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MINISTRIES

HOW TO BE
Godly
IN AN UNGODLY WORLD

SHAPING YOUR CULTURE BY LIVING **CHRISTIAN VALUES**

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HOW TO BE GODLY IN AN UNGODLY WORLD

Avoiding Deception

I. Deception

A. **Matthew 24:4** – ...*Be careful that no one misleads you [deceiving you and leading you into error].*

1. A lack of knowledge (education) is the doorway to deception.
2. Deception will be so great in the last days that even the very elect could be deceived if God did not shorten the days.
3. By chapter 3 in Genesis, Satan had deceived Eve. How much more deception is in the earth now that he has had thousands of years to work?
4. **Revelation 12:9** – Satan is the great deceiver and he dwells here on the earth.

B. Deception (defined/Vine's) – To cheat, deceive, beguile, that which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence. Crafty, bait, a snare.

1. A wandering from the right path.
2. Those who deceive with empty words, belittling **the true character of sin**.

- a. **Isaiah 5:20** – The line between what is right and wrong has become blurred. Many call good evil and evil good!
 - b. We avoid calling sin what it is (SIN). We call it our weakness, our bondage, our addiction, our problem!
3. Society today is filled with lack of integrity, compromise, dishonesty, injustice, and lies. People don't keep commitments; they don't value their word. High-ranking officials often take bribes and they acquit the guilty, but take away the rights of the innocent and the righteous (See **Isaiah 5:23**).
4. God is long-suffering and merciful. He patiently tries to draw people out of sin into His forgiveness and holiness, BUT the day will come when He will not merely put up with what is taking place in the world today.
- a. **Isaiah 5:24** – A warning
 - b. **Romans 14:11-12** – Every man will give an account of himself.
 - c. **Isaiah 10:1, 3** – Woe to the judges who issue unrighteous decrees, and to the magistrates who keep causing unjust and oppressive decisions to be recorded.
- Woe (defined) – Every kind of misery imaginable!
- d. If I went through the woes and warnings to the wicked in the Bible, we might all be frightened out of our wits. But in some instances, that might not be a bad thing.

God wants His goodness to lead men to repentance; but I think if He has to scare the Hell out of them, He will, and I am willing to help Him!!

- e. God is love and He is filled with mercy, but He is also just and eventually, the reaping of what has been sown will occur for the wicked!

C. Things that deceive us:

1. Riches (See **Mark 4:19**.)
2. Reasoning (See **James 1:22**.)
3. Emotions deceive. Men can be deceived and made a fool of by a woman. (See **Job 31:9**.)

Proverbs: Chapter 5 is clear about the result of sex outside of marriage.

- a. Emotions lead us to believe we can spend more money than we earn.
 - b. They lead us to think we can do the wrong thing and still get a right result.
4. The pride of our own heart (See **Obadiah 1:3**.)
 5. Those who we associate with (See **I Corinthians 15:33**.)

II. The Truth Will Make You Free.

- A. Knowledge of God's Word, or of truth in any area closes the door to deception.
 1. Facts are not truth. Facts are the way things are; but truth is the way God intends them to be.

2. The fact is, I was sexually abused by my father. I believed I could never totally recover from what was done to me and that I would always be flawed and have a second rate life at best. I DID NOT KNOW THE TRUTH.
 3. **Isaiah 61:3-7** – The truth is that God offered me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for heaviness. He offered me a double recompense for the shame of my youth. He offered to take the fragments of my life and make something miraculous out of them.
 4. As long as I believed the world’s brand of truth, I was trapped in bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness. I had a chip on my shoulder and felt the world owed me something, and I was trapped in self-pity. I could not maintain good relationships, had a poor self-image, a shame-based nature, a failure image and a bad attitude, but **the Truth made me free!!**
- B. Knowledge of our constitution, our history and our rights as citizens closes the door to the deception that is rampant today in our society if we will apply the knowledge once we have it.
1. Examples of such deception:
 - a. “The church and the state should be separate.” It is a misinterpretation of the first amendment that says Congress shall make no law establishing a national religion and neither shall it prohibit religion.
 - b. President Jefferson used the phrase in a letter written to a group of Baptist pastors in Connecticut in 1802. His purpose was to assure them that his somewhat unorthodox view of Christianity would not be pressed on the church in the United States during his presidency. Jefferson believed in God, but not in any of the supernatural events recorded in the Bible.

- c. President Jefferson assured them that there is a wall of separation that protects the church from any undue meddling by the state. The irony is that the phrase never implied that the **state** needed to be protected from the **church**.

- d. If religion had no place in government and was to be separated from it, why did former leaders make these statements?
 - 1) **George Washington** – “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

 - 2) **John Adams** – “Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people...so great is my veneration of the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read, the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens in their country and respectful members of society.”

 - 3) **Thomas Jefferson** – “The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty.... Students’ perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands.”

 - 4) **Andrew Jackson** – “That book (the Bible) is the rock on which our Republic rests.”

 - 5) **William Penn** – “If we will not be governed by God, we must be governed by tyrants.”

 - 6) **Ulysses S. Grant** – “Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of your liberties write its precepts in your hearts, and practice them in your lives.”

To the influence of this Book, we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization and to this we must look as our guide in the future.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”
(See **Proverbs 14:34.**)

C. Deception is everywhere!!

1. The world says we have a money problem. We need the economy stimulated so we print money that has nothing to back it up and go deeper in debt as a nation trying to solve a problem that money will never solve.

We don't have a money problem in our nation...we have a morality problem. Bring God back as the center of all things and the prosperity we once experienced will return.

2. You can borrow on next week's paycheck and the company loaning you the money will **only** charge you a **small** fee! And, of course the lender “only” wants to help you.
3. You can buy now and make no payments for six months, and sometimes even a year. It sounds good, but you are spending tomorrow's prosperity today – and when tomorrow comes, you will still be broke and under financial pressure.
4. Credit cards are deceptive for many people. It is fun to go shopping and just give everyone the card, but the bill will come!!

III. Be In The World, But Not Of It!

- A. **John 17:14-16** – God wants us in the world to be an example to those living in darkness without God, but we are not and must not be “of the world.”

1. That doesn't mean that we behave like aliens from another planet called "Christian planet!" We don't need to act so religious that no one can relate to us. We need to be real, but godly!!
 - a. Some Christians act as if they are of the world, but not in it! Jesus said we are to be in it, but not of it!
 - b. We live in a real world, with real people who have real problems and we have a Savior who has real answers.

B. **Romans 12:2** – Be not conformed to this world!

1. We are supposed to change the world – not let the world change us.
2. Today the lines are blurred. It is hard to recognize who God's people are.
 - a. **Ephesians 4:1** – Behave in a way that is a credit to God!

There are times when I am around someone and in a short while I know they love God. I can tell by their attitude and the way they treat people. But, many times people tell me they are Christians and I would not have recognized it at all by the way they behaved.

- b. **Colossians 3:12** – Put on behavior that represents God.
 - 1) True repentance includes a change in behavior!! In the New Testament it always means a change of mind and purpose, and a turning away from sin and a turning toward God.

- 2) I believe it is a Divine Exchange! We give ourselves, and all that we are and are not, to God; and He gives Himself and all that He is and has to us!

**When we try to “get God” without
“giving ourselves” it never works.**

- c. **I Thessalonians 2:10** – Paul talked about the behavior of the apostles.
 - d. **II Peter 3:10-11** – The day will come when Jesus will return, but what should be our conduct and behavior in the meantime.
- C. **II Corinthians 5:20** – We are Christ’s ambassadors and God is making His appeal to the world through us!!
1. Will others want a relationship with God from watching your example and behavior?
 2. Even though the world may not agree with your choice to serve God, will they respect you because they see you live what you say you believe, or will they say you are a hypocrite because you compromise all the time?
 - a. **Matthew: Chapter 23** – Jesus talked of the “woes” that would come on hypocrites!
 - b. **Woe** (defined/Webster’s 1828 Dictionary) – Sorrowful, distressed, grief and calamity; affliction; wretched and mourning; misery!!

Closing Statement:

I am very concerned for people today. They are slipping into Hell by the multitudes daily and sadly many Christians stand by and do absolutely nothing! We are to be salt and light in a dark and tasteless world. IT IS TIME TO STIR UP THE FLAVOR AND TURN THE LIGHTS ON!!

PERSONAL NOTES

The Deception Of Compromise

I. Compromise

- A. **Luke 4:5-8** – Jesus was tempted to compromise, but if He would not have resisted, the plan of salvation would have been thwarted.
1. The “just once” lie!
 2. Look at what the world has to offer. You don’t have it, but this little compromise will give it to you.
 3. It is just a little thing! Too little to make that much difference.
- B. **Compromise** (defined) – To know what is right to do but not to do it, or to go a little below what you know is right.
1. **James 4:17** – It is sin!
- C. Compromising to settle differences in relationships is not always bad unless doing so causes us to sin. Then we have to take a stand for what is right.
1. If we don’t stand for something, we will fall for everything.
(Source unknown)
 2. Example: Let’s say that a woman really wants her husband to go to church with her and the kids. He finally says that he will go if she will go get drunk with him on Friday night!

She cannot compromise!
 3. But let’s say that he says, “You want me to go to church with you, but you won’t ever go fishing with me.” She says, “You always go on Sunday and I can’t miss church.” He says, “Sunday is the only day I am not working and the only time I can go.”

Now, a compromise might be for her to say, “I will miss church this Sunday to go fishing with you if you will go to the Wednesday night church service with me.”

4. Compromise usually means that you get a little of what you want and the other party gets a little of what they want, but nobody gets everything they want.
5. We cannot give the devil a little of what he wants, and give God a little of what He wants, and us have a little of what we want! God must be first. He must be obeyed and we must not compromise.

II. A “Little” Leaven Can Ruin The Whole Thing

A. **Galatians 5:9** – *A little leaven (a slight inclination to error, or a few false teachers) leavens the whole lump [it perverts the whole conception of faith or misleads the whole church].*

1. In **Matthew: Chapter 16**, Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees who tried to destroy their freedom by once again putting them under the law.
2. They could not earn right standing with God through works. But Satan, using the religious people of the day, continually tried to deceive them.
3. **Anytime we are making progress, Satan will tempt us to compromise!!**

B. **Galatians 2:11-14** – Peter compromised just a little and Paul boldly confronted Him.

1. Perhaps we should confront one another in love more often.
2. These people were compromising on the principle of faith in Christ rather than works of the law as a means of salvation and righteousness. What kind of compromises do we see in society and in the world today?

- C. Politicians compromise in order to get votes, even if it means that they don't do what they promised the people who voted for them the last election.
- D. Christians sometimes compromise their moral standard at work in order to get promoted.
 - 1. The boss wants you to do something that isn't right. You don't want to do it, but know that if you don't you will be rejected for future promotion.
 - 2. What kind of moral compromises do people make to have fame and fortune?
- E. Christians compromise in order to avoid rejection by their peers.
 - 1. Young people (teens and young adults) are often swayed from their standards due to peer pressure.
 - 2. **Galatians 1:10** – Paul said he would not have been an apostle had he wanted to be popular with the people.
 - 3. Saul lost his kingdom partially due to fear of losing the people and his fear caused him to disobey God. (See **I Samuel 13:11**.)

III. Greed And Compromise

- A. Greed (wanting more at any cost) may be the biggest reason for compromise!
 - 1. Remember that Satan offered Jesus all the things of the world if He would just compromise once.
 - 2. I am sure glad that Jesus wasn't greedy!!
- B. We often pay a high price for a cheap thrill!

1. **Proverbs 1:19** – Greed takes away the lives of its possessors.
2. **Proverbs 15:27** – The greedy person troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.

Satan is trying to bribe us when he tempts us to compromise for some promised gain.

- C. The same devil that tempts us to compromise to have what the world offers will leave us empty, miserable and lonely once we have done his bidding.
 1. God will give us all good things in due time, but He doesn't always give them to us when we want them, or if having them won't be good for us.

IV. Laziness And Compromise

- A. Just being lazy will cause us to compromise!
 1. Not doing the right thing because we don't feel like putting forth the extra effort it takes
 2. There was a time when people did what was right simply because it was their duty. It was the honorable thing to do. Sadly, those principles have all but disappeared from society.
 3. A real man or woman of God doesn't give up when the way becomes hard – they just become more determined to do the right thing.
 4. **Proverbs 24:30-34** – Laziness and destruction
 5. **Matthew 25:24-26** – The servant who did nothing with his talent was lazy!!

V. Excellence

- A. To go the extra mile. To take what you have and do the best you can with it.
- B. Excellent people do what is right because it is right! Even though it will bring a reward eventually, that is not the primary reason they do it.

Excellence reveals character.

- C. **John 3:20-21** – If we practice truth, then we do what is right. We live in the light and that is what the world needs to see.

- D. **Matthew 5:1-16** – We are salt and light in a tasteless and dark world!

1. Be humble.
2. Mourn over sin and the condition of the world.
3. Be meek, mild, patient and longsuffering.
4. Hunger and thirst for righteousness (right being and right doing).
5. Be merciful.
6. Be pure in heart (not a hypocrite).
7. Be a peacemaker.
8. Rejoice when you're persecuted for righteousness' sake.
9. Don't be tasteless, or even worse, leave a bad taste in people's mouths.
10. Be a light!
11. Don't hide your light! Be a Christian everywhere, not just at church!

12. DON'T COMPROMISE!

VI. Take A Stand

- A. If you don't stand for something you will fall for everything!
1. Take a stand against immorality and ungodliness when the world tries to force it on you.
 2. If the government is attempting to take away your rights as stated in the constitution, then take a stand. Speak up!

Silence is viewed as agreement!
- B. Integrity means to have a standard or a code of values that we refuse to go below.
1. Integrity does not try to find a way to justify what is below that standard.
 2. When one of my children was very young and just beginning at the ministry, we were going on a ministry trip that was to someplace he had always wanted to go, so he asked if he could go along. We told him "No" because we didn't feel it would be right to spend ministry money just so he could go somewhere to visit. He responded with "Well, can't you justify me going by saying you needed me for some reason?" I said loud and clear, **"I am not trying to find justification for your flesh to get its way. My heart knows it would not be right.**
 - a. This set a standard for him that he still honors today even with the people who now work for him in ministry.
 - b. As parents we must set standards for our children, especially by being a good example to them.
 - c. God even expects us to set a standard for the rest of society.

C. We must set a standard for how we are going to live and not keep lowering the standard in order to fit into the world.

1. Do you have a standard for what you will watch on television and the movies you will go see, or do you just watch whatever is popular?
2. Do you have any kind of standard for what you will and won't do for entertainment, the kind of places you will go, or the people you will be close friends with?
3. Note: I am not saying not to be friendly with unsaved people. Actually we should be aggressively friendly and loving, but we must not cross the line of our standard and compromise to please them.
4. Do you have a standard for your language, or when you are with unsaved people do you just talk the way they talk?
 - a. Crude language
 - b. Gossip
 - c. Slander
 - d. Complaining
5. **Philippians 2:14-15** – Live among the unbelievers without complaining!

D. We live in difficult times and compromise abounds!

1. Because the government legalizes something doesn't mean that God approves of it, and it doesn't mean that you won't suffer for doing it later in life.
2. Because most people live together today before getting married that doesn't mean that God approves of it, and it doesn't mean that it doesn't harm your relationship in some way.
3. "Everyone does it," is not a reason for us to do it!

4. **II Timothy 3:1-14** – Let us make a commitment to take a stand for God’s Word and live by it no matter what the world says or does!!

Verse 14 – No matter what the world does – as for you, continue to hold to the things that you have learned and of which you are convinced.

PERSONAL NOTES

Pursuing Holiness

I. We Are Made Holy By The Blood Of Jesus

A. **Hebrews 10:10, 14**

B. **I Peter 1:2** – Made holy to be obedient to Jesus Christ

C. God gives us His HOLY Spirit to make us holy and to enable us to live holy lives.

1. God never asks us to do something without giving us what we need to do it!

D. **I Peter 1:14-16** – *[Live] as children of obedience [to God]; do not conform yourselves to the evil desires [that governed you] in your former ignorance [when you did not know the requirements of the Gospel]. But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living. For it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.*

1. Let's view this as a promise of what God has done and will do in us if we follow the Holy Spirit.
2. This is not intended to frighten us, but to motivate us to be all God intends us to be.

E. Holiness (defined/Vine's) - The state predetermined by God for believers, into which in grace He calls them, and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it; growing towards perfection.

II. Pursue Holiness.

A. **Hebrews 12:14** – Pursue holiness without which no one will (ever) see the Lord.

1. What about salvation by grace and not by works? The book of Romans states that no man can be made righteous (right with God) by works of the law, but only by faith in Jesus. So what about that?
 2. Grace justifies the sinner, but it never justifies sin!
 3. Paul said, “I do not take the grace of God in vain.” (See **Galatians 2:21**.)
- B. It is really very simple ... Faith without works is dead!!
1. **James 2:14-20** – Real faith will produce a desire to do the works of God.
 2. We avoid works of the flesh (our energy trying to do what only God can do).
 - a. Saving ourselves
 - b. Making ourselves righteous
 - c. Following our human plans to get what we want instead of asking God and waiting on His way and timing.
 3. Although we avoid works of the flesh, we should aggressively pursue doing the work of God.
 4. **John 17:4** – Jesus glorified His Father by completing the work He was given to do.
- C. In the spiritual classic, *A Serious Call to A Devout and Holy Life*, William Law said, “***assurance to us that He will be merciful to our unavoidable weakness and infirmities, that is to such failing as are the effects of ignorance or surprise, yet we have no reason to expect the same mercy towards those sins which we have lived in, through a want of intention to avoid them.***”

1. He also said, *“For instance, you perhaps have made no progress in the most important Christian virtues, you have scarce gone halfway in humility and charity; now if your failure in these duties is purely owing to your want of intention of performing them in any true degree, have you not then as little to plead for yourself, and are you not as much without all excuse as the common swearer?”*
- D. Living a holy life can only be done with intention. We must do it on purpose as our duty to God and society, and never on any account wait to feel like doing so.
1. We pursue holiness because of what God has done in us, and never to earn anything from Him.
 2. Seriously wanting to do the right thing is proof of our love for God.
 - a. **John 14:15** – If you really love Me you will obey Me!
 - b. **John 21:15-18** – If you love Me then help someone! Be willing to let Me lead and guide you and cease trying to run your own life.
 3. **Romans 12:1** – Make a decision to dedicate all your faculties (all of you) as a living sacrifice.
 - a. When we are weak and fail, God will forgive us, but we must have a heart to press toward the mark of perfection and holiness!
 - b. **Hebrews 12:14** – Pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

III. Holiness Is Not Legalism – Holiness Is Doing The Absolute Best That You Can For Where You Are In Spiritual Growth.

- A. **Philippians 2:12-13** – Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, not in your own strength, but with God working in and through you.

1. Self distrust, serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ.
2. By compromising and ungodly behavior, the church has discredited the name of Christ and all that it stands for, and the world disrespects us and has no desire to be like us.
3. The phrase, “I’m a Christian,” has come to be almost meaningless, especially among people 40 years old and younger.

Young people are looking for something genuine and real. They prefer open sin rather than pretended godliness.

B. In past times, holiness has been reduced to.....

1. Not smoking, drinking, or cussing.
2. Not dancing, playing cards, or going to parties.
3. Not wearing pretty colors and beautiful clothes, makeup, jewelry, or having a nice hairstyle.
 - a. The Old Testament priests came to church in amazingly beautiful garments!
 - b. **I Peter 3:3-4** – Don’t let it be merely the outward adorning that we focus on.
4. Cutting or not cutting your hair, depending on which brand of religion you follow.
5. Not getting a tattoo.
 - a. **Isaiah 44:5** – *One will say, I am the Lord’s; and another will call himself by the name of Jacob; and another will write [even brand or tattoo] upon his hand, I am the Lord’s. . .*

- b. **Isaiah 49:16** – *Behold, I have indelibly imprinted (tattooed a picture of) you on the palm of each of My hands. . .*
 - c. You may have heard **Leviticus 19:28** misquoted which says, “You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print or tattoo any marks on you (for the dead).
 - d. **Leviticus 19:27** also says, *You shall not round the corners of the hair of your heads nor trim the corners of your beard [as some idolaters do].*
6. Men not wearing earrings
- a. **Ezekiel 16:9-13** – God speaks to Israel.
 - b. **Hosea 2:13** – God visited punishment upon His people for celebrating the feast days of Baals, burning incense to them and decking themselves with earrings and nose rings and going after other lovers and forgetting God.
 - c. The reason why people do things is the important thing to God!! God sees our heart.
7. Rules that supposedly make one holy get really ridiculous and they are **all** things we cannot do!
8. It was even suggested that people should live in poverty and have nothing because things may tempt them and draw them away from God.
- C. What did Jesus say?
- 1. Be obedient to God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit!

2. Focus on love because it fulfills all the law!
3. **John 13:34** – If we walk in love the world will know that we are His disciples.

D. Love leads us to do our duty.

1. **John 13:-14-15** – Jesus gave us an example to follow and said it is our “duty.”
2. We have duties as Christians that we are to perform.
3. **I Timothy 5:4** – Caring for elderly parents and grandparents is our duty.
4. **II Thessalonians 3:7, 11** – Paul speaks of doing our duty.
5. **Colossians 3:18** – Wives, be submissive to your husbands as a duty to the Lord.
6. **Acts 23:1** – Paul said that he had done his duty with a good conscience.

He made a point of mentioning doing his duty as a citizen!

E. What is our duty?

1. It is our duty to vote in every election, for men and women with biblical morals, who will lead our nation in righteousness.
2. It is our duty to hold them accountable to do what they promised to do.
3. It is our duty to pay taxes (Jesus told Peter to pay his taxes and render to Caesar what was Caesars and to God what was God’s).
 - a. We have a duty to God and to our country.

- b. We must never render to Caesar what belongs to God! (Depend on and put your trust in God not the government to take care of you.)
 - c. If government ever tries to take away our rights to believe in and worship God we will have to stand against it!
 - 4. It is our duty to be excellent in all that we do and take care of our property.
 - 5. It is our duty to tell the truth and be men and women of honor and integrity.
 - 6. It is our duty to work unless it is impossible for us to do so.
 - 7. It is our duty to worship God!
 - 8. It is our duty to love and serve.
 - 9. It is our Christian duty to forgive our enemies.
 - 10. It is our duty to have behavior that is a credit to God.
- F. **I Peter 2:15-16** – Let us make a decision to do what is right at all times (to the best of our ability) and let us do it to glorify God and be an example to those who would judge and criticize us.
- 1. Live as free people, but do not employ your freedom as an excuse for sin! Live at all times as servants of God.

PERSONAL NOTES

The Voice of Conscience

Foundation Scriptures: Acts 23:1; 24:16

I. The Conscience

- A. The function of the conscience is to correct and reprimand us, so as to render us uneasy when we do something that displeases God.
 - 1. Conscience (defined/Vines/Greek) – A knowing, or to know; a witness borne to one's conduct by conscience; the faculty by which we apprehend the will of God and that which is designed to govern our lives; the process of that which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad and prompting us to do the good and avoid the bad; acting a certain way because conscience requires it.

- B. A healthy conscience
 - 1. A healthy conscience is not overactive – it does not question things unnecessarily. It is educated in God's Word and knows the difference in true conviction verses accusation and condemnation from the devil.
 - 2. A healthy conscience is not hardened or seared, but rather it is sensitive.

- C. Learn to follow peace.
 - 1. Colossians 3:15 – Let peace rule in your hearts and let it make all final decisions.
 - a. The first thing the sinner feels when he is born again is **peace**! His sins are forgiven and he has peace with God!!

- b. **John 14:26-27** – Jesus left us His peace and commands us to hold onto it, and to not allow ourselves to be disturbed. One of the ways we do that is to listen to the voice of conscience.
 - c. **Hebrews 12:14** – Learn to follow peace all the way to holiness.
2. **Romans 14:1-2, 5, 14, 16, 22-23** – Even if a person has a weak conscience, he is better off to do nothing that offends it and lose his peace. He should keep learning God’s Word and working with the Holy Spirit and as he grows in God he will realize what his legitimate rights and freedoms are, and be able to enjoy them.
- a. In **Romans: Chapter 14**, the point is also clearly made that if a person has liberty to do something, and he is with someone who would feel condemned if he also did it, then the stronger believer should refrain from doing it out of love and respect. He should not judge or criticize the weaker believer, nor should he do anything that would tempt him to disobey his conscience.
 - b. I recall a very religious relative correcting me one time for wearing blue eye shadow!!
 - c. Things that are clearly covered in God’s Word (lying, stealing, adultery, murder) are not things that one is free to do while another isn’t, but things that are not covered specifically are left to the individual’s conscience.
3. **Romans 14:12** – Each of us shall give an account of himself to God!

II. Conscience And The Unregenerate Sinner

A. The Spirit of man has three functions:

1. Communion with God.
2. Intuition (knowing by revelation). Knowing by the spirit rather than by the mind.

The spiritual man knows things that he has no way of knowing!

3. Conscience

B. The unregenerate man is dead spiritually – communion with God and intuition are dead (he lives from his mind and feelings) and the conscience is in a coma.

1. Conscience may have a little life, but it is asleep and generally unresponsive.
2. He is accustomed to living with low-level guilt and has developed ways to ignore it.

- a. Making excuses
- b. Finding fault with others
- c. Being deceived by his own reasoning
(See **James 1:22**.)
- d. All of these may also be practiced by the believer!!!

C. The man who has been regenerated and enlightened by God communicates with God regularly. He knows things spiritually, and his conscience is not only activated, but becomes more and more active as he learns God's Word.

1. **I Corinthians 2:13-15** – The natural man in comparison to the spiritual man.
2. **Romans 8:5-6** – The mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life and peace!!

III. A Seared Or A Sensitive Conscience

- A. Pray for a tender conscience!
- B. Let your conscience (enlightened by the Holy Spirit) be your Friend!
- C. Sensitivity to conscience can be increased and it can be decreased.
 1. **I Timothy 4:1-2** – A seared conscience. Each time we ignore conscience or answer it with an excuse or reason, the next time or after a few times its voice become softer. When it is repeatedly rejected in an area it may cease to speak!
 2. If we obey conscience it becomes a window that lets in more and more light!
- D. **Matthew 6:22-23** – Your conscience is like a light in you – don't allow it to become dark or it will become a dense darkness.
 1. Many lives are filled with dense darkness due to one thing – not heeding the voice of conscience.
 2. Many believers are very unhappy and lack peace due to not heeding the voice of conscience.

IV. Ways We May Discern That An Action Is Improper For Us.

- A. The conscience condemns it.
- B. We lack peace while planning it or doing it.

1. We are uncomfortable while doing it!
2. We have difficulty enjoying it!

Making purchases, gossiping, complaining, being less than excellent, compromising integrity, not keeping our word, not keeping our commitments, not finishing what we start

- C. We lack peace until we confront it, admit it is sin and ask to be forgiven by God or anyone we have hurt.
- D. We feel the need to hide it!
 1. Things I learned in the grocery store!
 2. Anything we have to hide is probably wrong!
- E. We are afraid that people will find out we did it.
- F. Each time a believer does not listen to his conscience, he damages his spiritual walk.

V. The Conscience And Fellowship With God

- A. **Hebrews 10:22** – Draw near with a clean conscience.
- B. **I Timothy 3:9** – Faith and a clear conscience
- C. **I Timothy 1:19** – Some have made a shipwreck of their faith by thrusting from them a clean conscience.
- D. **II Timothy 1:3** – Worship with a clear conscience.

PERSONAL NOTES

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