

## I. The Debt of Love and Life's Choices

You remember, I constantly remind you this, and it is true in all of our lives, that life is choices. The things that we have to struggle with in life and go through in life, many times are based on the bad choices that we make. That doesn't mean that there is not a way out from under it; there always is. The Bible is very clear on that aspect.

But it comes back to the point where we have to understand how the principle applies that we have to run through our decisions. I talked about how that we have a race to run. That race is where we are to stay focused on the prize that God has for us, the prize being the judgment seat of Christ. Yet, the things that we put in our world, the things that are made of bad choices or bad consequences, they add weight to our run. We talked about several examples of that.

I must say that the response last week was quite overwhelming. I appreciate so many of you that have come in and talked with me or called me on the phone, that the message really struck right where you were at and maybe what you are dealing with in your life. I came away with this last week, in one respect anyhow, so amazed with the fact that so many of you desire to do what is right with your life. I think that is one of the things that I really love about so many of you, is that you really want to do what is right with your life.

The uniqueness of our church, and I think this is really a quality that I do not say much about, but I think it is a true quality, is that almost all of you, for the most part, at least 85% of you, are people who have just gotten saved or people who never really got into the system yet, so to speak. You haven't been taught how to be a professional Christian. You just simply love God. You want to do what is right in your life with your families. Maybe you do not know how, but you are willing to learn. Boy, I will tell you what, you do not find anything better than that.

I can give people all of the lesson plans, all of the books of the Bible, like I spend 6,000 hours teaching you the principles of the Bible, but if you do not have the attitude of heart to receive what the Word of God is coming, then it is really a waste of time on my part. One of the things that I love about you is the fact that there are so many of you who desire to do what is right with your life, and it is evident in the things that you do.

It struck me this week after I preached that sermon; it really was not a hard sermon, but it was a sermon that dealt with the reality of life, and many times we do not want to deal with the reality. Remember, I gave you two great verses, two great principles.

Philippians 4:19 talked about and focused on our needs: "My God shall supply all of your need," and not the wants. 1 Timothy 6:6 talked about the fact that we need to be content with the things that we have, that "godliness with contentment is great gain," the Bible says.

Last week we looked at the aspect of debt, and we will continue on that in Romans 13, but I want to look at it from another aspect, and it is really the context of this passage here, even though it carries both subjects.

## II. The Fulfillment of the Law Through Love

I want to read here in Romans 13, and let us pick it up in verse 8 together, and then we will go on from there.

*Romans 13:8-10*

*Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

*For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, I just stand in awe sometimes how Your Spirit puts the things in our lives and in our hearts at the time that we need them. Lord, where our church is at right now, I cannot think of a better place to be than right here in chapter 13, coming down to the end, then moving into chapter 14 and chapter 15, which deals with our relationship with each other as Christians.

Lord, I thank You for the fact that we can come to Your Word today. Lord, we love You. We thank You, Father, for all that You have done for us and all that You have given us. We ask You, Lord, now to open up our hearts to give us, Lord, exactly what we need today. We will be thankful to give You all the honor and the glory and the praise in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

You remember that I have reminded you all through our study on the book of Romans that the book of Romans is a book about perspective. It gives us our perspective in almost everything in our life that we need to know about our relationship with everything as a Christian. When we get to Romans 14 and 15, and I told you this the other day, when we get to chapter 14 and 15, and I think this is just of God for where our church is at, Romans 14 and 15 really talks about the ability to minister to each other.

It is the final two chapters in the book of Romans. He leaves the book of Romans. He has gone through every aspect. In chapter 1, he went through our perspective of the Gentiles. In chapter 2, he went through our perspective of the Jews. In chapters 3 and 4, our perspective of the law and how it all deals with it. Chapters 5 and 6, we got into the death of Christ and the cross and how it relates to you and I and our walk with God. Now finally we come to chapter 12, which was our relationship with other people, chapter 13, our government. Now we come into chapters 14 and 15 here in the next couple of weeks.

He ends the book with probably the single greatest concept that we always need to keep before us, and that is the aspect of our relationship to each other. I think that, as I said, it is very profitable for where we are at in this particular time. Romans 13:8-14 not only brings chapter 13 to a close in dealing with government authority and accountability to it, but what it also does in

these passages, it forms a bridge. It kind of brings us from a transition coming from chapter 13 with the government going into chapter 14 and chapter 15.

Last week we talked about the fact that we get so caught up with owing money to the world and our debt to the world that we never see the real debt that we have as God's people and as to the unsaved world. We talked about Romans 1:14-16 about preaching, not being ashamed, and preaching the Gospel to the world. That really is our debt. Yet today we are going to take another concept of that aspect of debt. We are going to take it one step further within the context of the passage here.

This second aspect is without a doubt probably the most important thing that you will ever learn and understand. That is why it is kind of like a prelude to chapters 14 and 15. It is about the debt not that we owe to the world, but the debt that we owe to each other. If you look at this passage here, this passage is an incredible thing. The key to a successful church is unity. There is no question about that. The oneness of God, the oneness of the mind, the oneness of the heart, the oneness of the Word of God, and everybody on the same page as far as ministry is concerned. This principle deals with the fact that we need to take that same debt aspect into our relationship with each other.

Just like our debt to the unsaved world, we will never get it paid. The reason why we will never get it paid is because of Christ's death on the cross and the fact that you and I have experienced the salvation that God wants us to tell others about. I know I am a pastor and I get paid for what I do, but if I did not get paid for what I do, I would still do what I could do. There were times in my life when I was not a pastor and I did exactly what I do now, maybe not to the extent because I had to work a job like many of you do. But it was never a time in my life where I was not looking to put out the Gospel and tell somebody about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason for that is because when I got saved, I realized the debt that Christ paid for my soul. I realized, as many a child of God never realizes, all that God did for me to get to Heaven. It was no easy act for God just to snap His fingers and allow people to go to Heaven. When I understood the fact that His Son came down and died on the cross, shed His blood, when I read places like Isaiah 52, Isaiah 53, and many places in the Old Testament, the book of Psalms, when I saw the absolute agony that He paid on the price and then fully realized that He did that for me, I fully understood what Paul meant when he said, "I am a debtor to the Greeks and the Gentiles." Because I understand as a debtor to this world, I have a debt now that what God has given me, I need to give to others.

Somebody told me one time years ago, and it was such a true statement, and I have never forgotten it. He defined what Christians ought to be. He said, "Christians and Christianity, we get our little social levels where everybody wants to have a little pecking order spiritually." He said simply this, and it is so true: "Christianity and Christians are just one beggar telling another beggar where to get bread." Boy, that is absolutely one of the truest little statements that you can put down as a ministry principle in your book. It is a great thing.

Besides that, the context here is the fact that we are in debt to each other to love each other. The reason why we are in debt to love each other is because the Lord loved you and me when we

were nothing. The Lord loved you and me when we did not deserve any love. When we were altogether unlovely, when God was a holy God and we were absolutely the most grotesque, horrible thing to God could ever be. When we were the most unlovable person in this world, God still loved us. Because the Lord loved us when we were nothing and deserved no love, that is why Jesus in John 15:12 says:

*John 15:12*

*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

This is why he said in 1 John 4:11:

*1 John 4:11*

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

These verses are talking about God's children, you and me, loving each other with the concept based on what God has done for us.

### III. Understanding the Purpose of the Law

So he comes down here in verse 9 and he says this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." What he is doing here, and Paul does this a lot in the Bible, that is a quotation from Leviticus 19:18. In that particular passage, he uses this phrase here, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." What Paul is doing is what he does many, many times. He is taking the Old Testament commandment to teach a New Testament principle to you and to me.

We use the term a lot, you hear me say it a lot, talking about becoming Christ-like. I talk about the fact that the goal of every young Christian is to become more like Christ every day of your life. We talk about being conformed to His image. But you know what? Being Christ-like has really nothing to do with what you say. Being Christ-like even has nothing to do with what you do. But in reality, and this is where the rubber of Christianity meets the pavement, the reality of Christianity and the love that we should have of being Christ-like has nothing to do with what you say or what you do, but in reality has to do everything with how we treat each other. That is the key. Christ-like is treating other people like Christ takes care of you. It is dealing with people like He deals with you. It is treating people like He treated you. That is what the Bible's definition of Christ-like is.

Let me explain how this kind of works together for you, and I want you to understand the background of this. I never want you just to grasp the principle without seeing how it works. Let me talk to you about understanding the concept of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, if you lay them out, are in two aspects. Some of them deal with God, and they would be called the ceremonial ones. They are the ones that are God-ward. Then there are other commandments that are what they call the moral commandments, and they are toward man. So your Ten Commandments basically break down in a ceremonial mode and in a moral mode. The ceremonial ones being like, "Thou shalt have no other God before me." The moral ones being

like, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not steal," and so on. Some are God-ward and some are man-ward.

The Old Testament idea of God giving the Ten Commandments, and let me explain this: God never gave the Ten Commandments for man to keep. We get the idea that the Ten Commandments form the golden rule, and so if we live by the Ten Commandments or most of the Ten Commandments or the majority of the Ten Commandments, that kind of cuts some ice with God. Well, let me bring you back down to reality. First of all, the Ten Commandments were never given for anybody to keep. You know why that is? Because nobody can keep them. In fact, the Bible says, "Well, I kept nine of them," somebody says, "and I just have a problem with the number 10 one or one of them in there." Well, the Bible says that if you keep the whole law and you offend it in one point, you are guilty of it all.

My point is this: The Ten Commandments were never given for you and me to keep, but at the same time it is a great moral standard by which we should measure ourselves and our relationship with God and our morals in our life. But more than that, the Ten Commandments were never given for you and I to keep. God never intended to give them to us to keep. God gave the Ten Commandments so you and I would understand how far we fell short of what God really expected of us.

You know what the Bible says in the book of Galatians?

*Galatians 3:24-25*

*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

*But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

Now you have all been in school. We have a host of teachers here. Most of your kids are in school. We all grew up in school. We all went through the public school system. You know how it works. You go to a classroom and you have a teacher. The teacher keeps your focus on the subject. If you are in American history class, she keeps the focus on American history. If you are in biology class, they keep the focus on biology. That is what a teacher does. Well, the Holy Spirit of God and the Ten Commandments is our teacher. It is our schoolmaster, and what it keeps us focused on is the fact that you and I, as human beings, as good as you try, as hard as we try, we fall short of what God expects of us. That is what it does.

Yet the Bible says in Galatians 3:25 that now because of faith, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. When Christ came, He took away the law. This is what I want you to understand today. I want you to grasp this concept. The idea is in the Ten Commandments that if you kept the ones toward God, then you would keep the ones toward man. See how it works? That is a great reality truth there. I do not know if right now where you are at, you can grasp that concept. One of the things that I have learned over the years is that many of the supreme concepts that help me out in life and get me through life are basically basic ones.

God's idea behind the Ten Commandments, now you know that it was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, to show us our condition that we needed to have a Savior. But it also, in its context, this is what God intended. He said to Himself, "I will give them Ten Commandments." By the way, they are not the Ten Suggestions, they are the Ten Commandments. I met some people in my life, I heard a guy say one time he was preaching, he said, "If God would have known so and so, there would have been 12 Commandments instead of 10." That may be true too.

The bottom line is this: God realized that He gave some that are God-ward and some that are man-ward because He understood this. This is His thinking, and you need to know this. God's thinking on it is this: He could not conceive in His mind somebody who would keep the ones toward God, but he would not keep the one toward man. See how the thing works? Truthfully, in Bible Christianity, and I know you have a lot of Christians like this, it does not take you long to go to church to figure this out in any church. I have been around it all of my life. Today, in a lot of ways, there is going to be an assessment of the things that I have learned in the last 36 plus years of my life.

It does not take you long to go in any churches, and many of you have been in churches in your life where you see this. The bottom line is you cannot fake Bible Christianity. You cannot say that you love Him on one end and then treat each other the way that God's people treat each other. It just does not work. It just does not work. What you have here is the fact that the law, now here is the point I am going to get to. The law was our schoolmaster that brought us to Christ. It also says that through faith, the law was done away with, that we do not have a schoolmaster anymore. This is why we are not under the Ten Commandments like the nation of Israel was.

Now I am going to tell you again, they are a great moral compass to follow through your life. But you do not want to think that if I keep the Ten Commandments, I am going to Heaven. You will not get to Heaven by keeping the Ten Commandments, because you cannot keep them. But here is what you got: Based on the cross when He came and died, what He did was in Himself, in His death on the cross, He fulfilled the law. This is the aspect of your salvation. Thursday night we talked about, you probably do not know this, but Thursday night you got twelve of the greatest definitions on New Testament salvation that completely, thoroughly gives you every aspect of it for you to understand.

In God's salvation of Christ's death on the cross, what He did is He, Christ, fulfilled the law. We are in the book of Hebrews. We know the book of Hebrews is a unique book because what it does is it shows the nation of Israel that everything in the Old Testament was a temporary, imperfect structure. The only perfect structure was what God had in the New Testament through death on the cross. So everything in Hebrews is based on what the Old Testament could not do and what Christ did do when He came and fulfilled the law.

So when Christ came and died on the cross, Romans 8:3-4 says this:

*Romans 8:3-4*

*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

*That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

You see how clear that is? You cannot keep the commandments that are toward God and not keep the commandments toward man. You are either in the flesh or you are in the spirit, but you do not have one foot in either way. You either love God and you treat your neighbor as God does and you love them, each other, as God loves them unconditionally, or you do not. You cannot have it both ways.

When you get saved, it was Christ who fulfilled the law, and now what does He do? He fulfilled the law and He comes now and He indwells in you and I. The fact that He has fulfilled the law and He indwells in you and I, then our lives should be a fulfillment of the law in a spiritual sense just like it was a fulfillment in the physical sense in the Old Testament. You realize that if you are saved here this morning, you have Christ living inside you, and if Christ is living inside you and He fulfilled the law, then your job as a Christian after He is living inside you is what? Fulfill the law.

What is the law? What He did with the ten is redefine them down to two. This is why He says in verse 8, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." You see that? We have a debt to each other as Christians. Yes, we have a debt to the unsaved world to go out and tell them the story of Christ. That was the aspect we talked about last week. But you and I have a debt to each other, and that debt is to love each other as Christ loves you, and then to speak no ill of one another. We will look at that when we get down here in verse 9.

Now let me talk about this law here where he says in verse 8, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." This law in the New Testament is found in Galatians 6:1-2. Here it is called the law of Christ. Now watch this. You do not have to turn to Galatians 6:1-2. I will read it for you. Well, no, turn to it because you might think I am lying to you.

*Galatians 6:1-2*

*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

You see that? That is called the law of Christ in the Bible. That law of Christ supersedes the Old Testament law of the ten and takes the form that you and I now are to have a debt to each other. When a man be overtaken in a fault, "ye that are spiritual," and that would be the key word there by the way, "ye that are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself lest also be tempted."

All right. We can come over to James 2:8. Here it is.

*James 2:8*

*If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

Now here it is called the royal law. The royal law, the law of Christ, is what Christ changed about the Old Testament law when He fulfilled it. When He came in you and me and now He dwells inside of us, we are to be the fulfillment of the law in these two things just like Christ is.

This is what Jesus was making reference to in Matthew 22:37-40 when He said this:

*Matthew 22:37-40*

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

*This is the first and great commandment.*

*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Now you see that? That is the first commandment, is it not? The first commandment back in Exodus 20 is "Thou shalt have no other God before me." See? That is the first commandment. Now watch this. And the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. That is not the second one. Somebody raise your hand and tell me what the second commandment is in Exodus 20. Have no graven images. So that is not the second commandment. See? The second commandment was "Thou shalt have no other God before me," then talked about graven images. But here he says the first commandment is to love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul. And then the second commandment is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Look at verse 40: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." You know what He did? God did the same thing with you and me. Now listen to me. This is very, very important what I am about to say. God did the same thing with you and me that He did with the Old Testament law to the nation of Israel. God looked at the Ten Commandments. Some of them were God-ward. Some of them were man-ward. Some of them were ceremonial. Some of them were moral. God looked at the Ten Commandments and He said to Himself, "I know they cannot keep it, but I am going to use it to show them how far they fall short." But at the same time, it is a great standard because here is what I want to do. Here is how that will work. If they will love Me and they will fulfill the things that are God-ward, and it is really real, see, that is the key. Then they will fulfill the things that are man-ward.

You know what He is saying here? He is saying that is what you and I do as Christians who now have Christ living inside us who fulfill the law. Your true spirituality is not how much you talk about loving God. Your true spirituality is not about how much you talk about reading the Bible or how you run around yelling "Praise the Lord" or do everything that you want to do. That is not the mark of a true Christian. Now we think that is the mark, do not we?

## IV. True Spirituality: Love in Action

I am kind of torn on this. I grew up in churches where people amen when you preach. If you ever preach in a black church, and I preach many, many times, they will amen you right off the place, man. I love it. I mean, I think it is the greatest thing in the world. I mean, you get amen, you get "well," you get just about everything that you could want. I mean, they are fired up. You cannot preach in a black church if you are probably dead. Both people love God and have an exuberance for it. I grew up in churches like that where a guy would really get flying through the thing. People would just, guys would amen, people amen, ladies would amen. Sometimes it happens here.

I know we are, time has changed and we are in the Midwest now, and I do not know what that has to do with it, but I guess I am trying to give you an alibi. The bottom line is this: I have got so many old things in my pocket that Savaka taught me over the years. He used to, he would go preach in someplace and there is always, and I do not, where is Phil? Is Phil in here? Okay, Phil, just take no personal, or John, do not take this personal because you amen a lot, so I do not want to think I am centering you up here or putting you out, but everybody look around at Phil back there right now. No, I am just kidding. I am just kidding. All you guys, but you have to say things because I do not want anybody to think I am talking about somebody here. I like it, but at the same time in every church, you always got, and Mel used to say this, he would be up there preaching and some guy down the front would just, and sometimes it can be done very appropriately like it is here, but you have been in churches where, I mean, they just are very inappropriate with it. I mean, they will amen, scream and yell, and you cannot get anything said. Old Mel used to say, "Thank you, brother, but do not amen it louder than you live it." That is a true statement.

What God did was He took all of the Ten Commandments and He redefined them into two, one that is God-ward and one that is man-ward, and then He put them in His Son. When you and I get saved now, we also have those two areas in our life because Christ is in us and they are redefined in Him. Those are the law of Christ and the Royal law. That is the law that all the other Ten Commandments go to, and they are the character qualities of Christ. Therefore, when we become Christ-like in the real deal, we follow the same format. You cannot fake Bible Christianity. I will tell you what, you just simply cannot. It is one of those things what it is, the thing is so clear.

God looked at us and He said, "You know what, I am going to take all of those ten and they do not need ten because they got their faith and they are under grace. So I am going to boil them down into two. I am going to take all of the ones to God and I am going to make those all in one. And then I am going to take all the ones to man and I am going to make them down to one. And then I am going to put Him in My Son and that is going to be the Royal law, the law of Christ, because He fulfilled it. And then when My people in the church age get saved, that is the two laws they are going to operate under, and that is the two laws is the proof if they are really who they say they are in Christ."

Here is His thinking: The idea is if you love God, you do what is right with people. So He is saying here, He combines it into two. If you love God and you love your neighbor as yourself, look at verse 9. If you love God and you love your neighbor as yourself, then you will not commit adultery against them. You will not kill them. You will not steal from them. You will not bear false witness against them, and you will not covet what they have. See how it works.

Now look at verse 10, and this is a great principle. In fact, I dare some to say that this verse here defines what really biblical love is. If you want a definition, and I know sometime when you John 3:16, "For God so loved the world," I guess that would be a good one for the God-ward side. So you want a defining verse for a child of God in you and me and our relationship with each other. It is found in verse 10, and verse 10 simply says this:

*Romans 13:10*

*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

See that thing? Working no ill toward someone, another Christian. We hear a lot today about love in action. That is a big word today, love in action. The truth of the matter is the greatest verse in the Bible that defines love in action is 1 Corinthians 8:3 as far as I am concerned. One of my favorite verses in the Bible. It says:

*1 Corinthians 8:3*

*But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

Now analyze that verse. You say, "Well, you know people love God because they sing loud when you sing." "Well, people love God because they have wide margin Bibles." You cannot love God without wide margin Bibles. Two things: if you love God without a wide margin Bible, you cannot go to Heaven without a red pencil, so you better get one. We look at that. We look at all the outward things that people do. But of course, the bottom line is that is not based on the principle here. We now understand in this great chapter that is not the defining factor of whether you love God or not. When it says, "if any man love God, the same is known of him," it is based on the concept that both commandments or the Ten Commandments have been defined down into two. They are in Christ, and then they are in you, and God cannot conceive of us really honestly loving Him and then showing ill towards your fellow Christian. Well, that makes life real simple, does it not?

You see, true Christian love is based on our identifying with the two character qualities of Christ in these two areas. Of course, that is just what it is: loving the same thing that He did, loving the unlovable and forgiving the unforgivable. That is God. God expects those same two things in our life. Those same two things in our life.

I talked last week about everybody makes mistakes, and we all do. I heard a great quote this week. A great quote went like this: "Without mistakes there would be no forgiveness, and without forgiveness there would be no love." Boy, if that is not true of God's concept for you and me, and that is why I tell you and I tell you over and over and over again, because people come in here with some areas in their life that are some tough areas. That is a situation where, you

know, I have told you many, many times, I do not care where you have come from, I do not care what you have done, I do not care what situation you found yourself in, as long as you want to do what is right and you are willing to do what you have got to do to change that, who in the world am I to hold you back from what God wants to do in your life based on the law of Christ and the royal law?

It does not take long, as I said, to see how this thing does not work in most churches, and you are going to find that in most churches, and I found this to be true all my life. I start putting my message together on Monday morning. I will get a rough draft on Monday, and I like that, and I do things weird, not everybody does it. I will get a concept about, I will look before I go to bed Sunday night, I will read the next chapter I want to next part I want to go through, and I will just simmer that all night long. I will read it again in the morning before I go to the fitness center, and then I will go to the fitness center while I am working out and doing my thing, that thing begins to take some kind of form and shape of where I want to go and what I want to do. I will come back from that and I will sit down for the next three or four hours and I will basically put out an outline of where I want to go and what I want to do, and then as the week goes on, I will redefine it, reshape it, read it, and probably Wednesday or Thursday it is in its basic final form.

It gives me a chance to think things through, so to speak. It gives me a chance to reflect on things. When I talk about things, I do not just like to be an academic person, I like to give you personal things that I have learned because I think that is so vital. It does not take long to see this in churches, and many of you have come from churches where you were used and abused, so to speak, and you come to the place where you realize, and I have heard testimonies in the last three or four weeks of people that I have talked to that have come over and talked to me, and I think that would be safe to say for most of us who, most of God's people, not all of them, and maybe not most of them, maybe that is a bad choice of words, but you are going to find that a lot of God's people lead double lives.

I found all through my life, I found that scenario: they have a set of rules for themselves and then they have a set of rules for everybody else. I think of modern day Christianity, and again, not everybody, but enough over the years that I have seen that there are some things that I have just never really understood. I guess I am going to talk to you today in just a few moments about, and this is probably a shock to most of you, and it should not be because I certainly never have portrayed myself to knowing everything about the Bible and do not pretend to in any way, shape or form, but most of the time when you ask me a question about the Bible, I have the answer to it. I realize that most of you think that is because I am so smart, but that is really not true.

The Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another." Here is another one of mine. I did two last week, I will do two more. This is all you are getting. In 35 years, I have probably been asked the same question a hundred thousand times. I do not think I have had a new question asked me about the Bible in the last six years of my life. So after a while it seems like, "Wow, how did he know that?" Because you are the 9,446th person that asked me that, that is how I know that. Now that takes away from my demeanor now, and now you will not think I was as smart as I think I am, but it has nothing to do with smarts. If it has to do with smarts, I am definitely in trouble. But it does have to do with the fact that the principles in the Word of God are so clear and they

show us that this is exactly what we do. We have a set of rules for ourselves and we have a set of rules for everybody else.

I think the greatest verse that defines God's people is found in Isaiah 29. This is one of these little verses that is really tucked away. I have got about 40 of them in the front of my Bible. I have never given them out to anybody, but they are, if I ever need to get into a jam where I have to preach something and I want it to be a blockbuster, these are the 40 verses. These things absolutely are one-liner atom bombs. You know there are some verses in the Bible that are really good. Some of them are good, but then there are some that just will drop you like an H-bomb right on top of your head. I call them reality verses, and I got about 40 of them. I do not have them there so much to preach as I have them there to read them about every day or every week for my own self.

But here is what he said, and this is so true.

*Isaiah 29:13*

*Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

Now in the world today we call this lip service, do not we? We tell somebody what they want to hear, but then we do something else, and that was the state of the nation of Israel right there in Isaiah. Of course, Isaiah is talking about right before the judgment of Sennacherib comes down and destroys Jerusalem, but that was the state of the nation of Israel for the most part in what, 587 BC, and it is also the state of Bible Christianity today in the most part, because we talk about how much we love God on one hand, and then we destroy our neighbor with the same lips that just talked about how much we love God, do not we? That is how it works. You see, we say, "Oh, I love God," but we do not fulfill the other side of it, and the truth of the matter is, if you do not fulfill the one, you really cannot fulfill the other, and that is what it means to be Christ-like. It is absolutely incredible to me.

It is, and based on our debt to God, and I understand that this all comes through a process. I cannot expect anybody when you first come in here to begin to just have a handle on all of this. This is part of the growth process that comes through your life, that you begin to put these principles in these two areas in your life and you learn how to do it, but it is always based on your debt to God for Him forgiving us when we were unforgivable and loving us when we were unlovable, and that forms the basis for the debt that I have and the debt that you have for loving each other and not showing ill toward each other, and that is simply where it is at. It is incredible.

## V. The Seven Things God Hates (Proverbs 6)

In Proverbs 6, and to me I like the conceptual studies in the Bible. In Proverbs 6, you have a great passage here, and in Proverbs 6:16, the Bible says there are six things that the Lord hates. Now for you new Bible students, I just want to draw your attention to Proverbs 6, and then you find it in verse 16, and then you find there are six things. It does not take much of a math person

to figure out that 666. What we got in Proverbs 6, I will just make it real easy for you. What we got in Proverbs 6 is the character makeup of the devil. That is what we have, and if you read down through here, it talks about the six things that God hates, and yet it tops it off with number seven, and it tells you that there are six things that God hates, but then it tells you there is a seventh thing that forms the abomination of all the rest of them, and these are the seven character qualities of the devil.

I want you to, if you do not have these in your Bible, I want you to put them in your Bible, maybe not right now today, but get this down, get the tape, and then go back and put this thing into context for you, and you will want to use this. You hear me talk all the time and I say this about learning how to use your Bible. I am not talking about just finding what order the books of the Bible go in. I am not talking about how to get in your map section in the back and find where they crossed the Red Sea. I mean, that is important, but that is not what I am talking about. What I am talking about is coming to the place that you know how to use these things in your Bible that give you the insight that you do not make bad choices in your life or bad choices of association in your life.

Now in Proverbs 6:16-19, here is what it says:

*Proverbs 6:16-19*

*These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:*

*A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

*An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,*

*A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

Now I do not know what you know about the Bible. I am going to give you something right now that is worth a hundred billion dollars. You got a hundred billion dollars today, Roy? Would you take a check? We will take a check. I am going to give you something worth a hundred billion dollars, and this is not part of the sermon today, but since we are here, let us get it out of the way so at least you will have it. This is worth a hundred billion dollars. I told you that this is the character, concept, makeup of the devil. There are seven things here. These seven things will match up to seven periods in the history of man and the history of the Bible. It is incredible. These seven things will show you the history of the Bible running right down through the whole aspect of the Bible. Let us see if it works, and boy it does work.

1. A proud look. Where will we go in the Bible where we find the first concept of pride? Genesis 1:1, Ezekiel 28, and Isaiah 14. Remember when the devil, who was not the devil, his name was Lucifer, and he got kicked out of Heaven? What was the reason why he got kicked out of Heaven? What happened in his world that caused him to do what he did? He wanted to be like the Lord. The Bible says his heart was lifted up and he said, "I will be like the most high God." Pride. There is your first mark.
2. A lying tongue. You come on through your Bible a little way and you know what you got? You got a lying tongue is the next one. Adam and Eve. In Genesis 3, the devil came to Eve.

What did he say with a lying tongue? "God said," and then he lied about what God said. There is your lying tongue. See that thing? It only gets better or worse.

3. Hands that shed innocent blood. Cain and Abel. We are walking right through the Bible. When it talks about hands that shed innocent blood, that is exactly what happened. Cain took his brother and killed him. I do not know if you picked it up yet or not coming through these things, but every one of these deals with a specific part of the Bible that is key. The fall in Genesis 1:1 with a proud look, that is key. Adam and Eve being deceived in the fall, that is pretty key. Cain and Abel, that is pretty key.
4. A heart that devises wicked imaginations. Where does that one fit? Genesis 6, where the Bible says in Noah's day that all the imagination of man was to do evil continually. Remember that? But it does not just start with Genesis 6. It goes all the way up to the Tower of Babel. See that thing? So that brings us up to the beginning and the start of the nation of Israel with a heart that devises wicked imaginations.
5. Feet that be swift in running to mischief. Running to Baal. I gave you a key. Talked about coming up to the beginning of the nation of Israel. Remember that? After the Tower of Babel, we had Abraham. The Tower of Babel is in Genesis 10, and Abraham shows up in Genesis 11. The nation of Israel goes on from there. But the nation of Israel begins with Abraham and comes through his loins and down the line by the time we get into 1 and 2 Kings. You know what Israel does? Who has got the kingdom of Heaven, everything that God is supposed to do? They do exactly what she just said. They have feet that run or swift running to mischief, and they keep going after Baal.
6. A false witness. Where does that come in? The crucifixion. Remember they took false witness against Him. False witness against Him. Now, I told you that this is the character makeup of the devil laid out for you in a systematic study of the Bible that shows you every major event that formulated the historical aspect of the Bible and shows you that basically the devil is in operation all through this time, specifically breaking it down so you could follow it with the six things. These six things, now I say it again, are the things that God hates: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet swift running to mischief, false witness.
7. He that soweth discord among brethren. That is the last and final one. That is the capstone of the six that makes it an abomination before God. What does that fit into? The seventh, the abomination, sowing discord, is the problem the church age has. That is why it is the seventh because it ends with the rapture of the church and it is over as far as that point is concerned. You got the six personalities of the devil that work it right up through that thing. The last one is a false witness of the crucifixion of Christ, and the predominant problem that the devil puts into the next fusion of God's plan, which is the church age, makes the abomination, and it is showing discord among the brethren. The failure of you and me to take the God-ward ones and take those same ones to the man-ward ones. We give Him lip service with our mouth, but our hearts are far from Him. Boy, I will tell you what. That is worth a hundred billion dollars in gold bullion, but we are not done quite just yet.

## VI. The Seven Character Qualities of Christ (Romans 15)

I love comparison studies. We have not got here yet. But just as you have the seven things that God hates that are the personality of the devil, when we get into Romans 15, you have the seven quality traits of Christ that should be in you and me that balances out the seven. Now, you want to learn how to use your Bible? Real simple. Bible study 101. Put both of these down. I have not given you the seven yet. Put all these down on two papers and everybody you meet the rest of your life, judge them off of those two. How simple? Every Christian, every person, everybody who comes to you and talks about how much they love God or this or that. It does not matter whoever they are, judge them off of those things. They are either going to have the characteristics of God toward each other, which I am going to give you, or they are going to have the characteristics you find in Proverbs 6:16-19.

We think that the fact that because we are saved and on our way to Heaven that the devil cannot really have an influence in our life. You need to go back and read the book of Matthew where Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He was talking to Peter who was trying to get Him to not go to the cross. When you find these seven things in a person's life or one of them or two of them, you know what you are dealing with? I will tell you what you are not dealing with. You are not dealing with a character of God.

Now, let us look at these seven things that a Christian has. I did not write the verses down for these, so I will have to just give them to you.

- 1.) Edifies other Christians. The first one is a proud look. The first one over there in Romans 15 is the job of a Christian is he edifies other Christians. Does everything that comes out of your mouth edify other Christians? You know what my momma used to say? My momma was smart. Your momma probably said it too. If you cannot say anything nice about somebody, then do not say anything. Christians need to edify each other. Why? Because we have a debt to love each other, not a debt of lip service, a debt of love in action. I love that. Love in action. We may share some things today before we leave. I am into this ecumenical movement. Proud look. Yet the Bible says the child of God edifies people.
- 2.) Helps other people. Lying tongue. Romans 15 says he helps other people.
- 3.) Pleases people by what you do. Proverbs says hands that shed innocent blood, and you know hands is what you do things with in the Bible. You hurt people with your hands. But yet the Bible says in Romans 15 that you please people by what you do.
- 4.) Receives people. The Bible says in Proverbs, "the heart that devises wicked imaginations." Yet the Bible says in Romans 15 that your job and my job is to receive people. Have you ever been to a church where you go into it is really cold? Have you ever been to a church someplace where you go in there and you feel like you are in the first church refrigerator? Nobody talks to you. Everybody is cold. Everybody is indifferent. One of the things I love about so many of you is the fact that in this church when somebody comes in, you act like you have known them all your life. It is a thing where you just, you know, I have seen honestly, and this is not a criticism in any way, shape or form. I have stood back in the back and seen some of you ladies when you saw a visitor that you went up and you just give them a big old bear hug, and they are giving a big hug. You are glad to see him and their head is

over your shoulder and I am behind you and I am seeing them going, "It is okay." He receives people.

- 5.) Prays for people. Proverbs 6 says "feet swift running to mischief." Boy, that is so true. The one in Romans 15 is that he prays for people. You see how can you show discord and feet running to mischief and still pray for people that are your brethren? Does that compute to you? To me that is like putting a 110 and a 270 socket. It is going to get a lot of flash.
- 6.) Ministers to other people. False witness. The Bible says in Romans 15 that we minister to other people.
- 7.) Admonishes one another. In the seventh, "abomination and sowing discord among the brethren," the Bible says in Romans 15 that we admonish one another. You know what admonish means? Well, I will tell you what it does not mean. It does not mean speaking ill of your neighbor. It does not mean taking somebody and trashing them because of whatever issue you have. It is an incredible concept. That is why the Bible says, "if any man loved God, the same is known of him." Because it is the concept that you cannot love God and do God-ward without doing the man-ward. When you see nobody doing the man-ward, do not get fooled. Use this. This is using your Bible 101. Do not get fooled when you see somebody doing something that is ill to their neighbor, no matter what it may be. Do not get fooled in the trap that they got the God-ward one down.

## VII. Living Out the Law of Love in the Church

Things like that and messages like this is why this church will never run 500. All right, Phil, knock it off. Do not shout it louder than you will live it. I will tell you something else, and I have never understood this. I have seen this all my life. I have had some great preaching experiences in my life. I preach just about on every continent. I love South Africa so much. It is beautiful. It is absolutely beautiful. We stayed one night, I do not remember where it was, but we stayed in a place where you probably know these places where you drive in at night and they lock you in at night and you stay in. It is a big resort place, but you are right in the middle of everything. You hear the lion growling, and I sleep for man. You get up in the morning, there are crocodiles out of the river, but you are locked in. Thank God you are locked into the thing. But I love it, man. South Africa was my favorite place.

But I had the ability God given me some great places to preach in my life, and I have really enjoyed my preaching in the state. I do not go anymore. Do not do much anymore simply because this is my job here now, and I have had my fill of the world of going and preaching and doing things, and I do not really have any desire. I got enough of you guys who can handle that, and I would go very few places now that I would not take some one or two of you with me to let you preach too. It is like Joplin, you know, I am not interested in going down and just preaching anymore. I have had my fun in the sun, you know, and all that stuff.

But you know what, all my life I have seen this, and these are the things that I do not understand. I mean, I am the guy who can answer any Bible question you want to ask, and you know, I can probably give you an answer because I heard it before. But there are some things about life in the

Bible that I have never figured out, and yet I probably do figure them out. Maybe I do not want to come to the conclusion, but it is hard for me to understand.

I would go places to preach, and all my life I go places to preach, and usually when you preach, you start on a Sunday night, you go Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and you finish up on Wednesday, and then you fly back wherever you are going back on Thursday morning. I would go out to preach some place, and about the third or fourth night, a couple of deacons would come over to me, or sometimes a family, or sometimes an individual, it did not matter. They would pull me aside and they would start to tell me all the things they do not like about the church and the pastor. I think I have talked to other pastors and it all happens to everybody. You go in there and you know you start preaching and somebody starts coming to the point where they really like what you are saying, and they feel like the people are having a problem with the pastor not hearing what you are saying, so they will pull you aside. I have even had some of them say, "You know what, you need to preach on this." I mean, all my life I have done that, I have seen that.

Here is what I always say. First of all, I am the wrong guy to say that to. I am just telling you right out of the chute. I mean, you are the wrong, I am the wrong guy to come and try to put me in a confederacy with you against a leadership position in the church. I am the wrong guy. Now maybe it works for you, but boy, I go to a church someplace and I am preaching and somebody's deacon comes over to me or somebody comes over to me, and I mean, I always have my standard answers. One of the things I will say is this, I will say, "Well, you know," and I have had one lady and her husband, they wanted to take me out afterwards, and for somebody, and I thought that would be nice. They look like a nice couple. Was I wrong? I never wanted to go back to a dirty hotel room so bad in all my life. I mean, it went on and on and on and on, and finally I said to him, I said, "You know what, I do not want to tell you. First of all, this is not my problem." I said, "But let me ask you a question, if all this is true about the pastor or the people in the church and everything is as bad as you say it is, why do you stay there? I mean, do you like abuse? I mean, if it is true, I mean, you know what, everybody has a right to be happy. Why would you stay in a place that makes you miserable every time you go?" I have never understood that.

I tell him, "Look, the Bible says you have an issue with your pastor. You have an issue with someone in that church. What does the Bible say?" I have never not been told the right answer. There is nobody ever does it. I have never understood it all in my life. I have seen it every place I go. Every place I go. They have issues with some person or the pastor or the brethren. But if you know, I would say, "You know, if you cannot or you will not do what you need to do, I mean, then go find a church that you are happy in. What is so hard about that?" You know what they just look at me. You know what one guy said? He said, "Well, because this is the best church I ever been in." What? I do not understand that.

Then I would say this, "Based on the Bible, why are you telling me this? I am just Bob Alexander from Kansas City. I cannot fix your issue. Why do not you go to the person who can fix your issue? I mean, is not that what the Bible says to do? Why are you coming to me? I came up here to preach, have a good time, fellowship, get a little break from what I do, and enjoy the people. Why are you involving me in something that is none of my business and I cannot fix?" I

said, "Go to them. I know your pastor. Sit down with him. I will go with you. I am here for the next couple of days. I will sit down with you. I hope you work it out. If it is some other person, just sit down, open up in prayer, get on your knees together and deal with it."

A deacon said to me one time. He got me about this. This was up in Chickopee, Massachusetts. They later split that church and that pastor went down to someplace in Columbus, but he came across. I do not know if it is over this easy or not, but he came over to me and he said, "I talked to you, brother," and I was getting nervous when he said that like that. I said, "Yeah, sure, what do you want to talk about?" He said, "Well, I do not like the way the direction of the church is going." I guess he stayed waiting for me to say, "Well, gee," I said, "Well, wow, well, yeah, let us pass out guns and burn the place down." He said, "Well, I do not like the way the direction of the church is going." I said, "Well, that is not your call. The deacons do not have the vision of the church, that is the pastor's job. I do not know when he played a new test with the deacons had any vision at all, which that is waiting on tables and doing what that needed to be done. That is not your call. God does not give the deacons the vision, He gives that to the pastor."

You know what my answer was to him? "Look, you look like a nice guy. If you do not like the way he is running it, why do not you go start your own church?" I should be honest about it, go out in front of the congregation and say, "I do not like the way the pastor is doing it. Talk to the pastor, I do not like the way you are doing it. I am going to go out and start my own work." You know, if the pastor has got any guts at all, he will say, "Wow, you know, nine gates. We have got a dung gate. Yeah, thank you." I said, "Why do not you go out and start your own church?" You know what he said? He said, "Why, I tried that, preacher, one time and it did not work out." I said, "You mean it flopped?" "Oh," I said, "baby, that is good. That is real good. You cannot even build one yourself, but now you want to tell the guy who is building one how to build it? Well, that will fly. You should get on a plane with Amelia Earhart. You could have made good buddies on that thing."

Now that is why I do not get invited back many places when I preach. I do not care. That Bible says that I am to love God-ward and I am to love you. I have a debt to the things of God and I have a debt to love you, and that does not allow somebody coming in and canceling out that debt based on what He did for me. Keep them accountable. But you know what, I am going to tell you the truth. I would go back next year and the same people with the same issues. They never did what was clear in the Bible that they were supposed to do. It just kept festering year after year, and God only knows where it all wound up. I have no idea.

I was always led. This is what is tough for me and this is what I do not understand. This is what is tough for me. To me, when I see these things down through my life, and probably some of you, Roy, you probably saw it. You pastored enough years to see it. When I see these things, I try so hard to try to balance them out and figure them out and rationalize them out. But at the end of the day, I am only left after 36 years of seeing this stuff. I am only left with one conclusion, and it is not a very pretty conclusion, and I do not even like to think about it.

You have somebody in a situation like that, it does not like the way it is run, does not like the pastor, does not like this, does not like that, does not like the way it goes, and they continually

stay in that and complain about it. When they have an option to go every place else and find something else to make them happy, and they stay and it continues and it continues year after year after year. I went to one church six years, and at the end of six years I did not go back anymore. At the end of six years that same deacon and his family were still mad about the same things they were mad six years ago. I come to the conclusion, you know what, you do not want to do what is right. You want to stay in a situation and pretend your spiritual with lip service to God, but your heart is far from Him, and you want to spend your time in that church undoing what the man of God has been called to do. That is a terrible conclusion. But in those scenarios, that is what I am left with.

I look at Matthew 16:23 where Peter is trying to keep the Lord from going to the cross, and it was not Peter. It was Satan using Peter, and the Lord says to Peter:

*Matthew 16:23*

*But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

You know why? Because Satan was using Peter to destroy the work that God wanted to. I have seen it all my life. Now to me, folks, it is real clear. We have a debt. We have a debt to the unsaved world. We have a debt to each other. That debt is to love each other. That debt is to love each other based on God's love for us. There is an infallible system given throughout the Bible to deal with any issue that ever comes up in any church. It is the lack of fulfilling the God-ward one and the man-ward one that break that thing down.

A true child of God will be just like the summation of God and Christ. He will fulfill the law in two aspects. The Old Testament law is summed up in two when the New Testament is in effect. Christ is summed up into the same two when He comes down, the law of law and the law of Christ, and you and I as a Christian, you and me can be summed up in the same thing. You love God and you love each other as yourself. Not two sets of rules. The same rules you have for yourself are the same rules you have for somebody else. The Bible says, "if any man loved God, the same is known of him." You see, it is this ending of Romans 13, as I said earlier when we started, that formed the bridge to get you prepared for the two great chapters in the Bible on our relationship with each other. Now what we are going to do is next week we will take these things and we will bring it right on farther and we will deal with these things. The second aspect of it that brings you right into Romans 12, 13, and 14. Every head bowed and every eye closed.