

The End of the Commandment

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a pure heart and loving others selflessly and unconditionally, as inspired by God's love.

Duration: 46:21

Scripture: Psalm 24:4, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 22:39, 1 Corinthians 10:32, 1 Timothy 5:8, James 1:27, 1 Peter 4:8

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a woman who realizes that she has never tried to share her faith with two people she knows. She decides to approach them, but they reject her because they remember a party from many years ago where Christians did not show love. The speaker emphasizes that God wants us to show love and not be hypocritical in our actions. He encourages listeners to have genuine love for others and to let the Bible produce this love in their hearts. The sermon also includes a story about a man who was living a double life but was convicted by the Holy Spirit and made things right. The speaker urges listeners to deal with any unresolved issues or sins in their lives and allow the Holy Spirit to lead them.

Transcript

I'd like to read one verse from 1 Timothy 1 and 5, and we're going to sing in a minute, so don't get too far away from the instruments. It says, now, the end of the commandment is love. The English word charity is actually a Latin word, caritas, and it means love.

The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and you know, wherever in the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a genuine faith. So here we are told that the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a genuine faith. I'd like to begin by asking this question, you'll have to answer it for yourself, why do you read the Bible? What is your reason for studying scripture? We could ask another question, why did God give us the Bible? That question might be a little easier to answer.

There are many reasons, actually. God wanted us to know things, of course, about himself, and things about ourself, how we were made, how men fell, what sin is, what salvation is, and of course God wanted us to know things about his spirit, things about the future, things about the nation of Israel. It's very important, because unto that nation were committed the oracles of God.

Those are a few reasons as to why God gave us the scripture. Why do men read the Bible? Some people read the Bible to prove that eternal security is true, and other people read it to prove it's not true. And some people read the Bible to prove that speaking in tongues is a sign of being baptized in the spirit, and other people read the Bible to prove it's not.

And some people read the Bible to prove that their particular denominational group is right because their name is found in the Bible. You can find the word Baptist. The fellow said to me one time, don't forget John was called John the Baptist.

And then the Nazarenes can say, well, you know, it talks about the sect of the Nazarenes in the Book of Acts. And the Church of Christ people can say, well, it talks about the Church of Christ in the Bible. And the Church of God people can say the same thing, it talks about the Church of God in the Bible.

So there's quite a few groups that can claim biblical authority for the particular church name that they have. And you know, some people are great in this area. What is your reason for reading the Bible? To impress somebody else, to give yourself a better feeling that you've done your duty as a Christian? Well, our text tells us why God gave us the Bible.

At least this is a larger reason. This is behind anything else we have mentioned or anything else we might think about. There are three reasons why God gave us the Bible.

The phrase, the end of the commandment, has been translated, the goal of our instruction. That's a good translation, the goal of our instruction, or the reason for which God gave us the scripture. The end of the commandment.

I was raised in a Presbyterian church, and as a boy with my three brothers, we learned the short of Catechism. And the first article of the Catechism, you know, questions and answers. The question was, what is the chief end of man? That means, what is the chief reason, you know, as to why God put man on the earth? And the answer was, man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

Now my brother Bob, who's now with the Lord, was killed tragically a year or so ago. He's a school teacher in Penticton, B.C., and he told me he was in his twenties before he discovered that he'd learned the response wrongly. He'd learned it this way.

Man's chief end is to glorify God and to endure him forever. But there are many Christians who are enduring their God, not enjoying him, and they really wonder how they're going to put up with God for all eternity and sit in a cloud, play in a harp. It's going to be so dead.

Well, man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. The Bible says in God's presence is fullness of joy, and in God's right hand there are pleasures forevermore. And there's another verse that tells me that we're going to be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house.

So whatever it is, we're going to be abundantly satisfied. That's what it says. It says in the book of Romans, chapter 10, that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

That means that the law of God, the Old Testament law of God is in mind here, that the law of God, as you study it, it will lead you, it will bring you eventually to Jesus Christ. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. The end of a commandment.

The commandment is just a phrase, sometimes meaning the word of God. The same Greek word is used by Paul in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 when he said, You know what commandments we gave you by our Lord Jesus Christ? So it's the word of God. And the word of God is moving us along to one particular point.

Actually three things are mentioned here. But they belong, they just belong together. So the end of a commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith.

Now is that why you read the Bible? What about that lady that burnt out five Bibles in twenty years? She didn't know why she was reading the Bible. She was reading it day and night, and I presume she was marking her Bible a great deal, too. Yet somehow it wasn't doing anything for her.

She had a lot of Bible knowledge, and many Christians have a lot of Bible knowledge, but they really don't understand their text. They haven't been reading the Bible with this in mind. And if I have been reading the Bible with anything less in mind than our text, I haven't been reading it rightly.

And it may explain why I'm the kind of person I am, why my life doesn't seem to be satisfying or full as the Bible says it ought to be. So the end of a commandment is love out of a pure heart. Let's start with a pure heart, because you obviously can't have this love unless you have a pure heart.

That's what it's saying. Now there's an old saying, I think it was some cynic that coined it, he said that holiness is like strong perfume, a little goes a long way. And there are some cool Christians that, you know, they quote that verse from Ecclesiastes that says, be not righteous over much, for why should you destroy yourself? Say take it cool, take it easy.

The prevailing philosophy among evangelicals today is threefold. Don't rock the boat, don't stick out your neck, and don't get involved. Play it cool.

You might get into trouble. And that's why we have so little power and so little joy. All right? Is it possible to have a pure heart? People say, oh brother, in the kind of world we live in, you're going to talk about a pure heart? That's not possible.

Oh, I'll agree. It's not possible. If you sit with your nose, you know, in front of the boob tube for hours on end, the way many Christians do, it is not possible to have a pure heart.

Because you're exposing yourself to the wrong things. You remember Paul said, whatever things are pure and honest and just and true and right, he said think on these things. But if I watch all this maim and violence and lust and all the rest of it on these TV programs, it'll have an effect on your heart.

There's no way. You can't tell me it won't. A fellow came and challenged me one time after I'd said something, at least in the meeting years ago.

And he said, I don't agree, Pastor. He said, I watch all these programs on TV, they don't have any effect on me at all. I said, then my friend, one of two things is so, either you're a liar or else you're not a man.

He kind of looked at me, I said, let me ask you something. I said, isn't it true that there have been times when you've been on your knees praying and you're really having fellowship with God and suddenly, while you're in the middle of this beautiful time of fellowship with God, your mind was flooded with some obscenity you saw on a TV set? And he hung his head and said, yes, yeah, it's happened. I said, I know

it's happened to you because it's happened to me.

And I said, haven't there been times when you were reading the Bible, you were just enjoying it, and all of a sudden your mind was taken over by something you saw, something evil, something violent on TV, and it took over, yeah, he said, it's happened. I said, I know it's happened because it's happened to me. All right, a pure heart, oh yes.

You know, Jesus said in Matthew 5, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. So as far as Jesus Christ was concerned, some people have pure hearts. Now Paul talks about this in Titus 1.15, he says, unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving there is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Some people can look at anything and not think evil. Other people see a, you know, a dog running across a field, or a rusty tin can or an old cardboard box in a field, and they start thinking evil. Unto the pure all things are pure, unto them that are defiled and unbelieving there is nothing pure, because their whole mind and conscience has been defiled, you see.

Now remember how in Hebrews 12 it says, follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord? That's a great text. A lot said in the Bible about holiness connected with love, by the way. All right.

It is possible to have a pure heart. Do you know that pure, that word, is not used of God, it's used of men. Because pure basically means purified, and God never had any sin.

Holy, yes, God is holy, and he's perfect, and he's without sin. But he never had to be purified, and we have to be. Isaiah 118, come now, let us reason together, sayeth the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

A young Jewish Christian, about 28 years old, came to us after a meeting one time, and here he'd gone through college and seminary after his conversion, but he said, frankly, I haven't gone into the ministry because I just never felt that my life was clean. And so we knelt together, my song leader and this Jewish Christian and myself, we knelt together and counseled with him about renewal. He poured out his whole life before God, was totally honest and humble.

And God touched him. Do you know what he said when he got to his seat? He just stared at us and he said, I have never felt so clean in all my life. Do you know where he is now? He's pastoring a church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in an area where there's a lot of Jewish people living.

Well, he said what? I have never felt so clean in all my life. He'd been a Christian for years. All right, God says, come now, let's reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Jesus said all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto the sons of men. And that's not to encourage Christian people to sin.

That's to encourage those who have sinned for them to realize that God will wash it away. Revelation 1.5, which you might take as a text for the whole Bible. It says, unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Another translation says, and freed us from our sins in his own blood. How wonderful. Or 1 John 1.9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And if I am willing to deal with this sin in my life, God is willing to forgive it and cleanse it and wash it all away. You remember how the Prophet Zechariah declared that God was going to open a fountain for sin and for uncleanness? And so we sing there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunge beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains. Canada's largest Protestant denomination has deleted all references to the blood of Christ from their song book, their hymn book.

There is not one line in their entire book now that says anything about the blood of Jesus Christ. I wonder why. I wonder who was behind that.

Well, if you read Revelation 12.11, you find out who was behind that. They overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb. That's who was behind it.

The blood will never lose its power unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, whoever you are. O say, The Lord wants us to be pure, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place, he that has clean hands and a pure heart, that has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, that's emptiness, nor sworn deceitfully, hypocritically? He shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

So James says, Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep.

I said to a fellow one time, I said, If you are double-minded the way that you are telling me, then your problem is impurity. Oh, say, he got upset about that. No, no, no, he said, it's not.

I said, Then why does the Bible say, Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded? Why did God say that? There's an old saying, it's not in the Bible, His strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure. And when your heart is pure before God, you are strong. And when there's sin there, you are weak, until it's taken care of by the grace of God.

So the end of the commandment, the goal of our instruction, the reason why we have the Bible, is love rising out of a pure heart. Let's advance to that. First Peter 1.22, the Bible says, Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto, that word in the Greek means motion toward, unto unfeigned love of the brethren.

See that you love one another with a pure heart, fervently being born again. If I am born again, then the reason why I am God's child, the reason why I am saved, is that I might love. Now then, you've heard this before, it's not new, that love is not the absence of hatred.

Just because you don't hate somebody doesn't mean you love them. And you know, it's not enough to tolerate people. Many of us manage to tolerate other people, that's not love either.

Love is a force. You know, human love is very, very selfish, and we have some tragic examples of this in the Bible. You remember how that King Saul, when David came and stood in front of him as a young man, it says that Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer.

That's in chapter 16 of 1 Samuel, in chapter 18, he hurled a javelin and tried to pin him to the wall. Now tell me, what kind of love was that? He only loved David for what he could get out of him, because when the evil spirit was on Saul, the Hebrew language there says he was terrified. He had occult problems, for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft to God.

And he had occult problems, and evil spirit terrified him. And the reason he loved David was because when David played on the harp and sang, Saul felt better. That's a good example of human love.

Another example we find is a case of Amnon, who is one of David's sons, and the Bible says he fell in love with a girl called Tamar. And he fell so deeply in love with her that the Bible says he fell sick, but let me tell you something. When people fall sick because they're in love, it's not love, it's lust.

A genuine love will inspire you, but it won't make you sick. But that's what happened to Amnon. And he had a friend called Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, who was not a very good friend.

He was a very supple man, it says, and he suggested a little plan of action for him. And he followed this plan. His father David was totally deceived and allowed Tamar to come down to make a meal for him.

And then he forced a girl and he raped her. And then the Bible says after it was all over, he hated her so much that the hatred he felt for her was worse, was far stronger than the love he felt before. I can agree with that.

I could understand that. And he called his servant and said, now the English says, and he said, have this woman out. Put her out.

Put this woman out. But really all he said was, have this out. Get this thing out of here.

He couldn't stand the sight of her. It wasn't love at all. Now Jesus talked about human love in Matthew 5 and Luke 6, and you know what he said? He said our love as Christian believers has to be different and far greater than the love that the world shows.

And he used this as an example. He said, and lend. Lend your money, hoping for 10%.

Do you remember reading that in Luke chapter 6? I don't either. What did he really say? He said, and lend, hoping for nothing. Can you find a Christian in a hundred that would loan money for nothing? Oh, then people say, just a minute, that's not very practical.

You know, this is 1975. All right. Would you throw me a pair of scissors and we'll just clip out Luke chapter 6? It says, lend, hoping for nothing.

Jesus Christ, you see, in the context said, look, sinners lend to sinners to receive as much again. I mean, the sinners get 10% in their money too. So there's no difference between the sinner and the Christian then, in some of these areas.

And Jesus said, if you only love those that love you, you aren't doing one bit more than sinners are doing, because they're loving those that love them. They do that much. And if you lend to them whom you hope to receive, you aren't doing any more than the publicans are doing.

They're all doing that much. And you know, really, basically, when you look at it from a biblical viewpoint, in the light of facts as they are, the average Christian's life is no different than the life of the people out

there. Because we're not really filled with the love of God.

Lend hoping for nothing? Well, why not? Give, and it shall be given unto you, Jesus Christ, said in the same context there. Good measure, pressed down, straitened together, running over, shall men give into your bosom. The trouble is, we've got so much glue on our fingers, the Lord can't get five dollars through us, sometimes.

Then, you know, we think, well, if I'm giving a tenth of my money, I'm really doing something for God. I said something about this the other day, that we do God's people a disservice if we teach them they're a hot Christian because they're giving one-tenth of their income. Why, the Pharisees did that.

The Pharisees said, I give tithes of all that I possess. He was doing that much. Jesus Christ said, you pay tithes, but you have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God.

Those are weightier to God than giving a tenth of our income. So Jesus then used this illustration over in Matthew 5. He said, You are to be like your Heavenly Father, who makes his sun to shine on the field of the unjust as well as on the field of the just, and who sends rain on the field of the unconverted as well as on the field of the converted. Why, listen, if God was to operate the way we do, there wouldn't be a sinner left alive in the world.

He'd burn them all up. He wouldn't let the rain fall on their field. He wouldn't put any fish in their nets.

He'd starve them to death. But the Bible, Jesus taught us that we're to be like our Heavenly Father in this matter of loving. Love out of the pure heart.

If I've got the pure heart, the next step is love. But you see, it's not my love made strong or made over. Romans 5 says, The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has given unto us, and some of us are afraid to put the blinds up, for fear the light will come in.

When you give yourself without reserve to God, the first thing that happens is you begin to sense the love of God in your soul. You look at people differently. You look at things differently.

The whole world looks different, and it ought to, because now we're walking in love, as Christ also has loved us and has given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for his sake. You know something? Not one single solitary Christian came near him and offered to help him, and a Jew drove up from Winnipeg and said, Mr. Reimer, I heard you had a bad fire. I want to give you \$50,000 to get started.

Mr. Reimer told me the story himself. He said, I said to my Jewish friend, but you know, I don't have any security, any collateral. You might lose your \$50,000.

And the Jew said, oh, so what? He said, it's between two good friends. What happened to the Christians? All right. This is what the Bible is teaching us.

So my love has to be pure, rising from a pure heart, and as generous as the love of God. The next time you look at the sun, or the next time you see the rain falling, will you think of what God is doing, blessing everybody, why the Bible says the Lord is good to all. It says the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

He has prepared of his goodness for the poor. Boy, if the Lord operated the way the average Christian does, I'll tell you, the sinners would starve to death in a week. God isn't like that.

And he doesn't want us to be like that either, or to follow God. When Jesus Christ said, Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, he was talking in the context about love. That's the context.

Well, this is the goal of our instruction. This is why we read the Bible. Is it producing that in your heart? Do you have this kind of love for people? Do you really love people from your heart? Well, that's what the Bible is saying.

And it's what God Almighty wants. When I was a missionary at the logging camp, we had some rough times, and the devil used to come and beat me around. I remember one time I was lying on a three-ton gravel truck with a load of gravel in the box and chains on the wheels, and the roads were iced roads, they called them rutted roads, and he was dragging three or four sleighloads of green lumber, and I was laying on top of one of these sleighloads of green lumber, and we had miles to go, and we were only going about 15 miles an hour, and it was about 40 degrees below zero, and there was something of a wind blowing, and there I was lying fully exposed on top of this load of lumber.

I had nothing to hang on to. I had a pack sack, and there was a chain that went across and a tightener. Now if I put my hand under the chain and the load happened to shift, I would lose my hand, and I knew that.

So you have to hold on to the chain from the top, very gingerly, ready to just let go if it ever snapped. And the devil came along and said, You're an absolute ass. You're just a fool.

These guys don't want to listen to the gospel anyway. And the devil really gave me a rough time that day, but the Lord gave me the victory. And I recall another time when we'd gone through a whole swing of these camps, another fellow and I, and we were all set to get home Saturday night to be with our families when somebody told us about a camp way back in the bush.

They said there was only 14 men in the camp, and so we talked it over, Should we go? The devil said, No, there's only 14 men there. But love said, Yes. So love won out, and we went, and dear people, it was one of the most glorious meetings I was ever in in all my life.

Oh, if I hadn't have gone to see love prevail. And love prevails, or ought to prevail, in a Christian's life from day to day, in human relationships, in your own home, in your church, at the job, or wherever you are. Like this gal came for counseling, I forget where it was now, in one of our crusades, and she said, You know, there's an unconverted woman.

We work in the same office, and she said, I don't know what it is, but boy, when she walks in, she said, I just go berserk. I can't stand the sight of her. I can't stand to be near her.

And she went on like this, and I said, But listen, she's not even a Christian, and you're a believer. So we talked about love being the goal of our instruction, and finally she saw it, and we prayed together, and God renewed her, and I said, Now, when you get to the job tomorrow, here's what you ought to do. You go to that girl, and you say to her, Look, I am a Christian believer, and I've had this horrible feeling against you.

I want you to forgive me, and put your arms around her, and give her a hug. Will you do that? She said, Sure. And she did.

You know, she could hardly wait to talk to me, and tell me what happened. She said, We've got this beautiful relationship going. She said, It's just so wonderful, you know.

It was possible all the time, but you know, some of us are so crusty, and cold, and critical, and carnal in our hearts. We don't want to give way to the love of God, because we're afraid, dear people, of where it might take us. And if you put up boundaries and fences to the love of God, He will know that, and He'll have to withhold a blessing until you let the fences go down and say, Okay, God, I am willing for anything, anything you want, in this particular area.

And it may mean a radical transformation in your life. This is certainly meant in mine. All right? The goal of our instruction, the end of the commandment, is love out of a pure heart.

And then, He says this, and a good conscience. The Lord gave me a sermon many years ago called, Don't Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide. See, a lot of people say, Well, someone told me this just the other day.

I live by my conscience. Well, that's not good. You know why? Because the Bible says our conscience may be weak, or evil, or seared, or defiled, or dead.

Supposing your conscience is dead, and you're going by your conscience, supposing your conscience is weak, or evil, or seared, or defiled, what then? The only time I can safely follow my conscience is when my conscience has been renewed and I'm walking in the Spirit, in the light of the Word of God. And that's part of the goal of our instruction, that I might have a conscience like Paul said in Romans chapter 9, verse 1, My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. When you have a conscience like that, many talks in 2nd Corinthians chapter 1 about the testimony of my conscience, a conscience that is right, not weak, but strong, not evil, but good, not seared, but clean, all right? That's the goal of our instruction.

You know, Paul said in Acts chapter 24, He said, Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. Sometimes we think we have the conscience toward God, that's all taken care of, but maybe there are some things on the human level that are not really taken care of. Do you have a good conscience with all men everywhere tonight, in your own home and around the neighborhood and as far as you can think, where you know people? Do you have a good conscience? Not only, I say, with God, but with men? Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience empty of offense, a conscience that does not accuse me.

Many Christians are walking around with a fractured conscience, and they've turned it off. So now their conscience is weak because they've made it weak, and it's defiled because they've defiled it, and it's dead because they've killed it. Because they won't allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in their heart, so they might have a conscience that bears them witness in the Holy Ghost.

A lady once, you know, she sold a house, and the house had a big crack in the basement wall. So she camouflaged the crack, very skillfully painted the wall, and you couldn't see it. And a young couple came along, they were not Christians, and they bought the house.

After they lived in it a week, they discovered the crack in the basement wall, so they contacted her. Tough being, she said, the deal's been made, and you had an opportunity to examine the house, and I mean, the crack was always there. I didn't, you know.

Tough luck. Well, then some years went by, you see, and she was in some of the meetings, and God renewed her, and she sat down and wrote a letter and enclosed a generous check, a check that she said would be far more than sufficient to repair a crack in a basement wall. She no longer lived in the same city, so she sent it in the mail to these people with a covering letter explaining her sin, her guilt, and what she had done, and asking their forgiveness and the check and all.

And she got this beautiful letter back, which she read to the crusade in the sharing time one night, and this couple said, we got your letter, and we were so touched by it. You will never know how that letter blessed our hearts. Now, they were not Christians, remember? They said, we just can't explain it.

It's just profoundly revolutionized the two of us, and we don't want your money. We're sending it back. Do with it what you want, but they just seemed over for it.

They kept saying, well, thank you for writing. Thank you for it. It's meant so much to us.

And then she had this sweet conscience, you see, as far as this matter was concerned. Well, she put the money in the crusade offering one night, and that was, I suppose, all right. But the main thing was, she got this thing out of the way that was between her and this other couple.

If the Holy Spirit during these meetings talks to you about something from a way back, or maybe from yesterday, deal with it, will you deal with it? And he'll lead you on from there. We normally get stopped where we stop. I heard of some Christians, a certain group of churches that fellowshiped together, and they said in this article that they had perennial revival in those churches.

And do you know why they did? Here was the program they followed. As they studied the Bible, if they came to a verse in the Bible and the fellow realized, well, now look, I'm not living up to that, he wouldn't read one verse further until he dealt with that problem, until he could say honestly, now I'm living up to that. Then he would read on.

Well, I'm sure you can see, if we as Christian believers were to live this way, we would have perennial revival in our hearts. But you know, sometimes we hop, skip, and jump when we read the Bible. You know, Psalm 23, that's beautiful, brother, that's beautiful, well, it is beautiful.

Is that all you read? We need to read 1 Peter chapter 4. Have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins. And some of these other areas in the Word of God. But you know, many times we avoid, you know what a lot of Christians have? They have what I like to call a selective conscience.

They can filter out the things that God is saying, so they're not even there. And the things they want to listen to, they hear real, right, loud, and clear, and the things they don't want to listen to, they're not even there, it's dead. Because they filter them out, because they have a selective conscience, and they're not listening to what God Almighty is saying really at all.

We are to provide for things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. You might do something that God knows is perfectly all right, but somebody else may not know that. And the Christian believer is to avoid ever giving any offense in an area like this.

Don't allow yourself to get into a situation where a worldly, an unconverted person might misinterpret what you are doing. It is very important. We are to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

If Jesus Christ in the gospel is the picture, the Christian is the picture frame. If the picture frame is cockeyed, worm-eaten, dirty, and cheap, then they're not going to look at the picture, they're going to think the picture is the same. So the Bible says, make straight paths for your feet.

Walk in straight paths. Of others it's written, they have made them crooked paths, whosoever goes therein shall not know peace. Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame, the sinner, be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

A Christian woman in her 60s talked to me one time, she said, I want to tell you a story so you won't think I'm a better Christian than I really have been. And she told me how years before, the area they lived in, they were mink ranchers, she and her husband, and a young couple moved in. They were a very nice couple, but they hadn't been there long before they got to drinking, and they both became alcoholics, and 25 years later their home was a total shambles, the guy couldn't hold down a job for three or four days at a time, and they were just at the end of everything.

And one day she thought to herself, you know, here I am, I'm a Christian believer, and I've never even tried to win those two people to the Lord, I'm going to go over there. So she went over and she said, you know, I'd like to talk to you about Jesus Christ, and they said, don't bother. Why not? They said, do you remember when we first moved into this area 25, 26 years ago? She said yes.

They said, do you remember a certain party in a certain home? She said yes. They said, you should, because you were there. We were there too.

They said, up until then we had never touched a drop of liquor in our life. Now we were not believers in God or anything like this, but we didn't know whether drinking was right or wrong, and we knew there was going to be liquor at the party, and we also knew that you claimed to be a Christian, so we talked it over at home and decided that what you do at the party, we'll do, and they said, you drank at that party and you got us started. Don't talk to us.

And that woman sat in that chair and she wept her heart out. But you see, the Bible says providing for things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. That's why Paul said, you know, if wine drinking will cause someone else to stumble, I won't touch it.

I will not touch it or anything else. You see, we live, whether we like it or not, on a stage. Paul said, we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.

Do you know what the Greek word there is? It's theatron, from which we get an English word, theater. We Christians are made a theater to the world, to angels and to men. I wonder why it makes a difference between world and men.

I think the world would refer to the unconverted world out there, and men would be people that found Jesus Christ as their Savior, and angels, of course, we understand what that is, and we are a theater. We are on parade, we are being watched, and it matters a great deal how you live. Now we have a saying in revival circles, watch it my brother, watch it my sister, your reactions are showing.

That's another matter. It's, you know, it's not what people say, and it's not what people do, and it's not what happens to you, but it's your reaction to what happens. It shows where you really stand.

If you had a horse or a dog laying down, you're dead, and you dove a fork into their ribs and they began to kick a little bit, brother, they're playing possum, they're not dead. And it's true of a Christian also, we talk about being dead. The moment you talk about being dead, being crucified with Christ, the reality of that's going to be tested.

You'll find out. It'll be tested. Watch those reactions.

What happens doesn't really matter when we're walking with God, but to some Christians it matters a great deal. The end of the commandment then is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience. And you might say, okay, so you've talked about a conscience, how do I get a good conscience? All right.

Hebrews 9 puts it this way, it says, It's the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. And the references to the Old Testament economy or system, the religious system they had, where they offered these animals and birds and so on, and cut their blood and sprinkled on the book of God and on the people and at the altar and all these things they did then. And so he said, if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer used to burn these animals and take the ashes and mix it with water and sprinkle it on the people as part of the system then, and he says, if this stood for the sanctifying, the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience and dead works to serve the living God? Oh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, if you've got a bad conscience, the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse it and make it what it ought to be? So in Hebrews chapter 10 it says, Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil, let us to say his flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, that's with the pure water of the word of God.

Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. There is no gimmick that we can use or apply that's going to do anything to our bad conscience, but the blood of Jesus Christ which is applied when I confess my sins and forsake them, and then by the grace of God seek to walk in the light. If we walk in the light, if he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, the Christian with his God.

And the next statement is, And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. Now have you received this as a result of your study of the word of God? But that's why God gave us the Bible. And last of all he talks about a genuine faith.

Do you have that? Or do you have a faith that breaks down constantly when things go wrong? You know the moment you talk about faith you have to talk about trials. And so the Bible uses the phrase, the trial of your faith, being much more precious than a gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire. Some Christians think, Brother, if I'm really serving God, I shouldn't have any sickness, I shouldn't have any financial reverses, I shouldn't have any problems.

But somebody said, if you want great faith and ask God for great trials, because they go together every time. The Bible says, Above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith you shall be able to quench or put out all the fiery darts of the wicked. You can't stop the devil from hurling those fiery darts, and if you don't have the shield of faith he's going to get you every time.

The goal of our instruction, the reason for which God gave us the Bible, there's two other things we've thought about. The third thing is a genuine faith. How do we get this? Romans 10, 17 says, So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

That's not all. Did you ever think of this verse in Galatians 5, 6? It says, Faith works by what? Faith works by love. That's what it says, Galatians 5 and 6. Faith works by love.

So one time, after I saw this, I thought to myself, I wonder how often these words occur together in the word of God. Well, right away, 1 Corinthians 13, the last verse flashed in my mind, And now abides faith, hope, and love. These three, but the greatest of these is love.

That's one verse. Do you know in 1 and 2 Timothy, faith and love occur together eight times in those two short books? And you find it literally everywhere. Ephesians 1, Paul said, We heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love unto all the saints.

Love and faith go together. Colossians 1, he says, We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love that you have to all the saints. Faith and love go together.

1 Thessalonians, he said, Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. Faith and love go together. 2 Thessalonians 1, faith and love occur together.

So faith works by love. And if I'm not filled with the love of God, we come back to that again, I'll never really have a faith that will work. Faith what? Faith works.

Faith what? I say again, faith works. It doesn't work if love is not there. It's just a word.

So we can sing, My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, and fall flat in our face twelve times a day. Every time a problem or a trial comes along, bang, down we go, because we don't understand it. Faith works by love.

Faith and love always then occur together in the word of God. You cannot really have the one without the other. I say they belong together.

All right. Then we find this in the word of God, that God the Father is working to give me this kind of faith. Ephesians 2.8 and 9 says that.

Jesus Christ the Son is trying to give me faith. Hebrews 12 says that, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher. One translation says the beginner and perfecter of our faith.

The Holy Spirit is the author of faith. We find in Ephesians 5.22 that faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit. So the glorious Heavenly Father, Son, Holy Spirit, they are all actively working together to produce in the Christian heart a genuine faith.

Do I get this as a result of reading the Bible? But that's why we have it. The end of the commandment, the goal of our instruction is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith. I think of a man, he had three or four hundred men working under him.

He was a church member, a member of a very large church. I don't know what the membership was, but I know the church would seek fourteen hundred and people thought he was a good Christian, but on the

side. He was breaking the commandments and laws of God all over the country, and people that knew him well, they knew this, but his family didn't know it and the church didn't know it, so there was never any discipline or anything applied.

And then one night the Lord got a hold of him at one of the meetings, and he sat there with a sweat poured off him just like somebody had poured a bucket of water on his head, because he knew the issues, what he was going to have to do to make things right. Well, he did, and I was in the meeting when he gave his testimony, when he got on the pulpit that's what he said, okay, I'm going to give a testimony for God, and some of you men down in the crowd who you work for me and you're saying to yourself, look at that dirty hypocrite up in the pulpit, he said, you're right, that's what I've been. But, Jesus Christ changed me the other night, and now I challenge you to watch my life from this time on.

And he gave this beautiful testimony, well, I was back in that area about a year later for meetings, matter of fact in the same church, and one night a fella came up and he was literally jumping about this high off the floor as he was sharing the things God was doing for him, and I knew the guy was talking to me like I knew him, this was the same fella, I didn't recognize him. He was so altered and changed and he was so full of God, he was jumping up and down, he was telling me, he says, you know last week I led three people to war, I'm having a trial of my life. And I suddenly donned him and knew who the guy was.

He's moved out to British Columbia now, I was in Vancouver a while ago for meetings, I don't think he missed a night although he had to drive about 40 miles every night, and he was there with his wife night after night. Oh, he said, it's so wonderful when your conscience is clear and your heart is filled with the love of God. And dear people, I don't know how to say it other than what I've said already.

It's so wonderful when your conscience is clear and your heart is right with God and with men, and you love purely and sincerely, not because you're trying to swing people into orbit around yourself, you love them just for love's sake, because God loves them. And they may not be much, and they may not have much, they might only have grade 4 education, but you love them as much as if they had two million dollars in the bank and might leave you a little bit when they die. See a lot of our loving, you know, we love people because of what we can get out of them, and we swing them into orbit around ourselves, and we normally associate with the people that don't rub the fur the wrong way, the people with whom we get along well, these are the people we normally associate with.

And it's so wrong. It's so wrong. And I say in closing, the love of God is shed abroad.

That's the same Greek there as in Acts chapter 10 where it says the Holy Spirit was poured out. The love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us. You are taught of God, Paul said, to love one another.

Are we listening to the teacher? The end of a commandment, the goal of our instruction, the reason for which we have the Bible is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a genuine faith.

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