

# Descending Morals and Sinking Values

by Ralph Sexton

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of obeying those in authority, remembering those in bonds and adversity, and guarding one's marriage and family, as we are all accountable to God for our actions.*

**Duration:** 37:16

**Scripture:** Hebrews 13:1-2, Hebrews 13:7, Hebrews 13:17

**Topics:** "Brotherly Love", "Accountability"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of brotherly love and helping one another in the church. He mentions the biblical verse about entertaining strangers, suggesting that angels may be among us. The preacher shares personal experiences of encountering angels and believes that God can still send angels to comfort and help in times of stress. He emphasizes the need to follow the inherent infallible word of God and be accountable for our actions, especially in the face of societal pressures. The sermon concludes with a reminder to remember and support those who are in bonds or in jail.

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## Transcript

Hebrews 13, 17, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourself, semicolon. There's two words right there in that first phrase that my flesh does not like. Could I share those with you? They are rule and submit.

Obey them that have the rule over you. And submit yourself. No one wants to be ruled over, let alone submit herself.

That's just human nature. But when I go through that semicolon to the latter part of the verse, notice the phrasing. For they watch for your souls, as they must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.

Every person in ministry is given a responsibility to love the sheep that belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we're given the responsibility to teach the Word of God without fear and without favor. We're also instructed by the Word of God that we do that task with joy, gladness of heart, that when we can help one another.

Now all of you that are here tonight have a ministry. Every person that's born again, the Bible says for us to exhort one another. The Bible says for us to bear one another's burdens.

So every one of us already are in ministry by exhortation, by praying one for another, thirdly, by bearing one another's burdens. So we're all in ministry. We also know that God ordained in the local church the under-shepherd.

And as He is the great shepherd, we know that we have Sunday school teachers, we have people that study and pray and plan and prepare to take the people in their classes to another level in the Word of God. We have spiritual leaders in our church, our deacon ministry. We have people in our church that have the roles of prayer ministry.

And they all have responsibility. And God says in His Word, Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they must give an account. Now as the pastor of this church, one day I'm going to stand in front of God.

And when I stand in front of God, I will not only be judged as my name in the Lamb's Book of Life, but then God's going to look at me and He's going to say, Now, Ralph, because you are the high priest of your home, you are married, you have a wife, her name is Musette, I'm going to review how you conducted yourself in your relationship with your wife. I'm going to judge her. I'm going to look at her spiritual character, her spiritual growth.

And ultimately, I'm going to come right back to you, Ralph. You be right here, I'll be right back. Secondly, He's going to look at my children.

I don't think any person ought to feel puffed up or high-minded just because we go to church. I think we ought to be sort of humbled before a holy God because I realize my accountability and my responsibility. Then when all that's over, He says, Oh yes, you were the under-shepherd over at Trinity.

And I'm going to review the spiritual well-being of that church. Did you preach the Word without fear and without favor? Did you tell the truth? Listen, I can't make you live right and do right any more than a parent can make a grown child live and do right. Got to get an amen on that.

Alright? But, if I have faithfully brought you the Word of God and taught and instructed, then I have been faithful to my responsibility and God now holds you accountable. There's not one person in this auditorium can go home and get down to your bed tonight and say, God, would you please forgive me for hearing what Pastor Ralph had to say tonight. I'm sorry I heard all that truth.

You cannot repent of light received. Now, Brother Ed, you've been in education with children. They can't come the next week and say, I didn't know we had that test on Friday.

Because you told them Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. So on Friday, ignorance of the law does not work. So when we go stand in front of a holy God, God's going to say, you went to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night.

You had a Bible. You had a preacher. You had a choir that sang the Word.

You had friends that admonished you and encouraged you. You had a Sunday school teacher that stood faithfully and taught the Word of God. I'm going to hold you accountable.

And God said right here, for me, the pastor, He said, as they must give an account, we will all be held accountable. Alright? Now, skip with me to chapter 13 and verse 7 of Hebrews. We were in 17.

Let's go to verse 7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you, thee what? Have spoken to you Ralph's opinion. Have spoken to you Baptist dogma. Have spoken to you their pet theology.

At church, it's awfully easy for Christian people to get a part of truth and make it their pet and they water that and fertilize it and they make the basis of fellowship around a little pet doctrine. Now, that's the truth. I know that wouldn't happen at Trinity, but it happens.

I've seen it happen. People get a little old pet something. Out of the Word of God, they get half of a verse or two-thirds of a chapter.

And that's it, buddy. If you don't believe this, we're pushing you off the cliff. When Kent was a little guy, about three years old, I came in the playroom one day and I was standing there and he had those little Weeble peoples, you know, those little Weebles, and he had them up.

And he had them on the toy box. And he had them all lined up. He was just preaching.

Boy, he was giving it to them. And he was having church. And then all of a sudden he said, Everybody who wants to go to heaven, come forward.

He made his invitation. And nobody moved. And he knocked them all off and said, Go to hell.

I said, Kent, sing another verse, son. Give them a little chance here. Man.

You didn't respond in seven seconds. That was it. No mercy, no grace.

Go to hell. You're out. Weebles and all.

Well, listen. It's easy for us to get little parts of things. And when God wants us to take the whole Word of God and He wants us to have the truth of God's Word, and He said, Remember them, in verse 7, which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you, not a pet doctrine, not Baptist doctrine, and even though we're Baptist in our beliefs, but you follow what I'm saying.

It's not Trinity's opinion. It's not pastor's opinion. It's not my pet doctrine.

It is the inerrant, infallible Word of God. That's what we've got to have, is the taught, blessed Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Look at verse 8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.

Now, God's Word is going to be good for what I've just been through. God's Word is good for what I'm in today. And God's Word is going to be good for tomorrow.

How many of us have already had the blessing of living long enough and being through enough circumstances of life that when you're up against a tough place, you can think back about the times that God delivered you in the days gone by? God hasn't abandoned one of us. Not one person can stand up in this church and say, let me tell you about the time God just hung me out to dry. Huh? Can we do that? No, we can't.

Now, we can stand up and say, I went through something I don't understand. I couldn't figure out what God was doing. But we never can testify God hung us out to dry.

He walked with us every step of the way. All right, now, let's back up to verse 1 of Hebrews 13. Verse 1, Let brotherly love continue.

Isn't that an interesting verse? Church is a place where we are to help each other, love each other, encourage each other. Okay? Verse 2, Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware. Now, you say, Brother Ralph, I don't really believe that verse.

That gets spooky. Well, I'm not Jehudi and I don't have a pen knife. I'm not going to cut that out.

It's in the Bible. I believe sometime in my life I've entertained an angel. I believe that.

And I've got testimony that I believe God has sent angels to comfort and angels to help in a time of stress. I believe that. And I've got a couple of things in my life that have happened that I cannot explain if I take away the divine fact that God had to send an angel to help.

There's a couple of things that there's no explanation outside of the fact but God. Now, you say, Well, I'm probably in the wrong church. Y'all are getting way out there on the limb.

No, I'm way out there on verse number 2. That's not a limb. It's in the book. That's what I just talked about, the Word of God.

What's wrong with our faith for today? Why do we think this only worked when our pastor Americus was in business? Why did this only work when Moody was preaching the gospel? Huh? This is the same book, and it's the same God. And I believe the same God that did great and marvelous things in the past is the same God that can do them today. I'm so messed up, I believe that.

All right? Now, look at verse number 3. Remember them that are in bonds. Remember them that are in jail. Remember them that are in difficulties.

Remember them that are suffering addictions. Do you have a family member or a friend that is addicted to a chemical? Family and friends can be addicted to marijuana. Family and friends can be addicted to alcohol.

Family and friends can be addicted to methamphetamine. Family and friends can be addicted to the wrong kind of websites. Did you know pornography is more addictive than heroin? Huh? Pornography.

Much more destructive. Listen to this. Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.

There's all kinds of bonds. I won't go through all that. And them which suffer adversity.

Do you know anyone that has had an adversity? Have had their world turned upside down? Things did not go as they imagined. Well, God said in His Word, you better remember them. As being yourselves also what? In what? In the body of what? In the body of Christ.

If one member of us hurt, we all hurt. If one suffers, we all suffer. If one is in bonds, we're all in bonds.

And if a person has been saved and washed in the blood of the Lamb and they're going through adversity and suffering and heartache, we all, if we're aware of it, we are responsible and accountable to try to help their suffering. Knowing this, that if I'm going to plant some mercy, there may be a day in Ralph's life he'll want some mercy. If I'm going to plant some grace, there may be a day in my life I'll want some grace.

What are we sowing in our lives? All right? Notice this. Verse 4. Marriage is honorable in all and to bed undefiled. Now, God said that your marriage is honorable and you are to protect your honorable marriage.

God doesn't want anyone shopping in someone else's house. Is that good? You have a wife, you take care of your wife, but don't go looking over at someone else's wife. You have a husband, you take care of your husband, but don't go looking over at someone else's husband.

Marriage is honorable. Honorable in all. And to bed undefiled.

God said, I bless the marriage bed. Now, some people say, well, are you going to talk about sex at church? Y-E-S. We're going to talk about S-E-X.

That's why the children are in another building and the teens are over there on Wednesday night because we deal with these issues. The marriage bed is pure and undefiled. Now, God invented this idea.

God went into the Garden of Eden and He made a man and He made a woman. And God said, when these two become one, this is wonderful, this is good, this is a blessing, this is what it should be. And God ordained it.

And by the way, God put a fence around the bed. He said, it's pure and undefiled. The husband is to enjoy the wife.

The wife is to enjoy the husband. God said, that's good. That's not a sin.

It's good. God ordained that. God made Adam and Eve.

He didn't make Adam and Steve. Made Adam and Eve. God had a plan.

And He said, this is a good plan. It was so good that when God brought Eve over to Adam, Adam was such a nice guy. He hunted, he fished, he had it made, he had a garden, he had running water and groceries.

And God said, you know, son, is there anything you need? Is there anything? He said, I think I need a fishing buddy. And God said, you poor dumb fellow. He said, go to sleep here a minute.

I got something for you. Put him to sleep, took out a rib, made the woman. Do you know why He made the woman out of the rib? He didn't take the woman out of a toe bone to be walked on.

Took her right by the heart. Man, a man loves his wife. He'd give his life for his wife.

He can't explain that love. Loves his wife. Wife loves her husband.

And the two shall become one. Wakes Adam up and says, look what I made. And Adam went, whoa, man! And that's where she got her name, woman.

See? That's all Bible. Read it. It's in the book.

You'd think I'm making that up. God had a plan. And He said, this marriage is so honorable that I'm going to put a fence around it.

And if you break the rules and you go outside of your marriage, there's a death penalty. The wages of sin is death. That's why in our society we're suffering from the sickness of sex sins.

We're suffering from that. And we have venereal diseases. We have all kinds of complications with the HIV virus and all of those things that are happening.

And do you know why those are taking place? It's because people broke the rules. They left the fence around the pure marriage bed that is undefiled. Now, God said that that is honorable.

Okay? Now, watch with me as we go into what the Lord is saying. Marriage is honorable and all, and the bed undefiled. But notice this phrase, whoremongers.

Now, historically that word, whoremongers, has a connotation of single adults practicing sexual activity outside of marriage. And adulterers are for those that are married and they break the marriage vow. Okay? But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Now, what amazes me in this study out of the Word of God is the fact that God ordained in His Word that there's two sexual sins here that God is going to personally judge. God's going to deal with that. God is going to take His personal attention and focus it on someone that is committed adultery.

Did I read that wrong? But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. All right, look at verse 5. Let your conversation, and He's talking about being without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He has said, here it is, what I just said a moment ago, I will never leave thee, nor what? Forsake thee.

That we may boldly say the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. God said, don't fear what man can do. Now, I'm convinced our nation is in trouble.

I have a folder here of things that I put together this afternoon. New casualty figures push quake death toll to 79,000 people. Already this year we've had the tsunami.

We've had Hurricane Katrina, Rita, and if that's not bad enough, they say Wilma is far bigger and badder than any storm in the history of keeping records. They judge the record of the strength of these storms by millibars of pressure. And we've never had a storm score 880.

And yet Wilma did that. Category 5. And as service was starting, they said that that wall of wind was already up to 171, 171 miles an hour. They said today in Russia that they discovered that the bird flu has spread into Russia.

And now the deadly, the same deadly strain, it's been found in Romania. It's been found on the Greek islands. It's been found on a farm near the Aegean Sea.

And they said that this is now spreading across Siberia to the Mediterranean. Turkey has already been infected. I got to looking on through the news here, and it said that in the United States that teenagers define sex in new ways.

There's that half of the teenagers age 15 to 19 are practicing sex outside of marriage. Fifty percent. They say it's called technical virginity.

Technical virginity. The Bible said that as we get close to the coming of the Lord that we'll change the rules of sin. We'll give it new names.

The Bible says that that's going to be a part of the lifestyle of what's going on. And you know what we're doing? You know what the church is doing with this? We're confusing a crowd of people for a church. And a crowd is not a church.

Just because we have a lot of people, that doesn't mean we're having a church. And we're confusing blessings of materialism, cars and clothes and beautiful buildings. We're confusing blessings for anointing.

That doesn't mean God approves. A crowd doesn't make a church, and blessings does not make anointing. And neither does long-suffering of God mean approval.

And I'm afraid our society has made that connection. That God's patience and God's long-suffering is God approving of our lifestyle. And He's not approving.

You know what the Bible says? The Bible says to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not is what? Sin. What do we know about the human body? The human body is that we are what we eat. We are what we ingest.

We eat the wrong kinds of food, we develop health problems. We eat junk food all the time, we develop health problems. We neglect in a culture, if you do not eat fruits and veggies, you can get all kinds of problems of anemia and all kinds of vitamin deficiencies.

That's why we supplement our milk with vitamin D, because we want to try to offset certain illnesses. That's why we put iodine in our salt. We want to offset certain illnesses, because we know that we are what we eat.

I ask you tonight, what is America eating morally? What is America eating in values? What is the church eating morally? What are people that go to church, what are we watching on TV on Thursday and Friday and Saturday? What kind of music are we listening to? We go to church on Sunday, and Monday are we listening to rap music and rock music and country music and our cars and trucks? What are we feeding on? What are we feeding on? Do you understand what I'm saying? What are we ingesting? We are what we eat. You say, well, Brother Ralph, we wish you would have stayed out of town. Yeah, but I didn't.

I came home. Look, here's what we're up against. We have declining morals as a nation, and we have sinking values as a people.

And what's going on in the church today is just a mirror image of what's going on in the world. Instead of the church lifting the world up, we're allowing the world to bring the church even lower. We're trying to get church service to look like the world.

We're trying to get church service to sound like the world. We're wanting people to be comfortable from the world in church. We're confusing a crowd with a church.

We're confusing material blessings for God's anointing. And we're confusing His long-suffering for His approval. That's why, just because you go to church, it does not mean that you can get careless in your marriage.

You can't get careless. The devil wants your marriage even more so if you go to Trinity Baptist Church. You say, well, she's a godly woman.

She understands me. Yeah, and that's straight out of the mid-pits of hell, too. There's no God in heaven that's going to counsel you to look at another Christian woman or man and say, that's the person you're supposed to be with.

That's not a god. That's of the devil. Right? You better guard these homes and you better guard these marriages.

I'm telling you, there's a great wave sweeping over our land. You better love the Lord. You better love your man.

You better love your woman. You better love your children. And you better say, God, by Your help and Your grace, I'm going to do what You have ordained me to do in my life.

And in my marriage and in my home. Listen, the more you pray and the more you study, the more you see the focus that the devil is putting in these last hours and days before the Lord comes back on the home and on the marriage. Now, look at this.

Israel, turn in the Old Testament. I left my watch on purpose in the car. No, I left my, what time is it? It's what time? 7.20? 5.20 in California.

All right. Terry Michaels used to have me a clock in the old building. I don't get one in this building.

Wait a minute. There's somebody calling me right now. Tell me what time it is.

Hello? I'm preaching. What are you doing? Yes, sir. Yeah.

Why aren't you in church? That's a big thing. Oh, no. You better not be calling the preacher at church, because I'll find out where my members are.

Yeah. All right. All right.

I'll be checking on you right after service. Don't call the preacher when he's preaching. He's got a violent answer.

He's having a heart attack right now. I believe his wife will call 911. Here's what we've got to do.

We've got to understand that the Lord's coming, and he could come at any moment. And the devil doesn't play fair. The devil doesn't have a rule book.

The devil doesn't have any orchestrated way that I can put something up on the screen and say, Now, if you'll follow 1, 2, and 3, the devil's always going to approach you this way. That's not the way he does. He's different for every person, because every person is different.

You've got an adversary that's smart. So what I have to do is, as your pastor, I have to say, Here's the general instruction from the Word of God. And in the book of Jeremiah, God dealt with the children of Israel, and he dealt with them about playing with the sins and the things of this world.

Now, look at this. Jeremiah, for the sake of time. Jeremiah chapter 5. If you have your old Schofield Bible, it's 3-7, 777.

Jeremiah 5 and verse 7. How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and swore by them that are, what? No gods. When I had fed them to the full, they then committed, what? Adultery. Adultery.

For some reason, in God's plan, he gets very upset when we break our marriage vows. He deals with adultery over and over. And assemble themselves by troops in where? The harlot's house.

God said, I want you to keep yourself. I made you. I made your body.

If you're saved, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. And wives, you keep yourself for your husband. Husbands, you keep yourself for your wives.

Young adults, single adults, he said, you keep yourself for me until I put someone in your life. Now, he said marriage is sacred. It's important.

Verse 8. They were fed. They were as fed horses in the morning. I blessed them.

I took care of them. Gave them a place to live. Gave them food.

Every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. God said, I compare you to the brute beast of the field with no morals and no standards. Verse 9. Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, and shall not my soul be avenged on such a, what? Nation as this.

God said, you can tell me to take a hike. You can throw my Bible out. You can quit praying.

You can abandon me in your culture. You can throw me away in your television, your music, and your movies. But I promise you, I will visit every nation that does that.

Go with me to the book of Genesis. Abraham made a mistake in Genesis 20. You can go over to Numbers chapter 25, but let's go to Genesis 20.

And Abraham journeyed from thence. This is chapter 20, verse 1. The south country and dwelled between Kadesh and Sir, and sojourned into Kiar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, she is my sister.

Was Sarah his sister? What did he do? Why did he lie? He had a man-fearing spirit. He was afraid. He didn't know how King Abimelech would respond.

So he lied to this man about who his beautiful wife really was. Verse 3, God went around Abraham's lying ways, a man-fearing spirit, and God talked to King Abimelech. Verse 3, but God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said unto him, Behold, thou art but a dead man.

He said, you're just a dead man. For the woman which thou hast taken, for she is what? A man's wife. You think God tolerates men and women messing in other people's marriages, looking over the fence at another man's wife, trying to flirt and entice? You think God approves of that? God said, Mr. King Abimelech, you were lied to and you're nothing but a dead man for what you're getting ready to do.

But Abimelech had not come near her and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me? She is my sister. And she, even she herself said, he is my brother. In the integrity of my

heart and innocence of my hands have I done this.

Abimelech went to God and said, God, they lied to me. I've talked to both of them. I thought this was this man's sister.

And the whole reason I'm pointing out Genesis 20 to you is because I want you to know that God takes the human body seriously. He takes your relationships seriously. We're a throwaway society.

We throw away everything. And you know what? We just say, well, that's another marriage. Let's throw it away.

We'll just get us another one. God doesn't do business like that. There's a sacredness there.

You read about how he dealt with King Abimelech. He said, you're a dead man. If that's what you want, you're going to do it, and you know what you're doing? You're a dead man.

The king said, man, I didn't know. I didn't know. And what we've got to understand here at church tonight is God's taught us right from wrong.

We know things that we're supposed to be doing. And what we're held accountable for is whether or not we're going to do what we know to do. Do we love God enough, love our families enough to do the right thing in the face of all this cultural and society pressure? We ought to vow tonight, by God's help, we're going to be men and women of faith.

We're going to be mature Christians. We're going to study to show why there's pressures on our society and culture that we never dreamed would happen in our day and generation. Descending morals and sinking values are symptoms of a sin problem that has taken our land when the church stopped preaching.

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