

# *The "Regulations of Divine Worship"*

*Hebrews 9:1*

*Covenants Have Regulations of Worship*

*"Now Even the First Covenant Had Regulations of Divine Worship" Hebrews 9:1*

*Book 3 of 3 in The Complete Advanced Bible Study on Christian Worship for Pleasing God, by Rick David, an Evangelist and Author of [FreeBibleStudy.org](http://FreeBibleStudy.org)*

*With great passion, some announce and proclaim a gospel, saying,*

*"It's not about rules and regulations! It is about a relationship!"*

*But is this really true? Are there no rules and regulations in the Christian religion? What kind of relationship does God want with us? Is the kind of relationship God wants a regulated one or a deregulated one? As some politicians say, "We need less regulation!" or "We need less government!," while other politicians say, "We need more government!" or "We need more regulation!"*

*Now, I once met a young Christian man in a public place, not in church, and he was wearing a shirt with a cross on it which boldly said, in large letters, "It's not about rules and regulations. It's about a relationship". So, referring to his shirt, I then asked him if he ever read Hebrews 9:1. He answered and said, "Does it talk about regulations?". I said, "Yes". Then I explained to him that Hebrews 9:1 is speaking to and referring to the Christian religion, saying, "even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship". So, this verse implies, that like the Old Covenant, Moses's Law, the Christian covenant also has regulations for worshiping the divine, meaning God. But, for good reasons, we know that Christ's regulations of worship are different than the ones Moses gave to Israel. So, the kind of relationship which God wants with us is a regulated one, especially regarding worship.*

*When you complete this study, you will see that many things, subjects, or topics in the Christian religion are regulated, such as worship, our talents or spiritual gifts, our gender, the Lord's supper, and so on and so forth, even the kind of lifestyle which God desires us to live.*

*Therefore, if you are following the misguided and passionate proclamation of the moment, a gospel which has nothing to do with regulations, then I recommend you halt. Take stock of yourself and your church with this study.*

*Pause and consider which gospel you believe, a regulated one or a deregulated one, an obedient one or a rebellious one.*

# *The "Regulations of Divine Worship"*

*Hebrews 9:1*

*Covenants Have Regulations of Worship*

*"Now Even the First Covenant Had Regulations of Divine Worship" Hebrews 9:1*

*The Complete Advanced Bible Study on Christian Worship for Pleasing God, a Three Book Series*

1. The Bible Study on New Life, "Walk in Newness of Life" (Ro 6:4). What our duties are after personal salvation.
2. The Bible Study on "True Worshipers... For Such People the Father Seeks to Be His Worshipers" (Jn 4:23). The characteristics and habits of true worshipers.
3. The Bible Study on the "Regulations of Divine Worship," "Now Even the First Covenant Had Regulations of Divine Worship" (Heb 9:1). Covenants have regulations of worship.



## *Benefits, Goals and Objectives of This Study*

1. Understand the regulations of worship in Christ's Covenant.
2. Be warned not to violate these regulations and the consequences for doing so.
3. Remember the nature of true worship (Jn 4:24), that it is to reflect the very nature and characteristics of God (spirit and truth), not man (flesh and error).
4. Be encouraged to attend worship, with a purpose.
5. Learn how to motivate and encourage certain members of a church to be more loving towards all men, women, and children, and to do good works which are beneficial or useful in their nature or characteristics towards others.
6. Comprehend exactly who is God, in three separate and distinct persons, and be encouraged to worship them as such.
7. Learn what the word worship means, and therefore know how to apply it in its most authentic and meaningful form, especially during worship or elements of it, such as during prayer.
8. Know how certain spiritual gifts or talents must be regulated during worship.
9. Learn how to conduct yourself during worship and in the greater kingdom of God.
10. Understand when, how, and why to observe the Lord's Supper.
11. Learn how to judge wicked members of your own church body.
12. Learn how to detect a false teacher and how to avoid them.
13. Be taught to avoid hypocritical separations.

## *Acknowledgements and Dedication*

Thanks be to the God of peace (order), who calls us to live an orderly, regulated life before Him, his people, and the world; to be ruly. I dedicate this study to all of you who wish to behave properly in God's house during worship, the assembly and in the kingdom of God.

## *Cover Explanation*

In this painting of Abraham Lincoln he demonstrated some choice things about Christian worship: (1) Respect and honor for the holy Bible, (2) Bending the knee in worship of God [which is what the word 'worship' literally means, and what every worshiper ought to be doing, and what every knee will do to the glory of God / SEE Phil 2:9-11], and (3) Removing his hat (head covering) to show respect toward Christ, which is what the apostles commanded men to do in certain circumstances (1 Cor 11:4, 7). Abe, who was the 16th President of the U.S.A., is famous for the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed all American slaves.



## *About the Author*

Greetings. My name is Pat "Rick" David Yanello. By God's grace and power, He has called me to be an evangelist, a husband of one wife, a father of nine children (all from that same wife!), a publisher, a home schooling father, and more. I have authored several Bible studies that have been used by tens of thousands of people worldwide. I am truly blessed by God to establish [FreeBibleStudy.org](http://FreeBibleStudy.org) and [FreeBibleSchool.org](http://FreeBibleSchool.org), and the core curriculum used therein. These websites have had millions of page hits. I was born and raised in Pennsylvania, but I have also lived in Texas and North Carolina. I have personally served in the spreading of the gospel in many communities throughout the United States, and in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mexico.

Translation: Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references from the New American Standard Bible, Copyright, The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission. Bold, brackets, and underlines made by Patrick David Yanello.



# Contents

## 1. Covenants Have Regulations of Divine Worship 7

When it comes to being a Christian, many worshipers do not believe that it has anything to do with obeying certain rules and regulations. Yet, the kind of relationship which God wants with His worshipers is a regulated one. The Christian covenant has rules and regulations which govern one's conduct in life and in the household of God, during worship. Brethren, there are very serious consequences for breaking these regulations or remaining ignorant of them. God does not save rebels! So we must be ruly, not unruly.

## 2. Review the Heart, the Essence of True Worship 13

Friends, the nature of our worship must reflect the nature of our God, His personality. It must be spiritual and truthful, not sensual and erring. For God is spirit and truth, not flesh and error. So, the nature and character of our worship must be the same. Simply because of God's nature, His personality, He only can accept worship, or elements of it, that are according to that nature. Likewise, He can only accept groups of worshipers who worship Him in a way that is in keeping with His character. There are many things in the Scriptures which mark worshipers as worshiping God in flesh, not in spirit, not according to God's true nature. This could include the kind of music that we sing, prayers that we submit to God, covenant we follow, style of worship that we promote or practice, the way that we "name" ourselves as a church, and much more. Likewise, there are many things which mark worshipers as worshiping God in error, not in truth; things such as promoting ourselves, our own opinions, and our own traditions over Christ and His truth. So, we must renew our minds with Christ's teachings about true worshipers, the characteristics and habits that they demonstrate and in which they grow.

## 3. Beloved, Understand Whom We Worship 21

All throughout the Bible we find evidence of who God actually is. The Old Covenant began to describe Him as an "Us" and an "Our" and as "the Spirit". The New Covenant more completely described the "Us" as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; three separate and distinct persons. Our God, whom we worship, are three persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



## 4. Church, Observe the True Meaning of the Word Worship 27

When it comes to worshipping our God, many worshipers have not yet learned and put into practice one of the most basic and reverent aspects of it. Throughout the whole Bible, from the beginning of the Old Testament to the worship activity in heaven, as recorded in the book of Revelation, true worshipers have demonstrated the sacred meaning of the word; to bend the knee in worship of God. In its most authentic use, this is what the word worship means. Let us practice it together during worship!

## 5. Friend, Observe the Regulation to Attend Worship, with a Purpose 31

From now on and into eternity, God wants people to worship Him, together, through Jesus Christ, His Son. There are many reasons for this. First, we have commandment to do so, to be in the habit of attending worship services. But there is more to it than just attendance. God wants every Christian to join in the assembly, but to come with the purpose to motivate members of the assembly (with their gifts and talents) to be much more loving and also heavily involved in good works. So we must come to worship with a purpose to increase people's love for God and man (and women and children) and to do excellent things in life.

## Test 1 on Regulations

## 6. Beloved, Know How to Conduct Yourself During Worship 45

On the door of His house (the N.T.), our Father has posted a code of "conduct" for His children to follow when they enter his household to worship Him. It controls the kind of words that we ought to speak while in His home, and even whom should be speaking words in His home. Likewise, it governs the adornment of His daughters, what they ought to wear while in it. The code guides us in selecting whom ought to lead us in worship and whom should follow. It influences how we must treat, honor, and respect each member of His household, the young and the old, male and female, and so on and so forth. Through a written code of conduct, the Lord wants to steer and direct the behavior of each member in His household to accomplish His good purposes.

## 7. Gifted Ones, Observe the Regulations for Using Your Talents During Worship 59

You are talented. You are gifted, in the spirit. And as with every Christian, your spiritual talent is a part of the value and usefulness that God wants you to bring into the kingdom of God. But, this does not mean that every Christian (including you) is using his talent to build other Christians up in the Christian faith, in the spirit. Indeed, many are using them (their tongues, their singing, their teaching, their gender, and more) to lead others down the path of sensuality, they are using them as sensual gifts, the opposite of what it means to be spiritual. This is disgusting to God. So, do you know how to properly use your spiritual gifts, especially around other Christians, even during worship? If not, then God might not admit that He knows who you are.

## 8. Church, Observe The Lord's Supper, and Its Regulations 71

Judas Iscariot is an integral part of the story of the Lord's supper, but not in a good way. During the supper, Jesus revealed that Judas would soon betray him. In doing so, he became guilty of the blood of the Lord, meaning murder. For Christ was an innocent man, and Judas knew it. He even said that he betrayed innocent blood. Did you know that today you could be just as guilty as Judas in how you are (or are not) eating the Lord's supper? You could be guilty of murdering Christ. So, you must not disregard or dishonor the supper, or somehow trivialize it as not important or essential to the worship of God. So, learn how to eat it in a praiseworthy way.

## 9. Church, Observe The Regulations for Judging Wicked Members 83

Is there a time for everything under the sun, even passing judgment on a disciple? Jesus said judge not! So, there is a time not to judge our brother. Do you know when we should not judge our brother? Do you know whom should not judge his brother? Paul said do you not judge those inside the church? So, there is a time to judge our brother. Do you know when we should judge our brother? Do you know whom should judge their brother? Do you know how to judge your brother? There are three things a church must do to judge their wicked members. Examine your membership.

## 10. Friends, Observe The Regulations for Dealing with False Teachers 93

God does not favor a false teacher. And He does not want you to be gracious to them as well. Indeed, he wants you to avoid them. You have His permission and blessing to not greet them or offer them any form of hospitality. Indeed, He has commanded you to treat them in this way. Are you keeping this command? If not, you might be aiding and abetting a liar. Not good! Yet, like Diotrophes, you must not be a hypocritical separator.

## Test 2 on Regulations

## Appendix A - On Love 99

# Covenants Have Regulations of Divine Worship

When I saw a Christian wear a shirt like this, I wondered if he had ever read Hebrews 9:1.

"Now Even the First Covenant Had **Regulations** of Divine Worship" Hebrews 9:1



There are several key passages in the new covenant which regulate our worship, that is, how God wants us to relate to Him during a worship assembly. Some of these passages were already studied in the other two books in this three part series on Christian worship, such as John 4:21-26, which regulates *the nature or character* of our worship, and 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, which regulates the use of coverings during prayer and such.

In this Bible study, we will consider even more key passages on Christian worship, such as 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, which regulates the use of spiritual gifts during worship. The whole book of 1 Timothy regulates every member's conduct during a worship service and in the kingdom of God. 2 John regulates how to treat false teachers. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 regulates the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 5 regulates how to judge wicked church members. All of us need to be keenly aware of these passages, and more like them, so that we can, together, as obedient children, please God our Father in all things relating to worship and His household.

Yet as we can see from this T-shirt which says, "It's Not about Rules and Regulations," some Christians are mistaken about the true nature and character of Christianity, and the kind of relationship which God seeks, especially in regards to what worship is all about, whether it is regulated or not. Like this T-shirt, there are a lot of bold, misguided speculations about the meaning and purpose of Christianity as it applies to our life. These speculations create a lot of confusion for others, and mislead many, since they arrogantly contend against and oppose the truth which has been revealed and commanded by Christ about these things. For example, concerning **Christian worship, in speaking about the Christian covenant and the regulations therein**, in one place it says, "Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship" (He 9:1).



This implies that in the second major covenant, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, there are “**regulations**” for worshipping God. So when a worshiper asserts, and even advertises to others on a shirt, that Christianity is not about regulations, perhaps he has not yet read or understood Hebrews 9:1, which says that it is about “**regulations**”. Or with many worshipers, it is even worse than just plain ignorance. For example, in truth, many worshipers do not want to be submissive, but instead rebellious in nature; a rebel, making Christianity a “rebel religion”. “For there are **many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers**” (Titus 1:10). This verse is talking about worshipers! Yet the worship of God is regulated. Our **relationship** with God, in the form of worship, which is the kind of **relationship** that He wants with us, a worshipful one, is regulated. For we will not win “**the prize**” of eternal life unless we worship God “**according to the rules,**” the rule of God. [God does not save rebels, meaning **unruly** people.]

## “Compete According to **the Rules**” 2 Tim 2:5

In a comparison about serving God through Christ, it is written that “**Athletes do not win the prize unless they compete according to the rules**” (2 Tim 2:5). So, in regards to our conduct during worship and how we, so to speak, play our game (our part, our position, our calling in life), we can easily see that Christianity has something to do with “**rules**” and “**regulations**”. These govern our **relationship** with God. We cannot have a **friendship** with the Lord unless we follow His rules and regulations, especially in how we **relate** to Him in worship. 8

## “Admonish the **Unruly**” 1 Thessalonians 5:14

“For you are **my friends** if you do what I command you” (Jn 15:14). On Judgment Day, we will find out who are the friends of Jesus and who are not His friends. For Jesus predicted that He will condemn to the hell fire “**many**” (Mt 7:22) talented Christians, who will claim to be the hard working **friends** of Jesus, because they did not compete according to the “**rules**” and “**regulations**” of His law. “I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice **lawlessness**’ ” (Mt 7:21-23), meaning one who does not follow certain rules and regulations in regards to either how to live the Christian life or how to worship God according to Christ.

## There Are Serious Consequences for Breaking the Rules of Conduct

Now we must understand that breaking or deviating from the regulations of divine worship will bring severity and wrath from God upon an individual or a church. So, “**We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly**” (1 Thess 5:14). Yet, if Christianity is not about rules and regulations, how then can we admonish the **unruly**? If there are no **rules** of proper conduct so becoming of a Christian or even a Christian church, then how can we admonish anyone at all?

Yet, from the beginning, in every Biblical age, there were rules and regulations given by God to man which governed man’s relationship with Him. For example:

## **There Were Rules of Conduct in The Beginning Age and Serious Consequences for Breaking Them**

In the beginning, Adam and Eve disobeyed one rule or regulation. For this, God was severe with them. For example, He put them out of the garden and they eventually died. They were not permitted to eat from the tree of eternal life and live forever (SEE Ge 3:22-24). They did not receive eternal life. It was not "secure," as some false teachers preach today, just like the serpent preached it to Eve.

## **There Were Rules of Conduct in the Patriarchal Age and Serious Consequences for Breaking Them**

In the Patriarchal Age, God planned to deal severely with Moses, because apparently he had not yet circumcised his son according to the regulations given to Abraham (Ex 4:24-26; Ge 17:14). *[At this point, Moses was on his way to help save Israel, so he had not yet received the Law.]* Now God planned to put someone to death over this, but Moses' wife, Zipporah, saved a life, since she circumcised their son.

## **There Were Rules of Conduct in the Mosaic Age and Serious Consequences for Breaking Them**

In the Mosaic Age, there are many examples of how setting aside its regulations resulted in severity, meaning wrath from God being displayed from heaven on an individual or a congregation. For example, as soon as God gave Israel the ten commandments, they began to break some of them, and so God swiftly dealt with them for breaking these regulations. He

wrathfully destroyed many of them for worshiping a golden calf. When David was bringing back the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem, Uzzah reached out his hand to stop it from apparently falling off of the cart. So God struck him down for his irreverence (2 Sam 6:6, 7). He died. It was irreverent for anyone to touch the Ark of God. Not even the priests were permitted to touch it. There were regulations in Moses' Law which spoke about this.

## **There Are Rules of Conduct in the Christian Age and Serious Consequences for Breaking Them**

Even in the Christian Age, we find examples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ Himself, dealing severely and wrathfully with worshipers who set aside His regulations. For example, two Christians, Ananias and his wife Sapphira, were struck down by the Lord for lying about their giving (Ac 5:1-11). Indeed, Jesus does not tolerate liars. In another place, because of a Christian woman's unchecked deviant conduct in church, Jesus planned to bring sickness and great tribulation on her, and on all of those who followed her ways, and to kill her children with pestilence (READ Re 2:22, 23). For she was an immoral, idolatrous woman who was teaching and leading Christians astray into practicing these things.

**"For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality" (Col 3:25).** God will not favor us (be partial toward us) to the point that He will let us continue in sin. So even in the Christian Age, God will punish or destroy any of His children who do not repent of their sin. For He does not favor [grace] sin. He only forgives it if we repent of it and separate ourselves from it.

# We Must Not Insult the Spirit of Grace by Setting Aside the Regulations in Christ's Covenant

As a warning to Christians, and Christian churches, the writer of Hebrews said this: "Anyone who has **set aside the Law of Moses dies** without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much **severer** punishment do you think he will deserve who has **trampled under foot** the Son of God, and **has regarded as unclean** the blood of **the covenant** by which he was sanctified, and has **insulted** the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "**THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.**" It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (He 10:28-31).

And so we, "His people," must not insult the Spirit of grace by setting aside "**the covenant**," and its regulations, or else we will receive God's severity [His wrath], not His kindness [His grace], for "**The Lord will judge His people**" (He 10:30). "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God" (1 Pe 4:17). God is judging His people, now. So then we must "**Behold then the kindness [grace/favor] and severity [wrath] of God; to those who fell, severity [wrath], but to you, God's kindness [grace/favor], if you continue in His kindness [grace/favor]; otherwise you also will be cut off [wrath]**" (Ro 11:22). This gospel passage specifically applies to our conduct after we are saved, which would include our worship of God, whether or not it is according to the regulations and principles in Christ's covenant. For this passage is talking to Christians, the saved, that they can be "**cut**

**off**" if they discontinue in what God favors, and fall back into practicing sins which God condemns.

So we have to consider both what God favors (graces) and what God wraths (condemns). For even Jesus came to preach the favorable year of the Lord, meaning His grace, His favor, and the vengeance of our God, meaning His wrath and indignation (READ Isa 61:2). He preached about both the grace and the wrath of God, what God favors and what or whom he will condemn.

## Conclusion

There are certain "**rules**" and "**regulations**" which govern our **relationship** with God, that is, how we worship Him and live the Christian life. Teaching and following them pleases God. Remaining ignorant of them, not teaching them, or deviating from them will bring the wrath of Jesus upon an individual or a church.

Yet, Jesus said, "**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you** (Mt 28:19, 20). So when a minister of the gospel has baptized some people into Christ, he then is supposed to be "**teaching them to observe all that I [Christ] commanded**". Obviously, this would include teaching them to put into practice each and every one of Christ's commandments which regulate the worship of God and the Christian life (since now they have become a worshiper of God through Christ alone, not Moses or any other person, religion, or covenant).



Therefore, the purpose of this study is to make us keenly aware of these regulations of worship so that we can then observe them by putting them into practice together. For many worshipers are not yet obediently observing them, because, as noted before, of the ignorant or rebellious nature of many worshipers (Titus 1:10). Yet God does not save rebels! Let us strive then, from the heart, to, in all ways, be not unruly, but instead submissive and ruly to God and His words regarding Christian worship! Let us not get out of hand, His hand of authoritative rule. Let us be ruly, ruled by Christ, the Lord, meaning our Master, someone to whom we submit in all things, a ruler, even the elders who rule over us well (1 Tim 5:17).

**“ The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor”**  
1 Tim 5:17

For if Christianity is not about rules or regulations, then we do not have to submit to anyone in authority, like to those who rule over us, our overseers, our leaders (He 13:17); wives would not have to submit to the rule of their husbands in anything (Eph 5:22-24); children would not have to obediently honor their parents (Eph 6:2, 3); likewise Christians would not have to submit to the governing authorities (Ro 13:1), and so on and so forth.

**“ Christianity is not a rebel religion, as some make it out to be ”**

Yet we know that Christianity is not a rebel religion, as some make it out to be by their advertising or form of worship. On the contrary, Christianity brings God's willful order and rule to the home, the church, and society. We even must earnestly petition God for it to be so, saying, **“Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven”** (Mt 6:10). So God has a will that He wants everyone on earth to obediently submit to, if they are willing. Amen.

**“Let us demonstrate a good attitude about Christianity and its teachings”**

So when it comes to the Christian religion, let us have a good attitude about it, saying that it does have something to do with certain rules and regulations. For **“even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship”** (He 9:1). Likewise, so does the second major covenant, the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christian covenant is regulated. So let us have an attitude of ruliness, not unruliness or unregulatedness. For worshipers who practice the Christian religion in an unregulated, meaning **“lawless”** way, meaning an unruly way, will inherit the hellfire (READ Mt 7:22, 23). So let us who wish to be ruly, demonstrate a good attitude about Christianity and its teachings. Let us not advertise to others that Christianity is not about rules and regulations, or laws. For this demonstrates a bad attitude, and is worthy of condemnation.

# Additional Notes About This Study

## 1. This Bible Study Is Specifically for Worship Assemblies

The passages in this study specifically relate to and focus on the commandments which regulate worship when we assemble, when we come together as a group to perform some or all aspects of worship for one another and toward God, such as prayer, teaching, singing, the Lord's Supper, etc. So it cannot be used for every other kind of activity or meeting in the kingdom of God. [Yet obviously certain commandments which relate to worship also apply beyond the assembly, into the broader kingdom of God, such as the commandments regarding the husband wife relationship, the commandments for proper adornment, and so on and so forth.]. Now the passages used in this Bible study clearly reveal their "group" nature with statements like these, "in God's house, the church", and "when you assemble", and "worship", and "do this [i.e. together]", etc. These keywords help identify the subject of these passages and the points related to them.

## 2. This Study Is Not for Every Type of Ministry or Service

There are a variety of ministries (SEE 1 Cor 12:5), meaning services which Christians provide to others, even many kinds of services which do not directly relate to worship assemblies or elements or parts of a worship service. This would include ministries such as hospitality, foot washing, fellowship meals, church food pantries, church libraries or book stores, clothes closets, health care, and so on and so forth. Therefore, the regulations listed in this study do not always apply to these types of situations. Yet other commandments of Christ would obviously apply, such as, any commandments related to living the Christian life or how to behave in the broader kingdom of God, outside of a worship service.

## 3. This Study Is Not about the Style or Nature of Worship

In the second book of this three part series on Christian worship (*The Bible Study on "True Worshipers... For Such People the Father Seeks to Be His Worshipers"* John 4:23, *The Characteristics and Habits of True Worshipers*), we studied the commandments which regulate **the nature and character** of our worship, that it must be according to the na-

ture of God, spiritual and truthful, not sensual and erring. So this passage on worship will not be studied in this book. Yet, elements related to it may be briefly mentioned, outlined, or referred to in this study. For how can our worship of God be acceptable to Him if we are simply good at regulating sensual or erring forms or elements of worship toward Him?

## 4. It Is Not about Spiritual Gifts, But the Regulation of Them

In the *Complete Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts* (which includes the *Bible Study on The Greater Gifts*, *The Non-Teaching Gifts*, and *The Situational Gifts*), we carefully study the exact meaning and purpose of all the revealed gifts. So, in this book, only the regulations governing spiritual gifts will be studied, not the meaning and purpose of a spiritual gift. For the exact meaning and purpose of a spiritual gift, please refer to the gift studies mentioned above.

## 5. This Study Is Only 1 Piece of the Complete Worship Puzzle

In addition to the "regulations" of divine worship, there are several other important aspects of Christian worship which need to be carefully studied and applied. [These are covered in *The Bible Study on New Life*, *The Bible Study on True Worshipers*, and *The Bible Study on The Greater Gifts*, *The Non-Teaching Gifts*, and *The Situational Gifts*.] So this study on *The Regulations of Divine Worship* is only one important piece of many which should be used altogether as a guide to conduct a group worship service, or to train all disciples for worship and the Christian life. It is my hope that all of these studies mentioned above will greatly assist us in our worship of God so that **"we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe"** (He 12:28). Amen and amen! Rick David

# Review the Heart, the Essence of True Worship

## The Nature of Our Worship Must Reflect the Nature of Our God

Brethren, this is the key to worship. Jesus said, **"True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"** (Jn 4:23, 24). Therefore, since the nature of God **"is Spirit"** and truth, those who worship Him **"must"** also worship Him in that same kind of nature, **"in spirit and truth,"** if they want to be sought out by Him. **"For such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers"** (Jn 4:23).

The character of God is spiritual and truthful, not sensual and erring. So the character of our worship must be in keeping with the character traits of our God. God is not flesh. He is not sensual. God is not deceptive or deceived. He is not a liar. He does not go on deceiving or being deceived. So God, because of His nature, that is, the kind of person He truly is, can only accept worship and worshipers who worship according to that nature. Likewise, He cannot accept those who worship in a way that is contrary to it. So, fittingly, God said that He only **"seeks"** and labels as **"true worshipers"** churches who worship Him according to His personality. When He looks at us, He wants to see the reflection of Himself mirrored back to Him. So we must strive as churches to prove to be the kind of worshipers whom God seeks, who worship Him according to His nature. Otherwise, He will ignore our churches and label us as false.

## There Are Two Key Points to Understand about True Worship

As Jesus pointed out to the woman at the well, to be considered a true church by the Father, we **"must worship in spirit and truth"** (Jn 4:24). What then does it mean to worship God **"in spirit and truth"**? Below, I want to remind you of the exact meaning of this to refresh your memory.

Note: We already studied this and more in the second book in my three part series on Christian worship to please God, *The Bible Study on "True Worshipers... For Such People the Father Seeks to Be His Worshipers"* (Jn 4:23). If you have not yet completed it, I encourage you and your church to finish it so that you can get the full picture of what it means to be the kind of worshipers whom God seeks.

## What Does It Mean to "Worship in Spirit"?

I want to explain this to you in three ways. First, by drawing attention to or linking it to the number one attribute of the Spirit, how He is **"holy"** in nature. Second, by precisely defining this attribute, its meaning (excerpted from *The Bible Study on New Life*). Third, by giving examples from the gospel of how worshipers violate this principle of worshiping God in spirit, so that we can then avoid doing the same thing.

First, to accurately define what it means to **"worship in spirit,"** we ought to do what Jesus did. We need to begin with and appeal to the fact that God is a spiritual being, not a fleshly one! Jesus said, **"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit"** (Jn 4:24).



Now what kind of spirit is God? In other words, what word or adjective is always very closely associated with God's Spirit? Is it not the word holy? The "**Spirit**" of God is holy. God is the *Holy Spirit*. It is one of His names, into which we are baptized (SEE Mt 28:19), and it denotes the kind of Spirit He indeed is, meaning that He is holy. And He appeals to us to be the same way (1 Pe 1:16).

Holiness is God's main character quality or trait. He is spiritual, meaning holy spiritual. Therefore, the kind of worship that we offer to Him must be spiritual, holy spiritual. We must worship God in the spirit of holiness, in spiritual, not sensual ways. Hence, "Worship the Lord in holy array" (1 Chron 16:29; Ps 29:2), not as some like to say, "come as you are" to worship Him.

Now the spirit of holiness is separated, specifically from sin, **spiritual**, sanctified, sinless, sacred, pure, and undefiled; holy. But the opposite of the "spirit" is the "flesh," meaning fleshly, **sensual**, unholy, worldly, earthly, natural, carnal, sinful, secular, profane, demonic, and defiled, and so on and so forth. So to worship God in spirit means to worship Him in spiritual (holy), not sensual ways (unholy).

Note: Since being a spiritual person truly means being a holy person, not a sensual person (fleshly), this gives us greater insight and understanding into the exact meaning of verses such as these:

(a) Acts 6:3-5, which directs churches to select and appoint men who are "**full of the Spirit**" (meaning spiritual men, not men of flesh, a carnal nature) to be servants (deacons) of certain needs within a church.

(b) Galatians 6:1, which calls and directs a "**spiritual**" person (meaning a holy person, not an unholy/sensual person) to try to help restore someone who is sinning (sensual). For what does a sensual, sinful man have to do with teaching God's spiritual word to others or using it to correct or restore others to God (SEE Ro 2)?

(c) 1 Corinthians 2:12-16, which indicates that the word of God, the things of God, are "**spiritually appraised**" by "**he who is spiritual**" using "**the spirit... from God**," meaning the gift of the Holy Spirit. We received this gift when we, by faith, "**obey Him**" (Ac 5:32), specifically when we believed and were baptized into Christ (SEE Ac 2:38; 5:32). But a carnal man, a man without the Holy Spirit, cannot accept the things of God. So God's word needs to be spiritually appraised by spiritual people, not sensual people, who are without the spirit of our holy God.

## The Definition of What It Means to Be Holy (Spiritual)

Excerpted from the Bible Study on New Life, "Walk in Newness of Life" (Ro 6:4), What Our Duties Are After Personal Salvation

In one word, holiness means to "**separate**" (2 Cor 6:17). We must separate from something or some situation to be holy (separate). This is what the context in 2 Corinthians 6:17 implies. For example, consider the following definitions of the two related words "holiness" and "sanctification," from *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*.

### 1. Holiness (**Hagiosune**)

"Denotes the manifestation of the quality of holiness in personal conduct. Fundamentally signifies **separated**, and hence, in Scripture, in its moral and spiritual significance, **separated from sin** and therefore consecrated to God, sacred. The resultant state, the conduct befitting those so **separated**."

So according to this definition above, holiness must be manifested, visible, in our conduct in life in the form of **separating** or keeping **separate** from things that do err, defile, tarnish, and corrupt, namely sin. Are you in the habit of separating from sin? Set yourself apart! Holiness means to be set apart from sin, to separate from it.

### 2. Sanctification (**Hagiasmos**)

"Sanctification [sometimes translated "holiness"] is thus the state [condition or situation] predetermined by God for believers, into which in grace He calls them, and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it. Hence they are called 'saints' (**hagios**)... i.e. 'sanctified' or '**holy ones**'. Sanctification... is an individual possession, built up, little by little, as a result of obedience to the word of God."

So according to this definition, **sanctification means holiness**. And we know that holiness means to be **"separate"** from sin. So when God said, **"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord"** (He 12:14), He meant that without holiness, without sainthood, a person will not be saved. In other words, without separating from something or some situation, no one will see the Lord. God expects us to separate ourselves from certain things in this world. This is why we read that **"God... has saved us and called us to a holy life"** (2 Tim 1:8, 9). It is our purpose and duty after personal salvation, to pursue a holy life. It is our calling, the condition or situation in which God wants us to be, grow, and remain. For **"Let... the one who is holy, still keep himself holy"** (Re 22:11). For **"You shall be holy [separate], for I am holy [separate]"** (1 Pe 1:16). We must separate from certain things to be holy. If our brand of Christianity does not separate us from anything, we are following the wrong gospel. For to properly **"learn Christ"** is to learn the way of **"holiness of the truth"** (Eph 4:20,24). We are to learn to separate from **"sensuality"** (Eph 4:19), which is the opposite of spirituality (holiness). Instead we are to follow the truth which Christ spoke, because the truth separates us, makes us holy, it makes us spiritual, not sensual, if we let it. And **"sensuality"** is a sin that leads to death (SEE Mk 7:22, 23; 2 Cor 12:21; 1 Pe 4:3), because, as Paul said, it is one of the **"deeds of the flesh"** (Gal 5:19), not of the spirit, the Holy Spirit of God.

Note: Some teach that to be holy, to be a saint, it means that one is "set apart to God". On the contrary, let me clarify something here. God is not set apart to God, He is set apart from sin, holy. He said, I am separate, so you be separate, meaning holy. So some worshipers need to dig deeper into the true meaning of holiness or else they will deceive themselves into thinking that they are indeed set apart to God, and yet do not have to separate from anything for God. Holiness must be applied. For one is not "set apart to God" unless one first becomes **"separate"** from certain sins. **"Do not touch what is unclean"** (2 Cor 6:17).

## What Marks Worshipers as Worshiping in Flesh (Sensually), Not in Spirit (Holy)?

There are many things in the gospel which indicate that certain worshipers are worshiping God in the wrong spirit, **a sensual one** (sensually), not a holy one, not a **"separate"** one, not a spiritual one (not spiritually). In the following examples of this, please be aware that in their fuller contexts, they all use words or examples which clearly point out the sensual nature of their worship, words such as **"the flesh"** or **"not spiritual"** or **"pagan"** etc. [All of these examples are explained better in *The Bible Study on True Worshipers*]

### Which Covenant Do They Observe?

If worshipers, including Christians, are keeping all or parts of Moses' Law (which includes the first five books of the Old Testament) to be justified or right before God, the gospel marks them as worshiping in **"the flesh"** (Gal 4:29). For to do so totally disrespects, disregards, and insults Christ and His work on the cross, since He **"fulfilled"** Moses' Law for us (SEE Ro 8:3, 4). He **"canceled"** that **"certificate of debt"** (Col 2:13-17), which includes canceling the Old Testament food laws, the Sabbath, circumcision, etc. (as verse 17 points out, and other gospel Scriptures). So, as followers of Christ, the Messiah, we are no longer obligated to keep Moses' Law. It is like a canceled check. It will not bring us any value before God. In God's bank, we cannot cash it. For our surpassing value is now in Christ, not Moses.

Yet if worshipers exclusively observe the new covenant in Jesus Christ, the gospel then marks them as being in **"the Spirit"** (Gal 4:29). Friends, **"the flesh"** of Moses' Law is one of the most dealt with subjects in the New Covenant (SEE Mt 5:17; Ro 8:3, 4; Ro 10:4; Ac 15; Romans; Hebrews; Galatians; Philippians 3:2-5; Col 2:13-17, and more). Avoid it!

## Do They Observe The Worship Regulations?

When we ignore Christ's regulations of divine worship (for that is what Paul said they were, Christ's, not his own SEE 1 Cor 14:37), or parts of them, it marks us as worshiping in the flesh, the exact opposite of the spirit. And God will ignore us for doing so. For example, Paul taught that during a worship assembly (1 Cor 14:26), that if any of us thinks that we are talented or **"spiritual"** (vs. 37, 38), then we are supposed to recognize and abide by Christ's commandments on worship or else we will be **"ignored"** (SEE 1 Cor 14:37, 38). This would include, in the context, the regulations which restrict women from speaking and teaching during worship (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11, 12) and the regulations which restrict worshipers from speaking in tongues [different languages] during worship (1 Cor 14:27, 28), and more.

This passage on worship regulations concludes, **"For God is not a God of confusion but of peace [order], as in all the churches of the saints [holy ones] (1 Cor 14:33).** God knows what confuses His people in His kingdom, and what brings order to it. Therefore He gave us regulations to follow, all of us, but especially if we claim to have a talent from Him or if we claim to be, as Paul said, a **"spiritual"** (1 Cor 14:37) person. For this passage regulates the use of spiritual gifts in a worship assembly. Let us examine what our members are doing in worship, especially our so called talented or **"spiritual"** ones, and bring them in line with the regulations in this passage.

## What Kind of Music Do They Sing: Spiritual or Sensual?

When we include sensual or secular aspects of music into our worship songs (like the "back-beat"), this marks us as worshiping God sensually, in flesh. Likewise, in our daily lives, for **"living.. holy,"** meaning spiritually, not sensually, is a form of **"worship"** (SEE Ro 12:1). For example, we are supposed to be **"speaking to one another in... spiritual songs"** (Eph 5:19), not sensual songs, not "secular" songs. In all respects, including the words and the accompaniment, a song must be **"separate,"** sacred, in order for it to be considered a spiritual song, that is holy. A sensual song appeals to the flesh, the sensual nature. But a spiritual song appeals to the spirit, both to God's spirit and to the spirit He gave to us, the spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit.

**Notes on the Back-Beat:** The "back-beat" is a form of sensual accompaniment, not spiritual. For example, the term 'back beat' comes from the fact that the beat that makes one want to dance in popular music is beat 2 and 4, where the snare drum often plays. Hence, back beat, one that makes dancers want to physically get their 'backs or back sides into it'. Technically, a back-beat is a sharp rhythmic accent on the second and fourth beats of a measure in 4/4 time or 12/8 time, characteristic of "Rock" music. It can either be a soft beat, like the one used in up close sensual 'slow dancing,' or it can be a loud steady beat like the one used in sensual 'fast dancing'. This "back beat" style emerged in the late 1940's in rhythm and blues recordings (Jazz), and is one of the defining characteristics of Rock and Roll music, and is used in virtually all contemporary popular music. Most popular Christian singers use the same technique, the sensual back beat. So the back-beat has been designed to encourage and arouse the sensual, physical nature in people, and even worshipers, to cause them to get their flesh into it, their backs or backside into it, into the beat, (including all of their fleshy joints). It encourages sensual forms of "slow" and "fast" dancing (to imitate sexual relations), physical exercise, jumping up and down, strutting one's stuff arrogantly, vaunting oneself by thrusting one's body parts up and out and all over for everyone to take notice and see, even God. Yet God, especially during worship, is not up in heaven jumping up and down, shakin' it around, getting His backside into it, strutting His stuff, vaunting himself, getting His flesh into it, for He is not flesh! If you question this teaching, or have questions about it, please thoroughly read the fuller lesson related to it in *The Bible Study on True Worshipers*.

## What Kind of Prayers Do They Offer: Pagan Repetition or Meaningful Ones?

When we pray like pagans, we are worshiping God in flesh. For example, many worshipers do exactly what Jesus said not to do, they use repetition prayers (Mt 6:7), not meaningful ones. He said that the **"pagans"** (KJV) do this, meaning the ungodly religions. The definition here of repetition means to babble, to repeat the same things over and over and over, to use many idle words, like a chant. Catholic nuns do this. In Africa, I have witnessed some Christian churches using some form of repetition prayer to call upon the name of the Lord. We must examine our prayers to see if they are meaningful, conversational prayers, or simply paganistic in their nature, such as repetition prayers.

## How Do They Behave During the Lord's Supper: Carnally or Spiritually?

The church in Corinth worshiped God in a sensual way when they misbehaved during the Lord's Supper. They were getting drunk, which is a fleshly thing to do, and some of them ate up all the unleavened bread so that no one else could have any. How childish! **"For in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another**

is drunk" (1 Cor 11:21). To do something like this during the Lord's Supper, which is a most holy part of worship, was worthy of Paul's utter condemnation and judgment of them as a church. We must not misbehave around the Lord's "table," or else, as this passage indicates (vs. 27-32), we will end up like Eli and his sons! Let us make sure that we, together as a church, are not sinning when we remember Christ in the bread and fruit of the vine.

## Do They Speak from Their Puffed Up Sensual Minds or from God and His Word?

Some worshipers, who claim to be led by the Spirit, or that the Lord is giving them something, or speaking to them, are actually being led by their own sensual minds (some claim to be "prophesying"). They are simply given to quick, bold, and erring impressions about others or circumstances. For example, a worshiper can be "inflated without cause by his fleshly mind" (Col 2:18). As the context of this verse further explains, this can lead him to "keep defrauding" other Christians of their prize (eternal life) by delighting in certain forms of worship that require "self-abasement," or "the worship of angels," or "taking his stand on visions he has seen," meaning dreams, and what they contain. To "defraud" someone is to cheat him, to deceive. Fleshly minded speakers cheat us away from the spirit and truth of God, and instead give us "their" spirit and "their" truth. Speculators! In some arrogant, misdirected way, worshipers like this do not hold fast to the head of the body, Jesus Christ, or His gospel. They go beyond what is written. We must not pretend or presume to act like the Lord is speaking to us or leading us to do or say something, when it is simply coming from our own fleshly mind or heart, not God's! We must not speculate (opinionate, guess) because it does not further the truths in the gospel (SEE 2 Tim 1:3, 4), but instead it misleads others.

## What Kind of Weapons Do They Use: of the Flesh or of the Spirit?

Some worshipers are fighting God's enemies with "weapons... of the flesh" (2 Cor 10:4), instead of weapons of the spirit, such as prayer, love, etc. And some churches are figuratively "naked" (Re 3:17), meaning in the flesh, because as Jesus said, though they

are rich, they are without some form of spiritual wealth and spiritual garments that only He could give to them. So if we are rich, we better not let that make us apathetic to what we really need from the Lord. We better get a hungering for righteousness so that we can be filled, that is fed, by the Lord. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Mt 5:6).

## What Do They Call or Name Themselves as a Church: Their Favorite Divisive Phrase or an Impartial One?

When we affiliate with or name ourselves after the names of religious men (such as Menno Simons/The Mennonite Church, or Martin Luther/The Lutheran Church), we are not spiritual worshipers. For example, when members of the church in Corinth started to do this (SEE 1 Cor 1:12), Paul rebuked them and said that they were "not... spiritual," "but... men of flesh," "still fleshly" (1 Cor 3:1, 3). Religious men were not crucified for us, and so we must not name our church after a creature, a man. This would be a form of idolatry. Besides, it is also a form of the sin of partiality (Ja 2:9).

There are more ways in which worshipers have become divisive in how they name their churches, such as after their favorite doctrine (the baptist church), a religious sounding word (chapel), Bible phrases or words (church of God), and nationalities (African Methodist Episcopal). It is all a form of favoritism which divides Christians, not unites them. For the exact solution to the partiality towards name sin, how to become impartial in how we name ourselves as a church, and for other sins which mark worshipers as worshipping God in flesh, please see the Bible Study on True Worshipers.

## What Does It Mean to "Worship in... Truth"?

Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (Jn 18:38). In prayer to His Father, Jesus told us what is truth, saying, "Sanctify them [make them holy, separate] them in the truth; Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). Indeed, Jesus Himself is the truth, for He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but through Me" (Jn 14:6). So to wor-

ship God in truth is to worship Him according to His holy word of truth and through the man of truth, Jesus Christ, His Son. Yet there are three things that are raised up against the truth (against Jesus and His word), and compete with it, and therefore hinder a church's ability to worship God in truth, and instead cause us to worship God in error, namely (1) Ourselves [the church], emphasizing the church over the Christ, (2) Opinions, teaching our opinions as doctrines to be followed by other members of the church, and (3) the traditions of men, teaching our own commandments instead of God's, or replacing God's commandments with our own erring misleading version or application of them. For some worship not "in truth," but instead "in self," "in opinion," or "in the traditions of men." These also quench God's interest in a church. Below, consider these three things further. But for a more perfect explanation, please refer to *The Bible Study on True Worshipers*.

## Do They Make the Good Confession or the Church Confession?

When we place more importance or emphasis on preaching ourselves to others than the Christ (who is the truth, for we are not the truth), then we are worshiping in error. Now I perceive that many do this in ignorance, unwittingly, unknowingly, in the sin of ignorance. Yet, Christians must uphold the truth to others, not themselves. For example, "The household of God... is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15).

So the basic and fundamental structural purpose of a Christian church is to uphold (lift up) the truth to others, not itself. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (Jn 12:32), not first and foremost to "the church". "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wil-

derness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life" (Jn 3:14, 15). But some worshipers and churches are guilty of lifting up themselves to others over the Christ. For example, I know of one worshiper, more than one worshiper, teachers at that, who like to baptize others, as they say themselves, "into the church," instead of how we read it in the Scriptures of being "baptized into Christ" (Gal 3:27; Ro 6:3). For all spiritual blessings are in Christ, not the church! (READ Eph 1:3).

I know of another worshiper who unabashedly said, "we need to proclaim the church" to "save souls". Notice how he said preach the church, not the Christ. He placed the importance on his church! (I won't tell you which one!) Yet we were not crucified for us, were we! Philip preached "Jesus" to the lost (Ac 8:35), not the church, himself, a talent, or a movement (like others do). He emphasized Christ to the lost to save souls. Paul placed the emphasis and importance on Jesus, not the church, when he said: "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus" (2 Cor 4:5).

Jesus asked the hypocrites of His day, who were incorrectly **emphasizing** one thing over another thing of greater importance, "Which is more important, the offering [on the altar] or the altar that sanctifies the offering?" (Mt 23:19). So I ask those who are being hypocritical in their emphasis today: Which is more important, the church (the offering) or the Christ (the one who sanctifies the offering)? Which is more important, the church or the Christ? The church's first and foremost desire should be to encourage every member to make "the good confession" (1 Tim 6:12, 13) about Jesus to others, and all the associated first teachings about Him, not "the church confession," and all the associated teachings about us. Let us not patronize ourselves! Let us not put ourselves on the cross. Let us humbly give first place to Christ in all things. Let us make the good confession of who Christ is to others, not the church confession of whom we are. Let us baptize men and women into Christ, not us. And so on and so forth.



## Are They Speculating (Opinion-ating) or Speaking the Truth?

Paul said, **"We are destroying speculations [opinions] and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ"** (2 Cor 10:5). So now we know what gets in the way of the truth concerning the knowledge of God; **"speculations"** [meaning opinions, guessing]. These are hindering the world, and worshippers, from knowing and obeying the truth about the Lord. So we must learn the difference between truth and opinion. Truth is fact, evident (it's non-fiction), it's revealed, or commanded by God. It's accurate. Yet, **opinion** is not fact (it's fiction), it's not evident, revealed, or commanded by God. It's hidden. It's theory. It's speculative, speculation. It's not accurate. It's guessing. It's not a good reliable witness, so to speak, in any matter. Therefore opinion is not binding.

Yet an **"application"** of a commandment of Christ, applying the truth of Christ, is not an **"opinion"**. It could be a **proper** application of a commandment of Christ or it could be an improper one, a **misapplication** of it, like with Christ's commandment to baptize. Some sprinkle, some pour, and others immerse. We know for a fact that baptism means immersion.

Indeed, in the confines of the Scriptures, as to how the Scriptures define it, thus how God defines it, is that **"opinion"** is "speculation"; guessing. It is not a commandment of the Lord. It is from one's own mind, not the mind of our Lord. For example, Paul said it himself: **"Now concerning virgins I have no command from the Lord, but I give an opinion"** (1 Cor 7:25). So before Paul speculated (opinionated) on this subject, before he guessed, Paul cleared himself by saying that he had no commandment from the Lord about whether or not virgins should or should not marry. And so whatever Paul said **on this subject** is not binding. But in this chapter, he did say some things which were commandments from the Lord. These **are** binding.

In Romans 14:1, there is more teaching concerning **"opinions"**, which is sometimes translated **"disputations,"** indicat-

ing the true nature of "opinion", that it gives rise to disputes. In 1 Timothy 1:4, the concept of opinion is sometimes translated and defined as **"speculation,"** again indicating the true meaning of "opinion", that it is guessing, and it says that this does not further the gospel because it is foreign to it, namely **"strange,"** and it is considered **"fruitless discussion"** (1 Tim 1:3, 4, 6).

So let us examine what we are saying to one another to see if we are upholding the truth to others, or simply an opinion. If we are speaking the truth, then we are worshiping in truth. But if we are speculating to one another (opinionating), we are worshiping God in error. Let us lift up the truth to one another and the world, not our own opinions. In God's kingdom, we are not entitled to preach our own opinions (guesses) to others. We are called to speak the truth in love to others (READ Eph 4:15), not our opinions. Let us be like Jesus, who said, even to the Devil, **"It is written"** (Mt 4:4), not "I think" or "my opinion is" or "It's just my opinion". Christians are not supposed to be an opinioned people, even towards unbelievers. Yet, one minister boldly told me, "I am a very opinionated person!" In spite of this, and other teachers like him, who are causing problems for us in the truth, let us be a people of the truth, not an opinion. Let us be determined to **"worship in... truth"** (Jn 4:24).

## Are They Teaching the Commandments of Christ or the Traditions of Men?

Many churches, and their teachers, are experts at setting aside the truth, suppressing it, replacing it, in order to keep their own tradition or custom (even some translators do this, for example by removing and replacing the masculine gender in the Scriptures. These are deceptively called "Gender Neutral Translations). Now when we set aside the truth, or replace it, this is deceptive, and therefore invalidates a churches worship in the sight of God. It is hypocrisy. For example, Jesus said

to the Scribes and Pharisees, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of **you hypocrites**, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But **in vain do the worship Me**, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' **Neglecting** the commandment of God, you **hold to the tradition of men**. You are **experts** at **setting aside** the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition" (Mark 7:6-9).

Their worship was "in vain," not "in truth," since they were "neglecting" the doctrine of God, and "setting aside" the commandment of God for the sake of their own tradition. They were not beginners at doing so, but instead they were "experts" at it. They liked to replace the commandment, and how to practice it, with their own mistaken custom. In another place, Jesus said to them, "**You invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition**. 'You hypocrites' (Mt 15:6, 7). The word of God ought to be validated, not "invalidated," by what we do with it. Yet they were not interested in proving, validating, or honoring the truth, but instead themselves and their tradition!

Obviously today we have a similar problem with Christianity. Many are "experts" at setting aside the commandments of Christ and replacing them with their own tradition. Many are not validating or proving to do certain commandments. This happens with both the first teachings about the Christ, the basics, and also the advanced subjects. For example, "Catholic Tradition," either oral or written down, for certain reasons, is considered by Catholics to be equal to or greater than the Bible, the holy Scriptures. In certain ways they place more importance on their own traditions than on the Bible. It affects how they "baptize," who they "baptize," what they call their religious leaders, and more. Other brotherhoods are doing the same thing as the Catholics on these things and more, especially on morality, such as what constitutes adultery, like when a man marries a divorced woman (READ

Mt 5:32; Lk 16:18). They are setting aside, or invalidating this commandment not to do so. Likewise with the worship regulations. For example, during an assembly, church, how many women are speaking, teaching, and leading today in God the Father's house (SEE 1 Cor 14:34, 35; 1 Tim 2:11, 12)? If you have completed my *Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible*, and the other two studies in this series on Christian worship, and my studies on spiritual gifts, you full well know that many of us are sinning all over the place, so to speak. We are sinning in many, many areas of doctrine, simply by our own custom, tradition, and habit that we have established to do so, to replace or suppress or in denial of what the gospel says about these things. This is a shame and a disgrace before the God of truth.

Nevertheless, let us be true worshipers who validate and honor the truth by seeking it and practicing the proper application of it. True worshipers validate the truth by proving to do it! True worshipers will not invalidate or dishonor the commandments of Christ for the sake of the tradition, custom, or well established habit of religious men or unbelievers.

Next, before we study or examine any other regulation of divine worship, it is a fitting time for us to make sure that we truly know the God whom we worship. For "**those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus... will pay the penalty of eternal destruction**" (2 Thess 1:8, 9). So, to be saved, we must first come to know who God truly is as a person, or persons, (as well as, secondly then, obey the gospel of His Son, the DBR of Christ). We must not be confused about who God is or ignorant of Him as a person. This is key to our salvation. Next, consider the evidence which reveals the three persons of God.

# Beloved, Understand Whom We Worship

## Is God One or Three in One?

Our God is plural, not singular. For example, the words "Us" and "Our", which are used in Genesis 1:26 to describe God, in whose image we are made (we are made in the image of an "Us" an "Our"), clearly indicate that God is more than one **person**, in other words a *plurality*. But how can God be plural when the Bible also says that He is one? For example, "Hear O Israel! The LORD is our **God**, the LORD is **one**!" (Deut 6:4). The word "God" used in this verse, **and in the Genesis creation account**, is in the Hebrew "**Elo-hiyim**" (pronounced El-o-heem), which is defined as a plural word, not singular.

So, in one sense God is one, but in another sense, He is plural. For example, consider a chicken egg. It has three parts--the shell, the yoke, and the white; but it is one egg, not three. Consider the government of the U.S.A. It is one government but with three almost independent divisions; (1) the executive branch [president], (2) the judicial branch [court] and (3) the legislative branch [congress]. We know that when a man marries a woman, that they become "**one**" (Mt 19:5), yet they are still two persons. And so we can understand how something can be one, yet three. Likewise, God is one but with three almost independent divisions or persons; God the Father,



God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This becomes clearer as we continue to study verses in the gospel which reveal more details about the three distinct persons of God.

Note: This is the reason why Muslims reject Jesus as the Son of God, meaning deity. They believe that God can only be one person, not two or three. Yet, we know, and will see below, that the gospel of Jesus Christ describes God as three persons, not one in the sense that Muslims believe. Even the Jews in the Scriptures knew that the Messiah would be God's Son, making Him equal with God, equal with Deity, God, meaning two different persons for God, the Father and His Son.

So, before we study certain "**regulations of divine worship**" (He 9:1), it seemed fitting to me to make sure that we first understand the God whom we worship. In my experience, for certain reasons, many worshipers do not yet fully understand who God is as a person or persons, and how to worship Him as such, and therefore need to grow in their understanding of Him. Yet others need to correct their understanding of Him, that He is not one person. This lesson aims to do both. However, one must truly "**know God**" to avoid "**the penalty of eternal destruction**" (2 Thess 1:8, 9). So this is a very, very important subject. We must know God. We must understand who He is as a person to be saved, especially His holy nature.

All throughout the Bible, we find evidence of who God is. For example, the Old Covenant began to describe Him, while the New Covenant added the important missing pieces to this puzzle, the mystery of who God is.

## The O.T. Began to Describe Him

From the very beginning of earthly time—from the beginning of the Bible, God has revealed to us who He is. Below, as you read part of the creation account, consider some evidence revealed therein of who God is. **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters" (Ge 1:1, 2).** A few verses later, God said, **"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Ge 1:26).** These verses begin to tell us three very important things about the person of God. For example:

1. That He is the Creator. **"God creat-ed the heavens and the earth" (vs. 1).**
2. That He is a Spirit. **"The Spirit of God was moving" (vs. 2).**
3. That He is more than one person (plural, not singular). **"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (vs. 26).**

## The N.T. Described God More Completely

In John's gospel account, he explained exactly who the **"Us"** and **"Our"** is that Genesis spoke of as being God. He explained the plurality of God, that it includes God the Father and God the Son. For example:

**"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into**

## God Is the Same Y, T, & F

God, as a person, is the same **y**esterday, **t**oday, and **f**orever. The three persons of God always exist. For example:

Yesterday, all three existed, like in the beginning. For example, in the beginning, **(1) the Spirit** of God was hovering over the surface of the deep (Ge 1:2). **(2) Jesus** said He existed with **(3) the Father** from the beginning (Jn 17:5). John said that Jesus existed with God (the Father) at creation (Jn 1). Even more, the gospel indicated that Jesus Christ is the one who truly led the Jews out of Egypt (SEE Ex 13:21; 1 Cor 10:4). So, Christ Jesus has always existed (in the spirit), at the beginning, and in the Mosaic Age.

Today, all three still exist, like when Christ was born. For example, now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by **(1) the Holy Spirit** (Mt 1:18). **(2) The Father** spoke at the baptism of **(3) His Son** (Mt 3:17). Jesus asked the Father to glorify the Son (Jn 17:1). Jesus praised the Father (Mt 11:25).

Forever, all three exist, like after Christ ascended, and after the Judgment and into eternity. For example, **(1) Jesus** said that He was ascending to **(2) His Father** (Jn 20:17), not going back to "be" the Father. **The Son** ascended to **the Father's** right hand (1 Pe 3:22; He 10:12). After Jesus ascended, His Father sent the person of **(3) the Holy Spirit** to disciples (Jn 7:39; 14:26), especially in the form of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling person of God in those of us who have believed and obeyed the gospel (SEE Ac 2:37, 38; 5:32). Stephen saw both the Father and the Son in heaven (Ac 7:55, 56). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (He 13:8). **At the end, after The Judgment, the Son will hand the kingdom back to the Father (SEE 1 Cor 15:24).** So after the judgment, both the Son and the Father still exist.

being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There came a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And **the Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from **the Father**, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him, and cried out saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He **existed** before me.'" For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through **Jesus Christ**. No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him" (Jn 1:1-18). So from this we can see that, in the beginning, Jesus was along with God (the Father), was God (the Son), and is the Creator.

Notes: In review, John said that someone called "the Word" previously existed at the beginning of all things, at creation (vs. 1, 15), and that this Word was with God, showing us that there was someone else together with God at the beginning (vs. 1, 2). John called the Word "God," equating deity to the Word (vs. 1), and he said that the Word created all things, indicating that the Word is the Creator (vs. 3, 10). And we know that Genesis 1:1 also says that "**God**" created the heavens and earth. So Whomever the Word is, He truly is God, the Creator. This Word became flesh (vs. 14), as of the only begotten of God, meaning by the Holy Spirit, the virgin birth (not that He was created, for if so He would then be a creature, not the Creator, not God). In other words, the Word in the Spirit (from heaven) became the Word in the flesh (from earth) through Mary. This shows that the Word was Spirit before He became man; flesh. Now someone who is begotten of a Father indicates four important things (vs. 14, 17, 18). One, that he who is begotten of a Father would be a Son, Jesus. Two, that the Word in the Spirit (from heaven) became God's Son in the Flesh (from earth) by the Holy Spirit through Mary. Three, that the "Word" John was talking about is Jesus. Therefore, since the "Word" was called God and Creator, Jesus is to be called God and Creator. Four, that there is a Father and a Son who are both called God, and that they are part of the "Us" and "Our" who created man in their image. We are made in the image of the Father and the Son. So then, there are two separate and distinct persons of God: God the Father and God the Son.

## The Holy Spirit Is the Third Separate and Distinct Person of God

The Holy Spirit is a "**He**", not an it! This indicates that the Holy Spirit is a person. For example, Jesus said to His apostles: "**But the Helper, [1] the Holy Spirit, whom [2] the Father will send in [3] My name, **He** [the Holy Spirit is a He, a Person] will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you**" (Jn 14:26). In this verse Jesus spoke of all three persons of God, [1] the "**Holy Spirit**," whom Jesus called a "**He**", [2] "**the Father**," and [3] "**My [Jesus'] name**" (Jn 14:26). These words are all capitalized by Bible translators to indicate a proper name or to show proper honor toward them as persons of God, even the pronoun referring to the Holy Spirit is capitalized, "**He**".

Now since the "Holy Spirit" came from the "Father" (Jn 14:26), and since anyone who speaks against the "Holy Spirit" will not be forgiven (He is called the "Spirit of God," the "Spirit," and the "Holy Spirit" (Mt 12:28, 31, 32; Ge 1:2), and since the "Holy Spirit" is listed along with the names of God to be called upon in water baptism (Mt 28:19), it is evident that the "Holy Spirit" is part of the plurality of God. It is only right, then, to conclude that when we worship God, **we ought to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit**, since they are all revealed to be Deity.

So when we think about who God is, we ought to think of the three persons of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These are whom the Bible reveals as Deity. God is one, but in three persons. A wonderful spiritual truth, indeed! A great mystery revealed! So, when we worship God, let us worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **But do we yet worship God according to the exact and most authentic meaning of the word?** Consider this further in the Lesson after this one, called "*Church, Observe the True Meaning of the Word Worship*".



# Q&A on Jesus Being God

There is a lot of confusion over who Jesus is, that is, His exact nature, as compared to the Father and the Holy Spirit. For example:

## Q1: Is Jesus the Father?

Jesus never claimed to be the Father. Yet, Jesus is equal with the Father, in the sense of being deity, meaning God. This is the main thing that we need to understand. For example, Jesus said, " 'I and the Father are one.' The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God' " (Jn 10:30-33). This is correct, Jesus made Himself out to be God, or that is, as He said, "one" with the Father. This is a little like the idea that a husband and wife are one, but two separate persons. John recorded this idea more clearly, saying, "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (Jn 5:18). Simply because Jesus is God's Son it makes Him "equal with" or "one" with God the Father, in the sense of deity. The Jews correctly understood this about Jesus (that God has a Son), but failed to believe that it was Jesus, as evidenced by their rage and determination to reject and kill Him. At that time, the Jews knew that the Christ would be God's Son (the high priest knew this / SEE Mt 26:63), indicating two persons of God.

Yet, even before He came to earth, Jesus was equal with the Father, in the sense of being deity. For example, "Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:5, 6). So when Jesus was with God, He was equal with God, He "existed in the form of God," as evidenced by the "Us" and "Our" in Genesis. But when Jesus Christ emptied Himself,

when He became a man, He did not empty Himself of His deity. He was still God. [For example, when He became flesh and blood, a man, the disciples worshiped Him. As a child, He was even worshiped by the wise men.] So then, He simply emptied Himself of His glorified, spiritual form that He had in heaven with God. He became flesh and dwelt among us. As the prophet said, Emmanuel, meaning God with us (in the flesh).

The point here is that the Son of God has always been equal with God the Father, in the sense of deity, and He has always existed as such. Yet He is not the Father, but the Son. And since he is equal with the Father, in the sense of deity, he must be treated just like God. For example, in the context of claiming to be equal with God (Jn 5:17, 18), Jesus said, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father" (Jn 5:22, 23). This passage not only repeatedly reveals the two persons of God, but also that we must treat Jesus even as, or like the Father, our Judge. Now if the Father is worshiped, then the Son must also be worshiped. Worshiping Jesus would be honoring to God the Father, not dishonoring to Him.

Note: The Jehovah's Witnesses do not "honor the Son even as the Father". They will not worship Jesus because they mistakenly teach that He is a created being. So while they claim to honor Jehovah Father, they fail to honor the Son even as Jehovah. They refuse to believe that Jesus is Deity. This is their greatest sin. This also influences their translation of the Bible. They remove some key references that bear witness to the deity of Christ.

## There Are Ways in Which Jesus Is Not Equal with the Father

Although the Son is "equal" or "one" with the Father, in the sense of being deity, meaning God, He is different from the Father in important ways. These "equality" differences continue to bear witness that Jesus is a separate person from the Father and always has been and always will be. For example, first and foremost, Jesus is different than the Father in the sense of ultimate authority or as some say in "headship". "But I want you to understand that... God is the

**head of Christ**" (1 Cor 11:3). To be "the head of" someone is to be his authority, like the husband being "the **head of the wife**" (Eph 5:23). He is her authority. Likewise, God, that is God the Father, is the head of Christ, the Son. This means that the Father is over the Son in ultimate authority. This is made even more clear in the next verse. "**For HE [God the Father] HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET [the Son's]**. But when He [the Father] says, 'All things are put in subjection,' **it is evident that He [the Father] is excepted** who put all things in subjection to Him [the Son]" (1 Cor 15:27, 28). So "it is evident," meaning very clear, that the Father is not in subjection to the Son. Instead the Son is in subjection to the Father. While Christ was on the earth, did He not display this kind of subjection? For it was not the Father who died on the cross, but Jesus Christ, His Son. This demonstrated subjection to His Father, even to the point of death.

Second, in heaven Jesus has a different seat than the Father. For example, "**The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet'**" (Mt 22:44). This indicates two things. One, that in heaven **there are two seats** (or thrones). Jesus is sitting in His own seat, next to the Father. He is not sitting next to Himself, or next to His own right hand. This would be impossible. Second, all enemies have not yet been put beneath the feet of Jesus. So, Jesus is supposed to sit by the Father until the end of the end. All of these things continue to bear witness to the separate persons of God.

Third, Jesus is different than the Father in knowledge of His return. For example, "**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone**" (Mt 24:36). Only God the Father knows when God the Son will return to the earth. From this Scripture, it is clear that Jesus does not know when He will return. So then there is a slight knowledge difference between the Father and the Son. It shows who is ultimately in control and it shows that Jesus is not the same person as the Father.

## Q2: But How Can It Be That "He who has seen Me [Jesus] has seen the Father"? Jn 14:9

The key thing to remember here is that Jesus is the **representative** of the Father, in being His Son, but not actually the Father Himself. He is the "**exact representation**" of Him, of His "**nature**" (SEE He 1:3). So while it is true that Jesus said, "**He who has seen Me has seen the Father**," He further explained, in the context of this statement, that He abides in the Father and the Father abides in Him, meaning that they are unified, one in purpose or nature. For example, "**If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.**" Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father **abiding in Me** does His works. Believe Me that **I am in the Father and the Father is in Me**; otherwise believe because of the works themselves' " (Jn 14:7-11). So just like Christ is in the Father, and the Father abides in Christ, yet they are two different people, Christ abides in us and we abide in Christ. Yet, we are not the exact same persons. We are not Christ. But we are His **representatives** on earth.

Notes: Likewise, in the parable of the vineyard, Jesus illustrated that He was the Father's representative on earth. "**But afterward he sent his son to them**, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" (Mt 21:37-40) Now who is the owner of the vineyard but God the Father? And who is the owner's son but Jesus Christ? And what is the vineyard but the congregation of God's people? And who are those vine-growers but selfish, covetous, wicked religious leaders? The conclusion is this: The Father did not come down Himself, but He did in a sense in His Son. He sent his son to our vineyard. John testified to this interpretation by saying, "**No one has seen God [the Father] at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He [the Son] has explained Him [the Father]**" (Jn 1:18), in person! Remember, John also announced that God [the Father] so loved the world that He [the Father] gave His only begotten Son (Jn 3:16). The Father sent His son to represent Himself.

### Q3: How Can Jesus Be “Begotten,” But Not Created?

There are two aspects about this that need to be addressed. First, when, for example, in John chapter one, it talks about Jesus being begotten of the Father, it means by the Holy Spirit, not by natural means; that Jesus became flesh; that Mary was with Child by the Holy Spirit. So, in one sense, when Jesus became flesh, He was begotten of God, the only begotten of God in this way or manner. Second, when the Bible talks about Jesus as the firstborn begotten of God (Ro 8:29; Re 1:5; Col 1:15, 18; He 1:6; 12:23), this means in pre-eminence as in birthright authority, not that He was created. For example, in Revelations 3:14, Jesus said about Himself that He is the beginning of creation. This means that He is the **origin** or source of it, not that He was the first created thing. Additionally, Jesus was born/created in the flesh, by the Holy Spirit, but not born/created in the Spirit. As previously pointed out, Jesus has always existed in the spirit (SEE Phil 2:5-8 and John 1).

Notes: Is it possible that Jesus could be God's Son without being created? Humanly speaking it seems impossible, but God is not human and in the flesh. So in another sense, nothing is impossible with God. Incomprehensible things are possible with Him, like having a Son without creating Him. God is awesome! His ways are higher than our ways. Now the whole point of what I am saying is that Jesus and the Father are two different persons of God (both are deity), and therefore worthy of worship, as well as the Holy Spirit. Time would fail us if I listed and explained other verses that indicate this, like John 1:18, where it states that Jesus was in the bosom of the Father. And what about all those verses where Jesus was praying? To whom did He pray: was it to Himself? Certainly not! He prayed to His Father, and He directed His disciples to do the same, to pray through Jesus, the Son, to the Father. For Jesus is a mediator of a new covenant (He 9:15). **And where there is a mediator, there has to be two other parties or persons, so to speak, namely the Father and us.** Jesus is the appointed mediator between these two parties, between us and the Father, and so on and so forth.

### Jesus Received Worship

In addition to all that has been said beforehand about the deity of Christ, we can also find a lot of evidence in the Scriptures that He was worshiped as such. Therefore, if Jesus was worshiped He cannot be a creature. He cannot be created. Anyone who worships a created being (a person or an animal or an angel, etc.) or a created thing (sun, moon stars, etc.) is committing

the sin of idolatry (SEE 1 Cor 6:9; Ro 1:25). Unless they repent, all idolaters will be thrown in the lake of fire (Re 21:8). We are supposed to worship the Creator only, not creatures (READ Ro 1:25). Therefore, since Jesus was worshiped, Jesus is God, that is God the Son, not a creature. Instead, we know that Jesus is the Creator (Jn 1).

So as such, the apostles of Christ, His closest companions, worshiped Jesus as God, not a creature. **“And they [the apostles], after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Lk 24:52).** The wise men worshiped God's Child. **“After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him” (Mt 2:11).** Mary Magdalene and the other Mary worshiped Jesus. **“And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him” (Mt 28:9).** The blind man worshiped Jesus. After Jesus healed the blind man, He asked him if he believed in the Son of Man. And the former blind man said, **“‘Lord, I believe.’ And he worshiped Him” (Jn 9:38).** The Father directed angels to worship His Son. **“When He [the Father] bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him’” (He 1:6 KJV).** Now, when all of these people, and angels, worshiped Jesus Christ, were they committing the sin of idolatry? Certainly not! This is because He is God, that is God the Son; deity. This is why God told us and the angels to worship His Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

### Conclusion

We need to accept the evidence in the Scriptures that, before the beginning of Creation and into eternity, Jesus and the Father are two different persons, and always have been, and always will be. Likewise, we need to accept the evidence which reveals that both of them are God, deity, and worthy of our worship. Yet one is God the Son and the other is God the Father. Therefore, we ought to worship the Father, the Son, and even the Holy Spirit of God. But do we yet worship God according to the exact and most authentic meaning of the word? Next, consider this further.

# Church, Observe the True Meaning of the Word Worship

**“I bow my knees before the Father ”**  
Ephesians 3:14

## What Does the Word ‘Worship’ Mean?

In my experience, many worshipers do not yet understand the sacred meaning and use of the word worship. Therefore, they do not know how to properly practice it in a more authentic, complete, and meaningful way. Therefore, at this point, it seems fitting to me to make sure that we know what it means, as used in the context of the Scripture, and how to practice it. This will help everyone be complete and grow in their knowledge of how to worship the Lord; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## To “Bow” in Submissive Awe of God, To “Bend the Knee”

In the entire Bible, both in the Old and New Covenants, the main use and definition of the word worship is “to bend the knee; to bow”. This is exactly what God said He would have all men do in regards to His Son. For example, **“God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY**



**KNEE WILL BOW [worship]**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philip 2:9, 10). Bowing is the most authentic, basic, and legitimate form of reverent worship there is. For example, in the Old Covenant, the Hebrew word for worship [Shachah: which is the word Abraham used (Ge 22:5) and the word which God used in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:5)], in its ordinary use in the sacred text, means **“to bow down, to prostrate oneself”** [Strong's Concordance of Old and New Testament Words]. Likewise, the Greek word for worship [Proskuneo] is used “in the NT **by kneeling or prostration** to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication”. So kneeling in worship, such as during prayer, is an authentic and legitimate act of holy worship.

As Paul said, "I bow my knees before the Father" (Eph 3:14). He meant that, during prayer, he worshiped the Lord in this way. The writer of the book of Acts, who apparently accompanied Paul, said this about themselves and the Christians in Tyre: "After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another" (Ac 21:5). Even when Jacob was bedridden, he did the same thing. "Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed" (Ge 47:31).

## Examples of Worship from the Old Covenant Prove This Definition

When God answered the prayer of Abraham's servant, and guided him to the person he was seeking, he did it. For example, "And I bowed low and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son" (Ge 24:48). When the people learned that God was concerned about them, they did it. "So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped" (Ex 4:31).

During the offering and during the singing, the leaders and others did it. "Now at the completion of the burnt offerings, the king and all who were present with him bowed down and worshiped. Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped" (2 Chron 29:29, 30).

When Ezra blessed the Lord, the congregation responded by bowing low. "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the

people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (Ne 8:5, 6).

When Moses first taught the Passover to the elders of Israel, they whole assembly of them responded by worshiping (i.e. bowing low). "The people bowed low and worshiped" (Ex 12:27).

When Job suffered, he did it. "Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped" (Job 1:20).

## Examples of Worship from the New Covenant Prove It

The wise men bowed in worship of the Child. "After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh" (Mt 2:11).

Jesus bowed in prayer. "And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will'" (Mt 26:39).

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary worshiped Jesus by bowing low. "And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him" (Mt 28:9). Indeed, we can see that all of the close companions and friends of Jesus bowed down in worship of Him.



Even in heaven, creatures, elders, and all worshipers, including angels, keep responding to God in this way. "And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped" (Re 5:14). "And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God" (Re 7:11). "And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God" (Re 11:16). Do we see how the elders in heaven are setting the example for us? When we worship God together, are we doing the same? Do our elders (our pastors) and teachers lead us in this form of worship? Do we set aside time to bow down in worship of God, like during prayer?

## Conclusion

In the Scriptures, the main and most prominent definition and application of the word 'worship' is to bow in submissive awe of the Lord, to bend the knee. Obviously, then, to be true and complete, we ought to be doing this in our worship of God, in private or in public worship settings, during prayer or other aspects of worship. Our leaders ought to be setting the example in this and encouraging us to follow them in it. For it is a most authentic, legitimate, and meaningful act of reverence. In both the Old and New Covenant, we can see this definition of worship exemplified in a variety of situations, on earth and in heaven, by kings, leaders, creatures, angels, congregations, teachers, apostles, Old Testament priests, friends of Jesus, and so on and so forth, in private and in public, during prayer and at other times during worship and in their lives. It is a most excellent way to respond to God and to seek His favor. During worship, are we together responding to the Lord in this way? 29

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Pe 5:6). Church, let us humble ourselves before our God by bowing low in submissive awe of His might, especially in regards to His Son. Beloved, let us bend the knee. This is what the Father would have all do. For "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW** [worship], of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:9, 10). Amen and amen!

## Some Personal Examples

When I attend a church that does not bow in worship, I purposely pick one or two times during the service, such as during a prayer, to bow down in reverent worship of God (at times, lifting holy hands toward His sanctuary / SEE Ps 28:2; 1 Tim 2:8). Now, I simply get out of my chair and I kneel with one or both knees on the ground. After the prayer, I quickly get up. For I am not trying to be seen. I simply desire to worship God in the purest form of the word. Yet I am attempting to set an example for others to follow, like my wife and children, and anyone else who will learn from it. So this not only more perfectly completes my worship of God, it also sets a holy example for others to witness and perhaps be strengthened by to follow. I also verbally encourage my wife and children to do the same. Yet I am not the originator of worshiping God in this way. For I have witnessed it in others, and received witness in the word of God, to do it. I learned it from other holy brethren. And it was confirmed to me in the Holy Scriptures by the abundance of evidence therein, both in the Old and New Covenant, and in what has been revealed to us about the conduct of those in heaven as they worship God.

When I have traveled to foreign lands to serve in the furtherance of the gospel, I have worshiped God in this way as well, in the sight of all the brethren we served. For example, when I went to Tanzania, Africa (with another Christian named Ken), to teach extensively on various subjects, both Ken and I knelt on our knees during one of the prayers. The result was that after we had returned home, this church sent us word that they noticed how we bowed during prayer, and pledged to start to do the same. We did not say a word to them about this, though we had the right to do so, but we did not go there at this time to teach them about this important aspect of worship. Yet, our example encouraged them to consider it and begin practicing it. Praise be to God! These were astute and noble minded worshipers!

Back home, in the USA, my family and I have attended three churches that, altogether, were in the habit of kneeling in worship during the prayer time (two of these churches met in homes, and one met in a church building). Likewise, during worship services in our own home, we have knelt in prayer, and even during the prayer for the Lord's Supper. When I have awoke from sleep, I have often times worshiped the Lord while still in bed! I have bowed in worship of God, and prayed mainly for myself and my own spiritual needs, and sometimes for the needs of others.

Now, we know that there are churches everywhere that do not bow down together in worship of God. Many brotherhoods simply do not have a habit of doing so. And it strikes me as so odd, that some of them, either in song or in prayer, simply talk to God about how they are "bowing down" to him at that time, even while they are yet standing up! Impossible! So, to get them to think about this, I have sometimes chided some of them, even their leading members, saying this: When members of your church stand before God and He tries to fulfill this verse with them, that **"at the name of Jesus every knee will bow to the glory of God the Father,"** they will balkingly say to Him, "We don't do that!" Or, "We are the church of \_\_\_\_\_!" Or, "That is not church of \_\_\_\_\_!" What I mean is that with some churches, bow-

ing in worship is so very foreign to them, since they have had no habit of doing so together as a brotherhood, and they do not yet see the need or benefit in doing so! For their habits are set. Therefore, when others do it in their midst, and perhaps when God expects them to do it, this is so strange to them. They have to say, "That's not what we do." They might say, "That's not church of \_\_\_\_\_!" Or, "That ain't Biblical! Or, "You don't have to do that!" Or, "You can't bind that on me and us!" On the contrary, you and your church ain't Biblical, in this area of concern! Yet God, before His judgment seat, is going to bind it on us all. Brethren, why not get in the habit of doing so today during worship? Don't you fear God? Don't you have this kind of respect for Him?

There are other examples that I could list, but these should be enough to exhort and stimulate our minds as to how to apply the true meaning of the word worship during our times together and in our private lives before God. But, to get us thinking about how to do this in a more robust way, or rather, at other important times of our lives, let me leave you with the following example to think about.

**"When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all" (Ac 20:36).**

Before Paul set sail for another episode of his evangelistic life, he prayed with them (the elders of the church in Ephesus). So, as we come and go from one another, especially in doing the Lord's work, let us, like Paul, pray together with one another, in worship of God. Let us kneel together and pray. Let us truly worship God together in its most meaningful and authentic form. Yet in order to do so, some of us will need to demonstrate more humility and reverence toward God. Even more, some of us, who do not yet go to church, will need to come together with this good purpose in mind, to worship the Lord together and more! For as you will see next, God wants us to attend worship, with a purpose.

# Friend, Observe The Regulation to Attend Worship, with a Purpose

## God Wants Us to Attend Church, with a Purpose!

On earth (and in heaven), it is evident that God wants us to join in the assembly together to worship Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But He wants us to do this in a thoughtful way, intentionally, with a specific purpose in mind. There are four things which God wants us to intentionally do with church. For example,

"Let us consider how to stimulate one another [1] to love and [2] good deeds, [3] not forsaking our own assembling [that is, churching] together, as is the habit of some, but [4] encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near" (He 10:24, 25).

Notes: The word "assembly" here means church, for in many Bibles the word "assembly" is translated "church". So the word church and assembly mean the exact same thing, to assemble with other Christians for the purpose of worship. Therefore, Christians are commanded to go to church, habitually, meaning the assembly, and the assembly is truly the kingdom of God. We are to be seeking first the kingdom, the assembly/church on earth and in heaven, to be a part of it for worship, even over our efforts to work to maintain our physical needs (SEE Mt 6:31, 33). So this passage regulates our attendance at worship, and also what we should have in mind to do when we are there, such as motivating one another to grow in love and good works and more. As Christians, we ought to be devoted to the assembly in several important ways. But attending worship is the first praiseworthy step.

But when I worked as a computer software consultant, an associate of mine said this to me: "At my church, I am teaching the teen class, and one of them said, 'We don't have to go to church. There is no commandment to go to church.' Do you have any suggestions?" I replied, "We do have a commandment to go to church." Then I showed him the Scriptures in this lesson which command or direct us to go to church, with a purpose (He 10:24, 25). So with these Scriptures, we need to encourage our teens, and adults, to have the right understanding and attitude about church, so that they fully understand the will and purpose of God for them concerning this matter.



## 1. Think about How to Motivate Each Other to Be More Loving (toward God, man, woman, child)

It is critically important for us to consider how to motivate one another to maintain and increase our love toward God and every man, woman, and child, especially because of the harmful affects of sin. Jesus said, "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold" (Mt 24:12). So with more sin, comes less love. Sin causes people's love for each other to grow colder, not hotter, even toward God! For when something sinfully bad happens to people in this world (young people, old people, believers, and unbelievers), how many of them stop loving God or man? Some say, "How could God let this happen to me?" So they forsake God. They do not love or believe in Him anymore. For example, recently, I heard a news report of a young woman, about fourteen years of age, who went to a party with other young people.

She got intoxicated and then a young man had his way with her. And afterward, she openly wondered how God could let this happen to her, to let a man violate her sexually. So she forsook God, religion, church, etc., saying that, because of this, she did not believe in God anymore, and so on and so forth. Sin causes people to hate God, man, woman, or child. So we, together, must combat the unloving affects of sin (even our own sin, for all of us sin), with focusing on helping one another maintain and grow in our love for each other and for God. For **"love covers a multitude of sins"** (Pr 10:12; 1 Pe 4:8).

Note: Believe me, Peter, the one who said that **"love covers a multitude of sins,"** as did Solomon (Pr 10:12), knew exactly what he was talking about, for he sinned in a big way against the Lord by denying that he knew Him at a much needed time in Jesus' life. But Peter repented of this and proved it by loving God and man through being restored to his apostleship. For when Peter sinned against the Lord, afterward, Jesus tested Peter on the one thing that he needed to know from him, three times; do you love me? And since Peter said yes (three times), Jesus then told him how to prove that love. If we sinned against someone, we need to repent of it and demonstrate love towards them, especially in the way in which they tell us to do so. We need to try to cover our sins with love, especially towards God. If you have sinned against your parents, repent and love them in the way that they say you ought to love them. If you have sinned against your children, repent and love them in the way that they say you ought to love them. Cover your sins with love. And when we sin against God our true Father, let us repent and prove that we love Him in the way in which He instructs us to do so. Do it.

Do churches need encouraged to be more loving? Certainly! Consider the church in Ephesus. Jesus said, **"You have left your first love"** (Re 2:4). Let me remind you that our first love needs to be for God, and our second

love needs to be for man (including woman and child), in that order or priority, loyalty, or in faithfulness (Mk 12:28-31), especially concerning one's parents (Eph 6:2). But both kinds of love, for God and man, are necessary and commanded. So churches need to be encouraged to maintain their first love, their love toward God. This was the charge Jesus leveled against the Pharisees, that they **"disregard"** and were **"neglecting"** **"the love of God"** (Lk 11:42).

Do wives need motivated to love their husbands? Certainly! (SEE Titus 2:4). Do mothers need motivated to love their children? Yes! They do (READ Titus 2:4). Do husbands need motivated to love their wives and children? Certainly! (READ Malachi 4:5, 6; Col 3:19). Do children need motivated to love their parents? Yes! (SEE Malachi 4:6; Eph 6:2). Do Christians need motivated to maintain or grow in their love for one another and for God? Certainly! (READ 2 Pe 1:7, 8).

Finally, I want you to consider Job's love for God and man. At a most difficult time in his life, he maintained his love for both. For example, when his life was destroyed by the sinful influence of Satan, his love for God did not decrease. For he continued to worship the Lord. Even when his wife encouraged him to hate God, he still loved the Lord and her, though she spoke foolishly. So Job continued to love God and man. In the midst of our stormy life and our stormy relationships, though we are tormented for a little while by sin and its unloving affects, let us follow Job's example of love toward God and man. Let us continue to worship God and endure the foolhardiness of certain men, women, and children. Amen.

But how many Christian sons, daughters, husbands, and wives, and more, have given up on loving each other, because of one another's sins? How many of our churches have let them do so? So let us motivate the ones who have left their first love (God), to put Him at the highest order of importance in their lives, such as attending church first (with a purpose), over work, recreation, disappointment, or neglect, etc. Let us motivate the men, women, and children among us who have (purposely or ignorantly) neglected to love certain people in their lives, to take loving steps towards them today. For love does not hesitate to love or take leave from doing so.

Note: Of course I mean as much as this depends on us, meaning we can only do our part. The other party has to do their part, if they are willing. We can love, but it might not be returned. It might not resolve our unloving relationship with someone. Yet when we take steps to love God, we know that He will restore our relationship with Him. For out of love for us, while we were yet sinners, He sent His one and only Son to die for our sins, if we believe it. If we let Him, God will love us. But His love is a holy love, not a permissive one. He will not continue to let us have something or be something that is sin.

Now the "love" which we are to somehow encourage in one another is in the Greek transliteration, agape. This kind of love is best defined, in sixteen of its key aspects, by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. For example, "**Love [Agape] is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails**" (1 Cor 13:4-8).

**Note: I have purposely put in an appendix definitions of each of these sixteen key aspects of true love;** definitions which compare and contrast what they mean with what they do not mean, along with examples. This will help us to study them in a fuller more meaningful and applicable way. Also, it will not overshadow the other points in this lesson. For the subject of love deserves an entire section itself, not just one point among many in a lesson on worship.

## Conclusion

Sin is destroying the love which people have for one another and for God. People are cruel, impatient, selfish, and more. This is stirring up hatred among men and toward God. Therefore, we need to fight against the harmful affects of sin (in our own lives and in the lives of others) with the weapons of love. **We must fight against the coldhearted affects of sin with the weapons of love.** This is the good fight. Let us fight it, unwavering, until death, with the appropriate aspects of love. Let us carefully think about how to cause the greatest and abiding Christian character trait to be in and amongst ourselves, and growing. "**But now faith, hope, love, abide these three: but the greatest of these is love** [agape]" (1 Cor 13:13).

**"We must fight against the coldhearted affects of sin with the weapons of love"**

So let us not forsake the church, but instead continue to think about her, how to motivate the people in her to maintain and grow in their love for one another, especially for God and toward their own family. Let us urge one another to "**pursue love**" (1 Cor 14:1). In order for us to do this, we will have to take the steps necessary to achieve it. In order to have a loving relationship with anyone, even with God, we must do our part and pursue it. Are you doing your part? Are you pursuing love with whom you ought to be, like your parents, your children, your brethren, and more?

Note: The best way to "**pursue love**" (1 Cor 14:1) with God and man (including our family, our parents, our child, our Christian brother or sister, or the lost), is to simply maintain a good work towards them from which they benefit, not you. For example, "**For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name,** in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints" (He 6:10). So when we serve and continue to serve one another, it demonstrates or proves our love for God, and His glorious name. This is why the next point encourages us to think about how to motivate one another to love **and** good works. Good works prove our love for someone.



## 2. Think about How to Motivate One Another to Do Good Works [for others]

We need to “consider how to stimulate one another to love and **good** deeds” (He 10:24). But what is the meaning of the word “good,” which is used to describe the kind of work we are to promote in one another? It means that which is **beneficial in its nature or characteristics** (obviously towards others, for the benefit of others, like one’s family, church, or other people in the world). So to do something good means to do something beneficial, something excellent, choice, honorable, fine, useful, upright, graceful, beautiful, commendable, admirable, or precious or praise worthy in the sight of God for others.

Now the opposite of good is bad, meaning something that is not beneficial in its nature or characteristics towards others. And we know that bad works harm others, even the doers of them. These are not useful, or worthy (for they are worthless), and not righteous (as some say, not ethical) in their nature or characteristics, and are wicked. They are not praiseworthy.

So we must think about how to motivate one another to do the very best things we are capable or called by God to do in life, things which are choice, meaning excellent, superior (in their benefit to others in need).

### Personal Examples

As I have raised my nine children, and as I have lived with my wife, and as I have thought about my own life, I have motivated all of us to do the best thing or things we can do for others (if we have the capacity or ability, and God authorized calling to do so, to help people with certain pressing or important needs). For example, I myself have focused on the good work of being an evangelist so that I can help myself, my family, and others who hear me, make progress in the faith which is revealed in the holy Scriptures.

Note: This is not something which I did lightly, saying, I want to be an evangelist, and instantly, I was an evangelist. I had to look carefully at what God was doing with me, in regards to the gift of evangelism, or rather wanted to do with me regarding evangelism. For He is the one who put this ministry in my life, not me. It was not planned by me. It just happened and I had to recognize somehow through others what God was doing with me. Likewise, amid competing good works, such as being a software engineer, I had to sacrifice other good works for the sake of the good work of evangelism. This was not easy, but a difficult and long journey, not instantaneous. It took faith. The transition from one to the other was well planned out over time, along with my wife and others.

I have also focused on the good work of raising my children and evangelism by sacrificing a significant amount of my time working for a living. For example, early on in my life, instead of going to work at the office (and driving very far to get there and back), I requested to work from home. They granted that request. Second, I noticed that a coworker of mine reduced his total hours of work per week, and therefore reduced his paycheck, to help his wife raise their two children for a while. I never forgot this and his example has motivated me to consider devoting more of my “work day” to my family as well. Third, I also noticed that my family needed me at home, and that my wife needed my help raising many children. So I have purposely sacrificed my work and other interests to spend more time organizing and helping my family grow up, especially when they were young.

For my wife, Heidi, I have intentionally motivated her to do the good work of midwifery. For example, when she was pregnant with our first child, Jan, we had the option to birth in the hospital or naturally at home with a midwife. We decided to try a midwife and natural birth at home. From that experience, I realized what a good work certain midwives do. And so I encouraged my wife to get involved with our midwife, and she was willing to let her do so. For almost two decades, my wife has been working on and off in different part time and full time capacities with our midwife. Heidi has been certified as a midwife by a national certifying group of midwives. She is a mentor or “preceptor,” as some call it, to other midwife trainees. She has received invita-

tion to speak at midwifery and birthing conferences, along with other internationally recognized midwives and doctors. My wife is doing a good work in midwifery, coming to the aid of women in their time of need. I prefer that, if possible. Women helping women (which is what the word "midwife" means, woman "with woman," obviously in her time of need regarding birthing).

In regards to my nine children, from their childhood on up, I have exhorted them to do something good with their lives that would benefit or help others in need (without neglecting to maintain or grow in their other good works or callings, such as in their sonship, or daughtership, and more, as pointed out in *The Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts*).

I have told my children that it does not matter how much money they make, but what matters is that they simply do something good for others in life. For example, I tell my daughters that being a wife is a good work, and that being a mother is a good work. Having your own business based out of your home can be a good work. For some of them, I sense that they have the capacity to be a doctor, like a dentist (which could be done by a woman in this country in one's home while raising one's family). Some of them could be midwives, other's nurses. These are all good works that help others in their time of need. I have also told them that the next best thing to a miracle is the gift of help, meaning that people have serious physical problems or needs, and helping someone with them in doctoring or dentistry or midwifery is one of the best, most beneficial things that one could do for them.

Yet I have urged my children to keep in mind the three categories of good works, as revealed, defined, and exemplified in the Scriptures. In this way they will not as easily neglect certain good works which God has called them to perform.

## The 3 Categories of Good Works

In God's kingdom, he wants us to encourage one another to maintain three kinds of good works. There are three categories of good works to consider doing or maintaining. These all relate to the wide range of talents or gifts which God gives or wants to give to His children for the purpose of doing something good with them for the benefit of others. For example, as I carefully point out in my *Complete Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts*, there are three categories or kinds of good works or talents: 1. The Greater Gifts/Talents/Works, 2. The Non-Teaching Gifts/Talents/Works, and 3. The Situational Gifts/Talents/Works.

Note: *The Complete Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts to Cause Growth* is a three book study. 1. The Bible Study on the Greater Gifts, "Earnestly Desire the Greater Gifts" (1 Cor 12:31). 2. The Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Gifts, "We Have Gifts That Differ" (Ro 12:6), and 3. The Bible Study on the Situational Gifts, for the Conditions in Which We Find or Place Ourselves in Life, "Each Man Must Remain in That Condition [Situation] in Which He Was Called" (1 Cor 7:20).

### 1. The Greater Good Works

The greater gifts are the teaching gifts, that is, the gifts (the good works) which God gave to some to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to others, such as evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph 4:11-16). These are called the "greater gifts" (1 Cor 12:31) by the Scriptures because they are greatest in their ability to help others to understand and apply the holy Scriptures, to receive wisdom from them which leads to salvation by faith (2 Tim 3:15). Therefore I encourage my children to consider the good work of a greater gift, to teach the gospel to others, whomever they are called by God through His word and commandment to teach, like their children, etc. For at some point, we all ought to be able to at least teach the basics of the faith to someone (Consider He 5:12). So God expects us to obtain a greater gift, to do the greater good work (teaching the gospel to someone) in some measure, fashion, or fitting way in His sight. **Not that everyone of us**

is called to be a pastor or an evangelist, for indeed we are not! (We study this fact in *The Bible Study on the Greater Gifts*). But we can learn to teach the gospel to someone. At some point in our Christian walk, to show our mastery of the basics of the Christian faith, we should demonstrate it by teaching them to somebody.

## 2. The Good Works Which Do Not Teach

The non-teaching gifts are simply the gifts (the good works) which do not focus on teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to others, such as the gifts of helps, administrations, mercy, giving, and more (1 Cor 12:28; Ro 12:6-8). These good works help others with their legitimate needs, other than their need to learn and understand the holy Scriptures.

## 3. The Good Works in Which We Find or Place Ourselves in Life

The situational gifts are the conditions (good works) in which we find or place ourselves in life. For **"each man must remain in that condition [situation] in which he was called"** (1 Cor 7:20). As the context of this verse implies, this could be our marital status (unmarried or married) as a type of gift, our nationality, and could include our work, our God given gender, and more. So I exhort my children to continue in the good work of being a female, a daughter, a son, a male, being unmarried or married. These are all a type of good work we need to properly maintain and in which we need to fittingly grow.

**A Personal Note:** Since there are three categories of good works (gifts), I urge my family to not focus their lives exclusively on only one gift or good work. For obviously, they still have to maintain the good work of their gender, and not pervert it or neglect it, likewise their sonship or daughtership towards their parents, or even to maintain their ability with a greater gift or a non-teaching gift. For he who is given much, much will be required (Lk 12:48). And from the standpoint of our talents, our good works, we have all been given much with which to be faithful, not just one talent or gift from God. For as Solomon said, if we fear God, we must not let go of one thing, while trying to grab hold of another (Eccl 7:18). We must not neglect one gift over another gift on which we must still prove faithful to God or man. So I urge my children, as they grow up and finish home school, to not pursue something afterward, though good, to the neglect of their other God given callings and gifts. Still be a daughter to your parents. Still be a sister to your siblings, and so on and so forth. Yet, of course, if one becomes married, one loses the gift or good work of being unmarried.

## There Are a Variety of Good Works to Motivate One Another to Do

Let us consider how to motivate one another, especially the ones teaching and leading us, to do the most important good works, without neglecting doing the things which are not as weighty in their nature (READ Mt 23:23). Let us consider how to motivate wealthy Christians to be rich in good works (1 Tim 6:18). Let us consider how to motivate everyone who believes in God to engage in good deeds (Titus 3:8), specifically for the purpose of meeting pressing needs, to be fruitful in this way (Titus 3:14). For it is important for all of us, especially some of us, even certain poor widows, to have a reputation of coming to the aid of those in distress (1 Tim 5:10). Let us somehow plan to motivate certain men to do the good work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5). Let us consider how to motivate those who teach us (evangelists and teachers) to help us find certain qualified older men to appoint them to the good work of being in charge of a flock, a church (that is, in charge of their souls SEE He 13:7), to pastor them (Titus 1:5; 1 Tim 3:1), and deacons to be in charge of certain task work within that church (1 Tim 3:8). Let us think about how to motivate certain older and reverent Christian women to teach what is good to the younger women (Titus 2:3-5). Let us consider how to motivate one another from time to time to take up collections from among ourselves for the good work of distributing it to people who are going through famines, or struck by some misfortune or catastrophe in life, especially if they have faith in Christ (2 Cor 8:6, 8). Let us consider how we can care for one another like a family, like a mother would her child, like a son would his mother, and so on and so forth (SEE Jn 19:27; Ro 16:13; Mt 12:48). For we all need mothering, fathering, and responsible sons and daughters in our lives to encourage us.

## Conclusion

Let us attend church with a purpose to encourage one another to do excellent in things in life; **things which are beneficial in their nature or characteristics towards others**; things which help meet people's legitimate pressing needs. In serving one another in this way, it will help us to let our light shine for the sake of God (Mt 5:16), and prove that we love His name (He 6:10). But we can only do this if we have a good habit of attending the assembly. Attending church is something which is beneficial in its nature or characteristics towards others; it is a **good** work.

### 3. Think about How to Motivate One Another to Be in the Good Habit of Going to Church

In order to fulfill our calling to motivate one another to love and good deeds, we need to associate with one another on a regular basis. We ought to have a sufficient amount of personal and direct interaction. We need to endure one another, face to face. Love endures. For example, in the very same breath, in the same sentence that God has encouraged us to "consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works," He also has added this: "not forsaking our own assembling [churching] together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another" (He 10:24, 25). Therefore, it is God's will that we assemble "together" to encourage one another in the way in which He has prescribed. It is a sin to be in the "habit" of missing church, meaning "our own assembling together," to give and receive encouragement. How else can we fulfill the commandments which relate to the things that can only take place in a face to face meeting? How else can the "older women... encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children" (Titus 2:3, 4)? How else can we "greet one another with a holy kiss" (Ro 16:16)? How else can we be "teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col 3:16)?

Note: The commandment to greet one another with a holy kiss is listed many times in the gospel, such as in Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:26, and 1 Peter 5:14. This indicates just how much God wants us to demonstrate love towards one another, even when we first see each other, in our greetings to one another. I myself greet Christians, men and women (and my children), with a holy kiss (on the cheek), if they are willing to accept it. Likewise, in one church which I have attended, a church of about 200 members, only one person, an older woman, seeks me out to greet me (and my wife and children) with a holy kiss, every time. She is demonstrating the kind of holy love that we all need to be demonstrating towards one another. We need to take the time and have the courage to greet one another in this way. It will help us get to know each other and show love towards one another. It is a good work, something which is beneficial in its nature or characteristics towards others. When Christian men and women, and my children or wife, greet me in this way, I am indeed encouraged by it.

How else can we "greet the friends by name" (3 Jn 1:14)? How can we "greet" one another "by name," or even be "friends" for that matter, if we do not yet even know each other? So we ought to purposely meet together to get to know one another's names, interests, needs, and talents or skills. Let us take the necessary time to do so. Let us have the desire to see each other face to face. It shows that we care for one another. It is an opportunity to show love and concern for all. Let us not neglect the opportunity.

Christianity is supposed to be a very personable, affectionate religion, a religion which truly, truly cares about the legitimate spiritual and physical needs of others. For every Christian has a need. Every Christian has an interest. "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4). We ought to come to church to consider the personal interests of others. But unless we have a sufficient amount of regular, personal, and direct interaction with one another, we cannot find out or inquire about one another's interests.

Jesus said, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things [food and covering] will be added to you" (Mt 6:33). So Christians ought to be seekers. We are trying to find something. For a seeker tries to find, locate, go to, or resort to something. In this case, we need to find the kingdom of God, meaning the assembly (church) on earth and in heaven. Also, we must seek out the righteousness of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, as revealed by Him in the gospel.

Note: As the context of this passage points out, we need to try to find and locate the kingdom and His righteousness first, not second, even over our efforts to secure our own food and covering. For Jesus promised that if we seek first the kingdom (the assembly on earth and in heaven) and His righteousness, then our needs to receive or acquire food and covering (things that are necessary for the body) would be added to us somehow, by God, or more precisely, by faith in or toward God, trusting in this promise. In this we can test the Lord. For those of us who have been neglecting our own church attendance, we will never know what the Lord is willing to do for us, until we put our efforts for food and covering second.

Consider the story of Paul. As soon as he began to believe in Jesus as Lord, he immediately joined with others who likewise believed and were baptized. For example, after he was baptized, **"For several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus"** (Ac 9:19). And, **"When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples"** (Ac 9:26). Some translations say **"he was trying to join the disciples"**. Yet, we know that Paul did not just attend church to worship God. He also motivated the members in it to be more loving towards each other and towards God, and to maintain some sort of good works. He went to church with a purpose. We are called by God to do the same thing, yet in our own way, and with our own talents and abilities which we have received from God. Like Paul, we should try to associate with or join the disciples wherever we live, travel, or visit, especially to worship the Lord together, with a purpose. Let us not forsake the assembly, but instead maintain a good attendance record. This is a good work. It is beneficial in its nature or characteristics to others.

**A Personal Story:** As soon as I began to believe in Jesus Christ, I wanted to attend the assembly of those who believed. For example, in my twenties, after reading the gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time, I immediately decided to attend a worship service with an associate of mine from school and work, a man whom I then readily perceived believed in Jesus for a long time. But since I had planned to move in a few days from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, I was only able to attend one church service with him. So a man in this church, a minister of the gospel, directed me to visit another related church in North Carolina. And so I did, for eight months, until I moved to Texas to receive training for a new job. At the risk of my new job, for we worked seven days a week during this training period, I still attended the assembly with my co-worker/roommate, who just happened to be a man with the exact same study Bible as mine, and who was a member of the same brotherhood with whom I had begun to meet (I did not arrange to have this man as my roommate; the company arranged it in their own corporate apartments). But I was not yet a member of Christ or an assembly, and did not yet know how to become one. I was not yet baptized. However, I desired to become a member of this same church in Texas, but was not able to articulate this to them, since I was so unlearned in the gospel of our God, and in the ways and means therein. But I associated with them, not knowing how to truly join them in Christ. Now after I returned to the church in North Carolina, to be baptized by a man in that congregation and to make the good confession, I then received a new work assignment in the Philadelphia area. And so I immediately sought out the disciples in that area and began worshipping God with them. And this has been my custom wherever I have moved or traveled. I have no intention of doing otherwise. For I, in my youth, had lived long enough time in the flesh to know that seeking out the kingdom of God is much better than seeking out the kingdom of this world. Amen and amen! And like Paul, I have endeavored to strengthen the disciples in these churches and more with my own abilities and talents which I have received from the Lord.

## 4. Think about How to Encourage One Another All the More, Not All the Less

There are reasons why it is necessary for us to increase our efforts to encourage one another in the Lord. For example, one of them is mentioned in our passage at hand. **"Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging [strengthening] one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near"** (He 10:24, 25). The return of Christ is drawing nearer and nearer. This is the reason why we need to encourage one another all the more, not all the less. Judgment Day will be here all the sooner. We need to help one another to be prepared for that day.

Now to **"encourage"** someone means to strengthen him, to make him strong, not weak. To establish him in something, to cause him to be firm, resolute, and so on and so forth. Like when Peter was about to sin against the Lord and fall away from Him, Jesus said, **"I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen [encourage] your brothers"** (Lk 22:32). So, like Peter, we ought to strengthen our brothers and sisters in Christ, meaning to encourage them somehow.

Another reason why it is necessary to increase our efforts to encourage one another is that sin will harden us if we do not do so. For example, **"Encourage [strengthen] one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin"** (He 3:13). So unless we somehow continue to **"encourage one another**



day after day" to do what is right, sin, if we let it, will deceive our hearts into being hardened. When something hardens, it is very difficult to once again make it soft. In order to do so, it would have to be broken up. This is speaking about a heart and its ability to overcome sin or be hardened in it. Sin can tempt us day after day, continually. So to combat this, we can "encourage one another day after day," continually. This kind of frequency would demonstrate our best effort.

### **The Key Principle That Governs Which Kind of Encouragement We Ought to Give to One Another**

When it comes to encouraging one another, let us keep this one over arching principle in mind to guide, focus, and govern our efforts to do so. "Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened [encouraged] by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited" (He 13:9). So it is beneficial for Christians to strengthen one another's hearts by grace, meaning what God now favors in Christ, and all that this contains. For the gospel is "the gospel of the grace of God" (Ac 20:24). It is what God now favors [graces]. But "varied and strange teachings," which are foreign to the gospel, meaning not commanded in it, cannot benefit or strengthen a Christian's spiritual heart. For God does not favor (grace) them because He did not teach them or imply them or reveal them. Likewise, teachings from the Old Covenant, Moses' Law, such as occupying ourselves with the "food" laws in it, cannot strengthen the spiritual heart of a Christian, similarly circumcision (Ac 15), the Sabbath (Col 2:16), and so on and so forth. For God does not anymore favor these things in the Law of Moses.

For Christ did us a favor, a grace, when He fulfilled the Law of Moses for us by dying on the cross for our sins, once and for all. He fulfilled Moses' law for us so that we would not have to do so (Mt 5:17; **READ** Ro 8:3, 4). This is especially true since we could not fully fulfill it ourselves, once and for all, because of our own sin. We could not completely satisfy that law. For the Law of Moses was added to show us how "utterly sinful" (Ro 7:13) we have become, and needful of redemption in a different way (Gal 3:19; He 7:19; He 10:1; Ro 7:13). Therefore only God could fulfill and satisfy this will and covenant for us, once and for all, since the Lord does not sin (He 9:25-28). This is another grace, another favor towards us from God. To consider this should benefit and strengthen the heart of a Christian. Amen.

### **The Church in Jerusalem Encouraged One Another Day by Day**

For example, "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they were [1] continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And [2] everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all [3] those who had believed were together, and [4] had all things in common; and [5] they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. And [6] day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and [7] breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, [8] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Ac 2:41-47).

## 1. They Continually Devoted Themselves to Four Important Things

They were “continually devoting themselves to” several key aspects of worship, such as (a) Teaching one another the gospel, (b) Fellowshiping with one another (meaning associating with one another, sharing their lives together to meet one another’s needs, having in common, spending time together), (c) Breaking bread together (breaking bread in the kingdom of God is a phrase that is mainly used to refer to eating the Lord’s Supper together SEE 1 Cor 10:16), and (d) Praying together.

These four things they did “continually,” meaning constantly, not semi-annually, or infrequently, etc. Let us encourage one another to be constantly and steadfastly devoted to these things as well, and all the more, as we see the day drawing near. Let us increase our devotions to these things, and adhere to them, even daily, as they did. What do your daily devotions include? Do you even have daily devotions to encourage and strengthen yourself or yourselves? With whom do you have them, your family, church, or whom? Do they steadfastly include these four important things?

## 2. They Were in Awe of the Lord

They “kept feeling a sense of awe”. If we truly understand the Lord, who He is as a person, and His marvelous dealings of old and today, then we cannot help but be in awe of Him. This demonstrates a worshipful spirit, especially bowing down on the ground in submissive awe of the Lord (which is what the word worship literally means). Let us somehow encourage one another to keep feeling a sense of awe for God and His ways in Christ.

## 3. They Accompanied Each Other

They “were together”. They associated with one another. They were near each other. They did not separate long from one another. They kept in close communication. Let us encourage one another to have the same kind of frequent association with each other. Let us accompany one another, more and more, as we see the day drawing near, but in a productive diligent way, not being lazy and unproductive (SEE 2 Thess 3:11; 1 Tim 5:13, 14).

## 4. They Did Not Possess Their Things

They “had all things in common”. The meaning of this is explained more perfectly in the following passages. “And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them” (Ac 4:32). They demonstrated the kind of attitude we need to have about all things in this world. For example, “But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; **for the form of this world is passing away**” (1 Cor 7:29-31).

Therefore, because this world, even our own day to day world, our life, is passing away, because the time has been shortened, meaning the world will not continue much longer, we need to have an attitude of not being possessive over anything, such

as (a) Our spouse (for we will not be married in heaven / Mt 22:30), (b) Our earthly sorrows and griefs (for in a short while we will be very happy and quite content in heaven (Re 21:4), though we are not happy and content on earth, similarly for (c) Earthly joy and (d) The things which we buy, meaning our goods.

So let us encourage one another to have an attitude which refuses to be possessive of the things which we possess or have in this life, even our children, our businesses, likewise our sorrows, because they are all temporary. All things will pass away, shortly, very shortly. So let us encourage one another to look heavenward, meaning everlastingly, while at the same time using all things temporary for the common good of our brethren. For our gifts and talents are given to us for the common, not the individual good (READ 1 Cor 12:7).

Now when our attitude is not possessive about anything we think we have, even our sorrows, this lends itself for us to more easily fulfill God's will for us to **"consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds"** (He 10:24). If we are not selfishly possessive with anything we have or are experiencing, like sorrow, we will then be more readily able to do something good and beneficial with our talents and abilities towards someone in need. Are you now more motivated to do good deeds? This would depend on one's attitude toward the things he possesses. As the song says (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God), "Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever."

## 5. They Shared with All Who Had Need

They **"were sharing... with all, as anyone might have need"**. This pleases God. For example, **"Do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased"** (He 13:16). Let us encourage one another to somehow share with all of our brothers and sisters who might be in need, not just some of our brethren, not just the "squeaky wheel," not just the ones we easily know have needs, not just the little (or big) bird in the nest who keeps squawking for food. For we must look out for the interests of others (Philip 2:4), not only our own personal needs and interests, or the needs of our personal favorite with whom we like to share. All of our members who are in need are worthy of some sort of fitting help from all of us.

Although we actually might have things or possess them (including our feelings of gladness or sorrow), we are not to be possessive with them. This will help us to be more ready to do a good work, to share with all who are in need, since we are clinging to our own feelings and things to the point of missing a good opportunity to share and please God. For we cannot take or possess any earthly thing with us to heaven, not our wives, our husbands, our children, not our goods and kindred, not even our sorrow. So from time to time, we must let them go or release them for the sake of the pressing needs of others, not expecting anything in return (SEE Lk 6:35). For that would not be giving.

## 6. They Encouraged One Another Every Day in a Place of Worship

They were **"day by day continuing with one mind in the temple"**. The ability to worship God together, in all of its many aspects, such as in prayer, in teaching, and more, the ability

to assemble together for worship, should be made available to every member of our church, every day.

The perfect reason for this is revealed and reinforced in the following Scripture. "Encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,'" so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (He 3:13). Is it still today? Well, then we need to have some sort of daily opportunity to get together to encourage one another in what is right, so that none of us will become hardened in some sort of sin. So let us encourage one another by making available a place of worship where we can all gather together every day, if we wish to do so, to strengthen one another in the Lord (through spiritual songs, teaching, prayers, and more). This could be done in the home of one of our brethren (SEE 1 Cor 16:19), or even in a public place so designated or available for that purpose.

## 7. They Were Very Hospitable People

They were "taking their meals together" "from house to house". And they did it "with gladness and sincerity of heart," not in grumbling or with impure motives or thinking, but out of the gratitude of their hearts, as we ought to do (SEE 1 Pe 4:9; 1 Tim 4:4).

As the day of Christ draws near, we ought to encourage one another by being more and more hospitable toward each other. For example, Peter said, "The end of all things is near; therefore,... be hospitable to one another without complaint" (1 Per 4:7, 9). So for this reason, let us invite one another into each other's homes for an encouraging time over a meal together, happily,

with gratitude in our hearts and words, with pure motives, not impure ones. Our hospitable efforts or lack thereof is a weighty issue, a so called "heaven or hell" issue (READ Mt 25:31-46). Beware! Be hospitable to Christians or else!

## 8. They Extolled the Lord

They were "praising God". For if one is in awe of the Lord for the things which He has done for us, one will praise Him for it. We can praise the birth of Christ, just like the heavenly host, who altogether appeared to them the shepherds to announce to them the birth of the Messiah, for they were: "Praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest'" (Lk 2:13, 14).

We can praise the Lord for all we have heard and seen about the Him, like the shepherds to whom the heavenly host appeared, they were: "Glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them" (Lk 2:20). We can praise God in a way that magnifies His glorious innocence, like the centurion who witnessed the details surrounding the death of Jesus: "He began praising God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent'" (Lk 23:47).

From these examples and more, we can more thoroughly discover and learn how to praise and extol the Lord among ourselves. Indeed, praising God is encouraging. "Just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord'" (1 Cor 1:31). For if one boasts in himself, it only encourages the one doing the boasting, in the wrong way, not the ones who hear him boast. So let us extol the Lord, praising Him for His excellent greatness, His excellent goodness, His excellent and altogether righteous judgments and more.

## More Ways In Which to Praise the Lord

It is fitting to extol the name of God over the machinations of men, and their weapons. "Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God" (Ps 20:7). Let us lift up all His names.

By extolling the Lord, we can help the poor and humble have joy. For "My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice" (Ps 34:2). So let us boast in the Lord because it encourages the humble among us, not the arrogant, for those who are arrogant want others to boast about them. But the poor in spirit among us will be glad to hear about the beauty of the Lord, the magnificence of His name, and the works of His in the past, the present, and into the future. So when we are around the humble, even the poor and needy, let us praise the Lord to them. For the poor cannot trust in the things that they have, for they have very, very little. But they can trust in the Lord, who has a lot! So how do we help the poor and humble to have joy? We praise the Lord to them. For they will hear it and be glad. They will rejoice, over the Lord. Amen.

If we are wise, we ought not boast in that, for this would not be wise. If we are strong, we ought not to boast in that, for this is not true strength. If we are rich, we ought not to boast in that, for this is not true riches. For example, "Thus says the LORD, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who

exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the LORD" (Jer 9:23, 24). So let us boast in knowing God. For it is good to know God. Let us boast in his loving kindness, his grace in Christ Jesus, how he has shown us His love in Him. Let us extol God's justice of old and concerning the Judgment Day. Let us altogether praise His righteousness.

As the wellspring from which we boast, the cross must replace ourselves and the world. For example, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Ga 6:14). So the source from which we gather our praises (what truly motivates us to praise) must not be ourselves or even this world, for we have been crucified to the world and its desires, and it has been crucified to us. It is dead, and therefore no longer allowed to live in us because it is dead in sin, but we are alive in Christ because of righteousness.

Finally, one of the most powerful ways of praising God is to do so altogether in song, like a heavenly host (Ps 40:3; Ac 16:25). So let us sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs of praise which extol the Lord and His character qualities.

For example, below, consider my adaptation of Psalm 9:1, 2.

I will give thanks unto the Lord with all my heart, I will tell of His wonders from the start, I will rejoice and be glad in you, I will sing praises to Your name, Lord most high, I will sing praises to Your name, Lord most high.



## Conclusion

The church in Jerusalem was a good example of what it means to be **"encouraging one another, and all the more,"** as the writer of Hebrews instructs us to do (He 10:25). For they attended church with a purpose. They continually learned the holy Scriptures. They continually associated and spent time with each other. They continually remembered Christ in the breaking of bread. They continually prayed together. They shared their lives with one another, their food, they had all things in common. Though they possessed things, they were not possessive of them.

And when they could no longer stay together in Jerusalem as a church, because they were persecuted out of Jerusalem, they encouraged others along the way in the Lord. It says that they went about preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to others as they fled and reestablished their lives in other places (Ac 8:4). They started churches by doing so (How many of us are strong enough in the Lord to do this?). Whether they knew it or not, they were prepared for this scattering. They were strong and encouraged in the Lord, for they had, as a church, encouraged one another day after day in many important ways. By constantly studying the teachings of Christ, through the apostles, they became mature enough to teach others the gospel of Jesus Christ (as we all ought to be able to do, in some fitting way, at some point / READ He 5:12-14). They were well practiced, well versed, in the Scriptures. They were mature and strong because they devoted themselves to making one another strong, daily.

Note: This lesson on attending church with a purpose could be the most important lesson in this Bible study. For how can we be strong in the things of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the worship of God through Him, unless we somehow devote ourselves to be a regular, even daily, encouragement to one another in the Lord?

## More Examples of Encouragement

The Lord strengthened Joshua when he was about to do a great work for God (Josh 1:1-9). An angel of the Lord strengthened Gideon to help save his people from their enemies (Judges 6:12-14). Mordecai strengthened his adopted daughter, Esther, to use her position and to risk her life to help deliver the Jews (Esther 4:1-14). Solomon strengthened sons in wise behavior (Pr 1:8). This mother strengthened her son to not be like the indulgent kings who tend to be swallowed up by excessive behavior, such as having many women or drinking wine or strong drink (Prov 31:1-9). She also strengthened him in choosing an excellent wife (Prov 31:10-31). In doing so, this mother has also taught and strengthened many wives in what is good for the home. It has led to many women becoming more focused on being an excellent wife, which is a high, honorable, and worthy goal for wives. It is a good work, for it is beneficial in its nature and characteristics towards others, especially towards husbands, and subsequently children, and perhaps even household assistants. For the happiness of a home mainly depends on the wife in this matter (SEE Titus 2:4, 5).

God strengthens the hearts of the disciples in every good work and word (2 Thess 2:17). This is true in my ministry of writing and publishing these series of Bible studies and more. Indeed, my God has strengthened me in this good work and word. Peter had a calling from Jesus to strengthen His sheep (Lk 22:32). Paul told the church to strengthen the fainthearted, the weary (1 Thess 5:14). Yet, how can we do these things if we do not meet with one another on a regular basis? **But, do you know how to behave properly in a Christian assembly? Next, consider this further.**

**Now Complete the  
TEST 1 On Regulations**

# Beloved, Know How to Conduct Yourself During Worship

## A Written Code of “Conduct” for All to Follow

In the kingdom of God, especially during worship, there is a code of “conduct” for all members to obey, even for those who teach or speak in the assembly, and likewise for each and every man and woman

in attendance. For ex-

ample, Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, his fel-

low minister of the gospel, to

urge him to command the con-

duct of all worshipers in a certain

orderly and godly way.

He said, “I

write so that you will know

how one ought to conduct him-

self in the house-

hold of God, which

is the church [meaning

when we assemble for wor-

ship]” (1 Tim 3:15). So, the main purpose of his entire letter was to teach or com-

mand us how to behave during church, to regulate our behavior. No one must remain ignorant of how to conduct

himself during worship. For violating



“ I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth ”

1 Tim 3:14, 15

any one of these principles would obviously be a

sin. So it is only right for us to understand

how to behave in a Christian assem-

bly, especially during worship,

and even in the greater king-

dom of God, while living the

Christian life. Next, to help us

to learn how to behave as Christ

commanded, especially during

church, I have listed out and emphasized

the points of “conduct”

or commandments concern-

ing this, chronologically, as Paul did in his letter to Timothy. Incidentally,

this letter is another witness to the idea that the Christian covenant is a regu-

lated one, with certain rules of “con-

duct” which ought to be willingly fol-

# 1. Instruct Speakers Not to Speculate / Be Opinionative

"Instruct certain men **not** to teach [1] **strange doctrines**, nor to pay attention to [2] myths and [3] endless genealogies, **which give rise to mere speculation** [opinions/disputes] rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith" (1 Tim 1:3, 4).  
[The full context of this point is 1 Tim 1:3-11]

Notice that the very first **subject** which Paul addressed concerning church "conduct" is the behavior of the ones who speak up or talk in an assembly (which would include, teachers, commentators, etc.). **What is coming out of ones' mouth; is it truth or "speculation" [opinion]?** In the kingdom of Christ, is not this where the source of all problems originate? Is one "furthering the administration of God," the gospel truth, or is one furthering the things which are speculative in their nature, such as strange teachings, myths, and endless genealogies?

If you have learned one of the key lessons from the story of the woman at the well, that "true worshipers will worship the Father **in spirit and truth**" (Jn 4:23), then you know that speaking, discussing, or practicing things "which give rise to mere speculation" is not worshiping God "in... truth," but rather "in opinion," meaning "in speculation." Indeed, as the context implies here, when one does so he is "straying" (1 Tim 1:6) from "the words of the faith" (1 Tim 4:6), and misleading himself and others to "turn... aside to fruitless discussion" (1 Tim 1:6). So it is not good to lead or permit discussions or practices which are speculative in their nature, for these are not useful or beneficial for Christians, for they do not bear fruit unto God.

Now Paul listed three things which are not the truth, but instead speculative, meaning opinionated, in their nature: strange teachings, myths, and endless genealogies. These are the words of men, not God. We are supposed to be "nourished on **the words of the faith**" (1 Tim 4:6), not **the words** of men!

## (a) Strange Teachings

When something is "strange" it means that it is foreign to someone or something; a foreigner, a stranger, something that has not ever before been known to someone or concerning some thing or subject. So a "strange doctrine" is a religious teaching which is introduced by someone, but, in truth, it is foreign or absent from the gospel. It was either not commanded in it or was not to be construed from it. Truly, this is precisely what is opinion.

For example, consider the subject of color. Some teach that the color **black** is holy, but certain other colors, especially bright ones, like **red**, are not. Instead, if one uses them, he is considered arrogant, proud, adulterous, or sinful or not "plain". Likewise, the dullness or the brightness of something. If it is dull, not shiny, it is holy. If it is shiny, it is sinful. But the problem with these kinds of teachings on color or the brightness or clarity of something (or the "plainness" of something) is that they have absolutely no clear and direct commandment from the gospel of Christ on which to base themselves! As such, they have no context to detail them or to support them. Therefore, they are utter speculation; opinions. They **exceed what is written** in the gospel, meaning they go beyond what is actually commanded or implied in it. Indeed, this is strange. Yet some worshipers have adopted "black" as their favorite color, and insist on its use for membership in their groups. This is divisive.

In a certain opinionated way, the church in Corinth began to "exceed what is written," and this led them to become "divided" (1 Cor 1:13) and to "become arrogant in behalf of one against the other" (1 Cor 4:6). For they started to name or affiliate themselves in a way that exceeded what was written on this subject (1 Cor 1:12). What they were doing was indeed "strange" or foreign to the gospel.

If we let them, this is exactly what our opinions will do to us. They will make us think more highly of ourselves than those who are not of our opinion. We will become divisive with them. In arrogance, we will begin to divide up Christianity based on our own opinions. We will even name ourselves, our churches, our religion, or parts of it, after them. This is grievous.

Note: Knowing this, Paul fittingly said to the opinionated church in Corinth: "We are destroying **speculations** [opinions] and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). A minister must destroy the speculative teachings among us, since they do not help us obey Christ.

## The Vocabulary of God or Men?

What about the profound and stunning example of what I call "vocabulary" speculation? [In *The Bible Study on True Worshipers, A Very Important Vocabulary Lesson for Christians*, I fully informed you of this.] Do you realize how many speculative words worshipers are using as **doctrine** to arrogantly and divisively define, differentiate, or praise themselves and condemn others, words or teachings that are not even in the Bible or a Bible concordance? [Teachings, such as acapella, anabaptist (ism), legalism, non-denominational (ism), rapture, conservative or liberal, and so on and so forth, continually.] Brethren, these are not God-breathed subjects in the Bible, and are truly not "the words of the faith" on which

we need to be "nourished" (1 Tim 4:6). They are not words (or subjects) in the Christian faith, and therefore, they have no context or details surrounding them from which to make legitimate points; points which are supposed to be related to the subject of a passage of Scripture. Now a "subject" (also called a theme or a topic) is that which forms a basic matter of thought, discussion, investigation, etc., such as a subject of conversation.

**Did God use any one of these words to denote the subject, theme, or topic of a conversation in the Bible?**

We are supposed to be "nourished on the words of the faith" (1 Tim 4:6), not the words (i.e. vocabulary) of men!

Friends, none of these teachings will judge us on the last day, since these words are not even in the Bible! God did not breathe them, and therefore He has not defined them, and so He will not require them to be understood or adhered to at all. They are speculative teachings since they, their words, originate in the minds of men and from man's own vocabulary and dictionary book, not God's. Thus, they are strange.

On Judgment Day, will God ask, "Are you denominational or non-denominational?" Why should He? He never told us to be one or the other, likewise for these other words or teachings in question. Men are simply making up these doctrines to suit themselves or their application of the Scriptures. So we must overcome the hazy cloud of these words, these teachings, with which men shroud the Scriptures. Instead we must humble ourselves by coming down from above the arrogant height of these cloudy words and teachings, and get past them to look more closely at the holy word of God. Then we might be able to find or discover the real subject of a passage and what God actually said about it. **This will unnerve many, but it must be done for the sake of the truth.**

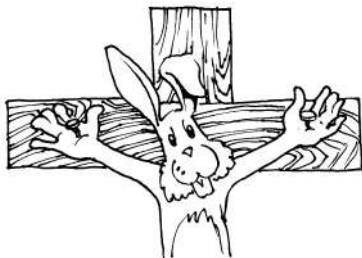
# “Let us use Bible words and Bible phrases”

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pe 4:11 KJV), not the oracles of men. And what are the “oracles of God” except His holy words (His vocabulary), the sacred writings? Let us approach teaching, speaking, and discussing the things of God, first and foremost, from this standpoint or viewpoint, not from the standpoint, viewpoint, or framework of the doctrinal words and “isms” of men. Amen. Let us not somehow make up, coin, or mint “doctrines” and somehow collect or fit the Bible, the Scriptures, under them. Let us be **“nourished on the words of the faith”** (1 Tim 4:6), not **“the words of men”**! **So let us use Bible terms and Bible phrases.** Awake!

## (b) Myths, Old Wives Tales

We must ignore myths, especially the ones which are interfering with the gospel. For example, **“Instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths”** (1 Tim 1:3, 4). Myths are stories, fables, tales, or “legends” which are not actually true. Instead, they are considered fiction, falsehoods, or fabrications; an invention, creation, or embellishment of the mind of men or women.

In certain ways, many people pay attention to or give heed to myths, passing them down from generation to generation, even worshipers of God. Yet, myths do not originate from Him. God is not the author of them. He is the God of truth, the author of truth, not myths. Therefore, mythological teachings, because they are not considered truth (especially “religious” myths connected to the worship of God), are a form of **“speculation”** and considered **“fruitless discussion”** for Christians. For example, consider the “resurrection bunny”. 48



### The Resurrection Bunny?

Many worshipers, at least in the United States of America, have become addicted to this myth. When people say, “The easter bunny,” what they are unwittingly saying is this: “The resurrection bunny”. For the word “easter” is a man made term for “the resurrection” of Jesus Christ. It has come to be known as “Resurrection Day,” a once a year celebration commemorating the day that Jesus was raised from the dead.

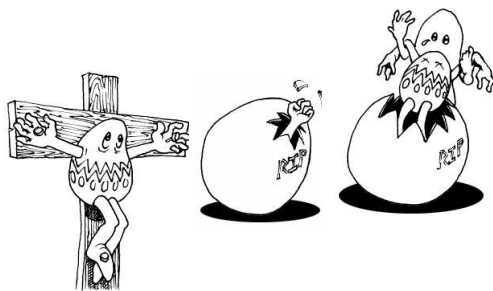
Note: For some strange reason, the word “Easter” is also used in the King James Version of the Scriptures to describe the Old Testament Passover Feast (Ac 12:4). The translators replaced the word Passover with the word “Easter”.

What then does a rabbit have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? Was a bunny put to death on a cross for our sins, buried, and then raised back to life on the third day? Is the bread that we break, the Lord’s Supper, as sharing in the body of a bunny? Is the cup that we drink a sharing in the blood of an animal? So, the next time we wish to celebrate “easter” along with the “easter bunny” and “easter eggs,” let us think about the lack of truth in these mythological things, lest we continue to be somehow, trite-fully, caught up in them.

### Resurrection Eggs?

Consider the death, burial, and resurrection egg. Many worshipers (especially women) are paying attention to this myth as well. When one says, “easter eggs,” he is actually saying, “resurrection eggs,” for “easter” means “Resurrection Day”.





Therefore, what do eggs have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Was an egg put to death for our sins, buried in a shell, and then raised or hatched to life on the third day? Certainly not! Why would true worshipers mix this pagan tradition into the celebration of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord of glory? Do not **"pay attention to myths"** (1 Tim 1:4). Let us ignore them! Let us not at all show deference to them, in word or in deed. They are not true! Christians are supposed to be into the truth, learning it, practicing it, being devoted to it, supporting it, not something else, like myths! **"The church"** is supposed to be **"the pillar and support of the truth"** (1 Tim 3:15), not myths! As worshipers of the true and living God, what are we supporting? **"Love... does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth"** (1 Cor 13:4 6). Myths are unrighteous because they are not the truth. In what are we rejoicing, the truth or myths. Which one will we celebrate? To which one will we be devoted?

### **"He Knows When You've Been Bad or Good," Truly?**

Consider yet another one of these **"worldly fables"** that we have been commanded to **"have nothing to do with"** (1 Tim 4:7); "Santa Clause," or as some call him, "Old Saint Nick". First of all, God-like power is attributed to him. For example, in song, children are warned to fear his power,



saying, "He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake. He knows when you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake! **You better watch out**, you better not cry, Santa Clause is coming to town." Obviously, these things are not true, for he does not even exist! Therefore, he cannot see, he cannot know, and so on and so forth. Additionally, parents encourage their children to ask "Nick" for things. Yet, why would a Christian encourage his children to petition or pray to a myth for things? We know that **"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights"** (Ja 1:17), not from "Nick". Besides, when parents teach and practice this myth, they are simply lying to their children. This is such an idolatrous-like fairy tale. Second, he competes with the birth of Jesus Christ. People celebrate him together along with the birth of the Messiah. Therefore, it is a mixed holiday, part mythological and part so called Christian. This makes no true sense at all. It is like celebrating the mythological "resurrection bunny" or "resurrection eggs" together along with the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Third, is "Saint Nick" really a saint, meaning one who is separated from sin (holy) in his behavior? Even if he was, which he was not (for he is the fabrication and embellishment of men and women, a myth, a legend), then why does he claim (or men foolishly attribute to him) God-like powers, a mere "man," a creature? No true saint would permit others to attribute to him deity-like characteristics. He is not the Creator. Where do we read about him in the Scriptures? We cannot! Why play along with this mythological idol-like man? Women, why do some of you treat him as a collectable item? Show yourselves to be true by dumping his image into the garbage! Sisters, be a **"pillar and support of the truth"** (1 Tim 3:15), not a pillar and support of myths! Participating in them is a form of practicing falsehood, and so is worthy of condemnation (SEE 1 Jn 3:10; Ps 101:7; Re 22:15).

## Notes on Myths and “Christian” Holidays

### (1) In One Letter, Twice Paul Instructed Timothy about Myths

Paul directed Timothy to instruct us to not teach speculative things, which included myths (1 Tim 1:4). But in the same letter he also instructed Timothy to personally have nothing to do with them either, saying, **“But have nothing to do with worldly fables [some translations say myths] fit only for old women”** (1 Tim 4:7). So a minister of the gospel is not to practice them among the brethren, or even before the world for that matter. Instead, he is to fear God, and His holy word, not Christians who are including some form of mythology into their worship of God. Indeed, Christians who are paying attention to myths need reproof and put to shame for doing so.

### (2) We Must Reprove Christians for Paying Attention to Myths

Paul instructed another minister, Titus, saying, **“For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth”** (Titus 1:13, 14). Have you turned away from the truth to practice myths? Do you need “severely” “reprove”d or rebuked for doing so? Are you “sound in the faith” or are you still “paying attention to... myths”? If so, you need some serious verbal reproof. You need to have a “Peter and Simon” moment (SEE Ac 8:20). In no uncertain terms, you need to be told to **“repent!”**. You need to have a “Paul and Peter” moment (Ga 2:11). You need “opposed” to your “face” because you stand, you **“stood condemned!”**. What nation or culture does not have their own myths? We know myths are nothing. Yet, even so, we are not to tolerate them in our collective or individual practice of the Christian faith. They are not worshipping God “in truth”. Are we not supposed to be **“the pillar and support of the truth”** (1 Tim 3:15), not myths? What are we supporting? What are you yourself supporting? Are you a “pillar and support of the myths” in your society? Would this please God?

### (3) A Personal Story about the Easter Bunny and Eggs

I myself have attempted, face to face, to help Christian churches stop paying attention to myths, but not without opposition. For example, in the year 2001, when I was in Texas working with a very large and worldwide evangelistic ministry, I admonished a church about myths. Now one of the leaders of this evangelistic ministry was also one of the pastors of a very large congregation, at which he so happened to be teaching a class on 1 Timothy (in which we know are commandments concerning myths). When he arrived at the verses which taught against practicing myths, I spoke up from my seat and began to exhort them a little bit about this commandment, even giving them an example of how their own church, of over 1,000 members, was practicing one of them. For at that very time, many of the tables throughout the church building had on them centerpiece arrangements of easter bunnies or easter eggs. My brief exhortation stunned the class, for many of them jostled in their seats and turned around to look at me, as though I lacked understanding or as if I was a foreigner to them or their church ways; not one of them. One leading man, seemingly unaware of this teaching, said to me during class that maybe we could discuss this further sometime. Yet, the one teaching the class opposed me on the spot, face to face, and refuted me for what I said. But low and behold, about two weeks later, this same man who reproved me over it in front of everybody, the one teaching the class, came to my office and said to me that he subsequently received good feedback from several members of the class concerning what I said, that they appreciated it. So this teacher (and shepherd of this large flock) then thanked me and showed appreciation for what I tried to point out to the brethren. Praise God! But I knew that when I said this to them that it would be hard for them to swallow, since they were all caught up together in practicing this sin. And their teacher, their shepherd, was complicit in this, for he was tolerating and supporting and defending them in this **(he was simply men pleasing)**. Yet, I know that these men are not ignorant of the truth, but they are somehow caught up in tolerating certain things which they should instead sternly oppose and not accommodate, for the sake of the truth which has been written concerning these things and more.

### (4) Halloween Is a Myth

What about the myth and fabrication of Halloween, which comes along with the pretense of witches, deception, and all kinds of things which God hates or condemns to the Lake of Fire? For example, some parents permit their children to dress up as a witch, a sorceress! Why not dress up as an adulterer or an adulteress? Why not dress up as a liar or a thief or a murderer or anything else which God condemns? Why would a Christian pretend to be something or someone whom God has sentenced to hell? This would be foolish and fool hardy for a Christian to practice. Why put God to the test? Why put this mythological stumbling block before children? Why teach children to be frightening or tricky, hence “trick or treat”?

### (5) A Christian Can “Observe” any Day He Himself Devotes to the Lord (without neglecting church for worship He 10:24, 25)

Evidently, an individual Christian, in his own “opinion,” (Ro 14:1) can “observe” any “day” of the week or year as holy, a so called holy day, if he devotes it to the Lord. For example, in the context of “opinions” (Ro 14:1), not things which are commanded, we read, **“One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord”** (Ro 14:5, 6). So a Christian can “observe” a “day” for the birth of Christ, His resurrection from the dead, and so on and so forth, without sinning by doing so. Yet, he must do so to or **“for the Lord,”** not in any way to or for myths, even one’s children. Now we know that the birth of Jesus Christ is not a myth, neither are any other aspects about Him, such as His resurrection from the dead. Who does not rejoice at the birth of Christ? Who does not rejoice over His resurrection from the dead? Yet, Christians cannot command these days to others since they are simply speculative; there is no command from God to observe them on a certain day as holy. Therefore, it would be a sin to teach others to observe them. But as the context on “opinions” further explains, we should not judge or condemn anyone who, in his own opinion, keeps or does not keep an opinionated day (SEE Ro 14:3, 4). Likewise, he who does keep it, he is to keep it between himself and God (SEE Ro 14:22). Therefore, he must keep it by himself, and not share, teach, or expect others to “observe” it. Finally, the only “celebration” that Christians have been commanded, directed, or authorized to observe **“often”** (1 Cor 11:25) or **“continually”** (Ac 2:42) is the memorial of Christ’s death, as remembered in eating the **“Lord’s supper”** (1 Cor 11:20), also called **“the breaking of bread”** (Ac 2:42). **“Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?”** (1 Cor 10:16). This keeps us focused on teaching the gospel, which essentially is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (SEE 1 Cor 15:1-5), not primarily His birth. **“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes (1 Cor 11:26), not His birth.**

So, is the birth of Christ important? Yes, but observing it has not been commanded. Is the death of Christ for our sins important? Yes, so much so that we have been commanded to observe it in the Lord’s Supper **“often”** obviously during our regular worship of God, as an act of regular worship. For in His death is the shedding of His blood, and in the shedding of His perfect blood, there is forgiveness of sins, once and for all. So for good reason, this is the only aspect of Christ’s life for which we have been clearly authorized or commanded to teach and commemorate or **“observe”** uniformly altogether as a church. Let us not become like some, who might misconstrue the subject and purpose of Romans 14 to somehow set their own day of worship, separate and apart from our assembly together. Even if one does so, he is not to be in the habit of forsaking our assembling (churching) together for the purpose of encouraging one another in the things of Lord (SEE He 10:24, 25). I suppose that the word “Christmas” is a Catholic word, to celebrate Christ’s Mass, meaning catholic worship. So we should not celebrate Catholic Mass (Christ’s-mass), since there are several things in it which are sinful, such as the worship of idols (i.e. praying to creatures, such as Mary, and so called saints), and the cannibalization of the communion (turning the bread and cup into real flesh and real blood), and the need for a priest to offer up Christ (in their communion in the flesh) again and again and again, instead of as we read it in the Scripture **“once for all”** (He 7:27). So one can celebrate the birth of Christ without sinning, but not Christ’s Mass (Catholicism).

## (c) Endless Genealogies

"Instruct certain men not... to pay attention to... **endless genealogies**, which give rise to mere speculation [opinions/disputes]" (1 Tim 1:3, 4). For some very good reasons, as you will see below, the Christian religion no longer needs to continue to track or record genealogies, specifically "religious" lineages. To do so would "give rise to mere speculation [opinion]" instead of the truth about these things as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Religious genealogies were not intended to be "endless" or ongoing, but indeed they were ended, discontinued, or finished with the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, in this regard, the birth of Jesus Christ is very, very, important.

Now a genealogy is a record of descent or lineage of one's ancestors or forefathers. They were used in the Scriptures to trace the line of Abraham's offspring, including the kings (of Judah), and the priests (of Aaron's line), and even the Christ (all the way back to Adam). Yet, there are a number of truths related to Christ which convince us, by faith, that **religious genealogies are no longer needed to prove anything**. For example, consider three important aspects of this; Christ, the priesthood, and Abraham's descendants.

### 1. The Genealogy of the Messiah

In the case of Christ, ancestry is no longer needed to be kept. For once it was proven, in roughly 1-33 A.D., that Jesus was the Christ, both genealogically (Mt 1:1-17) and by other legitimate means

(Ac 2:22; Ro 1:4), we no longer need to trace His lineage through the line of Judah. For the Christ was to come through Israel's son, Judah (Nu 24:17; Isa 9:6, 7). So we no longer need to wait for the Messiah to be born, and therefore we do not need to keep on tracking or recording the lineage of Judah to prove or verify the line of Christ. It is unnecessary and inconsequential to do so.

Note: Besides, this would seem quite difficult to do, to say the least, since shortly after the time of Jesus Christ the Jews were dispersed from Jerusalem for nearly two thousand years. As such, it seems quite improbable, humanly, that any of their supposed genealogical records could be properly kept, especially since God already ushered in the Messiah in 33 A.D. Therefore, God Himself does not need to provide or keep any more historical or prophetic proof or record of lineage of Judah in the Holy Scriptures. And He has no need to help enable Israel, the Jews, to do so. Thus, prophecy concerning the Christ is finished, as far as written prophecy. For the fulfillment of certain prophecies about Christ have not yet occurred, like His return for Judgment (2Thess 1:6-10). Nevertheless, continuing to track the line of Judah is irrelevant to the Christian faith.

"Religious genealogies are no longer needed to prove anything"

So now we only need to wait for the Messiah to come to earth a second time to save us from the wrath to come upon all men (1 Thess 1:10; 2 Thess 1:6-10). This requires no genealogical record, for we will all see Him as He is (Re 1:7). At that time, it will be unmistakable for anyone to know who He is, even kings (SEE Re 6:12-17).

### 2. The Genealogy of the Priests

In the case of the priests, ancestry is no longer needed to be kept. For with the death of Christ, we no longer need to maintain the priesthood, since Christ, in His body, was the final offering for all of our sin "**once for all**" (He 10:10). Therefore, we no longer need a priest to offer the sacrifice for sin. Indeed, Christ Jesus is the final priest (He 5:6), and the final sacrifice.

Note: The Catholics believe they need priests to continue to offer the sacrifice to God for sin. Hence, in their communion, the priests attempt to offer to God the literal body of Christ and the literal blood of Christ, over and over again, in every communion. But we know that they cannot, in truth, do this for two reasons. First, with the sacrifice of Christ, we fully know that we do not need another sacrifice to be offered or re-offered to God for our sins. So, as a consequence of this, we do not need a priest to offer anymore sacrifices for sin. Second, Catholic communion does not actually turn into Christ's real body and real blood. This would be a form of cannibalism, a sin. For example, we are commanded in one place to not eat or drink blood (SEE Ac 15:20). These Catholic teachings on communion and the priests are indeed strange and perverted doctrines, nowhere to be justifiably found or construed from the whole of Scriptures. Additionally, they are an affront to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work that He finished, even an affront to His sole and singular priesthood. Therefore, these men are not priests of God, but imposters!

### 3. Abraham's Offspring, His Genealogy

We no longer need to keep the genealogical records of Abraham. For we are all children of God through faith in Christ, not genealogical ascendancy or something else, like gender or societal status. Amen! **"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise"** (Gal 3:26-29).

So we who have "faith" that Jesus is the Christ, we who were "baptized" into Him, "are Abraham's descendants," regardless of Jewish heritage (or one's gender or societal status, etc.). We who believe in Christ are the descendants of the faith which Abraham had in God, not of the lineage "of the flesh," but of the believing spirit in Abraham, Christ's spirit. Likewise, "**For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."** That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants" (Ro 9:6-8). The repetition in this passage makes it clear. The genealogy of "the flesh" has nothing to do with a people being regarded as the "children" of God or "Abraham," or "Israel," but instead it is the "promise" that we have in Christ which makes it so.

Notes: Indeed, in speaking about His very own mother and brothers (Mt 12:46-50), Jesus totally disregarded their fleshly lineage to Him as important, saying, **"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother"** (Mt 12:50). He emphasized that doing the Father's will makes one related to Jesus, and a child of God, no matter who one claims to be, even in relation to the Son of God. His mother and brothers would still have to do the Father's will in order to be considered a true "relative" of Christ, and therefore of Abraham, the Hebrew.

Likewise, we no longer need to keep the lineage of certain descendants of Abraham, such as Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve sons or tribes which came from him. For these genealogical records were meant to be kept for land distribution and inheritance rights in the promised land. Yet, now these kind of inheritance rights are a part of the "canceled" law (Col 2:14) which Christ came to "fulfill" (Mt 5:17) or complete, once and for all (Ro 8:3, 4).

However, there seems to be something like a "genealogy" in the book of Revelation which has not yet been fulfilled. For example, something concerning the "number of the beast... for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six" (He 13:18). This may suggest the "generation" of a man, and so may need to be calculated, as the context points out to do. For this passage of Scripture encourages some who have "understanding" to "calculate" that number or perhaps "generation". So somehow properly calculating this "number... of a man" is not futile, if it is done exactly and precisely right!

The Catholics have a strange doctrine which could be likened to a "genealogy" of sorts, and therefore would be speculative, meaning opinionative, not fact or truth. It is the doctrine of "Apostolic Succession" which essentially teaches that the original apostles, such as Peter, James, etc., decided to keep the calling of apostles going after they died, endlessly. And so to do so, they supposedly, before they died, decided to lay their hands on others, naming them as apostles, who in turn laid their hands on others, and so on and so forth down through the generations of men, until this day. The Catholic church claims to have had all of these men in their church. They believe that this kind of "apostleship" gives them license to make up doctrines which are not in the Bible, doctrines which are equal to or more important than the New Testament. Hence, the doctrine of "Catholic tradition" which is equal in authority as the Scriptures. Indeed, they think it is the Scripture, God-breathed. But this teaching on "Apostolic Succession" is not necessary on three counts. First, this is a doctrine of men, not God. For the Scriptures do not support this strange idea of "ongoing lineage" through the laying on of hands of so called apostles throughout the ages. Second, this is an "endless genealogy," and as such, a religious lineage, it is "mere speculation" and as a result, they, the Catholics, have "turned aside to fruitless discussion". It does not bear fruit unto God's stated purposes and commandments. Third, the religious traditions which come from men (which are not commanded in the Scriptures) do not satisfy the will and commandment of God, and are considered "vain... worship" (Mt 7:7). Thus, "Catholic Tradition" is not equal to or at all greater than the holy Scriptures. Indeed, "Catholic Tradition", the writings thereof, is considered strange doctrine, because it is foreign or absent from the holy Scriptures.

Yet, it seems harmless for a Christian to use his or another's genealogy for one's own good purposes, irrespective of and not connected to the Christian faith.

**Now I have spent the greater part of this lesson on this one point, the conduct of those who speak during a Christian assembly** (a worship service, a Bible study, a class, etc.), from the pulpit or the pew: what comes out of one's mouth. I did so because verbal leadership is either the source of the problem or the God ordained solution to it (SEE Eph 4:15), depending on the nature of one's speech. Is it truth or opinion? Is one following after the example of Paul and his ministerial associates who were "destroying speculations [opinions] and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and... taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5)? Or is one promoting speculative things, or tolerating them and therefore an accessory to them? Is one helping others be "nourished on the words of the faith" (1 Tim 4:6), or the vocabulary of men?



## 2. Let the Men Pray

The second point of conduct in Paul's letter is about prayer. As we will see more perfectly in point four, we need to encourage the men to lead us in prayer. For example, **"I want the men in every place to pray"** (1 Tim 2:8). *[The greater context of this point on prayer, and for whom or what to pray, is 1 Tim 2:1-8].* And so we can see that God wants the men in every church to lead out in prayer. This implies two things. First, that more than one man can pray during worship, not just one man (but not all at once, for this would be chaotic and unclear to the listeners, for we need to hear and understand a prayer in order to be encouraged by it somehow). Second, the men, not the women, ought to lead a church in prayer. For in an **"assembly"** (1 Cor 14:26), **"the women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves"** (1 Cor 14:34). So women are not to take a lead role in worship, especially the speaking roles, which would include prayer. (Additional commandments which regulate this, and the reasons for it, are listed in point four.)

## 3. Let the Women Properly Adorn Themselves

For a number of good reasons, church is not the place for a Christian woman to **"adorn"** herself improperly. Ladies (females), there is a **"proper"** and improper way for you to **"adorn"** yourselves during church, and also while living the Christian life. For example, **"Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, [1] modestly and discreetly, [2] not with braided hair [3] and gold or pearls [4] or costly garments, [5] but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness"** (1 Tim 2:9, 10).

**How should Christian women properly adorn themselves?** *(This is the subject of this passage.)* First, she must **"adorn"** herself (meaning "arrange" herself, her whole "cosmos," meaning appearance), in a modest and discreet way. The opposite of this is to be immodest or indiscreet (with immodest meaning unabashedly, without shame, and indiscreet meaning revealingly, exposingly, alluringly). Second, she must not adorn her head with braided hair, meaning to twist it or weave it, or things of that nature, like braiding or plaiting. The opposite of this would be to simply arrange one's hair naturally, in an uncomplicated way, not in a fancy or elaborate "hairdo" or styling. Third, she must not adorn herself with gold or pearls, but instead forsake the jeweled lifestyle or habit. Fourth, she must not adorn herself with expensive clothes, but with inexpensive ones. Fifth, she must adorn herself with **"good works,"** instead of the costumed, fashionista lifestyle spoken against in the first four points of Paul's exhortation! Ladies and gentlemen, **"Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds"** (He 10:24), not the vain (Pr 31:30) or sensual things listed in this passage.

Note: For further clarification and training on the five points in this passage, and on a variety of other passages related to Christian adornment (both figurative and literal), please see *The Bible Study on New Life*, "Walk in Newness of Life" (Ro 6:4), the lesson titled *God's Team Must Wear Holy Uniforms*.

## 4. Let the Women Remain Silent and Submissive

During church, a woman must not speak or take the lead, but instead let Christian men do so. For example, **"A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to**



remain **quiet**. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Tim 2:11-14). So, during church, women must worship or participate in both a "quiet" and "submissive" way. First, they must "remain quiet". They must not be encouraged to speak or be given a speaking role, such as teaching, commenting, Scripture reading, making announcements, and so on and so forth. Second, women must not "exercise authority over a man," meaning lead him in any aspect of worship, such as prayer, singing (though we sing together), teaching, and more, but instead worship with man in "entire submissiveness". So both verbally and guidance-wise (leading and directing), women must completely subject or defer themselves to man in the Lord. They must yield all aspects of church leadership, including the speaking roles, to Christian men. There were two very good reasons given for this.

Note: Likewise, in another place, the Scripture confirms this more perfectly, saying, "when you assemble" (vs 26), obviously for worship, that "The women are to **keep silent in the churches**: for they are **not permitted to speak**, but **are to subject themselves**" (1 Cor 14:34). So when Christians "assemble" for worship (or even aspects of it, like prayer, singing, etc.), when Christian men are present, let the women "keep silent," meaning not be given a speaking role. Let them completely "subject themselves," meaning not lead at all but instead be subject to or obey or follow or defer to the lead of Christian men in the Lord.

## (a) Reason #1: Man Was Created First

"For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve". This principle is like the "firstborn male birthright" in the Old Testament. When a father died in Israel, his firstborn male son

became the authority in his father's household. He was to have the rule over his father's house, his things, his brothers, and so on and so forth. He would be the new "head of" the household, the leader. Likewise, we read about this principle in regards to men leading women in this verse: "man is the **head of a woman**" (1 Cor 11:3). As we can see here (and

in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 and in 1 Corinthians 14:34), this principle is

"Ladies,  
encourage  
the men to  
speak and  
lead during  
church"

true regardless of marital status. It applies to Christian men and women

in general. Likewise,

woman was created for man's sake, to

suit him, not to lead him (SEE Ge 2:18, 20,

22). She was made to be a suitable helper

to him, not a leader. Additionally, woman

originated from man, not man from woman (SEE

1 Cor 11:8, 9; Ge 2:22). These

are the reasons why women

ought to be submissive. **Ladies, encourage the men to speak and lead during church.** Remain quiet or

silent. Remain submissive and yielding to man. This is how God wants

women to honor men. It is a matter of deference and respect for man.

Notes: Being "the head of" someone (in this case a "man" being "the head of a woman" (1 Cor 11:3), is being his authority, the one to whom he must subject himself. Likewise, when it says, "God is the **head of Christ**" (1 Cor 11:3), it means that someone is in higher authority than Christ (namely the Father), and Christ must subject Himself to Him, the Father. Indeed, Jesus did submit Himself to the Father's authority, in all things, yielding to His will, even to the point of death on a cross for our sins.

Today, many worshipers refuse to acknowledge God's will that "man is the head of a woman" (1 Cor 11:3). They will not show leadership deference to males. So much so that even translators have created opinionated (speculative) versions of the Bible which remove, replace, and suppress the male gender and therefore its associated "head of" authoritative calling over females. These Bibles have been deceptively called "Gender Neutral" or "Gender Inclusive" Bibles (such as the NRSV or the NIV-I). But we know that they exclude the male gender. They are not neutral on this point. For example, the translators have removed thousands of masculine or male words such as he, him, father, patriarch, son, son of man, and so on and so forth.

So, they are feminine favored and pervert preferred versions which are simply not the truth. For they are not quoting God, but hiding what He actually said. Therefore, these are worthy of condemnation, and so are the translators who created them.

Also, for some strange reason, during church, certain worshippers like to have anyone give a "testimonial" about how Christ has been working in their lives. Because of this custom of men, many women have been encouraged to speak during worship to the whole church about anything at all. And many women have done so. Yet, this practice violates the commandments in the passage which direct women to "**re-main quiet**" and "**silent**" during church. Additionally, "giving one's testimony" during church has not been commanded. Therefore it is a strange doctrine, absent from the gospel, and is speculative, a matter of one's own opinion, not the truth. It goes beyond what is written, meaning there is no command for this, and therefore no context from which to preach or make points, or on which to exhort or judge one another.

Even more, the only so called "testimony" that we must encourage all men and women to make publicly, before a group of believing men and women, is what is called "**the good confession**" (1 Tim 6:12) of who Jesus is, namely the Christ, the Son of the living God. This has something to do with a person's salvation (SEE Ro 10:9). It ought to be encouraged before a person is baptized, as in the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch (SEE Ac 8:37, 38). He was not permitted to be baptized until he made the good confession, from the heart, regarding Jesus, that He is the Christ. For why baptize someone into Christ when he has not yet come to believe that Jesus is the Christ or is afraid to admit it or acknowledge or agree to his belief in public, before witnesses? Indeed, the reason why the gospels were written (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) was to help those of us who read it to be able to believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Christ (SEE Jn 20:31). This good belief must precede the "**good confession**" (1 Tim 6:12), which leads us to eternal life in His name. Let us encourage this confession among us, as a habit. For we have commandment to do so.

## (b) Reason #2: Woman Was Deceived (First)

**"And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression".** So woman was deceived first, and as I recall in the original story, quite quickly and easily at that! One could say that she also led Adam into sin! For these reasons, because of Eve and her sin, women are not permitted to lead or speak in church. God has made a distinction between a man and a woman. It is part of the consequences of Eve's sin, such that God said to her, "**he [man] will rule over you [woman]**" (Ge 3:16).

Note: There are a lot of confusing questions about women leading or remaining silent in a church. In the next lesson, *Gifted Ones, Observe the Regulations for Spiritual Gifts*, I have addressed some of the most prominent questions that I have encountered. Please see the "Q&A" session in that lesson for answers to these questions. Also, refer to *The Bible Study on the Greater Gifts* for instruction on women in connection to teaching gifts.

# 5. Let Certain Husbands Rule As Overseers (a.k.a. Pastors/Elders)

Note: In *The Bible Study on the Greater Gifts* and *The Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Gifts*, I have written a complete lesson about overseers (a.k.a. pastors/elders). So, below, I will only alert you to some key overarching points about it. For thorough training on the true meaning and purpose of this position, and its eligibility requirements, please refer to my gifts studies.

## (a) This Position Is Only for Certain Husbands

For example, "**It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife..., (1 Tim 3:1-7)**, and so on and so forth, listing various mandatory "**must be**" qualifications through verse seven (they are not optional). So, only certain husbands should be overseers of a church, not unmarried men or women, or men with more than one wife. So let us encourage certain married men to be overseers of a church.

Notes: These men must also satisfy some requirements regarding their own children (SEE vs. 4; and Titus 1:6). So, they must not be childless, among other things related to their children.

"Gender Neutral" or "Inclusive" versions may distort these verses, since they have a habit of not translating the male gender (the pronouns related to it, such as man, him, father, husband, son, and so on and so forth). They even do this when a term in the Greek can only mean a husband or a father. For example, consider the requirement that an overseer be "**must be... the husband of one wife**". The word for "**husband**" in this verse is in the Greek transliteration "aner," which can only mean a husband or a father. So it cannot mean a mother or a wife. It cannot at all refer to a female. But listen to what the opinionated NRSV gender neutral version did to this exclusively male term and others like it. "**The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop [overseer] desires a noble task. Now a bishop [overseer] must be above reproach, married only once." (1 Tim 3:1, 3). So here we see that they suppressed the word "**man**" with the genderless "**whoever**," and likewise suppressed the entire phrase "**the husband of one wife**" with the genderless "**married only once**". So these passages fail to directly quote God, who encourages the men to formally lead and formally serve a church. It also encourages women to violate the passages which call them to subject themselves to men in church, not leading or teaching them in it (SEE 1 Timothy 2:11-14).**

## (b) Many Churches Confuse or Divide Up the Role of Overseers, Elders, and Pastors

Certain churches separate the pastor position from the elder position. They have one pastor and several elders; two separate positions, with two separate sets of requirements or qualifications. Others have a pastor, along with elders, and

also overseers; three separate positions, with three separate sets of qualifications. They separate the overseer position from the pastor position from the elder position. Yet, an overseer is supposed to be an elder and a pastor, **one position**, not two or three separate positions or callings. For example, in another passage, Paul uses the word “**elders**” and “**overseer**” interchangeably to describe the same position or calling (SEE Titus 1:5, 7). This indicates that the “**elder**” and “**overseer**” are the same person, role, or position, not two different ones. For one word describes his age and gender (elder), and the other describes the authority which has been given to him to rule over a church (overseer).

Moreover, both Paul and Peter **unify** this role with the pastor role (a shepherd). For example, in Acts 20, Paul called the “**elders**” of the church in Ephesus to come to him, and said that the Holy Spirit made them the “**overseers**” to “**shepherd**” (**that is, pastor**) the church, obviously in Ephesus (SEE Ac 20:17, 28). Likewise, Peter called on all the “**elders**” among us to “**shepherd**” (**that is, pastor**) the flock of God, “**exercising the oversight**” (SEE 1 Pet 5:1, 2), meaning the overseership or “**bishopric**”. For the word overseer (Gk. episkope) means someone who has authority to oversee another, to rule over them (the KJV uses the word bishop for overseer). The word “**shepherd**” means “**pastor**” (Gk. poimen), someone who is to feed the flock on the word of God, to teach a church the words of Christ. In the Scriptures, the word “**elder**” (Gk. presbuteros) always means an older man, and speaks to his gender and his length of experience in physical age attained in society. So both Paul and Peter taught that this was one position, with three key words to describe the calling; one referencing his age and experience in life (elder); another referring to his power to exercise authority

over a church (overseer); and another referring to his responsibility or function to teach a church (to pastor/shepherd it).

Now when we understand the meaning of these three words, along with how both Peter and Paul used them interchangeably to address and exhort the same group of men, we can easily see that this is talking about one position or calling, not two or three. They cleared up the confusion and division over the position of overseer, how it is directly related to being a pastor and an elder. Therefore, an elder (preferably more than one) is to oversee an individual church, teaching it the words of Christ (feeding it, pastoring it). Certain older men are to be appointed to rule over an individual church and feed it, themselves, on the word of God. They must be able to teach the holy Scriptures.

Notes: Unfortunately, some worshipers have named themselves after the overseers (actually after the Greek transliteration of the word for overseer, episkope), namely “The Episcopal Church”. Likewise, others have named themselves after the elders of the church (actually after the Greek transliteration of the word for elder, presbuteros), namely “The Presbyterian Church”. This is divisive for several reasons. One, the overseers/elders were not crucified for us. They were not sinless, like Christ. Their blood was not shed for our sins. Therefore, we must not call ourselves after them, but Christ. We must simply be Christians, not something else. We follow Christ, not the elders, the overseers. Christ is our religion. Second, we have no command to name ourselves after one another’s calling or membership position in a church, a body of Christ. It goes beyond what is written, and this form of favoritism leads to divisive arrogance on behalf of one group or church against the other (SEE 1 Cor 4:6). Third, it is a form of idolatry to call ourselves after a mere creature, an elder/overseer.

## 6. Let Certain Husbands Serve as Deacons

Note: In *The Bible Study on the Greater Gifts and Non-Teaching Gifts*, I have written a complete lesson about deacons. So, below, I will only alert you to some key points about it. For thorough training on the true meaning and purpose of this position, and its eligibility requirements, please refer to my gifts studies.

### This Position also Is Only for Certain Husbands

For example, “**Deacons must be husbands of only one wife**” (1 Tim 3:12). So, only certain husbands should be deacons, not unmarried men or women or men with more than one wife. So let us encourage certain married men to be deacons of a church.

Notes: These men must also meet some sort of requirements regarding their own children (SEE vs. 12). So, they must not be childless, but able to manage their own children well.

Unfortunately, "gender neutral" translations suppress the truth that "deacons" **"must be husbands of only one wife"** (1 Tim 3:12), saying, **"Let deacons be married only once"**. This confuses (perverts) the gender callings of Christ, and is sin.

Within the context of this passage, regarding the appointing of certain "husbands" as "deacons," there is some confusion over one of the verses in it which mentions women or the wives of deacons. The King James Version renders the verse in this way: **"Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things"** (KJV 1 Tim 3:11). Likewise, the widely used New International Version renders it this way: **"In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything"**. This indicates that a candidate for deacon must have a wife who behaves herself in a certain godly way, not in a malicious, silly, drunk, or untrustworthy manner. Yet, some translations render it "women" instead of "wives," causing confusion as to the role of Christian women being subjective and not "lead the church" oriented. However, in the Greek the word can mean either women or wives. Yet, the context in which this word is placed would indicate that it should be translated wives, as the translators did in the King James and New International versions. So, there is truly no clear context for us to formally appoint women as deacons. For in this context it does not directly or clearly tell us to formally appoint women as deacons, for that word "deacon" is not at all used here in reference to them. Besides, this is talking about the "wives" of deacons, not women as deacons. Even more, this verse is placed within the context or subject of the qualifications for appointing husbands as deacons, not women. So, it is not a different subject within that context, but directly related to it in the sense of a deacon's wife and her conduct.

## 7. Let Us Treat Members According to Their Callings

In a certain sense, we need to treat all Christians in a fitting way, especially according to or with respect to their God given condition, situation, or calling in life (SEE 1 Tim 5:1-20). For example:

(a) Do not speak sharply or harshly to an older Christian man, especially those who lead. Instead, appeal to them as a father (vs. 1). This especially would apply to younger men (like Timothy, to whom Paul was writing), and women, or even children for that matter. You that are younger, soften your tongue, your words, to older men, especially to your own father. Honor them in this way.

(b) Treat younger Christian men like they were your own brothers (vs. 1). Honor them in this way.

(c) Treat older Christian women as your mother (vs. 2). Honor them in this way.

(d) Treat younger Christian women as your sister, keeping them pure, not defiling them with any sexual or sensual misconduct or in promiscuity (vs. 2). Honor them in this way.

(e) Honor (support) widows by putting them on the food roll. But do not simply put any older Christian widow on it. There are strict qualifications for even honoring widows (vs. 3-16). A church must prioritize its support in a way that directs it to those who are truly worthy of it in their calling, even among widows, and likewise among leaders of a church. Below, consider this further.

(f) Honor (support) older Christian church leaders who work hard at preaching and teaching (vs. 17, 18). This means to pay them for it. If possible supplying their living for it, so that they can continue to devote themselves to preaching and teaching among us.

Note: This is God directed or led. For example, **"So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel"** (1 Cor 9:14). Likewise, **"The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him"** (Gal 6:6). We are to support our teachers by sharing or giving them what is good. We are to be generous to them, and practice the gift of giving with them. This is not talking about sharing in the sense of telling him everything that is on your mind! No! For Paul said, **"Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction"** (Philip 4:14). He meant that they took up a collection for him and sent it to him. That is how they shared **"all good things"** with the one who was teaching them.

(g) Do not publicly charge your Christian leaders with sin, unless there are two or three who have witnessed it or can testify to it themselves (vs. 19, 20).

Notes: The sin it is especially talking about here is the kind that will condemn a person to hell if he continues in it, such as practicing sexual immorality, fornication, adultery, theft, lying, idolatry; sins of that condemnable nature or weight; sins that would prevent one from being saved or becoming a Christian in the first place. Now if it is true that one of the leading men has sinned in this manner, the church must rebuke him, your leader, in the presence of all, meaning during church, in worship (SEE 1 Tim 5:19, 20). You, the church, must do this so that the others would be afraid to sin in the same manner as the one leading. Christianity is about overcoming sins which lead to death in the Lake of Fire (Re 22:7, 8; He 6:1), not continuing in the habit of them, especially one's leaders. For a church does not need a leader who is sinning to his own condemnation and also misleading or misguiding others by his wicked and evil example.

Therefore, when we consider how to properly treat or honor one another in the Lord, let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. In speaking about the subject of family (brothers and mothers and fathers and sisters), He said, **"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother"** (Mt 12:50). Let us so regard one another who walk in the truth, as family. For we who do the will of God in Christ become like mothers, fathers, and siblings to one another. Amen.

#### Additional Points of Conduct

These relate mostly to Timothy, or men like him today (ministers of the gospel). Yet, some of them are for other categories of worshipers, such as the rich and slaves.

1:19 Keep the faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

4:1-7 Point out false teachings on food and marriage.

4:7, 8 Understand the value or benefits of being devoted to spiritual vs. physical training or discipline.

4:11-16 Pay careful attention to your life and your teaching, persevere in them in order to ensure that you and those who listen to it will be saved by it, not misguided by it and lost.

5:21 Maintain the principles of conduct in this letter without showing favoritism/partiality to anyone.

5:22 Do not in haste appoint anyone to church positions, or else you will be guilty of participating in their sins.

5:23 Use a little wine for your frequent stomach ailments.

6:1,2 Christians who happen to be slaves ought to treat their masters with full respect, especially if they are Christians. [But Christians should not be making men slaves or putting themselves in slavery of men (SEE 1 Cor 7:23). Yet, it just so happens that some men who become Christians were/are also slaves of men.]

6:3-19 Various warnings and exhortations which all relate to riches, such as using the Christian religion for greed, fleeing the pursuit of riches and instead pursuing the keeping of the faith and godliness, guarding it (that treasure), including the good confession which Timothy made. And exhortations to rich Christians to do good and share and to be humble, etc.

6:20-21 Avoid talk or conversations and so called "knowledge" which leads worshipers away from the faith.

## Conclusion

God has spoken to us about how we ought to behave in His house. We can see in Paul's letter to Timothy that there is a code of **"conduct"** (1 Tim 3:15) which somehow applies to everyone, both male and female, young and old, leader or follower. For example:

It applies to those who speak up during church. For God wants us to be **"nourished on the words of the faith"** (1 Tim 4:6), not the opinions, that is, the speculation of men.

It applies to whom should lead us in all the different aspects of worship. For good reasons, God wants the men [the males] to do so, and the women [the females] to refrain from doing so.

It applies to how women adorn themselves. God wants females to refrain from making church a fashion, glamor, or sensual show. For in His sight, jewelry, hair dos, fine or expensive clothes, and more, are not considered **"good works,"** nor are they the kind of reputation with which God wants His women to be adorned.

Finally, it applies to how we treat one another. God wants us to conduct ourselves like a family, honoring one another in a fitting way according to one's age or gender, with all holiness. Likewise, God wants us to somehow support those among us who are truly worthy of our support.

Brethren! It matters how we behave. For **"He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of conduct will die"** (Pr 19:16). Church! **"Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,... striving together for the faith of the gospel"** (Php 1:27). So let us worship the Lord together in a worthy way, according to the **"conduct"** so desired by God and commanded by Him in Paul's first letter to Timothy. Amen.

Note: Little children! It matters to God how you behave. For **"It is by his deeds that a lad distinguishes himself; If his conduct is pure and right (Pr 20:11).** So children, be holy, not unholy. Be righteous, not unrighteous. Be good, not bad. Boys! Be good, not bad. Girls! Be good, not bad. Love what is good!



# *Gifted Ones, Observe The Regulations for Using Your Talents During Worship*

## **On Worship & Spiritual Gifts**

In summation of his discourse on spiritual gifts (SEE 1 Cor 12:1), Paul said, "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble [meaning for church, for worship], [1] each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. [2] Let all things be done for edification. [3] If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him [4] recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner" (1 Cor 14:26-40).

## **The Proper Way to Manage Spiritual Gifts During Worship**

Like Paul's first letter to Timothy (SEE 1 Tim 3:15), there is another passage of Scripture which has been given to us to regulate our conduct during a worship service, meaning church, a Christian assembly, namely 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.



Specifically, it sets the rules for the use of spiritual gifts (that is, our talents or callings) during church. Therefore, it directs or manages members who wish to contribute their God-given talents or callings in the worship of God.

As you ought to see in the first point of this passage (and especially in my Level 3 Bible studies on Spiritual Gifts), these regulations indeed affect all of us, for all Christians have been given gifts. This includes one's gender. So, be alert! Pay attention! In some way, this lesson applies to all of us, male or female, leader or follower, etc. This passage of Scripture has been designed and ordained by God, and given to us by an apostle of Christ, to manage and control the worship of everyone, the whole church.

## Four key points in this context

In this passage there are four broad points for us to consider and therefore heed or put into practice, in every church. But first, there are some things you ought to know about this context and this lesson. The context (that is, the subject) starts back in chapter twelve, by saying, **"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware"** (1 Cor 12:1), and it ends in the last verse of chapter fourteen. So, the overall context or subject of this broader passage, three chapters, is spiritual gifts, including chapter thirteen, the "love" chapter. Somehow, this is all related to or connected to the subject or theme of spiritual gifts. And when we get to the end of this broader context, in chapter fourteen, it comes to some logical conclusion or summation about them, by saying, **"What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble..."** (1 Cor 14:26), meaning for church (an assembly for worship). Thus begins our passage (and four point lesson) on how we ought to properly manage the callings of God (spiritual gifts) during worship. Indeed, it concludes all things by saying, **"But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner"** (1 Cor 14:40). So, then, this whole passage or context sets forth the proper or fitting way to both understand certain things about the talents and the callings which God gives, and also, consequently, how to manage them in an orderly vs. disorderly (proper vs. improper) way during a Christian worship service.

Notes: Since I have written additional Bible studies on the exact or true meaning and purpose (and use) of each spiritual gift or calling, including the ones listed in this passage (the gift of song, tongues, prophecy, and gender, etc.), and since the subject of this overall Bible study is about the **"regulations of divine worship"** (He 9:1), not spiritual gifts, I will not fully teach about each and every gift listed in this passage. You can study the exact meaning and purpose of each spiritual gift in Level 3, The Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts, which contains three studies: (1) The Bible Study on the Greater Gifts, "Earnestly desire the greater gifts" (1 Cor 12:31), and (2) The Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Gifts, "We have gifts that differ" (Ro 12:6), and (3) The Bible Study on the Situational Gifts, "Each man must remain in that condition [situation] in which he was called" (1 Cor 7:20). These are the three categories or kinds of gifts, and in this passage you will see all three represented, with all of them, in some way, being regulated. Now, I will say to you that there are two problems you will face or encounter with spiritual gifts. One, there are a lot of naive disciples who are easily misled on the true meaning and purpose of them, and therefore, the use of certain spiritual gifts, especially the gifts of tongues, prophecy, apostleship, gender, and more. Second, there are many who are speaking, teaching, or acting falsely on them (imposters), being self-deceived and deceiving others. Therefore, I recommend that you complete all of my studies on spiritual gifts so that you can more precisely learn the exact truth about the gifts of God, especially the ones in question, and understand or use them (or not pretend to use them) accordingly, in a fitting and proper way.

## 1. Encourage Everybody to Use Their Talents During Worship

**"When you assemble [for worship], each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation"** (1 Cor 14:26). Now, what this passage is saying or implying is that every disciple has a certain gift of the Holy Spirit to use during worship, but not every gift! For, **"All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?"** (1 Cor 12:29). The answer to these questions is an obvious: "No!". So, each disciple has a gift from God to contribute during the assembly in the worship of God, but he does not have all of the gifts. Hence, church is not a "one man show," not a one or two man game, so to speak. Every disciple must be permitted or encouraged to participate in the worship of God in a fitting way, in the way in which he has truly been gifted by God. It just makes sense. For why go to church to worship God and fail to worship Him in the way that you have been gifted by Him? Why do nothing at church? What good is that?

As this passage indicates, he may have **"a psalm,"** implying, in general, the gift of singing. He may have **"a teaching,"** implying the gift of apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoring, or simply the gift of teaching without having those unique specialties intertwined with it (for these are the five teaching/speaking gifts; SEE Eph 4:11, 15). He may have **"a revelation,"** implying the gift of prophecy. He may have **"a tongue"** or **"interpretation"** of that tongue, meaning the gift of speaking in more than one language, or interpreting or translating a language into the language of the hearers (being bilingual, trilingual, etc.)

Now, to emphasize the main point, one thing which is evident or apparent about spiritual gifts is that nearly everywhere they are brought up in the New Covenant, in the various passages, it indicates that everybody has one (or more). For example, in another place, Paul said, "each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that" (1 Cor 7:7). And again, "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph 4:7). And again, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you" (1 Tim 4:14). And again, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pe 4:10). Indeed, in the parable of the talents, Jesus warned us to not be lazy with our spiritual gifts, but to immediately put them to work to cause spiritual growth in His kingdom, otherwise we will lose our salvation over it (READ Mt 25:14-30). So, if for whatever reason you are being lazy with them, don't be!

## Conclusion

Each disciple has a gift from God for the purpose of using it during the worship of God, while in church, when we are altogether as one body, one church. For "each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7), not for the individual good. This means that, by God's design, we are to share or use our talents with the whole church body, as Peter said, "in serving one another" (1 Pe 4:10). So, let us permit, urge, and encourage every disciple to use his gift during worship, especially "Since we have gifts that differ" (Ro 12:6). We do not all have the same talent. So we must respect the gifts of others, and the use thereof, the exercising of them, especially during worship. This is the proper way to manage spiritual gifts during worship, to somehow get everyone involved in it.

Note: But as we ought to see in the other points in this passage, certain gifts (and members who have them) are regulated in specific ways, even forbidding their use during worship. So, ultimately, during an assembly, we must respect and exercise God's commandments over the talents of others. This shows true love toward God and the disciples (READ 1 Jn 5:2, 3), and is what the last point of this lesson, point four, is all about, namely respecting and honoring and regarding this passage on regulating the gifts as the will and commandment and new covenant of God, not men.

## Be Alert! Be Warned! Take Heed!

Some of the five teaching gifts (listed in Eph 4:11, 15) have already been cemented, by God Himself, into the foundation of our building (meaning the Christian church or Christian faith). And so we cannot presume to put ourselves into these foundational gifts. For example, it is God's will and plan that both Jews and Gentiles become united in Christ, "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone" (Eph 2:20). So the Christ, His apostles, and the prophets are the sole foundation (meaning the teaching foundation) on which we must take our stand, on which we all must be built or made into disciples and maintained as disciples. For they, not us, are the writers, penmen, and covenant bearers who have brought to us the Christian faith, "the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3), obviously by the apostles and prophets, including Christ Himself. So we have the final revelation of the Christian faith from God.

Therefore, today, since we already have the teaching foundation of the Christian faith, we no longer need to have the talents or callings which were ordained and sent by the Father to bring it to us, namely apostles, prophets, or another Christ for that matter.

**Are you in the foundation, or have you been built upon it?** Are you claiming to be the Christ, an apostle, or a prophet? Are you claiming to be the one who brought us the Christian faith?

Note: For further clarification on the exclusiveness of these gifts and callings of God, please see my Bible Study on the Greater Gifts. For today, the gifts of prophecy, apostleship, along with the gift of tongues and gender, and their true meaning and purpose from God, have been misunderstood by many, and therefore mis-taught and misused by many. As Peter said, there will be false teachers among us (2 Pe 2:1), even concerning spiritual gifts. So, beware!

## 2. Only Allow Them to Be Used for Christian Edification

"When you assemble... Let all things be done **for edification**" (1 Cor 14:26). This is the goal of Christian worship, to edify one another with our different talents, that is with our singing talent, our speaking talent, with whatever talent God gives.

Yet, Christian edification is different than entertainment (**that is, amusement**), or any other kind of edification or education. For example, in the Greek, the word "**edification**" means the act of building, erecting, or completing something. It implies that an edifice, or building needs to be founded, established, and completed, erected, or built or grown up, so to speak. Comparing this definition then to us, in a worship service, it means that we ought to use our talents to promote growth in Christ, to help others grow up in Christ, in Christian teachings. As it is written, "**He gave gifts [spiritual gifts] to men... to the building up [the edification] of the body of Christ... to grow up [to edify] in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ**" (Eph 4:8, 12, 15).

So, the reason why God gave us the talents is so that we would then use them to help each other become a mature Christian, to learn and put into practice all the different aspects of the Christian faith. Is this how you are using your talents? Even more, "**Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification**" (Ro 15:2). So, this concept of Christian edification even extends into our daily lives, outside of worship, into our communities, among our nations. Let us live a life of edification, a life which is purposely striving in all things for the goal to edify others in regards to Jesus Christ, His principles. But, "**not all things edify**" (1 Cor 10:23). Therefore, in our worship of God, we must judge and distinguish between what truly is Christian edification and what is not. To

to be successful at this, we need to understand the distinctive and defining characteristic of spiritual gifts, which is related to the spirit of God, which is holy (we need to understand the nature of God). For in the phrase "spiritual gifts" the word "spiritual" denotes the kind of gifts that they are, spiritual, meaning of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of holiness. They were designed by the Holy Spirit Himself and given to us to encourage the growth of the spiritual nature in a person (the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit in a person / Ac 2:38), the holiness of a person, not the sensual nature in a person (the flesh, meaning the sinful or carnal nature. Now, to encourage people in the flesh is to arouse their sensual nature). Indeed, the opposite of spiritual gifts are sensual gifts. And Jesus said "**sensuality**" is "**evil**" and it "**defiles the man**" (Mk 7:22, 23). Indeed, many are using their talents (their tongues, their singing, their teaching, their gender, and more) to lead others down the path of sensuality, they are using them as sensual gifts, the opposite of what it means to be spiritual. This is disgusting to God.

So, as principled Christians, in our worship of God, and in our daily lives, we must distinguish between the spiritual and the sensual, especially in regards to how people are using their talents. For it is evident that many worshipers are using their talents and abilities in a sensual way (their gender, their speaking ability, their singing ability, their giving ability, etc.) to promote some form of the sinful nature in themselves and in others (inwardly and outwardly).

Notes: For specific examples of these things, I recommend that you complete my Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible (especially the lesson on Repentance from Dead Works), The Bible Study on True Worshipers (especially the lesson on Worship God in Spirit, Not Flesh!), The Bible Study on New Life, and even my studies on spiritual gifts. Additionally, it must be said that "**love edifies**" (1 Cor 8:1). So, things which are contrary, or opposite of what God considers love (as defined in 1 Cor 13), do not edify. But, love does not exclude verbal severity and exercising spiritual authority over Christians, because of their sin, as Paul explained (READ 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10). So these are given by God to some to build others up, to edify them. Thus, some of the words of Christ can be severe and authoritative (and likewise His ministers, such as James, who was severe with rich Christians), for the purpose of edifying others. For with the gospel, we must tear down the work of sin, unbuild it (SEE 2 Cor 10:5).

## Conclusion

Every Christian has a spiritual gift from God for the purpose of using it to build others up spiritually, in the spirit of Holiness, who is God. Yet, this does not mean that every Christian is using their talent to cause others to grow in spirituality. Indeed, many worshipers are instead using their abilities to encourage others to grow in sensuality, which is the opposite of the spirit. **"Not all things edify" (1 Cor 10:23).** So, during worship, we must only permit or allow a Christian to use his gift (his singing gift, his speaking gift, his gender gift, his gift of giving, etc.) in a way or form which encourages the spiritual nature in worshipers, not their sensual nature; the flesh. This is the proper way to manage spiritual gifts during worship, and even our lives.

Note: We are to be **"building yourselves up [edifying yourselves] on your most holy faith"** (Jude 1:20), with "most" meaning to the greatest extent, the maximum, and with "holy" meaning spiritual, not sensual. So we ought to use our talents to maximize, not minimize the holiness or holy nature in other Christians, which is the true nature of God.

## 3. This Does Not Mean That Everyone Is Permitted to Speak in or to the Group

Indeed, no matter how "talented" or "spiritual" a worshiper is or thinks he or she is, for good reasons, he might not be permitted by the Lord to talk to the church, in the way that he wants or is gifted, especially when the whole church is assembled for worship. So, it is important to understand who is and who is not permitted by God to speak or talk during worship and the reasons why. Also, it is important to know how and why God wants to regulate those whom He permits to speak to His body, while we are in His house, while we are assembled. Now, in 1 Corinthians 14:27-35, God makes a point of it to manage the speaking (the talking) gifts. For example, He regulates those who have ability to speak to the group in more than one language (tongues vs. 27, 28). He regulates the teaching gifts, that is the clear speaking gifts (such as prophets vs. 29-30). He regulates the speech of women (vs 34). Below, consider these things further.

## A. The Regulations for Speaking (Talking) in Different Languages (the gift of tongues)

**"When you assemble... if anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God" (1 Cor 14:26, 27-28).**

First of all, "tongues" means languages. So, **"a tongue"** is a language, and if anyone has the gift of tongues, this means that he has the ability to speak in more than one language. He is bilingual, trilingual, etc. Second, they are not to be used in the worship of God, in church, among believers, unless they are interpreted, meaning translated into the language of the hearers. **"If there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God"**. The reasons for this restriction was explained by Paul in previous verses of this broad context on spiritual gifts, such as in 1 Corinthians 14:9-13, which says that it is barbaric to use a foreign language in the assembly of God's people (vs. 11). The reason for this is that it is not edifying to the church (SEE vs. 12), meaning they do not understand it, since they do not speak this particular language themselves. So, do you wish to be a barbarian to the church, even to God? Now, when it says **"let him speak to himself and to God,"** this is not saying or teaching or revealing that the meaning and purpose of this gift is for prayer, to speak with God, or as some say, "a private prayer language," or "in a language I do not know or understand," or "my spiritual language". Indeed, Paul told us the true meaning, purpose, and use of this gift, that God prophesied that He would use it with unbelievers (especially unbelieving Jews), not believers, regarding the coming Christ (**READ 1 Cor 14:20-22**). For example, the apostles, who were the first to have it, used it in Jerusalem to speak to unbelievers in their own languages [tongues] about the mighty deeds of God, in Christ (SEE



Ac 2:4-11). So, do not be confused about the meaning and purpose of tongues [languages]. God wants to reach all language groups with the gospel of His Son, so He does not want language to be a barrier. Thus, the gift of tongues.

Notes: For a more complete teaching on this, please refer to my Bible Study on the Greater Gifts (specifically the lesson on the three categories of gifts) and the Non-teaching Gifts (specifically the lesson on the gift of tongues). But, you ask, "Then why did Paul say, "let him speak to himself and to God?" The answer is this: It is because "no language is without meaning" (1 Cor 14:10), and also because the one who speaks "edifies himself" (SEE 1 Cor 14:4), because it is implied that he knows what he is saying, himself. And God can understand any language we use to pray and petition Him. Even more, this verse: "let him speak to himself and to God," is not the subject of the passage or even the point of the passage. Indeed, it is a tertiary statement on how to fulfill one's desire to exercise his bilingual ability, for edification to himself. So, we can pray to God in any language that we know. Yet, multi-language ability [tongues] are to be used to preach the gospel to unbelievers in their own language, outside of church, in the marketplaces, etc.

Finally, if someone can speak in a language which is truly translatable, then only two or three should speak using a translator. Indeed, foreign languages are not forbidden to be spoken in church (1 Cor 14:39), they are permitted. But they must only be used with a translator, and not all at once. For that would be confusion, like Babel, a world of misunderstandings or barbarianism. So, we must not get together to speak in tongues. We must "utter by the tongue speech that is clear" (1 Cor 14:9). "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Cor 14:33), with peace, meaning order, being the opposite of confusion. Do not let anyone confuse you about these things, making you disorderly in God's house.

## **B. The Regulations for Speaking the Word of God (the teaching gifts)**

"When you assemble... let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Cor 14:26, 29-33).

First of all, a prophet is a person who hears the word of God directly from the Lord, audibly; by revelation. For example, Paul, an apostle, was also a prophet because man did not teach him the gospel, but Jesus revealed it to him (See Ga 1:12). Likewise, Samuel heard the Lord calling his name (1 Sam 3:4). And God spoke to Moses (Ex 4:30; 6:2), and so on and so forth. They were prophets. Therefore, to prophesy is to say "Thus sayeth the Lord," to speak forth His very words, His will, especially in predicting the future, not to speak one's own words or feelings about the future.

**We are not to be soothsayers.** For some claim to be a prophet or prophetess or prophesying, but by definition, they are simply soothsaying, which is a sin. They are not quoting God, but their own feelings or thinking. For some say, "Let us prophesy over you or this place". This is simply a wrongheaded definition and use of the gift of prophecy, since it is not prophecy in the sense or meaning of the word in the holy Scriptures. Beware.

Second, prophecy is one of the five speaking gifts/teaching gifts (SEE Eph 4:7, 11, 15). Apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are the other four. Third, the gift of prophecy, as well as the gift of apostleship, was placed into the teaching foundation on which all Christians must be established and built/edified (READ Eph 2:20), meaning the New Testament. The New Testament was written by the apostles and prophets, in the first century, after Christ ascended back to the Father. Fourth, therefore, since these two gifts, apostles and prophets, have already been put into the foundation, since Christianity has already been founded by Christ and the apostles and prophets, we need people to fill the spot of teaching us their words which they wrote down for us in the holy Scriptures, the Bible. Pastors, evangelists,

and teachers are called to preach to us and teach us the words of the apostles and prophets, as I am now doing with you. But pastors, evangelists, and teachers, including me, are not prophets, nor should we be confused with them, since they, not us, their words, not mine or your words, are the teaching foundation on which we all must be built. Indeed, and I say again, indeed, **"contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 1:3).** So, we do not need more covenant bearers, that is apostles and prophets, to the saints, the Christians. But, we do need pastors, evangelists, and teachers to explain that covenant to us.

Notes: But, someone will say, "You do not believe that God can speak through people." I say, "God can do anything He wants, whenever He wants, in whomever He wants, for His glory, even speak through people, or rocks, or donkeys." But, through ignorance and arrogance, or presumption, there are a lot of worshipers who think that they are prophets or apostles when they are not. Do not be naïve, but wise. For a more complete explanation of the meaning and purpose of the gift of apostleship and prophecy, and who can have these gifts, see my Bible Study on the Greater Gifts.

Fifth, we should encourage more than one teacher to speak to us during worship, when the whole church body is assembled for worship, for as it is written: **"Let two or three prophets speak... For you [the prophets] can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted" (1 Cor 14:29-31).** Having more than one man teach the church will help everyone learn and be edified, which is one of the goals of worship (Remember 1 Cor 14:26). Yet, since apostles and prophets are already cemented in the foundation, we then ought to have several evangelists, pastors, or teachers speak to us concerning the holy Scriptures. Indeed, we should earnestly desire a teaching gift (teaching, evangelism, pastoring Eph 4:11), so that we can then use it to edify other Christians (SEE 1 Cor 14:39), for God has chosen **"speaking the truth"** as the most powerful way to build up others in the words of Christ (Eph 4:7, 11, 15). Amen.

## C. The Regulations for Women Speaking (Talking) in Worship

**"When you assemble... The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law [the O.T. Law of Moses] also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church" (1 Cor 14:26, 34, 35).**

First of all, before I explain the most important principle in this point, let me speak to what this is really getting at here, the broader picture. Gender is a special gift from God which comes with certain God given responsibilities, which are not the same for men and women. And this passage is simply speaking to or upholding those principles of gender (those differences) during worship, as do other Scriptures for other environments, such as in the environment of the Christian home (SEE Eph 5:22, 24; Col 3:18). So, when it says, **"The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law [the O.T. Law of Moses] also says"** (1 Cor 14:34), it is teaching females to abstain from taking a speaking role, a talking role, in church, because they are to instead **"subject themselves"** to man. Indeed, **"I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ"** (1 Cor 11:3). Now, to be **"head of"** someone is to be his authority. So, this passage indicates that the Father is over the Son in authority (in regards to exercising it), and Christ is over man in authority, and man is over woman in authority. Then it goes on to explain how God wants us to show honor and respect to one's authority, our head.

Note: In the Greek, this passage does not at all reference marriage, husbands, or wives, but instead the general authority a man has over a woman in the kingdom of God, especially during worship. So this is not speaking about authority in the marriage relationship.

The following passage more completely explains this calling with more reasons given for it. In speaking how to behave during church (SEE 1 Tim 3:15), Paul said, **"But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression"** (1 Tim 2:12-14). So, why should females let the males teach (speak) and lead? One, male was created first, and female was created second, and that for the purpose of keeping company with man, who might be lonely, and suiting or completing him in various ways (READ Ge 2:18). So, it is like the "firstborn" concept in the Old Covenant, where the first born son who, after his father died, became the head of his father's household, not the other sons. Second, the female was first misled.

Therefore, to comply with this regulation (to fulfill your gender calling in church, to demonstrate your submission to man and to God's will for you), I recommend that females do not take or receive a speaking, talking, or leading role in the church, especially during worship, but only support type roles. This would especially include abstaining from the group teaching roles (such as pastoring, evangelizing, or teaching the whole group), for in the kingdom of God, speaking is teaching, and the teaching gifts are the leading gifts. This restriction would also include other forms of speaking (talking) to the group, such as speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, or leading prayers (SEE 1 Tim 2:8; 3:15) and so on and so forth.

Note: Now, since the meaning and purpose of the gift of gender is being confused around the world, even in the kingdom of God, especially the gift of being female, at the end of this lesson, I have included a Q&A session about it. It includes the typical questions or objections which I have received while teaching others to adhere to these principles.

## Conclusion

There is a proper way to manage the speaking gifts during worship. This includes making sure that foreign languages are not spoken in the church. But if one is spoken, it must be interpreted into the language of the hearers, it must be an interpretable language, for no language is without meaning (SEE 1 Cor 14:10). And therefore, only one person may speak in a foreign language at a time, otherwise this would be confusion, a tower of Babel. Additionally, two or three people with the ability to teach ought to speak to the whole church about the word of God, to maximize edification, so that all may be exhorted. One teacher will not be fully adequate to equip the church. But those who teach the whole church body must be male, not female, since females (women) have been made by God to take a subjective, yielding, and complimentary or supportive role toward males (men).

## 4. Warning! Ignore These Principles at Your Own Peril!

The final point in this passage is an apostolic warning to not ignore the principles of worship that He laid out in it. For example, Paul said, **"Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized"** (1 Cor 14:37, 38).

So, to be known by God, each individual needs to take heed to the principles in this passage (indeed, make sure everybody in church takes heed to them), otherwise God will not know them or us. He will not recognize anyone who violates the principles in it, even a

whole church. So, why would leaders of a church, not correct, but recognize or give place to anyone who violates them in their worship of God? Why do leaders allow these things in the midst of the churches whom they are leading? Whom do you fear, men or God?

### **Do you want God to know your church as one of His churches?**

Jesus warned the church in Ephesus that He would take away from before Him their lampstand, (Re 2:5) with the lampstand signifying that He knew them as one of His churches. This implies that Jesus was willing to forget them, to not recognize them anymore as His disciples, for they were not following Him in some key areas. Now, thanks be to God that in this same passage Jesus warned them to "repent" so that they could still have a lampstand before Him. Thanks be to God for offering and granting repentance! Yet, did they follow His admonition to do so? Will your church follow His admonitions to do so? Will He continue to know your church? Will your church continue to have a lampstand before Him? Do you have a lampstand before Him, or is your church too far gone away from Christ and His holy teachings? Has obedience to the rule of Christ died in your midst?

### **Do you want God to know you as one of His worshipers?**

At the judgment, Jesus will say to many of us who claim to worship God through Him, even to many of the very "talented" ones among us: "I never knew you; depart from Me" (Mt 7:23), for this very reason: "you who practice lawlessness". So, many Christians are rebelling in some key, essential area of Christ's teachings, doctrines, and commandments. Indeed, Jesus does not save rebels. As verse twenty two indicates, Jesus will even say to many

"gifted" and "talented" worshipers: "I never knew you". So, it is more important to obey Christ, than to exercise our talents for Christ. Just think of the story of King Saul. Did he obey God or not? What did Samuel, a prophet of God, tell this king? Which is more important, sacrifice and offerings or obedience? So just being a king in God's kingdom does not mean one is saved. One has to satisfactorily obey God, not self. This is being trustworthy. God wants trustworthy disciples, not disobedient ones.

So, as Paul said in this passage on how to manage spiritual gifts during an assembly, if you "think" you are a "spiritual" (1 Cor 14:37) person, even "a prophet," you still have to recognize, not ignore, what Paul wrote here, meaning obey these commandments. And if not, it is implied that even a "spiritual" person or a "prophet" will be ignored by God. Sinful and ignorant men may recognize you, but God certainly will not. He will ignore you because you are misbehaving in his house. So, let us worship God "with reverence and awe" (He 12:28). Not only with awe or wonder, or joy for that matter, but also with reverence. Let us revere His word in His presence, in the midst of the assembly. For as John said, this is how we love God and the children of God (SEE 1 Jn 5:2), by observing His commandments. Amen. Worshiper, do you love God? Church, do you love God? Take stock. In conclusion, do you understand how and why God wants to manage our talents during worship? If not, simply go back to the beginning of this lesson and again read all four points.

Note: To help us receive some more conviction about point four, that is to get some more faith about it, let us answer Paul's questions which he raised in this point. (1) No, we are not the source of the truth, but God is through the apostles and prophets. We are not the covenant bearers. (2) No, we are not the only people to whom the word of God came. Other people have or know the word of God. What do these things mean? They mean that we are not the source of the truth, and we are not the senders of the truth. So, we do not get make the rules on how to regulate everyone's gifts in a worship service. We are not the covenant bearers, but Paul was one, and so were the other apostles and prophets of Christ. Let us not be presumptuous.

# Q&A on Women Speaking or Leading During Worship

Since many cultures and nations, including mine, have gotten so far away from doing God's will (even in regards to the genders and fulfilling their respective callings and responsibilities from God), the words of Christ which are related to gender (especially the ones taught in this lesson on worship) have become offensive and objectionable to many people, even many worshipers. So, with the worldwide perversion of the gender callings, even in the churches, I must address these objections in this Question and Answer section.

Notes: Now, these objections that I have listed or formulated below have come from members of my free Bible school classes, people who profess Christ, not unbelievers. So, as you should see, many disciples in my country are having difficulty in understanding gender callings. So, again, the first reason why we have this gender calling confusion is because of the worldwide lack of the knowledge and obedience to the revealed will of God about these things. Therefore, many worshipers are conforming (in their thinking, attitude, goals and lifestyle, and in their purpose in the kingdom of God) to the misguided, disobedient image or practice of the nations.

Second, this ungodly attitude has led translators to design Bible translations (deceptively called "Gender-Neutral" or "Inclusive" translations) which remove most of the male gender, the terms referring to it, such as him, son, father, patriarch, and so on and so forth, even blurring the gender of the Lord sometimes (but if some worshipers have their way, they will even replace the gender of the Father, not allowing that "offensive" word to appear in the text). So these are not gender neutral or inclusive translations, but feminine favored or pervert preferred translations. As one brother said to me when I taught him about this: "these are gender-bender Bibles". This is so true, since things that are not straight are bent, meaning perverted. When I asked someone, "Are you straight?", he said, "No, I'm gay," meaning I'm perverted. Things that are not straight are crooked; bent. I am speaking about these gender bender translations. They are perverted.

Now these translators and worshipers know that if you remove a calling, you remove the exclusive responsibilities of that calling. If there are no men, then only men do not get to do what only men are called by God to do (leading, pastoring, etc.) Thus, the perversion of the gender callings of God. So, you must make yourself aware of the fact that some Bibles are not translations of what God actually said (a direct quote Bible), but instead opinionated (fiction, not quoting God) Bibles, which are not translations at all. They are the words of men in regards to the masculine gender and its respective calling, even blurring the true meaning of the passages regarding the responsibilities of men by using words that would permit women and perverted people to fulfill those roles, callings, or qualifications. So, if you have what is called a "Gender-Neutral" or "Inclusive" Bible (we should not call it a Bible because in it tens of thousands of the words of God have not been translated properly, it is the word of men, not God), then you will not be able to more readily study the words of God on this matter, and even may be misled or misleading others by using, quoting, or teaching from these perverted translations. For detailed information about these translations, or which translation to use, I recommend that you get a copy of my Bible Study on True Worshipers, specifically the lesson called "Worship the Father, Not a Genderless Being!", and the lesson "Which translation should we use" from the Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible.

**1. THE QUESTION OF EDUCATION:** "The reason why women were not permitted to speak during worship in Corinth was because they were not educated, right? Obviously, now women are educated, so they should be permitted to speak and teach in worship, correct?"

**ANSWER:** It seems to me that Eve was educated by God Himself in the word of God. She could even quote it to the Devil (Ge 3:2, 3). But, her excellent education, for God was her teacher, was not good enough. She still first sinned. This fact is used in the gospel of Jesus Christ as one of the reasons why a woman is not permitted to speak in church or to exercise authority over a man. **"And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Tim 2:14).** The implication is that she was the first one to be deceived, not Adam.

Therefore, the Bible does not speak to the idea of whether or not women were educated as the reason for them being forbidden to speak in church. But interestingly enough, in opposition to the "education" argument sits the prophecy of Joel, which clearly announced that spiritual gifts would be poured out on men and women when Christ's covenant would be ushered in: **"your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Ac 2:17).**

Now, prophesying means to speak the words of God by direct revelation (audibly hearing God's voice), without being taught by a man. So, ability to speak the word of God in that manner, that kind of spiritual talent, is by far not a matter of education, but of the Spirit. But, even with this understanding that women could obviously speak the word of God, since Joel's prophecy said they could, the first Christian churches were commanded to not permit women to speak during worship, even talented ones in the sense of being able to speak the word of God to fulfill Joel's prophecy on Christian prophetesses. There are more aspects to this, but I address them in the rest of the answers below. So, read onward.

**2. THE QUESTION OF TALENT:** "It is clear that women are given spiritual gifts and that they are talented, not just men. So women ought to use their speaking and teaching talent during worship, correct?"

**ANSWER:** Since the beginning of creation to this day, with the female gender, it has never been about speaking or teaching talent, for many women are able to speak very well, and some women are able to teach very well. Remem-



ber Eve? She could quote the word of God. Additionally, as I pointed out in the previous answer, women would prophesy when Christianity started, since Joel's prophecy said that "**daughters**" would have that kind of talent.

Yet, in the early days of Christianity, even with these types of talented women around, prophetesses, prophesying in church was limited to men. For example, in the context of prophesying in an assembly, during worship, the Bible said that "**prophets**" (1 Cor 14:29) could speak, which is masculine, not prophetesses, which is feminine (indeed, even pastor is a gender specific term, meaning shepherd, not shepherdess). The Holy Spirit specified the masculine talent could speak. And immediately after saying this, as if there would be debate over this very issue of who could speak the words of God in church, even though it specified the male gender, the female gender was specifically told that she could not exercise a speaking talent in an assembly, by saying: "**The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says**" (1 Cor 14:34). So it is not a matter of talent, it is a matter of women being subject or obedient to the word and law of God and to yield or defer certain roles in church to man, even if she thinks she is "**spiritual**" or prophetic (Remember 1 Cor 14:27). It has never been about talent. Women are talented, but regulated by the gospel in regards to that talent.

**3. THE QUESTION OF EQUALITY, GENDER, and AUTHORITY ("HEADSHIP"):** "The gospel says that with God, "there is no male, nor female" (SEE Gal 3:28). So, clearly women can speak and teach during worship, not just men. Gender should not be an issue in speaking or leading in church, because gender is not an issue with God. He does not recognize gender. So, we should not discriminate based on gender. We are all equal when it comes to gender, correct?"

**ANSWER:** First of all, since you are taking this phrase out of its context, you are not making the point that God is making with it in this passage. And, as it has been said, "When we take something out of context, it will lead to a pretext," meaning something that is put forward to conceal a true purpose of something or someone. It is deceptive. It leads to misjudging, even of God's word. Therefore, I want you to consider the context in which this statement was made, so that you will judge this phrase rightly. Let me ask you some relevant questions about it. Why did God say this, that "there is neither male, nor female"? Was He eliminating gender and/or the Scriptural

responsibilities which had always gone along with them from the creation? Was gender the subject, theme, or point of this passage? We know the gospel sets us free, but does it set us free from our gender? Certainly not! Indeed, the subject of this passage (and the subject of the entire letter to the church in Galatia), is how we all (Jews or Gentiles, male or female, slave or free) can be saved through Christ by faith in Christ, not by Moses' Law, which was like a dividing wall between the Jews and the nations, thus a dividing wall between God and all people. So, with Christ, God wanted to bring us all together, who believed (Paul makes a similar point to other churches, such as in Ephesians 2:11-19). For example, below, consider some of the context of this statement, "there is neither male, nor female":

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law [**the Law of Moses**], having become a curse for us--for it is written, "**CURSED IS EVERY-ONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE**"-- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would **receive the promise of the Spirit through faith**" (Gal 3:13, 14). And then, later in the same passage and context, it concludes this point by saying: "**For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise**" (Ga 3:25, 27-29).

So, this passage is making the point that with Christ, not Moses, anyone (not only the Jews) can be saved by faith in Christ, no matter if one is a Jew or Gentile, male or female, slave or free, etc. Therefore, the subject of this passage is salvation by faith in Christ, the blessing of the calling of salvation, in which we all (Jews and the Gentiles, male and female) can share in Christ, through faith, and water baptism, and other good first teachings about Christ. By faith, anyone can be an "**heir**" of "**the promise**" which God gave to Abraham. It is not anymore a matter of being a Jew, a Hebrew. It is about having faith in Christ, not Moses, for Moses prophesied about the Christ, that when He comes, the Jews, and the Gentiles, must now listen to Him (SEE Deut 18:15; Ac 3:22, 23).

The conclusion is this: Men and women are equal in regards to the promise or calling of salvation, but not in regards to the calling of gender, which is somehow related to authority and submission. We do not get to choose our gender. God is

in control of it. Now, in the following passage, Peter ties together both of these thoughts very well (our equal calling of salvation and unequal calling of gender responsibilities), when he tells wives to be submissive to their husbands (1 Pe 3:1-6), capping this by saying to the husbands, "show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Pe 3:7). So, we are "fellow heirs of the grace [the favor] of life," but in respect to gender, we are not equal in authority in the marriage relationship, and even in the greater kingdom of God, for man is the head of a woman (1 Cor 11:3). This is not talking about the marriage relationship. Nevertheless, men and women have equal eternal worth, which is why God wants to save us equally and forever. But, temporarily, on earth, men have the "headship" over women.

#### 4. THE QUESTION OF SPEAKING AND TEACHING AT ALL: "Is there a proper time and place for a woman to share the Christian faith?"

**ANSWER:** Yes, yes, and yes! Below, there are four ways in which a Christian woman can share the Christian faith. One, she can teach other women. For example, the apostles authorize and encourage certain older women to encourage and teach the younger women or younger wives (SEE Titus 2:3-5). So, I recommend that a woman aim to meet the eligibility requirements listed in Titus 2:3-5, so that she then can be eligible and able to teach women how to fulfill their calling as women, or wives, or mothers, and so on and so forth. Two, a mother can teach her children. It is evident that when a woman has a child, whether a male child or a female child, she is to be rearing it, raising it, which would include teaching it the will of God in Christ. As Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says, all of Israel (which included women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers) was admonished to teach their children, even listing various good ways for an individual family to do so in the home. Three, a woman can teach a man outside of the assembly, on the side, so to speak. For example, when Aquila and Priscilla found out that a great teacher of Christ, Apollos, did not yet understand something about water baptism, they pulled him aside into their home to instruct him further (SEE Ac 18:26). It is implied that they both helped impart or teach Apollos the truth about baptism into Christ. I assume, that if he learned his lesson about Christ's baptism, that he also would have been re-baptized into Christ. If you study the meaning of purpose of Christian baptism, water baptism, as I pointed out to you in my Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible, then you know full well that today many teachers of Christ are not getting it right on the

reason why we must be baptized (that one must call on the name of the Lord to be saved in water baptism, not in prayer). Also, many are not getting it right on the way one ought to be baptized (by immersion, not sprinkling, not pouring). So, I recommend that women share the truth with men about these things outside of worship, on the side so to speak, but in an honorable and respectful way, for there are many mistakes in the kingdom of God which must be corrected by someone, even a godly woman who knows the truth about what I am saying here and even about true worship, and anything else I have written about to draw attention to the principles of Christ. Four, many women want to share the truths in the gospel, but are not fully able to do so. Therefore, I recommend that these women do the next best thing, which is also God's hope for you as well, that you undergird or support those who do so. Use any non-speaking/teaching talent you have received from God to spread the gospel through others who are able to do so. For a variety of non-teaching gifts which you may have or receive, see my Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Gifts and also The Situational Gifts. For we are all here to support the work of God with our spiritual talents and abilities, no matter which ones we have.

#### 5. THE QUESTION OF WOMEN LEADING/PROPHESYING IN THE O.T: "Deborah was a judge and a prophetess. So, talented women can lead and teach in the assembly today, correct?"

**ANSWER:** Deborah was a prophetess and a judge, but she did not prophesy during worship. Notice that people came to her at the tree under which she sat (Judges 4:5). She was sitting at the tree prophesying, not in the assembly. Miriam was a prophetess, but it was noted that she specifically led the women in song, not the whole assembly (Ex 15:20, 21). Huldah was a prophetess, but the leading men went to her house to hear the word of God, not in the assembly of God's people (2 Kings 22:14-22). So, there is no revealed truth to the idea that these talented women spoke in the assembly. In fact, we see that they did so outside of the assembly, in keeping with the Law. These talented women knew their place in the kingdom of God, that it was one of subjection. So, I recommend that if a woman thinks she has a speaking gift, meaning a teaching gift, that she use it in a way that the women in the Old Testament used it, outside of church, in the home, on the side, so to speak. Any man or woman can come to know the truth, and share that truth. But, God only permits the men who know the truth to share that truth in the assembly of Christians.

# Church, Observe The Lord's Supper, And Its Regulations



## On a Divisive Lord's Supper

"But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come" (1 Cor 11:17-34).

## Eat It in a Praiseworthy Way

The manner in which we eat the Lord's supper matters to the Lord. We can see this in Paul's letter to the church in Corinth. For when he discovered that they were not eating it in a praiseworthy way, he said, "**But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse**" (1 Cor 11:17). Then he warned them, saying, "**Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord**" (1 Cor 11:27). So, the subject of this passage is how to eat the Lord's supper in a praiseworthy, not condemnable way. Now, do you wish to be a Judas? Do you wish to betray Jesus Christ? Do you wish to be a crucifier of Christ? Will your answer be: "Surely not I, Lord"? Yet, if you or your church is not carrying out the Lord's supper in a fitting and proper way, then, as Paul said, you are guilty of betraying the Lord.

Note: So, how could some of you say, "The Lord's supper is not a heaven or hell issue"? How could you say this? You are trivializing it. Have you failed to learn and acknowledge the truths in the eleventh chapter of Paul's letter to the church in Corinth? Indeed, how one thinks about the Lord's supper is how one thinks about the Lord Himself. Is He trivial to you? How have you come to receive such a bad attitude about the Lord's supper, that it is not essential, that it is nothing to be concerned about in connection to one's salvation? If one could become like a Judas in dishonoring the supper, and be condemned by God for it, then how can you say it has nothing to do with one's salvation? Wake up yourself! You are sleeping. Come alive. Honor the supper. Quit disregarding Christ in it. Change your attitude about it. Change your attitude about Christ.

Concerning the one who betrayed Him, Jesus said, "The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Mt 26:24). Therefore, as it was not good to betray or crucify the Lord, to be a Judas, today it is not good to somehow become one in how we treat His supper. For good reason, it is a most intimate and personal thing to Him, and it should be to us as well. Does the Lord think that it would have been better for some of our churches to not have been born, so to speak, since some of us are betraying Him in how we are conducting His supper? How are you remembering Him? Let us honor Christ in the supper.

*Now, in this passage on how to eat the supper in a praiseworthy manner, there are three points we ought to consider and apply in every church.*

## 1. Eat It Together, When You Assemble for Worship

For certain reasons, many churches are not yet practicing the Lord's supper as a regular part of their worship of God. So, in this point, I want you to see two things concerning the supper. One, we are supposed to eat it together, not apart, in unity (together), not in division (apart). For in regards to the church in Corinth's supper, Paul said, "divisions exist among you" (1 Cor 11:18). They were not eating it together. It was becoming divisive. Second, we ought to eat it as a regular part of our church worship service.

Note: By faith, I can eat the Lord's supper every day, not only when we all get together for worship. But the point here is that when the church in Corinth did get together to eat it, they were still not eating it together. So, point 1 is only addressing when we eat it as a church, not in other circumstances. By faith, one can eat the Lord's supper every day of the week, alone or with some other Christians, or even on the moon, as did Buzz Aldrin.

## (a) Eat it in unity (together) vs. division (apart)

The church in Corinth was not waiting for all of their members to arrive before eating the supper. This was like "a first come, first serve" attitude, not an all come, all serve mentality. And, because of this, they ran out of food! "For in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk" (1 Cor 11:21). This reminds me of a Christian who told me a story about a country he had visited. When he gathered together some of the youth to give them some lunch, some hospitality, they altogether grabbed at the food, somewhat wildly, and said, "This is how we do it in our culture".

This is why Paul said, "So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another" (1 Cor 11:33). In other words, do not eat until everyone arrives. Eat it together, in unity, not in belly driven behavior. Do not take your "own supper first". Do not be selfish. Do not be divisive. Include all of your brothers and sisters in Christ in the supper. Have enough for everybody. Do not come to see how much you can eat or drink, as fast as you can, before everybody else or anybody else can take any to eat. And when everyone does arrive, let us not then somehow divide up our assembly into separate groups or mini-assemblies, such as in family groups, to eat it as individual families or groups. Let us eat it as one family, in unity, not division. The church is to eat it altogether, in peace; orderly.

## (b) Eat it as a regular, intentional part of your worship of God

Many churches are confused about the frequency of eating the Lord's supper. But, as we can begin to see in this passage (and in other related commandments and examples that I will show you), it was understood by the apostles and

churches to be practiced along with their regular worship of God. For example, notice all of the words and phrases which Paul used to indicate that the church in Corinth ate the supper as a regular, not irregular, part of their coming together for church. He said, "you come together" (vs. 17), "when you come together as a church" (vs. 18), "when you meet together" (vs. 20), "when you come together" (vs. 33). So, when they came together "as a church," they ate the Lord's supper, with "when" speaking to or indicating the frequency with which they ate it together, "when" they came together "as a church". But, as we know, they were not truly eating "it" since they were sinning in sensuality which led to divisiveness among themselves. Sensuality, the opposite of spirituality, always leads to division (SEE Jude 1:19). For to follow the Holy Spirit, God, is spirituality. But to follow the flesh, and its desires, is to be sensual.

### **The church in Jerusalem ate it "continually," not annually, not semiannually**

The first disciples of Christ, which included His hand picked and hand trained apostles, were also the first to devote themselves to the Lord's supper, "continually," not annually or semi-annually, or quarterly, or some other frequency. For example: "They [including the apostles] continually devoted themselves [1] to the apostles' teaching and [2] to fellowship, [3] to the breaking of bread and [4] to prayer" (Ac 2:42). So, they "continually devoted themselves" to four good things, including "to the breaking of bread". In the New Covenant, the phrase "breaking bread" first and foremost means to eat the Lord's supper together. For, "Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor 10:16). Indeed, when Jesus introduced the Lord's supper to His apostles, before He gave the bread to them to

eat, He Himself actually "broke" it (Mt 26:26). Every mature Christian knows that breaking bread primarily means in connection to the supper of the Lord. Therefore, do not be confused about this phrase. So, when it says that the disciples in Jerusalem "continually devoted themselves.. to the breaking of bread," it is readily understood to mean breaking bread in remembrance of Christ.

Now, did the church in Jerusalem get together only once or twice a year to pray? Did they assemble annually to hear the apostles' teaching? Did they meet only once every three months to share in and contribute to the needs and lives of others (fellowship)? Would this demonstrate the meaning of the phrase "continually devoted"? Certainly not! Likewise, they did not assemble infrequently to remember Christ in the supper, but continually, meaning as a regular part of their assemblies, their worship of God through Christ.

This kind of devotion to breaking bread gives renewed and deeper meaning to the word "often," which is the word Christ used to introduce the supper, with "often" referring to the idea of when His disciples would eat the supper. He said, "do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor 11:25). Now, what does the word "often" mean? It means frequently, not infrequently. Thus, "continually" they practiced the teaching to break bread in honor and regard for Christ, and to reflect on His sacrifice for them, and as you will see in point three, to soberly reflect on their own conduct as well.

But someone has said, "If we eat it regularly, as a part of worship, it loses its meaning." Excuse me? It loses its meaning? It gets old? It gets stale? The more you think about the gospel it loses its meaning? The more you think about Jesus, He loses His meaning? The more you think of what He did for you to save you from hell, it loses its meaning? Do not be foolish! Evidently, you do not yet realize how big a sinner you are. Are you truly born again? Has your life truly been saved by the Lord? Do you appreciate Him in the way that you ought? Is there a man alive who gets saved from certain death by a man and yet does not continually thank and memorialize that man, or confess that man to others? Is Jesus your hero or what? Do you truly believe that Jesus died for your sins? Is the recurring thought of this (as remembered in the supper) abhorrent to you? Perhaps you think that you do not need this reminder; that you are too good for this.



## Should we practice the Passover with the Lord's supper?

For two reasons, the answer is no. First, since Christ came to fulfill the Old Covenant (SEE Mt 5:17), meaning to complete it, we no longer are required to keep it. This would include keeping the feasts, such as the Passover. God will not judge us on these things anymore, because of Christ (READ Col 2:17 which tells us that we do not have to keep the Old Testament feasts, or Sabbaths, etc.). **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Ro 10:4).** This means that Christ is the end of the Old Covenant Law, the keeping of it. For Christ kept it perfectly for us so that we would not have to do so, especially by Himself being the perfect and satisfactory sacrifice for sin for all time (READ Ro 8:3, 4). So, it is understood that Christians ought not keep the Passover, for it was from another covenant, which has been finished. We are not to continue to practice it. It is finished. Second, notice the example of Paul and the church in Troas. Many days after the Passover feast, he and others assembled to break bread, separate and apart from Passover. For example, **"We [Paul and others] sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread [also called the Passover / See Lk 22:1], and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days. On the first day of the week [Sunday], when we were gathered together to break bread [which is another way of saying the Lord's Supper / See 1 Cor 10:16], Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight" (Ac 20:6, 7).**

So, do the math. **After** the Passover, Paul spent **five days** traveling. Additionally, he then waited **seven days** at Troas until they got together to break bread (aka, eat the Lord's supper). Then, Paul departed on the next day. Therefore, about twelve days after the Passover feast, they broke bread. So, they, including Christ's apostle, ate the supper separate and apart from the Passover. They did not confuse or mix the meaning of the Passover (and its regulations) with the meaning and purpose of the Lord's supper (and its regulations). For these are two different covenants, with two different sets of instructions for worship, because they serve two different purposes of God. So, we should eat the Lord's supper separate from the Passover, yet as a continual (not annual) and consistent part of our coming together to worship God.

## 2. Recollect the Two Reasons for Eating It

The supper is good time to give everyone a reminder about Christ and His deeds. But, this is not what the church in Corinth was doing with it. So, Paul corrected them, and concluded by reminding them of the two reasons why we eat it. For example, he said:

**"Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this [1] in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you [2] proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor 11:20-26).**

So, the purpose of the supper is two-fold: One, to recall Him to our minds (to put Him in our minds, to remember Him), and two, to preach the gospel. Now, on the first reason we eat it, to recall Him to mind, we ought to specifically refresh our minds with His **"body,"** as He said, **"This is My body, which is for you; do this in remem-**

brance of Me". So, we are to remember His real body, which He gave for us. For God so loved the world that He gave us His Son (Jn 3:16). He gave us the real body of His Son to save us.

Second, we are to specifically recall to mind the "new covenant" "in His blood," as He said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me". For the shedding of His blood started, inaugurated, and began the Christian covenant, age, and doctrines (ALSO READ He 9:18). It signifies when it became law. It also signifies that the Old Covenant was no longer valid as a law, for Jesus fulfilled the law of Moses for us (SEE Mt 5:17), so that we would not have to do so (SEE Ro 8:3, 5). For the Law of Moses was given to show us how we all cannot perfectly keep God's holy law, and because so, we sin, and need another more perfect solution; namely Christ (Ro 5:20; Gal 3:18; Ro 3:23).

Notes: Indeed, "And He saw that there was no man, And was astonished that there was no one to intercede; Then His own arm brought salvation to Him, And His righteousness upheld Him" (Isaiah 59:16). Likewise, "I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me" (Isaiah 63:5). Now, the right arm of God the Father is God the Son, Jesus Christ. So, the Father used His Son, in regards to sin, to satisfy Himself, since none of us are a good enough to intervene for all, only God. God knows that He alone can save us. Salvation is only possible with God (Mt 19:25, 26). So He rightfully has to be the source of it, not man.

So, in the supper, we are to recall to mind the "body" of Christ and the "new covenant" in His blood. For "Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME" (He 10:5). And, "When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear" (He 8:13). How did He make the first covenant obsolete? It was by the blood of His Son.

And during our supper, when our speakers verbally express these things to us, we also are fulfilling the second purpose of eating it; to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. For, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:1-4). So, during the Lord's supper, our speakers are to proclaim, announce, and dwell on the gospel, which is the prophetic DBR of Christ for our sins.

### 3. Take Stock of Yourself and the Church

"The Lord's Supper" (1 Cor 11:20) is not only a time to remember His body and deeds, but also to consider our own lives as well, individually and as a group. It is a time to reflect on our own attitudes and level of devotion to the Lord. We need to take a sober inventory or accounting of our faith, or lack thereof. As Paul said:

"But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world" (1 Cor 11:28-32).

So, during the supper, we are not only supposed to think about the Lord, but also our own selves. Each member ought to "**examine himself**," meaning he is to do a self-analysis of his condition before the Lord. Likewise, we are also to inspect the church. "**But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world,**" or other like things, such as becoming "**weak and sick, and... sleep,**" meaning die. So, Paul took stock of this church, he analyzed it, and judged it for its sins, and told us to do the same, to "**judge.. ourselves**". He simply spoke against their sins in relation to their eating the supper. "**Do you not judge those who are within the church?**" (1 Cor 5:12). Should we not speak against the body if it is getting intoxicated? Is intoxication a sin? Should we not speak against the body if it is being disorderly in how it eats? Is selfish belly driven behavior a sin? What other sins must our members not commit, in church or out of church?

As Paul said, "**Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?**" (2 Cor 13:5). Test your faith. Are you in the faith, the one faith? Whom is in you? Is it Jesus Christ? How does one receive the spirit of Christ (**Consider** Ac 5:32; Ac 2:38; Ro 8:9).

Regarding whom they would serve, Joshua tested the congregation (Josh 24:15). He tested their devotion to God. It was a time for renewal. The supper is a time for renewal. It is like in the time of Deborah, where, among the men of Israel, "**there were great searchings of heart**" (Judges 5:16). So, in the supper, let us stir up great searchings of heart among our members to courageously serve the Lord.

Consider how Jacob (Israel) challenged the hearts of the twelve tribes (meaning his family, his sons, and in-laws, and grandchildren, and their wives). He stirred up their hearts by saying to all: "**Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments**" (Ge 35:2).

Consider their response: "**So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem**" (Ge 35:4). So, they rid themselves, they separated themselves from the things which were competing with the Lord, even certain parts of their adornment, their jewelry. Likewise, we need to challenge the hearts of every member of Christ who assembles for the supper (both men and women, and children, wives and husbands, and in-laws and relatives), everyone, to repent of these things and more. This includes our adornment sins. "**Purify yourselves and change your garments.**" For as Christians, we do have commandments which tell us how to adorn ourselves in a spiritual, not sensual way (SEE 1 Tim 2:9, 10). Indeed, challenge the church to: "**Worship the Lord in holy array**" (Ps 29:2), meaning in spiritual adornment, not sensual garments (both figurative and literal).

So, let us somehow, in a fitting way, remove from our lives the things which are making God jealous, and the things which do not belong on our bodies, since they are not holy, pure. Let our adornment (both literal and figurative), draw people's eyes, hearts, and affections to God, not an indiscreet woman, man, or child. I am challenging you to test and examine your need to repent of your sins, during the Lord's supper. It is a time for self examination. Examine yourselves. Test the areas in your life in which you need to repent.

# Q&A on the Supper

In this lesson I have answered several key questions that you may have had about the supper, such as its intended frequency, its disconnection from the Passover, the unity and togetherness which needs to be displayed in it by worshipers, the two reasons for eating it, and the kind of heart searching individual (and group) analysis and reflection of one's faith (and of the faith of the whole church) which needs to go on as we begin to come together to eat it. I have also shown you how essential the supper is to one's salvation.

Yet, it is evident to me that other questions need to be answered as well. For as an evangelist, I have personally worked with many churches in my own country, and certain ones in several different nations. I have first hand information on additional questions that have arisen and therefore need answers and solutions and solving. For example, below, consider the following issues and answers, which are not in any order of importance, but randomly listed. I trust that this lesson, along with this Q&A session will serve as an in depth and intentional look at the supper, so that we will not in any way be found naive about it by the Lord, but wise. In this Q&A, let us aim to grow up in all aspects on this subject.

**Q1: A sect has said, "Since, in this context, Paul said to "eat at home," we then are forbidden from eating a meal together as a church, specifically in a church building." Is this true?**

A: No, we are not forbidden from eating together as a church, being hospitable to one another, even in a church building. There are three reasons for this, which I will give shortly. Yet, some believe that this verse forbids churches from eating together. And so, to discourage worshipers from eating together, certain churches do not authorize or permit their church buildings to have kitchens, kitchen sinks, drinking water, food or food containers, refrigerators, and fellowship meals in the building, and so on and so forth, saying it is not authorized, not Biblical, but forbidden. But, they are wrong on three counts.

**First**, it is obvious that when we come together to eat the Lord's supper that we are eating together in church. This would require some sort of facility to handle the bread and fruit of the vine, including the plates and cups (or tables) on which and in which they are served, and anything related to their servicing, preparing, cleaning, etc. So, we are eating together in church, in our "building". This requires some form of hospitable accommodations. Yet, someone will say, "We are only authorized to do this for the Lord's supper, but no other form of eating!" I say, consider the next point.

**Second**, this passage is only speaking to the hospitality of the Lord's supper, how to properly handle it, not other forms of church hospitality. So, the Lord's supper and other forms of hospitality are, in a great sense, two different things, subjects, or topics, with two different sets of instructions or contexts in which to operate or conduct ourselves. So, the points in this passage on the Lord's supper do not directly speak to, relate to, or apply to other forms of church hospitality. In the Bible, there are differences between the hospitality of the Lord's supper and other kinds or categories of hospitality.

Note: We are commanded to be hospitable to one another (1 Pe 4:9), and especially to be helpful to the poor in this matter, even meeting their needs during the Lord's Supper. For example, as Paul said concerning this: "Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?" (1 Cor 11:22). For example, before some of the poor disciples could eat the Lord's supper, certain ones ate all of it, thus shaming the poor, starving them. In so doing, some showed partiality toward themselves and their desires over the needs of the poor. So, Jesus is mercifully concerned about the poor, even in His supper!

Therefore, **third**, and finally, if you are teaching that this phrase "eat at home" means we are not allowed to eat at church, you are taking this verse out of its context (its subject) and misapplying it. For example, the admonition to "eat at home" is not the subject or theme of the passage, it is not even one of the points. The subject is how to eat a praiseworthy Lord's supper, not "Where can Christians eat together?" Indeed, it is a tertiary support statement designed to help worshipers eat the supper altogether, in unity, not apart in flesh driven behavior, in divisiveness. *[Remember, this is the first point in this passage, to eat it altogether not apart. So, this verse is supporting that point, to somehow, in some fitting way, bring them altogether to eat it in unity, not divisiveness.]*

So, it is improper to emphasize and expand this phrase to be the subject or the point of this passage, even applying it beyond the supper, its context, into other forms of church hospitality, limiting churches from eating together altogether. It is not a sin to be hospitable and eat together as a church. It is a sin to do so in a disorderly way. Do you understand this distinction? Some are confusing the subject of this passage. Is it about the Lord's supper or is it about where Christians can eat? This verse was prohibiting them from eating together in a sinful way, not prohibiting them from eating together.

Note: Now, I realize that I have used a lot of words in dealing with this one issue. But, let me remind you and help you to never forget that compassion is a number one issue with the Lord, even in the Lord's supper. "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice' " (Mt 9:13). And, "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent " (Mt 12:7). But some hardened soul will condemn the innocent, and say, "You can be compassionately hospitable as an individual, at home, not in church!" I say, is not the church the very body of Christ? Why then would you be so bold to tell Christ Himself, His body, that He Himself cannot use His whole body (His hands, His head, His feet, and so on), and use His talents, to be compassionately hospitable to others or even towards His own body? Remember the poor, even during the Lord's supper! As Paul said about it, do not "**despise**" and "**shame**" the poor (1 Cor 11:22). Blessed are the merciful (compassionate), for they shall receive compassion. What will you receive? It depends a lot on your demonstration of individual or group hospitality (READ THE WARNING IN Mt 25:41-46).

## Q2: Whom should eat the Lord's supper? With whom should we eat it?

A: Christians should eat it, disciples of Christ, believers, but not unbelievers. We should eat it with believers. For example, Jesus told his disciples, the apostles, to "**do this**" (Lk 22:19). Yet, we know that it was not only for them to practice. For example, Paul said that he, as an apostle, passed on to the church in Corinth what he also learned about the supper, so that they too could practice it as disciples of Christ (SEE 1 Cor 11:23-26).

But, he also said, "**We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat**" (He 13:10). [Those who serve at the tabernacle is a figure of speech referring to the unbelieving Jews who continue to worship God through Moses (SEE He 13:11), not Christ. Likewise, the "**altar**" from which they "**have no right to eat**" is a figure of speech referring to the Christ, the Christian religion and form of worship, especially the Lord's supper.] So, it is not right for unbelievers, even if they are Jewish, to eat the supper of the Lord. It is not wise to eat it with unbelievers.

Yet, additionally, we should not even eat the supper with certain believers who are still sinning in one or more "**dead works**" (He 6:1). For example, "**I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one**" (1 Cor 5:11). "**Remove the wicked man from among yourselves**" (1 Cor 5:13). So, we must not worship with or eat with certain believers, especially the Lord's supper, if they have not yet been purged of practicing certain sins which lead to death. For a church must know the basic character of its members, whether it is holy or not. "Examine yourselves".

## A Story about Eating It with Fornicators

I have followed these principles and taken this same stand against certain members of a church in my locality, even when the leadership has not! For example, after attending a certain church for about two years, one of the pastors of it told me that they have members who are fornicators, and that one of them has even led and served the Lord's supper! For a man and a woman were having each other and living together without being married.

So, I told him that this is a salvation issue and a membership issue, for no one can be saved who continues to be sexually immoral, and no one can be a member of Christ without repenting of this sin. And he said, "We cannot nail shut the church door". I said, the Scripture says, "See to it... that there be no immoral... person" among you (He 12:15, 16). He replied, "You do not understand God's grace". I said, "God does not favor sin. For grace means favor." His wrath will be on fornications (SEE He 13:4).

So, ever since I found out about these kinds of "believers" in this assembly, and about the attitude of the leadership concerning it, I have refused to eat the Lord's supper at this church. And they know the reason why. For years, I have alerted them to the truths concerning sexual immorality, and how to deal with it, but to no avail. This is a very, very distressing situation. So, before we worship with this church, we break bread at home.



Notes: Likewise, there are other kinds of sinners being admitted into this assembly and membership who should instead be rejected, namely adulterers and adulteresses, for some have married into adultery (**SEE Mt 5:32**), and some of their leading teachers have married them into adultery, unaware that it is adultery. These are conversion issues. These are basic purity (holiness) issues, salvation issues. What is wrong with churches in this day and age? What is wrong with leading men today? They are not holy in this. They are not sanctifiers. They are not separators. But, the gospel aims to separate us from something, especially sexual immorality. This is for our good, our eternal good.

Now, since so many churches operate and conduct themselves in the way that I have described to you, in an unholy, unconverted way, I urge you to get a copy of my Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible, and read the repentance lesson in it. For I am convinced that many, multitudes, who say that they know Jesus, and declare that they are saved by Jesus, do not yet know that they are idolaters, adulteresses, adulterers, and more.

**Q3: A brother said, "But Jesus ate the supper with Judas, who betrayed Him. So, like Jesus, I/we can eat it with anyone. I am so gracious and generous (liberal)."**

A: Brother, this is a naive position to take. For your profession is wrong on two counts. **First**, as I pointed out to you in the answer to Q2, after Jesus was betrayed, put to death, and risen and ascended into heaven, He then gave further commandment to His apostles and prophets concerning with whom we should not eat, even the supper of the Lord. Indeed, even in some cases, not eating a regular meal with certain sinful believers, outside of church, at home. Regarding the supper, these further commandments would include abstaining from eating it with unbelievers and also believers with a log of sin in their eye (SEE 1 Cor 5:13). This would subsequently mean that we are not to eat with the likes of Judas, Judas'. For they have a log if sin in their eye.

So, consider the whole covenant of Christ, the complete New Testament, not only the scene of the last Passover supper of Christ. For it was not all that was written about eating the supper.

For this is like saying that you do not have to be baptized, because the thief on the cross was not baptized and yet was saved. Brother, after this scene, there were more things, commandments, written about water baptism. For at the cross, the commandment to baptize them into Christ, His death, was not yet given. And it could not have been yet given. For Christ had not yet been buried and raised from the dead. So, the thief could not be buried and raised into Christ. So, be careful how you interpret the Scriptures. Therefore, the thief was saved, but he did not have to be baptized into Christ. We know the reason why. It was not that he did not have to be baptized, it was that he (and anybody for that matter) could not yet have been baptized into the death of Christ. He was not yet dead.

Do unbelievers eat the Lord's supper in a worthy manner? Do adulterers eat it in a worthy manner? Do drunkards eat it while they are drunk? Do liars eat it in a worthy manner. What is the purpose of church, to gather together all manner of unbelievers, idolaters, sexually immoral persons, liars, and so on and so forth and remember the Lord with them? Certainly not! By their sins, they are not yet converted to the Lord. They are not holy to the Lord.

**Second**, when Jesus ate the supper with Judas, he had not yet betrayed the Lord. But afterward, no body ate with him. So, the timing and unfolding of everything regarding the Christ had to be fulfilled. **"Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread. Has lifted up his heel against me"** (Ps 41:9). [Judas dipped his bread in Christ's bowl / Mt 26:23] But, once this prophecy was fulfilled, it was never again to be fulfilled. Do you understand these things?

Nevertheless, Christ's church body is to be pure and holy. We are to eat the Lord's supper with the saints, not sinners. If you know what the word saint means then you will know that he is one who is separated from these kinds of sins. So, it is not being like Christ, it is not being Christian, it is not being generous or charitable to gather with unbelievers and hypocrites to eat the Lord's supper. It is a sin to do so, a missing of the mark, the intention and will of God. Let us be intentional about this.

**Q3: Should our infants and children eat it?**

A: Let three aspects guide our conclusion about this. **First**, we must demonstrate compassion for the needs of poor disciples, including their children, even in the Lord's supper. As I pointed out to you, Paul said that the church in Corinth was despising and shaming the poor by not waiting to eat the supper together, not allowing all to eat and remember Christ, and some to get some nourishment from it, the poor (1 Cor 11:22). So, even in the supper, Christ is concerned about the poor members of His body, even their physical nourishment from it. Christ cares about our physical needs. Whereas, some of us do not also need nourishment from the supper, for we can eat at home, we have enough, we are satisfied. But let us satisfy the poor with good things. We who are rich are content to remember Christ in the supper, without the additional benefit of physical nourishment. We leave enough of it so that our poor brethren can enjoy this aspect of it, as well as enjoy the memory of Christ.

**Second**, as I pointed out to you in the answer to Q2, the unconverted should not eat it. For they do not truly know Jesus as Lord and Christ. So, are infants and children converted to Christ? Do they go around telling others that Jesus is the Son of God? Do they make that good confession? Did you know that Philip preached the gospel to men and women, and when they believed they were baptized, men and women (SEE Ac 8:12), not infants or children? Can an infant or a baby hear the gospel, believe it, confessing who is Jesus, repent of their sins, and finally come to the waters of baptism all by himself? What about a child, toddler, or pre-teen? I suppose it is possible, but Philip baptized men and women. You see what I mean? Children seem to be in a special category with the Lord. We should love them, teach them, and serve them. But, we should not somehow expect them to act like an adult when they do not even have an adult set of skin, so to speak. They do not fully have the sinful nature that comes along with it, and the struggle to subdue it by the spirit of Christ.

**Third**, there is a sacredness, a holiness to the bread and fruit of the vine. During the supper, when we devote the bread and the fruit of the vine to the Lord, to His body and blood, it then becomes sacred, holy, and set apart for the Lord and to the Lord, for His purposes. Therefore, we should be careful to whom we give it to eat. Should we feed it to the dogs? Should we donate the left over bread and fruit of the vine to the food bank, so to speak? Things that are holy should not be used for common purposes. It is for believers, and perhaps their children, especially poor believers and their children. Yet, my custom, and the custom of the churches with whom we worship, is to let the children eat it who have responded to the gospel of their own accord in repentance and water baptism. Yet, like Philip, I myself do not baptize non-adult believers, but encourage them to keep believing and when they grow up into a man or a woman to then plan on getting baptized into Christ. So, in conclusion, let us be compassionate, wise, and holy concerning the use of the Lord's supper, even among our children.

#### **Q4: Should we have one cup and one plate, or many cups and many plates?**

A: Regarding the cup of the Lord, one verse and context quotes Jesus as saying, *"drink from it, all of you"* (NAS Mt 26:27). But, another verse and different context quotes Him as saying, *"divide it among yourselves"* (KJV Lk 27:17). [Now, this is not a contradiction in commandment, as a closer look at the contexts and timing of these statements will prove. But they do serve to stimulate and broaden our thinking and debate of this issue of cups. This is the very reason why I began this answer with these two verses. For I perceive that we need to broaden our understanding of the supper in this point so that we do not somehow, through zealous ignorance, become arrogant and divisive over the cup.]

So, one church concludes that it is Biblical to have one cup, since Jesus said to drink from it, with "it" meaning the one cup. Yet, another church says it is Biblical to have many cups, since in another place Jesus said to "divide it" from that one cup, with divide meaning to separate from something, in this case to separate the contents of the one cup, the fruit of the vine, into other cups or containers.

Now, in defense of using only one cup, a sister said, "If it says that we should drink from one cup, then I do not want to add to or take away from the Scripture." I replied, "But, we must not go beneath the Scripture as well, not living up to other verses on the subject. We must not fall short of applying the whole will of God. For in another verse it says to divide it among us, that is to divide the contents of the one cup among us, meaning to separate it from the cup into other containers. For divide means to separate." She replied, "I need to look at that verse." And so I directed her where to find it (Lk 27:17 KJV). And so I encouraged her to not take away from the Scripture by neglecting to know a verse which helps us to more perfectly understand and live up to the truth on this matter, a verse which speaks to diffuse or resolve this issue, a verse which broadens our understanding and authorized application how to share it among ourselves.

Yet, among certain churches this has become a divisive and dividing issue. For some have condemned and withdrawn from other disciples over it and more, even creating a whole division of churches named after or affiliated with "one cup," a container. **Brethren, I will not contend for a container, but for what the contents represent!** So, lest we become divisive over this through some form of emphatic ignorance regarding the whole truth of the matter, below consider a very stimulating and though provoking Q&A session which I created about it, a tract, called:

## Plates and Cups, or Body and Blood?

*Brethren, answer these questions!*

1. What is the Lord's supper?
2. Was the cup or plate crucified for you?
3. Did a cup, or one cup, ooze out of Christ while He was on the cross and did it fall to the ground with a bang?
4. Were you redeemed with a cup and a plate?
5. Does the physical plate represent the body of Jesus Christ?
6. Does the physical cup represent the blood of Jesus Christ?
7. Is there any significance in an empty plate or in an empty cup?
8. Did Jesus want His disciples to remember Him in the plate and in the container, or in eating and drinking?
9. What was the subject of Christ's teaching on the Lord's supper?
10. Did Paul pass on to the Corinthians what he also received, a remembrance of the plate and the container?
11. Which is more important and in what order: the plate and the cup, the contents there in, or what the contents represent?
12. What ought to be emphasized during the Lord's supper, plates and cups?
13. What should we have in our minds during the supper, the plate and the container?
14. Are plates and cups essential to the Lord's supper?
15. Should we condemn and withdraw from Christians who do not think a plate or a cup are essential to their Lord's supper?



## Answer to Q1-15 (Do I even need to answer them for you?)

Why have I asked you these questions about the Lord's Supper? Do any of you understand why I have raised these questions? I did it to help you to see the one thing which is essential, the one thing which is to be emphasized in practicing the Lord's Supper; the main thing, the main subject of the Lord's Supper. The thing on which we need to place the most importance. In doing so we will not become hypocritical, imbalanced, and misfocused. I write this because I hear that some brethren have come to some of you and converted you to a container, not Christ! They have converted you away from the essentials of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. They have converted you away from the bread and the fruit of the vine. Instead they have focused you in on something that does not at all represent Christ's body or blood. This is hypocritical and divisive and here are the reasons why.

[Even more, they are offering some of you money and support, from their divisive brotherhood, because you are now worthy of their support, but not before, because they have now converted you to a cup. And they have paraded you around, that is, your conversion to a cup, a container, in a letter and circulated it to other congregations which are just like them, as the very reason why you are now worthy of support. You once were so called, as they say, "digestive" or a "digestive preacher," and now you are found. You once were lost, but now you are found. It's all about a cup, not Christ. And if you do not get converted to the container, then they will condemn you, withdraw from you, not worship or church with you, mark and avoid you, and treat you worse than an unbeliever!]

Q1. It is a remembrance, a memorial of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, not a memorial of the plate and a container.

Q2. No, the plate was not crucified for you.

Q3. No, it was blood.

Q4. Certainly not!

Q5. No, the bread represents Christ's body.

Q6. No, the fruit of the vine represents the blood of Christ.

Q7. No, their significance comes from their contents.

Q8. In eating and drinking.

Q9. It was not plates and cups, but instead it was the body and the blood, the bread and the fruit of the vine, the new covenant.

Q10. No, he passed on a remembrance of the body and the blood of Christ.

Q11. First, what the contents represent (namely, the body and the blood of Jesus Christ). Second, the actual contents (namely, the bread and the fruit of the vine). Third, and the least important on what an in what they are served (namely, the plate and the container).

Q12. No, the body and the blood of Christ; the new covenant in His blood.

Q13. Certainly not!

Q14. No, they are not. But they are necessary to carry the substance, the food of our memorial.

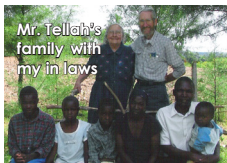
Q15. No, this would be divisive, hypocritical and imbalanced. It is not focused on the supreme importance of Christ, but on the supreme importance of plates and containers, which do not represent the body and blood of Christ.

I say again, I will not contend for a container, but for what the contents therein represent; Christ. For the cup was not crucified for me, neither was the plate. So, let us not be contentious about containers, becoming divisive over containers. Let us not make them into a doctrine.

*Now, below, are more Q&A's on different aspects of the supper, some of which are indeed very strange. For I do not want you to be misled on these things. There are continuous problems surrounding this one holy topic in the Scriptures. Why is this so?*

## Q: The question of literally eating the supper

A: The Friends churches (a.k.a. Quakers) believe that it is not "spiritual" to actually eat the Lord's supper, because it is an "outward" action. They think similarly on water baptism. So, they do not literally eat the supper, nor do they literally baptize their members in water. But, their profession is wrong on two counts. **First**, Jesus and His disciples literally ate the bread and drank the fruit of the vine for the Lord's supper. Likewise, they taught churches to do the same. For example, we know that Paul taught the church in Corinth to literally eat it (1 Cor 11:17-34). For Jesus even broke the physical unleavened bread and drank the literal fruit of vine, and he had His disciples literally do the same. So, the "Friends" are not following the right example. **Second**, their definition of the word "spiritual" is not the correct definition of the word. So, they are subsequently misapplying it in connection to the supper and baptism and so on and so forth. For to be "spiritual" means to be following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God, which includes following His nature and His words. Holiness includes outward actions. So, in truth, the Friends churches are not being spiritual about this, for they are not following the Holy Spirit in these things. Thus, they are instead, unwittingly, being sensual, the opposite of what it means to be spiritual, to be holy, to be following the Holy Spirit, God. Instead they are following the flesh, their own flesh, their own fleshly thinking, not God's holy thinking. In the Bible Study on True Worshipers, the lesson Worship God in Spirit, Not Flesh, and in the Bible Study on New Life, I have written extensively about what it means to be a spiritual person, holy. So, I recommend that you read those two studies to understand what it means to be spiritual, its synonyms, and more. Otherwise, you too might be easily misled about it. **Finally**, there is the story of Paul Tellah, from Kenya, Africa, who was formerly of the Friends church. He had received some of my free Bible studies from a dear sister in the Lord. Subsequently, through that relationship, and the kindness of this sister, he invited someone to come visit him and his church. So, my father in law, who used to live in Kenya, eventually visited him. And when he taught this Friends church, he taught them about the Lord's supper and water baptism, that it is literal, that it is actually to be done outwardly, but with or from an inward desire to be spiritual, pursuing the Spirit, God. So, several of the members wanted to be water baptized in the name of the Lord and also eat the Lord's supper. The ones who did not want to do this decided to remain in the Friends church, but the others started a new church. Have they not become the friends of Christ? (yet, this is not their church name). Jesus said, "You are My friends if you do what I command you" (Jn 15:14). Is your church doing the Lord's supper, likewise doing water baptism, and so on and so forth?



## Q: The question of where to eat it

A: Have you heard of the Church of the Upper Room? Since Jesus and His disciples ate the supper in an upper room, not on the first floor, some disciples have decided to create a division based on this, naming it the Church of the Upper Room. Yet, I do not think that there is a division named the church on the first floor. Why? Because it is not important, nor correct to do so. For there are two problems with their profession. **One**, they are making the upper room the subject or point regarding the supper, when God has not made it the subject or point. Therefore, it is not a commandment. It is simply a detail in the story regarding where they ate it, a description of the location, not a commandment for everyone to eat it in an upper room. Thus, some call it an "incidental" detail, which is not essential. For where is the directive from Christ for us to eat it on the second floor of a building? **Second**, they are being divisive in that they are emphasizing the upper room over the Christ. For they have named or affiliated themselves to an upper room, not Christ. But, was the upper room crucified for us? Certainly not! We contend that we belong to Christ, to God, not the upper room! Now, there are five ways in which churches name or affiliate themselves that causes unhealthy divisions. In the Bible Study on True Worshipers, the lesson Worship God in Spirit, Not in Flesh, I have alerted you to them. I recommend that you read that lesson, for most all churches are sinning in this. Again, most all churches are sinning in this. Will you read that lesson? Regardless, where we eat the supper, the location, generally does not matter, unless for some reason or in some way it is in a sinful or unholy place, like in the temple of idols!

## Q: The question of the kind of bread and vine

A: It is understood that Jesus used unleavened bread and "the fruit of the vine" (Lk 22:18) in direct connection or comparison to His body and blood. So, it is meaningful to use unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, not something else, because of what it represents. Yet, this does not preclude us from using grape juice instead of wine, since "fruit of the vine" would possibly include grape juice. We use grape juice and prefer it over wine, meaning alcohol. Yet, some poor churches need to use wine because they cannot refrigerate grape juice. Likewise, this does not preclude us to substitute other fruits of the vine, such as elderberry juice, when no grape juice is available, as one church did in a difficult situation. I think they used elderberry wine. But our goal ought to be compassionate in this, not to entertain ourselves in seeing how many different fruits of the vine we can drink for the supper. I recommend the fruit of the grape vine, since I suppose that is what Jesus used. Now, concerning the unleavened bread, a sister insisted that one must use very fine wheat flour, not a lesser grade or quality of flour, perhaps even quoting the Old Testament concerning unleavened bread. Yet, in the new covenant, there is no distinction or additional indication given to us by the Lord regarding this detail. So, I recommend that we not concern ourselves regarding whether the flour is wheat, white, finely or coarsely ground, and so on and so forth, or become divisive over it, separating from one another.

## Q: The question of unnecessary concerns

A: Some are more concerned about keeping the church house (a question of cleanliness, keeping house) than eating the Lord's supper. For example, I once visited a so called Messianic congregation who met on Saturday evening. While there, I noticed that they did not eat the supper. So, I asked one of their members, "Why don't you eat the Lord's supper?" She said, "We do not want to make crumbs, because we are renting this place." Amazing! Like Martha, this church was worried about many things, but only one thing was necessary. Hey! I myself do not like people making a mess in my house, especially my own wife and children (ask my wife). In my own house, for a variety of good reasons, I hate crumbs! But when we have eaten the Lord's supper in my house with our own family and with other Christians, for many times we have assembled for worship in our home, I do not make an issue about bread crumbs or juice stains. You see, like with dear Martha, only one thing was necessary. Though I am concerned about housekeeping, I understand the one thing. Do you? Would you like your own family and Christian friends to know the importance of the Lord's supper over a few crumbs? Therefore, let us forget about housekeeping, and instead eat the supper so that we can together "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26). It is to be perpetually kept or done by us "until" He returns. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Come.

## Q: The question of literally eating Christ

A: When we eat the supper, are we literally or figuratively eating Christ's body and blood? In the Catholic supper, they pretend to literally eat the flesh of Christ and drink His literal blood. Since Jesus said, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you cannot be saved (Jn 6:53), the Catholics then misapply this to mean that when one eats the Lord's supper, he must, somehow, literally eat His flesh and drink His blood. This profession is wrong on four counts. **First**, it was a figure of speech, not to be literally applied. **Second**, we are not to eat human flesh or drink blood (READ AC 15:20). So, we are not to somehow cannibalize the supper. This would be carnal. We are not to become, or pretend to become cannibals. **Third**, this definition serves their priesthood, it stems from or is connected to their concept of priests. It is systemic of their overall approach of another subject, the catholic priests. For they say that they need a priest to offer the sacrifice. And in their supper, since it turns into Christ's real body and blood, by their faith, they, the priests are offering up the sacrifice of Christ for sin, over and over again. For they say that they need a priest to offer the sacrifice. Thus, by this practice, they reject Christ's final offering for sin "once and for all" (He 9:12), and reject Him as the final priest. **Fourth**, the bread and juice in their supper does not in truth, somehow, change into the real flesh and blood of Christ. Several Catholics acknowledge this and to get around it they say that it takes faith to believe it to be so, that we believe by faith, before we eat, it turns into His real flesh and blood. This is not faith, but devilish folly! So, the true supper is figurative in nature, the attributes of the bread and the fruit of the vine are figuratively, not literally Christ's flesh and blood. We are not to literally "chomp" His flesh, as some Catholics say the word "eat" means, but we are to eat the bread, figuratively applying it or comparing it to Him. It is a comparison, a parable, if you will, not a literal.

# Church, Observe The Regulations for Judging Wicked Members

## The Problem in Judging Is with Unrighteous Worshipers

Church, the problem with judging is not with judging, but the way in which one does it or the actual person doing it. So, there are two aspects to consider. First, is one right or wrong in his judging? Second, is one judging as a righteous person or as a hypocrite? For example, Jesus told worshipers to **"Judge with righteous judgment"** (Jn 7:24), for the way in which they were judging Him was unrighteous. They were wrong, not right in their judgment concerning Him. So, if you judge, you better be right, not only in your own mind, but, also right with the truth of the matter and with the circumstances and with the law of the Lord. Likewise, concerning hypocritical judging, that is hypocrites who like to judge others on their unrighteousness, Jesus said, **"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye"** (Mt 7:1-5). So, the problem is not with judging, but with hypocritical judging, meaning the one with a log of sin ought to not judge another for his sins. Instead he should first repent of his own wickedness. So, if you are carrying around a log of sin, you better not judge or speak against anyone else. For Jesus sees you as a hypocrite and will judge you accordingly. In conclusion, the problem is not with judging, but with unrighteous judging or with hypocritical people who like to judge others. These ought to "judge not".



## There Is a Time for Everything Under the Sun

Is there a time for judging our brother? Is there a time for everything under the sun, even a time for a church to judge a Christian? As we ought to see in this lesson, even on the subject of judging our brother, this principle seems to be true. There is a time to judge a brother and a time not to judge him. There is a time for a Christian to fear punishment and a time for him not to fear it. Do you understand when to judge your brother and when not to judge him? Do you understand when your brother ought to fear punishment and when he should not fear it?

### 1. There is a time not to judge your brother

Do you know when we should avoid judging our brother? Do you know whom should abstain from judging others? Now, because Jesus said, **"Do not judge"** (Mt 7:1), many Christians do not approve of or believe in judging their Christian brothers and sisters, no matter



their conduct or behavior. They oppose the very concept of judging at all. They say, "We are not supposed to judge," or "Jesus said, Judge not!" or "We are all sinners". So, they refrain from judging any Christian, especially the ones with whom they worship. Likewise, they discourage others from judging. For they firmly believe that the gospel teaches us not to judge, that the gospel is a gospel of no judgment or condemnation from others. Yet, this kind of profession suits the Devil very well. For when he enters the hearts and minds and conduct of certain shaky disciples, he knows that he will not be judged at all. He says, "Judge not" or "we are not supposed to judge". Yet, you are taking this verse out of its context and therefore misapplying it to serve the purposes of the Devil, not the Lord. So, you need to study the context in which Jesus said it.

## Understand the Context of the Phrase "Judge Not"

For the context reveals that certain religious people show a lack of ability to properly judge others, and therefore are not even qualified to judge, teach, or correct others. So, they should keep their mouths shut! As Jesus said, they should "judge not". So, let me ask you an important question about the context in which Jesus said, "judge not".

## To whom did Jesus say "judge not"?

He said it to the disciple with a log of sin in his own eye. So, after Jesus said, **"Do not judge,"** He then explained the specific reason why He said this. There is a problem with certain disciple's standards of measure which leads them to become unrighteous in their judgment or hypocritical in their judging of others, for in God's eyes, they are doing worse things than others!

Note: Luke 6:37, 38 also records the "measurement" problem some worshipers have in judging others.

## Compare a Log to a Speck

In His explanation of what He meant about the subject of judging, Jesus gave us a figurative or comparative example to help us to clearly see this problem we have among us of incorrectly measuring others. Compare a log to a speck. Are they similar? What is the difference between the two? Is it big or small? Which one is heavier? Which one is lighter? The truth is that there is a very large difference between a log and a piece of sawdust.

Jesus used the log and the speck as a figure of speech to help us to see or judge the different weight of certain sins. The log and the speck represent sin. Logs then are very weighty sins which lead to death (Like the ones listed in 1 Cor 6:9, 10), and some disciples still have them or carry them. Specks represent lighter matters or matters of becoming mature in an area of concern, and all disciples have them or carry them. These specks may not even lead to death, though they are a missing of the mark, sin (SEE 1 Jn 5:16, 17). Yet, disciples who are still carrying around a log of sin stand condemned. They must repent, now! For one cannot even be a disciple of Christ or be saved and still be carrying around a log of sin. These are conversion issues, not matters of maturity in Christ.

### Whom should we let speak to disciples about righteousness?

Regarding sin and Christ and the gospel, whom should be judging, teaching, or correcting others on what is right or wrong? Should we let adulterers and adulteresses be our teachers? Can they teach us about morality? Should we let those who are in the habit of getting intoxicated be our guides? Can they teach us about true enjoyment, the fruit of the spirit not the spirit of the fermented fruit? Should we have greedy or covetous men be our leading men? For what is their chief goal, but to be first among us and to be wealthy or comfortable in life? Should we permit a person who is demonstrating rebellion to their authority to conduct Bible studies with us or our children? How can he, being a rebel, get us to obey God, our Father, by faith? Should we even have these kinds of sinners as members? Yet, some disciples are still these things and more. Should we let witches, warlocks, magicians, homosexuals, liars, or any other wicked person try to teach what is right to disciples? Should we let a sensual soul teach God's children about spirituality? Is not sensuality the opposite of the spirit of God, spirituality? Does Jesus want these types of people and disciples to be correcting, teaching, or leading His people? Certainly not! But if they did do so, then they would be what Jesus called them, hypocrites. For this is how Jesus defined who is a hypocrite. The man or woman with a log of sin in his own eye in the sight of a holy God.

## Consider your own balancing act

A hypocrite is largely imbalanced. Because of a certain large sin that he still practices, he has a problem assigning proper weights to certain things of God, to what is right. He has a conscience problem, a defiled conscience, not clean. Because of his own log of sin, his conscience is defiled to the point that he cannot and should not make right judgments about others. Neither should we let him do so. We ought to silence him, as Jesus would have him "judge not".

So, carefully think about your standard of measurement, of sizing up your brother and what you perceive to be his faults as compared to your own. How big of sins are you still committing compared to your brother? Consider your own balancing act. Who should judge, correct, and teach others in God's kingdom? The one without a log in his eye, the one with specks is called by God to try to remove the logs and the specks from the eyes of others, from the faulty beliefs and practice of others.

## The parable of the log and the speck gives clarity to this verse:

"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, **you who are spiritual, restore such a one**" (Gal 6:1). Now, a spiritual person is a holy person, one who is not caught up in practicing any log of sin. But, the unspiritual person, is an unholy person, one who is caught up in the habit of committing a log of sin. So, in this verse, only spiritual persons, meaning holy spiritual, are called by God to risk speaking to others about their sins, to try to restore them to the holy principles of Christ, and therefore to a holy God.

## More examples reveal that the problem in judging is with certain disciples

For example, Paul addressed the same log and speck problem that Jesus addressed. He said, "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?" (Ro 2:1-3) "But if you bear the name 'Jew' and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?" (Ro 2:17-22). The conclusion is this: There are some who are in an adulterous marriage union, but are preachers and teachers. There are some who claim to understand and approve of the basic doctrines of God, and so they are confident that they can help others to learn them. But they themselves have logs of sin in their own eyes. These are the ones who must not judge, teach, or guide and correct other disciples. Paul said that they will not escape the judgment of God. These kind of disciples are hypocrites and as such, will be condemned to hell.

Both mature disciples and immature disciples can be poor judges. For example, there were certain mature and immature disciples in Rome who could not keep silent when it came to certain matters of individual faith which were of no consequence or matters of opinion (guessing), not truth. They were passing judgment, condemning, or treating one another with contempt when it came to the individual differences that they had over the types of food to eat and not to eat, and the types of days to hold to the Lord and not to hold to the Lord. Both of which, are matters of opinion, not commandment. So, Paul told both the mature and the immature to not judge one another on these matters (Ro 14:1 - 15:4). About these things he said, "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore" (Ro 14:13). So, be aware that poor judgment, or lack of an ability to measure things properly, especially the difference between truth and opinion, is not just among the young, weak, or new disciple. It is also among the ones who are strong, mature, and well taught. So, let us learn to deal with the opinion of men in a commendable way, a way in which it will not destroy the faith of those so opinionated. I recommend that you read my lesson on The Difference Between Truth and Opinion, in the Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible. Yet, some opinions (also called speculations) must be judged, especially by ministers of the gospel, since they are contending against the truth which has been revealed about God and misleading others into sin (READ 2 Cor 10:5). So, we must address speculation (opinions), but in a way to not result in sin on anyone's part. So, some opinions need to be judged and others do not.

Some display good judgment on earthly matters, but not on spiritual matters. Now, spiritual matters are things which are connected to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, and what He is or is not trying to do on earth. For example, some disciples, whom Jesus called hypocrites, could properly judge when it might rain, based on the appearance of the sky, but they could not properly analyze God's visitation in Jesus, based on the appearance and content of Jesus (Lk 12:54-59).

Some passed judgment on Jesus for doing a good work on the Sabbath. So, Jesus plainly told them, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (Jn 7:24). Condemning someone for doing a good work, n any day of the week, is outright hypocritical and divisive. Instead disciples are to love what is good. For example, one disciple whom I taught and baptized, on one Sunday, missed worship, but arrived later. Out of concern, I asked him how he was doing. He said that on the way to church he saw a man's barn on fire, and so he stopped and tried to help him save his animals. Wow! This is a good reason to miss church! He is great guy! Likewise, an elder brother who was involved in teaching a church, whom I was also teaching, arrived after church one Sunday. We were concerned, not knowing what to think. We found out that a hot air balloon landed on his farm, and he had to destroy part of his fence so that a truck could travel through the field to pick up the balloon. So, let us first get the facts before we develop a healthy disgust for someone's failures. Let us discover the reasons why, especially before openly passing judgment for another's conduct. Judge with righteous, not unrighteous judgment.

## Conclusion

Jesus is well aware that many worshipers lack ability to judge righteously. For many misjudged Him and His words, especially most all of the leading religious men. So, He told them to be careful how they judge, to judge with righteous, not unrighteous judgment. For there are serious and severe consequences from God for misjudging the righteous or what is right. Likewise, Jesus warned and commanded the hypocrites among us: **"Do not judge"**. For these are the ones who are still in their sins. They are still guilty of being in the habit of practicing certain forms of adultery, sexual immorality, fornication, sensuality, idolatry, lying, perversions, magic or sorcery, and so on and so forth. For disciples who practice these things stand condemned before God. And if they do not repent of their hypocrisy, He will make this plain, especially on that great day of judgment. They will be condemned forever (SEE Mt 7:21-23). So, there is a time not to judge your brother. Do you know when is that time?

## 2. Yet, There Is a Time to Judge Your Brother

Paul said to the church in Corinth, **"Do you not judge those who are within the church?" (1 Cor 5:12)**. So, a Christian church is supposed to judge its members. Yet, as we ought to see in the context of this passage, a church is only to judge (openly speak against to condemn or sentence) its members who are acting wickedly, meaning conduct which God deems evil, not good.

Now, the word **"judge"** which Paul used here is the same Greek word [Krino], which Jesus used when He said, **"Do not judge" (Mt 7:1)**. This word means to summon to pass judgment, to condemn, to decide wrong or to sentence. So, now we know exactly what these passages are addressing, that is the open condemnation of others.

## A Time to Fear and to Not Fear Punishment

There is a time to fear and to not fear the judgment day. For the demons fear it (SEE Lk 4:34). We know that unbelievers should fear it, and believers should not. Yet, we know that certain disciples, even groups of them, have the faith of demons (READ Ja 2:19). So, they ought to fear the judgment or be put in the fear of it. But, when should a disciple fear the judgment, and when should a disciple not fear it?

### 1. Are you living like Jesus or not?

If you are living like Jesus, then you should not fear the judgment of God. For example, John said about the subject of fearing the judgment: **"By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love" (1 Jn 4:17, 18)**. On what condition may we have this "confidence" of not fearing the "punishment," the "judgment"? John said, **"as He is, so also are we in this world"**. So, the question is how are you living? Is it like Jesus or not? Are you now still confident about your judgment day? Examine yourself!

### 2. Are you willfully sinning, backsliding?

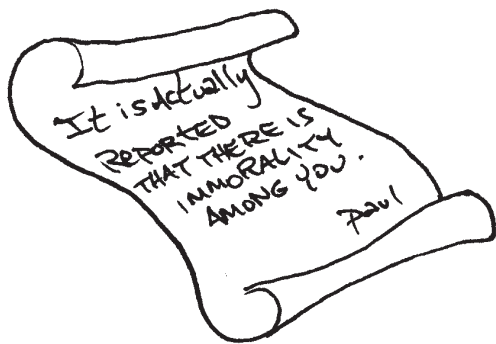
Disciple, for whose will are you living, God's or your own sinful will? **"For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES... punishment" (He 10:26, 27, 29)**. And, **"But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul" (He 10:38, 39)**. So, those disciples who willfully sin, which is the definition of rebellion, also called backsliders, should fear the judgment, and that with terror hope.

### Conclusion

There is a time for disciples to fear and not fear the judgment. Disciples who are living like Jesus would live, those who are not willfully sinning, those who are continuing in the grace of God, living in what He favors, should not fear the judgment. But, those disciples among us who are not living as Jesus would live, those who are willfully sinning, those who are continuing to live in what God wraths, those who are shrinking back, backsliding, should fear the judgment. So, there is a time to fear and to not fear punishment. Do you understand the difference between the two?

Notes: More verses which speak to judgment, consequences, and even a severe punishment (hell) for disciples who continue to sin: Ro 11:20, 21; 2 Cor 10:6; Col 3:25.

# How to Judge Wicked Church Members



Christian churches must properly regulate their membership. The truth is that some members will get into the habit of being sexually immoral, or other such logs of sin, as is the case with the church in Corinth, to which, Paul said, “**It is actually reported that there is immorality among you**” (1 Cor 5:1). Then, he proceeded to tell them how to properly “judge” the disciple who was guilty of this sin.

For it is not fitting to have members who are sexually immoral, among other comparable logs of sin. For we must “**see to it... that there be no immoral or godless person**” (He 12: 15, 16) among us. Indeed, “**For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God**” (Eph 5:5). Yet, as we can see with the church in Corinth, they did not yet know with certainty the condemnable nature of this kind of sexual immorality, which was specifically both adultery and incest.

Likewise, some disciples will get into the habit of being intoxicated. Some will end up being revilers and more (Jude 1:8-16; 2 Tim 3:1-9). We then must somehow purge ourselves of these kinds of sins, and members, if they are not willing to be taught out of them through repentance. For, as we shall see, dismissal of members who are found to be sexually immoral is one of the points in Paul’s lesson to the church in Corinth.

## On Judging Church Members

“It is actually reported that **there is immorality among you** [a log of sin], and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father’s wife. You have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. For **I, on my part,** though absent in body but present in spirit, **have already judged him** who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and **wickedness**, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Do you not judge those who are within the church?** But those who are outside, God judges. **REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES**” (1 Cor 5:1-13).

# Three Things a Church Must Do to Properly Judge Wicked Members

There are three things a church ought to do to properly judge members who are, as Paul said, “wicked” (1 Cor 5:13). Even Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, passed judgment on an evil disciple in Corinth, saying, “For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present” (1 Cor 5:3). He did not stop there, but he also urged the whole church to do the same, saying, “Do you not judge those who are within the church?” (1 Cor 5:12). Paul even called this disciple of Christ, this member of the church in Corinth: “The wicked man” (1 Cor 5:13). So, the subject of this passage and context is how to judge wicked church members. There are three things he told them to do.

Note: For a list of sins which God considers wicked, meaning evil, not good, I recommend that you read the lesson on repentance in the Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments. Then you will know which members to teach out of their wickedness or else you will then have to judge them according to the points in this lesson.

## 1. MOURN Over the Log in a Member's Eye

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn” (Mt 5:4), meaning grieve, especially those who mourn over their own sins and the sins of others! In this area of concern, in the kingdom, do we not need to be more blessed? But, someone will say, “You do not understand the grace of God!” I say, “You do not understand the wrath of God, which is the opposite of what He graces. For God does not favor (grace) sin. He only forgives us of it if we mournfully repent of it.” Consider how the church in Corinth misunderstood the grace of God, and therefore arrogantly misapplied it among their membership. For they were not being graceful, but permissive. Grace does not mean permissiveness.

Note: If you wish to understand what is true grace, what it means, and what it does not mean, what it includes and does not include, I recommend that you read the entire lesson called We Can Be Saved by the Grace of God, in the Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible. For in the kingdom even many leading disciples do not yet know what grace really means, and therefore they are not properly applying it.

For example, about this wicked member, Paul said, “It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst” (1 Cor 5:1, 2). So, they had a member who was committing both the sin of adultery and incest with his own mother, his father's wife! And the church was being “arrogant” about this. Perhaps they thought that the grace of God would cover it. Perhaps they thought that the gospel was a gospel of no judging at all. Perhaps they thought that they were all sinners and that they had no right to judge another, no matter his sin. But, Paul told them to stop being “arrogant” about this and instead start mourning over it “in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst”.

## The church itself must repent over a member's wickedness

For some wicked members, repentance must not start with them, but with his church! Otherwise, his sin will go unchecked, unjudged. Yet, the church in Corinth was failing to repent over a log of sin in a member's eye. This is why they did nothing about it. Even more, it is evident that they knew of his sexual immorality, but instead of grieving over it, Paul said that they were proud of it! They boastfully tolerated it. Perhaps they thought they were being loving, kind, and graceful. But, this is totally the opposite of God's will and God's grace! For “grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ” (Ro 5:12), not through unrighteousness. For “the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 6:9). So, God will not favor (grace) the unrighteousness of sexual immorality and other like sins. Indeed, in another place, God commanded disciples to: “See to it... that there be no immoral... person” (He 12:15, 16) among you. And, “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints” (Eph 5:3). Can any form of sexual immorality be named among your church? In Corinth, it could be named among them. Yet, this is not “proper among saints”.



## Consider What It Means to Mourn

Now repentance requires an individual to have the most mournful, sorrowful afterthoughts about his sin. But at times, the church itself, as an entire body, needs to feel the same mournful sorrow of repentance over a member's log of sin in order to keep itself pure. If certain sins do not make you sick to the stomach, then you will tolerate them because you still have a taste for them. Church, consider your appetite.

When Paul told the church to mourn over a wicked member (1 Cor 5:2), he meant that they were to have the deepest sorrow a person could have. When someone close to us dies, we have the deepest sorrow. We mourn. We are gripped with grief. We are in tears. We nearly fall to pieces over it. We are sickened by it, and cannot eat for a time. We may even throw up. For a time, we stop everything that we normally do in life, even our work, to deal properly with our grief. When we mourn, it may take weeks, months, or even years to overcome it.

This is the kind of sorrow the whole church body must feel when only one of its members is found to be doing something that is wicked in God's sight. But the stomach of the church in Corinth did not churn in sickness over their evil member. Therefore they had no ability to spit him up, that is expel him, out of the belly of their assembly. They were proud. Pride kills repentance. But in another place, Paul said to disciples, "**Abhor what is evil**" (Ro 12:9). Abhor means to shudder, to physically demonstrate repulsiveness. This goes right along with the idea of mourning. A log of sin in one member's eye should make your flesh and bones tingle, shudder, and shake in rejection of it, yet not in anger, but in grief!

## Consider How Ezra and The Whole Assembly Mourned Over Their Ungodly Marriages

When Ezra heard a report about all of the Jews who broke the command of God to not marry certain people (Ezra 9:10, 14), he and they mourned in the following way. "**When I heard about this matter, I tore my garment and my robe, and pulled some of the hair from my**

**head and my beard, and sat down appalled**" (Ezra 9:3). "I sat **appalled** until the evening offering" (Ezra 9:4). "I arose from my **humiliation**" (Ezra 9:5). "I am **ashamed** and **embarrassed**... our **guilt** has grown even to the heavens" (Ezra 9:6). "Ezra was praying and making confession, **weeping** and prostrating himself... **the people wept bitterly**" (Ezra 10:1). "Then Ezra rose from before the house of God and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib. Although he went there, **he did not eat bread nor drink water, for he was mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiles**" (Ezra 10:6). "And all the people sat in the open square before the house of God, **trembling** because of this matter and the heavy rain" (Ezra 10:9).

Like Ezra and the congregation of the Jews, do you now understand the sense of mourning that needs to be felt and demonstrated by a church over sins that will make a person not stand before God (Ezra 9:15)? Be appalled, humiliated, ashamed, and embarrassed. Be guilty, weep, weep bitterly. Do not eat. Tremble!

## Today, Many Have Violated Christ's Beliefs on Marriage

In general, the men in Moses' covenant were forbidden from marrying anyone but a Jew. Yet, today, this covenant is no longer valid or required to be kept, since it was only designed by God to be a temporary one (Gal 3:23-27) until Christ fulfilled it and replaced it with His covenant (Mt 5:17; Ro 8:1-4; Ro 10:4). But, you must not remain ignorant of the fact that today, in Christ's covenant, there are other forms of marriage unions which Christ considers wrong, namely adultery. For Jesus believes that if any man divorces his wife and marries another woman (except if she has been sexually immoral), he is committing adultery (Mt 5:32). His second marriage is not holy, but adultery. Likewise, Jesus believes that if any man marries a divorced woman, he and she are committing adultery (Mt 5:32). The divorced woman's second marriage is adultery, not holy in the sight of Jesus. Like in Ezra's day, many churches need to repent and believe what Jesus believes on this matter, and separate from their adulterous marriage unions. I'm not talking about whether a disciple married a Jew or a Gentile, a believer or an unbeliever. This is not the issue here.

And so, we can see that in Christ's covenant, like in Moses's covenant, there are marriages that must be mournfully repented of, by separating from them, not remaining in them. Church, on this subject, we need to repent and believe what Jesus believes. Today, in my country, many men and women who profess Christ as Lord have married into adultery, like King Herod did (Mk 6:17, 18). And the churches are approving of this and even doing the marrying! Yet, as John the Baptist pointed out to the king, this is not right. Yet, John was persecuted for it. For the king and his wife did not mourn over their sin in order to repent of it. Instead, they murdered John, a holy man. O, the wrath which they will receive for this! Is the gospel the good news of no consequences?

What will you do with your adulterous marriage unions? Will you be like Ezra and the Jews who mourned, assembled, and then repented (separated) from their sinful marriage unions? Or will you be like Herod and his adulterous wife and become enraged at the truth which Jesus spoke and persecute the messenger? Will you be guilty of even more sin or will you clear your conscience of your adulterous marriage unions?

Note: I remember the first time I got sick over certain members' log sin. For example, in November 1999, on the night before Thanksgiving Day, I heard a report of some wickedness among some members of our church. They happened to live next to our house with their five children. But the parents were doing some wicked things. For example, the husband helped set up his wife to commit some immoral conduct with a former boyfriend of hers from high school. He, the husband, actually drove her to the location and dropped her off for this private event between the two. Around the same time, the conduct of this husband was called into question by an owner of a local business. The husband asked one of his teenage employees out for a date. But this teenager happened to be the owner's daughter. So no date! When I heard the report of these things, I was stunned. That very night I began to verify what I had heard. When it was ringing true, by the mouth of more than a few witnesses, I began to mourn greatly. On the next day, I attended a large Thanksgiving event. But I did not eat the main meal because I was sickened over the wickedness of these two disciples. Afterward, my mourning motivated me to admonish the church to quickly do something about this. After quite some time, and after much proving and prodding, the church passed judgment on them by sending them a letter that listed and opposed their wicked conduct [they were not attending at this point]. Later it was verified that both the husband and wife read this letter. The strange thing is that about a week before I first heard the report of their conduct, the husband thought that it would be best for him and his children to attend another church, without his wife of course. Suspicious timing! So about a week before he was found out, he got out! His wife had already been absent for a couple of weeks before we found out. She discontinued going to any church and confessed to another disciple about herself, saying, "I am going to hell." [And although we extended the hope of forgiveness to them, they were unwilling.] She and her husband separated. The church that the husband decided to attend had members in it that I had worked with before, both a deacon and an elder/pastor. I fully alerted them about the wicked conduct of the man.

## Conclusion

If there is a true, accurate, and verifiable log of sin in a church member's eye, not a speck, a sin that God said clearly leads to death, to the lake of fire, then the other church members must not tolerate it or be proud of it. Instead the church must mourn over it so that they can then begin to take the steps to properly deal with it. Jesus praised the church in Ephesus for not tolerating evil men (Re 2:2). Yet, Jesus was against the church in Pergamum for tolerating evil men in their membership (Re 2:14, 15, 16). Jesus was against the church in Thyatira because they tolerated an evil woman in their membership (Re 2:20-24). This is why you must take the next step with members who continue to do evil in the sight of the Lord.

## 2. Assemble to DELIVER Him to Satan

You must assemble the whole church together, with or without the wicked member, to turn



him away from God to the enemy, Satan, for his master is not God, but the Devil. And this for the purpose of somehow trying to save him through the difficulty of it. For example, Paul said:

**"In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5:4, 5)**

So, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by His authority and blessing, you must assemble all the members, in mournful repentance, to deliver or turn over the wicked member to the person to whom he is truly serving, the Devil. For we baptize in the name of the Lord, we pray in the name of the Lord, and we must judge and deliver wicked members in the name of the Lord.

# The Meaning of the Word Deliver

To **"deliver"** [Gk. paradidomi] means to commit, to hand over, to give up, to give over, to deliver verbally. The same word is used to describe Jesus being delivered up to the Roman government (Lk 20:20), and Paul being delivered into the hands of the Gentiles (Ac 21:11).

Notes: It is like what God did and will do to worshipers who start forsaking the worship of Him to worship other things, even backsliders. **"God gave them over [paradidomi] in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them" (Ro 1:24).** And, **"God gave them over to degrading passions" (Ro 1:26).** And, **"God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper" (Ro 1:28).** For, **"the immoral man sins against his own body" (1 Cor 6:18).** So, forsaking the worship of God will lead to other sins, such as a depraved mind, sexual immorality, and the like, which will destroy them in the flesh. It is what Paul did to two wicked disciples, for he delivered them to their god, saying, **"Fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymanaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over [paradidomi] to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Tim 1:18-20).** So, rejection is a teaching tool, a last resort teaching tool. Some times, we need to teach our members a lesson that they will never forget, and should never forget.

## This Requires Going Public with It, Bringing Charges before the Church

Just like Ezra made a proclamation throughout the Land of Israel (SEE Ezra 10:7), to assemble them to publicly charge the wicked among them with their sins (SEE Ezra 10:10, 11), a church must announce a meeting to all their members to do the same. As Ezra did, we must tell the church the condemnable ways in which certain members are being unfaithful to the Lord.

Now, if the church is going to turn a wicked member over to Satan, it is evident that the reason for this must not be kept a secret to the church. It must be made known to the assembly, with grieving. For example, Paul publicly stated the reason why he handed two disciples over to Satan, for blaspheming (1 Tim 1:18-10). And in the case of the immoral man at Corinth, it was to be done for **"the destruction of his flesh,"** his sinful flesh habit that is, his form of sexual immorality (1 Cor 5:4). **"Do you not judge those who are within the church?" (1 Cor 5:12)** Judging means to summon to verbally pass judgment. It means to hold someone or something in contempt or to condemn them (Ro 14:10, 22). It means to publicly charge, oppose, or disapprove of something or someone. So, you must make known, even to him who has done this thing, the reason for handing the wicked member over to Satan. Make the log of sin known to the whole congregation. 91

## You Must Judge/Publicly Charge Even Leaders

Now, just like Ezra publicly charged even leading men with their sins (this included Israel, the priests, and the princes and rulers, who were foremost in sinning in this way SEE Ezra 9:1, 2), a Christian church must even publicly charge their leaders who are sinning in a log of sin. For example, **"Do not receive an accusation against an elder [an older man who is leading the church, aka pastor, overseer, bishop] except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning" (1 Tim 5:19, 20).** So, even older leading men who "continue in sin," must be charged with their sin, in the presence of all members, in a rebuking way. This should also cause any other member to be afraid of sinning in the same manner as he did.

**Consider these examples of judging, charging, and opposing leading men.** The prophet Samuel brought charges against King Saul for his rebellion against God's word (1 Sam 15:10-26). The prophet Nathan brought charges against King David for his sexual immorality and murder (2 Sam 12:1-14). God warned Solomon about his idolatry (1 Kings 11:9-11). Prince Charles of England was publicly judged/charged by a bishop of the church of England for his planned wedding to a woman who was divorced, Camilla Parker Bowles. BBC internet news reported Sunday, March 27th, 2005 in an article titled "Prince 'must atone' for Conduct", that, David Stancliffe, bishop of Salisbury said Prince Charles must be about "the making good of any hurts, the restoration of relationships and serious attention being paid to the relationships fractured or damaged by misconduct." CNN internet news reported Sunday, March 27th 2005 in an article titled "Prince Charles Must Atone", that, "Bishop David Stancliffe said church rules dictate that Prince Charles must atone for committing adultery and he should apologize to Andrew Parker Bowles for breaking up his marriage." CNN said that "The forthcoming marriage has upset some members of the church—which traditionally frowns on church remarriage for divorcees." Foxnews internet also reported on March 27th 2005, that "Bishop David Stancliffe said church rules dictated Prince Charles must atone for committing adultery and he should apologize to Andrew Parker Bowles for breaking up his marriage." "Stancliffe, a church authority on rules of worship, said the apology should come before the April 8th wedding and should include 'making good of any hurts, the restoration of relationships and serious attention being paid to the relationships fractured or damaged by misconduct.'" Now, if Prince Charles would become king, then he would be the supreme governor of the church of England, for that is the law of their nation, but not of God. Does God want an adulterer to be in charge of a church? Would you want a swindler to be your banker? Would you want a man who uses child pornography to be your children's school teacher? Would a sound bank and a sound school keep people around like that very long? Certainly not! Neither should the church. It is a corrupting influence. It leads to a bad reputation before God.

## Conclusion

Since sin is no respecter of persons, for all sin, the discipline of the church should respect no persons, for all must be disciplined. Both the least and the greatest member of a church can be tempted to behave wickedly. In dealing with its logs, the church must not favor the great or the small, but pass judgment on all. If someone persists in a sin that leads to death, then the church must mournfully assemble to judge him, to publicly charge him with his sin, and then immediately remove him from the assembly, the membership, his position, and so on and so forth. This is to be done as a last resort to help him, and the church, learn not tolerate this form of evil. It is the most difficult, most grievous, but necessary teaching tool the church must use.

### 3. Remove [Dismiss] Him, the Yeast! Clean House!

In a certain country, when a just and righteous military commander hears a report that one of his soldiers has committed a most serious offense, he investigates it to establish the facts of the matter. And if found true, he must summon his soldier to a military court or assembly. He must charge his soldier with his serious crime. Then the military dismisses him from the military service with a dishonorable discharge. He can no longer be in the service, that is the military service. He can no longer be a part of his company, platoon, or squad of soldiers. He will no longer be sent by the military to serve their purposes. He will no longer be allowed to keep company with them, including eating, housing, and serving along with them.

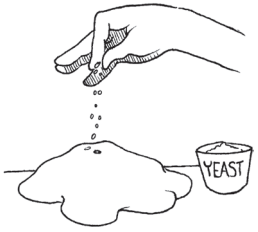


Likewise, when a member of Christ continues to act wickedly, he must no longer be permitted in the service of Christ, in the worship service, the assembly. For he can no longer be a member of the church. He must not be permitted in their company. He must no longer be used in the service of the church. He must not be permitted to keep company with them, to serve, eat, or house with them. He is not permitted to be in their company.

#### It Is What Paul Told the Church to Do

"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? **Clean out the old leaven** that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and **wickedness**, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:6-8). "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you **not to associate with any**

**so-called brother** if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—**not even to eat with such a one**. For what have I to do with judging



outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. **REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES**" (1 Cor 5:9-13).

#### Consider the Meaning of These Words

1. "**Clean out the old leaven**" -- to cleanse out, to clean thoroughly, to purge the man from the church body. Do you realize how quickly yeast makes bread rise? If so, then you know how quickly logs of sin will spread and arise in your church body, unless you remove them.
2. "**Not to associate with**" -- to mix up together, to keep company (companionship) with him, to be friends.
3. "**Not even to eat with such a one**" -- to not eat a meal together with him, especially the most holy Lord's supper. Now, if you have the right attitude about this, one of mourning deeply over his log of sin, then how can you even begin to eat a morsel with him? Are you not sick over it? How can you eat while mourning over his condition?
4. "**Remove the wicked man**" -- to lift up or take away out of a place, to put away this person from the church.

**In conclusion**, church is a place for people (and their families) who are overcoming their sins, through aiming to learn and apply the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is not a place for unbelievers, or even believers who continue in logs of sin, not specks. Church, be an unleavened loaf.

**Note: Be quick to forgive and receive him back**, if it is fitting to do so. For example, it is what the church in Corinth did to the man whom they judged and removed. This is good news for all, on two counts. One, the church obeyed Paul's teaching to judge the wicked man. This comforted Paul. Two, they forgave the man and accepted him back into the church (2 Cor 2:6-11). This comforted him and gave back to him his hope of eternal salvation. Yet, this took some time, as you can see that Paul writes about it in his second letter to them, not his first letter in which he told them to judge the man. In forgiving him, this would keep the Devil from having a foothold in this man's life. He found a pathway back to the forgiveness of the Lord and the assembly, a path of repentance and forgiveness, even of condemnable sins, even ones he committed against his own father and mother. For our God is a God of hope for sinners, not despair. Yet, no repentance, no hope, but fear.

# *Friends, Observe the Regulations for Dealing with False Teachers*

## **GOD HATES A FALSE TEACHER**



Some things God hates. One of them is a false witness, a liar. This would include a false teacher. "The Lord hates... a lying tongue... a false witness who utters lies" (Pr 6:16-19). A false teacher is like a duck decoy. A decoy is a phony bird which is used by a shrewd hunter to attract real birds so that he can then shoot to kill them for food or sport. The Devil uses a false teacher like a duck decoy. He lures many unsuspecting disciples to a person who will shrewdly misguide and beguile them in an important area of truth in order to kill their chances of going to heaven. Understand that, unlike many hunters who hunt as a part time hobby and for sport, luring people to a false teacher is the Devil's full time job. So that you will not become prey for a false teacher, you must learn how to detect and stay clear of one. <sup>93</sup>

### **How to Test the Teaching Spirits**

Below, is a lesson outline on the gift of distinguishing spirits from the Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Spiritual Gifts. This is an important subject which is related to how to treat false teachers. For if you are not skilled in determining who actually is a false witness of Christ and His true gospel, then I recommend that you get a copy of the Bible Study on the Non-Teaching gifts so you can learn about this gift and somehow grow in your ability to distinguish the teaching spirits, whether they are actually true or false, actually from God or not. As a primer on the subject, below consider the points in that lesson.

1. Do not be naive and believe many teachers (READ 1 Jn 4:1).
2. Rely upon the Holy Spirit to help you to overcome them (1 Jn 4:4).
3. Test teachers on what they CONFESS about the PERSON of Jesus Christ (1 Jn 4:1, 2, 3).
4. Test teachers on the SOURCE of their teachings [From where do they ORIGINATE or come?] (1 Jn 4:1, 5, 6).
5. Test teachers on their OBEDIENCE to the apostle's doctrine (1 Jn 4:1, 6).



Good news! John, an apostle, gave us a method to determine who is a false teacher and who is not (READ 1 John 4:1-6). It centers on testing teachers in not just one, but in several weighty areas of truth. You may have thought that only teachers were supposed to be the ones to test others. But you, the student, need to learn how to test your teachers, or would-be teachers, for the spirit of truth or error. Put teachers to the test.

## How to Avoid False Teachers

Not only did John write in a letter on how to distinguish the teaching spirits (1 Jn 4:1-6), he also wrote a letter to a Christian lady and her children to specifically warn them about false teachers, how to identify them and how to treat them (2 Jn). So, from these two things and more, we can see that this subject is an important one to teach and understand. Below, consider the subject and the related points in his letter to this chosen woman and her children.

First, John repeats ideas that he established in a previous letter to all disciples (1 Jn 4:1-6), that there are many false teachers, religious ones, but this time he calls them deceivers who say that Christ was not here on earth as a human being (2 Jn 7). So, in some way, they do not have the proper confession about the person of Jesus Christ. You need to test a religious teacher on what he confesses about the person of Jesus Christ (SEE 1 Jn 4:1, 2, 3).

Second, John said that these deceivers go too far away from the teachings of Christ and do not abide in them (2 Jn 9). So, in some way, they do not obey a significant or key part of the apostles' doctrine. You need to test a teacher on his obedience to the apostles' doctrine (SEE 1 Jn 4:1, 6). <sup>94</sup>

### On Avoiding False Teachers

"The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth, for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we **walk according to His commandments**. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. **For many deceivers have gone out into the world,** those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. **Watch yourselves**, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and **does not abide** in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, **do not receive him into your house,** and **do not give him a greeting;** for **the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.** Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that your joy may be made full. The children of your chosen sister greet you" (2 Jn 1-13).

But like his first letter on overcoming false teachers, this second one indicates that, in overcoming them, some things depend on you. First, whether or not your own walk is focused on obeying the commands of Christ (2 Jn 6). Second, whether or not you keep watch against false teachers (2 Jn 8). You cannot be naive about them. You must keep your guard up against them. So, examine your obedience to the Scriptures. Consider whether you are on your guard against rebels, for as Paul said, **"For there are many rebellious men"** (Titus 1:10). This would also mean many rebellious teaching men. As Jesus Himself said, **"Many false prophets will arise and mislead many"** (Mt 24:11). So, there are many, not a few false teachers.

For just as the Devil interfered with Eve's obedience to God's key command in the garden, which caused Eve to lose her rewarding place in paradise, a false teacher will interfere with your obedience to a key command of Christ regarding salvation so that you will lose your reward.

For John told this chosen Christian lady and her children to: **"Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward"** (1 Jn 8). **"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall"** (1 Cor 10:12).

Heedless, you could **"fall"** at the hands of a false teacher, through captivity to a log of sin, and **"lose"** your **"reward,"** the crown of eternal life. So, once you identify a false teacher, you must not be receptive of him. Instead, in two specific ways you must avoid him.

## King Hezekiah Received Bad Men and It Led to Captivity

"At that time Berodach-baladan a son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. **Hezekiah listened to them**, and showed them all his treasure **house**, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and **the house** of his armor and all that was found in his treasures. There was nothing **in his house** nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, 'What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?' And Hezekiah said, 'They have come from a far country, from Babylon.' He said, 'What have they seen **in your house**?' So Hezekiah answered, 'They have seen all that is **in my house**; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.' Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of the LORD, 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is **in your house**, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be **carried** to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 'Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you will beget, **will be taken away**; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon' " (2 Ki 20:12-18).

Hezekiah listened to and entertained men whom he should not have entertained. He brought them into his house. He was friendly and hospitable to them and showed them a lot of things. In this case, he was not wise with whom he received. This led to devastating results for his offspring. They would become captives. Likewise, when any one of us listens to a false teacher and let him into our homes, and show him things, it will lead to devastating results. It will lead our families into the captivity of sin and falsehood. Jesus said, **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy"** (Jn 10:10). Hezekiah and his kingdom were robbed of their glory and taken captive by thieves who came only to steal, kill, and destroy. But, the thief Jesus was talking about is a bad shepherd, not a good one. Now shepherd means pastor. So beware of false pastors. **"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form"** (Col 2:8, 9). So, from where does a person's teaching come? From the philosophy and tradition of men or Christ's word?

# 1. Do Not Offer Them Any Form of Hospitality

"Do not receive him into your house" (2 Jn 10). But, Christians are supposed to be hospitable, especially to visitors or strangers, right? In Jesus' name, we are supposed to give people a drink of water, especially if they claim to know Jesus. Yet, you should not be offering or giving any of these kinds of things to false teachers. You have God's permission to turn them away from your home without giving them a thing, even if they are needy.

Why let the sower of weeds and tares into your garden? Will he not sow weeds? What will grow, the truth? Will he not get you to think falsely? God, through John, forbid this Christian lady and her children from letting a false teacher into their home. Likewise, God prohibits you from letting them through your door. Do not let them past the threshold of your house.

So, a false teacher must not only be avoided publicly, but privately as well, meaning at home. If you fail to heed this restriction on your home, the results could be devastating to you and your offspring's future, and it could even bring the wrath of God upon you. Consider the following examples of this.

## False Teachers Enter Weak Households

"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless,

conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women" (2 Tim 3:1-6).

So, for unholy or ungodly reasons, false teachers will seek to captivate and lead astray spiritually weak women and their whole households. Therefore, women especially have to be on their guard against false teachers. Remember, John specifically wrote a letter to a Christian lady and her children to be on their guard against them (2 Jn). In the garden, this is whom Satan first went after, the woman. He captivated her with his teaching and led her into sin against the holy commandment. Ladies, beware! Consider a teacher's fruit! Is it holy? As the passage indicates, do they love themselves? Do they love money? Are they disobedient, unholy, lovers of pleasure, and so on and so forth? What kind of spirit do they have, meaning their character? Is it holy or not? For the fruit of the Holy Spirit is holy, not unholy.

## False Teachers Ruin Entire Households

"For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain" (Titus 1:10, 11).

Rebellious is the nature of a false teacher. He is marked by his contrariness to a significant command of Christ. Here Paul specifically refers to teachers who try to impose Moses'

Law on disciples, like circumcision for salvation. These and other types of deceptive teachers upset or ruin entire families or households. And this they do primarily for money. They are greedy for gain. Some will teach whatever others want to hear or believe just so they can get paid for it and get praise from men. They want the income and the praise, not the financial consequences of teaching accurately.

## Open Minded or Empty Headed (Unwise)?

Are you open minded to the point that you are empty headed, meaning unwise? Jesus told the story about a house that was swept clean of evil spiritual influence, but later it was filled with even more of the same. It seems to me that this house was open minded but empty headed.

"Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to **my house** from which I came'; and when it comes, it finds it **unoccupied**, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation" (Mt 12:43-45).

At one time this house, this person, was freed from an evil influence. But later there was plenty of room, vacancy, or hospitality to bring even more evil spiritual influence to live there (Jesus is talking about a whole generation). When he has opportunity, a false teacher will do the same, even with a whole generation, so

to speak. He will bring even more powerful false teachers with him to your house, to your brotherhood, to your nation, to the moon! Why invite messengers of Satan into your home? Do you want to encourage demons? False teaching is demonic. Our house must become occupied, or filled with the Holy Spirit of Truth to the point that we have the ability to resist, avoid, and turn away bad spiritual influence, such as false teachers. When you let in the Devil and his ministers, persuasive temptations will intensify and the spirit of evil will try to indwell you and yours mightily.

## Conclusion

John did not want this Christian lady and her children to lose their reward. So he forbid them from receiving false teachers into their home. This would include any form of hospitality, such as inviting them in, giving them food or drink, giving them a seat on which to rest, and so on and so forth.

Likewise, in order for you to stay in the truth, you must not permit them to step into your home. You must not encourage false teachers by strengthening their deceptive hearts with hospitality or by any other means, such as financially contributing to their causes. This holy unwelcoming attitude may seem unloving. But in the next point you will see the reason why it is so very necessary that you do not help them in any word or deed. Why aid and abet the enemy of God? If you do, God will consider you His enemy. He will consider you a participant with evil workers. The enemy of God is a false teacher, and secondarily those who harbor and support them.

## 2. Do Not Give Them Any Form of Greeting

"And do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds" (2 Jn 10, 11). What! But, Christians are supposed to be polite and gracious to everybody, correct? Now when a false teacher knocks on the door of your house, you might be wise enough to keep him out of it. This is good. But, did you greet him? You must not give a greeting to a false teacher. Do you believe this? The reason you should believe this is because the apostle said that by giving him an encouraging greeting makes you one who "participates in his evil deeds". Through the greeting, you become partners. Do you want to become partners with a false teacher and be charged by the apostle for participating in his evil deeds, even deeds which captivate and lead others astray from the commands of Christ through false teaching?

### Do Not Participate in His Unfruitful Deeds

In another place, we are taught: "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Eph 5:11). Therefore once you know who is a false teacher, expose their errors if you must and tell them where they are wrong, but do not participate in their unfruitful work by greeting them.

### Leading Men (Teachers) Are Warned Not to Share Responsibility for the Sins of Others

Paul told Timothy, who was an evangelist (SEE 2 Tim 4:5), saying, "Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for

the sins of others" (1 Tim 5:22). If we appoint a false teacher, well then, God will hold us responsible for it!

Note: The laying on of hands here refers to the way ministers (teachers, pastors, evangelists) are to be appointed by other leading men and the churches. For example, Timothy had hands laid on him to appoint him to the work of an evangelist (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 4:5). Barnabas and Paul had hands laid on them by the church to set them apart for the work of evangelism (SEE Ac 13:2, 3). And so, in the same letter in which Paul told Timothy to appoint elders to be the pastors, giving him the qualifications for such, he then told Timothy to not do this hastily, or else he could be held accountable by God for the appointee's false teaching (1 Tim 5:22).

### Consider These Forms of Greetings and Salutations

Below are some forms of greetings and salutations (both verbal and physical) that we ought not say, give, or do to a false teacher. Otherwise, as John said, we will be guilty of sharing in his sins. We do not want to encourage a false teacher in our greetings.

Saying "Greetings," "Hi," or "Hello!"

Shaking hands or waving hello or goodbye.

Saying, "Welcome!"

Giving him a holy kiss or embracing him or hugging him.

Saying, "God bless you."

Saying, "The Lord be with you."

Saying, "Peace be with you," or "peace."

Saying, "Godspeed."



To salute, hail, or commend him.

To wish him well, success, joy, or happiness.

To "thank" him or say, "Thank you."

To wish him health, prosperity, or well-being.

To bid him farewell or good day or good bye or adieu.

To receive him joyfully or smile at him.

What are other forms of greetings or salutations? How do you greet people or send them off? How does your culture or nation fittingly greet or send off one another?

## Conclusion

You have God's permission, command, and blessing to ignore a false teacher in any social graces, such as greetings. Does your culture expect you to greet everyone who calls on you? God's culture or kingdom does not expect you to greet everyone who visits you. This is a point of wisdom.

So, we must not bless a false teacher's efforts by offering our greetings and salutations to him. If we did, we would be aiding and abetting his efforts to mislead others, we would be participating in his evil deeds.

And moreover, if we did greet one, it would tend to cause all who hear our greeting to think favorably of him. Therefore, by words that lack any form of receptivity, we must reject a false teacher. As one person said, Christians are defined not only by what they accept, but also by what they reject.

"Christians are defined not only by what they accept, but also by what they reject."

And may I add, one is known by how firmly or infirmly and resolutely or irresolutely he rejects something or someone. So, once you (dear lady, dear son, dear mother, dear father), know who is misleading others to hell on key provisions in the Gospel, especially concerning who is Christ, you must reject him in both word and deed. For example, do not receive him into your home to offer him any hospitality. Do not even greet him. Turn him away.

Now if it is true that we are participating in a false teacher's work when we even so much as give him a greeting, or a smile, then why send him away or leave him with a farewell, good bye, so long, come back, see you later, bye bye, etc.? If we are not to receive a false teacher in a manner worthy of the gospel, then we must not send them off in a manner worthy of the gospel. They are not worthy!

"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves... of their own appetites" (Ro 16:17, 18). On what are you keeping your eye? You have to know where the snake is to avoid stepping on it. Do you know Christ and his teachings well enough to be able to tell who is and is not falsely teaching on them? Do you know the devils among us in the kingdom of God? For they are many.

## The Author's "Open Minded" Mistake

Forgive me as I make mention of some of my folly. For from my youth until this day, I have had the same skin as everybody else, the flesh. It is the biggest organ on the body. And so at times have missed keeping in step with the Spirit of God, the holiness of God. At times I have not always had the same holy attitude of the Lord. For, as you will see, I too have not known many holy Scriptures. Thus, I say we are redeemed, but flawed! Amen.

This is the story of how I greeted and received some well-known false teachers, and therefore sinned. Let me begin by saying that I know of an elder brother, a pastor who would let false teachers in to his house. Citing a redemptive attitude, and being a teacher, he would let false teachers, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, into his home to discuss the truth with them [I do not think that he gave them food or drink].

So, I began to follow that example of letting false teachers in my home, but I regret that I did so. For example, in the early 1990's, when two young Mormon men came to the door of my home seeking to teach us, I told them that I was open to discuss the truth (even though I knew they were false teachers). That was my first mistake, telling them that I was open, because it encouraged them and it led me to invite them into my home. It seems at that time, I did not yet fully know the apostles' doctrine on keeping false teachers out of one's home or I simply thought I had a higher and better motive, like it seemed the elder brother had. Perhaps I thought that I was above that command. I do not know.

Then I made another mistake, which I did not realize at that time. When they first arrived, we were eating, so I invited them in to sit down and have some food; home made biscuits and soup. I fed the enemy! We discussed truth and error for a while. Then they asked if they could come back another time. So I agreed. Now I was not being misled. I knew their mistakes and was pointing them out to them. I was discussing the truth with them in order to help them; a redemptive attitude. But in hindsight, I was weak in how to treat a false teacher. I was open minded and a bit empty headed (unwise). I sinned by letting them in my house and feeding them. After the second visit, they asked if they could bring someone else with them the next time. I agreed. So for the third visit, they brought an even more powerful false teacher with them, someone they called a high priest. He began to describe to me his initial prayer about the book of Mormon, whether it was true or not. Smashing his fist on my dining room table, with the other two Mormons looking on, he said that in

his prayer he asked God if it was true and that if it was not he then cursed Jesus to the fire of hell. After he did that, and after he tried to defend his title of high priest by twisting a Scripture, I was not so subtle in my opposition, but flat out opposed and disagreed with his blasphemous statements. So, this so called high priest indicated that they should leave. So they left. Yet, on another day, the two came back again, without the high priest. So I refuted them to the point that they left for good. But as they left I bluntly warned them that they would burn in hell for their false teaching.

After this, for some days, I felt like Satan was after me. For example, when I took a walk along the east side of the river walk in Harrisburg, PA, there was an older woman sitting on one of the benches on the northern part of the walk. She seemed demon possessed, like she had a familiar spirit. She kept talking out loud, angrily, and in a raspy voice. She seemed to be fuming a bit. It was very unusual. When I walked by her, for it was very close by, just a couple of feet, she repeated the exact same phrase that I left those two Mormons with. She kept repeating, "Burn in hell. Burn in hell. Burn in hell." And this across the street from a Jewish synagogue. Maybe she even sort of satanically chuckled a bit about it. Demonic pressure was after me. Satan was toying with me. I am telling you this so that you will not make the same mistake as I did. Be wiser than I was. Do not tell a false teacher that you are open minded. From that time on, and because I felt like Satan was after me, I do not invite false teachers into my home. I do not feed them, or give them a drink. Nor do I permit my wife or children to do so. Now I know the Scripture better concerning how to treat a false teacher.

Anyway, I am convinced that what I did was against the apostles' doctrine regarding false teachers. It gave them a foothold. You would be better off doing what Jesus told His followers to do in regards to bad teachers, "**Let them alone**" (Mt 15:14). Do not entertain them in your home for a moment. What about you who think you can correct a false teacher? When one knocks on the door of your home, do you think that you are the exception and so you invite him in to try to teach him a thing or two? Why not instead teach him out on the sidewalk of your home? Expose them on the outside, not the inside of your home. Obey the apostles' doctrine. Take a stand against false teachers. Prove it by not permitting them into your home. Do not give Satan a foothold. Keep his feet out of your house.

**Now Complete the  
TEST 2 On Regulations**

## Publicly Oppose Hypocritical Separators

When it comes to turning away from others, some have taken things too far and turned away from people whom they should not have. Diotrephes is a perfect example of this. He was a hypocritical separator. He withdrew from good teachers of the Bible and other people whom he should have instead received, greeted, and been hospitable towards. He rejected the wrong teachers and brothers and he strongly influenced others to do the same. In other words, he did not receive the right teachers, including the apostles, and he would not let others receive them. For this act of hypocrisy, in person, before the whole church, John would publicly oppose, expose, judge and deal with Diotrephes. For it was a form of persecuting Jesus.

"The elder to the beloved **Gaius**, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. Beloved, **you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers**; and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. **I wrote something to the church**; but **Diotrephes, who loves to be first** among them, **does not accept what we say**. For this reason, **if I come, I will call attention to his deeds** which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words, and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and **puts them out** of the church. Beloved, **do not imitate what is evil**, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and **we** add our testimony, and you know that **our** testimony is true" (3 Jn 1-12).

First, John praised Gaius for walking in the truth of the gospel, because he was accepting of brethren, even when they were strangers (3 Jn 3-6).

Second, John encouraged Gaius to help support the visiting brethren who were evangelistic, because they went out to spread the gospel (3 Jn 6-8).

Third, John previously wrote to this church, instructing them to accept the brethren, but Diotrephes who loves to be first among the church, did not accept the **"we,"** meaning the apostles and their instructions (3 Jn 9). Rejecting the apostles' teaching is one of the criteria used to identify a false teacher. Diotrephes did not accept the authority that God set up, the apostles. He wanted to be over them in authority. He liked to have the final say in church matters. How proud he must have been, incorrectly assessing his own self and position in the church. He had an overly high opinion of himself so he put himself out in front, first. He was selfish. He loved to be first, in charge when he was not even called or qualified to be in charge of that church.

Fourth, when he had opportunity, John planned to visit this church to publicly call attention to the hypocrisy of Diotrephes (3 Jn 10). Diotrephes unjustly slandered, bad-mouthed, and accused John and others with wicked words. Hypocritical separators can judge with unrighteous judgment. But they are the ones whom somebody ought to judge with righteous judgment. Diotrephes was causing division by rejecting visiting brethren. And if anyone around him did receive visiting brethren, he would put them out of the church, giving them the highest form of church punishment when they did not deserve any punishment at all. Instead Diotrephes should have praised his own fellow brethren for offering hospitality to the faithful visitors, like John did with Gaius.

For this kind of behavior actually happens today. For example, I discovered a Diotrephes type attitude in a church nearby. The church withdrew from a man they thought was

wrong. After they did this, a sister from their church visited him one time to investigate the charges. When the church found out what she did, they put her out of the church. They withdrew from her. She was not permitted to come to church. When I found out about this (because she came to me over it), I immediately called a brother in the church whom I knew, and who was responsible for this and I opposed him, charging him with wrongdoing. They should not have withdrawn from her. Hypocritical separators believe that everyone is rejected, guilty, and worthy of withdrawing from until they prove to follow everything the hypocritical separator wants. They are overbearing and lord it over others. Diotrephes was lording himself over the church that he was attending. Can you imagine the kind of pressure that existed in the church which Diotrephes was controlling? From whom is he going to withdraw this week? He would threaten his own godly brothers in the church with removal if they did not listen to him and stay away from someone he errantly marked to avoid. Who is it that Scripture commands to be removed from the church? Is it not the unrepentant wicked church member (1 Cor 5:11-13)? There is no command to remove those who are not wicked. Yet, the Diotrephes type does not care about that. He just wants his critical, misguided, unfair will to be obeyed. Hypocritical separators are twisted and extremely unbalanced when it comes to church matters. They destroy God's people. They have no business ruling over a church because their judgment is based on pride, the highest esteem for themselves, immaturity, and hypocrisy.

Fifth, John warned the church not to imitate or copy-cat the evil example Diotrephes was setting (3 Jn 11), because John concluded that Diotrephes was not from God.

Sixth, John praised another brother, Demetrius (3 Jn 12), pointing out three things that bore witness of his good behavior: the truth, the church, and the apostles. Wow! What a commendation. What a brother. He, like Gaius, was a disciple that the church could imitate or copy-cat in the faith, unlike Diotrephes.

## Conclusion

Today, if leaders are judging others with unrighteous judgment, and because to, putting them out of the church, refusing to eat with them, keeping them from eating the Lord's supper, they deserve a sharp public rebuke and scolding in front of all. Diotrephes types must change and get into the habit of receiving, being hospitable, and gathering together with believers.

What are you accomplishing for the brethren? Are you in the habit of withdrawing from them or ministering to them with your talents? The Diotrephes-type treats an acceptable believer worse than an unbeliever. This evil treatment tends to show itself in the form of the highest punishment which the church is allowed to give, dismissal. The Diotrephes-type is plagued with a withdrawal sickness from which he cannot get well, unless the church opposes him and he then repents. Many times, it just keeps getting worse and worse. For example, He might remove a Christian woman from church who has not fully developed "agape" love in her actions. He might avoid an evangelist, and restrict others from meeting with him, because he is not evangelizing as much as he should be. He might withdraw from you if you don't withdraw from the person from whom he has withdrawn. He might separate from someone who is not spiritually mature, though at one time he himself was spiritually immature and is still. The list goes on and on, and it is not made up. These are real present day examples that I listed for your consideration. I know a church which has done this. Hypocritical separators proudly want to be regarded as the authority in the church. This is why they use the highest form of church punishment in an unjust way. They know that people will fear them if they rule over them in this way. Now if Paul and John had to oppose hypocritical separators, even ones who were leading others, what makes you think that in your ministry to spread the gospel you will not run into this problem? Do you think that you will not encounter it? Mistakes are common in the kingdom of God. What are you going to do about it? May God give you the courage to do His will, even as a church.



# Appendix A - On Love

Now the "love" which we are to somehow encourage in one another is in the Greek transliteration, *agape*. This kind of love is best defined, in sixteen of its key aspects, by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. Next let us consider these things further so that we know better how to motivate one another to maintain and grow in these key aspects of our love for God and man. As we consider each of them, let us start thinking and planning individually, and even together, how we can motivate one another in them.

"Love [Agape] is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:4-8).

## 1. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Be Patient, Not Impatient, But to Wait

Love is patient, not impatient (in an ungodly way). To be patient means to be long-suffering, to wait, like when the patience of God kept "waiting" while Noah built the ark (1 Pe 3:20). It took a long time to build the Ark in order to save eight souls and to condemn the whole world. Through it all, God was long suffering. In certain circumstances and relationships, we need to be patient, we need to wait. For example, those who have not yet married must wait until they are married to have any form of sensual, sexual interactions or relations with another. Otherwise, they will become sexually immoral in their impatience. Unless they repent of it, this will bring the wrath of God into their lives. But those who marry must patiently wait until death to depart from that union, whether they are satisfied with it or not (Ro 7:2; 1 Cor 7:10, 11). Christians need to patiently wait for the Lord to return for them from heaven (1 Th 1:10; Ja 5:7). But

some are not patient in this, and therefore have given up hope of His return (2 Pe 3:3-9; 15). What will be the outcome for them? Esau could not wait to eat, and this led him to make a very bad, ungodly, decision (He 12:16). For this he was rejected by God. Likewise King Saul. He could not wait patiently for Samuel to offer the sacrifice (1 Sam 13:1-14). For this kind of impatience he was rejected by the Lord. Love is patient. So let us consider how to motivate one another to be patient with one another, meaning long suffering, to wait. Love suffers long. Let us be patient with one another. Let us suffer long with one another, and wait for each other.

## 2. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Be Kind, Not Cruel!

Love is kind, not cruel. To be kind means to show oneself to be mild or gentle or good towards someone, not harsh, cruel, or violent, wild, or unruly towards them. For if godly people are not even supposed to be cruel to animals (Ge 49:7; Deut 5:14), how much more are we not supposed to be cruel to men, women, and children? For "A righteous man has regard for the life of his animal, But even the compassion of the wicked is cruel" (Pr 12:10). Let us not be cruel, because it is wickedness, a sin, but instead let us be kind. For men, women, and children can be cruel about the least things in life, over the least things. Even man's mercy can be cruel, which is not mercy at all. For mercy is not cruel. Compassion is not cruel at all, but so very loving and pitiful and considerate of others who are in desperate and legitimate need of it. "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy" (Mt 5:7), especially from God. But the cruel will receive utter condemnation from the Lord.

"Men, women and children can be cruel over the least thing"



In our relationships with one another, there are things with which we need to be mild, not severe. For example, in youth to elder relationships, the younger is not to rebuke the older man sharply, but to appeal to him mildly, kindly as a father (1 Tim 5:1). Wives are to be mild, not harsh, sharp, or cruel to others, especially towards their own husbands and children (Titus 2:5). Ladies, women can be cruel, not just men or children. Christian brothers and sisters are told to be mild, not cruel to one another (Eph 4:32). God is mild, not cruel toward his adopted sons through Jesus Christ (Eph 1:5).

Now, a certain servant of God was not kind to the ones put under his charge and authority. He beat them harshly, neglected their physical needs, and got drunk. So the Lord would, in His own words, "**cut him in pieces**" for not being kind, but cruel toward the ones in his care (Mk 24:45-51). So God hates cruel people. They will not be saved. Indeed, if a man is a physically combative (pugnacious) person, he is not even eligible to lead a church, and feed it. For physically combative people are cruel, not kind. They are not spiritual people, but sensual, carnal people (1 Tim 1:3; Titus 1:7).

So let us consider how to motivate one another to be kind, not physically cruel, to everyone, even our animals! For God has regard for all flesh, man or animal. Let us resort to milder ways, spiritual ways, of dealing with one another, not cruel, harsh, or violent ways. Love is mild, not cruel. For "**Let the righteous smite me in kindness [not cruelty] and reprove me; it is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it**" (Ps 141:5). Amen. What a good attitude.

### **3. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Be Content with What One Has, Not Jealous of What Another Has**

Love is not jealous, but content or satisfied with what one has or with one's lot in life, the condition or situation in which we put or find ourselves in life. To be jealous means to burn with zeal; to be heated or to boil with bitter envy, hatred, or anger;

to covet or desire earnestly. We must make sure that our character, our nature, is free from the love of money, being content with what we have, not envious or jealous of what others have (He 13:5).

Jesus said that we must be on our guard against every form of greed (Lk 12:15). The way to do this is to be content in any situation in which we find ourselves (Php 4:11), such as with our wages (Lk 3:14), in our singleness or in our marriage, in difficulties for the sake of Christ (2 Cor 12:10), and more. As Paul said, "**If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content**" (2 Tim 6:8).

But Simon, a new convert, was jealous of an apostle's power and talents, and so he was rebuked very sharply and severely for it by Peter, and deservedly so (Ac 8:23). King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, were not content with their own property, but coveted their neighbor's vineyard. For this, and for murder, God brought them both to a miserable end (1 Ki 22:37, 38; 2 Ki 9:10). God hates covetous men and women.

So let us consider how to motivate one another to be content with what we are and what we have, not covetous or envious of what others have or are as a person. As a personal example, there was a time in my life where I realized that I may never get married, though I would have liked to have been married. So I thought to myself, in my heart, that I would have to learn to be content being single. And as I was starting to be content with it, I got an opportunity to marry a woman named Heidi. Stunning! Yet, this may not be how it works for you! Be content. When you get married, you will have to learn to be content with that as well. For in any calling with which God has called us, we must learn to be content. For it is too easy to be unhappy and unloving in any situation we find ourselves in life. Let us consider how to motivate one another to be content in any and every situation or condition we find ourselves in life, like with our gender, our income, our marital status, and more. For discontent leads to sin, and sin causes people's love to grow cold for one another.

#### 4. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Boast about God, Not Oneself!

Love does not brag about oneself! To brag means to boast of one's self; a self display employing rhetorical embellishments in extolling one's self excessively. Does anyone of us truly enjoy hearing somebody brag? King Nebachadnezzar bragged that he himself did everything by his own power. He gave no credit to God. So the Lord rejected him for this, since this king, and all kings, are simply tools of God (Daniel 4). Likewise, because King Herod let others extol him like he was a god, our God struck him dead (Ac 12). For he gave no glory to God. In his relationship with the Lord, no child of God can boast or brag before Him (1 Cor 1:29). A so called "godly person" tried it once and was rejected by the Lord (SEE Lk 18:11). But like Mary, a humble bond-servant of God will exalt the Lord and lift Him up, especially when He shows regard for His people, which at that time included Mary and Israel (SEE Lk 1:46-55). So let us consider how to motivate one another to extol and lift up God, and His character, His works, not ourselves, our church, or our own frame. And even when we do something good, let us remember the words of Jesus, **"So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done' "** (Lk 17:10). So, as the Psalmist said, David, let us magnify the Lord together, for the humble shall hear it thereof and be glad (Ps 34:2, 3). But those who exalt themselves, the arrogant, will be unhappy with it, for they want to be exalted. Nevertheless, **"Just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord' "** (Col 1:31).

#### 5. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Be Humble, Not Arrogant

Love is not arrogant, but humble. To be arrogant means to inflate, blow up, to cause to swell up, to puff up, make proud, to bear one's self loftily. Satan is arrogant, for he wants others to worship him instead of God. He even tried to get our Lord, God the Son, to worship him. For Satan arrogantly lifts him-

self up to the highest places, making himself out to be God, the truth, and more. In our business endeavors, boasting in overconfident arrogance is outright evil (Ja 4:16). Arrogance is overconfidence. An arrogant church permits sexual immorality among the membership (1 Cor 5:2). Arrogance creates a confidence and a courage which is not legitimate. It is divisive. For example, when Christians affiliate themselves with the names of religious men, creatures (or even name their churches after them) it makes them, as Paul said, **"arrogant on behalf of one against the other"** (1 Cor 1:12, 13; 4:6). Christians who do not yet properly understand both the kindness (the grace) and the severity of God (wrath) will likely be **"cut off"** from God, because they are arrogant and conceited about their salvation, thinking, in over confident arrogance, that they could never be lost (1 Cor 11:17-22). Christians are not to be **"haughty in mind"** (Ro 12:16), but instead prove their own humility by associating **"with the lowly"**, meaning the poor or less prominent in life. So let us think about how to motivate one another to be more loving in the sense of humility, not arrogance. For Christ did not regard equality with God a thing to be held on to, but instead He emptied Himself, He lowered Himself to come and serve us poor, wretched, evil, sinful people, to help us in our deepest needs. Let us imitate His humble example.

#### 6. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Behave Properly (Fittingly), Not Unbecomingly

Love does not act unbecomingly, meaning it knows how to behave or conduct itself in various situations in life. To act unbecomingly means to behave improperly, indecently, uncomely, or unseemly. Men and women act indecently, unbecomingly, or unseemly when they become lesbians and homosexuals (Ro 1:26, 27). In this world, the children of God must behave properly, becoming of a Christian, not in carousing, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, sensuality, strife, and jealousy (Ro 13:13). Christians must also act in a becoming manner towards non-Christians by pursuing a quiet life and in attending to their own work and

callings, not being a busy body or meddling with others (1 Thess 4:11, 12). In an assembly, what we do must be done in a becoming, orderly manner (1 Cor 14:40). Indeed, every Christian must learn how to behave during a worship service, during church, the assembly (READ 1 Tim 3:15). For this is the reason why Paul wrote his entire first letter to Timothy, to teach every man and woman how to conduct themselves during church. A father may realize that it is not becoming to keep his daughter unmarried. So because of this, he will let her marry (1 Cor 7:36). It is not becoming of a Christian to speak about the things that the disobedient do, intimately describing their disgusting and sinful words or actions to others (Eph 5:11-13). Therefore, we are not to be the Devil's reporter, so to speak, because this is disgraceful. Likewise, it is not becoming for any of us to be silly (meaning fool hearty), filthy, or coarse or vulgar in our language (Eph 5:4). We are not supposed to be silly or foul men. So in all the ways mentioned above, and more, let us think about how to motivate one another to know how to behave properly, fittingly, not unbecomingly.

## **7. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Look after the Needs and Interests of Others, Not Only Oneself's (Selfish)**

Love does not seek its own, meaning it is not selfish. To seek its own means to be selfish. **"Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others"** (Philippians 2:4). True love is not merely looking out for its own interests, to satisfy oneself alone. True love also looks out for the interests and needs of others, to satisfy them as well, like the needs of one's spouse, children, and friends in Christ. For even the gifts and talents which God gives us are not for individual use and satisfaction, but for the common good (1 Cor 12:7). Yet some Christians, especially ministers of the gospel, were being motivated to go to church or to serve God in the gospel out of their own selfish ambition, which is an impure motive, a sin (SEE Philippians 1:15-17). They were not focused, foremost, on satisfying the interests of God or

the interests and needs of the churches, but their own interests and purposes. Yet Christians must be motivated to do everything by agape love, not by selfish ambition or empty conceit, considering others better than themselves (Philippians 2:3-7). Paul said that Timothy, unlike other ministers of the gospel, was one who was genuinely concerned about the interests of others and especially the interests of Jesus Christ. So Timothy did not do things out of selfish ambition. He had pure and holy motives. He was not seeking after his own interests, but Christ's. His motivation was out of love for Jesus Christ and His people, not out of vain conceit or selfish ambition (Philippians 2:20-22). So Timothy furthered the administration of the gospel, not his own interests. So let us consider how to motivate one another to be like Timothy, a Christian who is not looking out for his own interests, but for the interests of Christ and legitimate interests and needs of other Christians. For the one who serves God in this way is approved by God, not condemned. Let us encourage one another to serve each other because we want to love each other, not because we want to get something for ourselves from each other. Let us work to satisfy the legitimate and godly interests and needs of every man, woman, and child in our church. In this covetous, self-serving world, this will be refreshing. The covetous, because they are selfish, especially in regards to seeking other people's things, callings, and more, even in the kingdom of God, will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:10). Diotrophes was selfish in leading a church, and this worked to destroy the purposes of God for the church (3 John 9, 10). Yet, overall, if man's interests are erring, selfish, or mistaken regarding the will and purpose of God Almighty, we then must keep God's interests in mind, not man's (Mt 16:23). Let us look out for the needs and interests of everyone, especially the interests of God, who desires all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). For this was the foremost interest of Christ (1 Tim 1:15), Paul (1 Cor 10:33), and should be our foremost interest in this world as well.

## 8. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Be Calm, Not Provoked or Exasperated

Love is not provoked. To be provoked means to make sharp, to stimulate, to irritate, or arouse to anger or to burn with anger, to exasperate, specifically to the point of sin. A father must not provoke or irritate his children to anger or wrath, causing them to act out in sinful ways (Eph 6:4). Likewise, children must not provoke or irritate their parents, or even other leaders in their lives. For when certain children mocked Elisha, the prophet, forty or more of them were killed by mother bears for it (2 Kings 2:22, 23). Likewise, in the Old Covenant, if a son or a daughter was unruly towards their parents, they were to be stoned. So, children, it is very important for you to honor your father and your mother and to show respect for them and for other honorable people whom God wants you to honor and respect, all the days of your life. You must not curse them, mock them, or profane them with foul words, or be unruly towards them. You must submit and yield to them. For consider Eli's two grown sons. They were unruly towards him and God in the service of Lord. This provoked God to put them both to death. As children of God, we must not provoke or exasperate our Father in heaven to jealous anger or wrath by any unbecoming and sinful conduct on our part (READ 1 Cor 10:22; He 3:16; 10:26-31, Ro 1:18; Jn 3:36). Instead, we must keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 1:21), meaning His grace, His favor; we must keep ourselves in the favor of God. In the midst of difficulty, King Hezekiah said, **"I composed my soul"** (Isa 38:13), meaning he calmed himself from his distress. Likewise, even in the midst of difficulty, we need to somehow calm our souls, to compose them. For from this we can postpone, allay, and even deter great difficulties or provocations (Eccl 10:4). Yet King Saul, did not remain calm, but was so provoked by jealousy over David, that he ordered the killing of all of the priests who lived in the town where David visited one of them (1 Sam 22:18). No wonder God would bring him to a miserable end. Let us consider how to motivate one another to not be provoked by others or take things in a provocative way, or be provocative to

others. For this will defuse strife among one another. **"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God"** (Mt 5:9). To make peace, we must not provoke or be provoked. Yet there is a time to be provoked in a godly way. For example, because Paul saw some men committing the sin of idolatry, he was provoked to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to them (Ac 17:16). This is a good way to be provoked. It caused some of them to believe in Jesus as Lord and Christ (SEE Ac 17:34). Let us provoke one another to tell sinners about the true God, through Jesus Christ. Likewise, as the "King James Version" renders it: **"Let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works"** (He 10:24 KJV). And so we can see that we need to somehow "provoke" one another to love and good deeds, as I am attempting to do with this Bible study. So provoke can be used as a good word. But not when it comes to provoking someone to sin, but to salvation or perfection and maturity in the Lord.

## 9. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Not Hold People's Sins Against Them, But to Forgive Them

For example, Jesus was willing to even forgive those who put Him to death, both Jews and Gentiles, priests, scribes and pharisees, governor Pilate and Roman soldiers, and even the two thieves who were being crucified next to Him (Lk 23:34). For we know that one thief repented of reviling Jesus and rebuked the other thief for doing so, and admitted that they deserved to die for their sins, but Jesus did not because He did not sin. So for this Jesus graciously forgave him and promised to take him to heaven that day. But He did not make this promise to the other thief who did not repent. And so when it comes to not holding people's sins against them, even the sins committed against Jesus, we can see that Jesus is ready to forgive, instantly. Yet forgiveness does not release a sinner from the responsibility to repent. We must repent in order to be saved from our sins. Without repentance, no one can be saved. So forgiveness is not to be interpreted as permissiveness, somehow excusing us to continue to do the same thing wrong. Forgiveness is not permission to continue in sin. Sin is unacceptable!

Christians should want to be forgiven. We should want to clear our conscience before God and men. Otherwise, we know that we cannot be saved from our sins. We want to be saved. This is why, that even though men might not repent of their sins, even their sins against us, we still desire to plead with God in prayer to not hold their sins against them. For we earnestly do not want them to be condemned. So we heed Jesus' teaching about prayer, that if we forgive, we will be forgiven. But if we do not forgive men their sins against us, we will not be forgiven by God, but condemned in the lake of fire. We must pray that God will not hold certain men's sins against them, just like we would not want God to hold our sins against us. Yet this does not mean that we are asking God to be permissive with us, and let us continue in sin. So we must also pray earnestly for men to repent. Love does not take into account a wrong suffered. There are times when the justice of God does not require or demand that you take into account a wrong suffered. Consider Joseph, the son of Israel. In the end, when his brothers were worried that Joseph would take into account the wrongs they did to him, they came to ask forgiveness of Joseph. Joseph forgave them and spoke kindly to them, he was mild with them and reassured them that everything was okay between them (Ge 50:15-21). Likewise, when your brother or sister sins against you, but afterward comes to you to apologize or to make the wrong right, in other words the person repents, there is no need to again call into account the wrong that you suffered. Jesus said that if your brother sins against you, even over and over again, but repents, you are to forgive him (Lk 17:3, 4; Mt 18:21-35). We are to take pity on those who repent of their sins, even sins committed against us, for the angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents (Lk 15:7). Likewise, we should be satisfied when someone actually bears the appropriate fruit unto repentance for their specific sin against us. To repent of a sin is such a great accomplishment. But how many, after sinning against us, will come back to us to apologize? And how many of us will rebuke our brother if he does sin against us? We have God's command to rebuke our brother for his sin against us (Lk 17:3). How many of us will require an apology? How many of us will oppose the sins of our brothers and sisters? Yet, agape love forgives those who repent.

Let us consider how to motivate one another to be ready to forgive others when they ask us or plead with us to forgive them. Let us not excuse one another from repenting of our sins and mistakes, but instead be like Jesus, who forgave the adulteress, but warned here to "sin no more". Be the forgiving member, not an unforgiving one. Control yourself! Be full of mercy. Be ready and willing to forgive someone who has sinned against you if they repent of it, apologize to you for it, or ask you to forgive them for it. For some sinners want to clear their guilty consciences caused by their own sin.

### **10. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Grieve Over Unrighteousness, Not Be Apathetic Towards It or Enjoy It!**

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. We are not to be happy with, pleased with, or enjoy the wrong things that people do, the things that are not right, or sin. The psalmist goes even farther to say that we are not to be pleased with, but despise a reprobate [a reject], the person who is unrighteous (Ps 15:4). He lists this as one of the attitudes that the righteous must have in order to qualify himself to live with God, to be saved (Ps 15:1). Not only must we despise a person who is rejected by God, we must also honor those who fear the Lord (Ps 15:4). The young and old must be careful to have this attitude in whom they esteem and whom they do not esteem. We are to abhor what is evil (Ro 12:9). This means to shudder. So we are not to be happy with, but instead must express abhorrence from the shivering core of our being towards what is wrong. This is love. Those who love the Lord must hate evil (Ps 97:10). The fear of the Lord means to hate evil (Prov 8:13). Be the member who grieves over unrighteousness, not the one who is indifferent over it.

### **11. Motivate One Another to Enjoy the Truth, Not the Lie!**

Love rejoices in the truth. Jesus rejoiced in the truth that the Father has hidden things from the wise and revealed them to babes (Mt 11:25, 26). Mary rejoiced in the truth that



God had exalted those who were humble and who feared Him, which included herself (Lk 1:47, 48, 52). The psalmist rejoiced at God's word (Ps 119:162), which is the truth (Jn 17:17). To be loving, we need to be in the habit of expressing gladness at the things that are true, right, and honorable. Be the member who enjoys the truth, not the lie!

## **12. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Forbear, Not Lacking in It**

Love bears all things. The word used here means deck, thatch, to cover (to protect or keep by covering, to preserve). To cover over with silence (to keep secret, to hide, conceal, like of the errors and faults of others). By covering to keep off something which threatens, to bear up against, hold out against, and so endure, bear, forbear. This is a little like when Joseph decided to put Mary away secretly for what he errantly thought was sexual immorality on her part (Mt 1:19). In another sense, wives and husbands need to bear all things. A husband need not air all the dirty laundry about his wife to others, and a wife need not air all the dirty laundry about her husband to others. This is a form of bearing all things. Close relationships tend to surface minor or even major faults in others. So a love that bears all things helps to cover over the rough spots in a relationship. Forbear.

## **13. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Have Faith Toward God in All Things, Not to Doubt Him**

Love believes all things. To believe means to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, to place confidence in. This is faith toward God and different aspects of it were already taught in the Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible, Level 1. So for a refresher, please refer to that study. Be the member who has faith toward God.

## **14. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Have Hope, Not Despair**

Love hopes all things. To hope means to expect, to have confident expectation, expecting what we do not yet have, see, or

have not yet realized. For example, some new disciples hope to be able to quote Scriptures some day. This hope, used with other important Christian habits, such as continuing to listen to and study the word of God, with time, can result in them quoting Scriptures. There are many good things that Christians need to learn to hope in or expect to get some day. For example, the hope of the salvation of your soul (1 Thess 5:8), and the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7). These are two great things to expect to receive on that great day. In another example of hope, the ones who are called to work hard at preaching and teaching the gospel can expect/hope to receive help to live from those with whom they are proving themselves, the ones who are spiritually benefiting from their labors (1 Cor 9:10, 14). It seems that even disciples who are being taught expect or have a hope to financially honor the one(s) teaching the gospel to them. This is the Christian way and it is right. But Paul, an apostle, did not plan or expect to receive from the ones he was teaching for a very good reason (1 Cor 9:12); he did not want to hinder the gospel. So he planned or expected to lovingly endure not being supported for his inspired labor to evangelize, for he was a prophet of the Most High. He was self-supported. He worked. But he and Barnabas had the right to refrain from working (1 Cor 9:6). Of course he did not always work full-time and even took many breaks from working to exclusively teach the gospel to others (Ac 18:5). Can you be career-minded and be an effective preacher and teacher of the gospel? Obviously his career suffered because it was secondary to his efforts to preach the gospel. But his labor for the Lord blossomed. So even a successful preacher and teacher of the gospel, like Paul, at times, may not expect to be paid or may even refuse to receive support so that it would not, in some way, hinder his work to spread the gospel. Who would have thought that support can hinder the gospel? Many who preach seem to think that they need support to preach. Paul proved them all wrong. For various reasons that I will not get into here, expecting to be supported or supporting someone

can hinder the gospel. However, we are expected to in some way support those who are sacrificing their lives to personally teach the gospel to others (3 Jn 5-8). Hope to accomplish helpful and supportive things for them who are laying down their lives to teach the gospel. Be the hopeful member, not the one who despairs.

### **15. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Endure All Things, Not Leave!**

Love endures all things. To endure means to remain or be left, to tarry behind, to abide, to not recede or flee. There are many things that we must learn to endure in order to show agape love towards others, God, or even oneself. For example, a wife who leaves her husband must remain [be left] unmarried or be reconciled with her husband (1 Cor 7:11). So she must not marry another man, for this would be the sin of adultery (SEE Ro 7:3). She must endure being single woman, without having any man, or be reunited to her rightful husband. Even when he was considered a criminal for doing such things, Paul did not flee his responsibilities to preach the gospel, but instead he said that endured all things so that the chosen could be saved (2 Tim 2:10). This was like the enduring love that Christ had for us when He went to the cross. He was considered a criminal. And why was He considered a criminal? It was because, like Abel, His deeds were good but the people were like Cain towards Him. This was extremely hard to endure. Why would He endure such a thing? It was so you and I and others could be saved (He 12:2). What kind of love is this? No one has loved us as much as You Lord. Thank You for the enduring love which You have shown towards the ones You have chosen. May it provoke us to have enduring love towards the chosen in our lives. May it help us endure the discipline that You deal out to us as Your sons and daughters as You address us each individually in the areas we need to become righteous (He 12:5-13). May we not faint under Your discipline. May we consider it important to be disciplined by You. We count those blessed who endured suffering (Ja 5:11).

You count those blessed who abide in Your love and who endure to the end (Jn 15:9; Mt 10:22). Give us an enduring love. But there are things to endure and there are things not to endure. There are things that we can endure, and there are things that we cannot endure. There are things that we must endure, and things that we do not have to endure. Lord, help us to mature in the commands of Christ enough to know the difference between the two. Be the member who endures all things, not leaves!

### **16. Consider How to Motivate One Another to Be Reliable, Not to Fail or Backslide**

Love never fails. To fail means to alight, like getting down from a camel or donkey, to descend from a higher place to a lower, to fall; to be unfaithful; to backslide. Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail (Lk 22:32). We know that it did for a moment. But in the end, Peter's faith surely did not fail. Lord, give us a love that does not continually fail the testing of our faith. "Let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained" (Php 3:16). Be the member who lives reliably.

### **Conclusion**

As Hebrews 10:24, 25 indicates, we are commanded to attend worship with a purpose, to somehow cause each other to focus on and grow in two key Christian character traits, love and good works. So, attendance to worship services is not the only good habit that a disciple ought to demonstrate. He is also obligated to think about the other worshipers in attendance for the purpose of somehow making them grow in love and good works. Each disciple needs to think about how to cause the greatest and abiding Christian character trait to be in and amongst its members. **"But now faith, hope, love, abide these three: but the greatest of these is love [agape]" (1 Cor 13:13).** Do not forsake the church. Come to worship. Yet, before you do come, think, consider, and plan how you will risk motivating some of the other worshipers in it to love and good works. **"Pursue love" (1 Cor 14:1).** Love, love, love, love love!

"I am very impressed by this study and am really glad the Lord has opened my heart for instruction. I pray this thirst for his word will never depart my heart as my journey continues with him." Laurie, Tennessee

"This course is awesome. It takes you to new levels with the Lord. I just cannot tell you what it has done for my faith and walk with God. It is absolutely wonderful." Tammy, USA

"The whole lesson was an essential part of my growing in the knowledge of the gospel and it has broadened my mind in my purpose in the believing and worship [related to ] of the gospel." James, New York

"This is an important lesson, because some believers feel that once they are baptized they only need to go to church every so often to claim their Christianity, not understanding that once they begin reading the word it will give them instructions and guidelines for what they need to do as a believer. It is funny that I am completing this lesson now, because last week at Bible study I was ministering to a sister, and I was telling her that she needs to be in fellowship with other believers, because if not, her being alone gives Satan time to attack her in whatever area of life she is weak in at that particular time. And she agreed with me. I have been in touch with her about 2-3 times weekly giving her encouragement." Karen, Texas

"Sometimes the church easily just ignores some of the divine regulations of the Lord and that is away from the truth of the Word." Marthinus, Ireland

"I learned that the Church has a duty to expose all immorality among members. The people in the Church just let things slide like adultery, homosexuality, divisions among members because they "don't want to judge". My worship has changed since I started these immaculate studies. I stopped my 3, 11 yr old, and myself from going to that P-anonymous Church." Lee, USA

"The whole lesson helped clear up my misunderstandings of obedience and consequences of disobedience! What struck me the most is how the church dealt with my ex-fiance and I when we had a child out of wedlock now seems more clear to me, the reasons they did what they did." Annette, New York

"What impacted me the most is how out of touch we are. I will indeed learn of Gods ways and worship Him with an open heart and mind." Marie, Kansas

"This study has shown me that most churches fail to follow God's commands regarding worship. I think it finally dawned on me that God has regulations for worship that we may not always understand. For example, going to church isn't only about me. I need to understand that provoking others to love may be what I need to do. Better attendance is my goal now. What impacted me the most was the section on false teachers. Wow! I was raised to have 'manners' but have never felt good about or never have allowed Jehovah's Witnesses into my home. I read somewhere once that we can knowing or unknowingly invite Satan into our homes. I was reminded of this while reading this section. Sometimes we do not recognize these false teachers for who they really are; Satan's helpers. The lesson gave me some great examples of what not to say as greetings. I have learned a lot from this study." Mary, NY

# *What People Are Learning*

"I was raised in church all my life, but I have never had the teaching impact me so much as I have through this study. I feel like I am reaching new levels in my Christianity and that is really exciting." Molly, Louisiana

"What impacted me is the lesson on not forsaking the church. About two months ago, Jesus gave me a hunger to work and live the love (agape) of God in the church and this lesson just came at the right time to motivate me and teach me about it when I needed it the most. I believe it was sent by the Lord at the right time." Marthinus, Ireland

"I can see how names have divided the church without us knowing it. There is so much division in the church without our realizing it. I thought there was nothing wrong in the names of denominations, but I have realized that it is the root cause of the division in the church. I wonder where the church is heading to? May God help us." Joseph, Nigeria

"The most new important thing that I learned in this lesson is that there are so many false teachers out there teaching people false doctrines about Jesus, and leading people away from the church, and that we should not greet them, be hospitable to them, or invite them into our homes. I believe that the thing that impacted me the most was how we must deal with the people in the church that are immoral. I always believed that if people were doing things that were not of God that He would judge them and that it was not our place in the church to judge them or to have them removed." Lola, New Jersey

"What impacted me the most was the Lord's Supper, the teaching about it." Samuel, Texas

"What impacted me the most was the divine regulations of worship." Uwoma, Nigeria

"The most important [new thing I learned] and the thing that impacted me the most was the fact that the Bible says women should not speak in the church. That women should not teach in the church. I have taught Bible study when my Pastor was out of town. I'm concerned now that it is not right." Anonymous

"I learned how much I really don't know about my behavior in my walk with God." Robin, California

"What impacted me the most is studying who God is. We need to know who God is and how He operates " Michelle, Texas

"All the missing pieces are being put in place by how thorough this has been put together." Cornell, Puerto Rico

"I think the most I have gotten out of these lessons is how little I know about the word, I love it." Donald, Nevada

"The most important new thing I learned was the full explanation and clarification of the rules to follow when you gather. What impacted me the most is the discussion on breaking bread and the full discussion on "Worship in Spirit and Truth". This is very good material. I feel that I am learning a lot and reinforcing old teachings. Every lesson makes me even more eager to get the next lesson." James, Arizona

"I learned how to worship in spirit and truth." Fitzgerald, New York