* "conveys the thought of knowing another's need and helping to fulfil it." (I.S.B.E., vol. 3, p. 20). It can be translated "better, kindness; a kindness which is useful or serviceable". (Vincent, p. 168). "Christian kindness means treating others in the way in which God has treated us." (Barclay, p. 102).

Bible Example

A lawyer one day came to ask Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus could have answered, "Anybody" or "Everybody". Instead, He gave us a parable about kindness in the morality tale of the good Samaritan. This parable answers the question, "Who is my neighbor?" But the story also answers the question we are asking today: "To whom should I show kindness to?" (See Luke 10:25-37).

Jesus tells of a man who was attacked by thieves on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho. The background to this settle is most interesting. Jerusalem is in the hills some 2,300 feet above sea level. Jericho is on a plain near the Dead Sea, some 1,300 feet below sea level. The road between the two cities, some seventy miles long, winds in a zig-zag fashion in order to accommodate the sharp drop. It provided an ideal place for robbers to ambush passers by.

First, a priest came by the victim, but passed by on the other side. Next, a Levite comes by, looks at the wounded man, and passed by on the other side. The Levites were members of the tribe of priests. They were servants to the priests, preparing the sacrifices, cleaning the utensils, etc. If the priest and Levite had a specific injunction in the Law that said, "if you see a man lying half dead, you shall help him," they probably would have obeyed. But a person who truly possesses the virtue of kindness will not wait around to be told how to show compassion in each given situation. Instead, the kind man or woman will be alert for the opportunities that present themselves along the pathways of life.

It took a Samaritan to come along, to show himself to be a true neighbor. The Samaritans, a kind of half-breed Jew. For over four hundred years the Samaritans had been the object of Jewish segregation, scorn, and hatred. To the Jews a Samaritan was like a human "dog" and would never consider them to be an example of any virtue, such as kindness.

When contrasting attitudes of the characters in the parable we find that: 1) the robbers felt that might makes right (what is yours is mine if I can take it); 2) the Priests and Levite felt that what is mine is mine and I will keep it; 3) but the Good Samaritan's attitude was what is mine is thine and we will share it.

Like any other fruit of the Spirit kindness must be manifested in action. To show kindness to this stranger the Good Samaritan had to have compassion of a sympathetic feeling strong enough to make him part of the situation. He had to have courage to risk becoming a victim as well. He had to put aside his prejudices and sacrifice the time and money it took to care for that man.

Application

Kindness requires that we be gentle people or Gentlemen and also Gentlewomen. After all, sheep can be led but not driven. Attempt to drive sheep and they will stampede and scatter. We are a busy people. All our hurrying and scurrying allows little time for tender social graces. The result is rudeness. God wants us to be kind one to another. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). The greatest lever to move the human heart is the acts of kindness. You cannot disarm an enemy better than by a kindly act. "Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire

on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:20-21).

Dr. John Treves wrote "The Elephant Man" about John Merrick a grossly deformed man, who was constantly in pain, lame, and male-treated, stirred and screamed at never being treated like a human being. Treves wrote "I asked a friend of mine, a young and pretty widow if she thought she could enter Merrick's room with a smile, wish him good morning, and shake him by the hand. She said she could and she did...As he let go of her hands he bent his head on his knees and sobbed until I thought he would never cease...From this day forward the transformation of Merrick commenced and he began to change, little by little from a hunted thing into a man".

Questions:

1. In your own words define "longsuffering".
2. With what had God blessed Job?
3. Who all was responsible for Job's suffering?
4. What was Job's reaction the day he lost everything? (1:20-22).
5. What bodily affliction did Satan bring upon Job?
6. What did Job's wife suggest he do? What did he respond?
7. What did Job's three friends believe was responsible for Job's suffering?
8. True/False Job never brought charge against God.
9. What did God do for Job after he repented?
10. What are some of the benefits of Job's suffering?

11. True/False When we suffer it is not necessarily because of our being punished for some sin.
12. What motivated Jesus to tell the Parable of the Good Samaritan?
13. What did the Priest and Levite do when they saw the victimized man by the road?
14. Why to you think they did not stop to help?
15. How did the jews feel about Samaritans?
16. How did the Samaritan show kindness?
17. How powerful are acts of kindness?

Application & Discussion:

1. What areas do you need patience or longsuffering the most?
2. Make a list of those in your life who could use a Good Samaritan.

Homework: When faces with persecution or trials and temptations remember the longsuffering of Job and Jesus. Find someone who needs you to being their Good Samaritan.

Goodness & Faithfulness

Goodness

Definition

The term translated "goodness" here among the fruit of the Spirit is from the Greek "agathosune (ag-ath-o-soo'-nay); from 18; goodness, i.e. virtue or beneficence: KJV-- goodness. (Strong's # 19). It involves a "...desire after goodness, to be and do good...Trench, following Jerome, distinguishes between chrestotes and agathosune in that the former describes the kindlier aspects of goodness, the latter includes also the sterner qualities by which doing good to others is not necessarily by gentile means. he illustrates the latter by the act of Christ in cleansing the temple, Mt. 21:12,13, and in denouncing the Scribes and Pharisees, 23:13-29; but chrestotes by His dealings with the penitent woman, Lk. 7:27-40." (Vine, p. 495). The idea is closely related to kindness. The quality which at one and the same time can be kind and strong. Goodness means "uprightness of heart and life..." (Thayer, p. 3) and "profitableness" (Vincent, III p. 35).

Goodness has been described as the opposite of meanness. Group of boys as being "full of meanness" who go bashing in the neighbor's mailboxes, spray painting or stealing traffic signs, etc.

The Standard of Goodness

The zealous Muslim who blows a fully loaded airplane out of the sky is doing good by his definition of that word. Whose definition do we use of the word "good" - God's or man's? There are many who have the wrong thinking about being good. Some think just being religious is good, but this still may not meet God's standard of good. *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 'And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Mt. 7:21-23).*

God even went so far as to say that the religious leaders of Israel had come *"to hate the good and love the evil"* (Mic. 3:2). *"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil"* (Is. 5:20). However, goodness is the opposite of that which is evil or bad. Today, men call homosexuality good by defending it as an alternate lifestyle. They then condemn those as prejudice who oppose such as a sexual perversion.

Our modern usage of the word "goodness" or "good" is much too casual. We carelessly describe so many things as being "good" when they are not "good" in the truest sense of the term, such as, "he is such a "good friend". God is the only one who can tell us what is really good and what is bad.

Therefore, to develop the virtue of goodness one must know the difference between good and evil or right and wrong from the true source of good. From the very beginning of man on earth God has set forth the standard of goodness. God made the world and then made man. All that he made was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). He gave man the duty of keeping the garden. But warned him, *"Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die"* (Gen. 2:16,17). God had clearly declared that the fruit of that tree was "Unfit for human consumption".

Sometime later the Serpent comes along and lies to Eve saying, *"You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"* (Gen. 3:4,5). She saw the forbidden fruit in a new light. It was no longer evil or wrong to eat

it because it looked good, it appealed to her appetite, and could greatly improve her status. She ate of it and so did Adam. Well, the rest is world history. they were cursed by God and kicked out of the Garden. Today, we are to follow God's inspired word and avoid the lies and "half-truths" of Satan. The Bible is the only true standard on what represents good works and works of the flesh. However, it is only in the scriptures that we are *"equipped for every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Examples of Goodness

Barnabas was described as a *"good man"* in Ac. 11;24. *"full of the Holy Spirit and of faith..."* His name change by the apostles to Barnabas is because it means "son of encouragement." He gave generously to the church for the needs of the saints.

Peter preached to Cornelius that Jesus *"went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him"* (Ac. 10:38).

In overturning their tables and driving them out, Jesus was "doing good" because He was teaching these people a valuable lesson that would benefit them spiritually.

When a parent gives a child a spanking. Their action is not kind, but it is good.

The apostle Paul said we are *"created in Christ Jesus for good works"* (Eph. 2:10). In writing to Titus, the apostle Paul said, *"And let our people also learn to maintain good works"* (Tit. 3:14). In writing to the churches of Galatia, Paul commanded, *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10). Christians are to follow the example of Jesus who "went about doing good" (Ac. 10:38). Jesus said His purpose in coming to earth was to *"seek and to save that which is lost"* (Lk. 19:10). Who will do good to the lost? Solomon, in his wisdom, wrote: *"He who wins souls is wise"* (Prov. 11:30). What greater good can be done for our fellow man than to help them attain Heaven?

While we have an obligation to do good to all, we have a special duty to do good "to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

There are many "one another" commands for disciples throughout the New Testament. In fulfilling these we show goodness to each other. The term "one another" is often used by inspired writers of the New Testament when giving instruction as to how we should act toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to forgive one another *"just as God in Christ also forgave you"* (Eph. 4:32). Another way that we can do good to our brethren is by sharing in their joys and sorrows. We are told to *"rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep"* (Rom. 12:15). We are told to *"be hospitable to one another"* (1 Pet. 4:9) and to be *"given to hospitality"* (Rom. 12:13). We need to *"bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"* (Gal. 6:2). We must learn to *"consider one another in order to stir up love and good works"* (Heb. 10:24).

God makes everything good. He never made evil or trash. During creation of the world He would give His appraisal of what was done that day by saying, "It is good". May we be able to say the same thing about all that we do.

Faithfulness

Definition

The Fruit of the Spirit "faithfulness" is translated from the Greek term "pistis (pis'-tis); from 3982; persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself: KJV-- assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity. (Strong's # 4102). The term also means "trustfulness", (Vincent, p. 168) and "2. fidelity, faithfulness, i.e. the character of one who can be relied on..." (Thayer, p. 514).

"Faithfulness involves integrity wherein one keeps his word or is loyal to his principles....he who is loyal to the Lord is trustworthy or reliable in his relationship with others. the faithful man is one who performs his assigned tasks. He does his duty, and he will be rewarded by the Lord (Mt. 25:21,23; Lk.

12:42." (Barclay, P. 94).

"Pistos is indeed a great word. it describes the man on whose faithful service we may rely, on those loyalty we may depend, whose word we can unreservedly accept. it describes the man in whom there is unswerving and inflexible fidelity of Jesus Christ, and the utter dependability of God." (Barclay, p. 111).

This word is common in secular Greek for trustworthiness. The man who is faithful would rather lose his life than dishonor or be untrue to his Lord.

Abraham, Father of the Faithful

Abraham is mentioned seventy times in the New Testament. This is more than any other Old Testament character. He is called the "*Father of all them that believe*" (Rom 4:11). Abraham being the preeminent prototype of faith for all believers in God in both the Old and New Covenants (Gen. 15:6; Neh. 9:7,8; Rom. 4:1-3; Gal. 3:6-9; Js. 2:21-23). Naturally, his faith is given the most comprehensive treatment of all the heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11. There were many times in the life of Abraham when his faith was put to the test. He passed these trials because he was willing to "Take God at his word" or trust His Commands no matter how difficult or unreasonable they sounded.

Abraham lived in Ur when God called him to pack up his family and leave. "*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Heb. 11:8-10). Now, Ur in the land of the Chaldeans was dedicated to Nannar, the moon god. The whole city was laid out like a medieval castle. Its inner fortress was the temple of the moon god. The ziggurat was Ur's chief splendor. Nannar was considered the king and landlord of the people. Unger states in his Archaeology and the Old Testament that the moon god "owned their farms, their shops and their wealth. Their gifts and payments were in kind..." There were temples and shrines dedicated to other deities throughout the city.

When Abrahams' family left Ur they had not escaped the corruptions of idolatry. Terah, the father of Abraham was an idolater (Josh. 24:2).

Abraham was no young man when the Lord called him. He was seventy-five years old. He obeyed the Lord by going out, although he did not even know where he was going. Wherever he moved, he worshipped. He built altars at Bethel (Gen. 12:8) and Hebron (13:18); he paid tithes the Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20). Indeed, Abraham was a man who worshipped the Lord wherever he went.

God promised him a land (Gen. 12:7; 15:13-15). In these words, the Lord explained to Abraham that the land which had been promised to him would not be given in this lifetime. He wandered about the land of promise as a stranger and sojourner (Ac. 7:45). When his wife died, he had to purchase a place to bury her. Even then he manifest faith in the promise of God, for he did not take his wife to the home gave plot in Ur to bury her. "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them*" (Heb. 11:13-16). The example of Abraham's faith comes as he lived a nomadic pilgrim's life in Canaan (Heb. 11:9,10). He never built or even designed a city. He merely pitched tents. Both Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5) and then later Jacob (Gen. 28:12-22) would become co-heirs with Abraham. All three men would never see the city of God in their lifetime. Their lives were focused on a strong desire to have what was in the future. "The verb 'looking forward' connotes intensely looking forward to and waiting for that city." (Barton 185)

When Isaac, the promised son, was born, Abraham was 100 (Gen. 21:5). He had looked to the gift and the Giver for 25 years.

One day the Lord returned to put him to the ultimate test of faith. He was to sacrifice his son at a specified location. "*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received*

the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense" (Heb. 11:17-19). Of this story Albert Barnes wrote, "It is the strongest illustration of faith, undoubtedly, which has ever been evinced in our world." For a long time Abraham had awaited his promised son. The severity of the command did not destroy Abraham's confidence in Jehovah. What do you do? Do you tell God that He is not being consistent? Abraham could of reasoned, "After all, how could the promise be fulfilled if I kill the one through whom it was the fulfilled?" He might have argued that the sacrifice is too burdensome.

There is no hint that he argued with the Lord about this matter. God had spoken. The affair was settled. God knew what he was doing. Abraham saddled an ass, packed the wood for the offering, took two of his young men with him, took Isaac, and set out for the land of Moriah. The journey was long. On the third day he lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. *"Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder the worship, and come again to you".*

The father took the wood for the burning of the offering and laid it upon Isaac, and he took the fire and a knife, and they went both of them together. Suddenly, it occurred to isaac that they had no lamb. the silence was broken when Isaac said, "My father." Abraham calmly replied, "here am I, my son." "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering". In the heart of Abraham, despite his attachment to his son, God was first.

Arriving at the designated spot, Abraham built an altar, laid the wood in order. Abruptly the Lord called out of heaven through an angel. Before the knife could be plunged into the body of Isaac, God said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

Having passed the test, Abraham looked behind him and there was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. He understood that God had provided a substitute for Isaac. He took the ram and offered it for a burnt offering.

Abraham was faithful, and today we are to imitate his faithfulness in our daily life (Neh. 9:8; Gal. 3:9; Js. 2:21-23). Trust God no matter what isn't as easy done and it is desired.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between goodness and kindness?
2. Who sets the standard on what is to be considered good?
3. Give some modern examples of men calling good, evil and evil, good.
4. What warning did God give Adam and Eve when He placed them in the garden?
5. What lie did the Serpent tell Eve?

6. What motivated Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit?
7. What sets the standards of good and evil for us today?
8. List some Bible examples of those who possessed the virtue of "goodness".
9. True/False Faithfulness means "trustworthiness".
10. Why did Abraham leave his home town of ur when he was 75?
11. What did Abraham build wherever he went?
12. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?
13. How did Abraham react when he was commanded to sacrifice his only son of promise?

Application & Discussion:

1. List other "one another" commands but which we show goodness to fellow Christians.
2. List others who are examples of great faithfulness like Abraham.

Homework: Go about your day doing good to others and demonstrating faithfulness to God.

Meekness & Self Control

Meekness

Definition

Years ago there was a TV game show called "Password". Contestants would pair up and one would be giving clues. Then the other would guess the secret word. On one show the contestants were given the word "meek". The clues were "timid", "weak" and "shy". People generally have the idea that a "meek" individual is one that is extremely quiet, withdrawn, timid. Those with an inferiority complex have been mistaken for being meek. Cowardice or spiritlessness have also been referred to as meek. The meek are akin to the milquetoast. A popular saying is "Meek as a mouse." Mice are shy and frightened creatures who scurry round the corners of life, afraid of everything and everyone. Can one find meekness by imitating a mouse or by just being easygoing? Or does meekness here mean the conformist? You know the one who can maintain peace at any price. Too timid to speak up or speak out. A real fence straddler.

It is no wonder that so many are confused as to what "meek" means. The English word underwent a lot of change over the past 350 years. Webster defines meek as "Unduly patient or submissive, spiritless" or "humbly patient or submissive, as under provocation from others, overly patient or submissive; spiritless;..." (Web., p. 891). It is sad that our word "meek" sounds so similar to the word "weak." However, these two have absolutely nothing in common.

The word for "meek" is translated from the Greek word *prautes*. The word was "...used of animals which have been tamed, and which have learned to accept discipline and control...A horse obedient to the reins, a dog trained to obey the word of command..." (Barclay, pp. 113,114). Meekness is like a horse once wild, but now obedient to the bridle and bit and thus, of service and value to its master. Therefore, it is not the absence of strength, but strength brought under control! Instead of "meek as a mouse" we should say "Meek As A Horse". Just as a horse is tamed by his master, so it is the wild spirit of man trained by the Spirit of God. Real might lies in control and discipline

Aristotle saw meekness as being the happy medium between too much and too little anger. Aristotle said, "To *praotes* belongs the ability to bear reproaches and slights with moderation...to be free from bitterness and contentiousness, having tranquility and stability of spirit." Meekness thus promotes a proper control or equilibrium. "Be angry, and sin not" (Eph. 4:26). It is a father big enough to pull a transmission and gentle enough to care for a baby. In Plato the best illustration of *prautes* is the watchdog who is bravely hostile to strangers and gently friendly with familiar whom he knows and loves" (Flesh and Spirit, p. 114).

An attitude that is chiefly towards God. Closely linked with the word "humility" and in several passages follows it (Eph. 4:3; Cor. 3:12). Meekness involves submissiveness to the divine will (Js. 1:21) and considerateness towards men (Gal. 6:1).

Bible Example: Moses

Meekness is seen in Christ as he stands before his accusers. It is this that allowed Christ to overcome the tendency to strike back when threatened or attacked, to turn the other cheek when smitten. Yet he was not spineless, for he willingly endured the cruel cross when he had the power to resist with legions of angels. Jesus showed that His strength was under His control.

Moses is said to have been the meekest man of his day (Num. 12:3). His meekness is seen by the way He served as the leader of God's people. Perhaps one of the most difficult jobs a man ever

performed. His meekness is seen in the way he handled the Israelites who were expert complainers. When it came to murmuring and complaining this people had it down to a science or an art.

Scarcely had they left Egypt behind them, and they started their belly-aching. The Israelites had everything they needed, but they never ran out of things to complain about. God had set up fast food locations wherever they pitch their tents throughout the wilderness. Yet they complained about the water being bitter, they wanted soft drinks (Ex. 15:23). Then they complained, "where's the beef". They had manna from heaven, but all bun and no meat! So God sent quail (Ex. 16:3). Then they complained that there wasn't enough water. Now they wanted unlimited refills (Ex. 17:1,2).

When the people murmur, it puts a discouraging load on the leaders. *"Moses said to the Lord, 'Why hast Thou been so hard on Thy servant? and why have I not found favor in Thy sight, that Thou hast laid the burden of all this people on me?'"* (Num. 11:11).

In Exodus 32, while Moses was up on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments the Meekness Israelites were down below breaking all then of them. They had turned to Aaron to make the an idol which he did from their good jewelry. God told Moses to get down to the people for they were corrupting themselves. When the Lord said He was going to destroy the people and make of Moses a great nation, he pleaded with the Lord to relent. "And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!

Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation." Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: *"Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 'Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 'Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' " So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people"* (vv. 9-14). When Moses saw the idolatry of the people he cast down the two tablets and broke them to show his righteous indignation. *"So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain"* (v. 19). *"Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it"* (v. 20). He rebukes Aaron, *"And Moses said to Aaron, 'What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?'"* So Aaron said, *"Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. 'For they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 'And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out."* (vv. 21-24). He gathered a small army of faithful Levites and 3,000 idolaters were killed by the edge of their swords. Does this sound like Moses the Meek was weak and spineless?

Moses' meekness is also seen in his relationship to God, he make choices in his life which clearly showed his determination to submit to the Divine Will. "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." (Heb. 11:24-27). Moses rejected worldly fame and position, correctly appraising the true value of material goods, separating himself from his former Egyptian lifestyle, fearing God rather than men, and leading God's people in obedience.

Characteristics of Meekness

► God Controlled Strength

Meekness is the opposite of one being out of control. Alexander the Great, who, in a fit of uncontrolled temper in the middle of a drunken debauch, hurled a spear at his best friend and killed him.

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Prov. 16:32).

▶ **Teachable**

You cannot teach a man who is self-assured that he knows it all. Yet the meek are willing to listen to God. *"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls"* (James 1:21).

▶ **Humbly Submit to God**

No servants are more miserable than those who constantly resent their servitude. Humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it is thinking more of God. The meek are not demanding of God, but willing to submit to God's demands (1 Pet. 5:6,7).

▶ **Gentle Toward All Men**

Paul informed Timothy *"And the Lord's servant...be gentle towards all..."* (2 Tim. 2:24-26). It is in such a spirit that we are to restore our erring brethren. *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness."* (Gal. 6:1).

Self -Control

Definition

Self-control is translated from the Greek word "egkrateia (eng-krat'-i-ah); from 1468; self-control (especially continence): KJV-- temperance. (Strong's # 1466). "From kratos, strength...'self control' is the preferable rendering, as temperance is now limited to one form of self control; the various powers between by God upon man are capable of abuse; the right use demands the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God." (Vine, p. 1126). Thayer explains "self-control...(the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, esp. his sensual appetites." (Thayer, p. 166). *Egkrateia* "...is nothing other than chastity, and chastity was the one completely new virtue which the Christian ethic brought into this world. ...that quality which makes him able to live and to walk in the world, and yet to keep his garments unspotted from the world." (Barclay, p. 127).

Some translators render *egkrateia* "temperance." Temperance in present English usage refers almost exclusively to abstinence from alcoholic beverages. "Control or restraint of oneself or one's actions, feelings, etc." (Web., p. 1293). Self-control, however, means just what it says, having control over one's self. This is similar to the Greek - to take hold of oneself, to get a grip on oneself. Akrates - a person who can't get a hold on himself. The Greek word of self-control is said to have been derive from a word for "strength." It involves the strength to control the appetites, as well as practicing mind-control, (Col. 3:2; 1 Pet. 1:13).

Bible Example: Joseph

Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob. His favored position, plus his prophetic dreams caused great envy and jealousy among his 11 other brothers. One day they cast him in a pit and were going to kill him, yet instead sold him into slavery to a passing caravan of Ishmaelites. They took his coat of many colors, tore it and dipped it in animal blood so that Jacob would think that his favorite son was dead. Joseph was eventually sold in Egypt to Potiphar. As captain of the guard, Potiphar was an important officer in Pharaoh's army.

He was betrayed by his own brethren and sold into slavery carried to a distant land. However, he displayed self-control by not whining, no defeatism, not being bent on revenge, or forsaking God. Instead he worked hard as a household slave. Joseph was put in charge of all of Potiphar's affairs.

Potiphar's wife took notice of this well-built, handsome young man. Mrs. Potiphar set out to entice the handsome Hebrew slave into adultery. She did not possess self-control. *"And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.' But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand'"* (Gen. 39:7-8).

Joseph not only said no but he gave her several good reasons why he would not lie with her (Gen. 39:8,9). He refused to violate Potiphar's trust in him. Today some trusts you to do what is right even when you are alone: your parents, boss, teachers, relatives, etc. Joseph would not disobey God. *"There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Gen. 39:9). Joseph lived with a constant awareness of God's powerful presence "Jehovah was with Joseph" (Gen. 39:2,21). He could have given in by saying: "no one would know".

Notice her persistence: day after day she tried to seduce him. *"And so it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her"* (Gen. 39:10). Joseph's resistance could not be worn down. We could call the memory the Seventh Command: *"Do not commit adultery."* Or Paul's admonition to *"flee fornication"* (1 Cor. 6:18). He did not have a Bible at all. Neither did Joseph have friends or family to encourage him to continue to resist.

We are subject to both verbal and visual stimuli. Joseph made every effort to avoid contact with Mrs. Potiphar (v. 10). He was surrounded by sexual immorality. Egyptian society was corrupt. He could not control the Egyptian environment, but we can control our environment. We need to use self-control to avoid situations that could lead to fornication, drinking, drugs, etc. Remember, sin such as fornication is not produced by an inherently sinful desire, but instead, it results from a failure to control one's own flesh. Joseph kept his fleshly desires under control.

One day when no other men were in the house, Potiphar's wife *"...caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me.'"*(v. 12). Surely this was too much temptation for any man. What was he to do. Joseph could have made many excuses for committing fornication with her. Joseph was not in Potiphar's house by choice, or alone with the woman by choice. Mrs. Potiphar was his superior. She all but forced him. He is only human. His action is that of 1 Cor. 6:18 - *"flee fornication."* Sometimes, temptations seem almost overwhelming, but God has promised that there is a way of escape. *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it"* (1 Cor. 10:13).

His resistance brought imprisonment rather than reward. (See vv. 11-20). He had gone from favorite son in Canaan to common slave in Egypt, to trusted steward, to convicted criminal, to most powerful political figure next to Pharaoh. When we leave Joseph at the end of Genesis he had risen to the pinnacle of political power in Egypt.

Application

Self control involves three SELF related areas: 1) Control over lusts of the flesh and selfish desires. This stands opposed both to the "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness," and to the "Drunkenness and revellings" before mentioned. 2) Abstaining from certain lawful things to help reduce temptation to yourself and others. 3) Moderation in lawful things such as eating, sleeping, certain leisure time activities, etc. We need to learn where self-control ends and self-indulgence begins.

Remember that story about the little boy running down the street. Somebody asked why he was in such a hurry. He said he was rushing home to get a whipping. When asked if he was that anxious to be punished he replied, "No, but if I don't get there before Dad gets home, he'll give it to me instead of Mom!" There's a deep message in that Story. If I discipline myself...God won't have to? discipline literally means to save the mind. If you don't save the leader, you've automatically lost the follower. But how do you save such a mind? By letting Christ's mind replace ours! (Phil 2:5). The little girl who paraphrased the 23rd Psalm as, "The Lord is my Shepherd, that's all I want" might not have had the exact words, but ...she had the right meaning.

Questions:

1. True/False A meek man is weak and spineless.

2. How does one demonstrate meekness toward God? Toward his fellow man?
3. How did Christ show meekness?
4. What are some of the things that Israel murmured about while in the wilderness?
5. What effect did all that complaining have on their leader, Moses?
6. While Moses was on Mt. Sinai the people made and worshipped the golden calf. What all did Moses do in reaction to this?
7. How did Moses demonstrate his meekness toward God?
8. Define "self-control" in your own words.
9. How is the word "temperance" defined today?
10. What had Joseph's brothers done to him? How did Joseph react to all this?
11. What reasons did Joseph give for not giving into Mrs. Potiphar's desires?
12. How did Joseph respond to her persistent tempting?
13. What excuses could Joseph have used to justify giving into fornication?
14. When Potiphar's wife tried to force herself on him what did he do?

15. What all happened to Joseph after he had refused Potiphar's wife?
16. In what areas should we use self-control?
17. True/False If we don't use self-control to discipline ourselves God will one day discipline us.

Application & Discussion:

1. Explain our a meek/self-controlled Christian are very strong.
2. What are some areas where people need to demonstrate self-control?

Homework: Exercise strength over self by submitting you control and will to God.