

# Christian Living in a Corinthian World

by Albert Barr

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*Albert Barr discusses the challenges of living a Christian life in a morally corrupt society, emphasizing the need for internal transformation and genuine love over mere external standards.*

**Duration:** 1:00:28

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19

**Topics:** "Christian Living"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living a holy and loving life as a testimony to others. He shares a story about a rescue attempt gone wrong to illustrate how some people's outward appearance of holiness can hide a mean and unloving heart. The preacher also highlights the need for balance in Christian living, acknowledging the freedom and liberty that Jesus has given believers. He references 1 Corinthians 6:9 to remind the congregation of the moral purity expected of those who will inherit the kingdom of God.

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## Transcript

Thank you, Brother Hedstrom, and of course the privilege is mine. I thank you. Now, we are talking about Christian living in a Corinthian world, because the Corinthian world is very much what we live in.

We mentioned yesterday that Corinth was one of the most wicked cities of the first century. Just immoral, and yet right in the middle of that was a little group of Christian believers. And they had written to Paul concerning some problems that they had, and Paul had heard of some other problems they had, and so he writes the Corinthian letters to deal with those.

And we mentioned that some of those problems that Paul had heard about was the problem of division and a party spirit, and we are going to deal with that before the week is out, of immorality and lawsuits. And then they had written concerning marriage, things offered to idols, church customs and conduct, spiritual gifts, the resurrection and even the taking of the collection. And we are going to deal with some of those.

But we started out yesterday talking about a particular problem that they had in Corinth that is not only noted and alluded to as Paul tries to help this small little church that had come out of this pagan environment, but also was pointed out even by secular writers from the day. And that was what we have called the smudging of the genders, the breakdown of the roles of the distinctities between men and

women. And that is one of the issues that Paul was dealing with, and we started talking about that.

So we are going to take that up and try to complete that today, looking at what was said. Let's be sure that we are all up to speed. Let's see where we want to start on this.

Basically what Paul had said was that these Christian believers had had a very dramatic, very wonderful supernatural experience with God. They were born again, they were new creatures in Christ Jesus, and he enjoined them to moral purity. In fact, let me just maybe start with that scripture.

It would be a good place to begin this. You remember that he said in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 9, he gives us this list of conduct that will not be part of those who are going to be in the kingdom of God. He said, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

And those two terms right there we especially looked at, because that's really in the area we're talking about. I'd point out the NIV, for example, takes those two and calls them male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders. So we're talking about gross moral perversion there.

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. So he is saying that moral purity is required of them. In spite of their environment, moral purity is required.

He's also saying that moral purity has been obtained by them, because he goes right on in verse 11, And such were some of you. But he says, Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Now, we're not going to go into that too much, but probably what he's talking about is simply a regenerated people here, because we are initially sanctified when we are saved, and there's good textual reason to think that's what we're talking about.

Not all these people were sanctified in the sense that we mean, having received that second blessing of heart purity, but they were all regenerated, and they had obtained that moral purity. So he's saying, You've had this internal work, and he says that this regenerated heart changes our values, changes our motives, changes our purposes, so that it produces a complete internal change, a change of attitude towards the things of the world. And then he's telling them, and that's basically how he's dealing with their questions concerning these issues, not just this issue, but many of those that stem from a moral perspective.

He's saying that this internal change works its way out to the outside. And certainly I believe that, and I believe that you do, too. He would write back in the 2nd Corinthian letter in chapter 5, verse 17, he would say, Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, that old things have passed away, and all things are become new.

So it's an external change. So over and over again, throughout not only the Corinthian letter, but the Pauline epistles in general, Paul teaches that the Christian is a changed person. We almost think we shouldn't have to even stress that among holiness people, but my observation is, yes, we must remind ourselves of that.

Christians are different, and that attitude is being eroded to a great extent, but Christians are different. We are different. We are moving in a different direction than those who are not Christians.

In chapter 5, verse 17, again, he reminds us of that. In chapter 6, verse 17, he says, Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive

you. The Bible still says that, people.

So the Christian is a come-outer, not as it's been caricatured today, and it means in some people's vocabulary, and many of us have reacted, and rightly so, to a harsh, holier-than-thou, ungracious, unkind, self-righteous, pharisaical statement of being a come-outer, and yet the fact still remains that the Christian is a come-outer. We come out from the world. We are separate from the world.

He would write the Roman Church in Romans 12, verse 2, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, completely changed, metamorphosed by the renewing of your minds in Christ Jesus, that you might approve that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. He would write the Ephesian church in Ephesians 5.11, and say, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. So the Christian is a person who is separated from the world, and this is meaningful to us today because we live in a Corinthian world, all around us.

I mentioned yesterday, and I'm sure you picked it up, that in all honesty, I don't like dealing with externals. I happen to believe an internal religion that oozes out. And in fact, people . . . let's just be candid.

All around us, we've got a generation of our young people that are leaving us. And it's a very easy thing for us to stand back and say, Well, bless God, they didn't want to pay the price. And there are a few of them that may indeed have a rebel's heart, but it's been my privilege to talk with many, many, many of those very young people, some of them preachers, some of them lay people, and to cry through the night with them.

And my heart's been broken as I've realized that they have not rejected true Bible holiness. They have rejected a parody of it. What they have rejected is something that is simply hung on the outside.

And the very first thing, if Paul is telling these Corinthian Christians anything, it is this separate life that you are going to have to live if you are going to please God, and if you are going to reflect the image of Christ in this Corinthian world. That these external things, these very questions you're asking me of external matters, must first and foremost flow from a transformed heart. That you must first and foremost be a new creation in Christ Jesus.

And if you get that backwards, you have a terrible thing. I am convinced that there is nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, more beautiful than true holiness, more winsome, more attractive, and nothing more hideous and ugly than this fake thing in which your religion consists of nothing but standards and nothing but hang-ons, just a fake external cosmetic holiness. And you're going to understand that I believe with all of my heart that the Christian does indeed dress modestly and humbly and so on.

But people, you can do all those things, and if you are mean-spirited, you are doing more harm to the cause of holiness than that person who may be struggling with those very issues. So many of our young people, and not always so young, have been turned off by people whose sum total of their religion is a bunch of standards. Traveling around the country, I sometimes pass a restaurant, a member of a big chain of restaurants around the country.

I've not eaten in one, but their slogan out front is, No Rules, Just Right. I'm quite sure they mean something totally different than what I'm going to construe it to mean, but I read that and I said, That's my religion. No rules, just right.

Now that's a little overplayed, but I'm here to tell you people, our Christianity does not consist of a bunch of rules. It consists of a heart that is set to do right. And you don't just do it because it's a rule, you do it because it's right.

Because you have a heart that's following hard after God. And those of us who do believe in personal piety and careful living, there are always those who will, the moment we stand for almost anything, will say that we are Pharisees, and say that we are legalists. You show me the rule, Brother Barr, that says I can't.

Show me the rule in black and white in the Bible that says I can't do it or I'm going to. Will you explain to me why that is any less the heart of a Pharisee? When you appeal to the law or the absence of the law, instead of to grace and to love, why is it that I am a Pharisee because I want to walk carefully with Jesus, and they are somehow at liberty because they want to show me the rule? I'm just saying, people, God's holy people won my heart because there was a mindset of love and dedication, that they were living for another world, that they were not living in this world, they were pilgrims and strangers here, this wasn't what it was all about. And it's still a winsome thing today.

And yet the tragedy is, of course, that so many who profess the name of Christ and profess holiness are mean and little and ungracious and unloving. I remember hearing, some people's religion reminded me of it, I remember hearing about a, in fact it was told me about by some school kids, so it was about an old maid school teacher, said she was walking along a river bank and she fell in. And so one of the men along the bank dove in to rescue her and then swam out and caught her by the hair and started to pull her back in but her hair came off, it was a wig.

So he turned around and reached back to get her again and bumped her eye and it fell out, it was glass. But he finally got her by the leg and started to bring her in but it came off, it was wood. Finally he turned to the other men on the bank and he yelled, you all men dive in, let's try to save as much of this woman as we can.

And I'll tell you what, I've been around a lot of holiness people that looked good until you started bumping them and stuff started falling off. And under all those trappings of holiness was a mean, pitiful, little shriveled soul. God grant that it not be said of Alabama Bible Methodism.

God make us a people that are good and gracious and loving and when people come into our churches and come across our paths and move to our, be our neighbors, yes they'll notice that we dress a little differently and that we don't, but they're a lasting impression of us. The thing that sticks in their mind is here's someone who loves God and loves me and cares about my soul. God makes it so.

I've met more than one Christian who had all the trappings and honestly people I want to bite them on the leg and tell them I was playing dog or something. So Paul is telling these Christians that they are to live a different life. And he says there are reasons why in this Corinthian environment they must live this separate, different life.

Now when we say separate, we're not talking about going up on a mountaintop, finding a cave and waiting for Jesus to come back. The Bible does not teach isolation. It teaches insulation.

We are to be in the world, but not of it. Jesus prayed for his disciples. He said, I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, father.

I'm asking you to keep them. We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and we are to hold our jobs and attend our schools and mow our grass and to be Christian and holy all the time we're doing that very thing. So when we talk about separation, we're not talking about isolation.

The most holy person is not the one who most successfully isolates himself from this world. It is the one who most successfully by the grace of God keeps his heart in tune with Christ and separate from the bubbles of this world. So Jesus says that there are certain things, certain reasons why, I mean Paul says there are certain reasons why that we must live a different life from that of our Corinthian neighbors.

He said, first of all, it is as a testimony. In fact, it's rather ironic, but it's possible that the liberty that comes with being a Christian, the liberty of the gospel was the very thing that had caused some of them to become careless, in fact, to flaunt their liberty. People, if I were to tell you what I believe about Christian, you know, I've had people, it's come back to me, people say, you know, Brother Barr is one of the most transparent people we ever met.

He just, no, I'm not. I thank you for that, but I'm not. And I must tell you, there are things I don't tell people.

And I, if I were to tell you what I believe about Christian liberty, you'd probably run me off. I believe that Christian is, is more free than most of us can ever imagine. Now, you know, let's just tell it like this.

You remember that there was a time when the, when, when the new Jewish converts were concerned about this very issue, you know, what is the Christian lifestyle? And a council met and decided they'd tell them what the rules were. And you read that and you say, all right, here it comes. Going to tell them how to dress, going to tell them.

And people outside of they shouldn't commit fornication. Don't drink any blood. You pretty well got it.

You got it pretty well. Everything else goes. I believe the Christian has tremendous liberty, awesome liberty.

And the tragedy is that so many of our holy people do not enjoy that liberty. Too many of us still picture God as some kind of a, can I say it and you understand, a spoil sport whose sole purpose in you is to see that you don't have too much fun. It really bothers me.

Everywhere I go, people, our people, good people, young and old come out of the woodwork, still struggling with this thing. I told the lady the other day, let me tell you something, woman. I said, if, if you treated your children like you apparently say your heavenly father treats you, you'd be in jail.

Our heavenly father is not a child abuser. It's a good and gracious and loving God. And it is no wonder to me that so many don't want what we have.

Heard old people be moaned, I don't understand why these young people don't want what I want, what I've got. I'm not young and I don't want what you've got. It is a marvelous, wonderful, thrilling, happy, joyous thing to be a Christian.

I'm having a marvelous time being a Christian. Any sorrows been in my life, it's been where I was less than I should be. I've had more fun.

Yes. Fun. Being a Christian.

I've been places. I've done things. I've had adventures that I'd never have had if it hadn't been that Jesus came into my life.

In our Christian school, we had a, we had a young lady, a teenage girl and friendly and nice in many ways. Family had a little bit of money and she, she was a little vain, I think. And she eventually didn't want to even abide by those Christian school rules.

And so she, she went somewhere else, but she still maintained friendship with some of our kids and would come by to see us from time to time. I remember one time she came by and, and, uh, she was saying, well, you know, I said, uh, just want everybody to know that she would be, uh, she said, told me, said, you know, we're, we're going to the Bahamas for her, for the, uh, for the weekend. I said, yeah, I know I've been there for weeks and months.

I remember one time my wife and I, we were staying in a hotel in Palm beach, Florida. Didn't cost me a dime. I'd been put up there because I was a preacher, a holiness preacher.

And I remember as they took us into this, you know, when, when you travel like I do and you stay in some of the motels that I stay, this thing, I, you know, I just stood back and looked at it and the butler took us to our room. And as he opened the door and ushered us in, he said, now I hope that this ma'am and sir, that you won't mind staying in this room. And I looked around, uh, why would we mind staying in this room? He said, well, some people don't like to stay here and said, this is the room that the Kennedy boy was found dead in, which doesn't bother me at all.

And he left. And I looked at my wife, a little holiness preacher's wife and a little fat holiness preacher. And we're staying in the room where the Kennedy's stay when they come to West Palm Beach or Palm beach.

I thought, you know, it sure is tough being a Christian. People, I've had the most marvelous time being a Christian and I have a lot of fun at it. And every now and then I run into one of these sour grapes that think Christians aren't supposed to have fun and find fault with some of the things I've done, having fun.

Some of you could afford to loosen up a little bit. It's just a lot of fun being a Christian. And I know that that sounds trite and it can be trite, but it certainly isn't the way I'm meaning it today.

It is a marvelous thing to be a Christian. My heavenly father has been good to me, be on my wildest imagining. And so Paul was telling them, he said, you must live this separate Christian life.

First of all, because it's a testimony. And so even in the midst of this freedom, you do not see people. One of the key rules of Christian living is balance always in forever balance.

And so Jesus comes along and gives us awesome liberty, but then he turns around and he reminds us that we have awesome responsibility. And so he would write these Corinthians in chapter eight of this letter in verse nine, for example, but take heed lest by any means your liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. And through thy knowledge, shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died.

But when you sin, so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. And if you have a problem with it, so be it. But there is many a thing that I do or do not do because I have a responsibility to my brethren that I personally do not believe I would have any problem with, but I have a responsibility and I am determined by God's grace to not trouble the saints to confuse the issues, to

muddy the water, or to start a trend that some may not be able to stop where maybe I could.

Is there something wrong with that? Is that stupid? Is that pharisaical and legalistic? The people, there was a time I hated people. I hated all people. I'm serious.

I just hated people because of my background. I hated people. People hurt you.

And Jesus transformed my heart. And I have come to understand that Jesus died for people. And people are more important than my taste and my preferences.

And so if there is not a principle of God's word, then I can adjust my taste and my preferences to accommodate others in the family of God who have different tastes and different preferences. And I know people that consider it good religion and holiness to tear a church all to pieces over the color of the carpet. I'm just sorry, people, but I'm not going that way.

I'm not going down this road of compromise, but I am not going to become one of these... Oh, I'm glad to hear somebody laugh. You know, it is Christian to laugh. Talk about saying amen.

You can laugh, too. That's all right. I used to work.

I worked for 11 years as an engineer in a plant. There was only one other young man there that acted like he really knew the Lord, George Harrison. And he wasn't part of the Beatles, okay? And George was a good guy.

He was of a different persuasion than I, and wherever places we didn't agree, but he loved the Lord, no question about that. And we had good fellowship all those years. George ran the tool crib.

You know, had a Dutch door, and you went to that Dutch door, and you'd check out parts for repair and maintenance or tools. And almost any time you went there, there'd be a salesman or two there giving him brochures for anything from motors to bearings. George attended a little charismatic church, and because we were friends over the years, we attended each other's church at special times just out of respect for each other.

I'm sure he did not agree with everything he heard in my church, and I certainly didn't agree with everything I heard at his church, but we respected and loved each other. I don't know exactly what the problem was. George himself was certainly a fine person.

But there must have been a problem in the church somewhere because they went through about two preachers a year, okay? So I never did know what exactly was going on as far as that part was concerned. But I remember one time I went back to the tool crib to get something, and I noticed kind of subconsciously out of the corner of my eye a man standing there in a suit, but that was common. Salesmen were there all the time.

So I walk up and I say, how you doing, George? He said, all right. I said, how you doing? I said, well, not doing so well, George. I said I got my well down crooked and all the water ran out of it.

And I, you know, in the back of my mind, I, you see, I don't have enough skin on my head. When I open my mouth, my ears close, all right? And so I'm really not quite picking this up, but George has kind of stepped back and he's mouthing to me, but it's not registering, so I'm going right on. And I'm saying, yeah, George, you know, he said, I said, I, I, all the water ran out and I said, but I pulled it up and cut it in short

lengths and I'm making fence post holes out of it.

And I said, I, I stacked them up in the garage upside down. Of course, I didn't figure that children would fall out of the well and I'm, I'm going on like it's in Georgia. And I felt a tap on my shoulder and I turned and it was this salesman who turned out to be their latest pastor.

And he said, uh, George tells me as you were coming up that you're a preacher. I said, yes, sir. He said, would you explain to me how you can be a preacher and lie like that? I said, well, why you mean? He said, you didn't get your well down crooked and all the water ran out.

Well, I thought he was kidding at first, but George is behind him saying he ain't kidding. And it turned out he didn't believe in laughing. Christians didn't laugh.

I didn't tell jokes. And you know, after a little while I realized that. So I told him, I said, well, sir, I, I said, I just always assume you're lying.

Deception is, is where you deliberately mislead someone. And I assumed you would understand that I didn't get my well down crooked and that the water ran out. And I said, I guess my real mistake was I overestimated your intelligence.

And I, some of us could learn to laugh. Wouldn't hurt a bit, but people, it is a Bible principle that you and I, as Christians, that we are concerned about the feelings of the other Christian. And yes, I know that you cannot accommodate everybody's notion.

I know that. And I know that somewhere out there, I don't care what you do. There's somebody out there that thinks you shouldn't.

But most of us, if we'll ask God, we have enough intelligence that God can help us to where we can be reasonable. And when it's someone who is sincere and earnest, and most certainly when it is a, a feeling that is held by several following Christ, then why in the world can we not lay aside our little preferences, be willing to forego some little liberty that we may enjoy in order that we not trouble the church of God, that we contribute to the health of the body of Christ. He's saying that they should live this different life than their Corinthian neighbors for their own spiritual safety.

Back again in chapter six, verse 12, he says, but all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient. Now I know by the way that most commentators would tell you that Paul is here quoting his critics, that his critics were going around saying, you know, Paul says he can do anything. I don't know.

I'm going to be honest with you. Just as I say this, I don't feel comfortable. I feel like I'm stretching things to say that, because I think Paul was saying that there is at least, there at least is a sense in which as a Christian, all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. So he is saying that there is this, there is this liberty, but it is, but there is responsibility. And I dare not play around with anything that even might get out of hand.

And so for my own spiritual safety, even though something may be, I might could do it. I will not. If, if there is any sense that it's a dangerous ground for Christians to get into.

So he's saying we listen to God on that kind of thing. We walk in light on that kind of thing. And I realize that I have, that I have shared this, this little point before here, but I feel like it must be said right here.

If it's going to, if we're going to really adequately cover this, but do you remember that the Christian is a light walker? We walk in the light. In fact, young people, and I can say that because my heart especially wants our young people to get this straight, but all of us, do you, do you read? There are two requirements, the best I can see two and only two requirements in the Bible to get to heaven. You must be born again and you must walk in the light.

Yes. I'm a second blessing holiness, man. And walking in the light will take us into holiness, but the Christian walks in the light.

And the moment you start backing up on life, you are in serious difficulty. And by the way, I'm also very conscious that that light doesn't necessarily come from Albert Barr. And that just because I say something doesn't make it like to you.

Although I recognize also that as a preacher of God, I have a responsibility as he lays it on me. And that's what I'm trying to do here today to preach those things. And that possibly God will use that to get light through to you.

But ultimately God gives you that light. And I know it. And I leave that both that responsibility and that privilege with you, but on every issue, whatever issue you've been struggling with, the Christian walks in the light.

So the years basically here's what is this, whatever issue it is that you are working with right now that you're struggling with God's talking to you. You're trying to get this straight in your life. I mean, here's how it works.

I'm going to get away from the microphone. Sorry about that. But let's just say that way over here is immoral, is immodest, is proud, or vain, whatever it might be.

And then way over here is a position on that that most anyone would say, well, that's certainly Satan's business. You know, maybe a little radical. In fact, it may be a little radical.

And somewhere in between that, on almost every issue, there is a gray area. And whether you like that or not, that is true. Not every single issue, but most issues there will be a gray area between those two extremes.

And of course, that's part of the problem. Given that there's a gray area, where do I stand? Well, if you are a conscientious, sincere Christian and understand you are living in a Corinthian world, then what the Christian does is they take a stand, certainly well over in the safe zone. I mean, there's something seriously wrong with your mind or your heart.

If you want to stand just as close to the edge as you can, and I hope it's your mind, you can get to heaven, stupid. So Christian comes well over into the safe zone, and that's where you take your stance. Hey, this is where I'm going.

This is going to be my position. This is how I'm going to live. This is how I'm going to dress.

This is what I'm going to do. This is what I'm not going to do. This is where I'm going to go.

This is where I'm not going to go. This is my position on this issue. But of course, the moment you do that, here's what will happen.

I'll guarantee it. The moment you say that, somebody, the devil will see that somebody comes along to laugh at you. And they will say, Brother Barr, that's where you stand? This is where I stand.

Where would you please explain to me the difference between right there and right here? I mean, what difference does an inch make? Don't you feel just a little bit pharisaical and legalistic arguing for an inch? And people, if you got half sense and one eye, you would feel sort of stupid arguing for an inch. I mean, if you're an honest, conscientious person, you would acknowledge, yes, I probably would. There really isn't much difference between right here and right here.

And for most things, that is true, whether you like to admit it or not. But, having said that, if having said that, you say, you know, there really isn't much difference between right here and right here. And I would feel sort of like a legalist arguing over an inch.

You're right. You've got a point. I move to right here.

The moment I do that, let me tell you what will happen. Somebody will come along to laugh at me. And they will say, that's where you stand, Brother Barr? Yes, this is where I stand.

Would you please explain to me, Brother Barr, the difference between right here and right here? I mean, what difference does an inch make? Wouldn't you feel just a little bit like a legalist and a Pharisee arguing over an inch, Brother Barr? If you are an intelligent, conscientious person, you will acknowledge that there really isn't much difference between right here and right here. And that you would feel just a little bit strained to argue over that inch. But if having said that, you then move to right here, the moment you do, you know what's going to happen.

Yeah. So what does the Christian do? You find a position that is safe, that is well over into the safe zone. A place where you're at peace with God.

And that's where you stand. And you do not call the person who decided to stand here a liberal. You simply say, look, this is where I stand.

I have peace with God here. I believe it is a safe position. I'm not laughing at you because you stand here.

I'm not looking down on you because you stand here. But don't bother to ask me to move because I'm not moving. Because if I start pulling up my anchor every time somebody giggles, I will eventually wind up over... It's a matter of settling some things.

And if you will listen to God, God will tell you where you're safe. And if the rest of us keep our mouth shut, they'll do pretty well. So he's saying you live a different life for the testimony.

You live a different life for your own spiritual safety. You live a different life because you belong to God. Look at verse 19 of chapter 6. What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price.

Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. In other words, he's saying you... In fact, people, this whole area... I haven't forgotten this gender thing. Because this whole principle of keeping strong distinctives between the man and the woman, the roles they play, the clothes they wear,

the way they look, their jobs to do, is part of representing the divine economy of things.

The relationship between Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, and his church. And when we muddy the waters in this area of gender, we are scarring this very important symbolism God himself put together the family to represent. So we are symbols of the church.

We belong to God. We are not our own. And that ought to be argument enough.

So one of the chief testimonies of the Christian in Corinth was to be their submission to the role that God had assigned them to play. And of course, Corinth was altogether against that. Reading in Corinth about female gladiators... You see, people, God created gender for more than just procreation.

There are theological reasons why God has put us together the way we are and why he gave us the assignments, the roles to play within our home. It's why that in the broadest sense, it is God's purpose that the man be the provider and that the woman be the keeper of the home. And that's not preached to put guilt feelings on anyone.

In a day when I realize that it's so expensive just to live, and I know young couples who both are working, and not to keep a boat in the yard or a new car, but just to keep the bills paid and the wolf from the door, and I'm not here to lend any additional burden to you. And yet I think we all know, if we read the Bible, that the general purpose of God is that the man be the provider and that the woman be the keeper of the home. And to the very best that you are able to accommodate that plan, you're going to be the happiest and have the best home.

And if you attempt to do that, to please God, I believe God will help you to do it successfully. And yet having said all of that, that is not to make anyone feel guilty because of pressure or because of emergency or because of your situation. You let God deal with that.

And yet we all know that is the Bible. And why is that? What does it make nowadays? Does it make any difference? Yes, it makes a difference, because we have a heavenly Father, a heavenly Bridegroom, who says the church is His bride, and He is to be our protector and our provider, and we are to be in submission to Him. And if we aren't doing those things and playing those roles in our home, we are not representing the relationship between Christ and the church to the Corinthian world that is watching us.

Anything that tends to break down the distinctions between the sexes is playing into the hands of the antichrist forces. And so God has set some standards and has always been, that not just holiness people, but sincere people, sincere, earnest Christians have always recognized that the Christian is different than the world. Anytime we decide that we are going to debunk the last generation and we are going to walk off and leave all these standards that our forefathers and founders and grandparents had, we are saying a lot of things, and some of them are very egotistical, that we are smarter, that we are closer to God, that we know our Bibles better, that we are more sensitive to the voice of the Spirit than some of these great men of the past.

I'm just for one not prepared to say that. And so Paul tells them that there are some distinctives that he wants them to maintain in this Corinthian world to help maintain this distinction between the sexes and their roles, to keep from muddying the water, from smudging the genders. And the Bible stresses that.

It means that we dress differently. And by the way, styles change, and Christians change with the styles. There is no virtue in the dress style of the 50s as opposed to the 90s.

But always the Christian dresses modestly. Always the Christian dresses with rules of modesty and utility and humility and economy and a whole bunch of principles that God has given. Science goes on.

The day may come that you'll be wearing plastic clothes or metal clothes, and when that time comes and they've got the advantages, the Christian will wear them. But the way that they are cut will still meet God's standards of modesty and simplicity and humility and utility and economy. But that's so again.

I knew of a Baptist preacher, good man, loved the Lord, no question about that. Had many, many good standards. Obviously there were things we didn't agree on.

And he was very, very strong. Came down very hard on women wearing pants. But he went, took a bunch of his church on a picnic, and in the pavilion over next to theirs, a bunch of cross-dressers were having a picnic too.

A whole bunch of guys out there dressed like women. Sickening, repulsive, to the point that this preacher couldn't handle it. He went marching over there and came down on one of those guys, a man dressed like a woman with a dress on.

And the guy pointed out, said, some of your women are dressed like men. What's the difference? Aren't there clothes that are pants that are made for women? Yep, sure are. Aren't there places in the world where both men and women wear pants? Yep, sure are.

What about the first century, Brother Barr? What was the first century back then? Well, I'm not living in the first century. Isn't it just part of our culture, Brother Barr? Yeah, an increasingly pagan culture. But what if you lived in China, Brother Barr? I don't.

What if you were a woman and you were escaping from? I'm not. And I'll just be frank with you people. It is my conviction that any job that requires you to literally dress like a man is not a woman's job.

And I say that kindly. And I recognize that there are extremes of climate and there are situations that people have to work out their own. And as far as I'm concerned, that's between them and God and none of my business.

And I will love you and have confidence in you, but I will say that still with the conviction that God's people are very sensitive to these issues and will have a mindset that says, look, let's not start down that road. If you want to say, well, Brother Barr, you know, you still, you talk about this stuff, but it's all principles. There's no ironclad Some of you aren't going to like me saying this, but 99% of the things that you and I stand for can be argued away by the very same arguments that are being used to say that it's all right for women to wear pants and culottes.

I've got just as good a scripture for that as I do that I shouldn't drink wine. You want us to all just say, okay, from now on, Christians can all drink liquor. I don't know that I can take and make an ironclad case that you shouldn't drink liquor.

I'm just telling you like, Hey, yes, I know the scripture too. And that's why I'm saying, I don't believe I can make an ironclad case. Do you want us to start saying, okay, no longer we have a stand here.

All of us holding this people can drink liquor and just about everything that you do hold dear. Even those of you who maybe have slipped in so many areas, there are some things you hold dear. And I'm here to tell

you that the very same argument you're using to defend your position will be used to rip away those last things that you do hold dear.

If you aren't careful somewhere, the Christian simply says, look, it isn't laws and rules. It's an understanding of broad principles that God said, look, Christians are careful here. We live in a Corinthian world, but we are citizens of another world.

Brother Bart, don't you believe that there are Christian women who wear pants? Yes, I do. Sure do. Also believe that there are Christians that smoke cigarettes and drink liquor, but I don't want you to do it.

There was another one that Paul would share with these people, and that is the hair issue. You remember it, the 11th chapter of our epistle. Let's read it together.

1 Corinthians 11, let's begin with verse 3. But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

For that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it would be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head for as much as he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man. By the way, that's why men don't wear hats when they pray.

Just where the custom comes from for the man is not of the woman, but the woman, the man, neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord.

For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God judging yourselves. Is it calmly that a woman pray unto God uncovered does not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her for her hair is given her for a covering.

But if any man seemed to be contentious, we have no such custom. Neither the churches of God. And by the way, I've heard people take that last verse and take everything that came before and say, but he's saying here, it doesn't really mean anything.

Now that would be real smart writing. Spend a dozen verses saying something and say, but I really doesn't really matter. What he's saying is that we have no such custom within the church of a woman having short hair.

Now there's a, there's a lot here to be debated. You can get into the original word of command. What does it mean and what does it mean in context? But it just seems to me that an obvious reading here.

And by the way, there are many scholars who do not take this position and make it a, a, a matter of culture and custom, who still will tell you that the original readers of this understood Paul to be saying that a woman should not cut her hair at all, that it was a shame for a woman to pray with her hair, with her head uncovered, that the covering that she wants to wear was the one God gave her. That was her hair, which

was given her for a covering. And that if she would not have that long hair, if she would not have that covering God gave her that she might as well, if she's going, if it's going to be cut, then it might as well be shaved.

And I know you can debate them. And by the way, I knew one scholar who took this position, presented it before a bunch of preachers. And when it was over the, uh, one of the preachers that he walked by, uh, holding this convention, walked by and said, Hey, I can, I got a stack of commentaries this high that says that you're wrong.

And he thought people, I've got a stack of commentaries this high that says that holiness is not a biblical doctrine. You can't preach your stuff from commentaries. Are we holding this people? Does it not at least say here that there is a principle that a man has short hair, a woman has long hair.

And I know, well, well, how long is long brother Bart seems reasonable to me that long is as long as it grows if you keep the scissors out. And if that is short in some culture or, or some particular race or some particular person, then so be it. I mean, did he take a whole chapter practically here to talk about something that really has no pertinence at all? And in my conviction, and it's one of these things like I talked about yesterday, then I am not 100% sure I've read the cultural interpretations, but I think I'm 90% sure that the Bible is teaching that the Christian woman does not cut her hair.

I say that understanding not everybody sees that some people have never heard even heard that. And I'm also reminding you, it's one of those things that if the tables were turned and I was 90% sure the Bible was saying a woman could cut her hair, but I had a 10% question. I would not want my wife to cut her hair because I'm not into playing games with God for 10%.

I know it is not wrong, not for a woman to cut her hair. If she's doing it in order to please God and to conform to her understanding of the scripture. Now, all, all of this, of course, is said with an understanding that God knows that we are flesh.

If you've got to have brain surgery, you're going to need your head shaved. All right. We're not talking about, I'm talking about cosmetically.

In fact, one of the great tragedies that I remember as a teenager, there was a, uh, just a little mountain preacher and his wife, good and godly, conservative, careful, holiness, people loved the Lord. We had him for a revival meeting, come down, good preacher, just solid people. And just a teenager.

I really loved the guy. His wife was a beautiful lady. She'd never cut her hair because she'd grown up in the holiness movement and they'd been taught that was not, and her hair, they told me would, would drag the ground and it was thick and massive.

And, and I mean, she had a head of hair. She had a heart attack. She wound up in the hospital.

Didn't look like she's going to survive. They were fighting to save her life. They're in the hospital in those days of struggling and her just, just lingering between life and death.

The doctor said, look, we've got to take some of that hair off. It's just too much of a drain on her body. She can't handle it.

And this preacher struggled and prayed. This was a strong conviction with him and his wife. Finally felt like to save his wife's life.

He would allow that to be done. And even after it was done and she did survive and came out of the hospital, you'd have never known that when she had so much hair and she wore it up, you'd never know. But when the word got out that that had been done, the whole church that walked off and left them didn't want anything to do with these people who'd compromised this standard.

God have mercy on such little shriveled, pitiful souls who do not understand the difference. But having said that, I'm convinced that it is the mindset of the Christian that here is an issue where we are not going to let the Corinthian world press us into its mold. Well, Brother Barr, if you are saying then that that word kamao, long hair, means uncut hair, then you are saying that the man, if he cuts his hair at all, he's met the standard.

Yeah, that's true. In other words, a man can have real long hair. As long as he trims it a little bit, he's met the standard.

Yeah, I confess that's pretty much what I'm saying. If I'm going to be consistent, that's basically what I'm saying. But again, I think we're seeing here that God is saying a principle that there be a strong distinctive that you shouldn't have to look three times to decide whether it's a she or a he.

And by the way, this to you guys out there, you always run into this thing in some cultures, in some areas where I talk that, hey, Jesus had long hair. No, he didn't. No, he didn't.

He may have had a little more hair than some of us. He probably had what was, you know what? People did not, men did not wear long hair in the first century. You want to know what men, how they wore their hair? Look at the bust of the, of the Romans, of the emperors.

That's how they wore their hair. Men didn't wear long hair in the first century. Now they wore long hair during the Renaissance when the paintings that came down to us of Christ were painted, but not in, not in when Jesus was actually alive on earth.

And Paul saw Jesus, probably not with his physical eyes, but he saw Jesus and Paul's the very one who says it's a shame for a man to have long hair. Well, Samson had long hair and he got in trouble when he cut it off. Yeah.

And you know why Samson had long hair? Samson had long hair because it was a shame unto him. It was part of the Nazarite vow. It was part of the humiliation.

You can't drink liquor. You can't eat grapes. You can't eat raisins and you can't cut your hair.

And it was part of the very shame of it. It's part of the humiliation of that vow that he didn't cut his hair, but you aren't a Nazarite. I haven't said that I hear preachers preach a lot of other things about hair.

Women have to wear it up. Sorry. I don't find that in the Bible.

Sorry people. Some of you aren't going to like me for that, but I I've heard some of the most idiotic stuff for versions of the scripture used to try to say a woman has to wear her hair up and I'm not going to preach that kind of garbage. Now it seems reasonable that if you never cut your hair and God caused it to grow reasonable, there'll probably be a time when it'll be most practical for lots of reasons to wear your hair up.

But let's stick with the Bible people. If you want our kids to throw the whole ball of wax out, you preach that kind of stupidity locked onto the biblical principles and they'll reject the whole thing. I hear people get up and preach to women about having bows in their hair.

It strikes me as kind of a woman sort of thing. What kind of thing do I get up and preach bows out of women's hair and I'm wearing a tie. I think it looks kind of pretty.

While we're on this whole hair thing, as I just mentioned yesterday, we have no biblical grounds for forbidding a man from having a beard and or a mustache. And let's, I mean, people, let's stick with the Bible. I had a guy come to me one time after I preached and he said, well, my problem is why do they wear it? I said, well, I don't know why they wear it.

I said, he might wear it out of pride, in which case he's got a problem. But I said, I don't know why you're wearing that tie. I don't know why you're driving that car.

And it's none of my business. I can't see your heart. Some of you people apparently have x-ray vision.

One of the greatest things I ever learned was that some things don't concern me. I was telling Brother Buston last night, very first pastorate I ever had. It's a wonderful place.

If you survived a year there, you were definitely called to preach. No question about it. I mean, people, it's been decades ago and I wouldn't turn my hand, admit making mistakes.

And the people I know, I've learned a few things. I had the foggiest idea how to solve about 90% of the problems that were in that church. But I'd only been there just a couple of weeks.

And I discovered that between two of the main families in my church, I mean, they both had offices in the church, that there was a longstanding family feud. I mean, one of these Hatfield and McCoy type thing, got nothing to do with the church. It went back for generations, but it kept these two families in the church from ever talking to each other.

And it was that place in my whole new church. So I thought, young preacher, boy, it's my, my responsibility to go straighten this mess out. So I went trotting over to the first house and people, they allowed me very slowly.

Now these, I'm their pastor. They allowed me very slowly to back out of the house with my hands in the air and a loaded 12 gauge shotgun in my belly. And they allowed me to get in the car and go, for which I'm very thankful.

Because as I came to know them, I realized if I'd have misbehaved, they'd have blown me away. Now people, I'm a real slow learner, but I learned fast at the end of a shotgun. And I'm real thankful for that because I learned just like that.

Some things aren't any of my business. And I know people been preaching for 50 years, hadn't figured that out yet, but I learned it as a young man. Some things are none of my business.

And people, when it comes to motives, let's admit we don't know what motive is going on in the human heart. So let's mind our own business. And you got a youngin, or not so youngin, in your church that's trying to walk with God and has measured up to some of the standards, but hasn't dotted every I and crossed every T. Thank God they got a mindset to go as far as they've gone, love them and give them

some room.

Well, that's enough. Let's go home.

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