

# Sermons on Job #2 (Riches, Poverty, Family, etc.)

by John Calvin

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*John Calvin's sermon on Job emphasizes the virtues of humility, piety, and brotherhood amidst the challenges of wealth and poverty.*

**Duration:** 1:02:47

**Scripture:** Job 1:2

**Topics:** "Wealth And Poverty", "Faith And Humility"

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## Description

In this sermon, the Reverend John Calvin focuses on the story of Job from the book of Job in the Bible. He begins by describing Job's wealth and the feasts that his children would have. Calvin emphasizes the importance of not putting trust in worldly riches, as they are uncertain and can be taken away at any moment. He then references a passage from 1st Timothy, where Paul instructs the rich to be humble and to use their wealth for good works. Calvin concludes by highlighting the virtue of Job and the difficulty for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven, not because of their wealth itself, but due to the corruption and wickedness that can come with it.

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## Transcript

The sermon we will hear today is the second sermon from the first chapter of the Book of Job, from a series of sermons on Job preached in the 1500s by the Reverend John Calvin. The sermons were translated from the original French into English by Mr. Arthur Golding and published in 1574. The 1574 publication is the basis for the sermon as we will hear it today.

And so let us begin Job, the first chapter, starting in the second verse through verse five. And he had seven sons born unto him, and three daughters. And he had a great substance of cattle, to wit, seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and a great household, insomuch that he surmounted all of them of the east.

And his sons went and made feasts at their houses, every man his day, and they called their three sisters also to eat and drink with them. When they had made an end of their feasting, Job sent for his children and sanctified them. And rising up at times in the morning, offered sacrifices according to the number of them.

For he said, It may be that my children have sinned, and have not blessed the Lord in their hearts. And thus did Job every day. Yesterday we heard the prayers which the Holy Ghost gave unto Job, not so much for himself as for our instruction.

To the end we should know how we ought to rule our life. Namely, that we walk in singleness of heart, so as there be no peace of counter fitness in us, and that with that our works also may yield witness of the same singleness. And moreover, that we fear God, knowing how it is he to whom we must refer our whole life, and that his honor is the thing that we must give ourselves unto.

And further, that for as much as we be continually beset with many stumbling blocks, and the devil plots to thrust us out of the right way, we should stand upon our guard to withdraw ourselves from evil, and to recover ourselves unto God, until such time as we be quite dispatched from all the defilements of the world by death. And now, it ensues in the text, that Job was an exceeding rich man, and a great part of his possessions are specially recited to us here. It is no small thing to have seven thousand head of small cattle, five hundred yoke of oxen, as many she-asses, and as many camels.

Behold here a great substance for one man, and therefore it is said, he surpassed all of them of the east. But at once we shall see wherefore this is rehearsed unto us, for his patience was so much the more praiseworthy, for that he being deprived of so great goods, and brought to extreme poverty, did despite this continue quiet, as if he had lost little or nothing. Seeing then how God has so much the better tried him.

But here with this we have to consider what a virtuous mind was in Job. Seeing his riches had not blinded him with pride, nor caused him to set too much by the world, or to discharge himself of the serving of God, as we commonly see that many men, by reason of their great riches, become so lofty that it is impossible to tame them, abusing their credit to the oppressing of poor folk. And besides that they be full of cruelty, they also be stately and full of pomp, so that riches are accompanied with many inconveniences.

Therefore it is not in vain that it is told us here, that Job being so rich, had nevertheless always persisted in the serving of God, and held himself in the said singleness of which mention is made here. For by his example, the rich men of this world are warned of their duty, which is to take good heed, that when God has put abundance into their hands, they be not entangled by them, according as also the Psalm exhorts them in Psalm 52. And further, according as St. Paul speaks to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 6. Turn with me there if you will.

1 Timothy chapter 6, beginning in verse 17, where we read, Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life, that they be not puffed up with pride, nor put their trust in the transitory things of this world, in which there is no certainty, for he that is rich today, may become poor by tomorrow, whenever it pleases God. So then, seeing that the goods of this world are fickle, and that we may soon be deprived of them, rich men, says St. Paul, ought to take good heed, that they rest not themselves upon them, nor make an idol of them, as though they were sure to possess them, and to enjoy them forever, but must be ready to yield them up. And to be short, according as it is said in another text, such as have fields and vineyards, meadows and grain, money and wares, must have a care to use them in such way, as if they had none at all, so as they may be poor in heart.

Thus then, we see, that we have to note upon this sentence. For lest any man might allege, that it is very hard to behave himself so purely in the midst of so great riches, considering how Christ himself calls them thorns, in Matthew 13, verse 22. Therefore the example of Job, shall condemn all such, as keep not themselves undefiled, howsoever hard it be to be done.

It is very certain that a man, rather than a rich man, shall have more due to walk in the fear of God, than shall a poor man. And true it is also, that poverty of itself, brings abundance of temptations. For when a man is needy, he falls to thinking in himself, what shall become of me? And the devil thrusts him forward to distrust.

Hereupon he shall be induced to murmur against God, according as we see that many, fall into a rage, and it seems to them that God does them wrong, and they know not which side to turn themselves, on which they conclude, See, I cannot get my living by my labor, without doing other men wrong, I must take another way to it. On this they take permission, to rob and plunder, and they do many shrewd turns, harms and damages to their neighbors. Behold, I pray you, the temptations which poverty brings.

But if a man make comparison between it, and riches, it is certain that the richer sort, have far greater assaults. For as much as Satan is ever at their elbow, to blindfold their eyes, to the end they should overshoot themselves, and forgetting their state, lift themselves up against God, tie themselves wholly to the world, make a mock of the heavenly life, act and conduct themselves, as if nothing can hurt them, abuse their credit in various ways, have regard of nothing, be loath to bear any yoke, be unwilling to yield to any reason, and think all other men, too base to be in their company, insomuch that if it were possible for them, they would pluck away the light of the sun, from the poor, so that finally they act, and conduct themselves, as if they deserve a good right, to be separated, and set aside as it were on a row, by themselves. We see now, the corruptions, and other infinite miseries, that riches bring.

And yet there is no excuse, for them that be rich. Why? For here, shall Job, be made their judge before God, for as much as he was not corrupted, nor perverted by the great abundance, and quality of goods that he had, but always served God in singleness of heart. But if the rich men be made inexcusable, let the poorer sort, also look well to themselves.

For I have told you already, that it is easier for a man to walk simply, to whom God has not given so great abundance, than for such as have a great abundance. The case is like as if a man were in some little boat, and in some small river. It is likely enough that he might be tossed, and it is likely enough that he might, rush against some stump, or against some bank of the river.

But he is not in such danger, as he that is in a ship, on the middle of the sea, where the waves and storms are far more violent. Even so, say I, stands the case between the poor and the rich. For surely, so long as we be in this world, we row upon the water, where we may be tossed with tempests, and rush against something, and always be in danger.

Thus are the poor, as it were, on a little river. But the rich, are as it were, on the middle of the sea. So as they can hardly escape sinking, in one whirlpool or another.

Now then, if there be no excuse for the rich sort, what shall become of those, to whom God gives the means, to hold themselves in simplicity? We see therefore, that there is a general lesson, to serve for all men, as well great as small, and that it profits each man, to benefit himself by the example, that is here set before our eyes. But here with this, we see the virtue of Job, is right commendable. For we hear the

judgment, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How it is right hard, for a rich man to enter, into the kingdom of heaven. Not that riches do of themselves, hinder us from serving God, as I have said. But it happens, through our wickedness, and corruption.

That where as it becomes us, to take occasion, to be drawn unto God, by the benefits, which he bestows upon us, we be the further, drawn back from him. Wherefore we see, that Job was a man, of wonderful virtue, seeing that in the midst, of such riches, he had not his eyes blindfolded, to conceive any pride in his heart, so as he should, tread other folks under his feet, or forget God, or become a dissolute, vain and pompous person, but held on his race, which he had begun. Behold here the virtue, that was commendable in him, and this is done to the end, that if we cannot attain, to be full equal with him, yet every one of us, should look to himself, and go on forward, to the mark, that is set before him.

Furthermore we see also, that riches of themselves, are not to be condemned, as some foolish persons surmise, who hold opinion, that a rich man, cannot be a Christian, for let them find me, any of the poor, that may be compared to Job, in this virtue, and then let them condemn riches. But when a man shall have sought, throughout all the poor men in the world, hardly shall he find one, that shall come anywhere near this man. Seeing that the case is so, let us mark that, riches of themselves, and of their own nature, are not to be condemned, and specially that it is, it is a great blasphemy, against God, if a man finds such fault with riches, that he thinks that party, which possesses them, to be utterly marred.

For from where come riches, but God? Therefore when a man, condemns them, he sets himself up, against God. And further, it profits us to mark, that God must necessarily work, far more marvelously, in a rich man, than in a poor man, as I have said before. For I have already showed, the difficulty, that a man has, to maintain himself, in simplicity and uprightness, when he has abundance of goods.

Then had God need, to utter a singular force, of His Holy Spirit, to preserve rich men, from corrupting of themselves. But if a man despise, such a grace of God, does he not lift himself up, against God? By this means then, we be warned, not to condemn riches, in themselves, like also as we see, how our Lord Jesus Christ, has showed us, by matching the poor, and the rich together, in the Kingdom of Heaven. When he speaks, when he speaks of Lazarus, in Saint Luke, chapter 16, verses 19 through 31.

He says there, that the angels, carried Lazarus, for all be it, that he was an outcast, among men, and a poor creature, of whom no account was made, in so much, that he was forsaken, of all men. Yet, nevertheless, behold how the angels, carry his soul, into Abraham's bosom. And what was this Abraham? You could read, Genesis chapter 13, verses 2 and 6. You could read in Genesis 24, verse 35.

A man rich, both in cattle, and in money, and in household, and in all other things, except houses and lands. For those were not lawful, for him to have, because it was necessary for him, to await God's leisure, until he gave him, the land of Canaan, to inherit. True it is, that he purchased a burying place, but he had not any inheritance, we are told in Acts, chapter 7, verse 5. Notwithstanding, that his movable possessions, were very great.

Therefore, when we see the soul of Lazarus, carried by angels, into the bosom of Abraham, who is the father of the faithful, we perceive that God, of his infinite grace and goodness, calls both rich and poor, to salvation. And unto this purpose, means that also, which St. Paul says, in 1 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 4. Namely, that God will have all men to be saved. For he speaks of kings and princes, who ordinarily do misbehave themselves, in their greatness, and cannot find in their hearts, to stoop unto God.

Yes, it seems to them, that they be no mortal men, and yet God picks out some of them to himself, and will not have to be lost, and to perish. Thus you see what we have to mark. Yet for all this, the rich men, must not flatter themselves, but rather know how they stand, as it were upon ice, where they may soon slide.

And, that they be as it were among thorns, so as it profits them, to look diligently to themselves, from being pricked. Behold how each one of us ought to be touched, with carefulness, to commend ourselves unto God, that we may walk according to his will. And upon this saying, that Job had seven sons, and three daughters, I note how it does us to know, that God had sent his blessing upon him, to make him prosper by all means.

And as I have touched up to this time, we shall hereafter better see the cause, why all this is expressed, and the intent of the Holy Ghost, that is to say, that it was an incomparable virtue in Job, to bear patiently Job's, rather to bear patiently God's, taking away of all the things, which he had put into his hand. And it is also very well declared, how his children behaved themselves, and how he himself also on his part, governed them in the fear of God. And this is done to the end, that we should understand, that when God afflicts us, he shows by effect, that he can dispose of his creatures at his own pleasure.

And that although we be at our wit's end, and see not the reason why God handles man so roughly, yet it becomes us to cast down our eyes, and to confess that he is righteous. And to wait his leisure, until he discover unto us the cause, why he disposes things so. But now let us proceed, with that which is rehearsed to us here.

It is said, that Job's children feasted, one another day by day, every one in his turn. And that they called their sisters, to bear them company. True it is, that nature may well stir up brethren to love one another, but yet our men become so evil, that there be very few that consider, what brotherhood imports.

For the proofs of this, we shall see many brethren that agree, like cats and dogs. They be brethren, and yet for all that, they cease not to spite, and malice one another, as if one of them would eat another. We see then by such, according as men grow out of kindness into cruelty, that brethren are acquainted, with harmony and affection, and although it be not so with all of them, yet is every man so addicted to himself, as there be very few, that love one another in such way, as God teaches.

Thus does the Holy Ghost, set a looking glass before our eyes, to make us to behold the good agreement, and love that was among Job's children, and specially, how they exercise themselves continually in that respect. To the end, they would not give any occasion of, evil mistrust to another. For the feasts that they made, were to no other end, but to yield record of their brotherliness and agreement.

And see how it is said expressly, that they went to seek their sisters, to the intent, that their friendship might utter itself in all points. Behold here a great virtue. All be it, a man may perceive that Job, did not fear, that there was any fault in the thing that was ordained, for a good purpose, and to a good end.

Yet nevertheless, we see, how he thought in himself, even then, that God might be offended in it. Surely this is a very notable example. And of no doubt, good agreement, and friendship among men, and especially among brethren, is as pleasant a thing unto God, as anything can be.

We hear how it is said in the psalm, 133, It is a joyful thing, when brethren agree in one, dwelling together in unity. It is like the dew, that falls down to give seasoning and nourishment, to the ground. And like the oil, that drops down from Aaron's beard, so as the scent of it, was spread out over all his garments.

Behold, what two similes be here, to show how God loves peace, and amity among men, and above all things, among brethren. They do us to understand, that when men, embrace one another with hearty love, it is, all one, as when the field and herbs, receive nourishment, by the dew of heaven. And also, that it is a thing, that yields a very sweet savor before God, as a good and acceptable sacrifice unto Him.

Even like the scent of the holy oil, that was poured upon Aaron's head. Nevertheless, this is spoken of, such as embrace one another, with a godly manner. For it may well be, that wicked men, shall bear an affection of love, one towards another.

And they may peradventure, link themselves together, to accomplish their appointments. But all this is nothing. Friendship, must come from God, and go to God.

And mark here, how the name of brotherhood is set down, to the end we should be taught, to lift up our eyes unto God, and to look unto Him, as often as there is any question, of loving one another. Furthermore, we see here, that the best things in the world, may as well be corrupted, by the wickedness of men, and by this we see also, what our nature is, ever since Adam sinned. That is to say, that ever since, he overshot himself, up to this time, good has been turned into evil, despite that our intent or meaning, be good.

For example, when a husband, loves his wife, or when a father, loves his children. These are good, holy, and commendable things. And yet nevertheless, there is not a man to be found, in the whole world, that loves his wife, in such measure, that no fault, may be found in his love.

Or, that loves his children, with so pure and hearty love, but there shall always be, some medley of corruption. And why so? For seeing that God has ordained, that the man shall love his wife, and that it is expressly said, love your wives as your own bodies, shall their so doing, be imputed to them for a fault. Can the good, be turned into evil? Doubtless, that comes of our cursed nature.

Like as one grain of salt, or one drop of vinegar, fails not to mar a great deal of wine, even so is it with men, for holding themselves in temperance. They have not their affections, so well ruled, as there may no fault be found in them. Or, not to be condemned, in many respects.

Then is it no strange case, that Job, thought in himself, that his children, might have offended God, in the thing, that of itself, was good and commendable. Not for that he condemned, the feasting of brethren together, especially with their making of good cheer, one with another, was to maintain themselves, in mutual amity. That was not the thing, that Job found fault with.

But, for as much as he was, thoroughly acquainted with, man's infirmity, he knew it was very hard, to keep temperance, so as no vice, should be intermingled, with it by the way. And therefore, he took good heed to himself, and sanctified his children. But yet, nevertheless, we have further to note, that Job had well marked, and borne away the thing, which experience shows unto us, namely, that in all feasts and banquets, there is some disorder, through which God is not so well honored, as he ought to be.

First of all, in all such meetings, there will always be, some excess of meats, and they that come there, do for company's sake, eat and drink more, than their ordinary custom. And hardly could a man, think of the excess that is there, insomuch that even the holiest men, that fear God best, are overseen there. True it is, that they play not the gluttons, in stuffing of the paunch, nor in cramming themselves like swine, and much less, will they be so drunken, as to be out of their wits like beasts.

No, not so, but so much may be done, as they may somewhat, pass moderation and temperance. And how so? For we see, that a man overshoots himself, in that case, before he'd be aware. So then we see, that some inconvenience, happens in feasts, notwithstanding, that they be made for a good cause, and that the intent of him, that bids his friends be good, as well of those that come, to keep him company, for hardly can it be escaped, but that there shall be some fault, of which the very doer himself, shall not be privy.

And furthermore, when a man is there, what a great deal of vain and fond talk, shall he have, to hold him together with this, where a man ought to eat, as in the presence of God, and to be merry, as it were, with the angels, there shall be abundance of vanities, which shall carry men in such way, as many of them, yes, even of the good men themselves, as many of them, shall think, that they make no good cheer, except they disguise themselves, I cannot tell how. There are yet, many other evil inconveniences, whereby we see that God is offended, diverse ways, according as men find in themselves, afterward. So then let us mark well, that Job, did not without cause, mistrust and doubt, lest his children had sinned against God, seeing they made feasts in such way.

Notwithstanding they were of the faithful sort, as I have said before. Now if it be so, that where feasts and banquets are best ruled, yet there is some fault that God does not like. How is it with them that drive God out of their company, and from their table, as men are commonly inclined to do? For if we shall speak of feasting, at where do men begin? At calling upon the name of God? No, that would be thought, too sad a matter.

Therefore the name of God, must be buried. Has a man well sufficed his appetite? Then is it no time to say grace, for it necessitates them to remember the good cheer, that they have made. That is to say, that they be swine.

For if a man make mention of God, it will be thought, that all the pleasure which they have taken in their feasting, is turned into sorrow. And afterward all must run riot, in such way as there shall be no talk, but of crudeness and wantonness, or rather of treachery and malice. So as there shall be none other news, but of backbiting their neighbor, and of practicing devices against this man and that man.

See what banqueting breeds. Now then, seeing that men are so inclined to vice, it is not possible, but there must be some fault, notwithstanding that they give not themselves the bridle of restraint in all points. I pray you then, must it not necessarily be as it were a gulf of hell, where they meet together to make compacts of wickedness and treason.

Therefore let us mark well this sentence, to the end that seeing we know men to be so much inclined to vices that they mar the thing that is good, and turn it into evil. We may take the more heed to ourselves, that when we eat and drink one with another, we confess ourselves always sinners, for offending God by that means. True it is indeed, that we must not be scrupulous and superstitious, as some be which eat not a bit of bread with quietness of conscience.

If a man tell them that they ought to advise themselves what they do, immediately after that they conclude that men can neither eat nor drink without offending God. And when they are once come to such scrupulousness, as to think that they sin in all things that they do, they fall to concluding, well then let us set all at random without planning. I say, there are such as these to be found, but this is not as we ought to do.

This is not as the scripture lead us. Therefore let us wake and keep sure watch, that we be not taken unawares. When we be set at the table, to drink and to eat, let us pray unto God, beseeching him of his gracious goodness, to keep us in such sobriety, that being nourished by his gifts, we may be the better disposed to serve him.

So as our meat may not serve to overload us, but to sustain us, and to give us strength, that we may be the better able to occupy ourselves in the service of our God. And that he will grant us the grace to so pass through these corruptible things, as we may always labor for the heavenly life, unto which he calls us by his word. For God maintains us not in this world to live for a day, or for ten or for fifty years, but to the intent we should come to the said heavenly glory.

Let us then consider how we ought to behave ourselves. And when we be at the table, let us eat our meal in such manner, as if God himself ate with us. And although we be in this world, taking our nourishment of the food that we know, let us look up unto God, who shows himself a father towards us, and has witnessed unto us that we be his children, in so much as he has a care of these, our poor bodies here.

And will have his love extended even unto them, despite that they be but rottenness. Therefore when we see that God does so nourish and sustain us, we may be the merrier, and the better assured of his goodness and fatherly love towards us. And by this means we see why St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 31, and again in Colossians 3 verse 17, by this means we see why St. Paul says, that whether we drink or whether we eat, we must do it all together, in the name of God.

There are many which suppose that there should be no thinking upon God, when men come to eating and drinking. Whereas in very deed we should therefore think so much the more of God. Seeing that God gives such virtue unto bread by his word, that we be sustained by it, will he not have us to acknowledge his presence, and how he has his hand stretched out over us? So then it is rather a cause that we should think the more upon God.

For we see in 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 5, that our eating and drinking are sanctified by yielding all honor to his name. And therefore when it comes to saying of grace, let us acknowledge that some fault may have escaped us, and then will God surely forgive us all our wrongdoing, if it be so that we return unto him. Thus you see the cause why it is said here expressly, that when Job's children had made an end of feasting each other by turns, Job commanded them to sanctify themselves, and afterwards offered a solemn sacrifice for each one of them, saying, it may be that my children have sinned and that they have not blessed God.

But we will speak of this whole matter in the end. We see then that Job was none of that sort, which after they have made foolishness for a while, do finally conclude to set all at random without purpose. But he goes to the remedy, that is to say, that God will bear with us in our infirmities.

Albeit, says he, that my children have not done their duty at all points, yet am I sure that God will have pity both upon them and upon me. And therefore let us ask him forgiveness. But yet for all this, Job forbade not his children to use their accustomed feasting.

And why not? For the thing of itself was good, as I have said before. If Job had said, I see here a lewd matter, truly he would not have made sacrifice, for that had been to abuse God's name, and to make it a cloak of evil. Sacrifices were not ordained to maintain us in evil, nor that any man should feed and flatter himself in his sins, so as he should say, I may do sacrifice and then God will be contented.

Job therefore sacrificed. Not to have it said that he maintained an evil thing, but he knew that his children did well in giving such entertainment one to another, and that it was a commendable thing to do. For as much as he knew that, he meant not to find fault with the thing that was good, but sought for the remedy that if any fault lay hid under it, it might please God to amend it.

As if he should say, of good reason ought we to crave pardon at God's hand, to the end he may supply our infirmity. We see then after what manner Job here proceeds. And also after what manner we must proceed.

And furthermore let us mark that Job in commanding his children to sanctify themselves, he has showed the manner of the bringing up which he gave them in their childhood. That is to say, to serve God. If it had been simply said that Job had sanctified the Lord, a man might say, very well.

He was a good man for his own behalf, but he had no great regard of his children. He did enough for the discharging of himself towards God, but he has laid the bridle in the neck of the others. But contrary it is said that he commanded them to sanctify themselves, which thing it had been in vain and unavailable for him to do, had they not been taught long before how they ought to walk in the fear of God.

And although they were as then grown men, and every one of them had a house of his own, and kept a table by himself, yet notwithstanding Job ceased not to keep them continually under some reverence and awe. Behold here a doctrine very profitable for us, which is that parents must so guide their children as God may be honored of them all. And it profits us to mark this doctrine the better, for as much as we see it is so ill put to use.

For in these days they that have children could well find in their hearts to have them taught, but hardly shall you find one among a hundred that is led with a zeal and affection towards God. How are they led then? Every man minds his own profit. He may well say, I would willingly have my son taught, but what? That if he be of a good mind he may come forward, that he may make himself brave, that he may gather goods, that he may come to credit and honor.

Behold here the respects that fathers have in their desire to have their children brought up. But where is there a man to be found so well advised, or bent to such simplicity as to say, it is enough for me that my child serve God. For I am sure that God will bless him and make him to prosper, and although he be poor to the world, it is enough for me that God is his father.

And God will also render such reward unto the fathers as they have deserved. For they imagine that they have done very much for their children when they have advanced them, and God suffers their children to put out their eyes, and to be as hangmen to torment them. We see it to be so before our eyes, and yet they perceive not how it is God that chastises them, and that justly, and therefore so much the more it profits us to mark well the doctrine which the Holy Ghost shows us here under the example of Job.

That is to say, that fathers and mothers should hold their children in such reverence and awe as they may cause them to serve God. And specially this circumstance is not to be forgotten. Namely, that although Job's children were grown to full years of discretion, yet nevertheless their father held them always as it were under reverence and awe, warning them to ask forgiveness of God when they had offended him, and to purify themselves.

But nowadays, as soon as children be ten years old, by and by they think themselves men, when despite this it were fitting to give them the rod fifteen years after that they wear the trappings of a man, and seem to themselves to be marvelous fellows, for they be no better but silly outcasts and derelicts. And as for to suffer any correction or any instruction, it is very foreign with them. Yes, they would think they had great wrong and injury offered them.

To the contrary, we see what is said here. But what? The fathers are worthy to have their children disobedient and stubborn against them. Why so? For fitting it is that he which will be honored should be honorable.

That is to say, it is requisite that he should show cause why to be honored. How then shall a father purchase himself authority towards his children, to be obeyed of them and to keep them in fear and reverence? Even by having such a generosity and seriousness and soberness in himself, as his children ought to be ashamed to oppose and contradict him in anything. But if the fathers shake off the fear of God, how can it be that their children should obey them, seeing that they themselves yield not God the honor that belongs unto him? Behold here the cause why children show themselves so loath to be corrected and why they cannot be kept in awe and reverence, namely for that their fathers are disobedient unto God.

And so it is that both the fathers and the children are condemned here. The fathers for their negligence in not taking heed to bring their children up in the fear of God and the children for not suffering themselves to be governed by their fathers. And here they have a goodly example.

For it is spoken of such as may say, My father has held me in awe as long as I was young, and yet must I still be always under the rod? Job's children might have said so. But we see that although they become to have households of their own, yet are they still under the governance of their father. For in the text it is not said that they opposed or contradicted anything that he commanded them, as it is reported of the children of Eli in 1 Samuel chapter 2 verse 25.

But rather that they obeyed him to the end that they might be partakers of the sacrifices which he offered for them. This that we heard then is enough to condemn all these petty louts which make such a bravery and carry their craft so high. They know not what this awfulness in any way means, but they are outcasts and derelicts, and yet nevertheless they will bear the countenance of men.

But we see here how those that are of age and discretion to guide a household orderly still be held under the government and obedience of their fathers. Furthermore, as concerning this word sacrifice, it is meant according to the ordinary custom of the law, whereby to the intent a man might be partaker of the sacrifices, it is necessary for him to be purified, that he might be duly disposed to that. And albeit that Job was not of the country where the law of Moses was written, but rather by all likelihood was before Moses was born, yet despite this it has always been a custom among the faithful that when they should sacrifice unto God, they had some sign of cleansing, that is to say of purging themselves from the filthiness with which they had been stained and defiled.

And this was not invented by men. We must not think all this to have been devised as a trifling antic by men, but it was God's will it should be so. And what for? For His meaning was to put men in remembrance that they are not worthy to approach unto Him.

When we come unto God, it is necessary for us to acknowledge our own poorness and to be ashamed of it and to say, How dare I press before the majesty of my God? What favor shall I find there? God's will is to

have this known in all ages. And now although we do not have the said ceremony of cleansing ourselves, yet it is necessary for us to have the meaning of it in us. That is to say, that at all times and as often as we come unto God to make our prayers and petitions unto Him, we must acknowledge that we be unworthy, saving that we know the means whereby He receives us.

That is to say, to cleanse ourselves by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that He is the only washing by which all our spots may be made clean. Will we then be acceptable unto God? It is necessary for us to attain to it by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, shadowing us under the grace which He has purchased us by His death and passion, His suffering, as who is the full perfection and accomplishment of the things that have been given forth in all time, in figures and shadows. Therefore, let us cast ourselves flat before the face of our good God with acknowledgement of our offenses, beseeching Him to make us know better what we have left undone.

And that as long as we live in this corruptible world, we, acknowledging ourselves to be wrapped in many sins, may resist the temptations of our flesh and buckle ourselves to battle against all things that may turn us aside from the obeying of our God. And although we fail in diverse ways, yet nevertheless let us pray that we may walk in such soundness before Him as we may desire nothing but to dedicate ourselves wholly unto Him, and that it may please Him to accept the service that we offer unto Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding that it be imperfect until such time as His glory shall shine fully in us. That it may please Him to bestow His benefit and grace not only upon us, but also upon all people and nations of the earth.

Stand with me and let's bow our hearts in prayer. This Reformation audio resource is a production of Stillwater's Revival Books and was read by Mr. Mike Crowns on November 11, 2001. There is no copyright on this material, and we encourage you to reproduce it and pass it on to your friends.

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And remember that John Calvin, in defending the Reformation's regulative principle of worship, or what is sometimes called the scriptural law of worship, commenting on the words of God, which I commanded them not, neither came into my heart, from his commentary on Jeremiah 7:31, God here cuts off from men every occasion for making evasions, since he condemns by this one phrase, I have not commanded them, whatever the Jews devised. There is then no other argument needed to condemn superstitions than that they are not commanded by God. For when men allow themselves to worship God according to their own fancies, and attend not to His commands, they pervert true religion.

And if this principle was adopted by the Papists, all those fictitious modes of worship in which they absurdly exercise themselves would fall to the ground. It is indeed a horrible thing for the Papists to seek to discharge their duties towards God by performing their own superstitions. There is an immense number of them, as it is well known, and as it manifestly appears.

Were they to admit this principle, that we cannot rightly worship God except by obeying His word, they would be delivered from their deep abyss of error. The prophet's words then are very important, when he says that God had commanded no such thing, and that it never came to his mind. As though he had said that men assume too much wisdom when they devise what he never required, nay, what he never knew.

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